**Chapter one**

1. **Project concept**
   1. **Definition of a project**

* A project is a complex set of activities where resources are used in expectation of return and which lends itself to planning, financing and implementing as a unit.
* A project is a sequence of unique, complex, and connected activities having one goal or purpose and that must be completed by a specific time, within budget, and according to specification.
* The Project Management Institute (PMI) defines a project as a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result.
* Projects are goal directed and time framed, and when managed well, projects deliver on time and within budget.
* Projects can contain smaller projects.

Eg. Constructing a building

Implementing a new business

* The general definition of project in project planning considers the following words:

Aims ---------------------why are we doing the project?

Scope --- ----------------what is included or excluded?

Product/deliverables---what will be the output of the project?

Benefits-------------------what benefits will be delivered?

Work breakdown--------what work must be done?

Resources required------who will do the work?

Time scale-----------------how long will it take?

Cost------------------------how much will it take?

* 1. **Project Characteristics**
* A project is unique: A project contains a well-defined objective and has unique product. The project objective is defined in terms of scope (requirements), schedule, and cost.
* A project is carried out via a set of interdependent tasks.
* A project uses various resources to carry out these tasks.
* It is temporary in nature: The temporary nature of projects indicates a definite beginning and ending time. A project has a definite start date and an expected completion date. Projects are completed when the project goals are achieved or it’s determined the project is no longer viable. The actual completion date may not always be the same as the expected date.
* It has a customer: Most projects have many interested parties or stakeholders, but someone must take the primary role of sponsorship. The **project sponsor** usually provides the direction and funding for the project.
* It involves uncertainty: Because every project is unique, it is sometimes difficult to define the project’s objectives clearly, estimate exactly how long it will take to complete, or determine how much it will cost. External factors also cause uncertainty, such as a supplier going out of business or a project team member needing unplanned time off. Uncertainty is one of the main reasons project management is so challenging, because uncertainty leads to risk.
  1. **Project versus program**
* Often program and project are used interchangeably, but nominally, a program is a larger concept than a project. A program is a set of related projects.
* A project is an investment activity in which financial resources are expended to create capital assets that produce benefits over an extended period of time.
* it has a beginning and an end with specific objectives,
* A program is an ongoing development effort or plan which may not necessarily be time bounded.
* It may include one or several projects at various times whose specific objectives are linked to the achievement of higher level of common objectives.

Examples: A road development program

A health improvement program

* The major difference between a project and a program is not so much in objectives stated but lies more in scope, the details and accuracy.
* A project is designed with a high degree of precision and details as regards its objectives, features, calculation of returns and implementation plan.
* A program by contrast is general, lacks details and precision and aims at a broader goal often related to a sectorial policy of a country or departmental policy of an organization.
* Perhaps the distinction between projects and programs would be clear if we see the basic characteristics of projects. Projects in general need to be **SMART.**

 **S – Specific**

 **M - Measurable**

 **A – Area bounded**

 **R – Real**

 **T – Time bounded**

**S – Specific**

* A project is designed to meet a specific objective as opposed to a program, which is broad.
* A project has also specific activities.
* Projects have well defined sequence of investment and production activities and a specific group of benefits.
* A project is also designed to benefit a specific group of people.

**M - Measurable**

* Projects are designed in such a way that investment and production activities and benefits expected should be identified and if possible be valued in financial, economic and if possible social terms.
* Though it is sometimes difficult to value especially secondary costs and benefits of a project, attempt should be made to measure them.
* Measurement of costs and benefits must lend themselves for valuation and generally projects are thought to be measurable.

**A –Area bounded**

* As projects have specific and identifiable group of beneficiaries, so also have to have boundaries.
* In designing a project, its area of operation must clearly be identified and delineated.
* Though some secondary costs and benefits may go beyond the boundary, its major area of operation must be identified. Hence projects are said to be area bounded.

**R – Real**

* Planning of a project and its analysis must be made based on real information.
* Planner must make sure whether the project fits with real social, economic, political, technical, etc situations.
* This requires detail analysis of different aspects of a project.

**T –Time bounded**

* A project has a clear starting and ending point.
* The overall life of the project must be determined.
* Moreover, investment and production activities have their own time sequence.
  1. **Understanding the Project Environment**
* There are many factors that need to be understood within your project environment.
* Project environment is the surroundings in which a project is undertaken and it includes social, political and economic context within and outside the project boundaries.
* Understanding this environment also involves identifying the project stakeholders and their ability to affect its successful outcome.
* At one level, you need to think in terms of the cultural and social environments (i.e., people, demographics, and education).
* The international and political environment is where you need to understand about different countries’ cultural influences and needs to be aware of local laws and customs.
* Then we move to the physical environment; here we think about time zones.
* Of all the factors, the physical ones are the easiest to understand. But, the cultural and international factors that are often misunderstood or ignored. How we deal with clients, customers, or project members from other countries can be critical to the success of the project.
  1. **Types of rural(agricultural) development projects**

**1. Capacity building through Technical Assistance (Project-type Technical Cooperation)**

* It has supported the capacity-building of public administration officials in charge of rural development through the Project-type Technical Cooperation.
* The major characteristics of this type of cooperation are:

(1) integrated rural and community development;

(2) Rural community development and training of administrators;

(3) Health care improvement; and

(4) Enhancement of protective capabilities.

1. **Policy-making of Rural Development (Development Study)**

* Since many developing countries have limited policy-planning capabilities, effective development plans cannot be formulated at times. Therefore, the Development Study scheme presents a grand design for national policies and overall plans of counterpart countries. Verification of planned projects and pilot projects are also implemented. Based on the study, community-based plans are formulated with social, economic and environmental considerations.
* Major Development Studies on rural development include:

(1) Recommendations on improvement of agricultural productivity;

(2) Support for improvement of local health care; and

(3) Local infrastructure improvement as well as school mapping.

* Based on the results of the Development Studies, Grant Aid and the Project-type Technical Cooperation may be provided.
* Although the Development Study formulates plans, plan implementation is almost always given priority in formulation. For the implementation of appropriate projects, the plan must be formulated deliberately based on solid research.

**3. Development of Facilities (Grant Aid)**

* There are a lot of model projects through Grant Aid, based on the Development Study.
* Those projects include the construction of infrastructure such as road and traffic control (roads and bridges), enhancement of public transportation (including busses), rural electrification (small-scale waterpower, solar energy etc).
* Extensive assistance has been provided for school construction to expand access to education and market-related infrastructure.
* Recently, consultants and other aid workers have promoted the social dimension of development, such as management and maintenance through training and educational activities in the construction of infrastructure under Grant Aid.

**4. Cooperation in Specific Rural Villages (Community Empowerment Program/**

* Regionally-based integrated rural development has been implemented by NGOs, rather than under a government initiative.
* Support for public organizations focused on technical transfer to counterpart organizations and on infrastructure development in pursuit of economic development.
* On the other hand, the private sectors and NGOs have provided detailed assistances to specific areas. Some NGOs have accumulated quite a lot of knowledge on participatory development approaches, and an increasing number of projects.
* Basically grant aid is provided for infrastructure, and cooperation with social components is required.
* Effective Approaches for Rural Development have requested NGOs to implement rural development projects in specific areas. In recent years, poverty reduction has increasingly become the crucial issue in rural development.
* Utilizing NGO knowledge and promoting collaboration with NGOs is important in providing assistance to the poor at the grass-roots level and is expected to accelerate.