Participation: Beyond the Concept

Indifference to 'participation' is ubiquitous. It is all pervasive. Non-participation is not only characteristic of development but of other areas of human endeavor as well, including construction and systematic dissemination of knowledge which can be called education system. Social change throughout history has certainly propelled mankind much forward, but at the same time, it has created deep-rooted alienation leading to non-participation. Human beings are alienated not only from their resources, their knowledge and the technology which they create but also from the system of governance, which they create to enhance their lives.

What causes such indifference and alienation? Which factors lead to non-participation? What kind of attempts should be made to create space for the active engagement of the so far 'passive' and 'excluded' actors in every sphere of human life?

PRIA has been addressing these questions persistently since its inception. But during the last two years, PRIA has tried to involve other actors systematically to reflect on this problematic. PRIA has worked with academicians in India on the concern of marginalization of people and the alienation of social sciences in the process of social transformation. This collaborative exercise has addressed the questions of the way in which the social sciences can enrich participation and conversely the way in which participation can enhance our understanding of the times we live in. In addition, the ways in which the exchange between participation and social sciences enriches the process of social transformation has also been addressed.

PRIA has also interacted with social work educators in India in an organised manner to look into the issue of non-participation and understand participation from their vantage point. Though, development of people is the core of social work education, participation eludes their modes of teaching, learning and practice. A dialogue between educators and practitioners was initiated to derive insights into the complexities of participation and to realize the need to reorient the stream.

PRIA has also attempted to explore the factors and consequences of participation in the context of development projects and to promote participation by organizing programmes for implementing by personnel from government, semi-government, bilateral and
multilateral development agencies. It is important to understand participation in the context of projects since the project approach to development is today a predominant approach. It is interesting to note how participation is comprehended and practiced by project formulators and implementors. It has been found that understanding of participation, even if it exists, is not shared at all levels adequately and inspite of a common understanding, a number of bottlenecks hindering practice emerge. These bottlenecks are difficult to eliminate because of various factors—the chief one being the rigidity of projects.

Since the issue of “non-participation” is widespread and easily comprehensible, there is a corresponding urgency in the attempt to promote participation in every sphere.

This issue of the bulletin focuses on these concerns. Learning from field provides insights as to how “Pani Panchayat” in Maharashtra has created space for active engagement of beneficiaries by removing bottlenecks. The theme of the bulletin based on the research studies done by different organizations looks at participation in various projects.

— Dr. Nalin R. Jena

**Wish You**  
**A VERY HAPPY**  
**1996**
Rural Development through Community Action: The Case of Pani-Panchayats in Maharashtra

P. N. Pimpley*

The history of rural development efforts in India can be rationally divided into three phases: 1) the community development programme, 2) the intensive area development programme, and 3) the integrated rural development programme. Massive inputs have gone into each of them with varying results. One visible outcome of these, particularly of the second phase, has been the green revolution in some parts of the country. As a consequence, the availability of foodgrains at the aggregate level has increased considerably. However, two problems are immediately visible. First, the green revolution is confined to only small parts of the country - Punjab, Haryana, Western UP and parts of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. This has created a regional imbalance in the country. Second, the green revolution has given rise to what can be called the refraction effect. Those sections of the village community who already had greater initial resources have been able to improve their position rather than those who had little or none at all. Small and marginal farmers, the share croppers and the landless agricultural workers have not materially benefited from any trickle down effect. Many social scientists (Rajini Kothari, 1987) find that the path of development involving centralised planning, large scale schemes with heavy capital inputs which are bureaucratically administered, having a long gestation period, are responsible for the imbalances in development and the resulting inequalities. In this process of development, not only do the economic inequalities increase but it also leads to the further fragmentation of the village communities. It is also argued that the developmental efforts in India have resulted in the disempowerment of the people.

As an alternative to state implemented plans of development, people themselves should participate in their own development. What is being further suggested is that instead of large-scale schemes, small scale local level schemes with short gestation period and with high benefit-ratio be adopted. This suggestion comes from the experience of hundreds of small voluntary groups working in different parts of the country at the grass-roots level. Despite the demonstrable benefits of such micro level actions, some problems are endemic to these. Most of these action groups are led by a small number of idealistic urban middle class youth who work for short durations with the people. They face acute shortage of funds and have to gradually fall back upon state patronage thereby negating the rationale for their activism. Yet another problem is the one that arises out of the difficulties in their spread to other areas since such activities and their success are based on the charisma of the leaders of such groups. Once they withdraw from the scene, for whatever reasons, the tempo of the activities is not maintained and in course of time the situation reverses back to square one. It therefore appears that if the local level initiatives are to have any sustained development thrust, two conditions need to be recognised: (1) that there be a conceptual model that can be first built and administered, not in terms of individual or a group's efforts but on an institutionalised basis.

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(for detailed discussion of these issues, see Pimpley, 1990a, 1990b, 1992).

I have elsewhere documented a success story in this area in village Sukhomajri near Chandigarh (Pimpley 1990). I had suggested that success of the voluntary social action groups depends on the charismatic leadership which is able to mobilize the local resources – including human resources - for bringing about change. Paradoxically, this strength of voluntarism is also its major weakness since the disappearance of the leader from the scene decreases the propensity for change. The solution of the paradox lies in routinization of charisma (Weber 1948). Working out of a methodology for change and an organisation to implement it over time and across space can lead to more localised success stories. Anna Hazare’s work at Ralegan Shidi is a paradigm case of non-routinized charismatic leadership becoming a more local affair. He was successful in developing the village in a variety of ways by enforcing a strict religious - moral code on the villages by virtue of his charisma (Meeta and Rajiv Lochan, 1994). Despite this success, in the absence of an organisation to replicate the methodology, it is confined to only one village.

In contrast, R. R. Mishra’s experiment was replicated in dozens of villages in the foothills of the Shivaliks due to a conscious effort at routinization of charisma through formation of Hill Resources Management Societies which combined water resources management, social conservation and agricultural development (Pimpley 1990). Yet another success story which exemplifies the above mentioned two conditions are to be found in the Pani Panchayats of Maharashtra.

SECTION - 2

In Maharashtra, nearly one-third of the total cultivable land is affected by drought. In the State only 12 per cent of agricultural land is irrigated and 15 per cent of the population is covered. It is in these areas, e.g. Sangli and Kolhapur, that sugar cane is grown and there is ample evidence of the increasing disparities and concentration of power in the hands of a few to merit any further elaboration.

One of the severest droughts in Maharashtra was seen in 1971-72, particularly in the Purandhar block of Pune district. There was no water for irrigation or drinking. There was no fodder for the animals who as a result, died in thousands. A majority of the people had to migrate to nearby towns and cities in search of sustenance. Such was the condition that was observed by a perceptive engineer, Mr V.B. Salunkhe. Greatly disturbed by what he had seen, he approached the administrators of Pune and suggested a scheme for making water available for construction of percolation tanks. However his experience with the bureaucracy led him to take up a voluntaristic approach to solve the perennial problem of water scarcity and resulting miseries. In 1974, dipping into his resources and with the help of some philanthropists, he started a charitable trust called ‘Gram Gaurav Pratishan’, an experiment in village Naigoan where the villagers made available 16 hectares of barren land belonging to the village temple on a long-term lease to him. This 16-hectare land is situated on a micro-watershed. During the heavy rains a precipitation from about 200 acres runs off from this watershed. To impound this water, a percolation tank of the capacity of a million cubic feet of water was constructed within this land. While this was being constructed, the fields were contour bounded, leveled, stones removed, ploughed and an open well dug at the base, on the downstream of the tank. A pump of 7.5 H.P. was installed at the well to lift the water up to a height of 40 ft (say about 13 metre). The rising main of RCC pipes about 300 metres was laid under-ground
by digging trenches to the distribution chambers. Out of the 16 hectares of land, 9.60 hectares were brought under protective irrigation, 2.40 hectares under afforestation and the remaining 4 hectares came under the percolation tank, well, field bunds, and the tract of infrastructure (Gram Gourav Pratishtan, 1983).

When the above experiments were being carried out by the Trust on the barren land, the farmers of Naigaon village showed little interest. They were not only sceptical but were sure that it was a futile exercise. But soon the experiment proved a success. When the villagers saw that 200 quintals of grains were produced on 24 acres of land under experiment, whereas 40 acres of their own hardly produced ten quintals, they flocked around Mr. Salunkhe, requesting him to start similar schemes for them.

Besides producing record food grains, the farm has generated full time employment for fifteen people and supports fifteen animals; 4000 trees on the rocky rimland and 2000 fruit trees along field bunds are thriving. In addition, a three-quarter acre has been brought under Thomson Seedless grape vines. Some decades ago Purandhar Taluka was famous for horticulture. Today there are only a dozen or so orchards that produce guavas and custard apples.

The one million of water stored in a small percolation tank at Naigaon has proved quite sufficient to irrigate 2.43 hectares in Kharif, 8.20 hectares in Rabi and 0.5 hectares in the summer, or about 11.00 hectares in all.

In 1980 Mr. Salunkhe decided that time had come to move forward for economic transformation of the villages. He first started with Naigaon by seeking the involvement of the poor farmers in establishing a series of community minor lift irrigation schemes, building upon the experience he had acquired with the experimental farm.

The various experiments carried out at the experimental farm have conclusively proved that, with proper methods of water conservation and careful distribution, half an acre of irrigated land would reasonably sustain one person. Thus, a family would have a maximum of 2 and 1/2 acres of irrigated land. Here came one of the key ingredients in the rural transformation; the allocation of water not in proportion with land holdings but in proportion with the number of people in a family unit. This revolutionary concept is the key to altering the "reaction effect" of technological inputs.

Had Naigaon followed the usual traditional practice of allocating water in proportion with land holdings, the result is easy to predict. Those with more land would have benefited more. Since water in a drought-prone area is the key to more productive agriculture, this advantage would have been multiplied down the line in terms of the ability to use other technological inputs to increase productivity. Hence, the usual pattern would have soon emerged in Naigaon, as it has in so many other well intentioned rural development schemes throughout the country.

With irrigation, small farms intensively cultivated, would achieve higher levels of productivity than larger farms which are less intensively cultivated. Therefore, the overall agricultural production in the village economy would increase more through the strategy of allocating water to a large number of small farmers rather than to a small number of large farmers.

Another key element in the plan was its financing. When the lift irrigation programme started in Naigaon, a formula called 20/40/60 was followed, that is, the beneficiaries put in 20 percent of the capital cost, the government another 40 percent as subsidy and the Trust the remaining 40 percent (interest free loan to be repaid in five years). The government gave subsidy from a programme called Minor Irrigation Extension Programme for 2 to 4 hectares, which was later withdrawn in April, 1981.

From the socio-economic consideration, the modalities of Pani Panchayat for sharing water, the
scarcest resource in a drought prone area and the main input for increasing the agricultural production are, therefore, as follows.

1. Only group schemes are undertaken and not schemes for individuals. This fosters community spirit.

2. The sharing of water is on the basis of the number of members in the family and not in proportion with land holdings. Half an acre per capita, maximum of 2 and 1/2 acres. The land in excess of 2 and 1/2 acres is to remain under rain-fed condition. The principle of equity is thus incorporated and imbalance is avoided.

3. The rights of water do not go to the land, but to the individual beneficiaries for increasing their own agricultural income. If the land is sold, the rights of water revert to the Trust.

4. Beneficiaries share 20 per cent of the cost of the lift irrigation project, according to their share. Peoples' active participation and stakes are thus ensured. The balance of the 80 percent will be given by the Trust, as interest free loan to be repaid in five years, from the donations received. After the scheme becomes productive, the government will be requested to reimburse the 80 percent or part thereof, which may or may not be accepted.

5. The beneficiaries of the project themselves are to administer, and operate all its aspects. The leadership, capability and skill of the rural people are thus recognised and enhanced.

6. Crops such as sugarcane requiring more frequent watering and consequently more quantity of water are not to be grown. This will bring more area of seasonal crops under protective irrigation. Thereby more people will benefit than otherwise.

7. The landless can also share water so that they gain full employment in the village itself by becoming sharecroppers to farmers having more land. This will check migration to cities.

**SECTION-3**

There have been considerable socio-economic changes that need to be recognised. The community which was divided on caste lines now has a stake in the maintenance of solidarity for continued benefits from the common irrigation facility for the village. The seasonal migration that took place to towns and cities has practically stopped. Many of the villagers who had gone to Bombay and Pune in search of employment have returned to their land. The nomadic shepherds have permanently settled down in the village. An acre of land which could barely produce 50 kg. of grains now produces 4-5 quintals of foodgrains. In order to merit this scheme, the Pani Panchayats provide for a group leader to be elected by the beneficiaries of this scheme. A suitable water distributor is appointed on a modest honorarium (who is not from the village itself and has no such vested interests). He has to look after fair distribution of water to all the beneficiaries. This takes care of the possible misuse of power by the influential persons in the village. One of the major reasons for the success of this scheme is that it has been based on a carefully formulated techno-economic and social management perspective. Secondly, despite the fact that the initial ideas, technical expertise and guidance have come from one person, functioning of this scheme has been routinized through the institution of Pani Panchayats where decisions are taken through discussions and consensus.

After the success of the Naigaon experiment more than 40 schemes have been taken up under the Pani Panchayat Scheme. The trust which Mr. Solunkhe had formed has taken over many defunct minor irrigation schemes run on cooperative basis.
and they are now functioning well. The demonstration effect of Naigaoon experiment has been considerable which is evident from the fact that a large number of villagers surrounding Naigaoon have visited it and with the help of the Trust have started similar schemes in their own villages.

There are many similarities between that Pani Panchayat at Naigaoon and the Sukhomajri experiment to suggest that these are not accidental but involve similar necessary and sufficient conditions for bringing about successful micro level rural development on a voluntaristic basis.

It may be coincidental that both Misra and Salunkhe were technically qualified men whose initial concern was not rural development at all but became involved in it accidentally. Mr. Misra was a technocrat at an ICAR Research Centre at Chandigarh and Salunkhe is mechanical engineer running a manufacturing unit at Hadapasar near Pune. Both were moved by the pitiable conditions of the rural masses and showed concern for others and were dedicated selfless workers. In both cases the governmental agencies had already been working in the respective field for augmenting resources of the rural communities without showing any tangible results. In both cases a single experiment for providing water as a critical input for agriculture in degraded soil conditions was carried out in similar villages. Both experiments had a short gestation period of approximately one year and showed immediate gains from them. These involved a demonstration effect for the people in the villages making it possible for generating interest in similar schemes for themselves. However, instead of carrying out the experiment in one village only, both felt the need of replication of their experiments at numerous places so that a large number of people and communities sharing similar problems could benefit from them. The methodology adopted by both of them assures the involvement of the entire community in the project, formation of an organization of the entire community for implementing and running the project, insisting on 2-way developmental communications and decision-making through discussions among all the members and arriving at a consensus to be binding on all the members and ensuring that every member has a stake in the projects by bearing at least a part of the cost. Unlike the government-sponsored schemes where the distribution of water is carried out in terms of the amount of land holdings, they followed the method of equitable distribution of water resources.

This methodology allowed them to replicate the initial experiment over a number of communities ensuring that these schemes would continue to function even when the charismatic initiators of the schemes gradually withdrew from the developmental activities.

Similarly results of community involvement through formation of voluntary organisations for development of the entire community have also been reported from Sri Lanka (Ratnayake, P 1991)

The doubts raised about the viability of micro-level efforts by voluntary groups of being able to sustain the developmental efforts is not borne out by both of these case studies. It can therefore be inferred that small scale developmental efforts carried out through a democratic process of people’s organisations at the community level, having a short gestation period are likely to succeed where the large-scale state schemes may lead to increasing disparity in village communities.

References
I saw the Maoris

ARVIND KUMAR

The struggle for self identity and dignity by the tribals is not restricted to India, it is a worldwide phenomena. It is also a fact that all over the globe the powerful have made both direct and indirect attempts to sabotage and suppress these struggles.

I have used the word ‘power’ here consciously. Not only politically powerful but also religious and economically powerful people do not want the tribals to maintain their identity and dignity. The main reason for this, I feel, is that, on one hand, the tribals want to retain the collective ‘we’ feeling in their culture and maintain their traditional symbiotic relationship with nature; on the other hand, they want to be a part of modernisation which is based on individualism and economic and political power. This situation has given rise to contradictions which are clearly perceptible.

In this context, I had an opportunity of visiting the Maori Tribals of New Zealand. Between 18-23 June’95 I attended a Conference organised by New Zealand 2nd Commonwealth NGO Forum in New Zealand. The main objective of the Conference was to discuss the role of the NGOs in poverty eradication. 150 participants from 51 Commonwealth countries participated in the Conference. In the Conference a number of group discussions on different issues were organised. It is not necessary to go into these details. However, I would like to highlight some of my observations with regard to the Maori tribe.

On the first day the participants were welcomed by the Maoris with a welcome speech followed by a cultural programme.

As I hail from Bihar or for that matter anybody from India, will have a set image of a tribal - a scantily clothed, dark skinned and mostly frail looking persons. When I saw the Maoris I was surprised, because the Maoris were no different from the non-Maoris or non-tribals in their physical features, dress and behaviour. I am sure, anyone familiar with the tribals in Bihar, Bengal or Madhya Pradesh will face the same difficulty as I experienced.

One important reason for this could be that the Maoris are educated, and have adopted modernisation without compromising on their traditional identity. This is demonstrated clearly in their language. On reaching New Zealand at the Airport I noticed a sign board which displayed “Airport” in English as well as in some unintelligible script, which I could not decipher. Dr. Rajesh Tandon, Executive Director of PRIA, who coincidentally was with us at the airport, clarified that it was written in the native Maori language. This made me very curious about the Maoris, spurring me to know more about them.

During this period, on 19th June, 1995, Save the Children’s Fund organised a multi cultural charity show in Wellington Town Hall. The Maori groups presented a variety of songs and dances in the programme.

These cultural programmes of Maoris or the way the Maoris were projected in the cultural programmes made me compare them with their Indian counterparts. I did not find much difference between these two groups living in two different sub-continents. Of course, there is a difference in colour and education. The level of education and the literacy rate among the tribals in India is quite low.

The Maori tribals are certainly much more developed than their Indian counterparts. It is possibly because of higher level of education which Maoris have acquired. Otherwise they would have been subject to similar exploitation as the tribals in India are. What is striking is the growth of leadership among Maori women. In the Commonwealth conference a number of Maori women put forth their views in a very forceful manner.

During the Conference, Maoris were persistently making efforts to put forth their main demands. Though the participants from other countries were not saying anything but in every session, there was unnecessary intervention it seemed. However, the presence of Maoris was quite visible.

Informal interaction with people during the Conference revealed that when government or non-government committees are formed, if the top position is occupied by a non-Maori, the assistant position is reserved for the Maoris. On the other hand, if a Maori is occupying the top position then a non Maori may or may not occupy the assistant’s seat.

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Thus the influence of the Maoris and their customs is prevalent in whole of New Zealand. In spite of this, the Maoris are still continuing their struggle for their identity and development.

The Maori tribes have made a national level organization called 'Maori Conference'. The main objectives of the Conference are:

- To provide a national forum for iwi to address issues affecting Maoris
- To advance iwi nationhood
- To promote constitutional and legislative arrangement that will enable Maori to control their own right to development and self determination
- To monitor government policy and practice and its implications for Maoris
- To articulate a Maori view on matters of foreign policy
- To conduct such administrative and financial functions as may be necessary
- To abide by the Treaty of Waitangi
- To assist in the development and monitoring of legislation that affects Maoris
- To advance all Maoris

The above objectives reflect the mainstream. What is conspicuously lacking is any attempt to relate themselves to the question of natural resources, which should be the main plank of tribal identity and development, I think.

Is it possible that the Maoris are caught in a conflict between their tradition and the forces of modernisation?

**Look at the World Through Women's Eyes — NGO Forum ’95**

**NAMRATA JAITLI**

Women have been discriminated since time immemorial — from the stone age to the present age of computers, their exploitation has seen no end. Inspite of the overwhelming changes that have overtaken the world at large, women still occupy the lowest rung of the socio-economic and political ladder.

However, there is hope. The NGOs, various formations of civil society and women's movement have emerged as strong social forces fighting for the rights of women. They have made significant contributions in catalyzing and prioritizing women's issues in the national and the international fora. United Nations and Governments have also played an important role in the process of women's development. However a lot more needs to be done.

An example of the cumulative efforts of the three parties towards women's empowerment has been the recently concluded Fourth World Conference on Women and the simultaneous NGO Forum.

**OFFICIAL CONFERENCE**

The Fourth UN Conference on Women was held in Beijing from 4th September '95 to 15th September '95, forming another link to the chain of UN supported Women Conferences starting in 1975 from Mexico city, through Copenhagen in 1980 and Nairobi in 1985. The Conference builds upon the commitments made for enhancement of the status of women in the other UN Conferences in Rio (Conference on Environment and Development '92), Vienna (Conference on Human Rights '93), Cairo (Population and Development '94) and Copenhagen (Social Development Summit '95). The Commission on the Status of Women was the preparatory body of the Conference.

The main objective of the Conference was the adoption of the Platform of Action by the heads of foreign dignitaries.

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the problems faced in the NGO forum within the larger context of the Official Conference.

The Forum as a parallel program to the UN Fourth Conference on Women, was organised at Huairau, from 30 August '95 to 8 September '95.

Three main objectives of the Forum were:

1. Lobbying with the official UN delegations on the inclusion of alternative positions taken on the bracketed sections of the DPOA.
2. Networking and formulating alliances within the NGOs for formulating alternative statements on the disputed sections of the draft and for post Beijing development activities.
3. Celebrating the aspect of being a woman.

With the broad theme of "Look at the world through women's eyes", the Forum strived "to bring together women and men to challenge, create and transform global structures and processes at all levels through empowerment and celebration of women". More than thirty thousand women from all over the world representing NGOs, women's groups, academia, media and other civil society formations participated in this international Forum. For the first time so many women assembled as a force raising voice for their rights as women.

For the success of the Forum it was essential to have adequate channels for information exchange, interaction, celebration, and reflection among the participants, spread over the Forum site of 42 hectares.

Plenary sessions on each day were organised to discuss salient issues regarding the global forces affecting the quality of life, the initiatives and strategies used by women to bring about the required change and the future commitments of the women.

Along with that about 325 - 350 workshops were organised each day to cover related issues. Some of the issues discussed with relation to women were economy, governance, peace, human rights, education, health, environment and media.

Another important channel for interaction were a number of tents, like the Regional Tents (for
regional NGOs) Diversity tents (for the Youth, Grassroots women, Older women, lesbians etc.) and Special Tents (Peace tent, healing tent, Global pavilion). The tents provided the participants with space and opportunity to share experiences, discuss and formulate alternative positions on the outstanding issues in the DPOA.

Spontaneous and peaceful processions and marches on issues like the plight of the Bosnian and Palestine women, protests against world wide fundamentalism and on lesbian rights, were undertaken, as a symbol of solidarity.

“Forum95” – an independent daily of the NGO Forum on Women gave a day to day account of the important happenings in the Forum site and the Official Conference, while posters highlighted information related to workshops, organisations and struggles.

The Achievements

Differences in opinion regarding the achievement of NGO Forum 1995 exist. Some support the view that the NGOs could not contribute sufficiently to the Official proceedings where the major policy decisions were taking place. It is being stated that the forum proved more a ground for celebration and networking, with the NGO community making no significant contribution in influencing policy.

Having participated in the Forum one feels that the contribution of the NGO Forum, in influencing policy decisions cannot and should not be undermined. The women’s movement and the NGOs’ role as a pressure group has helped to prioritise the issues related to women, putting them high on international agenda.

Women’s Groups and NGOs were involved in structured preparation for this conference since last three years, with national and regional meetings being organised towards the Beijing Conference. The participation of their representatives in the ‘PrepComs’ provided them with opportunities, though inadequate, to influence the initial drafts on the Platform of Action.

As representatives of millions of women the world over, members of the NGO community came out with a number of critiques of the DPOA, putting forward their alternative statements and recommendations. Some of their recommendations were incorporated as part of the DPOA while others were negotiated in the official Conference.

In Huairau the Civil Society formations played a significant role in improving the future of the world’s women, inspite of constraining factors like the long distance between the official Conference and the Forum site, difficulty in getting accreditation and low representation of the NGOs in the official delegation. The Forum site saw lobby groups among the NGOs being formed and alternative statements on issues being discussed in a number of workshops.

Despite many institutional, infrastructural and natural constraints the spirit of oneness, gaiety and hope encompassed the ten days proceedings. The unique opportunity provided in the Forum for interaction and networking among NGOs was a big achievement in itself, taking the Forum activities beyond Beijing. The cultural exchange on the other side of the iron curtain, cutting across all national, cultural, political and economic barriers, has been an enriching and eventful experience for all involved and a mobilising process in itself.

For the UN, organisation of the simultaneous NGO forum is a step closer to the international community recognizing the contribution of the NGOs in developing a just and equitable world order. On the occasion of the UN celebrating its first 50 years, the Forum provides a platform to reanalyse the UN-NGO-NGO relationship, reasserting the need for equal partnership between the three parties in deciding and laying a foundation for a better world.
Challenges
The Conference reasserts the need for achieving a global perspective on women issues. The winds of globalisation and economic liberalisation have reduced the boundaries of the world. Taking advantage of the present state of affairs, the women's movement nationally and internationally should gain greater momentum, drawing strength from millions of similar struggles being undertaken in different parts of the globe.

A step towards this globalisation process would be greater participation of the NGOs in policy decisions made in such international conferences, without which their sphere of influence gets restricted. Their close interaction with the ground realities, forming an essential link between the micro and the macro aspects of the problem, makes them an essential component in the official dialogues. Though the NGOs did get space in their national government delegations, there has been a felt need for more space in the plenaries, where the drafting of the Platform of Action was taking place.

Ensuring women's participation in international conferences is not enough. Efforts need to be made to ensure optimal utilisation of the time and energies of the Forum participants, keeping the overall objectives of the Forum in mind. There is a strong need for more organised lobbying strategies amidst the NGOs before and during the Forum. This includes better coordination within the Forum participants – the NGOs, women's groups, activists, media and others. For that the workshops and other channels of communication should be used not only as means of information sharing and alliance formation, but also as channels for formulating lobbying strategies.

Planned preparation of the NGOs in policy studies, policy influence and policy advocacy is another significant area for intervention. Here the role of Educational Support Organisations in strengthening capacities of grass root NGOs and their networks, in policy advocacy, becomes important.

The Conference and the Forum is not an end in itself. It is, but, a means towards an end. Lot more needs to be done post-Beijing and Huairau. The NGOs have to play an important role in following up post Beijing activities. The alliances formed in Huairau and Beijing need to be strengthened and expanded. Further they need to monitor and collaborate collectively with their governments in implementing the Platform of Action within their national perspective. Through their programmatic interventions at grass roots they should give teeth to the development agendas decided at the global and national level.

It becomes their priority to ensure that commitments made in Beijing are not restricted to paper but are followed by concrete action plans. Only then can the Conference and the NGOs' role in it be considered successful.
People’s Participation in Development: A Comparative Analysis of some Development Projects in India

DR. NALIN R. JENA

Background

'Participation', 'popular participation', and 'community participation' are today very commonly used terms in the parlance of development. In fact, since the early 1970's, there has been an increasing interest in people's participation in development and participatory approaches to development. This interest is manifested at local, national and international levels, and appears to be shared by individuals and institutions of widely divergent ideologies and backgrounds. At the international level, most multilateral and bilateral agencies have recognised the importance of participation both as a means and as an objective of development. Likewise national plans in many countries have started paying a great deal of attention to the need for a participatory pattern of development. The Indian national plan too recognizes the importance of people's participation in development. At the local level, both government and non-governmental voluntary development organizations are making efforts, or claiming to apply the participatory pattern of development.

However, rarely any systematic poring has been done to explore the state of affairs with regard to 'people's participation in practice' in various development projects. Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi, in collaboration with Institute for Development Research, Boston, embarked upon an exercise, firstly to study the realities of popular participation in development projects, and secondly to strengthen the research capacity of the collaborating fraternal Regional Support Organizations and close partners based in different parts of the country.

This learning process was designed into four phases which continued for 15 months. The first phase workshop focused on research processes, basic concepts of research and the concept of participation; the second on how to formulate research questions and hypothesis and methods; the third on tools of data collection and data analysis; the fourth and concluding workshop dealt with data analysis and interpretation, report writing and dissemination. In the first workshop the participants identified their respective projects for study. After learning the methods in the workshop they applied them to do the study. The following projects were selected by the teams. (see Table 1).

All the studies had the common premise that participation (or community participation as it is

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<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Name of the Project</th>
<th>State in which the project exists</th>
<th>Study done by</th>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>Income Generation Programmes of Mahila Samajams and DWCRA groups.</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>Sahayi Trivandrum Kerala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Self Help Credit Groups</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>Janamitra, Bangalore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Bihar Education Project</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>Cencored, Patna, Bihar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>SSK, Lucknow, U.P</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Joint Forest Management</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>PRIA, Delhi</td>
</tr>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Water Harvesting Project</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>Unnati,</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Self Help Credit Programme</td>
<td>Ahmedabad, Gujarat</td>
<td>CYSD,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Watershed Development</td>
<td>Orissa Bhubaneswar, Orissa</td>
<td>HARC, Dehradun, U.P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The author is working in PRIA.
often labeled) is a natural phenomenon. This entails that participation to improve one’s own life situation is a ‘natural’ human tendency and for the community this is a natural social process. However, when development projects attempt to elicit or inject participation into development projects, apparently certain factors-social, economic, cultural, political, human, ecological, structural, etc., inhibit and restrict participation and impair the natural process of participation. The common framework of the study tried to explore these inhibitive factors as well as the enabling and facilitative factors.

The next section provides an overview of the conceptual background of participation and presents a brief review of literature. The concept of participation and participatory development are shrouded with ambiguities and attached with a variety of interpretations (Rahmema, 1992). Then we discuss the cases, the methods by which the case data were collected and formulated. This will be followed by the discussion of the results.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The words ‘participation’ and ‘participatory’ appeared for the first time in the development jargon during the late 1950s. The genesis of these terms is historically rooted in the utter dissatisfaction of social activists and field development workers with the prevalent ‘top-down’ model of development (ibid). Since then participation has assumed many meanings, forms and dimensions. In recent times, various multilateral and bilateral development agencies have also come up with their understanding of participation and are trying to inject participation into their projects. We will mention a few of them in the following discussion.

For the Oxford Dictionary, participation is ‘the action or fact of partaking, having or forming a part of’. In this sense, participation could be either transitive, intransitive; either moral, amoral or immoral; either forced or free; either manipulative or spontaneous (ibid). UNDP report (1993) says, ‘Participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that affect their lives. People may have complete and direct or partial and indirect control over these processes. The important thing is that people have constant access to decision-making and power’. UNRISD discussion paper defines participation in terms of empowerment. It identifies two facets of empowerment which provide conceptual strength to participation. One facet of empowerment is pooling of resources to achieve collective strength and countervailing power. Another is the enhancement of manual and technical skills, planning and managerial competence and analytical and reflective abilities of the people (Ghai, 1988).

Recently the World Bank is emphasizing participation as an essential component of development. The Learning Group on Participatory Development defines participation as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them (The World Bank, 1994). While the World Bank’s definition can be categorised as a transitive construction, the ones proffered by UNDP and UNRISD are more or less intransitive having broader connotations.

Besides these institutions and agencies, various scholars have also tried to look at the meaning of participation. Having analyzed the available interpretations of participation, Oakley (1991) suggests three essential interpretations of participation as follow:

1. **Participation as contribution** — The dominant interpretation of participation in development projects in the Third World sees participation as implying voluntary or other forms of contributions by rural people to predetermined programmes and projects.

2. **Participation as organisation** — This strand points out that organisation is essential for participation. Either organisations emerge as a result of a participatory process or participation is facilitated by through organisations.

3. **Participation is empowering** — This is close to the definition proffered by UNRISD: However, some see empowering as the development skills and abilities to enable rural people to manage better, have a say in or negotiate with existing development delivery systems; others see it as more fundamental and essentially concerned with enabling rural people to decide upon and to take the actions which they believe are essential to their development. Though it is hard to define the concept of empowerment, it essentially refers to the power dimension of the society.

While the above interpretations and definitions represent different streams of thoughts and
conceptualizations, they should not be treated as separate, discrete and contradictory categories. However, three notions of participation emerge out of the above exercise. First, participation is a means to an end; second, participation is an end in itself; third, it is a means to an end and an end in itself.

Results from participation
The very definitions of participation imbibe some of the results obtained from the practice of participation in development. However, results or costs and benefits ought to be explained and analyzed distinctly as they become significant in view of its sustained practice and the plausibility of replicability. Some studies on participation do point out various outcomes both positive and negative (Mishra, 1984; Uphoff, 1986; Oakley, 1991; Ghai, 1988).

Oakley et al. (1991) in their review of participatory cases have found out five major results yielded by participatory initiatives, viz. efficiency, effectiveness, self-reliance, coverage and sustainability. These need a bit more elaboration for better clarity. While participation implies a greater chance of efficient use of resources, it will also ensure effectiveness. Participation helps to achieve self-reliance in the sense that it breaks the mentality of dependence which is inbuilt into the social system and further reinforced by the current development pattern to a great extent. The very action of participation promotes awareness and self-confidence. Participation creates capacity among the marginalised and ‘rural excluded’ to examine their problems and seek solution to them. Participation enables the project to expand its scope and also increases the chances of sustainability of the development initiative. Experiences show that externally motivated projects often fail to sustain themselves once the initial level of project support or inputs either diminishes or are withdrawn. Participation is seen as an antidote to this situation in that it can maintain the project’s dynamism.

The World Development Report 1992 also supports that projects are more successful if they are participatory in design and implementation. A review of thirty completed projects from the 1970s reveals an average rate of return of 18 percent for projects that were adjudged culturally appropriate but only nine percent for the projects that did not include mechanisms for social and cultural adaptation. A detailed study of 52 USAID projects similarly found a strong correlation between participation and project success, especially when participation took place through organisations created and managed by the beneficiaries themselves (The World Bank, 1992).

Ghai (1988) in his study of nine grass-roots participatory initiatives finds very positive consequences of participation which range from alleviation of economic status to reform of ancient but antiquated customs and practices. Corroborating the above result from the study of USAID projects, he concludes, “The experience of these initiatives shows that once the people are organised in voluntary, cooperative groups and are given the necessary motivation, they decide on their own to carry through social changes for far reaching significance” (ibid).

As the above studies show, participation in the context of development projects renders advantages in many ways, and participation per se turns the people into active agent of social change rather than passive recipients of the benefits of the project. While the advantages of participation is no more a theoretical substance, at the same time adverse effects of participation are a reality. Oakley et al. (1991) point out that participation may cause delay, increase cost and gives opportunity to oppose the project. The World Development Report 1992 also mentions that participation tends to be expensive and can cause or enhance local conflicts by reinforcing the power of the local elite (The World Bank, 1992).

While looking at the the concept of participation and the studies on participation, one has to keep in mind that participation is a complex concept and promoting participation is a further complex and difficult task. People’s participation is certainly more than the participation of beneficiaries in projects, this is important but it is only one aspect of participation. Participation is not a one-off activity or input into development projects; it is a process which evolves over time and whose direction and outcome are not always predictable or manageable. Participation is a broad, multidimensional phenomenon with political, economic and social characteristics (Oakley, 1994).

Against the backdrop of the above discussion which focuses on the results of participation it is important to explore the factors which promote or inhibit participation. This comparative analysis will precisely delve into this area.
CASES AND METHODS
As mentioned earlier, the teams decided their projects for study. The criteria of selection of project were basically access to the project and information thereon, and those which included the component of participation. However, the teams were advised to select both government and NGO projects which have already demonstrated some results.

The projects were chosen to represent a wide range of activities, from enrollment and retention in primary education, to self-help credit groups, to income generation activities, to water harvesting, to joint forest management, to watershed development. In total eight projects from seven states were taken up. All the projects proclaimed to involve people in their own way and have demonstrated results. Table-2 describes the nature of project along with the main actors involved in.

The teams developed a common set of hypotheses to which specific hypotheses of each study was anchored. Specific hypotheses were formulated as per the nature of the project. However, all the studies focused on the factors of participation both facilitative and inhibiting, and results of participation.

Participation was operationally defined as process through which local stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decision and resources which affect them (The World Bank, 1994; p.1; local added). However, in view of the specific realities, a number of elements of participation was taken up. Table-3 presents the elements of participation case wise. Each team clubbed their elements to develop an index of participation.

Commonly, the survey method was adopted by all the studies and semi-structured interview schedule and observation were applied. Informants were also used to collect information. Some studies conducted interviews in group situation and some interviewed individuals. But the combination of these two was the common practice. All the teams collected both quantitative as well as qualitative data.

All the teams brought their coded data to workshop-IV where they designed their statistical analysis and applied SPSS to analyse data which they had learnt in workshop-III. Except the Sahayi team which studied Income Generation Programme of Mahila Samajams and DWCRA Group in Kerala, all the teams applied basically correlation test to examine their hypotheses. Sahayi applied cross tabulation. It is to be mentioned that correlation as a measure of association does not establish causal connection (Jaeger, 1990).

It needs to be qualified that as the teams were learning research methods and had limited time available to them, each team concentrated on relatively smaller samples and minimum data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Name of the Project</th>
<th>Main thrust</th>
<th>Actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Income Generation Programmes of Mahila Samajams and DWCRA groups</td>
<td>Income generation for poor and marginalised sections including women.</td>
<td>GO and NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Self Help Credit Groups</td>
<td>Savings and credit for rural people</td>
<td>NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bihar Education Project</td>
<td>Enchancing enrolment and retention of cohorts in Primay education</td>
<td>GO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Promtion of non-formal education</td>
<td>NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Joint Forest Management</td>
<td>Development and regeneration of degraded forest land</td>
<td>GO and World Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Water Harvesting Project and water</td>
<td>Tank construction harvesting</td>
<td>NGO, NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Self Help Credit Programme</td>
<td>Savings and credit for rural people</td>
<td>NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Watershed Development</td>
<td>Development of Watersheds in hilly regions of U.P.</td>
<td>World Bank and GO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
collection. Hence, the studies may not be authoritative, but are certainly indicative.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Elements of participation

This analysis will begin with the discussion of the elements of participation which Table-3 displays.

It is evident from the above table that participation in evaluation is the most important element as all the five cases (two are yet to complete the analysis and report) have found this element appropriate for their study. Participation in decision making, project selection, planning, implementation as well as management are also important elements of participation. It seems that control over resources is not considered as an important element of participation by the projects undertaken for study.

Factors of participation

These studies did not focus on either structural or social factors of participation. Undoubtedly structural factors such as socio-political system, administrative and legal systems of the country, and social factors such as community's tradition, culture, attitude and behaviour, etc. play a major role in occurrence of participatory process (Oakley, 1987). The studies have primarily focused on operational factors which are presented in Table-4.

It is interesting to note in Table-4 that shared understanding is the most important promoting factor of participation. Shared understanding basically refers to common understanding of, what is participation and its importance for the success of the project. This common understanding is developed through various mechanisms such as meetings and interpersonal information sharing between the project authorities, project personnel and the beneficiaries. This is apparently an important factor both for government and NGO run projects. However, two cases studied by Janamitra and SSK do not support the association of shared understanding as a promoting factor of participation. SSK finds a negative correlation of shared understanding with that of participation.

In Joint Forest Management project, shared understanding is very strongly correlated with partici-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL.No.</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Influen. in project selection</th>
<th>Participation in initial definition of</th>
<th>Participation in implementation</th>
<th>Participation in evaluation</th>
<th>Participation in decision making</th>
<th>Participation in project management</th>
<th>Control over resources and benefits</th>
<th>Promotion of membership and coordination with LSO</th>
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<td>(1)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Cencored</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>PRIA</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Unnati</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>CYSD</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>HARC</td>
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</table>

Participation & Governance 17 Vol.2 No.5 November 1995
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Shared Understanding</th>
<th>Effective LSO</th>
<th>Planned Mechanism</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sahayi</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Janamitra</td>
<td>✓ .21</td>
<td>✓ .32*</td>
<td>✓ .21</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
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<td>✓ .73**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>SSK</td>
<td>✓ .58**</td>
<td>✓ .00</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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<td>✓ .89***</td>
<td>✓ .44*</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Unnati</td>
<td>✓ .39*</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>CYSD</td>
<td></td>
<td>Report awaited</td>
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<tr>
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<td>HARC</td>
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<td>Report awaited</td>
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</table>

The figures in the boxes are correlation scores between factors and participation

* - Sig at .05 level  ** - Sig at .01 level  *** - Sig at .001 level

DWCRA groups helped to promote participation of the stakeholders. Interestingly Sahayi's study reports that newly created LSOs, i.e. DWCRA groups are more effective than the older Mahila Samajams in motivating people to participate and probably provide greater opportunities for participation. Janamitra also finds that LSOs, i.e. credit groups formed by the stakeholders have played major role in promoting participation. Village Education Committees in Bihar Education Programme, and Forest Protection Committees which were constituted specially for the purpose of JFM programme have also played a very important role in facilitating people’s participation. SSK's study of NGO run programme finds that effective LSO is not at all correlated with participation. Explanation for the same needs deeper exploration. The above findings corroborate the recommendations of FAO (1982) and the World Bank (1994). Ghai's (1988) study also lends support to this.

There are some other interesting factors which one or the other study took up for examination depending on the nature of the project and the factors imbibed in the same project. JFM programme has a strong component of planned mechanism which is strongly correlated with participation, in the sense planned mechanisms facilitate participation. The elements of planned mechanism as the study defines are- information sharing, joint assessment of community's needs and resources, community contribution and incentive for participation. Recommendations made by institutions like FAO (1982) and The World Bank (1994) support this finding. Oakley et al. (1991) also recognizes this as an important factor of participation. Three other important factors which help in promoting participation are- positive history, staff attitude and behaviour, and planned preparation of LSOs. The first two are pointed out by SSK in its study and the third one by PRIA in its JFM study. One can say that planned preparation of LSO members enhances the capacity of LSO which in turn promotes participation. If the community has already had some experience of participation, this may facilitate another participatory project as...
revealed by SSK's study. SSK's study further finds that favourable staff attitude and behaviour conducive to participatory approach helps in promoting participation.

Some studies also report the obstacles to participation. Sahayi finds that excessive control by the chief functionaries inhibits participation. It is undeniable that centralization is a bottleneck to participation (UNDP, 1993). CENCORED in its study of Bihar Education Project finds that lack of training for LSOs restricts participation. Besides this, social customs and superstitions do hinder participation. Lack of coordination among various actors involved in the project contributes negatively to participation.

Consequences of participation

The studies have focused on more tangible and manifest consequences of participation than intangible and latent ones like empowerment, self-reliance, effectiveness and efficiency. Each study focused on particular consequences as relevant to that project. Hence, four major consequences were selected to find out their relation with participation. Table 5 presents the consequences with correlation score with that of participation index.

It is clear from Table 5 that goal accomplishment is the most important consequence of participation. All the six studies which looked at goal accomplishment find strong correlation with participation irrespective of government or NGO run projects. Four studies looked at the sustainability aspect. It is interesting to note that all the four have found reasonably strong correlation of participation with sustainability. Though no statistical test has been used to establish the causality, yet it can be certainly said that participation enhances the likelihood of sustainability of the project. This ensures that the project activities are managed by the stakeholders even after the withdrawal of outside assistance. This is again true of both government and NGO projects. Sustainability as similar to goal accomplishment is a very important result of participation (Oakley et al., 1984, 1991; FAO, 1982; City, 1994).

There are two other results which deserve mention are — enhancement of effectiveness of LSO and the capacity of the staff. The SSK study finds that participation helps in strengthening the capacity of the LSO, whereas the same study finds negative association between effective LSO as a factor of participation and that of participation. The qualitative data leads to draw the conclusion that while the NGO directly promotes participation, people in turn make efforts to revitalize their organisations. PRIA's study of JFM also finds that participation of people through Forest Protection Committees (FPC) has strengthened FPCs. Same study further finds that along with LSOs, project staff are also subject to improvement in participatory approach to programme. Janamitra finds that staff improvement occurs when project goal is accomplished.

CONCLUSIONS

All the cases clearly demonstrate the variability and flexibility of participatory projects. Though the studies have many commonalities in terms of the elements, factors and results of participation, there

| TABLE – 5 : CONSEQUENCES OF PARTICIPATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SLNo. | Case | Goal Accomplishment | Enhance Effectiveness of LSO | Enhance Capacity of Staff | Sustainability |
| 1 | Sahayi | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2 | Janamitra | ✓ | ✓ .22 | ✓ .46* |
| 3 | Cencored | ✓ .69* .87** Enrolment | | ✓ .74* 0.92** Retention |
| 4 | SSK | ✓ .55** ✓ .58** | | |
| 5 | PRIA | ✓ .76** ✓ .65* ✓ .85*** | ✓ .87*** |
| 6 | Unnati | ✓ .48** | | |
| 7 | CYSD | Report awaited | | |
| 8 | HARC | Report awaited | | |

The figures in the boxes are correlation scores between participation and consequences
*- Sig at .05 level  **- Sig at .01 level  ***- Sig at .001 level
are many different specificities too.

As the elements of participation are based on the nature of the projects and the real elements each project inbuilds into it, it provides useful insight into how participation is viewed in the context of a project. The data on the elements of participation suggest that participation in initiatives, decision-making and control over resources which are crucial for participation are not on the priority of the project. Sahai finds that participation in decision-making is normally reduced to participation in implementation. Unnati also finds that participation is confined to only implementation and maintenance.

The data on factors of participation reveal that two mechanisms—information-sharing mechanisms and collaborative mechanisms are quite important for participatory development. Information-sharing mechanism refers to shared understanding on participation through various methods across the levels, and collaborative mechanism refers to formation of joint committees with stakeholders or their representatives and joint work with user groups, intermediary organisations, and other stakeholder groups (The World Bank, 1994). It seems that the stakeholders did not have considerable control over either decision-making or resources or benefit sharing. However, it noteworthy that majority of the studies indicate effective LSOs as an important factor of participation.

As far as results are concerned, two results yielded by participatory approach emerged important. These are goal accomplishment and sustainability. From the point of view of development project these two are certainly significant ones. The data suggests that all the projects have either fully of partially achieved the project goals, and sustainability of the project is also more or less achievable.

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Books and Documents


The book is a compilation of four studies undertaken at National Labour Institute (NLI), Delhi, and supported by Ford Foundation, to develop capabilities in gender sensitization and to make people in labour arena gender aware.

The introduction by the editor is an overview followed by a detailed outline of the four studies. These studies "primarily document gender as a social construct in the everyday life of unorganized labour" in order to highlight the consequence of gender in work organisations.

The first study explores the dynamics of gender in the unionization process in marine food processing units located in and around Vishakapatnam. The focus is on gender division of labour, the process of recruitment, the dynamics of gender in the industry, the perceptible gains for women and their empowerment.

The second study explores gender issues in unions working in unorganized sectors, with focus on Tamil Nadu Construction Workers Union (TMKTG) at Madras, one of the few unions working with organized construction workers. It studies how construction industry is organized, the position of men and women in the industry, the trade union movement and the labour process of the industry.

The subject of the third study is DISHA, a Saharanpur based NGO actively involved in organizing both women and men in the agrarian situation. The study identifies conditions that facilitate women's participation in the organization structure and in the programmatic activities and makes efforts to understand the working of the NGO from the perspective of gender.

How gender is manifested in the labour administration system of Maharashtra is the focus of the fourth study. It studies the labour administration system, the state of enforcement of labour legislation in SEEPZ, a hitech industrial area, and the relationship between labour administration and gender.

The book would be of valuable guidance to all those who want to study the reality of gender in the labour arena.


Susheela Kaushik's new book analyses the challenges faced by women in their newly accorded constitutional role in Panchayati Raj as provided in 73rd Constitutional Amendment. She feels that the absence of speedy reinforcement of the Act and effective implementation of the provisions, bears negative consequences for the political empowerment of women.

The book has been thematically organized into four chapters. The author traces the participation of women in Panchayati Raj institutions (PRI) and highlights some of the salient challenges to women's role. She poses a relevant question, "To what extent have the women come forward to utilize these political opportunities?"

Chapter one provides an insight into the Act and its implications, studying the salient features of the different state legislations, and highlighting the common features in special areas. Issues relating to Tribal areas and Panchayat elections are also incorporated in this section.

The issue of decentralization and local development forms the focus of chapter two. The author critically analyses whether the spirit of local self governance has been truly internalised in the constitutional amendment and its practice especially in case of development planning, programming and monitoring and in the relationship of bureaucracy and local governance.

Chapter three provides an overview of the elections to PRI in the states where election took
place and the case studies of those states where the election were delayed.

The outcome of these elections in terms of women’s participation, the issues of violence against women, experiences of the elected women and encouraging example of all-women panchayats form the content of chapter four, providing a clear insight into the dynamics involved in the election process.

On the whole, the book provides an holistic overview of the achievements made in the last two years related to PRI, focusing clearly on the success and hurdles encountered by the women in their struggle for political empowerment.

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The book consists of 16 papers presented in a three day Conference organised by GAPP - Group for Anthropology in Policy and Practice, to explore participatory development in theory and practice.

The broad theme of the volume traces the relationship between participation and shift in power - “within community, between people and policy making and resource holding institutions and within the structures of these organisations.”

The book is divided thematically into five parts. Part one introduces the broad themes of the compilation of 16 papers on the theme of participation and power.

Part two assesses the shift of power in research processes, the theoretical progress undertaken in the work of popular participation, highlighting the issues of a transformative feminist research perspective on the issue of participation and power. The paradigm shifts in practice of Participatory Research and Development, the focus on Participatory Research and participant observation, and the theoretical development of Participatory Research in the field of development, feminism and anthropology have been traced in this section.

The relationship of power and different methods of Participatory Research form the content of part three of the book. Utilising theatre as a medium of development and empowerment, studying farmers as analysts and decision makers and analysing aspects of Participatory Research on non-European immigration to Italy form the subject matter of the papers clubbed in this section.

Part four highlights the aspect of the community’s participation in development and shift in power within the community. History of community management of tank irrigation systems in South India, the concept of community development, user group forestry in Nepal and community care for older people provide insight into the importance of community participation, deriving significant illustrations from practical case studies.

The gap between institutional rhetoric and practice has been analysed in part five. Participation in the language and practice of governmental agencies and NGOs forms the thematic base of this section. Institutionalising adequate planning and local level concerns, the relationship of participatory ideology and practical development and an assessment of popular participation in aid assisted projects are some of the issues discussed.

The emphasis is to institutionalise processes whereby those with newly acquired “power to” can negotiate in the community and agencies in ways which are sustainable.

The book leaves open the question “Are such people-centered perspectives transforming the apparatus of development?” It emphasises that people have to be able to use their ‘power to’ to challenge and negotiate with those who have institutional and structural ‘power over’.

Delving into the power dimension of development the book makes worthwhile reading for those interested in people centred development.

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Gender assessment studies “investigate the ex-
pected impact of a project on women and assesses whether and to what extent, the project responds to the specific interests and needs of various categories of women as compared to men”.

The three case studies included in the book are pilot studies undertaken as part of an initiative by Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS), to develop and formulate workable guidelines for other gender assessment studies.

The book is organised thematically in five chapters. The first chapter deals with the methodological framework which has been followed by all the three case studies. Context analysis, gender analysis, institutional analysis and project analysis are the key gender assessment tools highlighted in the framework.

Subsequent chapters, focusing on three case studies, provide significant data on the position of women in the development projects of Bolivia, Burkina Faso and India. Following the four components of the analytical structure, the studies investigate “development project’s expected impact on women as compared to men”. All three studies have shown that access to and control over resources are the most critical issues for small and marginal farm households. Each study has produced specific results concerning the institutional aspects and the gender impact of the proposed project interventions.

Major findings and conclusions of three case studies, the importance and limitations of “a gender assessment study” along with recommendations for future studies are included in Chapter five. The authors feel that a gender assessment study should be regarded as an “ongoing analytical process” which can be used at various stages of the project cycle.

An important document for those interested in policy on women and development and in the methodological framework of gender assessment studies.


This book is an outcome of the SAVE NARMADA CAMPAIGN organised by ‘Visthar’, among high school students in Bangalore during 1994. The book describes the consequences of the Narmada Valley Development plan, jointly initiated by the Governments of Gujrat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra, envisaging 30 big, 135 medium and 300 small dams on the river Narmada and its 41 tributaries.

Compilation of expressions of the students on the issue through stories, poetry, drawings and paintings aims to motivate the student community to strive towards “genuine development.” The need for an alternative development model, which is sustainable, participatory and democratic in nature is stressed. The objective of this book is to set all readers thinking - “Development: At whose cost?”

LETTERS TO A FRIEND (Experiences from a Panchayat Mela). Utashi Mahila Abhyudaya (UMA) Resource Book-7, Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi

The resource book is in the form of letters, written by a woman who participated in a Panchayat mela organised by Institute of Social Studies Trust, Bangalore. The mela was attended by 200 elected women representatives of the Karnataka Gram Panchayat.

The author describes her experiences to a friend who could not attend the mela. She highlights the major issues discussed and debated during the three days mela, viz status of women in society, issues concerning women’s health, roles and responsibilities of women members elected to the Panchayats, how to run the Panchayats effectively, the activities of Gram Panchayat and their rules and regulations. Emphasis is also given on the Panchayat’s role towards sound management of natural resources and the role of women in achieving it.

Newsletters
GROOTS

South Asian newsletter of GROOTS (Grassroots Organisations Operating Together In Sisterhood) focuses on current development issues and critical areas of concerns. Information, views, debates, profiles and case studies make the newsletter an important medium of networking, information dissemination and awareness building.

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Panchayati Raj Initiatives


The new 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments provide new possibilities for strengthening people’s participation in making decisions about their own development, with increased emphasis on women and weaker sections. The Network of Collaborating Regional Support Organisations (NCRSOS) and PRIA have recognised the critical role of grass-roots voluntary agencies (VAs) in promoting and strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI). The first step of strengthening the capacity of this network and coming to a common framework was the Master Training of Trainers Programme (MTOT).

Forty participants from the NCRSOS involved in PRI intervention in eleven states, attended the Training programme. Issues elaborated and debated upon were ‘Potential and challenge of Local Self Governance under 73rd Amendment’, ‘Historical overview of Panchayati Raj Institutions in India’, ‘Strategies to enhance women’s participation in Panchayati Raj’ and ‘Potential opportunities and required mechanisms in Local Self Governance’. Focus was brought on a more specific and detail common framework of educational material, training, microplanning, research and documentation. A detailed state wise strategic intervention was planned and presented by each organisation.

TRAINING OF TRAINERS (TOT) ON PANCHAYATI RAJ. October 6-14, 1995. Organised by CENCORD, Vaisbali.

Thirty representatives from twenty voluntary organisations of the State participated in this training programme. The main objectives of the training programme were to:

- develop mass understanding regarding 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act.
- develop understanding on methodologies and techniques for information dissemination of Panchayati Raj issues.
- develop management strategies for implementing the development programmes.
- prepare a team of trainers for Panchayati Raj interventions.
- develop detailed action plan designs for intervening in the pre and post Panchayati Raj activities.

The main issues highlighted in the nine day programme were the historical background of Panchayati Raj, the details of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, the 11th Schedule, incorporation of development activities in the purview of the Panchayats and the Bihar Panchayati Raj Act.

Communication strategy, role of trainers and action plans for the pre and post election awareness generation activities were some other issues of the programme.

Small group discussions, panels, songs, plays and simulation exercises made the training programme a participatory and enriching effort.


17 participants from 8 Network of Collaborating Regional Support Organisations (NCRSO) and PRIA participated in the workshop. This workshop was organised by PRIA with the following objectives:

1. To understand the relevance of research and documentation in the Panchayati Raj issue.
2. To understand the basic concepts and methods of research.
3. To understand ‘Computerized’ data-base - concepts and management.
4. To prepare a plan of action on research for the different NCRSOS working on the issue of Panchayati Raj.

Through lectures, group discussion and presentations, a common framework was developed for data collection and report-writing.

The main objective of this meet was to prepare a strategic plan for Panchayati Raj Institutions' (PRI) interventions in U.P.

Thirty eight participants from twenty eight voluntary organisations of Eastern U.P., Bundelkhand and Central U.P participated in this meet.

The participants actively participated in discussions and prepared follow up strategy for PRI intervention in their region. The discussion focused on “why should we work on Panchayati Raj?”, “what should be our strategy?” and “how to implement the strategy?”.


The first state level training of trainers programme of U.P. was conducted by SSK. Twenty nine participants, representing sixteen voluntary organisations of Eastern U.P, participated in this programme.

The primary issues focused in the programme were understanding of seventy third constitutional amendment, issues of self governance, 11th schedule of the amendment, training methodology and organisation wise follow up planning. The follow up strategy of research and documentation was discussed at the end.

Resource persons Ms. Mridula Sharma, UNICEF, Mr. Debabrata Dixit, special secretary to UP Govt., Mr. Rakesh Chaturvedi, CAPART, Mr. L.M. Joshi, Joint Director of SIRD and Alka added significant inputs to the seven day training programme.

BEIJING FOLLOW UP


The Panel was organised as a follow up to the NGO Forum (Aug 30-Sept 8' 95) and Official Conference on Women (Sept 4-Sept 15'95).

Representatives from government (Department of Women and Child Development; Ministry of External Affairs), NGOs, Economists, Media activists, UNIFEM and women activists shared their experiences of the Beijing Conference and the NGO Forum.

The broad issues highlighted were the achievements of the Indian government delegations and the NGOs in the Conference and the Forum respectively; the broad issues faced by the Indian delegations, the problems faced, lessons learnt and the follow up strategies for post Beijing.

The combined collaborative role of the government, NGOs, Media, womens groups and others working on the issue of Women and Gender was highlighted, along with need for better negotiation strategies and media coverage.


As follow up to the Beijing Conference, the seminar was organised to:

- exchange information regarding the activities and functions of NGOs
- identify the major concerns of women in the region and to formulate strategies to focus and expand NGO activities on those concerns
- consider strategies to bridge the gap between NGOs and the government and NGOs and Women's Commission; and to strengthen the partnership with the NGOs for accelerating women's advancement
- discuss the role of NGOs with reference to the Beijing Conference and follow-up action.

A number of documents related to the Conference and the Forum were circulated. NGOs working on issues related to women, from five states of Delhi, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh along with women members of Parliament and representatives of government departments attended the seminar. Presentations on the above mentioned themes were followed by open house discussions.
POST BEIJING INFORMATION SHARING SEMINAR October 30-31, 1995. Organised by the Coordination Unit for Beijing, India, the UN system and the British Council Division of the British High Commission.

The objective of the workshop was to start the post Beijing process of putting to implementation the Platform of Action; form networks; to reach other actors such as government, academics, media; and to understand how other international concern and issue based linkages worked in Beijing.

Participants from Chandigarh, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, J & K, U.P., Madhya Pradesh and Delhi attended the programme.

During the first day of the seminar the perspective on government’s commitment to Beijing plan, and the outcomes of the Beijing process as seen by the UN, were addressed. The later half constituted of panel discussions on the preparation made for the Beijing Conference.

The second day was devoted to various issues such as human rights, politics, health, education, science and technology, media networking and economics. The issues were tackled well and put in the right perspective.

SOCIAL SUMMIT FOLLOW UP

The Declaration of the Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development is an important milestone in the search and commitment for building a better society. Starting from the pre-Summit period, SAHAYI organised state level workshop on the themes and methods of the Plan of Action outlined by the Summit and participated in national seminars on the same. SAHAYI has undertaken the task of conducting follow up workshops and seminars for the benefit of social workers and activists.

The two-day state level consultation 1995, focused the attention of the voluntary groups on the vital importance of following up the decisions of the Summit and ensuring their implementation through state and NGO interventions. More than 50 voluntary activists, representing various districts of the state, academicians, representatives of funding agencies, and the media persons to participate in the consultation.

The central theme of these discussions was the role of voluntary groups and the methods to be adopted in furthering the interests of marginalised groups.

The crux of the consultations was preparation of plans of action, for both the state and the voluntary agencies, with a focus on the issues of poverty, unemployment, ill-health, gender disparities, empowerment of women, environmental degradation, etc.

A plan of action was decided, which will be presented to the state, the NGOs, the media and the general public to invite the participation of all involved, in a united campaign to build a regenerated society.


Half-day brain storming session was organized to assess the concept and need for networking of organizations who share common concerns regarding urban governance. The session was attended by representatives from ten non-governmental organizations based in different parts of India.

The discussion began with clarification regarding the concept of ‘networking’ and went on to preliminary sorting out of ‘what, why, and how’ of the concept.

It was strongly felt that ‘commonality of mandate’ is essential for forming any kind of alliance and the same holds true for this particular purpose also. It was also felt that promulgation of 74th Amendment should be considered as the most appropriate moment to initiate this ‘network’ as one could capitalize on the level of interest being generated due to the amendment.

The session ended with an understanding that this meeting would not be a one-time event but the first step in the process of establishing a long term relationship among the concerned organizations. The next task is to concretize the operational aspect and identify the role of the ‘prime-mover(s)’ of this network.
Social Structure and Explanations

Why do the rich stay rich and the poor stay poor?


MYTH OR REALITY?

Typeset and Printed by: SYSTEMS VISION A-199 Okhla Industrial Area Phase-1 New Delhi 110 020.
PRIA

The Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) is an independent, non-profit, non-government organisation registered in 1982 under the Society Registration Act 1860. PRIA is based at New Delhi, India.

Over the past twelve years, PRIA has promoted people-centered development initiatives within the perspective of Participatory Research. Strengthening popular knowledge, demystifying dominant concepts and promoting experiential learning, have been the basis of supporting empowerment of the poor and the oppressed in PRIA’s work. Through field studies and documentation, workshops and training programmes, networking and enabling linkages, PRIA has facilitated the strengthening of capacities within grass roots groups, voluntary agencies, NGOs and other formations.

As the cherished mission, PRIA endeavours to promote people-centered, holistic and comprehensive evolution of society characterised by Freedom, Justice, Equity and Sustainability, by

- creating opportunities of sharing, analysing and learning among formations of the Civil Society (in particular, people’s organisations and NGOs);
- engaging in independent and critical analysis of societal trends and issues, development policies and programmes; and
- enabling dialogue across diverse perspectives, sectors and institutions.

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