

Context Paper One

Concept of Participatory Development

Participation and Development

The word 'participation' has been part of the development vocabulary since the 1960s. Back then, however, it was usually understood to mean people's involvement in only some specific kind of problem. Today, participation is viewed as integral to the overall development effort. Global changes have had a major influence on this shift in approach: increasing democratisation and more open political systems, more open economies and trading systems, higher levels of education in developing countries, and increased human resource capacity, improved communication and information flow, and increasing concern about environmental and poverty issues.

Participation is a 'means' to more effective poverty reduction, a window of opportunity for accelerating social and economic progress.

A growing body of evidence shows that participation can help bring more development to more people. Participation implies nothing less than a transformation in the traditional approach to development.

"Through participation, we lost control of the project, and in so doing gained ownership and sustainability, precious things in our business"

Sandstrom, World Bank, 1994

Participation is a process in which beneficiaries collectively discover solutions to their own problems. This process mobilises and empowers. Hence, participation seeks institutional arrangements to support authority, responsibility, resource mobilisation and profit-sharing. Power and control are pivotal to participation. If control of a project and decision-making power rests with the planners, administrators, and the community elites, participation for ordinary users becomes listening to what is being planned for them and what will be done to them.

Participation Means Fundamental Behaviour Change

Participation is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives

and the decisions and resources which affect them. It is not that we should simply seek new and better ways of managing society, the economy, and the world. The point is, we should fundamentally change how we behave. Certain situations require behavioural changes on the part of people within a given system. How and why does their behaviour need to change? Intended beneficiaries of development programmes, the poor and others who are disadvantaged in terms of wealth, education, ethnicity or gender, usually lack a voice in the development process. It should be recognised that different stakeholders have different access to power, different interests, and different resources. A suitable environment needs to be created to enable different stakeholders to interact on an equitable and genuinely collaborative basis.

Poor people face many barriers to having a real stake in development activities. Special arrangements and efforts are required to reach and engage them and to progressively empower them. The type of participation is highly influenced by the overall circumstances and the unique social context in which action is being undertaken. Participation should be a learning process from the people about their situation and what they feel they need. Participatory approaches increase the effectiveness and impact of resources flowing from development agencies to the poor. At the same time, they cost less than expert studies, because participation involves local people rather than foreign consultants.

Participatory processes create a conducive environment for stakeholders taking part collaboratively to:

- identify strengths/weaknesses,
- decide and articulate what is needed,
- decide directions, priorities, responsibilities, and
- develop aspects needed to move from the present to the future.

Arguably, building sustainable development services for poor men and women is high on the agenda of development agencies. From the perspective of poverty reduction, the case is even more compelling.

Participation Situations

Participation is an interactive sociopolitical process, motivated by the desire to meet an individual's needs

through collective action. This collective action must ensure mutual benefit for parties involved.

People's participation can take place under four different situations.

- **Initiation** - This is the process that unfolds naturally bringing people together for a common action. It is an indigenous initiative of the people, by the people, and for the people.
- **Facilitation** - This is a process catalysed often by an outside agent. It is a planned intervention to create awareness and motivate action by a group or a community to change a situation or redress the cause or causes of problems.
- **Co-optation** - This is a process through which a project or programme has been decided upon, designed, and packed for implementation in the community. It is a top-down process of decision-making. The implementation requires people to participate.
- **Induction** - This is a process in which power, social sanctions, and propaganda are used to brainwash people into participating in a certain project or programme.

Principles of Relationship Involved in People's Participation

- **Mutual Respect** - All people must be accepted as they are, with their weaknesses and strengths.
- **Active Involvement** - This is a prerequisite to participation. The participation patterns must continue from planning through evaluation.
- **Agree to Disagree** - Participation requires an implicit and explicit understanding to agree and disagree and to accept common interest above personal interest.
- **Building Consensus** - Collective responsibility for decisions made
- **Commitment to Action** - All participating partners must commit themselves to action on the basis of agreed upon decisions and plans.

Participatory Development includes the following.

- Formation of social capital
- Equitable meeting of present needs in Safeguarding interests of future generations
- Creation of an enabling environment
- Access to equal opportunity
- Making the community's own choices
- Exercising active control
- Taking collective action
- Voluntary participation
- Increase of productivity
- Sustainability
- Empowerment
- Indigenous knowledge and value system

Communities' Participation

The recognition that rural people and their communities are the principal decision-makers on matters of resource management has led development programmes to emphasise the role of participatory methods and the analysis of gender issues. Experience with participatory methods has deepened and now emphasises community envisioning, tapping of indigenous knowledge and creativity, mobilising local resources and stakeholders, and platforms for local and equitable development and benefit distribution.

Meaning of Participation

Participation is about developing a mutually beneficial relationship in development that benefits all groups involved, to replace the frustrating 'one-sided relationships of the past.

Meaningful and effective development depends on successfully mobilising people. Hence, people's participation is an essential condition within a process whose objective is to achieve a better standard of living and an improved quality of life. True participation will only occur when sizeable representation is made of all kinds of groups, castes, ethnicities, religions, economic levels, women and men, and children living within the community in question. For this, an appropriate environment needs to be created so that powerless, voiceless, and neglected sectors of the community can be heard.

Objective of Participatory Development Approaches

The main objective of participatory approaches is to support and strengthen the capability of local people and their institutions. Enabling them and their institutions to establish working relations with other related organizations, including government and private sectors, is helpful in sustaining development programmes.

Participatory development approaches are designed to deal with planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and management of development programmes at the local level with development agencies taking catalytic roles. They create an environment in which talents and resources available at the community level for local development are better utilised in sustainable ways.

Participatory Development Approaches Involve the Following

- People and spatial orientation
- Consideration of social values
- Dialogue, consensus, facilitating and motivating
- Decentralization

- Intersectoral and functional linkages
- Community and user orientation
- Human resource development
- Sustainability, internalisation, and replicability
- Resource orientation and multi-year planning
- Involvement of local representatives at all stages of development
- Transparency and communication

Local-level Participatory Development Planning (PDP)

Planning is a process of making decisions about what should be done, what work should be done, by whom the work should be done, how the work will be done, and when the work should be completed. Participatory Development Planning is an approach concerned with planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and management of development programmes at the local level.

Main Features of Local-level PDP

- Considers social structure and values in formulation and implementation of development programmes
- Stresses the concept of development by the people
- Development programmes are area- or location-based
- Seeks to promote intersectoral linkages

Major Features of Participation

- Participation continuum - Participation occurs along a continuum. On one end are beneficiaries who are the recipients of services and resources.
- Overcoming barriers - Overcoming the vulnerability imposed by continual reliance on subsidies by a market-based system that can operate on its own.
- Need for intermediation - Mechanisms must be created to bridge the gaps created by poverty, illiteracy, gender and remoteness. Local institutions must be built and nurtured and the skills and confidence of the poor must be developed.
- Use of local self-help groups - Group-based approaches have several advantages-groups' acceptance of joint responsibility which is more binding, self-policing mechanisms, bulk work where there is a sizeable unit to input supplying agencies, economical service, mutual socio-psychological support.
- Advantage for women: One of the most important aspects of a group is that it provides a legitimate 'social space' beyond the home, and it fosters a sense of solidarity that allows women to deal more freely with unfamiliar formal institutions and processes.
- Characteristics of successful groups - Characteristics of strong groups include self-selection of members,

literacy of at least a few group members, and membership of only one gender. Group enforcement of sanctions is strongest when there is a readily available system for calling on outside assistance to resolve serious conflicts.

- Criteria for successful functioning - If a community group is to function successfully, several criteria must be met:

- the group must address a felt need and a common interest,
- the benefits to individuals of participating in the group must outweigh the costs,
- the group should be embedded in the existing social organization,
- it must have the capacity, leadership, knowledge and skills to manage the task, and
- it must own and enforce its own rules and regulations.

Natural Resource Management through Participation

The management of natural resources for the production of food and other primary products has been a central concern throughout the evolution of human beings. The world has witnessed a per capita food production increase during the last thirty years. It is estimated that the present level of food production needs to be further doubled by the year 2025. It is argued that although this doubling can be achieved, regional disparities where the severity of hunger is concerned are likely to persist, with the most needy continuing to be the most affected. Despite success in raising food production and productivity, this has only been possible at the cost of significant environmental degradation. Meeting the ever-rising food needs in an environmentally-friendly way is a Herculean task and is only possible through people's participation.

Dynamics of Natural Resource Management (NRM)

In the process of meeting the needs and wants of the ever-rising population and the enterprises associated with it, the pressure on natural resources is expected to intensify during the next few decades. Because of continuous changes in underlying factors, tackling resource degradation and food insecurity can be like "hitting a moving target."

Major determinants of NRM

- Expanding and changing demands for natural resource products due to population increase and income growth
- Increasing scarcity of natural resources as a result of conversion to other uses, depletion, and degradation
- Intensifying commercialisation of both agricultural (and forestry) inputs and outputs
- Growing off-farm opportunities which promote labour-saving practices

- Changing agricultural and natural resource policies, sometimes fundamental, such as structural adjustments

Gender Issues in Participation

The equal participation of men and women in policy-making, in economic and sectoral analysis, and in project design and management may be impeded by cultural and legal constraints against women's participation and by women's relative lack of time and mobility due to their heavy workload and multiple roles. If participatory development is to benefit from women's contributions, and meet women's particular needs, a range of strategic and practical measures must be taken to overcome these barriers.

In a patriarchal society, it is inevitable that if a family must be represented by one member for any programme, it will be the male head of the household. Experience shows that women from different communities and castes not only have conflicting interests and priorities but often cannot even be brought together on a common platform due to deep-seated prejudices and beliefs about each other.

Experience in participatory development has made clear that, unless specific steps are taken to ensure the equal participation of men and women, women are very often excluded. As a result, projects fail to benefit from women's contribution and fail to meet women's particular needs and interests. The causes are deeply embedded in social and legal institutions. Men and women play different roles, have different needs, and face different constraints. Gender issues need to be addressed from the start of development projects.

Barriers to Women's Development

- Laws and customs stand as barriers to women's access to resources: property ownership, credit, productive inputs, employment, education, information, medical care, etc.
- Customs, beliefs, and attitudes confine women mostly to the domestic sphere.
- There are severe time burdens imposed by women's workload.

Gender Concerns in PWM

Gender refers not to biological differences but to socially and culturally constructed differences between men and women. Gender divisions are learned behaviour and change over time, as circumstances force communities to adapt to situations by changing gender roles. Several misconceptions prevent women from taking part in watershed planning and management programmes, either as contributors or as beneficiaries.

Prevailing Misconceptions are as follow:

- women only do domestic work,
- each member of the family shares benefits equally,
- technology will automatically benefit both men and women equally,
- women's voices will be heard through their male relatives, and
- women are incompetent at certain activities.

How Women's Needs Generally Get Overlooked

A Case of Drinking Water

In areas with a drinking water problem, women suffer the most as they are required to spend several hours a day fetching water for household needs. This adds tremendous pressure on women who are already over-burdened. Formal institutions run by men may not prioritise the drinking water issues because they cannot appreciate the burden. Consequently, the drinking water problem may be completely overlooked.

Two Case Studies in which Gender was Overlooked

Potato Farming

When potato farming was introduced as a cash crop on a large scale in the Almora hills, the income was misused by the male farmers, leaving the women and children worse off than when subsistence crops were grown.

Firewood/Fodder Collection

In a watershed area of Nepal, forest land was declared protected and the local villagers were forbidden to enter. As a result, farmers, especially women, faced serious problems. Collecting the necessary firewood and fodder forced women to work several hours longer than previously. They had to enter the forest at night to avoid the army.

Women's Access to Property through Inheritance

This depends on locality. In Sri Lanka, for instance, a young couple can opt to marry and settle in the wife's home, thereby ensuring that the wife will inherit land from her parents. In many other countries, like Nepal, women are severely constrained in inheriting property, though the PEWA system in Nepal does allow women to own property which can be transferable to her next marital home, e.g., goats. In India, though equal heredity rights exist, women are often forced by families to forgo their hereditary rights in favour of their male kin soon after marriage. Sisters give their claims to their brothers, often under severe social pressure.

Training Men or Women

In a case study, only men were invited to agro-forestry training on nursery skills, while in fact, women were the

ones engaged in homestead agro-forestry. Thus, men were trained to do women's work and the survival rate of the planted seedlings was very low.

Women are Better Managers

Women's Groups in a Watershed Project in Nepal

The Participatory Upland Conservation and Development Project in Nepal observed that women's groups were often more successful and active than mixed or male groups. The reasons for this were that women's groups made clearer financial statements: there was no conflict or problem with finances. Furthermore, women were responsible and faithful to one another.

Women Use Money Better

Grameen Bank in Bangladesh

Initially, the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh made a provision that 50% of its loans should go to women. Now 94% of its clients are poor women and the return rate is 97%. The Grameen Bank also found that women were better able to spend the loans in more useful ways and more productively than men. Women spent their money on food, health, children, home, and family matters. Consequently, gender relations improved and women gained respect.

Designing Community-based Development

When properly designed, community-based programmes can be highly effective in managing natural resources, providing basic infrastructure, or ensuring primary social services. Participation in community-based development depends on reversing control and accountability from central authorities to community organizations. Successful design requires responsiveness to local needs, understanding and building on the strengths of existing institutions, and defining the changes needed in intermediary implementing agencies to support community action.

There are two persistent beliefs about community-based programmes: they cost more and take longer. However, evidence increasingly indicates that when the institutional framework is right, community-based programmes actually cost less and are quicker to implement.

Participation in Forest and Conservation Management

The participation of local communities and other stakeholders in managing forestry and conservation projects can help improve forest productivity, alleviate poverty, increase environmental sustainability, and make rules governing forest access more enforceable. Introducing participatory management depends on

government commitment, and it requires time and resources to develop consensus among stakeholders, establish new institutional arrangements, decentralize finance and administration, ensure appropriate rules and incentives for local involvement, and build organizational capabilities at the local level.

There has been a fundamental shift over the last decade in approaches to forestry and conservation - from a focus on centralized planning and management by government agencies to a more participatory approach that balances social, environmental, and economic objectives.

Benefits

One of the most compelling reasons for seeking the participation of forest users in the management of forest resources has been the governments' inability to police forest areas effectively and to enforce their own rules of access and use without local public support. When local communities and private companies share in the design, benefits, costs, and management responsibility of forestry projects, they have incentives for cooperating in enforcing rules they have themselves agreed upon.

Poverty Alleviation

The majority of the people who occupy forest areas, or the agricultural fringes that surround them, are poor and vulnerable populations. Many are indigenous people or landless people who have migrated from other areas. Enabling them to share in the benefits, as well as the management of forestry development and commercialisation, helps alleviate their poverty and diversify their sources of income.

Forest Productivity

With the benefit of local knowledge and participation, the value of non-timber forest products to different users - for food, fibre, medicines, oils, and gums - can be more fully exploited. Indigenous productive technologies can enrich scientific research and serve as potential sources of new products.

Sustainability

The important role played by forests in preserving biodiversity and protecting critical watersheds is obvious. Especially in regions with large and growing populations, participation is often the only viable way to conserve forest areas for sustainable use or for keeping their environmental values intact.

Limitations

The following situations may prove to be limitations to a participatory approach: i) when conflicts over forest resources are particularly intense, ii) when forest resources are abundant relative to a small, dispersed population

near the forest, iii) when powerful interests at the national level are opposed to policy reforms in the sector or to decentralization of authority, or (iv) when extreme social inequalities at the local level reinforce the control of forest benefits by local elites.

Participation in the Irrigation Sector

The irrigation sector provides a rich source of experiences and lessons in user participation. Participation by farmers in system design and management helps ensure the sustainability of the system, reduce the public expenditure burden, and improve efficiency, equity, and standards of service. Mobilising support at all levels and establishing the participatory process, however, involves costs and also demands knowledge of the incentives facing each group of stakeholders and of the essential elements in building effective users' organizations.

Benefits

Efforts to increase user participation have been spurred by poor performance in terms of efficiency, equity, cost recovery, and accountability of many large-scale irrigation systems managed by government agencies. Greater participation by farmers, through water users' associations, has helped overcome many of these problems.

The overriding reason for increasing participation in irrigation is to improve system performance. Clear gains in efficiency in the standard of service are achieved when design and management of the irrigation system is transferred to farmers. System design benefits from local knowledge, and farmers have the means and incentives to minimise costs and improve services.

Building irrigation systems which are wanted, supported, and owned by users themselves provides the best assurance of sustainability. More equitable organizational arrangements and water delivery have been noted when participatory approaches are followed.

Collaborative Decision-making

Workshop-based methods

Appreciation-Influence-Control (AIC)

Encourages stakeholders to consider the social, political, and cultural factors along with the technical and economic aspects that influence a given project or policy. AIC i) helps identify a common purpose, ii) helps recognise the range of stakeholders relevant to the purpose, iii) creates an enabling forum for stakeholders to collaboratively pursue that purpose.

Objective-Oriented Project Planning (ZOPP)

Helpful to set priorities and plan for implementation and monitoring. The purpose of ZOPP is to undertake participatory, objective-oriented planning.

Main Features of ZOPP

- Encourages 'social learning'
- Promotes ownership
- Produces a visual matrix of the project plan
- Stakeholders establish the rules of the game
- Stakeholders establish working relations

Community-based Methods

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

Emphasises local knowledge and enables local people to do their own appraisal, analysis and planning. PRA uses group animation and exercises to facilitate information-sharing, analysis, and action among stakeholders.

SARAR

A participatory approach to training which builds upon local knowledge and strengths and local capacity to assess, prioritise, plan, create, organize, and evaluate. The five characteristics of SARAR are: Self-esteem, Associative strengths, Resourcefulness, Action planning, and Responsibility.

Purposes of SARAR

- To provide a multi-sectoral, multi-level approach to team-building through training
- To encourage participants to learn from local experience rather than from external experts
- To empower people at the community and agency levels to initiate action

Main Features of SARAR

- Based on interactive, often visual tools, which enable participation regardless of literacy levels
- Demystifies the research and planning process by drawing upon everyday experience
- Participants feel empowered by their participation and the sense that their contributions are valued

Beneficiary Assessment (BA)

A systemic investigation of the perception of beneficiaries and other stakeholders to ensure that their concerns are heard and incorporated in project and policy formulation.

Purposes of BA

- To undertake systemic listening in order to give a voice to poor and other hard-to-reach beneficiaries
- To obtain feedback on development interventions

Social Assessment (SA)

A systematic approach to prepare a programme action framework

Purpose of SA

- To identify key stakeholders and establish the appropriate framework for their participation
- To ensure that the project objectives and incentives for change are appropriate and acceptable to beneficiaries
- To assess social aspects and risks and
- To minimise or mitigate adverse impacts

Gender Analysis (GA)

Focusses on understanding and documenting the differences in gender roles, activities, needs, and opportunities in a given context. It involves the disaggregation of quantitative data by gender and highlights the different roles and learned behaviour of men and women, based on gender attributes that vary across culture, class, ethnicity, income, education, and time.

Conditions for Effective Participation

PRA techniques are intended to enable local people to conduct their own analysis and often to plan and take action. Villagers have a greater capacity to map, model, quantify and estimate, rank, score, and diagram than outsiders have generally supposed (Chambers, 1992). This technique itself will not always work unless the practitioner understands the situation and creates an environment to involve people. A certain level of community organization skills are essential. Local people must be socialised to bring them to the stage of participation. It is a process of learning, with decentralization and empowerment of the oppressed poor as primary goals and values. Poor village people who have been struggling and spending their lives in their own villages know the best coping strategies for survival. As Chambers (1995) convincingly argues, there are no real experts in social development, except possibly poor people themselves. Development workers should simply facilitate the process of their discovery.

Communities Have the Best Answers

An example from Nepal shows how local people cope with food insufficiency. People reveal that *Jand* (liquor soup) from one *pathi* (about 4kg) of corn lasts more than a week, whereas, if they make only *Chekhla* (broken maize grains used as rice), it lasts only three or four days for a family of seven members.

Benefits and Costs of Participation

Participation makes development more people-centred, yet it is not a panacea.

Benefits of Participation

- Increased quality and sustainability of development options

- Increased stakeholder ownership of policies and projects
- More willingness to share costs and help with maintenance
- Increased equity by involving the poor and other groups in planning and implementation
- Increased local capacity-building
- Increased transparency and accountability
- Institutional performance

Costs of Participation

- Participation sometimes entails painstaking collaboration.
- The process may not be captured by a small group of intermediaries intent on advancing their own agenda.
- The risk of raising expectations that may prove impossible to fulfill.
- Possible cultural and political constraints.

Case Studies of Participation Illustrate Some of these Benefits

- Pakistan's Orangi Pilot Project provided sewage facilities to nearly one million people in a poor area of Karachi with costs only one-eighth of conventional sewage provided by city authorities. This was due to changes in technical design and elimination of payoffs to intermediaries.
- In Gujarat, India, during the 1980s, an average of 18,000 forest offences, which included timber theft, illegal grazing, and fires, were recorded annually. Twenty forestry officials were killed in confrontation with communities and offenders, and assaults on forestry officials were frequent. In response, an experiment in joint management with communities was initiated by the conservator. This included community meetings, widely-publicised creation of forest protection committees, and profit-sharing of 25 per cent of timber returns with local groups. As a result, conflicts between officials and community groups diminished, community groups assumed responsibility for patrolling forests, and productivity of land and returns to villages increased sharply.
- In Cote d'Ivoire, a national rural water supply programme established community water groups which managed maintenance of 13,500 water points and reduced breakdown rates from 50 to 11 per cent at one-third the cost. The results were sustained in those villages which had a high demand for the rehabilitated water point and where well-functioning community organizations already existed.
- In Tamil Nadu, India, a community-based nutrition outreach programme in 9,000 villages resulted in a one-third decline in severe malnutrition. Earlier programmes focussing only on the creation of health infrastructure made no difference in the nutritional status of children.

- The Philippines: Beginning with a pilot project in 1976, the approach to irrigation was expanded in 1980 to cover all communal systems, and later extended to large-scale national irrigation systems. A 1993 study of three irrigation systems reported substantial improvements in performance after ownership and management responsibility were transferred to farmers.
- In Nicaragua, local supervision of a barrio upgrading project contributed to a rate of return 50% above what had been anticipated, and the project was completed in 3.5 instead of 5 years.
- In South Korea, over 52,000 kilometres of village access roads have been built over the past two decades as part of a community self-help effort.
- In Nepal, Baglung district, communities constructed 62 suspension bridges using mostly local materials

and labour inputs, the cost to the government was only about \$ 50,000.

Conclusion

Development programmes will bring desired results only if they are people-centred, environmentally-friendly, participatory, and build local and national capacities for self-reliance. For this, human and institutional capacity-building must be supported. Also, it is essential to learn, understand, and respond to rapidly changing rural systems with the purpose of boosting productivity, eradicating human deprivation, and eliminating resource degradation. It is equally important that farm women, men, and children should be respected as intelligent, knowledgeable, and forward-looking resource managers.