Chapter Two

Understanding Community Participation

THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN development practice, using examples from the literature and chronicles of the changing meaning of community participation. The overview includes definitions, and use and abuse of the concept participation in development projects. In addition, the chapter reviews elements of effective community participation followed by an overview of the relationships between community participation and development. The section also examines the qualities of participation that particularly enhance the effectiveness of development projects through community participation.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Internationally, resources for social welfare services are shrinking. Population pressures, changing priorities, economic competition, and demands for greater effectiveness are all affecting the course of social welfare (Bens, 1994). The utilization of nonprofessionals through citizen involvement mechanisms to address social problems has become more commonplace (Kaufman and Poulin, 1996).

In their modern form, the concepts of community development and community participation took shape in the 1950s (Chowdhury, 1996). From the situation in the 1950s, when community development was perceived to be synonymous with community participation, the situation has now changed to one in which there appears to be no clear understanding of the relationship between the two (Abbott, 1995). Clearly, this impacts or changes perception of what constitutes *community participation* and *development*.

Definition and Meaning of Community Participation

Participation is a rich concept that varies with its application and definition. The way participation is defined also depends on the context in which it occurs. For some, it is a matter of principle; for others, practice; for still others, an end in itself (World Bank, 1995). Indeed, there is merit in all these interpretations as Rahnema (1992) notes:

> Participation is a stereotype word like children use Lego pieces. Like Lego pieces the words fit arbitrarily together and support the most fanciful constructions. They have no content, but do serve a function. As these words are separate from any context, they are ideal for manipulative purposes. 'Participation' belongs to this category of word. (p.116)

Often the term participation is modified with adjectives, resulting in terms such as *community participation, citizen participation, people's participation, public participation,* and *popular participation*. The Oxford English Dictionary defines participation as "to have a share in" or "to take part in," thereby emphasizing the rights of individuals and the choices that they make in order to participate. Arnstein (1969) states that the idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you. But there has been little analysis of the content of citizen participation, its definition, and its relationship to social imperatives such as social structure, social interaction, and the social context where it takes place.

Brager, Specht, and Torczyner (1987) defined participation as a means to educate citizens and to increase their competence. It is a vehicle for influencing decisions that affect the lives of citizens and an avenue for transferring political power. However, it can also be a method to co-opt dissent, a mechanism for ensuring the receptivity, sensitivity, and even accountability of social services to the consumers. Armitage (1988) defined citizen participation as a process by which citizens act in response to public concerns, voice their opinions about decisions that affect them, and take responsibility for changes to their community. Pran Manga and Wendy Muckle (Chappel, 1997) suggest that citizen participation may also be a response to the traditional sense of powerlessness felt by the general public when it comes to influencing government decisions: "people often feel that health and social services are beyond their control because the decisions are made outside their community by unknown bureaucrats and technocrats" (p. 99).

Westergaard (1986) defined participation as "collective efforts to increase and exercise control over resources and institutions on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from control" (p.14). This definition points toward a mechanism for ensuring community participation. The World Bank's Learning Group on Participatory Development (1995) defines participation as "a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them" (p. 3).

A descriptive definition of participation programs would imply the involvement of a significant number of persons in situations or actions that enhance their well-being, for example, their income, security, or self-esteem (Chowdhury, 1996). Chowdhury states that the ideal conditions contributing towards meaningful participation can be discussed from three aspects:

1. What kind of participation is under consideration?
2. Who participates in it?
3. How does participation occur?

Evens (1974) also points out the importance of the following issues in order to assess the extent of community participation:

1. Who participates?
2. What do people participate in?
3. Why do people participate? There are:
    a) Cultural explanations (values, norms, and roles, etc.)
    b) Cognitive explanations (verbal skills and knowledge about the organizations)
    c) Structural explanations (alternatives, resources available, and the nature of benefit sought)
4. Implications (how the benefit contributes to the ends or principles they value).

Oakley and Marsden (1987) defined community participation as the process by which individuals, families, or communities assume responsibility for their own welfare and develop a capacity to contribute to their own and the community's development. In the context of development, community participation refers to an active process whereby beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of development projects rather than merely receive a share of project benefits (Paul, in Bamberger, 1986). Paul's five objectives to which community participation might contribute are:

1. Sharing project costs: participants are asked to contribute money or labor (and occasionally goods) during the project's implementation or operational stages.
2. Increasing project efficiency: beneficiary consultation during project planning or beneficiary involvement in the management of project implementation or operation.
3. Increasing project effectiveness: greater beneficiary involvement to help ensure that the project achieves its objectives and that benefits go to the intended groups.
4. Building beneficiary capacity: either through ensuring that participants are actively involved in project planning and implementation or through formal or informal training and consciousness-raising activities.
5. Increasing empowerment: defined as seeking to increase the control of the underprivileged sectors of society over the resources and decisions affecting their lives and their participation in the benefits produced by the society in which they live. (p. 4–5)

Bamberger (1986) says the objectives and organization of project-level activities are different from those of programs at the national or regional levels. The level or scope of the activity must be taken into consideration when defining objectives. According to Bamberger, three distinct kinds of local participation included the following:

1. Beneficiary involvement in the planning and implementation of externally initiated projects or community participation.
2. External help to strengthen or create local organizations, but without reference to a particular project, or local organizational development.
3. Spontaneous activities of local organizations that have not resulted from outside assistance or indigenous local participation.

The first two are externally promoted participatory approaches used by governments, donors, or NGOs, while the third is the kind of social organization that has evolved independently of (or despite) outside interventions (Bamberger, 1986). At a community level, there is a separation of community participation into two distinct approaches: (1) the community development movement and (2) community involvement through conscientization (Freire, 1985). The basis of conscientization, according to De Kadt, started from "the existence of socioeconomic inequalities, the generation of these by the economic system, and their underpinning by the state" (De Kadt, in Abbott, 1995).

Development

The word development is fraught with ideological, political, and historical connotations that can greatly change its meaning depending on the perspective being discussed (Haug, 1997). The following three definitions of development are most helpful and suitable in relation to this research project. The first definition is provided by Korten (1990):

> Development is a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations. (p. 67)

Korten's definition emphasizes the process of development and its primary focus on personal and institutional capacity. It also touches on justice, equity, quality of life, and participation.

The second definition is from Robinson, Hoare, and Levy's (1993) work. He adds the dimension of empowerment to Korten's idea of development (Robinson, 1993).

> [Empowerment is] a social action process that promotes participation of people, organisations, and communities towards the goals of increased individual and community control, political efficacy, improved quality of life, and social justice. (p. 199)

Finally, Zachariah and Sooryamoorthy (1994) emphasize that development must promote economic growth, but not at any cost:

> The encouragement of economic growth must take account of and be restrained by three other equally important objectives:
>
> 1. Protection of the environment and consideration of the ecological impact of industrialisation and commercialisation.
>
> 2. Fair and equitable distribution as well as redistribution of goods and services to enable poorer people to get a fairer share of society's wealth and to participate fully in the economy.
>
> 3. Creation of opportunities for everyone to increasingly participate in the political, artistic and other activities of society. (1994: 22–23)

Zachariah and Sooryamoorthy's criteria for development recognize the environmental and ecological facets of communities going through the process of development. The environment is considered an integral part of development, since any impacts on a person's environment also influence the state of well-being or welfare. Environment and development are thus linked so intricately that separate approaches to either environmental or developmental problems are piecemeal at best (Bartelmus, 1986).

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The community development approach emphasizes self-help, the democratic process, and local leadership in community revitalization (Barker, 1991). Most community development work involves the participation of the communities or beneficiaries involved (Smith, 1998). Thus, community participation is an important component of community development and reflects a grassroots or bottom-up approach to problem solving. In social work, community participation refers to ". . . the active voluntary engagement of individuals and groups to change problematic conditions and to influence policies and programs that affect the quality of their lives or the lives of others" (Gamble and Weil, 1995).

One of the major aims of community development is to encourage participation of the community as a whole. Indeed, community development has been defined as a social process resulting from citizen participation (UN, 1963; Vaughan, 1972; Darby and Morris, 1975; Christenson and Robinson, 1980; Rahman, 1990 in Smith, 1998). Through citizen participation, a broad cross-section of the community is encouraged to identify and articulate their own goals, design their own methods of change, and pool their resources in the problem-solving process (Harrison, 1995).

It is widely recognized that participation in government schemes often means no more than using the service offered or providing inputs to support the project (Smith, 1998). This is contrasted with stronger forms of participation, involving control over decisions, priorities, plans, and implementation; or the spontaneous,

induced, or assisted formation of groups to achieve collective goals (Arnstein, 1969; Cohen and Uphoff, 1980; Rifkin, 1990; WHO, 1991; Rahman, 1993; Smith, 1998).

The most important and complicated issue bearing on local level planning and development is community participation. Effective community participation may lead to social and personal empowerment, economic development, and sociopolitical transformation (Kaufman and Alfonso, 1997). Yet there are obstacles: the power of central bureaucracies, the lack of local skills and organizational experience, social divisions, and the impact of national and transnational structures (Kaufman and Alfonso, 1997). There is no clear-cut agreement in the literature of community development on the nature of community participation or on a prescription to ensure it. The need for community participation in development and management is nonetheless accepted and recognized in the professional literature.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION APPROACHES

Although there is no consensus, some of the most important approaches to participation are presented below.

United Nations Research Institute on Social Development (UNRISD) Approach

The most important and original aspect of UNRISD is the focus on people power and organization of disadvantaged groups, hitherto bypassed in development. The significant factor in this approach was not that it concentrated on the poorest of the poor but that it emphasized questions of power and organization and also viewed the allies and adversaries of the hitherto excluded as included in the scope of investigation (Chowdhury, 1996, p. 10).

Norman Uphoff's Team: Framework on Participation

In 1976, USAID asked the interdisciplinary Rural Development Committee at Cornell University to come up with some practical concepts and measures of community participation in development (Uphoff, 1997). The committee focused on participation and its framework. In fact, they gave a new thrust to old Community Development (CD) approaches (Chowdhury, 1996). The four kinds of participation they identified are: decision-making, implementation, benefits, and evaluation. Even if these kinds of participation are distinguishable, there are usually connections and feedback among them; for example, participation in decision making is likely to contribute to participation in benefits. The more there is of any one kind, the more participation there is in total (Uphoff, 1997).

Uphoff also emphasized that who participates (and how they participate) is as important to consider as to whether there is participation, and of what kind. Just saying, "there was participation" does not tell us very much. We want to know who participated, why they participated, and how they participated. (Uphoff, 1997).

Self-reliance and Self-help Approach

During the development decade of the 1960s, self-reliance and self-help projects became the order of the day (Chowdhury, 1996). Chowdhury (1996) also notes that this trend is further developed by the social worker S. Tilakratna of Sri Lanka in his participatory rural development strategy, which aims to combine the best of community development and UNRISD ideas. According to Tilakratna, the idea of people's participation in development means improving the potential of the previously neglected rural poor, enabling them to make decisions for their own welfare. Chowdhury (1996) also notes:

> Essentially, the main components of this developmental process are participation in taking initiatives to identify unmet needs, and self-reliance—breaking away from dependencies that suppress the creativity of the poor. This approach is nearest to the type of people's participation practice in Bangladesh. It is more a psychological than an economic or physical process. (p. 13)

It is evident from these discussions that participation as it relates to development is a process that includes a set of activities and takes place through different stages. This section describes what constitutes the essential elements of effective community participation. The definitions, approaches, and the various literatures on participation suggests participation in development projects needs to be understood based on the following elements.

Identification of Appropriate Stakeholders

The public involvement of stakeholders in development projects is widely recognized as a fundamental element of the process. Timely, well-planned, and well-implemented public involvement programs have contributed to the successful design, implementation, operation, and management of proposals (UNEP, 1996). For instance, the range of stakeholders involved in an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) project typically includes:

1. The people, individuals, or groups in the local community
2. The proponent and other project beneficiaries
3. Government agencies
4. Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)
5. Others, such as donors, the private sectors, academics, and so forth

Needs Identification and Goal Determination

Participation of the masses in development activities implies enhanced capacity to perceive their own needs. Through participation, local people identify their needs as well as the relevant goals of a program. By participating in decision making and implementation activities, local people help project officials identify (1) needs, (2) strategies to meet those needs, and (3) the necessary resources required

to implement the various strategies (Yadama, 1995). For example, community participation will be discouraged if environmental issues are given priority in agendas without addressing issues such as poverty, homelessness, health, and other basic necessities perceived to be more important by the coastal communities.

Information Dissemination

This is a one-way flow of information from the proponent of the development project to the public. The proponent should provide sufficient relevant information about the project such as the benefits of the project to the beneficiaries, the costs of implementation, the potential for financing and implementation, and possible risk factors. The proponent must allow sufficient time for individuals to read and discuss the information provided, and listen to the views held by individuals as well as to issues and problems. Lack of transparency often fosters mistrust and misunderstanding between project authorities and local communities (UNEP, 1996).

Consultation

Consultation involves inviting people's views on the proposed actions and engaging them in a dialogue. It is a two-way flow of information between the proponent and the public. Consultation provides opportunities for the public to express their views on the project proposal initiated by the project proponent. Rigorous planning and implementation of projects should be undertaken only after considerable discussion and consultation. Consultation includes education, information sharing, and negotiation, with the goal being a better decision making process through organizations consulting the general public (Becker, 1997, p. 155). This process allows neglected people to hear and have a voice in future undertakings. Depending on the project, various methods are used during consultation such as public hearings, public meetings, general public information meetings, informal small group meetings, public displays, field trips, site visits, letter requests for comments, material for mass media, and response to public inquiries. The knowledge of local people should be recognized and they should be enrolled as experts in designing development projects. Participants should be encouraged to articulate their ideas and the design of the project should be based on such ideas.

Genuine Interests

Participation depends on people's legitimate interests in the project or development activities. Therefore, participation needs to be considered as an active process, meaning that the person or group in question takes initiatives and asserts an independent role (Chowdhury, 1996).

Public Involvement in Decision Making

The project should encourage a maximum number of people in the participation of development projects. Such involvement should give the participants full inclusion in designing, organizing, and implementing activities and workshops

in order to create consensus, ownership, and action in support of environmental change in specific areas. It should include people and groups rather than exclude any individuals. Public involvement is a process for involving the public in the decision making of an organization (Becker, 1997, p. 155). Participation actually brings the public into the decision-making process.

White (1989) stressed community involvement in management of marine protected areas. According to the author, public involvement can take place at several stages in the establishment and management of marine protected areas. These stages are: (1) the recognition of a need; (2) discussions with interested parties and integration with the community; (3) baseline studies and monitoring; (4) education; (5) core group building and formalization of reserves; and (6) enforcement.

Accountability

The requirement of accountability applies to all parties involved in the project, such as project management, external organizers, and traditional leaders, as well as any emergent leadership from the ranks of the poor and the disadvantaged (Adnan, Barrett, Alam, and Brustinow, 1992, p. 32). The authors also note that the agencies involved in project management and implementation are procedurally and periodically answerable to the people in the project area, as well as the citizens of the country in general. All people should be aware of their roles in the project and the planning of activities of the project. Accountability of concerned community members must be ensured, particularly after the decision is taken.

Repeated Interaction

Often there is interaction at the beginning of the project but no dialogue or any other form of interaction occurs during the project. This ultimately creates a big gap between the proponents of the development projects and the communities. Consequently, the local people abandon a project based on such an idea. Therefore, it is suggested that there should be ongoing communication throughout the project period.

Ownership and Control

Participation plays a major role in people's management of their own affairs. Ownership and control of resources have a profound impact on participation in development projects (Mathbor, 1990b). Ferrer (1988) emphasized four areas to be worked toward in a participatory coastal resource management program: greater economic and social equality, better access to services for all, greater participation in decision making, and deeper involvement in the organizing process resulting from the empowerment of people.

Sharing Benefits

It is evident that without sharing the benefits of the project, participation is a frustrating process for the poorer people. Zachariah and Sooryamoorthy (1994)

note that there should be a fair and equitable distribution of benefits, as well as redistribution of goods and services, to enable poorer people to get a fairer share of society's wealth and to participate fully in the development process.

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP, 1984), a regional rural development organization in South Asia, mentions that participation entails three distinct processes: first, the involvement of the people in decision making; second, eliciting of their contribution to development programs; and third, their participation in *sharing the benefits* from the development process.

Partnerships

Partnership in development processes allows stakeholders to work, talk, and solve problems with individuals who are often perceived as the masters. Instead of demonstrating the relationship as a worker-client tie, the parties involved should agree on working in partnerships. An expression used by the Latin American activists to describe their relationship with the people (communities, groups) with whom they are working is *accompanamiento*, or "accompanying the process" (Wilson and Whitmore, 1997). Wilson and Whitmore identified a set of principles for collaboration in a variety of settings and situations. These include nonintrusive collaboration, mutual trust and respect, a common analysis of what the problem is, a commitment to solidarity, equality in the relationship, an explicit focus on process, and the importance of language.

Environmental Legislation

The environment is considered as an integral part of development, since any impacts on an individual's environment also impacts on well-being or welfare. It has been shown that the lack of environmental legislation in developing countries limits environmental protection (Kakonge, 1996). This ultimately creates considerable environmental problems in the name of development in third world countries. Therefore, lack of legislation to protect human rights as well as the environment may impede public participation in development projects.

THE USE AND ABUSE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

It is noteworthy that until recently participation as it relates to the poor was not acknowledged in the literature, even though Toms (1992 in Robinson, 1995) notes that the disadvantaged were always expected to become actively involved in procuring their own services. For example, the poor in the United States are involved inter alia in state schools, welfare departments, hospitals, and public housing. Participation for them is time-consuming, but not voluntary, and they exercise a relatively low degree of influence or control over organizations in which they participate, given that the services are usually controlled by people who are not poor or recipients of the services.

How can poor people's participation be of greatest use? Rankopo (1995) utilizing Midgley (1995) identifies four typical state responses toward participation in majority world nations: the antiparticipatory mode, the manipulative mode, the incremental mode, and (the most desirable) the participatory mode. In the latter case, the state sponsors participatory activities through training and deployment of social development workers, and the provision of material, financial, and other forms of assistance (Bailey, 1996).

Arnstein (1969) contends that citizen participation is citizen power, but that there is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process. This difference was briefly exhibited in a poster painted by French students (in the spring of 1968) to explain the student-worker rebellion (in English): "I participate; you participate; he participates; we participate; you participate . . . They profit" (Arnstein, 1969). The poster highlights the fundamental point that participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. Abbott (1995) also supports the foundation for a new, more appropriate approach to community participation, based upon the concept of community power and control.

In order to assess the types of participation and nonparticipation, Arnstein (1969) suggested a typology of eight levels of participation using a ladder technique:

> The bottom rungs of the ladder are (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy. These two rungs describe levels of "non-participation" that have been contrived by some to substitute for genuine participation. Rungs (3) Informing and (4) Consultation, progress to levels of 'tokenism' that allow the have-nots to hear and to have a voice. Rung (5) Placation is simply a higher level tokenism because the ground rules allow have-nots to advice, but retains for the power holders the continued right to decide. Citizens can enter into a (6) Partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power-holders. At the topmost rungs, (7) delegated power and (8) Citizen Control; have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power. (p. 217)

The Use of Community Participation

The use of community participation yielded significant results in one of the community-based forestry regions in Gujrat, India. During the 1980s, an average of 18,000 offenses were recorded annually: 10,000 cases of timber theft, 2,000 of illegal grazing, 700 fires, and 5,300 other offenses (World Bank, 1998). The World Bank sourcebook reports:

> Twenty forestry officials were killed in confrontations with communities and offenders; assaults on forestry officials were frequent. In response, an experiment in joint management with communities was begun by the conservator. This included community meetings, widely publicized creation of forest protection committees,

and profit sharing of 25 percent 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 the land and returns to villages increased sharply. In one year, one village of eighty-eight households harvested and sold 12 tons of firewood, 50 tons of fodder, and other forest products, while also planting and protecting teak and bamboo trees (World Bank, 1998).

The Abuse of Community Participation

Abuse of the concept of participation is illustrated by using two examples of community forestry programs in South Asia. Community forestry programs have been designed and implemented to address the problem of declining forest resources. Yadama (1995) compared the use and abuse of the concept of participation from an institutional context:

> A growing number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are planning, organizing, and implementing community forestry programs in South Asia, the rise due in part to the perceived failure of government development programs. There is much documentation on how governmental community forestry programs have not paid attention to who participates and who benefits. The general criticism is that governmental programs ignore the social welfare effects of the community forestry programs. Many of the governmental programs were successful in generating new wood-based resources but were not effective in involving the poor and as a result had minimal impact on their economic well being. (p. 53)

While evaluations of community forestry programs managed by the government have found rural participation lacking, there is a growing belief that non-governmental organizations involved in community forestry have more effectively included rural people in the planning and decision making processes (Chowdhury, 1985; Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations/SIDA, 1985; Hazelwood, 1991; in Yadama, 1995). It was found that one of the advantages NGOs claim over the government sector is their ability to implement participatory programs that help the poorer people gain control of any new resources that are generated. Moreover, many of the NGOs are locally based and are familiar with the cultures and values of the communities in which they operate.

The second example of the abuse of community participation is the Bangladesh government's response to the management of coastal reforestation projects. Deforestation has become a critical problem in Bangladesh because only nine percent (Ahmed, 1994) of its area is forested (less than in most countries), and forest resources are an important national resource base. The southern part, which are the coastal regions of Bangladesh, has been favored by nature with this important resource endowment. The forest in this area is not only of economic significance, but also works as a barrier to devastating cyclones, tidal-bores, salinity, and erosion. It also provides shelter for many species of wild and aquatic animals and pro-

vides a living for many people who fish and collect honey, thatching materials, and timber for fuel and housing. The loss of mangrove trees and other forest resources has become extreme in the last fifty years. There is continuous deforestation by natural disasters such cyclones, tidal surges, and storms. Self-interested groups, who cut many trees for preparation of their shrimp projects, further aggravate the problem.

Consequently, the government has taken up reforestation projects in the area. One of the main issues in the reforestation project is the promotion of monoculture. As a matter of fact, reforestation was proceeding with only a very few, fast-growing nonindigenous species such as eucalyptus. In the process, indigenous species were displaced. Short-term gain from fast-growing species was sought, to the neglect of long-term benefit.

The planting of fast-growing species created several impacts. First was the depletion of water resources in the region, as fast-growing species require more water and are adapted to compete for the water resource. With the loss of indigenous species and monoculture there was loss of biodiversity. There was also loss of livelihoods as people who from a diverse ecosystem made their living by collecting honey, fuel woods and timbers, thatching materials, and fishing were no longer able to do so. This of course has a negative impact on communities and families living in the area.

In response, there were acts of violence against those seen as perpetrating these changes. Government offices were ransacked and destroyed, and government officials in some cases were beaten up. Many NGOs in the region had been obliged to oppose the government because it promoted monoculture plantation.

In fact, the government approach to reforestation projects was overcentralized, with little participation existing in the protection of coastal environmental projects. Indeed, there was no two-way communication between government staff and the local people. This phenomenon, or the paternalistic fallacy, assumes that planners, technicians, and experts possess all the knowledge, wisdom, and virtue needed to achieve development, the poor being deemed responsive and grateful beneficiaries. The traditional popular knowledge system and culture, which value the sustainable use of natural resources, are degraded and devalued in the name of science and technology by government officials. It has been found that in many cases, the proper utilization and implementation of coastal development projects such as mangrove vegetation, inshore fisheries, and coral reefs depends upon the community's understanding of the delicate nature of these resources and the beneficial role the proposed project will have in their daily lives and future welfare (CIDA, 1993).

In the process, coastal people ultimately felt cheated by the government because the project caused damage to the communities instead of creating opportunities in the area. The knowledge of these two situations provides us with an empirical scenario of the abuse of the concept of participation in development practice.

EVIDENCES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

There is evidence that community participation enhances the effectiveness of development projects. The following two examples from South Asia in this regard will explain about it in detail. Over the last two decades, Bangladesh hosted a unique model of community development named Grameen Bank, and I had some previous research experience with this institution. Therefore, I found it relevant and significant to share this innovative model for involving local people in the development pursuits that respects their right of self determination and indigenous knowledge to view local problems from their own perspectives.

The Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) has been selected because I was impressed by the project's tremendous success involving a maximum number of squatters from the Orangi slums effectively in managing and solving their own problems. I became familiar with OPP from two presentations made by Dr. Norman Uphoff, a keynote speaker in the Canadian Association for the Study of International Development (CASID) conference held June 6 through 8, 1997, at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Canada; and Mrs. Sadiqua Salahuddin (Executive Director, NGO Resource Centre) of Pakistan, a resource person in a weeklong summer institute on global education organized and sponsored by the Alberta Global Education Project, Canada, from July 21 through 26, 1996, held in Kananaskies Village, Alberta, Canada.

Orangi Pilot Project (OPP)

The Orangi Pilot Project of Karachi in Pakistan started in 1980 (Uphoff, 1997). This venture now involves most of the residents in a huge squatter settlement outside of Karachi with almost a million people. The founder of the project is Akhter Hamid Khan, a veteran civil servant who helped to establish a cooperative movement in Bangladesh when it was East Pakistan. The Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) was also established based on his two tier cooperative model of development.

Orangi is Karachi's largest slum, long considered a no hope area. The children were playing in filth; the streets were filled with excreta and wastewater, making movement difficult and creating health hazards. Typhoid, malaria, diarrhea, dysentery, and scabies were rampant in the area. Pearce (1996) reports that the residents of Orangi were aware of these problems, but they could not solve them because:

1. They believed that the provision of infrastructure was the responsibility of the government (the psychological barrier).
2. They did not have the technical expertise to construct a sewage system (the technological barrier).
3. They were not organized to undertake collective action (the sociological barrier).

4. They could not afford the costs of a conventional sewage system (the economic barrier).

Appeals for government-funded schemes were in vain. The project was established to fill the gap left by the city's incompetent government, which failed to provide the slum with sanitation (Pearce, 1996). The most urgently felt need of the community was for waste disposal, so low-cost, participatory sanitation became the first priority. The Orangi Pilot Project organized local people into street committees, each committee consisting of twenty to forty families living in the same lane, and lent them money to buy the raw materials to build their own sewage facility. Residents of individual lanes banded together to elect a project manager and contributed cash and voluntary labor to get their own sewer installed.

Uphoff (1997) reports that almost 100,000 households are now blessed with sewage facilities for between thirty and forty dollars each, plus labor and management inputs. Besides, local management capabilities developed through lane committees have provided the foundation for housing, health, family planning, community-financed education, women's work centers, micro-enterprises, reforestation, and other activities (Uphoff, 1997). Sanitation, combined with the OPP's health project, has brought the district's infant mortality down from 130 per 1,000 live births in 1980 to 37 in 1991 (Pearce, 1996). Nationally, the figure is 95 per 1,000 live births.

Impressed by the project's success, the government, along with international aid agencies, is trying to replicate its model for urban development in other parts of the country. To reiterate the importance of community participation in development, Akhter Hamid Khan states:

> The collapse of government here is very deep and probably irreversible. The old socialist model that everything will be done for the people has failed. The old institutions are dinosaurs that will decay and die. The new institutions, the vital bodies that can get things done, are arising out of squatter settlements. The state authorities promise to provide most services, but they fail. In future, most communities will provide most services for themselves. . . . We have broken out of the dependency culture. (Pearce, 1996, p. 42)

Qualities of Participation

Following are the qualities of effective relationship between community participation and the effectiveness of OPP.

1. Akhter Hamid Khan personally recruited social organizers from within the slum community. Local organizers' intimate knowledge of the locality helps in defining and designing effective programs of the project. In none of these programs did OPP see its role as the provider of a service; rather, the community provided the service to itself with appropriate assistance from OPP.

2. The idea of organizing people of the same lane into groups generated mutual trust.
3. The OPP has been able to mobilize major amounts of local resources—seventeen rupees' worth of funds, labor, and materials for every one rupee of external funding received (Uphoff, 1997).
4. The OPP was able to identify people's felt needs appropriately. This ultimately creates people's genuine interests in the project.
5. Each program of the project was introduced only after a thorough analysis of community need and identification of the most important factors. The programs have periodically been evaluated and modified to respond to changes within the community.
6. The project carried economic and social benefits to the local people.
7. The OPP has opened opportunities for people in local communities to make improvements in their lives through collective action.

The Grameen Bank (GB)

The community-based Grameen Bank Bangladesh is an institution that pioneered lending to the landless poor in Asia's poorest country. Since the Grameen Bank started in 1976, it has turned peasants' lives around with loans for cows, chickens, irrigation pumps, and plots of land. In total, Grameen customers, whose only collateral is the sari/shirt on their backs, have now borrowed US$1,662 million, and despite their meager incomes, repaid an astonishing 98 percent of it (Fuglesang and Chandler, 1993). Because of the Grameen Bank's significant performance, it has been copied in fifty-two countries of the world, including the United States, the United Kingdom, China, Australia, India, and other developed and developing countries.

In 35,568 out of 68,000 villages across Bangladesh, the GB's almost unparalleled success is rooted in a basic belief that its borrowers, no matter how poor they may be, understand their needs and their potential better than anyone else (Chowdhury, 1996). "We think they are as capable and as enterprising as anybody else in the world," said Dr. Mohammed Yunus, the founder of the Grameen Bank (Fuglesang and Chandler, 1993). If the poor are provided credit on reasonable terms, they themselves best know how to increase their incomes.

Grameen provides microcredit facilities to the rural poor, aimed at generating income to help them meet their basic needs and become independent of the moneylenders. The people participate in the loan program by forming groups and attending purposeful meetings. Villagers communicate among themselves and many of them have been taught the precepts of awareness (Chowdhury, 1996). Chowdhury also mentioned that:

> . . . after receiving awareness precepts, people become eager to learn about functional education and family planning along with skilled training to help them better conduct their small-scale business to earn profit. Motivated bank workers, a strict cadre of

dedicated youths, work at the grass-roots to help build up groups of five members and explain to them the process of requiring weekly savings before applying for loans on projects of their own. (p. 143)

Qualities of Participation

1. Grameen gives the authority to five-member groups of the local people called *Kendro* (center) to plan at the local level. This *Kendro* discusses concerns related to group and emergency funding with *Gram Sarkers,* administrative units. The assumption is that if individual borrowers are given access to credit, they will be able to identify and engage in viable income-generating activities.
2. The borrowers plan their loans by themselves and then discuss them with others. The viability of their scheme, how the marketing will be conducted, is also sorted out by the borrowers.
3. Grameen officials believe participation is a process of growth.
4. The GB follows a unique procedure for ensuring accountability of the group members. For example, the mode of repayment of loans: once the borrowers receive the money, they must repay 2 percent of the principal every week for one year. Then they have two weeks to pay the accumulated interest. Grameen experience shows that most of the borrowers pay within one week because they are waiting for another loan.
5. Borrowers' sincere and firm commitments to the sixteen decisions of GB are based on four basic principles: discipline, unity, courage, and hard work.
6. Grameen officials believe Dr. Mohammed Yunus' statement that "credit is a human right that should be treated as a human right. If credit can be accepted as a human right, then all other human rights will be easier to establish" (Chowdhury, 1996).
7. The Grameen Bank has directly attacked poverty (the basic problem of rural communities in Bangladesh) by targeting credit and organizational assistance directly to the poorest people at reasonable terms, and the poor find it acceptable.

In spite of GB's successes, certain criticisms have been leveled against the bank in the recent years. For instance, Chowdhury (1996) notes that "credit alone is useless, even at times counterproductive. One must proceed in an integrated manner where credit will be one of many variables such as education, training, family planning, marketing, technology, infrastructure development and so on" (p. 168).

Rahman (1999) based his study on anthropological methods and claims that he is the first to use this approach to examine the GB's records reports:

Previous studies have been quantitative focusing on the numbers of women involved in the program, investment of loans, the loan recovery rate, and profit margins. In the study, it was found that 78 percent of the total micro-loans in a village were used for

different purposes than those approved by the GB. About 30 percent were used to meet household needs such as paying dowry, buying medicine, or paying fees to broker agencies that arrange overseas employment for household members. (p. 79)

Overall, it was found in the study that the male members of the borrower's family used more than 60 percent of the loans. This situation created a debt burden for women, forcing them to borrow money from other lenders, appeal to men to pay off the loan installments, or sell the household produce that their families would otherwise consume.

As a result, there were acts of violence in the borrowers' families. Rahman (1998) mentions that in one case, a man threatened to send his wife back to her birthplace and remarry unless she took out another loan from GB. According to GB's policy she is not eligible to take a second loan unless she paid off her first loan. This situation led her to become the victim of violence in the family as well as in the society. Rahman (1998) describes: "In the household women are powerless in relation to their husband and in the loan centres they are powerless before influential members and bankers who are mostly men" (p. 21).

However, Rahman's study was based on one village and, therefore, the results are not definitive.