Empowering the Grassroots

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment has created legal opportunity for the pursuit of local self-governance at the village level. Though the idea of self-governance was in our political thought since the beginning of Independence movement, but its practice till date has been largely inadequate on the ground. Inspite of the powerful legacy of a nationalist movement with a 'rural bias' and increasing rural politicisation, the Indian exercises in rural development have conspicuously failed. Even the establishment of Panchayati Raj institution and the changing emphasis of programmes, thrust, plan allocation, etc. have proved to be futile.

After independence, we clearly spelled out the ultimate values of democracy, secularism, social justice with rise in productivity, standards of living, and social and economic egalitarianism. What was overlooked was people's participation in nourishing the values and achieving the goals. Top-down model and 'trickle down' principle were adopted for development and distribution of the fruits of development. In the Panchayati Raj system people's participation and involvement was emphasised, but in reality it remained more or less as a bureaucratically controlled and guided system. Besides bureaucracy, there were several other bottlenecks such as our highly stratified hierarchical social structure.

Against this backdrop, recent Constitutional Amendment has its significance. A number of provisions for effective participation, and representation are ensured; much greater responsibilities are bestowed upon the elected bodies to discuss, debate and decide collectively and then to implement. It is true that the new legal apparatus is not a foolproof one; there are shortcomings. But there is a need to carry this message to the masses, poor and oppressed, so that they can take the benefits. The voluntary organisations should play the crucial role of educating the people in general, and the elected members from 'new social categories' in particular, which will enable them to exercise their rights and power.
New Panchayati Raj system should be seen not merely as a change in planning and implementation system but as a vehicle of empowerment process.

In real sense, the 'new' institution will result in empowerment of the deprived, only if the earlier bottlenecks are eradicated, and opportunity to participate in deciding and planning their own development is given to them; if their rights over local resources are recognised. Then only real Panchayati Raj system can be seen in operation, otherwise it will be the same 'old wine in new bottle'. "We plan and manage, you participate", has to be discarded. The real participation means involvement of people right from the beginning, giving them free hand to decide and plan, and allowing them to commit mistakes and learn from them. From outside all possible support should be extended but not the instructions or guidance.

Dr. Rajesh Tandon

Wish You
A Very Happy
1995

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Letter to the Editors
The editors of the Participation and Governance want to hear your comments, criticism, or praise relating to any material printed in the Bulletin.

Please address all correspondence to:
Society for Participatory Research in Asia
42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi-110062
Phone: (011) 643-9559, 629-1908 Fax: (011) 647-1183

Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Rajesh Tandon
Executive Editor: Dr. Nalin R. Jena
Editorial Team: Chandan Datta, Shikha Ghildiyal, Namrata Jaitli

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New HOPE: A Beginning for Betterment

NAMRATA JAITLI

NEW HOPE (Himalayan Organisation for People’s Education) is an upcoming NGO located in the Bhavarna block of the Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh.

Kangra District is a valley with the total population of 11,740,72 people and an area of 5,739 sq. km. (1991 census). The valley is picturesque, with the Dhula Dhar mountain range enclosing it and the river Beas bisecting it.

The socio-economic status of the district needs further impetus, with greater emphasis on sustainable and people-oriented development.

New HOPE

The perceived developmental loopholes in the identified block facilitated the emergence of New HOPE as an organisation for the upliftment of the people. The organisation was registered under the Society Registration Act (1860) during the April of 1992, with work commencing in October 1992.

Emergence

Prior involvement in development work at informal level was followed by organised field-based work in three Panchayats by a small team, comprising of three persons. Being the residents of Palampur Tehsil facilitated the identification and selection of the initial three target Panchayats.

The initial four months in the field were spent in assessing the problems and needs of the people. Rapid Rural Appraisal exercise, individual home surveys, along with individual and group discussions enhanced people’s active participation in the assessment and action plan formulation procedure. The identified intervention areas were those found high in the need hierarchy of the people. A strong base for successful implementation and follow up of the developmental programmes, with the people’s support, was thus assured.

Over the last two years, the work area has extended to about eighteen villages and the New HOPE team has grown to the current strength of six members.

Philosophy

New HOPE is emerging as a people-based organisation through a slow, but organised process. It believes in the philosophy of people’s participation as an essential component of any development programme. The main objective of educating and empowering the marginalised section of the society is being pursued through sustained efforts, by involving the people in the three levels of identification of need areas, formulation of action plan and implementation of the same.

The overall aim is to promote holistic and integrated development of the rural areas.

Programmes

Empowerment of the people, through the means of training, education and motivation, is pursued with the help of the following programmes: (a) Need-based (b) Awareness building and (c) Promotion of local self-governance and local groups.

a) Need-based

Need-based programmes, as prioritized by the community, are;

i) Non-Formal Education

Inadequate educational facilities for pre-school children initiated the opening of eight balwadis in the identified villages. Balwadi is an educational centre for children between the age groups of 2-5 years. Its emphasis is on imparting free non-formal education and creative inputs in the form of songs, dance, storytelling, etc. Alongside, free time is also made available to the mothers to carry out their daily chores.

The running of the balwadi is a shared endeavour. New HOPE provides the necessary infrastructure while the community makes provisions for the space. The villagers’ contribution thus is assured in the programme. Greater involvement of people in managing these centres is slowly being enhanced.

Running of the balwadi is not free of problems, especially those related to enrolment and dropouts. Joint efforts by the community and the organisation to tackle them are underway.

ii) Income Generation Programmes

One essential need of the community was to enhance the socio-economic status of women. With that in mind, the organisation is running four centres for the
combined activity of tailoring, stitching, card making and two centres for carpet weaving. The composition of the sewing group is young girls in the age group of 16-25 years, and the carpet weaving groups comprise of women in the age group of 30-45 years.

The overall objective of these programmes is to impart income generation skills to the women. The members are enthusiastic, showing a keenness to learn, their interest being sustained by ensuring their active participation in the centre proceedings. The output of the centres is of good quality, with newer markets being identified and pursued.

Need for further streamlining and expanding these centres and making them more independent is being felt by the group and the organisation.

Work towards making some of the women groups self-reliant and self-sustaining by organising them in the form of co-operatives is in progress. The co-operatives would provide the appropriate backward and forward linkages. The sewing centres, thus, are slowly stepping closer towards people centered management and control.

**iii) Other Need-based Projects**

Work on other need-based projects, based on area and situation specific demands is on. The participation of the local people in these development endeavours is an important component of these projects.

**b) Awareness building**

To make people competent for taking appropriate decisions to make their lives more meaningful and educating them about certain vital issues forms an important focus for New HOPE.

Organisation of veterinary camps, and running of a modest library of books on important developmental issues mark a good beginning. More educational programmes are planned for the future.

**c) Promotion of local self-governance and local organisations**

Promoting people’s involvement in the village development process through Panchayats, Mahila Mandal and Youth Clubs is another intervention area of New HOPE.

Panchayati Raj has become an important third tier of governance, with the passing of 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The Amendment highlights the salient aspects of this process of democratic decentralisation in the rural set up.

It was recognised and felt by the people and the organisation that inadequate information and awareness about the Panchayati Raj institutions make the people handicapped in carrying out their newly recognised political role. This awareness led to the organisation of two phases of training and education workshop by New HOPE in collaboration with PRIA (Society for Participatory Research in Asia).

The objective of the workshops has been to educate the members of the identified Panchayats about the new Panchayati Raj Act. These workshops not only bring clarity about the significance, power and responsibilities of Panchayats, but also focus on other development related issues, facilitating better understanding and co-operation among different Panchayats.

**Overview**

New HOPE is still in its infancy. Based on the broad philosophy of people’s participation and on its objective of people’s empowerment through education, the organisation is strengthening the programmes underway, making them more people oriented and managed, and exploring new areas of intervention.

The programme implementations are not without hurdles, however the people-centered approach is facilitating the strive towards holistic development. "Hope" in people’s strength guides the way to a better future.
Development and People's Participation

The following presentation is based on face-to-face interview with four noted personalities

Francisco Vio Grossi

Francisco Vio Grossi is currently the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Chile. He has just been relieved from the position of President of International Council of Adult Education, but remains the member of Executive Committee. These apart, he is the director of Centre El Canelo de Nos, an NGO based just outside of Santiago in Chile. Centre El Canelo de Nos has been working for the patients and urban dwellers, addressing issues related to ecology, gender and culture, and imparting popular education and civic education. It is also involved in programmes for local development.

Centre El Canelo de Nos under the direction of Francisco Vio Grossi vociferously spearheaded a campaign against the then dictatorial regime. After democracy was instituted, Centre El Canelo de Nos campaigned to make the people aware of voting and educated them in democratic practices.

General scenario of development in Chile

Even after the onset of democracy the Chilean State has not been able to assert itself and take control of things. The State apparatus is very weak and the market is dominant. However, the State monopolises arms and the power to repress which is used to safeguard the principles of market in operation.

As far as the economic system in Chile is concerned, Pinochet, the then dictator reorganised the country completely in neo-liberal economic and socio-political ways according to the ideals of the Chicago school of economic thought. As a consequence, Chile built up a free market based on export, import and foreign investment. The Chilean economy is centred around fruits especially grapes and its export. If any time the export is hampered, Chilean economy dwindles. For instance, about four years back, two grapes were detected poisonous on US deck which drove the exporters in US to cancel the whole order of grapes and fruits. This led to total collapse of Chilean economy. This shows how dependent and fragile Chilean economy is.

However, undoubtedly Chilean economy has grown but not the economy of the people. The national economy has gained good health but the condition of common people has worsened. It is because the country's economy is rich-oriented and the poor are considered merely as labour or consumers dependent on credits.

As far as land is concerned, the fertile lands are with the entrepreneurs who grow fruits by exploiting seasonal labour. The farmers sell their fruits to intermediaries who have monopolised the trade. The scenario in industrial sector is also a similar one. The industrial sector invites big foreign investment. Environment is the prime victim as industry is based on massive extraction of natural resources. The State does not make any attempt to arrest these trends.

As far as social sector is concerned, State has handed over education, health and housing to the private sector. This has kept the people out of such facilities as they can't afford to avail them. The only help the democratic government renders to the people is in the form of subsidies in food, education, health and housing.

State of 'people's participation' in development and governance in Chile

Participatory strategy is not given scope in the Chilean development model. Popular knowledge is not given due recognition. On the contrary, 'scientific knowledge' is much valued and so-called experts wield the real power. The market-dominated economy coupled with the weak State do not encourage people's participation in development. Even the new democratic system of the country has not been able to extend democracy to the bottom in terms of sharing power and responsibility against the wishes of market.

The contemporary system of governance does not provide scope to community governance. The State only extends legal support to community organisations.

However, one thing which requires mention is increasing participation of civil servants in the affairs of the people. What is needed is to facilitate and improve the participation of civil servants in the lives of the people. Centre El Canelo de Nos runs several programmes to train the civil servants to enhance their participation in people's life.

Views on 'people's participation' in development or participatory development

Participatory strategy is essential for development. However, in Chile the term development is loosing its prestige. People are much more conscious of progress-
and aspire for a humane type of development. The people of Chile have begun to realise this and there is an awakening for their participation. Manifestation of such awakening among the workers of mines, teachers, students and other categories is noticeable.

Newly emerging ecological and feminist movements are strengthening such consciousness. The ecological or environmental movements have succeeded in compelling the foreign investors to respect environment, even more than Chilean investors. The feminist movement though operating in a traditional Catholic set up is making efforts to promote a divorce law which does not exist in Chile.

Role of NGOs and other groups
Community organisations in contemporary Chile are virtually non-existent. It is because the traditional leaders disappeared or were killed during dictatorial regime. The level of people's organisation in Chile is also very low. However, several informal groups exist. Hence, the real task is to politicise these informal groups rather than insisting on a model of formal organisation.

As far as NGOs are concerned, during the rule of Pinochet a very strong NGO movement assisted by international cooperation occurred in Chile. Now NGOs are playing a vital role in influencing the government to accept participatory strategy for development. The NGOs have organised Accion(action), which is a pressure group, to influence the government to increase the participation of the community in development programmes and to respect the autonomy of NGOs.

Jacques Proulx
Jacques Proulx is a professor in the Department of Psychology in F.L.S.H. University de Sherbrooke, Canada. Besides teaching intercultural communication, he has served Canadian Institute of Adult Education as its President. Currently he holds the position of Coordinator of International Cooperation, Vice President of the Canadian Sub-Commission of UNESCO and Vice President of International Council of Adult Education for North America.

General scenario of development in Canada
Canada is having a development model where the State imposes development and the provincial governments act as catalysts and facilitators. However, the model is primarily a growth-oriented one rather than strictly top-down. The power of the State has been enhanced and its role has increased because of larger integration of economy with that of North and Mexico. Free trade is overtaking the protectionist trade.

The contemporary development model has widened the gap between the rich and poor, have and have-nots; created and aggravated the problem of unemployment and generated new arenas of conflict. Conflict is arising between have and have-nots, those who have work and those who don't have, between the visions of
economic development and humane social development and between the protectionists and free trade protagonists. Tension is growing on increasing budget cuts on social programmes. Free trade is taking its toll by liquidating small entrepreneurs, as to compete within a free trade system requires enormous capital investment and infrastructure.

Views on 'people's participation' in development or participatory development

Role of people's participation in development is quite crucial if we have a vision of development that would help the people and community to develop resources and environment to fulfill their needs in a way that does not prevent the means to be passed on to the next generations. Participation allows clarifying needs and using the available resources in sustainable way for development. Participation is crucial as it allows the people and community to understand the inevitability of interdependence and the importance of a peace culture rather than a war culture.

Through participation people develop skills and leadership qualities/traits to cope with change and give an orientation to change. Participation allows development of a common vision of social projects that belong to many people and reflect the dreams of the common people.

But it is difficult to elicit participation or the chances of people's involvement may get constricted without democratic environment. Democratic environment is characterised by access to information and education for all and faith in the possibility that 'you can make the change'.

Role of NGOs and other groups

The non-government voluntary organisations in Canada since the last five years are realising that they have to renew their analysis in view of the recent changes in social and political environment, to identify the new challenges, the impact of new way of doing things and to identify appropriate research and action. The NGOs have to develop alternatives to the dominant model of development and to reduce the impact of the dominant development model.

The new society is becoming more and more multi-ethnic, hence more new problems and challenges are cropping up.

Now the NGOs are preparing themselves to take up these challenges. New groups such as literacy groups, solidarity groups, women's groups, etc. are emerging. These groups are influencing television to be more responsibly educative, and are making efforts to restore the self-esteem of the people and community. The NGOs are also asserting influence in the political process of the country. Now, they are not only heard by the government, but also becoming part of many official delegations. In certain fields such as environment, NGOs play a vital role.

There is still a conflict between NGOs and the
State. The conflict is about the strategy and model of development. However, confrontation has not marred collaboration between NGOs and government. While in the country, the NGOs are collaborating with the government, outside they are developing linkage with the NGOs in South, because now the issues are internationalized.

Dipl. Pol. Jakob Horn

Jakob Horn served the Institute of International Cooperation of DVV (German Adult Education Association) as the Director from 1974 to 1991. Based at Budapest, Hungary, he is still associated with DVV.

General scenario of development in Hungary

Hungary, a former socialist country, had started the process of democratization of the dogmatic socialist rule in the 1970s, which ended in early half of the 1990s with official institutions of democratization. This was a long process in Hungary as well as other former socialist countries such as Soviet Russia and Poland. After dismounting the socialist system, these countries are introducing free market economy principles without having a tradition of the same. This process is creating great difficulty affecting the daily life of the people, and every sector of economy.

The agricultural sector in Hungary has a long rich tradition and it functions at a very high level in terms of productivity, methods and knowledge. Under the socialist regime, the State owned all the farms and farming was done without recognising the need of flexibility in reaction to the increasing demands. No encouragement was accorded to individual initiatives.

Now the agricultural sector not only in Hungary but also in all other erstwhile socialist countries has received severe jolt. Hungary, in particular is facing a mammoth problem because of the breakdown of the socialist market. Now it is looking towards the West European market which is already facing a situation of over production.

Under the socialist system, agriculture which was heavily protected has changed completely. Now it has to sustain and face the new challenges of free market economy. This can be achieved by promoting local initiatives in the agricultural sector, allowing the farmers the flexibility of growing various agricultural products which can find a place in West European market, reorienting the thinking of the peasants and providing them with professional knowledge.

Similarly, industry is also undergoing great difficulty. The whole industry is disoriented. All branches of heavy industries have broken down. The State still owns 90 percent of the total industries as no buyer is available.

The world market, at present, is more transparent and free. It is good for the developing countries. In the long run, in spite of their handicaps, the developing countries will win. This will certainly make many victims. This is a crucial ethical and political question.

State of 'people's participation' in development and governance in Hungary.

Under socialist structures, people-initiated activities in civil society started at the local level in rural areas. Many of these local initiatives supported the official democratization starting in the first half of 1990s till the first general election.

Self-government has come into being after democratization. Self-governance in the Hungarian context means that the citizens of village or town or district are responsible for certain areas of development. This is the legal structure and principle in practical execution. This is also germinating conflicts because people are not used to taking such responsibilities as the socialist system did not respect the local initiatives. Then the system was highly centralised including cultural activities and educational policies. But now the people at the local level are responsible for social services and other important fundamental services of the community such as water, sanitation, etc. There is further a need to convince the people in villages to think about self-responsibility and to take care of services for all members of the community.

The adult educationists are playing a key role in this
development-oriented local self-governance, respecting that the individuals are free but they should also have responsibility for the community.

Views on 'people's participation' in development and governance

People's participation in development is crucial today to overcome the difficulties in the transitional phase which the former socialist countries are facing. People-centred governance at all levels, from village to nation, will only function in real sense, if civil organisations and institutions play the role of a daily fermentizer and build up a society with freedom and social justice.

Role of NGOs and other groups

The newly created non-government voluntary organisations are playing a very important role in this phase of transition and consolidation of democracy. The State and its organs are not taking care of all sectors because of the new structure and division of responsibilities under the new democratic system. The situation is further worsened due to paucity of finance. At this moment, NGOs are being formed by the people with common interests to take up developmental activities at village or district level. They are playing an important role in the area of self-governance.

Hungarian NGOs are trying to educate people and disseminate information through multi-media. Every Sunday in Channel II, a programme designed and prepared by NGOs to educate rural people is telecast. This is a well known programme and is considered to be a popular motivator. The NGOs are also distributing reading materials on various subjects. This has made the people in rural areas feel that they are not forgotten. In rural areas many groups, especially informal ones, have come up.

Though the NGOs in Hungary have big influence at the local and district levels, they do not play any effective role in influencing national policies.

What is urgently needed is greater cooperation among industrialised countries, former socialist countries and the developing countries, especially of the NGOs. The NGOs of the third world which have long experience in development, can help the NGOs and other people's groups in Hungary in an effective manner. However, exchange of such experiences is gradually building up.

World Summit for Social Development

MARIÁ LOURDES ALMAZAN-KHAN AND DR NALIN R JENA*

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/92, the World Summit for Social Development will be convened in Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1992, announces the Secretary-General of the United Nations. How to respond to it? What have been the responses from various quarters, especially what promises does it hold? Is it another Summit which will gradually lapse into oblivion?

The World Summit for Social Development builds on a series of global conferences, including (i) the World Conference on Education for All in 1990; (ii) the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 1990; (iii) the World Summit for Children in 1990; (iv) the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992; (v) the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993; (vi) the International Conference on Population and Development 1994. The World Summit for Social Development proclaims to address three crucial issues, i.e. poverty, unemployment and social conflict which the whole of mankind irrespective of the country, society, community, is confronting. The Summit intends not only to prioritise these issues on the agenda.

* The authors are from PRIA
of development but also to create an enabling environment and political will to tackle these vital problems.

Indeed, the Summit is very timely. This world event is going to take place at a point of time when the entire globe is undergoing dramatic social, economic and political changes affecting everyone’s life. On the one hand democratic processes are unfolding and on the other the market is becoming all pervasive. The pattern of development guided by purely economic principles has undermined the social and cultural aspects of development, has accentuated poverty and aggravated various other social problems resulting in schism. In this context, the Summit rightly focuses on attacking poverty, creating jobs, and building solidarity, though there are several other problems looming large.

Juan Somavia, Chilean Ambassador to the United Nations, who presides over the Preparatory Committee, in an interview to the People’s Alliance says, “During the preliminary organisation, we have made efforts to identify the leading problems with governments and civil society. This resulted in an agenda that includes reduction of poverty, generation of productive employment and promotion of social integration. These three global issues affect society as a whole, with greater intensity perhaps in the developing world but they are also increasingly present in the developed world”.

Preparation for the Summit has begun on mainly three fronts, i.e. the UN itself, member countries and non-government organisations.

While the Preparatory Committee of the UN is drafting the Programme of Action, member governments are working on their respective country papers, NGOs all over the world are initiating various fora to stimulate debate and inspire consensus on critical social development issues the world faces. They have actively advocated, with their governments and UN bodies and agencies, on alternative development strategies and policies.

One such initiative of NGOs is coordinated by the group of international NGOs who have constituted themselves into the People’s Alliance for Social Development (PASD) - a network of NGOs, people’s organisations, individuals, committed to initiating a set of processes ensuring the effective contribution of civil society in the World Summit and its preparatory activities.

Towards an Asia-Pacific Response

On October 11-18, 1994 more than a hundred participants from 92 NGOs all over Asia convened in Manila to voice their collective concern on social development problems in the region, and to offer concrete recommendations to the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference in preparation for the World Summit on Social Development. This gathering called the Asia Pacific NGO Forum for Social Development was part of an ongoing process initiated by the People’s Alliance for Social Development (PASD) along with other regional NGO networks preparing for the World Summit, such as the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), and the International Council for Voluntary Associations (ICVA).

The Asia-Pacific experience is particularly significant as it is home to some of the fastest growing economies of the world; home to the newly industrializing economies (NIEs) which are branded as prime examples of the positive effects of rapid economic growth. Current discourse in the official preparations for the World Summit persists in the preoccupation with growth-oriented strategies - and the Asia-Pacific region exemplifies many of these successes. NGOs have consistently argued, however, that while economic growth has unquestionably produced material wealth, unparalleled in the region’s history, it has exacerbated poverty and social inequity, unemployment and social disintegration, and has caused profound destruction on the environment.

Governments participating in the Social Summit discussions have advocated for policies which would institute safety nets or distributive mechanisms to stem the growing crisis of poverty, joblessness and social strife. What is clear however is that the severity of the crisis requires no less than a crucial break from the mainstream, growth-oriented development path.

As the Asia-Pacific NGO Forum for Social Development clearly articulated in their statement of 15 October 1994, “The only alternative we have to sustain human and humane existence into the twenty-first century is a fundamental change of course to a development path that is social and sustainable. One that puts people back in the centre of economic, political and social life; one that enables people to have access to and control over the resources that satisfy the needs of their material life, to participate in the processes and decisions that affect them and to draw from the wealth, diversity and depth of the human capacity for expression and interaction to fulfill their human wholeness; and, one that passes on all these to succeeding human generations. It is in the everyday lives of people where the struggle for social and sustainable development must be waged and where
strategies, programmes and policies will be ultimately assessed."

This 'fundamental change of course' requires the setting up of new institutional mechanisms and frameworks for representation, implementation and participation at local, regional and global levels. Governments need to recognise civil society not only as constituents but as partners in the development process. The United Nations needs to reform its organisational framework to make it more representative and accountable to humanity's concerns. Mechanisms need to be set up to address the unequal relations between the North and South, addressing the problem of unequal trade relations, debt servicing and skewed consumption patterns.

The challenge of the World Summit on Social Development is to find this common ground: a viable alternative which puts people at the centre of development; a consensus among the institutions of Civil Society, Government, and the For-Profit (Market) sectors for a sustainable development path committed to empowerment and democratisation.

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- 'Is Humanity Heading for a Dead-end? A Call for A Fundamental Change in Course', Asia Pacific NGO Forum for Social Development, 15 October 1994, Manila, Philippines.

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**Announcement**

**COURSE/TRAINING**

**Training course in Marketing of Non-timber Tree and Forest Products**

Regional Community Forestry Training Center (RECOFTC), Bangkok, Thailand, is offering the above training programme during February 6-24, 1995. The course is designed to provide middle management personnel in forestry departments and community forestry programme with the skills needed to explore and develop of markets for non-timber tree and forest products.

The course will include topics such as: marketing fundamentals; impact of national policy on the marketing of non-timber wood and forest product; impact of market demand on local resources, management practices and forest preservation, etc.

*For details and application form, please contact:*

**Dr Somsak Sukwong**
Director
Regional Community Forestry Training Center
P.O. Box-1111
Kasetsart University
Bangkok 10903
Thailand
Phone: 662-5790108; 5614881
Fax: 662-5614880

**Certificate Course in Community Forestry**

Regional Community Forestry Training Center, Bangkok, is offering the above course during June 5 to October 6, 1995 at RECOFTC.

The course objectives are to develop the skills to plan and implement community forestry activities with villagers, to develop knowledge and skills to advise villagers in the management of forest and tree resources and to act the role of facilitators between local people and the government. The course modules includes: introduction to community forestry and overview of the course; relevant forestry principles and practices; community based forest management systems; social and institutional issues; community forestry assessment and planning process.

RECOFTC is also offering a limited number of fellowships for participants from the Asia Pacific Region.

*For details and application form, please contact,*

**Dr Somsak Sukwong**
Director
Regional Community Forestry Training Centre
P.O. Box 1111
Kasetsart University
Bangkok 10903, Thailand
People's Participation in Rural Development: Need and Scope

SUJIT K DUTTA* AND DILIP K GHOSH**

The issue of people's participation in development or participatory development is not a new subject in India's planning era. The approach of participatory development was upheld since independence. Gandhi gave the first exposition of the participatory approach when he stated that 'people are the roots, the state is the fruit; that the classes at the top which are crushing the masses at the bottom must get off their backs', and that the democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the top, and 'that it has to be worked from below by the people of every village.' The thinking and ideology of Mahatma Gandhi are echoed in the voices of Jawaharlal Nehru when he reiterated while speaking in Community Projects Conference on December 15, 1952 that 'I think and thus they will affect our thinking as we affect their thinking...unless they feel that mental urge, that impact of the creative spirit within them to work'. The visions of the leaders are obviously reflected in India's First Plan Document. The following extract from the first Five Year Plan document is extremely relevant to stress once again that popular participation though talked about here and there by present leadership is not a new concept to India.

"Democratic planning will not succeed unless the sanction of an awakened public opinion operates powerfully and the force of public action in pursuit of constructive ends continually grows...The ignorance and apathy of large number have to be overcome...Their (people's) own views about their needs and difficulties and the correct solutions must be elicited and given the fullest weight in making the plans, in the execution of which they will be called upon to assist...Means have to be devised to bring the people into association both at the stage of formulation of the plans and in their implementation from stage to stage". But even after more than thirty years of planning, from different studies on this issue it can be realised that "in connection with rural development, presently there is no participation of rural poor in any kind of decision making process at the village, district and national levels of government. Lack of such participation has resulted in inadequate benefits for the poorer segment of the population. Equitable sharing of the fruits of the development programmes can only be ensured to poor people if their equitable participation in decision making and implementation process be ensured to the fullest extent. But the current political system many a time is biased towards the elitist section of the country both in urban and rural areas. Thus, inadequate representation of poor is the cause of their inadequate benefits and vice-versa. It is something like a closed circuit where reason is responsible for the consequence and consequence in turn accentuate the reason. Until this unholy alliance ceases to operate through strong external forces popular participation will remain an empty political will of the present leadership. First it should be assessed whether and how far they are really willing to allow common masses to participate in every step of development process. When programmes for the poor are formulated in consultation with political representatives and corresponding budgetary appropriation is approved by legislative bodies at various levels, the interests of poor masses are less likely to be given due weightage. Thus, participation through representatives does not yield good result unless participation be a direct one. A study on Panchayat bodies (formed on the basis of election in the year 1988) working in West Bengal will be presented in this article to reflect how far the Panchayat bodies are representative of the poor community of rural areas in true sense of the term.

The Panchayat election in West Bengal in the year 1993 introduced some changes in the composition pattern of Panchayat bodies through reservation of seats for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women. The objective was to bring them into the mainstream of the society on one hand, and on the other, to make them true partners in the development process of the
rural areas. A study was undertaken in a development block (Bolpur Srinketan) of Birbhum district West Bengal to have an idea about the socio-economic background of the Panchayat members. The study result is presented below. All these are done with the objective to know the representative character of Panchayat bodies in West Bengal as Panchayats are considered the vehicle of development in rural Bengal. If these bodies be representative of all sections of people in the villages, then and only then popular participation can be ensured.

The villagers had several traditions of participating in the development of their village and the village community. However, our new development approach has broken that fabric of commitment to social values. Individuals are now left alone. They are never called upon to get together and discuss matters relating to their welfare. The various schemes for rural development are handled either by the line departments in a bureaucratic fashion or by a coterie of government and Panchayat officials. Thus there is no encouragement for the people from all sections in a village to sit at the same place at par, to discuss and take decision on matters of common interest and concern.

With this conceptual background the present study has been taken up with the following objectives;

i) to portray different dimensions and forms of people's participation;

ii) to know the representative character of Panchayati Raj institutions at different levels, and;

iii) to examine the socio-economic background of Panchayat members.

Dimensions of Participation
Participation has economic, social and political dimensions. Participation is such a complex phenomenon that participation at one level may not result in participation at another level. The macro and micro dynamics of participation is a living phenomenon, so its complexion is changing continuously. What is necessary is to track these changes and adapt them to the changing situations. But participation means decentralization of the process where common people can participate in designing and implementing different projects at local level as "their knowledge in some respects is greater than that of technicians...This might release the latent creative and managerial energy" of common people (Hapgood, 1968). The development initiative thus should be based on the needs identified by local people and should involve them in the designing and implementation of various development projects and schemes using technology and working system suited to local conditions. As development is for the people so an essential element in the development process should be people's participation. Development should not come and cannot be imposed from outside or above. The desire for development must emanate from within and from those who have the desire to move from the lower rungs of socio-economic ladder to higher rungs (Santhanam, 1993).

Two Schools of Thought
There are two schools of thought on participation. The first school views participation as the key to inclusion of human resources in development efforts of the country. Now it is widely recognised that "if one could incorporate the human element in projects and persuade people to participate in them, then there would be stronger chance that projects would be successful" (Oakley, 1991). The second school
of thought advocates that participation of people is necessary for ameliorating their conditions of poverty and wretchedness. The view of this school is, "People are poor because they are excluded and have little influence upon the forces which affect their livelihood" (Ibid). Participation of people is necessary so as to empower them to exert some influences on decision making and implementation process of development activities.

If we look at the topic of discussion from the development angle, it can also be viewed that people's participation is a must for success in development efforts. As development is recognised as a humanisation process and people are at the focal point of any development programme, people should be allowed to participate freely and directly in any kind of development activities. Till now there exists donor-recipient relationship between the management of any development programme and its beneficiaries. Mostly, the recipient side remains silent and accepts whatever is given to them by delivery agency. Naturally, true manifestation of development process is yet to be seen. The word 'beneficiary' itself seems to be distorted as it automatically projects one (delivery agents of rural development programmes) superior to the other (beneficiaries, i.e. the recipients of the programme). For example, in poverty alleviation programme like IRDP, ineligible families many a times manage to get benefits of the programme. Concurrent evaluation of January-December 1989 reveals that 16.37 percent families having income of Rs. 4800 per annum managed to receive assistance though they were not eligible to get it. In 80 percent cases the assets provided to them were of good quality and 83 percent beneficiaries felt that the assistance i.e. subsidy plus credit provided to them were adequate for running their projects. The same document, published by the Department of Rural Development, Govt. of India, observed that adequate infrastructure facility was not available to beneficiaries in most of the cases. This would not happen if the beneficiaries were allowed to participate at the time of programme designing and implementation. Their participation can draw the attention of the delivery mechanism with respect to lack of infrastructural facilities (in IRDP there is a provision to spend 10 percent of allocation received on development of infrastructure schemes which will directly benefit IRDP beneficiaries). Field level experience tells that delivery agencies (DRDA, Block, Bank, Gram Panchayat) are either unable to perceive the needs of the beneficiaries or do not feel that it is their responsibility to locate infrastructural gap in the locality. A recent report published by the Department of Rural Development, Government of West Bengal (1994) showed that in IRDP necessary skills were not imparted to 31.78 percent IRDP families which made their schemes unremunerative. Again banks did not issue loan pass books to 30 percent recipients of IRDP schemes though it is obligatory for the banks to issue loan pass books to each and every loanee. Again, government monitoring mechanism was able to monitor only 3.56 percent of the beneficiary families per month in the year 1993-94 while according to IRDP Manual published by Government of India it should be 2070 (115 per district multiplied by the number of districts i.e. 17).

All these observations certainly indicate weakness of the programme that can be improved through active participation of the people in implementation of the programme. For example, monitoring of IRDP schemes can be entrusted to the Panchayat members as they are close to the recipients of the programmes. Again, more participation in designing the scheme and implementation will make them believe that the programme is meant for their betterment and the available funds should only be used fruitfully. Partici-
participation does not imply empowerment only, but it also helps enhancing awareness of people about different programmes and the formalities required to get the benefits. The experiences thus indicate that despite initiative taken by the government to help the rural poor and reduce the incidence of poverty, many of the programmes could not yield desired results, mainly due to lack of people’s participation (Jain, 1993).

**Forms of Participation**

Participation in development process may take different forms. In a nutshell they are presented here so as to emphasize the fact that the crying need of the present day is not only to call for people’s participation but to involve people intimately in every stage of development. This is particularly urgent for programmes of rural development and in functional departments associated with rural development. Most of the functionaries of these departments are neither rural nor poor. For obvious reason they cannot feel the pains and sufferings of the rural poor.

Participation may take the form of voluntary contribution, where people may not take part in planning or shaping the programme but contribute materials, labour, money and knowledge for implementation of the projects. For example, National Fund for Rural Development has been created for getting people’s money for strengthening the financial resource base of the government.

Participation may take the form of empowering people which means people get the power to influence the decisions in respect of planning and implementation. In 1979 the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development stressed the need to empower people through transfer of power which is ingrained in the word ‘participation’. Participation of rural people in the affairs of development is fundamental as they should decide upon and take actions which they believe to be essential for their development. Participation will generate a sense of ownership within the people which ensures maximum good out of the project. For example, in Social Forestry Project in West Bengal (Particularly in Bankura and Purulia district) disadvantaged people were brought into a collaborative management of forests to establish Forest Protection Committees (FPC). It has been decided “to make a compromise between the national interest and the local interest in as much as the communities are entitled to 25 percent of the net sale of the forest produce while Government retained 75 percent” (Palit, 1992). Therefore, in the present urge for decentralization of planning systems, participation is the means to an end which signifies the use of participation for achieving some predetermined goals or objectives. For example, with respect to poverty alleviation programmes people’s participation at village level is required for eliminating ineligible families from getting the benefits and selection of appropriate schemes/projects for the ineligible families. Some times it is argued that participation as a means is a passive form of participation as, as soon as the project is completed or a target has been achieved, enthusiasm of people to participate evaporates. But this logic has very limited validity because if the true spirit of participation be inculcated within the common people it will never die down, rather it will flourish through their experience of working in wider and conducive atmosphere. Participation, we feel, should be a permanent feature of any development venture, particularly in rural development activities.

Several questions are posed regarding how far the present development scenario is congenial for people’s participation. A quick study has been organised in Birbhum district of West Bengal for ascertaining the representative character of Panchayat bodies at village, block and Zilla Parishad level (The data based on 1988 Panchayat election in West Bengal). The objective of the study is to corroborate the fact that even Panchayat bodies working directly at village level do not represent all sections of the rural people. Even after about fifteen years of Panchayati Raj System in West Bengal (first Panchayat election was held in 1978) the elitist strata of rural areas (namely, teachers and cultivators) dominate the Panchayat institutions. In table 1 occupational status of members of three tiers of Panchayat set up is given.
From Table 1 it can be seen that of all the members of the three tier Panchayat bodies 70.65 percent members belong to cultivator-teacher group. Very little representation is there from bargadars (share croppers), pattadars (assignees of ceiling surplus land), agricultural labourers and rural artisans, as all these categories are clubbed together under the head 'other' and of 3091 Panchayat members only 19.02 belong to this category. These groups are the major constituents of this target group of rural development programmes. In Zilla Parishad which is at the helm of affairs of development work in the district, 50 percent are teachers and there is no representation from bargadars, pattadars, rural artisans and agricultural labourer categories. Further it can be seen that though according to 1981 census 49.01 percent of total population are women, of 3091 Panchayat members only two are women.

Out of the total members of 3091, 19.02 percent belong to scheduled caste communities and 5.72 percent are from scheduled tribe communities. Overall S.C./S.T. percentage in total members of Panchayat bodies is 24.72 percent whereas in the district as per 1981 census total population of S.C./S.T. community is 33.05 percent. This indicates that S.C./S.T. community of the district is not fully represented in Panchayat institutions of the district. From these two tables it can be concluded that Panchayat institutions at district, block and village level are not the true representatives of the poor people of the district. It is thus likely that the aspirations and needs of the common people will not be properly reflected in the agenda of development activities designed and implemented by these institutions. Thus the scope of people's direct participation in development activities is still very limited.

Bolpur-Sriniketan is one of the nineteen blocks of Birbhum district in the State of West Bengal. In this block there are nine Gram Panchayats (GPs). Out of 193 members of these GPs, 71 belong to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe communities. Again of 193 members, 67 are women. However, at the time of selection of Pradhans (head of a GP) and Upa-Pradhans, no woman member was selected as Pradhan. It is not true that there is no woman member who can manage a GP institution. It happens mainly because men dominate the situation. In case of Upa-Pradhans out of eight elected to the posts, four are women. If we consider caste status of Pradhans and Upa-Pradhans only two Pradhans belong to ST community. In case of Upa-Pradhans, two belong to SC and two to ST categories. Even if Muslim community be considered, it can be seen that out of 38 members from this community only three got the post of Pradhans. All these are presented to assert the fact that even within Panchayat bodies at the time of selecting the office bearers, attention is not paid to ensure representation of all sections. In the district also the same situation prevails. Out of 169 GPs, only in four GPs women are made Pradhans. In percentage, this is really microscopic. Out of 169 Upa-Pradhans, only 44 are females. Inadequate representation of all sections certainly makes people's participation a very difficult task to achieve.

Information on educational status of Panchayat members shows that out of 193 members only 18 have educational qualification more than secondary standard. Fifty nine members have education upto primary standard and 62 have completed secondary education. With regard to education level of Pradhans, out of nine Pradhans, eight have education upto secondary standard and only one is a graduate. In case of Upa-Pradhans out of eight, one is primary educated, four are secondary educated, two are graduate and one is a
post-graduate. This postgraduate Upa-Pradhans is a woman. She can easily manage the office of a Gram Panchayat. But she was made the Upa-Pradhan.

The unique feature of Panchayat bodies in West Bengal is that mostly people with lower income represent the Panchayat organisations. In the present study, out of 913 members 86 belong to income range upto Rs. 4000 per annum. Only 5 members have income more than Rs. 25000 per annum. If below poverty line income be considered, then out of 193 members, 174 belong to the category of the poor. However, at the time of election of Pradhans, only one member was selected as Pradhan from the lowest income range. In case of Upa-Pradhans, however, out of eight, four are selected from the lowest income range. Thus in higher posts representation of weaker section is very limited. This is sure to jeopardise the scope of people's participation. Until and unless the poorer community capture the power structure of people's organisations, participation of people in different areas of development activities will remain a dream.

The scope of participating in development is very much limited by factors like mass illiteracy, social inhibitions and dependency syndrome. Mass illiteracy does not allow the poor to be fully informed of their rights and to develop into a powerful pressure group capable of bargaining for their betterment. Various social inhibitions and stigmas forced the lower strata people to remain silent and accept without question whatever has been given to them. Probably the most frequent and powerful social obstacle to participation of poor people is the mentality of dependence or dependency syndrome which is deeply and historically ingrained in their minds. The poor in society are heterogeneous groups with little cohesion within them. Lack of leadership and organisational skills and obvious lack of experience in interaction with outer world force them to remain outside the development activities of their locality. As a consequence of perpetuation of these constraints most of the rural people want to remain where they are in the present socio-economic framework where existing economic and social arrangements help to continue the control of the few to the exclusion of the majority of the society. So long as the poor people of villages can be organised into viable economic groups, the question of their participation in development affairs will remain wishful thinking. Only real political will can create the scope for participation of poor people in planning and implementation of development activities. The Eighth Plan strategy for encouraging people's participation in development process can be best described in the words of Chairman of Planning Commission, "The success of development programmes can be multiplied manifold if the people are whole heartedly involved in their implementation. The implementation strategy for the Eighth Plan, therefore relies on building and strengthening people's institution and making people active participants. The role of government will be to create opportunities for the process of people's involvement in developmental activities". In fact, the Eighth Plan has been designed as a joint endeavour in national development. In the process of development, people must participate and the Government must cooperate. In this plan for the first time a new direction is being given to achieve plan objectives by the adoption of the institutional approach (Deputy Chairman's statement in Preface of the Eighth Plan). In this direction the Eighth Plan put a greater emphasis on the role of voluntary organisations in the development process of the country, with particular importance to rural development. ■

References
The Proposed New Forest Act: An Overview of the Critiques

DR NALIN RANJAN JENA*

The Ministry of Environment and Forest is ready with a draft forest Bill which is proposed to replace the Indian Forest Act 1927. The Ministry calls it the Conservation of Forests and Natural Ecosystems Act. The proposed Act has been subject to contentious debate by NGOs, academicians and activists. Here we intend to present a compendium of some of the critiques proffered by various quarters.

The very title of the Act has been subject to critical examination. It is pointed out that the title sounds over and goes beyond the jurisdiction of the concerned Ministry as it includes 'natural ecosystem'. To quote Ashish Kothari in this context, “The Natural Ecosystem would include, as per the definition given in the draft, both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems: forests, grasslands, wetlands, coral reefs, etc. If needed it is the intention of the government to conserve and sustainably utilize all such ecosystems, then the provisions will have to be greatly expanded, since the draft mostly deals with forests. Thus, for instance, wetlands require special treatment, and provisions which are quite different from those dealing with forests (e.g. against draining, pollution, etc., or dealing with sustainable fisheries). Also, the administrative structure currently dealing with wetlands is usually not the Forest Department, so this aspect too will need to be looked into”.

The proposed Act receive applause from the critics for its conservation orientation, ecological focus and relative deemphasis on industrial wood production from forest areas. Walter Fernandes points out, “Conservation is essential because India’s tree cover which stood at 40 percent in 1854, at 22 percent at the time of independence, has come down to a little over 10 percent today. Unless strong measures are taken to preserve forests and undertake afforestation, India can be sure of facing ecological disaster.” He further says, “It should be obvious then, that any new legislation should have a conservation orientation. That is what the proposed Act does.”

All the critiques unanimously denounce the non-

* The author is in the Centre for Participation and Governance in PRIA.

participatory approach adopted in the Bill. While people's participation in the management of this vital natural resource and people's rights and privileges are relegated to the rear stage, conservation under more centralised state control, power consolidation of the forest bureaucracy and abrogation of people's rights have gained prominence. Ashwini Chhatre views, “Forest management backed by legislation was formerly started in India by the British in the 1860s. It was primarily designed to sustain a regular supply of timber to the British Navy for ship building and to the Railways for sleepers. For this purpose the British erected a comprehensive legislation to takeover large tracts of forests and enforce state control for what they termed scientific management. However, this process did not enjoy any legitimacy and there were widespread protests, sometimes violent, against the provisions of these laws. The most glaring shortcoming of the proposed bill is a total ignorance of this historical evidence. The bill not only retains all the sections of the present Act but also proposes to add many more sections and clauses, giving greater powers to the forest bureaucracy.”

Prof. B.K. Roy Burman suggests that the preamble of the proposed Act should be reframed as “an Act to provide for restoration, conservation and management of forests and natural ecosystems thereto in partnership and with active participation of the forest dwelling communities and matters connected therewith and incidental.”

The critics consensually converge on the point that conservation without people is disastrous which is imbibed in the proposed Act. Apart from finding flaws with the basic orientation and approach of the proposed Act, each critic in his/her own style has taken up the sections, subsections and clauses for critical assessment in the context of his/her experience, understanding and perspective.

Here, we will confine ourself to summarizing the broad areas.

TYPE OF FORESTS
Reserved, Protected and Village forests

The proposed Act aims at expanding reserved forest and village forests, while doing away with protected forests. The process of constituting reserved forests starts with a notification in the official gazette specifying the forest (or any government land) and appointing a forest settlement officer to record and settle the claims to rights by the local people in the specified area. The forest settlement officer is rested
with the authority to record all such claims in writing and to accept or reject them in whole or in part before the state government finally notifies the forest as reserved under section 20.

The draft bill also authorises the state government to deserve the forest with the approval of the central government. The proposed Act, like the earlier one, extinguishes all rights of people in reserved forest. As far as the management of reserved forest is concerned, the government or the forest department is entrusted with absolute authority to manage.

Ashish Kothari comments, "The chapter on reserved forests provides for continued centralised control over forests by the state or central bureaucracies, with virtually no provisions for meaningful involvement of local communities in their management."

Ramchandra Guha explicates, "The new Act's ultimate objective is either to constitute reserved forests or village forests, " in the process gradually doing away with intermediate category of protected forests. However, a careful reading of the Act shows that its real aims are (i) to restrict people's rights in reserved forests, which are owned and managed by state; (ii) to sharply limit the area or extent of village forests in which local communities could exercise more effective and independent control.

The proposed Act (Section 1.12 and 12 (d)) subjects granting of rights to fuel, fodder, etc. to "carrying capacity" of the land. And "carrying capacity" is to be decided and determined by the forest settlement officer. If the land is considered "already degraded", the forest settlement officer can immediately stop the exercise of rights.

The concept "carrying capacity" has vehemently been criticised by almost all the critics. They emphasise that the concept is ambiguous and difficult to implement. In fact, the proposed Act itself does not attempt a definition or explanation. Prof. Ramchandra Guha comments that the proposed Act does not do so as no definition is possible.

Sharad Kulkarni states that in the Act of 1927, there was no provision to declare a protected forest to be not protected. However, such a power was presumed and was exercised by the state government from time to time for developmental activities. In the proposed Act, strict provisions have been made to declare protected forest as no more protected (Section 34 (i)). Kulkarni views that the provision in the proposed Act is very complicated and will obstruct the execution of development projects by unprotecting protected forests.

The third category, i.e., village forest has received more attention in the proposed Act. The critiques view that village forest assumes crucial importance from the point of view of adivasi, and other forest dwellers, as well as joint forest management. The proposed Act empowers the state government to constitute village forest over any land other than reserved forest over which it has proprietary rights or any land at the disposal of the village community or to which the village community has access by way of any right, concession or privilege to conserve. Village forests are to be managed through the village community and guidelines for such management have been laid down in the proposed Act. The village community, individually and the local body collectively, shall restrict the usage of the village forests to the extent and nature provided for in the management plan. However, as Kulkarni mentions, "Ultimately, the power of control over the village forest will be in the hands of the state government. It is laid down that where the state government or its authorised officer is satisfied that the local body or the residents of the village are either unable to protect the village forest or to abide by the prescribed management plan, the state government or the authorised officer may pass an order taking over the management of the forest after giving the villages or the local body an opportunity to present their case."

The critics view that the restrictive provisions on village forests drastically goes against the joint forest management, which has shown results of involving people in restoration and management of degraded forest. Walter Fernandes laments, "The bill has provisions that will act as disincentives to forming village forests as a modified form of JFM. The bill empowers state government to take back the management of village forests from the local body. The provision rules out JFM as a viable alternative, as majority of the forests in our country are reserved."
Guha adds that all the good quality land are under reserved category. He further says that the present provision forbidding the conversion of reserved forests to village forests will deliver a body blow to the programmes of JFM.

**Shifting Cultivation**

It is viewed that the proposed Act aims at doing away with shifting cultivation without providing any viable alternative means of livelihood to the poorer lot who are still surviving on shifting cultivation.

Whenever the state government wishes to protect forests owned by an individual or a community over which shifting cultivation is being practiced, under provisions of this bill, it may declare the same as "agro-forests" (Sect. 38F). The state government shall appoint a settlement committee of a maximum of seven persons to enquire into the claims of individuals and communities, and determine their rights, privileges and concessions, alleged to exist in respect of the practice of shifting cultivation. The settlement committee shall forward its report to the state government, with its recommendations. The state government shall announce the award "subject to such review as it may deem necessary," within a year of the report of the settlement committee, and notify it in the gazette. Such notification shall, as far as may be practicable, specify the identities of persons and communities in respect of whom rights, privileges and concessions to the practice of shifting cultivation have been admitted. Besides, the boundaries of the agro-forest will be notified. The central or state governments may make rules to regulate the management of the agro-forest according to a management plan, issue guidelines for the preparation of the management plans and prescribe the minimum period of rotation of shifting cultivation. Where forests are proposed to be reserved or protected, the state government will decide whether to permit shifting cultivation, in whole or in part, and where prohibited, extinguish it within a maximum of three years, provided that it will not be permitted on slopes exceeding thirty degrees. Permission for cultivation on slopes between ten and thirty degrees shall not be given without prior approval of the central government, Ashwini Chhatre says.

With respect to the domain of agro-forestry, Prof. Guha points out, the proposed Act facilitates unnecessary and irksome interference by the state. The proposed Act claims to facilitate tree farming, but at the same time it places numerous hurdles for the farmer. Every tree-grower has to be registered with the forest department, who must be informed when trees planted and nurtured by the farmers are to be felled or sold. Prof. Guha feels that these restrictions will be a great deterrent to farmers who might otherwise plant trees on their land.

As far as harvesting timber and other forest produce are concerned, the government, central or state, exercises absolute power. The trade in any or all classes of forest produce is also centralised (Section 40A). Chhatre comments that these provisions are a major step towards centralisation of decision-making powers at the centre. The centre is even empowered to "prescribe the route by which alone timber and other forest produce may be imported or exported" or prohibit or regulate its movement from one state to another.

On the whole, the draft forest bill is based on... (Contd. on page 26)
Books and Documents

READINGS ON PANCHAYATI RAJ

Recently the issue of local self-governance in the form of Panchayati Raj has been subject to intensive and extensive debate and discussion all over the country. This has led to the generation of a plethora of literature on Panchayati Raj analysing various aspects of it. The following are some of the important documentations on the same.


The book is a comparative study of decentralization in three developing countries where the efficiency of 'centralized bureaucracy' and arrogance of 'party elite' have generated a good climate for local self-governance.

The main aim of the comparative study is to examine few models of decentralization in India, Nigeria and People's Republic of China, compare them on a set of common parameters and draw conclusions which can generate further discussion and research. Comparative study of five states of India is also included in order to enhance a holistic understanding of decentralization patterns.

The book is classified into nine chapters, with three chapters devoted to the description of local self governments in Nigeria, China and India, along with an added chapter analysing the Karnataka model. The Nigerian successful experiment with decentralized local government, beginning with the military regime in 1975, and culminating into the new Nigerian Constitution (1989) recommended system of local governance, the increase in lower level autonomy with the creation of village committees in China and the Panchayati Raj in India form the focus of discussion.

The decentralization patterns of the three countries are compared on the common parameters of structures and relationships, power and functions, and financial and human resources.

Need for greater decentralization and democratization in the developing countries is stressed by the comparative study. The author feels that for local government to be regarded as a vehicle for promoting social and economic development, efforts need to be made to improve its image as an effective third tier of the government.


A compact, well written document on Panchayati Raj, analysing its transition from legislation to movement. The book is arranged in seventeen chapters, neatly organised into three parts.

The author traces the history of Panchayati Raj from the traditional Panchayats existing during the British period, with special reference to Lord Ripon's local self-government institutions, highlighting the gained impetus under Gandhi.

Categorizing the post independence emergence of Panchayati Raj institutions under first (Nehruvian era 1959-1964) and second generation phases (Post Ashok Mehta Committee), the evolution is traced till the phase of legislative and constitutional support and its implementation.

Critical analyses of the experiments of the states of Karnataka, Orissa, West Bengal and China give a complete view of the success and failures of the Panchayat Raj institutions and the reason for the same.

The discussion is further enriched by dealing with the critical issues of the role of women and political parties in Panchayati Raj.


The book is an analytical overview of the emergence of Panchayat Raj, with the author taking a national, as well as a state specific perspective of this important local self-governance issue.

The author has neatly categorized the discussion into four autonomous yet interrelated parts.

The focus of part one of the book is on a general review of the development of Panchayati Raj. It critically analyzes the local self-government heritage, from the first decade independent India, under Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of self-governing villages till the current position of conferment of constitutional status to Panchayati Raj following the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act.

An intensive analysis of the Panchayati Raj in eleven states is carried out in part two. The Panchayati Raj institutions of each state and a critical appraisal of their work enhances the holistic understanding of the decentralization issue. Each essay on the state Panchayati Raj institution is based on personal discussion and observation in the village by the author, supplemented
by available literature.

Eleven states are organised in three categories on the basis of the status and efficiency of their Panchayati Raj institutions, and their performance is reviewed. Several weaknesses restraining the role performance of these institutions have been identified and relevant suggestions to reinforce their political and developmental role are discussed. The author recognises the relevance of local self-government in rural as well as urban areas and further clarifies its nature with the help of two case presentations of PR Institutions.


This book evolves with the recognition of the need to train women for developing appropriate knowledge and skill in order to facilitate their participation in local self government. This follows the provisions for 33% reservations for women following the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act.

The book consists of nine chapters, neatly classified into three parts. The first part deals with empowering the women for politics, tracing historically their role in Panchayati Raj. The author suggests an agenda for action which includes strategies for empowering women through imparting information, training and political education.

The role of political parties in imparting political education and training of women is analyzed in considerable detail, and the significance of imparting training to government officials and rural development functionaries is highlighted in this important document.

It is an important source of information on government, non-government and grassroots level organizations and training institutes which are working for the empowerment of the women, especially for building their skills to carry out their newly recognized and assigned political role under the Panchayati Raj. Each organization's strategies for imparting political education and training are discussed in a simple yet comprehensive manner.

This is an important document for those interested in the study of women's role in Panchayat Raj.

**THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN POST-COMMUNIST EAST CENTRAL EUROPE.** Les Ewa 1994. Published by CIVICUS; Washington D.P. Pp. 75. The book contains five chapters besides an interesting introduction and informative appendices. The book based on a survey on the status of citizen action in the Eastern European region is part of a global study conducted by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. CIVICUS is an international alliance of organisations and individuals to strengthen citizen action and influence throughout the world through voluntary initiatives, philanthropy and community service.

This report discusses the position and prospects of the voluntary sector in Central and Eastern Europe, specifically Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovak Republic and Russia.

The book reveals that the transition of 1989-1990 made possible the re-emergence of an entire spectrum of voluntary organisations, groupings and movements in the public life of Eastern European Societies.

The voluntary sector varies significantly from country to country in regard to its scope, institutional types and mission. The earlier monolithic approach to the voluntary sector in the former Soviet block countries is being replaced by a multidimensional approach evolving along sub-regional differences in development, traditions, local circumstances and the advancement of the process of systematic transformation.

Despite all the political, economic and social differences, voluntary organisations in Central and Eastern Europe are in the process of transition from etatism to pluralism, seeking a place in the new institutional order. They have several characteristics and problems in common and often face similar challenges that this report discusses.

*For copies, please contact:*

**PRIA**
42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area
New Delhi-110 062
Phone : 622 - 1908, 643 - 9559, Fax: 91-11-647 1183

**CIVICUS**
919 18th Street N.W.
Suite 300, Washington D.C. - 20006 U.S.A
Phone : (202) 313-8518, Fax: (202) 331-8774


This volume has a special focus on people and the environment, in support of the 1994 United Nations International Conference on Population and Development. The volume is divided into four parts. The first part deals with the issues related to people and environment focusing on natural resource consumption; the environmental impact of population growth, and women's role in sustainable development. All the three chapters in Part-I support the idea that environmental and developmental issues are intimately connected.

Part-II reports on regional environmental conditions, trends and issues in Asia; one on China, the other on India.

The Report on China concludes that China is developing with enormous economic momentum and yet faces equally immense environmental problems. India has a wealth of natural resources, but poverty and the rate of growth of its population, as well as increasing industrialisation, are straining those resources and increasing the risk of serious degradation.

Part-III focuses on diverse areas and issues starting from food and agriculture to industry to international policies and institutions leading to international governance.

Part-IV presents the latest data on environmental conditions and trends. In addition to the updated core data presented in every issue, the data chapters present a wealth of new information to help give context to the global debate.


The United Nations Development Programme has come up with its annual report on Human Development. It is an useful substantive document which raises topical development issues every year.

While the Human Development Report 1993 examines how and how much people participate in the events and processes that shape their lives, the later 1994 Report expounds a new concept of human security - one that focuses on the security of people in their communities and in their environment. Such a concept of security binds together all people and all nations, and it can be addressed only through sustainable human development strategies, not through the acquisition of even more powerful weapons. The Report identifies some new indicators of human security that can help given an early warning on countries heading for trouble and alert the international community about the need for preventive diplomacy as well as preventive development.

1994 Report addresses the key issues likely to be taken up at the World Summit for Social Development to be held in March 1995 in Copenhagen. The Report offers a six-point agenda for the consideration of the Social Summit, including a World Social Charter, a 20:20 human development compact, measures for capturing the potential peace dividend, a global human security fund, a strengthened UN umbrella for human development and a UN Economic Security Council.

The Report also ranks all the countries by the Human Development Index (HDI), using the latest data. An updated set of human development indicators for 173 countries is also presented in the annexure.

Seminar/Conference Report


In April 1994, SID co-organised with the People-Centred Development Forum (PCD Forum) and the International Group on Grassroots Initiatives (IGGRI) an international workshop on Sustainable Livelihoods: Concepts and Strategies, for a Global Campaign. At this workshop some 40 activists and intellectuals from some 20 countries came together to share ideas, experiences, and information on the theme of sustainable livelihoods. The workshop agenda covered:

- Working towards a consensus definition of sustainable livelihoods;
- Scenario building to identify alternative paths to a global economy that provides sustainable livelihoods for all people;
- Examining alternative change strategies suggested by the scenarios;
- Planning inputs to planned SID regional conferences in preparation for the Social Development Summit.

The Report contains six papers inclusive of two synthesis papers. The synthesis paper by David C. Korten, President of PCD Forum analyzes the issues surrounding the theme of sustainable livelihoods, a part of which was based on the contributions of the participants at the workshop. The report then brings together three papers presented above as well as a paper on Strategies for Community Economic and Social
Transformation" by Sixto K. Roxas. A reflection from a Mexican participant, Gustavo Esteva on Social Affirmation has likewise been included.

This workshop report is meant to document and initiate wider dialogue and sharing on concepts and strategies for sustainable livelihoods in various regions of Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and North America. It is hoped that the outputs of these various workshops will make a contribution to elaborating on the issues. summit for the World Summit for Social Development in March 1995 in Copenhagen.

Inquiries or comments on this report should be addressed to:

Tina Limzon
PIED, Programme Coordinator
SID, Palazzo Civita del Lavoro, 00144, Rome, Italy
Tel: (396) 592 - 5506, Fax: (396) 591 - 9836


Asia-Pacific NGO conference is a part of the series of consultations which are taking place at the grassroots, national and regional levels in preparation for the World Summit to be held in March 1995. The conference was organised by the People's Alliance for Social Development (PASD) which is a coalition of NGOs and Networks formed to contribute to NGO perspective towards the World Social Summit 1995.

The report compiles the presentations by resource persons and records plenary discussions. The report presents an Asia-Pacific perspective on poverty alleviation, social integration and employment generation. The workshop led to the formulation of Strategies for the World Summit and Beyond which includes five points for discussion and thirteen points for action.

For the report, inquiries and comments, please address to:

Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement
940 Kayumanggi Press Building
Quezon Avenue, Quezon City
Philippines
Phone: 632-985576; 985563; 991715
Fax: 632-997919

Society for Participatory Research in Asia
42 Tughlakabad Institutional Area
New Delhi-110062
Phone: 011-6221908; 6439559, Fax: 011-6471183


VIKSAT in collaboration with the Pacific Institute carried out various research studies on the 'groundwater management.' This report presents the discussion and recommendations of a workshop on 'Water Management: India's Groundwater Challenge' held in Ahmedabad, Gujarat on December 14-16, 1993. The purpose of the workshop was three fold: to focus attention on the growing problem of water scarcity, to bring together individuals with a wide range of experience (national and state government, NGOs, academic researchers, and international donor agencies) into one forum and to generate an agenda for future work towards effective groundwater management approaches.

Recognising the importance of groundwater, major discussions were carried out for its sustainable management. Issues like problem of over-exploitation, groundwater legislation, hydro-geological mapping, receding international financing, technical development programme, economic water tariffs, conserving scarce groundwater resources, groundwater recharge projects, underground reservoirs, administrative setup for private irrigation and management information system were taken up. Following the discussion on these issues, various recommendations were put forward. These recommendations mainly emphasized upon the need for a systematic integrated approach to water management and also expanding the research area to cover the technical, social management, institutional and economic aspects of water management.

The report tries to present the crux of the 69 papers which were solicited nationally and internationally. Divided in five parts, it gives the summary and recommendations, the invited lectures, background notes and discussion summaries, various abstracts and finally the list of participants. The third part on background notes and discussion summit is further divided into four sections, namely emerging problems related to groundwater, physical management alternatives, current patterns of use and organisation and social opinions for management. Hence, this report provides a deep insight into groundwater management.

For copies, inquiries and comments, please contact:

VIKSAT
Thaltej Tekra, Ahmedabad, Gujarat-380054
Phone-0272-442651; 442642, Fax- 0272-420242

Participation & Governance Vol. 1 No. 2 November 1994

The book is distinctly divided into two parts. The first part compiles the debate on the proposed new Forest Bill and the second part enlists various Acts and judicial verdicts pertaining to forests and forest land. This is published on the occasion of the South India level Workshop on the proposed Forest Bill and forest lands, held on September 27-28, 1994 in Bangalore.

The book has basically brought together important articles critically assessing the proposed Forest Bill and documents relating to two issues namely, the Draft Forest Bill and privatization of forest lands for raw material needs of industries to facilitate widespread debate in the larger perspective of the forestry issues among the activists, scientists and concerned bureaucrats leading to people oriented policies and practices.

The book critically analyses the draft Forest Bill titled, 'The Conservation of Forests and Natural Ecosystems' and proposes certain amendments to it. The articles highlight a common point that the colonial forest laws which are still in vogue, are the cause of severe conflict between the forest communities and the state. But unfortunately, the proposed forest bill also follows the path towards centralisation and state monopoly. It, therefore, requires re-drafting and reworking to allow for a participatory system of forest management in which environmental protection is made harmonious with the claims of social justice. An alternative document is needed which should include the government's suggestions as well as decision of local people and other parties concerned.

The book provides a detailed presentation of the experiences and studies by various scientists and organisations, which urgently calls for conservation of natural forests and biodiversity. This is an evolutionary document intended to catalyze further reflections and debates on the forest issue.

For copies, inquiries and comments: Samaj Parivartana Samudaya (SPS) Asha Deep, Jayanagar Cross, Saptapur, Dharwad-580001, Karnataka

Return to Existence is a video documentary based on Adivasi Sangamam. On October 12, 1992 various Adivasi organisations in the South, scattered and numerically small, in the tri-junction of the states of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamilnadu brought together 35 Adivasi organisations from 11 states of the country in the Adivasi Sangamam at Mananthavity of Wayanad district in Kerala State. The historical emergence of these submerged people with their distinct culture and world views expressed in different forms is a challenge to the dominant culture, politics and development. October 12, 1992 symbolised the memory of the victorious battle of the Kurichias against the British imperialist in 1802. It was also the fifth centenary of the Resistance to colonialism. RETURN TO EXISTENCE captures the Adivasi Sangamam, its life and rhythm, the hopes and challenges, contextually.

For copies, please contact;

MADHYAM
No-1, 1st Floor, 10th Cross,
Vasanthanagar, Bangalore-560052

DELHI FORUM
F-10-12, Malviya Nagar,
New Delhi-110017

Conference
Local Heritage in the Changing Tropics: Innovative Strategies for Natural Resource Management and Control
Organised by:
The Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies
The Tropical Resource Institute
The Yale Student Chapter of International Society of Tropical Foresters

The conference will focus on the strategies used by marginalised peoples to assert customary rights over resource use and control in the current global context. The organisers are soliciting papers in the following areas:

1. Legal structure and local recognition
   - ethnicity as identity
   - role of international entities
   - adaptation of culture and management

2. Constructive Market Participation
   - using local markets
   - demonstrating value
   - international marketing

3. Information Technologies
   - mapping
   - data base
   - networking
   - media attention

Audio Visuals
RETURN TO EXISTENCE. 59 minutes. (available in English and Kannada)
The conference organisers sought abstract by September 1, 1994, and final papers by November 30. Those interested may contact the organisers to find out if papers can still be sent.

For inquiries and details, please address to:

Andi Eicher
ISTF Conference Committee
Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies
205 Prospect Street, New Haven, CT 06511
Fax: 203-4325942
E-mail: cwoodwar@minerva.cis.yale.edu


Organised by:

Indian Environmental Society
U-112,(3rd floor), Vidhata House,
Vikas Marg, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092 INDIA
Phone: 011-2223311, Fax: 91-11-3317301

The conference has the following objectives:

1. To develop action plan and programme for participation of women in developmental activities for social equity and sustainable development;
2. To assess the post Rio scenario and provide an input for the up-coming World Conference on Women to be held at Beijing, China in September, 1995.

Following topics are proposed to be discussed during the conference:

• Barriers to women's full participation in sustainable development
• Review of social status and legal rights of women
• Need for education and awareness for empowerment of women
• Women as natural resource managers
• Women's participation in control of environmental degradation
• Role of voluntary organisation and media in improving the status of women
• Assessment of women's related programmes and policies after UNCED
• Formulation of an agenda for World Conference on women at Beijing

The organisers solicited abstracts before November 30, 1994. Those interested may contact the organiser at the above mentioned address.

(Cont'd from page 20)

Growing centralisation of decision-making in all matters relating to forests. Prof. Guha says, "The draft forest Act, if passed into law, shall represent an emphatic victory for the forces of strict conservation and strict state control". He suggests that the present draft should be redrafted and reworked to allow more for a participatory system of forest management, in which environmental protection was made harmonious with the claims of social justice. Ashwini Chhatre comments, that the present law is totally antiquated and out of context. He views that a new law is required that reflects the changed situation regarding forests and addresses the crucial issues of environmental regeneration. Walter Fernandes says, "Most NGOs welcome the importance given to conservation but think that this goal has no meaning and cannot be achieved without the active involvement of the people affected." Prof. B. K. Roy Burman too supports the total rejection of the draft and framing another legal instrument which gives enough scope to participatory management of natural resources.

References

ASIA-PACIFIC CONSULTATION ON CIVICUS

A two day Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on CIVICUS (World Alliance for Citizen Participation) was convened in Manila during October 14-15, 1994. This Consultation had the following objectives:

a) To further our analysis of trends, challenges and opportunities facing Civil Society in Asia-Pacific following the regional study report;

b) To promote greater exchange and partnership across various sub-sectors of Civil Society in Asia-Pacific;

c) To identify critical issues facing Civil Society in our region which can be addressed by CIVICUS World Assembly scheduled in Mexico January 1995.

Twentythree participants from 11 countries of the region participated in this consultation. The participants came from Women's Movement, Environmental Movement, Training and Research Institute, Human Rights Group, Media, Popular Democracy Campaigns and individuals working towards the promotion of Citizens' Participation in their countries. Many national, regional and international NGOs working on developmental issues also took part.

The first session of the consultation examined the findings of the Asia-Pacific study undertaken by CIVICUS during 1993-94. From this debate three issues of significance were identified. These included relationships with the Market, relationships with the State and relationships with the Media. It became obvious from this discussion that emergence of Civil Society has uneven and chequered history in different countries of the regions and space for civic action varies across these countries.

It also became obvious that the nature of the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) was internally competing and contradictory, at times. It is in this context that useful sharing of experiences and analysis was made to look at the possibilities of building the regional alliance of CIVICUS in Asia-Pacific. It became clear from this discussion that the process of building the alliance was strengthened through this regional consultation and needed to be spread through existing network and contacts within the countries and sub-regions. Different participants took responsibility to carry this process forward.

It was agreed that the summary of the key issues discussed in this Consultation be fed into the First World Assembly of CIVICUS schedule in Mexico City during January 10-13, 1995.

For further details, interested persons/institutions may contact:

Ms. Margaret Bell AM,
President, IAVE, P.O.Box C591
Clarence Street
Sydney NSW 2000
AUSTRALIA.

Mr. Horacio R. Morales
Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement
940, Kayumanggi Press Building
Quezon Avenue, Quezon City
PHILIPPINES.

Dr. Rajesh Tandon
Executive Director
Society for Participatory Research in Asia
42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area
NEW DELHI - 110 062
INDIA.

WORKSHOP ON WEST BENGAL PANCHAYAT RAJ SYSTEM

PRIA in collaboration with State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) West Bengal, organised a four-day workshop on "West Bengal Panchayat System: Learning from its Experiences," during September 12-15, 1994 at SIRD, Kalyani, West Bengal. The main objectives of this workshop was to understand the West Bengal Panchayat System; its structure, systems, procedures, functions, etc., which is in practice for the last 18 years. Voluntary Organisations (VO) working in various states have very limited experience about Panchayat system especially the elected Panchayat. Twenty two VO representatives from six States participated in this workshop. The workshop was divided into lectures and discussion by the concerned government officials, elected members, academicians and also field visit to interact with the elected members at the Gram Panchayat and Panchayat Samiti level.

Dr. Suryokanta Mishra, Minister of State for Rural Development and Panchayat of West Bengal traced and analysed the history of West Bengal Panchayat System. He also discussed the Government-Panchayat relationship. After the recent amendment of West Bengal Panchayat Act various functions and duties are transferred to Panchayats. Now Government Departments at the district level and below are placed under the Panchayats and Panchayats have full control over them.

Prof. Prabhat Datta, Adviser, State Institute of
Panchayat and professor of Political Science, Calcutta University, focused his presentation on Nation-state situation, revitalization process and effects of revitalisation. Shri Shyam Ray, Deputy Secretary, focused an decentralised planning through Panchayats. Mr.Anil Chakraborty of State Institute of Panchayats focused on rural development through land reforms and role of PRI. Dr. S.K. Datta, Director, and Dr. Dilip Ghosh, Research officer, SIRD spoke on the role of PRI in rural development. Other speakers highlighted various important aspects of the Panchayat system.

As follow up, it was agreed upon to undertake some specific studies to understand the process of functioning of the Gram Panchayat, e.g. planning, implementation, land reforms, etc. A detailed report is being prepared.

For further details, contact:

Society for Participatory Research in Asia
42 Tughlakabad Institutional Area
New Delhi-110062, INDIA
Phone: 011-6221908: 6439559
Fax: 011-6471183

CASA - RLEK TRAINING WORKSHOP ON PANCHAYAT
CASA in collaboration with Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra (RLEK), Dehradun organised this workshop during September 3-4, 1994 at Dehradun. The main objectives of this workshop were: how to secure benefits of reservations for women, and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe proportionate to the population to provide better opportunity to them to participate in local planning and development programme; to understand the role of voluntary organisations towards this; to educate local people on Section 243 of the eleventh schedule of the Constitution and how to take the Panchayat Raj programme to the grassroots level. Over 60 NGO representatives including CASA partners and academicians participated in this workshop. PRIA also participated and contributed in the deliberations.

For more information, contact:

CASA
Rachna Building
2, Rajendra Place, Pusa Road,
New Delhi - 110 008, INDIA

RLEK
21, E.C. Road, Dehradun - 248 001
Uttar Pradesh, INDIA.

WORKSHOP ON PANCHAYATI RAJ
A network organisation of Swayam Shikshan Prayog (comparing SPARC, Chetna Vikas, Nirantar and some other) organised a workshop for NGOs and women’s organisations on planning for Panchayat Raj at Chetna Vikas, Gopuri during October 22-23, 1994. The purpose of this workshop was to explore the conceptual and practical issues related to Panchayat Raj from the perspective of Voluntary Organisations working at the grassroots level. The specific objectives were to inform ourselves on various issues pertaining to Panchayati Raj; to examine the issues from a field perspective; to explore the opportunities for village development that lie within this institutional framework, etc. Over 40 field based NGO activists from Maharashtra and few other NGOs active in Panchayat Raj related issues participated in this workshop. As a follow up, detailed area specific and organisation specific programme activities were prepared.

For more information contact:

Mrs. Suman Bang
Chetna Vikas
P.O. - Gopuri
Wardha
Maharashtra.

WORKSHOP ON “PEOPLE’S MOVEMENT IN THE NEW PANCHAYATI RAJ THROUGH VOLUNTARY ACTION”
National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad organised this workshop during November 7-9, 1994 on its campus. Twentythree NGO participants and faculty members of NIRD participated in this Workshop. The objectives of this workshop was to facilitate exchange of views and experiences of training of grassroots Panchayat functionaries; exchange the information in respect of the training curriculum prepared by different organisations; discuss strategies to impart training to the village level functionaries and common people, and to make suggestions for improving network among different organisations.

For further information, contact:

Dr. S.R.Jain
NIRD
Rajendra Nagar
Hyderabad - 500 030
Andhra Pradesh

28 Participation & Governance Vol. 1 No. 2 November 1994
SEMINAR ON “DYNAMICS OF DRINKING WATER IN RURAL GUJRAT”

A one-day seminar was organised by UTTHAN, Centre for Water Resources, Ahmedabad on June 9, 1994, to discuss the major findings of a study entitled “Dynamics of Drinking Water in Rural Gujrat.” Seventy-one participants from various government and non-government organisations, academics, research and training institutes, donor agencies, media and village communities/organisations participated in the workshop.

In order to focus discussions on the key issues during the seminar, four technical sessions as below, were scheduled:

1. profile of the drinking water problem in rural Gujrat: overview of the water resources of the State;
2. policies and programmes of the government;
3. traditional water supply systems and NGOs experiments; and
4. policy perspectives and future directions.

It was strongly suggested by the participants that in finding solutions to the problem of drinking water, finance is not a problem. The real needs are:

1. to set up an apex body which would be entrusted with the responsibility of implementing concrete action strategies;
2. to form a Working Group which will study the various points and recommendations raised in this seminar:
3. formulating the action strategies to give emphasis on the development and improvement of traditional/local water supply systems;
4. to adopt an appropriate water pricing policy and to implement it.

It was suggested that follow-up meetings be called by the seminar organisers to work out the mechanisms of organising the Working Group envisaged to formulate action strategies.

For inquiries and report, contact:

UTTHAN
36 Chitrakut Twins
Near Management Enclave
Vastrapur
Ahmedabad 380015
Phone: 079-401023; 405213

WORKSHOP ON PANCHAYATI RAJ

PRIA and New HOPE, a voluntary organisation based at Palampur, organised a three-day workshop on Panchayati Raj in Kheda village during November 18-20, 1994. Thirty-five members from 13 panchayats participated in this workshop. The objective of the workshop was to collectively analyse the existing problems of the elected members and the panchayats, and to equip them with the latest information on 73rd Amendment.

Pradhans, Upa-Pradhans and Ward Members pointed out the problems of the elected members as well as of their respective Panchayat. The problems were collectively analysed and some solutions were suggested. Emphasis was given on solving the problems on priority basis. Limited resource availability was realised as a major handicap. The Panchayat members were motivated to frame Micro-Plan for their respective area.

As follow-up, a collaborative effort for further exploration into the problems of the Panchayats was planned.
YOUR COMMENTS

“We have gone through your Participation & Governance Bulletin which seems to me an excellent academic documentation piece for any development researcher or scholar.”
S.K. Dutta, Director
State Institute of Rural Development, Kalyani, West Bengal

“We are very much interested in your magazine Participation & Governance, and we would like to be a subscriber to this.”
BS. Sondhi, Project Manager
Kribhco Indo-British Rainfed Farming Project, Dahod, Panchmahals

“A Bulletin is essential to serve as a meaningful vehicle for mutual learning and dialogue and source of information to NGOs. Participation & Governance tightly does this. We appreciate PRIA’s efforts in this regard.”
S. Sheik Dawood
National Integrated Rural Development Agency, Tamil Nadu

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Youth Charitable Organization, Vizag, Andhra Pradesh

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K. Elangovan
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Xavier Institute of Social Service, Ranchi

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Shree Shakti Sadan, Bombay

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Commonwealth Youth Programme: Asia Centre, Chandigarh

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“Participation & Governance made an extremely useful reading.”
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Deputy Conservator of Forests, Udaipur, Rajasthan

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Fr. Cedric Prakash, s.j. Director
St. Xavier’s Social Service Society, Ahmedabad, Gujrat

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Dear friend,

Thank you for your overwhelming response to our first issue of Participation & Governance. I would like to reiterate that as in the past, a Bulletin of this kind cannot be produced by us primarily on the basis of our own work. We need your support, contribution and feedback. If this Bulletin has to serve as a meaningful vehicle of mutual learning and dialogue, then your active contribution is urged. Its continued publication and dissemination in this form also requires resources, and we solicit that support from you.

We are excited about and committed to this initiative. And we are confident that you will join us in this venture.

Rajesh Tandon
NO MORE CUTTING OF TREES!
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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Society for Participatory Research in Asia
42 Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi-110062
Phone: (011) 643-9559, 622-1908, Fax: (011) 647-1183