PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION
IN
POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMMES

A CASE STUDY
OF
THE INTEGRATED TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (ITDP)
ATTAPPADY, KERALA.

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby affirm that the research for this dissertation titled **"PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMMES - A CASE STUDY OF THE INTEGRATED TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (ITDP), ATTAPPADY, KERALA"**, being submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy, was carried out entirely by me at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum.

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Certified that this dissertation is the bonafide work of **Shri.S.M.Vijayanand** and has not been considered for the award of any degree of any other University. This dissertation may be forwarded for evaluation.

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To

my little Venku

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They make excellent research fodder - using which the relevance of any theory on human development or underdevelopment can be tested. Innovative bureaucrats can experiment their pet strategies on them; committed bureaucrats can salve their conscience by working in Attappady for a few months 'serving' these downtrodden people; and rapacious bureaucrats can make a fortune there. Environmentalists can extol their lost livelihood styles; revolutionaries can spit false promises on them. Respectable politicians can drown them with doles; local powerbrokers can always manipulate them. Distant friends can shed tears at their plight and unfriendly neighbours can exploit them endlessly.

Yes - they can be everything to everybody, as passive, timid targets. I hope and pray that they can look inwards , know themselves, and resolve themselves, to be themselves for themselves.

PREFACE

This study concentrates on the processes related to the participation of the tribals of Attappady, a group of people still 'excluded' from development, in the government - sponsored programmes intended for their benefit. The subject of the study and its context call for a research approach that is more qualitative in the sense that the experiences and actions of the people, preferably in their own words, are of central concern. Naturally, to get a faithful picture, the complexity and the multi-directional relationships have to be captured. For such a study to have validity and relevance, one cannot afford to miss any pertinent detail, in order to ensure that the emergent patterns and conclusions organically spring from grass roots level realities.

This naturally poses a problem - of choosing between brevity with the likelihood of missing out relevant details and a comprehensive coverage. Here, a conscious choice has been made of the latter option - to do justice to the case study.

S.M.Vijayanand

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PART I

WHAT IS IT ABOUT ?

AND WHERE ?

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background:

Participation has become a buzz word in development literature. By overuse as well as indiscriminate use, this term is facing the danger of degenerating into a neutral catchphrase capable of being interpreted whimsically by the user. And it often becomes a fashion, a fad, to argue for people's participation in development, particularly in anti-poverty and basic needs programmes.

Interestingly protagonists of differing development ideologies, all plead for greater participation. Romantic populists place total reliance on the capabilities of the ordinary people to develop from within, even breaking through socio-economic structural barriers. Revolutionary activists see in participation, the antidote to the excesses of centralized planning and nurture hopes of socialism from below. Environmentalists vouch for the wisdom and capacity of the common man in order to refashion livelihood styles in a sustainable manner. Neo-liberalists strongly advocate greater participation by the people to push the state away from a developmentally activist role. And pragmatic managers of development programmes seek people's participation to attain higher efficiency in project implementation and sustainability of the project achievements.

Thus participatiion of the people has become an article of faith making the concept a bit too fuzzy for easy analysis. Yet, by keeping out the emotional and ethical elements by removing 'the cloud of rhetoric' [1] and focussing on the praxis of participation against the general theoretical background, better understanding can be attained. Given the increasing concern for participation in development thinking, certain clarity is essential [2].

1.2 Objectives of Present Study:

This is a case study on the praxis of participation in the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP), Attappady which constitutes a development block in the Palakkad district of Kerala. The focus of the study is on the tribals, a group which is considered as excluded, even now, from the development process, and, how they participate in the government programmes specially meant for the reduction of their poverty.

The objectives of this study are:

(i) To clarify the concept of people's participation in development, particularly in poverty reduction programmes.

(ii) To examine the levels of participation in government-sponsored poverty reduction programmes vis-a-vis the entitlements to participation conferred by such programmes.

(iii) To analyse the processes of exclusion and to identify the barriers to participation arising from these processes.

(iv) To draw conclusions relevant to policy making.

---

[1] Cernea (1991)
[2] Jena (1994)

The study assumes that participation by the excluded groups in programmes meant for their uplift is desirable as an end in itself or atleast as a clear-cut component of any programme.

1.3 Approach of the Study:

The study is based on an understanding of the concept of people's participation in development, obtained from an extensive review of literature and an indepth analysis of the participative process of a few government-sponsored development programmes in a backward region of Kerala. The scope for research and the methodology followed are explained in Chapter III. Qualitative information on various aspects are supplemented by direct observation in some cases and a structured questionnaire on the perceptions of the various actors and a sample survey on the socio-economic conditions of the people. This 'combination' approach to understanding the issues provided a fairly good insight into the various processes at work at the grassroots level.

Since the focus is on the micro-level processes, a comprehensive approach has been adopted so that nothing of significance is missed. Distinctive caselets are narrated to enrich the analysis and to create the mosaic pattern faithfully reflecting the intricate processes at work on the ground.

1.4 Structuring of the Study Report:

The study is presented in four parts, tersely titled as :

I. What is it about ? - and Where ?.
II. How is it ?.
III. Why is it not ?.
IV. What can be done ?.

The first part contains four chapters including this introductory one. Chapter II attempts to elucidate the concept of people's participation in development and arrive at an operational understanding. Chapter III examines the scope of the research and outlines the methodology adopted. And chapter IV sketches the background of the case chosen for study - the area, its people and its development experience, besides explaining the rationale for choosing this particular case.

In the second part, Chapter V analyses three selected government sponsored programmes for bringing out their participation possibilities - Co-operative farms, set up under the Western Ghats Development Programme (WGDP), Women's self-help economic development groups under Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) and wage employment schemes under the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) and the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) - and examines the levels of participation actually attained in practice. Also the perceptions of the actors - tribals, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), Panchayat Members and officials - on the levels of actual participation in the employment generation programmes are revealed. Chapter VI narrates certain relatively successful government interventions in bringing about participatory development and seeks to identify the factors behind the success.

The third part, through the long chapter VII explores the various processes of exclusion which have over a period of time marginalised the tribals. The important barriers to participation stemming from these processes are listed out and the perceptions of the various 'actors' on their relative importance brought out in Chapter VIII.

The fourth and concluding part presents the general conclusions of the study and points out the implications for policy in Chapter IX which concludes with an endeavour to construct a typical methodology for people's participation in poverty reduction programmes supported by the government.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The Background

2.1.1 People's Participation and Development Thought

It is difficult to pinpoint changes in development thinking with any historical accuracy. Howeve can be safely stated that the mid-seventies saw the start of a fundamental shift away from modernization model of development. It was realized that the capital-intensive import-substituting gro strategies had bypassed and even marginalized vast sections of people as the expected "trickle-dov didn't happen.

Even during this period participation of the people was sought through the Community Developm programmes, and later in spreading the high-yielding technology in agriculture. But both these strate ignored the contradictions of class and caste and saw village societies as homogenous and placed much reliance on the bureaucracy [1]. While the former dissipated soon, the latter ended up widen inequalities in rural areas.

The anitdote of state-sponsored direct attack on poverty, initiated from above soon proved ineffic and largely ineffective. And then came the search for alternatives. There were discussions on 'alternat or "another" development which would be need-oriented, endogenous, self-reliant, eco-friendly based on structural transformation [2]; There was great enthusiasm about the Basic Needs appro and people's participation itself came to be considered a Basic Need [3].

Gradually the idea of a people-centred development gained ground [4]. The events of the 80s early 90s have strengthened this. The structural adjustment policies have created a class of "e excluded"; the collapse of the socialist economies of USSR and Eastern Europe and the growing con for sustainable development, have all combined to give rise to the idea of "development from witl [5]. Much faith is bestowed on local initiatives, people's capabilities and appropriate polycer institutions. The state is expected to provide the enabling environment by empowering the people facilitating the participation of the hitherto excluded groups. This represents a clear reversal of earlier belief.

The role of United Nations and related organizations like ILO, UNRISD and the World Ban pioneering these changes in development thinking has helped evolve a general international consei on the new paradigm - though practice may be lagging behind [6].

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[1] Jain (1985)
[2] Nerfin (1977)
[3] Streeten (1981)
[4] Chambers (1983)
[5] Sundaram (1994)
[6] Wesetergaard (1986)

2.1.2 The Indian Context

In India the ideological roots of people's participation can be traced back to the Gandhian concept of Gram Swaraj. Since the introduction of planning, people's participation has been emphasized [7]. While the First Plan viewed participation as a kind of contribution, the Fifth Plan stated that "public commitment is an essential pre-requisite for proper implemenation". The Sixth Plan spoke of the necessity of involving people "at every stage of planning". The Seventh Plan espoused the empowerment concept envisaging participation by poor people's organisations and Non-Government Organisations.

The Balwantrai Mehta Committee (1957) and the Asoka Mehta Committee (1978) on Panchayati Raj strongly argued for involving the people at the grass roots level in the planning and implementation of local development programmes. The Committees which went into decentralised planning - Dantwala (1978) Hanumantha Rao (1984) and GVK Rao (1986) - took a similar view. The Hanumantha Rao Committee stressed the need to involve groups of the poor at every stage of development - pre-planning, strategy-setting, scheme formulation, implementation, monitoring and review [8].

People's participation has now been accorded constitutional sanction through the 73rd Amendment on Panchayati Raj. Gram Sabha or the general body of the village is formally recognised and assigned a basic role in planning as well as in social audit.

At the operational level, the concern about people's participation is best reflected in the anti-poverty programmes. Their policy guidelines and working instructions clearly provide for the participation of the beneficiaries at various stages. However, the extent to which these prescriptions are being adhered to on the ground, needs to be examined.

2.2 Definitions:

Although people's participation has gained currency in development thinking of various hues, there is no clear agreement on what it is all about. Goulet [9] traces the intellectual origin of participation in development to Ivan Illich who called for deprofessionalisation of all domains of life - schooling, health care, planning - to make ordinary people responsible for their own well being, and Paolo Freire, to whom people, ordinarily treated as mere objects, known and acted upon, are capable of becoming subjects of their own destiny, knowing and acting.

Among the several efforts to analyse and understand participation, three research projects undertaken in the 1970s deserve mention. The pioneering ILO study [10] relates people's participation to the attainment, both as an instrument and as an end, of basic needs. A Cornell University study [11] of the same period gives a neutral, theoretical definition: "With regard to rural development ... participation includes people's involvement in decision-making process, in implementing programmes, their sharing in the benefits of development programmes and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes".

The third study by UNRISD [12] points out the importance of the political framework for participation and defines participation as: " ... the organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control".

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[7] Sastry (1990)
[8] Yugandhar (1990)
[9] Goulet (1995)
[10] ILO (1978)
[11] Cohen and Uphoff (1977) - Page 6
[12] Stiefel and Pearse (1994) - Page 5

In a sense these three studies convey the typical range of interpretations: the ILO study sees participation primarily as the 'means' to attain basic needs; the UNRISD approach views it as an 'end', with empowerment as the main objective and Cornell university adopts a managerial perspective indicating possible areas of people's participation rather than its ultimate purpose.

A similar contrast can be seen between the definition of Bhaduri and Rahman [13] to whom participation is "a social experience shared by individuals and groups who live in definite economic and social relations to each other in a society. Since it can not be abstracted from the economic and social relationships of production, participation involves social segments and their economic interests which push for structural changes in relationships at any given level" and Samuel Paul [14] of the World Bank who considers participation as " an active process by which beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish".

It is not difference in perspective alone that distinguishes the definitions. Over time also, there have been changes of emphasis: the Economic Commission for Latin America stated in 1973 that participation is a voluntary contribution by the people in national development programmes but the people are not expected to shape the programme or criticise it [15]. Eight years later the United Nations [16] emphasised active participation "to influence the development process and share equitably in the fruits of development". Deepa Narayan [17] in a 1994 World Bank study gives this definition: " ... a voluntary process by which people, including the disadvantaged, (in income, gender, ethnicity, education) influence or control the decisions that affect them. The essence of participation is excercising voice and choice". This is more emphatic on the 'control' and 'choice' aspects than the definition of Samuel Paul given seven years later.

All these definitions imply that whatever be the view point, participation conveys notions of contribution, influence in decision-making, some control over resources, and enhancement of capabilities, on the part of those who could not attain these earlier - all circumcribed by the immediate context of the project and the larger socio-economic context.

2.3 Assumptions and Rationale:

The assumptions behind the concept of people's participation in development, particularly in anti-poverty initiatives are quite simple [18]. It is presumed that local people know what is essentially needed to improve their living conditions. They can organise best around such an immediately relevant problem. And they have the capacity and knowledge to think and act rationally and optimally to mitigate this problem given the freedom to do so, with little or no external help. Thus any move to promote participation affirms faith in the capabilities of the people.

The rationale for people's participation in development can be utilitarian or moral. It can bring about gains in programme achievements; in a larger sense, it can provide what both the state and the market can not provide and make up for their failures. In the moral sense, participation is a human right covering the social, political and economic domains.

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[13] Bhaduri and Rahman (1982) - Page 1-2
[14] Paul (1987) - Page 2
[15] Quoted in Oakley et al (1991)
[16] United Nations (1981) - Page 5
[17] Narayan, D (1994)
[18] Setty (1994)

Illich's depiction of underdevelopment, also as "a state of mind or level of consciousness" and Freire's lament over "the culture of silence" suggest that poverty implies powerlessness, the inability to exert influence over the forces which affect one's livelihood. Participation seeks to overcome this state. And even development may not yield satisfaction unless there is participation [19].

At a different level, participation attempts to reverse the style and approach to development - in which the planners and professionals dominate and the people are only 'objects'. Hence the talk of 'reversals' and putting "the last first" [20].

2.4 'Means' - 'End' Perspectives

The two major alternative uses of participation centre around participation as an end in itself or as a means to development. Logically, the two interpretations need not be seen as either ends of a continum. They represent "transformational participation" and "instrumental participation" and may appear in different combinations in a given project.

Participation as a means implies the use of participation to achieve some predetermined goal or objective, ie: as a way of harnessing various resources of the people for programme purposes, to improve delivery systems. Essentially such kind of participation is short-term and structured from outside. Participation as an end is a process which unfolds over time, whose purpose is to develop the capabilities of the rural people to intervene more directly in developmental initiatives. It need not even have pre-determined or measurable objectives. It is a dynamic process. It can begin with an external impulse but it should ultimately lead to independent autonomous action.

Though the two rationales for participation are often present at the same time, their logical status and implicit strategies and methodological approaches differ [21].

The 'means' perspective suggests a state-induced top-down partnership to attain efficiency whereas the 'end' perspective treats development as defined by the local people as a matter of right. In the former the focus is on the programme and the people are to be made capable of greater participation; in the latter, the people with their innate capacity to participate are of paramount importance. The 'means' approach assumes that lack of participation is due to the inability to do so due to lack of education, organization etc or due to inappropriate planning and so it can be brought about by applying technical, administrative and financial corrections. The 'end' approach implies the existence of social structures which keep out the poor or suo motu opting out by the poor as an expression of protest; the anti-participation structures need to be broken down to facilitate participation.

2.5 Dimensions of People's Participation in Development

The multi-dimensional nature of participation has been brought out in different ways by different experts, conveying different perspectives. According to Lyra Srinivasan of UNDP, cases of participation could be grouped under [22]:

- Cheap labour concept ie. provision of free labour by the beneficiaries.
- Cost-sharing concept.
- Contractual obligation concept ie: agreement to operate and maintain services".
- Community decision-making concept ie. involvement from the pre-planning stage.

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[19] Chathurvedi and Mitra (1982)
[20] Chambers (1993)
[21] Mikkelsen (1995)
[22] Srinivasan (1990)

Hall [23] distinguishes between four modes of people's participation in the context of social and economic change.

(i) Anti-participatory mode which precludes any form of participation.

(ii) Manipulative mode which is carefully planned to control people's participation for the political and economic objectives of the powers that be.

(iii) Incremental mode which is adhoc, unplanned and haphazard resulting from an ambivelent attitude towards participation.

(iv) Participatory mode where the state makes genuine efforts to secure the involvement of the people in all phases of development, not just as a kind of resource injection from outside or as a manageable input, but as empowerment of the people.

Summarising UNRISD research, Ghai [24] presents three interpretations:

(i) Participation as moblization - in projects conceived from above, people are mobilized to implement them.

(ii) Participation as decentralization - transferring resources and powers to lower level organs. This does not ensure participation of the poor by itself.

(iii) Participation as empowerment - strengthening the power of the deprived and excluded masses.

Oakley et al [25] have classified participation into three:

(i) Participation as contribution - here contribution forms the core of the participatory element and it is preferably voluntary.

(ii) Participation as organization: This approach revolves around the nature of the organizational form which would serve as the vehicle of participation: such organization might be either externally conceived and induced or emerge from within and take shape in response to a local stimulus.

(iii) Participation as a process of empowerment: Here, participation is seen as something beyond a project or development programme: It is visualised as a process which enables the deprived sections to gain control over their own life situation.

Samuel Paul [26] makes a distinction in intensities of participation, indentifying four categories:

(i) information-sharing
(ii) consultation
(iii) decision making
(iv) initiating action

The first two enable excercise of influence and the last two facilitate control - that is, the last two can lead to some form of empowerment, while the other two can contribute to effectiveness of the programme.

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[23] Hall (1988)
[24] Ghai (1988)
[25] Oakley et al (1991)
[26] Paul (1983)

Schneider [27] characterises participatory, people-centred development as demand-driven, based on the dynamics, perceptions and priorities of the people as opposed to the conventional development which is supply-driven. Thus participatory development approximates "endogenous development" in which people cease to be "beneficiaries" and become "actors".

While the above interpretations represent different streams of thought and ways of conceptualisation they should not be seen as seperate, discrete categories. They represent views of the same phenomenon from different angles. Thus participation is not a single thing - it is a rubric subsuming several things.

Schneider [28] sums up trends in perception of participatory development today as follows:

- it is holistic rather than sectoral.
- it is more people-centred (avoiding the assumption that communities are homogeneous)
- it is more a learning process than an institutional "fix".
- it is less an instrument than an end in itself, but there need be no conflict between these two characteristics.

2.6 Participation and Empowerment

Increasingly it is getting accepted that participation, to be meaningful, should incorporate some form of empowerment by giving the people a measure of control over the various stages of a development programme through the power of decision-making. This implication of participation has political connotations and empowerment is understood in different terms by different proponents. The World Bank increasingly mentions empowerment of the stakeholders, meaning devolution of more powers from the state to the beneficiary groups, sufficient to achieve the project objective [29]. At the other end, participation is visualised as capable of breaking structural barriers and bringing about greater equity in socio-economic relations through redistribution of economic and political power [30].

Power in a society is sometimes seen as a variable sum which means, by building on the capabilities of people hitherto excluded from development, the power of these groups increases, without necessarily affecting the position of others [31]. This is true to some extent in development sectors like health, and education. But power apprears to be a zero-sum proposition in key areas of economic development, like ownership of assets and control over resources. Here empowerment of the poorer groups would reduce the power of those who control the resources. This is particularly relevant in poverty reduction programmes.

2.7 Methodologies of Participation

Proven methodologies of people's participation in development are rare. They have to be gleaned from project experiences scattered in several places. Though 'models' can not be transferred from one situation to another [32], certain general principles of the methodology of participation can be identified [33].

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[27] Schneider (1995)
[28] Ibid.
[29] World Bank (1994)
[30] Rahman (1984)
[31] Craig and May (1995)
[32] Uphoff (1991)
[33] Oakley et al (1991)

They are:

- The emphasis shoud be on the process of participation rather than on quantitative outcomes.

- A balance between awareness-generation and economic activities needs to be struck and there has to be a recognition of the capabilities of the people.

- Participation is a labour-intensive process and it requires regular contact between the people and the development staff.

The methodology should be systematic and not ad hoc and in keeping with the pace and rhythm of the local people. The first contact and the first step are crucial.

As stated earlier participation is a process and it can be divided into stages. The stages depend on the nature of projects. A stylized presentation of the stages is given below:

a) Conventional Projects with a Participatory Component:
Eg. DWCRA

- Grouping of women
- Injection of capital
- Training for skill-development and management
- Structuring of group to give formal status
- Linking group with bank, market etc.
- Participatory development

b) Radical Approach for Building a Base for Continuing People's Participation:

- Entry - observation -initial contact - coming together - building the nucleus of agroup.
- Problem analysis - context diagnosis.
- Development and strengthening of people's structures.
- Preparation - animation - leadership training.
- Advance on key issues - group action - doing something concrete, preferably small-scale and giving quick results.
- Linking up - replication - consolidation
- Establishing base - sovereignty - control over resources.

Gow and Vansant [34] have outlined the "doing" of participation:

- Implementors should follow a 'process' approach characterised by continual openness to redesign and adaptation to changing circumstances.

- Start with small, relatively simple activities which respond to local needs and produce results quickly.

- Beneficiaries should make some resource commitment

- Existing organizations should be utilised, more than one, if there is factionalism and conflict. Later the capacity has to be developed.

- A two-way information flow both formal and informal should be established.

- Decentralized local control is the key to sustainable participation.

The discussion so far confirms that while there is no single proven methodology there is a great deal of similar thinking by experts on the important stages.

2.8 Key Elements in the Practice of Participation

2.8.1 Role of External Agency

While purists would argue that participation should be a wholly spontaneous, organic and internal process, practice reveals the need for some outside agency at least to spark off the process. This interlocutory role could be played by government agencies, but more effectively by NGOs or even by motiviated individual animators.

Government-mediated participation could be paternalistic and have instrumental motives [35]. Yet the predominant role in rural development played by government makes it the most important actor. And governments have promoted genuine participation in certain sectors like ecodevelopment [36]. As no Government is monolithic in its structure or homogenous in its functioning, there is every possibility of building alliances with progressive elements in government to generate the circumstances encouraging authentic participation.

Theoretically at least, NGOs with their coherent thinking, committed staff, flexible procedures, experimental projects, wide networks and local moorings are better placed to achieve greater participation by the people [37]. But experience shows NGOs could consciously or unconsciously hamper participation by pushing their views and analysis of local problems. A study of NGOs in Kerala shows that participation was mostly confined to sharing in benefits [38].

In either case, the change agents or animators have an important part to play. Tilekaratne [39] assigns the crucial place to such animators who could work as groups or individuals. The major dimensions of the project animator's role would be:

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[34] Gow and Vasant (1983)
[35] Hall (1988)
[36] Ghai and Vivian (1992)
[37] Fernandez (1986)
[38] Suresh and Joseph (1990)
[39] Tilekeratna in Wigneraja et al (1991)

- Animation - ie: stimulating the critical awareness of the people to understand and analyse problems.

- Structuring - ie: to provide a forum to achieve internal cohesion and solidarity,

- Facilitation - ie: assistance to undertake specific tasks to translate ideas into concrete activities.

- Intermediation - ie: in the initial stages to reach external service points.

- Linking - with people's groups in similar situations.

- Withdrawal - ie: achieving progressive redundancy.

Essentially the animator has to work with the poeple, not just for them.

2.8.2 Role of Organisation

Organisation is a critical dimension of the practice of participation. Broadly it could be for social action or just to serve as a receiving mechanism. It could begin as an amorphous nucleus and develop into a formal structure. It would enhance bargaining power and reduce individual vulnerability. Above all it affords opportunities for concretising social perceptions about development. The membership of the organisation and its relationship with the development agency are critical to the level of participation. Community-based organisations spring up spontaneously in defence of local natural resources [40].

A study of 150 organizations by Easman and Uphoff [41] found that informal groups with shared decision-making and linkages fared better in facilitating participation. While size was not a relevant variable, the source of initative and role of catalyst were significant.

2.8.3 Role of Education

As it is clear by now, participation has to be developed and for this education is crucial. Here education is not visualised as in the classical extension approach as working with rural people; it is education as awareness building, in the Freirian sense of concientization, that is more appropriate. It can be either in an intellectual form of dialogue, reflection and participative action, or better, in a relaxed non-formal manner.Either way it can lead to greater confidence, better assessment of issues, and more purposive action.

2.8.4 Summing Up

The relevance of the key elements discussed above has been underlined by the Planning Commission of India study [42] on the participatory development initiatives in three village - Sukhomajri (Haryana), Dasholi (Himachal) and Kundrakudi (Tamil Nadu). The study hailed the "Techno-academic-democratic mix", as the key to the successes; the elements of this mix are:

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[40] Lazarev (1994)
[41] Easman and Uphoff (1977)
[42] Planning Commission (1986)

- Organisational innovation.
  eg. Village Planning Forum, Water uses associations.

- External agency
  eg. Central Electro-Chemical Research Institute (CECRI), in Kundrakudi.
  Central Soil and Water Conservation Research and Training Institute (CSWCRTI), in Sukhomajri

- Local leadership

- Consensus style of functioning

- Flexible procedures

- Informal consultation groups

- Skill development

- Economic improvement.

2.9 Tools of Participation

All the conventional instruments like meetings and discussions, workshops, seminars and camps, folk media like theatre and song, and conscientization campaigns are relevant in a participatory setting too.

At this stage, mention must be made of a special set of tools which are tailor-made for the participative process - the technique of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

PRA is highly versatile in its applicability. To Chambers [43], it embodies various "reversals":

- from etic to emic ie: from the knowledge categories and values of outsiders to those of insiders

- from closed to open ie: from questionnaire to open interviews

- from pre-set to spontaneous

- from individual to group

- from verbal to visual

- from measuring to comparing

- reversal of relations from reserve to rapport.

- reversals of power - from extracting to empowering

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[43] Chambers (1994a)

Chambers defines PRA as " a family of approaches and methods to enable rural people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions to plan and to act". Thus PRA itself can empower as it builds-up self-awareness and leads to analysis of the prevalent situation.

The "menu" of methods of PRA includes [44]:

- Semi-structured interviews and discussions with key informants and groups.
- Learning by doing (eg: sowing)
- Participatory analysis of secondary sources.
- Participatory mapping and modelling - of natural resources, health, land use, places, institutions and infrastructure.
- Transect walks through an area to identify zones, soils, vegetation etc.
- Timelines and trend lines.
- Oral histories.
- Seasonal calendars (eg: nutrition)
- Time-use analysis
- Linkage diagramming
- Well-being and wealth ranking
- Matrix scoring and ranking
  eg: of options of opportunities of problems

Technical data can be superimposed [45]. The whole system is flexible and adaptable to local situations [46].

As the presentation and analysis of data is done in a participatory manner, PRA can be used for [47]:

- start-up
- Awareness generation.
- Self-analysis
- Data collection
- Need identification
- Resource identification
- Prioritisation
- Monitoring and evaluation

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[44] Chambers (1994b)
[45] CESS (1994)
[46] MYRADA (1990)
[47] Chambers (1994c)

Since PRA depends to a great deal on the relationship with the people, and the respect given to their perceptions by the outside agent, much training and sensitization is required. Also it calls for a great deal of patience, care and caution to reach out to the marginalized groups. Yet with the wealth of experience gained from practice, the methodology for ensuring reliability and validity has been built up [48].

2.10 Obstacles to Participation

Any strategy for putting participation into practice needs to recognise the possible obstacles. Oakley groups obstacles under three categories [49]:

(1) Operative Factors
eg. bureaucratic control/procedures legal impediments inappropriate technology

(ii) Social Factors
eg. caste elitism, gender discrimination

(iii) Structural Factors
eg. economic disparities.

Jazairy et al [50] distinguish between internal obstacles like inadequate organisation and leadership and external obstacles like inequitable distribution of assets, and weak policy support.

Hall lists certain other factors which affect widespread practice of participation [51]:

- It is yet to sink in as a viable strategy as far as the development establishment is concerned
- It is not amenable for rigorous theoretical analysis. So the effects are not easily quantified. This has limited its advocacy by economists.
- The small size of success and the difficulties in sustaining them, scaling them up and replicating them are dampers.
- Participatory development is slow-moving
- Fears of empowerment often restrain policy makers.

An OECD study indentifies some of the obstacles to participation as [52]:

- Non-responsive government unwilling to share power and resources.
- Lack of access to certain assets and rights.
- Passivity on the part of the people.

In practice, participation could face obstacles both from the immediate surroundings and the larger socio-economic system.

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[48] Mukherjee (1993)
[49] Oakley and Marsden (1984)
[50] Jazairy et al (1992)
[51] Hall (1988)
[52] Schneider (1995)

2.11 Costs, Risks and Benefits of Participation

2.11.1 Costs:

Participation has its own costs. Much of it is due to its slow evolving nature compounded by unsure methodology. Internal conflicts have to be resolved and increasing expectations contained. All these call for additional efforts on the part of the development agency in the form of specialist skills and better communication. A World Bank study [53] has reckoned that staff costs would increase by 10-15% in the pre-commissioning stage of a project, in order to achieve greater participation. Another form of cost would be opportunity cost to the people in terms of time spent, facilities foregone etc.

2.11.2 Risks:

Other than risks arising from uncertain methodology, there are a series of dangers from pseudo-participation [54]. The more serious possibilities include:

- Vernacular idioms of power and control being swamped by superimposed values resulting in a mix of heterogenous biases.
- Co-optation of the poor by the dominant groups by creating induced, addictive needs
- passing on costs to the poor in the name of participation
- paving the way for privatization of the economy by reducing the space for state intervention.
- resulting in two streams of development ie: a resource-intensive form for the privileged few and a low-grade one for the poor masses.

Some of the immediate risks would include:

- difficulties in focussing on priorities due to the multiple perspectives.
- Momentum may be lost due to the slow-moving nature of participation.
- Raising of too many expectations.
- Inability of professionals to change to the facilitatory role.

2.11.3 Benefits:

The important tangible benefits of people's participation in development are listed below:

- Easier data gathering; authentic analysis and better identification of the need - the best informed judgement of priority is possible [55].
- Consensual need identification reduces chances of obstructionist conflicts in future.
- Improved outreach leads to more effective technology and innovation diffusion.

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[53] World Bank (1994)
[54] Rahnema (1993)
[55] Narayan .S (1994)

- Incorporation of local knowledge often leads to cost-saving.
- Programme resources are eked out by local resource mobilization.
- Better supervision of work possible, reducing leakages and ensuring quality and accountability.
- Public pressure keeps pushing the pace of implementation cutting down time over-runs.
- Possibility of mid-course corrections helps avoid infructuous schemes.
- Operation amd maintenance improve lowering cost of service.
- Greater sharing of benefits paves way for full utilisation of schemes and thereby makes the impact greater.
- Authentic feed back is available for future planning.

In short, through greater efficiency, effectiveness and equity, participation promotes sustainability. The benefits are greater in the "ends" perspective projects. Some of the intangible and longer term benefits of such projects could be:

- Increases the management skills of the community.
- Reduces feeling of alienation and powerlessness
- Promotes new modes of understanding and offers freedom from dependency on external professionals and bureaucracy.
- Ensures full conscientization
- Facilitates social changes like control of harmful habits, like drinking, enhancement of status of women etc.
- Through the vanguard effect catalyses future initiatives for removal of poverty.
- Breaks structural barriers to equity.

All these develop the "capabilities" of the people and empower them.

Several studies have quantified the benefits. A few gleanings from such studies are offered below:

(i) In the Sukho-majiri project IRR was calculated as 12%. It was found that additional income accrued to the state, the community and the individuals [56].

(ii) The Joint Forest Management in Midnapore resulted in additional income to the poor and lower cost of conservation measures (not fully quantified) [57].

(iii) The Ramakrishna Mission Sanitation project in West Bengal constructed over one lakh latrines at about 1/10th the normal cost to government in four years, saving about 25 crore rupees [58].

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[56] Chopra et al (1990)
[57] Government of West Bengal (1993)
[58] A paper presented by Sri. S.S.Chakraborthy, R.K.Mission, in CDS on 21.6.1996 in connection with theNational Seminar on Rural Water Supply.

(iv) A study of 121 water supply projects by the World Bank [59] concluded that participation contributed significantly to the proportion of systems in good condition, overall economic benefits, reaching of target populuation, environmental benefits and achieving equity in aceess to facilities.

Though the initial costs of a participatory project tend to be high, there can be substantial reduction with each iteration, as strategies and tasks become clearer.

2.12 Sectors Amenable to Participation

Any discussion on participation needs to examine the question whether some sectors of development are more amenable to people's participation.

A CIRDAP study [60] which attempted to quantify intensities of participation across sectors found that some sectors like agriculture, water supply and village infrastructure allowed for greater participation than sectors like industry, major irrigation etc. Health and education sectors too had limited scope for participation (except in sharing of benefits), but as entry points they offered several spin off effects due to their non-controversial nature, invisible gains and silent changes induced.

Social groups like tribals with traditional livelihood systems and communally internalised awareness of the importance of forests are found to participate naturally and effectively in protecting and upgrading their environment [61],[62]. The success of Joint Forest Management in West Bengal is a case in point. Management of common property resources, like water which have the non-excludability characteristics of a public good, but which are subtractive, can not be left to the market forces and the state too may not be effective [63]. Here, people's institutions of local self-management as in Sukho Majri (Haryana) and Kundrakudi (Tamil Nadu) experiments, could be efficient. There is much evidence of effective people's participation in the management of drinking water projects [64].

Agriculture is one sector where the excess reliance on technology is seeing a reversal and the farmer first paradigm is gaining ground with emphasis on the folk expertise gained over centuries [65]. Self-help groups in the informal sector, especially of women have shown much promise as really effective institutions of participatory action, even of the autonomous kind. Participation of communities is possible to a larger degree in public works which not only provide employment but also satisfy a long-felt local need. In community health, upgradation of local institutions, importance given to local perceptions on needs, and local management are getting accepted in the community involvement in health strategy [66],[67].

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[59] Narayan .D. (1994)
[60] Poudyal and Weber (1993)
[61] Davis and Soeftestad (1995)
[62] Ghai (Ed.) (1994)
[63] Berkes (1989)
[64] Mc Common et al (1990)
[65] Chambers (1990)
[66] De Kadt (1982)
[67] Tandon (1994)

2.13 Towards an Operational Definition of People's Participation

Any operational definition of people's participation has to capture the range and nuances of the concept. First of all the term 'people' needs to be clarified - it does not denote the entire community for such a community could be heterogeneous in its socio-economic mix; it indicates a homogeneous group of people hitherto excluded from the development process, who share certain socio-economic characteristics. In the case of poverty reduction programmes, the poorest groups for whom the allocation of resources is made need to participate. Thus people's participation need not be the same as community participation.

Participation could be of varying intensities. The range could be summarised as:

- Anti-participation or Negative participation where something is imposed on people against their will by an outside agency.

- Zero-participation, where the people are indifferent to a programme and where the sponsoring agency does not do anything to motivate the people to participate.

- Information-sharing, which is a basic level of participation when people have access to all information on the intended programme, which may be decided from outside.

- Consultation, when the suggestions of the local people are heard before the project agency makes its own decision.

- Consent, when the local people have to give prior approval to a course of action, which could have originated from an external source.

- Contribution, when people voluntarily part with labour, cash or materials as a token of making a programme their own.

- Partnership, where the people and the development agency are co-equals and the whole programme is designed after dialogue, based on consensus.

- Autonomous action, when the people are supreme and take the final decisions with or without the presence and help of an external agency. In the case of government-sponsored programmes, autonomous action is possible in areas outside the ambit of the programme, in related sectors.

The last three categories involve decision-making and empowerment which could be on strategy, implementation, and/or running of the programme - they contribute to empowerment.

People's participation could be suo-motu or induced. Induced participation can be semi-coercive as in mass mobilisation or interactive. Participation can be induced by the state or by an NGO or catalysed by an animator from among the community.

From a different angle, the quality of participation can be graded as pseudo, manipulative or genuine. Pseudo-participation happens when the intention is to go through the motions purely to satisfy, on paper , only the procedural requirements; it is an empty ritual. Participation acquires a manipulative character when it is not based on a full understanding of the situation and is used to secure the interests of an outside agency. And genuine participation implies a total awareness of issues, and the power to decide on the course of action to be taken.

Participation can be direct by the groups involved or indirect through representatives. Based on objectives, participation could be an 'end' in itself leading to enhancement of capabilities and empowerment or a 'means' to achieving efficiency and effectiveness in programme implementation. In a sense, this can be called 'active' and 'passive' forms of participation.

Protest and dissent also could be expressions of participation, when it is resorted to by the excluded groups springing from an awareness of denial of rights, for awareness is the first step in getting conscientized, which is essential for generating demand - and demand-driven development facilitates participation.

Participation can exist in various stages of development, though by now it is common experience, that the entry point is crucial; and achieving participation in implementation is difficult if there has not been any participation in planning.

Among the important activities in a programme where participation is possible are:

(i) Planning phase:

- Diagonising a problem
- Suggesting solutions
- Weighing options and choosing the most optimum one.
- Planning the activities required to carry out the option chosen including time-scheduling, personnel arrangements, materials planning,setting up supervision systems, etc.

(ii) Implementation phase:

- Co-ordination and supervision of activities
- Actual carrying out of activities
- Resource contribution

(iii) Monitoring and Evaluation phase:

- Ensuring timely completion
- Watching quality of implementation
- Making suggestions for improvement.
- Assessing positive and negative impacts.

(iv) Operation and Maintenance phase:

- Sharing of benefits
- Making organisational and financial arrangements

In general, participation is understood as a process and not as a static phenomenon. Only for typological analysis can the categories be demarcated so clearly.

The present study focusses on poverty reduction programmes implemented by the government - particularly co-operatives for collective management of natural resources by landless tribals, self-help group economic activities by tribal women below poverty line, and wage employment creating infrastructure projects for the continuing benefits of the tribal poor. As poverty could be interpreted a

the result of a process of increased concentration of resources and power, any attempt to reverse this, by the excluded groups would impinge upon the power structure - social, political and economic.

Taking all these into account, people's participation in government-sponsored poverty reduction programmes could be defined as follows:

"Participation of the highest degree and the most effective form, is the process by which groups hitherto excluded from development, acquire the power and ability to direct resources and institutions meant for their well-being, in such a manner as to shape development in accordance with the needs and priorities as identified by them, and during which process their capabilities get enhanced and their entitlements extended".

Only such an inclusive definition can reflect the multi-faceted, multi-layered concept of people's participation in poverty-reduction programmes.

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CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM - SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope for further study about people's participation

A good number of the studies on people's participation have been either prescriptive and normative in general terms or analysis of specific project experiences. And the studies tend to reflect the concerns and beliefs of the researcher. The perceptions of the local actors - the beneficiary groups and grassroot level officials - are not reflected in these studies in any significant extent. This has resulted in ignoring the potential of adapting the traditional forms of participative behaviour and action, to serve the needs of development. Similarly holistic, inter-disciplenary studies are mostly confined to a few project evaluations. While the research on participation attempts to identify the crucial factors facilitating the involvement of the people, the actual barriers to participation are not much highlighted.

Though the government is the major player in poverty reduction programmes, the possibilities and realisation of participation within the context of state-sponsored development have not been probed much. Naturally the limitations and dangers of a ritualistic, pseudo-participation at the cutting edge level of the government machinery have not been brought out in the studies.

There is scope for study of the regular rural development, particularly the anti-poverty programmes, for which most of the government funds are earmarked. So such general programmes, as opposed to special individual projects, assume importance. Moreover, if participation is encouraged in such general programmes, there are possibilities of it having a multiplier effect in social development (than would be the case, if isolated projects alone are made participatory). And government's role in rural development especially in the provision of basic needs and in alleviation of abject poverty, is certainly going to increase even in a situation where the state is withdrawing from several sectors.

Most of the government rural development programmes have an explicit participatory content, often with flexible procedures. Yet its realisation in practice falls short of the possibilities provided by the programme context, even while the optimum levels of participation required in the sector could be far above these possibilities allowed by the programme guidleines. Thus, there is need for further study of this area.

With the constitutional mandate given to the Panchayati Raj system, the essential role of which is "planning for economic development and social justice", the importance of people's participation has increased manifold. This is particularly true for micro-level planning at the level of the Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat. Thus the relevance of a study on people's participation in a decentralized local-government set-up stands vindicated by this historical context.

So, a case study, not of any particular project, but of the general rural development programmes in a representative area would be very relevant.

3.2 Coverage of this Study:

This study purports to:

- Highlight the "practice" of participation in government-sponsored poverty reduction programmes.
- Be an intense and holistic study of a block, which is fairly representative in its backwardsness and in the range of programmes implemented there.
- Focus on one of the most "excluded groups", the tribals and their perspectives.
- Bring out the processes involved, in this case, those of exclusion out of which arise the barriers to participation.
- Clarify the concept of people's participation in development.

There are certain limitations:

- The benefits of participation can not be analysed or quantified, due to the negligible levels of participation attained in the programmes.
- The linkages of participation to gender, education, organisational form, economic status etc can not be studied, for the same reason as above.
- Being confined to a block, the hierarchy of anti-participatory structures, if any, can not be traced to higher levels in the system.
- Limited availability of quantitative data imposes its own restrictions on rigorous quantification.

But for a few instances, the study has to make its deductions based on analysis of negative caselets.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Theoretical Aspects

Research on participation is still in its infancy; and there is a paucity of practical guidelines. The qualitative and dynamic aspects of the concept cannot be lost sight of. As Haque says "Development is a multivariate quantitative and qualitative change. While scientific judgements about development need to be reasoned, cardinal quantification has often served as a fetish that detached from, rather than helped, evaluate, the more essential quantitative attributes" [1]. To capture the nuances of the process of participation a predominantly qualitative research approach appears necessary, buttressed by quantitative data whenever required.

Oakley [2] proposes certain assumptions for the study of participation: such a study has to be

- Naturalistic ie. studying things as they occur and not searching for expected outcomes.
- Heuristic ie: involving continuous redefinitions.
- Holistic ie: seeing things in their totality.
- Inductive ie: the outcome emerging from the study.

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[1] Haque et al (1977), Page 15
[2] Oakley at al (1991)

UNRISD [3] indentified six dimensions of participation, defining the perspectives, from which to analyse participation; they are:

(i) As encounter between the excluded and those who enforce the exclusion, ranging from traditional mutual accommodation, through forms of bargaining, organising the share of power, to violent conflict.

(ii) As movements and organisations of would-be participants.

(iii) As "biography" or the individual participatory experience.

(iv) As a programme or project of the government or an NGO, where the impetus for participation comes from above.

(v) As component of a progressive national policy, like the mass mobilisations of China and Tanzania.

(vi) In terms of anti-participatory structures and ideologies like anti-participatory laws and procedures, powerful bureaucracies and large social enterprises.

Cohen and Uphoff have outlined a framework for analysis [3] - and it has been much acclaimed (Fig 3.1).

In this framework three dimensions are given in their interaction with the context which focuses on the relationship between project characteristics/task environment and patterns of actual participation. The framework is not exhaustive. It can be enlarged to suit the project/programme being analysed. For example, a fourth dimension "for what" can be added. Also such analysis can only be static, and will miss out the subtleties of the processes in operation. This framework presupposes the availability of a lot of data, which may not be so in backward areas. And government records which would be the source for much of these data, are often manipulated to tally with project requirements on participation.

Fintersbusch and Van Winklin [5] recommend a subjective scoring of qualitative changes against an agreed checklist of criteria (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

Indicators for the evaluation of participation:

A. Beneficiaries' role in the planning phase:
1. Degree of participation in original idea.
2. Degree of participation in project planning
3. Beneficiary commitment to the project

B. Beneficiaries' role in the implementation phase:

4. Degree of financial contribution
5. Degree of participation in implementation
6. Degree of indigenous knowledge used vs. dependency on outside experts.
7. Degree of organisation of beneficiaries
8. Extent to which organisation is 'theirs' vs. engineered by others.

C. Beneficiaries' role in the maintenance phase:

9. Degree of participation in maintenance
10. Degree of indigenous knowledge used vs dependency on outside experts after project completion
11. Degree of local vs outside ownership and control of facilities and organisations.

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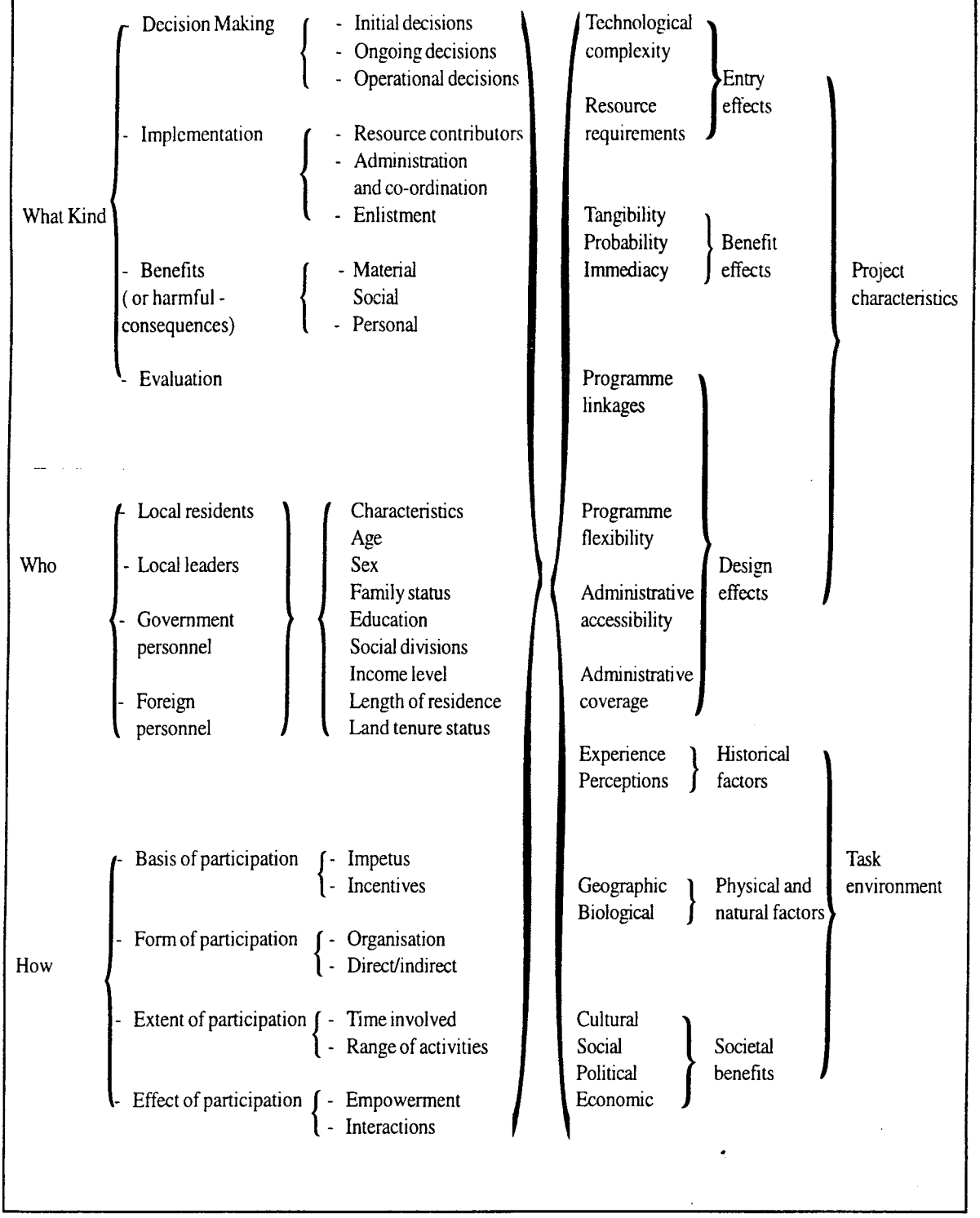
[3] Stiefel and Pearse (1994)
[4] Cohen and Uphoff (1990)
[5] Discussed in Moris and Copestake (1993)

Fig 3.1

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPATION



This can not be used to identify the levels of participation on its own as the bias of the respondent actor group could influence the scoring. However, it would be a useful epilogue, bringing out differing perceptions and relating them to the main analysis done earlier. So it can better serve as a prop to the main research.

Van Dusseldorp's [6] typology outlined below (Table 3.2) touches on certain deeper aspects like degree of voluntariness, intensity of participation and degree of effectiveness. However, the 'types' specified like intensive / extensive, local people / outsiders, complete / partial would need several sub-categories to facilitate sharper analysis.

Table 3.2

Typological Model of Participation Developed by Van Dusseldorp

Types		Criteria
Free	- X	
Forced	- X	Degree of Voluntariness
Customary	- X	
Direct	- X	
Indirect	- X	Way of Involvement
Organised	- X	
Unorganised	- X	Level of Organisation
Intensive	- X	
Extensive	- X	Intensity of Participatory Activities
Local People	- X	
Govt. Personnel	- X	Who is Participating
Outsiders	- X	
Complete	- X	
Partial	- X	Involvement
Unlimited	- X	
Limited	- X	Range of Activities
Effective	- X	
Ineffective	- X	Degree of Effectiveness
Locating Development	- X	
Social Planning	- X	
Social Action	- X	Objective of Participation

[6] Dusseldrop (1981)

This categorisation is quite useful when the study area is large and complex and where several processes of exclusion and exploitation operate.

Parameters and content of research depend on the operational understanding of the concept. If the focus is on economic issues then quantitative measures can be used: on the other hand if the focus is on the "process", qualitative methods are needed [7]. In this study, the accent is primarily on the process of participation with special reference to the barriers to participation. In such a study both qualitative and quantitative methods need to be used.

3.3.2 The Methodology Adopted

In this study a combination methodology but primarily qualitative, was followed to analyse the 'case' chosen. It was decided to go in for a case study as it would afford a real-life context, and facilitate an enquiry into both the phenomenon and the context when their boundaries are not clearly evident as is so in the case of participation [8]. This method provided opportunities for in-depth analysis and to seek the people's perspective, so crucial in understanding the process of participation. Though the experience of one ITDP has been taken as a 'case', it is composed of several caselets describing various experiences, lending richness to the study. And a fairly representative area was chosen to illustrate the problems of participation by very poor, marginalised groups (see Chapter 4.1 for the rationale of the choice of Attappady as study area) - in this sense it is a very revelatory case.

Within this general approach, specific methodologies were adpated from those described earlier. To identify the levels of participation the typology of both Cohen and Uphoff, and Van Dusseldorp were used, picking and choosing and adding those elements conforming to the operational understanding of participation described in Chapter 2.13. The dimensions mentioned in the UNRISD research were taken into account while interacting with the actors especially the key informants. A modified subjective ranking technique was used to study the perceptions of the various "actors" ie: the tribal chieftains, the educated tribal youths, the officials and the representatives of the people, both tribal and non-tribal.

As part of the qualitative research, participatory research techniques like direct observation, participant observation, focus group and community interviews and discussions, and semi-structured interviews with key informants were used [9]. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques like time line, historical transect, flow diagrams on impacts and folk histories were also employed in which the local tribals took the leading part. To realise the basic objective of quantitative research, that is discovery rather than proof, a series of characteristic caselets have been presented in full narrative, providing sufficient background for understanding the research outcomes.

The household sample survey method was used to obtain data on the socio-economic condition of the tribal families to validate some of the results obtained through the qualitative methods. How this methodology was followed in practice is detailed below.

As the first step, available secondary sources of information about Attappady were analysed - official documents like annual action plans, progress reports, evaluation studies, etc. as also reports of special projects taken up in Attappady by Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM), Kerala, Kerala Forest Research Institute(KFRI) and the Kerala Institute for Research, Training and Development Studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (KIRTADS). Various sociological studies on Irulas and Mudugas were also surveyed. The third tribal group in the area called Kurumbas, was left out of the study as these forest dwellers, classified as primitive tribals did not have a comparable development experience.

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[7] Maykut and Morehouse (1994)
[8] Yin (1989)
[9] Lammerink and Wolfers (1994)

Out of several government programmes being implemented, three with definitive participatory elements were picked up for detailed study - viz. DWCRA, wage employment generation schemes like EAS and JRY and the cooperative farms. DWCRA was chosen because it involved women's groups and represented self employment schemes. The JRY and the EAS were identified as one group because of their possibilities in meeting the 'felt' needs for local infrastructure. The rationale for chosing the cooperative farms was their long and chequered history and the gap between project intentions and project results, besides their inherent potential for participatory development.

It was decided to identify the levels of participation in each of these three schemes. For this purpose, the guidelines governing the schemes were analysed to identify provisions which called for people's participation. Initially indidivual survey through a formal questionnare was intended. However, while this survey was actually begun at the field level difficulties cropped up. The individual beneficiaries had very little information and participation was found to be practically zero in almost all the respects, showing no variation in relation to gender education, economic status, and geographical area. Also in keeping with tribal tradition it was realised that the villagers wished to respond in groups.

In deference to these findings of the pre-test, the questionnare was modified and administered to focus groups [10] in the case of DWCRA and Cooperative Farms and in the case of JRY and EAS community interviewing was adopted. Instead of formal questionnare a flexible design allowing for group interaction and qualitative descriptive response was adopted - a checklist was used to demarcate the areas of response.

This change of methodology resulted in a change of sampling methods as well. It was realized that random sampling would not be very rewarding. In the case of cooperative farms four out of five farms were selected for study and interviews were held with the farm members in groups. Similarly in the case of DWCRA all the existing units, as well as a few which became recently defunct, twelve in all, were studied and the members of the DWCRA units were approached as focus groups. In both these instances the critical issues were mooted to the focus group setting off intra-group discussions followed by a normally consensus response to the researcher. Though this tended to be long and time consuming the process was spontaneous and provided a lot of critical insights into the running of the schemes particularly in ensuring participation.

As regards JRY/EAS, representative villages were selected purposefully based on the geographical spread, level of development, type of work, etc. In these cases , twenty-seven in number, the hamlet was visited either in the morning or in the evening to get the full quorum of people. Generally transit walks were held followed by direct observation of the work done in the village. The community interview started with a discussion on the usefulness of the work. After examining the levels of participation the barriers to participation were identified by discussion. Following the semi-structured interviews, PRA techniques were used to get an idea of the dynamic processes affecting the tribal society and economy in the last three decades or so which affected the nature of participation.

In order to enrich the understanding of the various schemes in operation, 11 caselets have been described - three on DWCRA, five on JRY/EAS and three on successful government interventions - besides a general description of the working of the co-operative farms and the major interventions of three NGOs.

Participant observation was resorted to only sparingly for want of time. The ways in which ordinary tribals interacted with officials in the project office was studied by sitting in the office and moving about among the waiting petitioners. Similarly the dynamics of the Mooppan's council were studied by actual participation.

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[10] Morgan (1988)

The first part of research revealed that the levels of participation were abysmally low. The semi-structured interviews with the groups gave some possible reasons for the low level of participation. To pursue this further it was decided to have similar interviews with key informants representing the various actors (Appendix 2).

In addition, two workshops were conducted one with field level workers of an NGO and the other with a large group of 70 educated tribal boys and girls .In the latter case all of them had worked or were working as volunteers in participative development projects.

In the second workshop, fifteen hamlets were purposively identified representing the various development stages and problems of Attappady and from among them random stratified sampling of 150 families was done and a formal socio-economic survey carried out along with fifteen educated tribal youths (Appendix 3).

Then the information obtained on the levels of participation and the reasons for low participation were codified into a questionnaire and all the actors - NGOs, tribal chieftains, educated tribal youth (male and female), officials, and tribal and non-tribal Panchayat members - were asked to assign ranks based on the importance they attached to various answers (Appendix 4).

And finally, in a highly abbreviated form of the Delphi method, four top experts on Attappady representing anthropology, ecology, tribal development and NGO action were consulted on the emerging conclusions and their expert opinion obtained (Appendix 5).

To ensure quality of research outcome, care was taken to collect data from multiple sources on a set of objective criteria. 46 out of 135 Irula and Muduga hamlets were visited and discussions held with the community either during the key informant interviews or during the study of schemes (Appendix 6). The pattern of responses was analysed [11] even in the early stages of the study and seemingly discrepant elements were subject to special attention in the latter part of the field research. Outlier responses were thus followed up before acceptance or rejection. Only response areas which had logical links or congruence were utilised for final interpretation.

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[11] For analysis the techniques suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984) and Silverman (1993) were employed to a large extent with appropriate adaptations.

CHAPTER 4

THE STUDY AREA - RATIONALE AND CHARACTERISTICS

4.1 Choice of the Study Area - The Rationale

Attappady differs from the rest of Kerala in being extremely backward with high incidence of poverty and low levels of human development particularly among the tribal population. A study done by the State Planning Board [1] in 1975 had classified it as the most backward block in the whole of the State, and this situation does not seem to have changed.

It is the only Tribal Development block in Kerala. Since the focus of any study on participation would be on groups hitherto-excluded from development, the choice of the area is appropriate.

In a sense Attappady could be considered as the microcosom of backward India. It exhibits the typical characteristics of any poverty-stricken area - environmental degradation, socio-economic exploitation, policy -induced processes of poverty, backward agriculture, lack of employment in secondary or tertiary sectors, low levels of skill, absence of organization of the poor, etc. A case study of such an area has greater representative value.

Paradoxically, Attappady has had an unusually high development investment. For tribal development more than Rs.1.25 lakh has been spent per family since 1962. It has been both the cradle and graveyard of developmental experiments of various kinds. It happens to be the only block in Kerala for which the State Planning Board had directly prepared an Integrated Development Plan very back in 1975 [2]. All these have added to the variety of the development experience of the study area.

There is topical relevance too. In the context of Panchayati Raj which gives constitutional mandate for participative development, Attappady exemplifies the lurking dangers of a decentralized system where the power relations are to the disadvantage of the poor.

The relevance of the study at this moment is enhanced by the fact that a participatory Eco-Development Project for the area costing Rs.219 crore has just been formally sanctioned for implementation with Japanese assistance. Probably some of the lessons thrown up by this study could of immense use to the project authorities in chalking out strategies for genuine participation by the local people.

4.2 Characteristics of the Study Area

4.2.1 The Land:

Attappady is an extensive east sloping plateau covering an extent of 731 Sq.km. on the Western Ghats of Kerala (see Map). It is situated in Palakkad district north of the Palakkad gap and at the south-western part of Nilgiris. The northern and southern boundaries have an elevation between 1000 meters and 2000 meters above sea level; the eastern part of Attappady merges with the plains of Coimbatore. 60.6% of Attappady has an elevation between 600 M to 1000 M and 71.6% of the area has a slope between 15 to 30 degrees, showing the environmentlly sensitive nature of the region [3].

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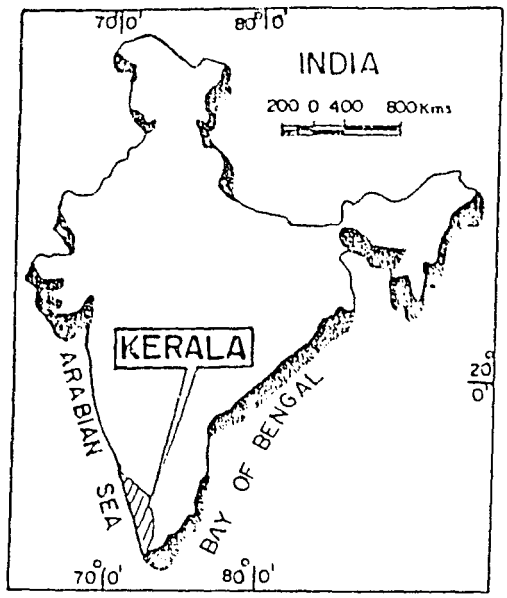
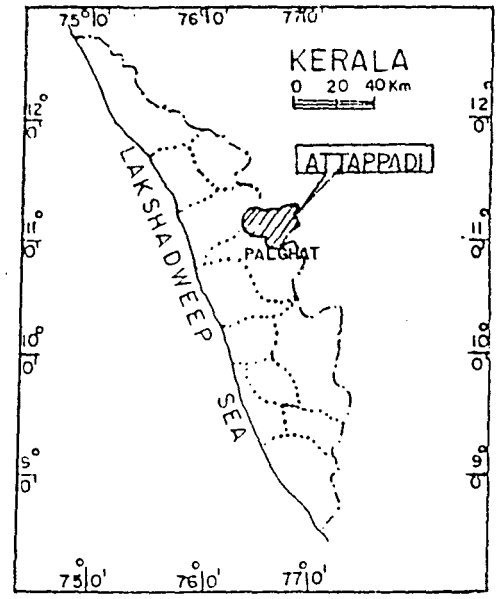
[1] State Planning Board (1975)
[2] Ibid
[3] Kerala State Land Use Board and NRSA (1994)





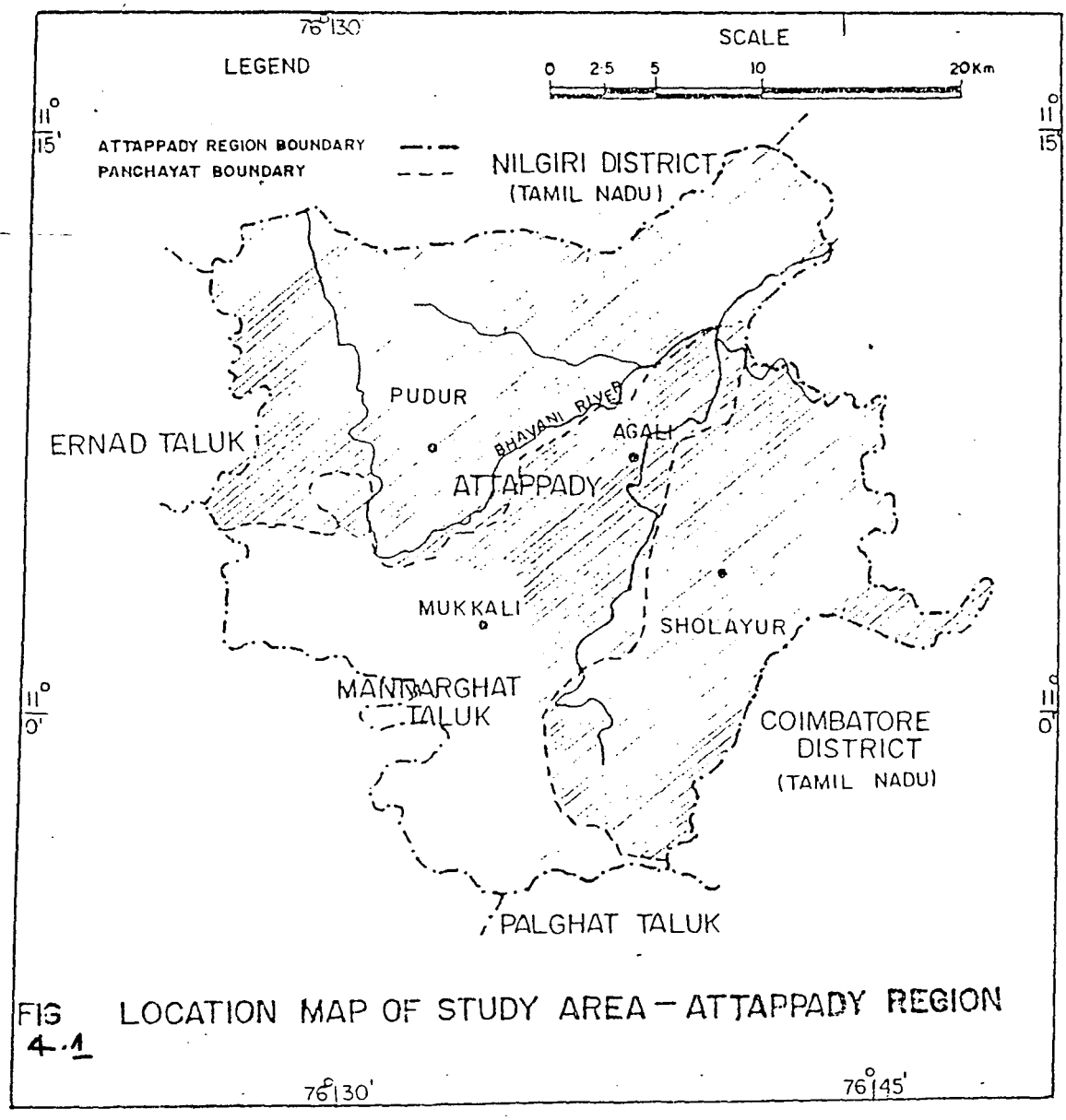


FIG 4.1 LOCATION MAP OF STUDY AREA – ATTAPPADY REGION

Attappady forms part of the Cauveri watershed and its eastern region is one of the driest parts of Kerala. Rainfall varies from 3000mm in the higher western reaches which are mostly forests to 900 mm in the eastern areas. The western parts of Attappady get rains mostly from the south west monsoon and the eastern parts receive the predominent share of rain from the north eastern monsoon.

Experts are of the opinion that even about five decades ago, Attappady must have been mostly tropical moist forests [4]. Various human interventions fragmented forest continuity creating a mosaic different different degraded systems including dry scrub forests. A study by the KFRI [5] shows that 52.8 percent of Attappady is forest land - but 66 percent of the forest area is either degraded forests or just grassland. Thus this block constitutes one of the most degraded portions of the Nilgris Biosphere.

The Attappady block consists of three panchayats viz. Agali, Pudur and Sholayur.

4.2.2 The People

The population of Attappady consists of tribals and non-tribals roughly in the ratio of 2:3. The anthropologists do not consider the tribal inhabitants of Attappady as aboriginals. They must all have been immigrants who sought refuge in the dense forests of the upper reaches to escape persecution in the plains. The population of Attappady as per the 1991 census is given in Table 4.1

Table 4.1

Population of Attappady

		Total Population	Tribals	Others
Number	:	62033	24228	37805
Percentage	:	100	39.06	60.94

The non-tribal population consists of migrants from Tamil Nadu, in the eastern low-lying portions and migrants from the rest of Kerala particularly Kottayam district, in the western portions.

The tribals of Attappady belong to three different groups, viz. Irulas, Mudugas and Kurumbas. They reside in small nuclear villages called "oorus". As of now there are 168 oorus in Attappady.

Each tribal ooru has got a chieftain called Mooppan. He is assisted by a Bhandari (Treasurer) and a Kuruthala (Junior Headman). Since mid-seventies a system of electing the Mooppan by the local Revenue Divisional Officer has been evolved. Normally the Mooppan's son is elected; but there have been rare cases of a different person getting elected too. It is still possible to identify the Mannukaran (a soil man or agricultural expert) in most of the hamlets. With the comming to end of the shifting cultivation and the switching over to settled agriculture the role of the Mannukkaran has dwindled into a ritualistic one [6].

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[4] Nair .S (1989)
[5] KFRI (1991)
[6] Mathur (1977)

The present day tribal economy is dominated by settled agriculture and in areas adjoining the forests minor forest produce collection is the major economic activity. Animal husbandary is practiced on a small scale [7].

Though there has been a significant expansion in the educational facilities in Attappady the number of educated tribals particularly those passing the 10th standard is very low. In spite of the total literacy programme the literacy level of the tribals has not improved - it is still a low 30.2 percent in a state which has 88.92 percentage rural literacy (1991 Census).

4.2.3 History of Development Experience

Government-sponsored development in Attappady can be categorised into three time periods: (1) Pre-1962 (2) 1962 to 1975 and (3) Post 1975.

In the pre-1962 days development was limited to health and educational interventions. In the 1950s the anti-malaria programme was carried out successfully in Attappady under the National Malaria Eradication Programme. During this period five welfare schools were started with the aim of attracting tribal children to school. An office of the Deputy Tahsildar was opened in Attappady to lend backup support to these government programmes and also to sort out local disputes.

In 1962 Attappady was declared as a Tribal Development Block and a senior Block Development Officer was posted. Infrastructure development was given the prime importance. The arterial road of Thavalam-Mully, the important crossway across the Bhavani river at Pudur and several school and office buildings were all constructed in the first few years [8]. Extension work was carried out to further education, and improve agriculture and animal husbandry. Special efforts were taken to improve personal hygiene. In 1964 the process of recording of the land rights of tribals was taken up as part of the land reforms. In 1966 the massive Kundah River valley Project was introduced in Attappady to conserve soil and moisture to prevent siltation of the Kundah dam. This scheme is still in operation and more than Rs.12 crore has been spent so far on it. In 1971, the private forests were nationalised.

In 1975 the Tribal Development Block was upgraded into the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) with much higher inflow of funds particularly for housing and economic development. Along with this the Western Ghat Development Programme (WGDP) was introduced primarily in the form of two cooperative farms covering an extent of about 2000 hectares intended to rehabilitate and settle landless tribal families. In the first seven years of this scheme about Rs.3 crore was spent.

In the 1980s the allotment of funds to ITDP under various rural development programmes started increasing significantly. IRDP, NREP and RLEGP all came into being. 1985 is another watershed in the development history of Attappady. The then Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi visited this place in September 1985 and this was followed up by a series of administrative measures to improve the delivery system and probe the corrupt deeds of the past. A cleansing operation was taken up in the ITDP office and staff with unsullied reputation alone were sent to Attappady. For four years from March 1986 the project was put under the charge of IAS Officers.

During 1980s and 1990s there has been a phenomenal increase in expenditure on the construction of roads. Investment in tribal housing has also increased. In 1989, NREP and RLEGP were converted into JRY. In 1993 Attappady became one among the 20 blocks in Kerala where the Employment Assurance Scheme became operative giving guaranteed employment of 100 days a year for two members from unemployed rural families below poverty line. And now the massive Rs.219 crore Japanese-aided Eco-Development Project has just been sanctioned.

Thus Government's developmental role in Attappady has been expanding at a rapid rate.

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[7] Hockings (1989)
[8] KIRTADS (1982)

PART II

HOW IS IT ?.

CHAPTER 5

PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN SELECTED PROGRAMMES- POSSIBILITIES AND PRACTICE

Most of the development programmes implemented by the ITDP have a strong participatory content. This is particularly true of the poverty reduction programmes.

The direct attack on rural poverty in India follows a twin strategy - one promoting self-employment through programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and its sub-scheme Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) and the other offering wage employment through rural works programmes like Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) and the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS).

In the context of Attappady, co-operative farming intended to cover about 10% of the poorest landless tribals is a major anti-poverty programme.

All these three programmes clearly provide for participatory development. The possibilities for participation offered by each of them are narrated and then the analysis of the levels realised in actual practice is juxtaposed - and this has brought out a pattern of diametrically opposite contrasts, as revealed below.

5.1. Cooperative Farms

5.1.1 Possibilities for Participation [1]:

In theory, cooperatives are the ideal participatory insitutions. But the Attappady co-operatives were organized due to initiatives from above. Four hundred and eighty landless tribal families from all over Attappady were organized into two large farming societies. Initially all decisions were taken by a nominated Director Board which included nominees of the tribal members also. Since 1987 elections have been held to decide the tribal nominees in the Director Board. All decisions except routine operational ones are discussed and taken in the Director Board. Thus there is opportunity for indirect participation. Since the members of the cooperatives reside mostly within the farms, there is opportunity for frequent mingling and development of common opinion on various issues for participation from below.

5.1.2 Practice of Participation:

a. Background:

There are two cooperative farming societies - The Attappady Cooperative Farming Society (ATCOFARMS) and the Vattuluky Girijan Cooperative Society, (VGCFS). The ATCOFARMS was organized in 1976 to rehabilitate 420 landless families by bringing into cultivation 1080 Ha. of vested forests, by raising cash crops of coffee, cardamom, pepper and nutmeg in four separate farms at Chindakki, Karuvara, Pothupady and Varadimala . Intended as a collective farm, two hectares of land were assigned to each tribal family and then pooled together. The title deeds were pledged against a loan of Rs.1.29 crore from the local cooperative bank to be refinanced by ARDC (now NABARD). Government of India gave an assistance of Rs.2.29 crore under Western Ghats Development Programme

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[1] State Planning Board (1975)

(WGDP). Each tribal family was given a personal plot of half an acre to undertake cultivation for domestic needs and houses were provided in all the farm sites to the resettled families. A school and a hospital were set up in Chindakki farm; the hospital ceased to function later.

In VGCFS, set up in 1980, only 60 families could be properly settled in an area of 482 ha. even though originally 200 landless tribal families were expected be included in the cooperative society. A combination of dairying and cultivation of horticultural crops was planned but no concrete economic activity has been taken up on a sustained basis so far. For about five years from 1987 sericulture was tried out. Now the main source of income is making of bricks and there is no farming activity other than a tiny extent of seri-culture in two hectares.

b. People's Participation in the Management of the Farms:

Both the co-operative farms were set up with clear objectives. In the formative period it was intended to provide professional and management support to the farms to train the tribal farmers in such a manner that they could run the farms on their own within a short period. The crop mix was to be such that traditional food crops were also to be raised to meet the food needs of the members.

Of course the project idea came from above, but there was a well-spelt out development ideology behind it, a reflection of the thinking of the times. The basic needs approach providing for essential human needs was followed and it included an element of redistribution through assigning of vested forests. In spite of the top-down planning strategy, it was envisaged that the capabilities of the tribals would be strengthened and that they would soon be allowed to manage the farms themselves.

The Mooppans were consulted and their opinions respected in the selection of the farm members. But once the farms were set up, and money started flowing a closed bureacratic management of the farms was resorted to . The real owners, the farm members, were never consulted or even informed about various plans and activities. Each society was run by a director board consisting mostly of officials and four nominated tribals. But it proved to be a ratifying body with very little attempts even to explain the decisions to its tribal members.

The knowledge of the tribals in agriculture and micro irrigation was not tapped. Their food crops were not planted. There was no attempt to train them in farm operations. In the initial years, various items of work including simple items like weeding were given on informal contract to middlemen who reaped good profits while the members of the co-operative farm worked as their labourers. The assets created proved to be substandard as was revealed in an enquiry in 1982 [2]. There was much financial mismanagement and criminal cases were instituted in 1986 against senior staff of the co-operative societies. Both the societies were on the verge of complete close down. Then a turn-around occurred mainly through the efforts of dedicated managers who started operating with a predominantly tribal staff. ATCOFARMS has reached the break-even point now; VGCFS has also improved, though it is still dependent on government subsidy.

It is against this background that the present study has to be viewed. Group interviews and discussions were held and the numner of participants is indicated in Table 5.1.

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[2] KIRTADS (1982)

Table 5.1		
Name of Farm	No. of Participants in Group Interview	
	Men	Women
Chindakki	16	11
Karuvara	12	9
Pothupady	14	9
Vattulukky	17	6

Being aware of the factual details of a programme is the first step towards deeper awareness of basic issues leading to participation. The most basic level of awareness relates to information which is supposed to be freely available. Table 5.2 presents the number of people knowing the basic details about the farms

The awareness levels of even basic facts, most of which are published in the annual report to the director board and general body of the co-operative farms, is extremely low. Only 31 percent of those interviewed in ATCOFARMS knew even the total membersship of the society and 10 percent, the area under its possession; for VGCFS, a more compact farm the figures were 87 percent and 70 percent respectively. But for two persons in the ATCOFARMS, none knew the yields of various crops - even the extent of various crops was known to just three percent and 26 percent of the interviewees in the two farms.

Table 5.2

Awareness Levels of Basic Facts

Details	ATCOFARMS No. of people knowing			VGCFS No. of people knowing		
	Men (N=42)	Women (N=29)	Total (N=71)	Men (N=17)	Women (N=6)	Total (N=23)
1. Total membership of the farming societies	15	7	22	15	5	20
2. Area owned by the co-ops.	6	1	7	12	4	16
3. Extent of various crops grown	2	0	2	4	2	6
4. Yields	2	0	2	0	0	0
5. Income of the co-ops.	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Expenditure of the co-ops.	0	0	0	0	0	0
7. Assistance received by the co-ops.	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. Place of sale of produce	0	0	0	4	0	4
9. Unit cost of sale	0	0	0	4	0	4
10. Sale proceeds	0	0	0	0	0	0

The knowledge of important facts indicating the health of the society like income and expenditure, assistance received and sales proceeds was nil among the groups contacted. And only four people who accompanied the sales van from the VGCFS knew the market and the unit sale price.

The levels of awareness of larger issues is equally poor as seen in Table 5.3 below:

Table 5.3

Awareness of Issues

Issues	Awareness Levels	
	ATCOFARMS	VGCFS
1. Financial difficulties of the co-op.	Very Low	Very Low
2. Strategic Plans of the society.	Very Low	Very Low
3. Operational Plans of the society.	High	Moderate
4. Objectives of the society	Moderate	Low
5. Labour rights	Very High	Moderate

There was awareness only of current operational plans ie: day-to-day activities like weeding, coppicing. tilling and manuring. This was more in the nature of knowing what work to do in the next few days. At the same time there was no knowledge whatsoever of strategic long-term plans of the societies. Even the objectives of the society were only partially understood and that too only in the ATCOFARMS.

An interesting aspect is the relatively higher awareness of labour rights which indicates the defacto worker status of the members of the co-operative farms as opposed to the de jure ownership status. This self-accepted role has affected the motivation to participate in the running of the socities. This was confirmed in the group discussions.

The levels of participation are quite low as may be expected with the levels of awareness the members had. They are consulted in taking day-to-day decisions and in preparing operational plans. Information is shared on purchases made and the benefits to be given. And there is no participation in any other activity (Table 5.4).

However, in implementation, of the action plans there was total involvement of the members, and middlemen were excluded. This could be described as semi-coercive, imposed by a strict but dedicated management. The tasks and work turn-out of each member were clearly laid down and explained to them.

Indirect participation too proved elusive. The four elected tribal members in each society could not effectively provide 'voice' to the tribal members except petitioning for more benefits as workers.

Table 5.4

Intensity of Participation in the Management of the Farms

	ATCOFARMS	VGCFS
Strategic Planning	Zero (pseudo)	Zero
Operational Planning	Consultation	Consultation
Purchase Decisions	Information given	Information given
Day-to-day running	Consultation	Consultation
Marketing	Zero	Zero
Sharing of Benefits	Information given	Information given
Monitoring	Zero	Zero
Evaluation	Zero	Zero

However, two decades of existence as a co-operative society has brought important gains. These were brought out in the focus group discussions held in the four farms. Compared to the position of tribals in the rest of Attappady, the members of the cooperative farms, particularly in the ATCOFARMS were in a better position. Except the Vattulukky members, all of them felt that standard of living was much higher among the farm members. There was greater certainity of income, and less threat of starvation. This is all the more significant as only the poorest landless tribals were included as members of the cooperative farms. Similarly they felt that they had greater information about government schemes and were better aware of their rights than their counterparts living in the oorus. These people had a better share of benefits from the government-sponsored schemes than anybody else in Attappady. However, they felt that the sense of belonging was still very weak. They thought of themselves more as labourers than as co-owners. This has reinforced the earlier finding, which showed that they were more sure of the rights of plantation labourers than about the planning and marketing strategies, and the financial position of the farm. It was revealed that during peak season when the farm required the maximum amount of labour at least 25 per cent of the members would be weaned away by non-tribal land owners by paying an extra amount to work in their farms. These members would desert their own farms even while knowing that delay in harvesting would cause an overall reduction of income in their own farm.

A very significant incident symbolic of the enhanced sense of well-being was the spontaneous mass demonstration held by the farm members in 1995 protesting against the attempt by non-tribals to encroach upon the farm land. This was only the second such natural demonstration held by the tribals in the last decade. Similarly they have been able to withstand the pressures exerted by the major political parties - to ask for individual land rights and disband the cooperatives.

The members were unanimous that since 1987 there has been significant improvement in the functioning of the farm and they have a better hope about the future. They pointed out that in spite of financial losses, the farms have protected the land resources of tribals even while their kinsman outside lost much of what they had to the exploitative actions of the non-tribal population.

This analysis shows that the level of participation is very low. Even when there exists some level of participation it is of a semi-coercive nature brought about by a benevolent management. However, it can be concluded that in comparision with any other programme in Attappady, there exists a foundation for active participation. People living together in a community and working together in their own lands and earning considerably more than their kith and kin outside have gained certain confidence and security which could be further built upon to initiate higher levels of participative functioning.

5.2 Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)

5.2.1 Possibilities for Participation [3],[4]:

This is a sub scheme of the Integrated Rural Development Programme which aims at providing self employment to the people below poverty line by providing capital in the form of loan and subsidy along with skill development and other supportive services particularly marketing. DWCRA focuses on groups of poor women. Those women who are below poverty line have to be organized in groups of 15 to 20 persons. These groups are to be natural and organic arising from mutual interest in a self help economic development activity. It is not necessary for the group to organise around the nucleus of economic activity. It can be around any matter of common concern but, for the group to get assistance, it has to take up an economic development activity. The identification of the members of the group has to be done with the involvement of the local community. The role of the government functionary, the Village Extension Officer (VEO) is only to catalyse the dynamics of group formation and cohesion. Even if the process is time consuming the group has to be well formed and should throw up a group leader during the process of formation.

Once a group comes into being it is expected to interact with the VEO and identify activities which it feels confident of taking up. The role of the official is in providing backward and forward linkages like training, provision of raw material, marketing etc. besides strengthening managerial capacity. Training is an important component of the DWCRA programme as it is essential that the technical skills and managerial capabilities of the members as well as the group are significantly upgraded.

The DWCRA group is expected to develop into an active forum for generating the demand for various government services and programmes; it is to be an important agency of cooperative non-state public action. The group is expected to absorb programmes taken up by other government agencies to achieve a sort of convergence through a point of effective demand. The group is also expected to build awareness among members on the problems of the poor, especially women and children.

The guidelines stipulate that a participative ongoing evaluation of the programme would be done by the members of the group along with VEOs. The group is to meet as frequently as possible to discuss the achievements of the objectives and analyse the shortcomings.

Thus, it is clear that the guidelines provide for a highly participative programme right from the pre-planning stage, well into the monitoring and evaluation stages.

5.2.2 Practice of Participation:

In the last decade, about thirty DWCRA units (the exact number is not avaiable in the ITDP) were set up. Twelve such units were selected for detailed study, including all the five functioning ones. The results of the study are presented in two parts - the first part is a narration of three caselets illustrative of DWCRA performance and the second part is an analysis of the levels of participation as revealed by the twelve samples.

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[3] Government of India (1991)
[4] Government of India (1992)

5.2.2.1 Illustrative Caselets

(i) DWCRA Unit, Boothivazhy:

This poultry unit was started in 1989. Seventeen beneficiaries were identified and each of them was given a total assistance of Rs.7000 of which fifty percent was subsidy and the balance was loan arranged from the local bank. The project envisaged construction of sheds at a cost of Rs.3000 each and purchase of 50 chicks per beneficiary to be reared in these sheds.

The scheme was initiated by the VEO who was asked by the ITDP to organise a women's economic development unit under DWCRA. The beneficiaries were called for a meeting and they were identified by the VEO out of the list of the people below the poverty line. There was no attempt to involve the local community in the selection and formation of the group. Four meetings were held in the ITDP office which is close by. The initial request by the beneficiaries was for supply of goats. When this was turned down by the ITDP they wished to have cows. But the VEO argued with the group that a poultry unit could be profitable. They demurred and gave their consent reluctantly though they were not fully convinced, as they did not want to lose the project.

The group members acted individually in relation to all decisions regarding the project activities. All of them were illiterate except one woman who had studied upto standard seven, and the VEO nominated her as the group leader. It was revealed that the group gave the consent not because they accepted her as the leader but because she was the only person who could read a bit and they needed a person who could operate the bank account and sign documents and maintain records all of which required some education.

After the group was formed, it took one year of delay, involving several visits to the bank and to the ITDP office, to get the loan. The first instalment was released for the construction of the shed for which a type design was prepared unsuited to the local situation. The construction was done by the beneficiaries themselves individually and there was no attempt to involve the members as a group. Middlemen entered the fray and put up poor quality sheds. And the construction which was done in fits and starts without any technical support from the ITDP, consumed another year. All these delays affected the morale of the beneficiaries and the idle waiting led to internal bickerings within the group. In order to get higher yields, an improved variety of chicks was supplied. They required supplementary feed which had to be purchased from the market. Initially the beneficiaries purchased feed from outside. Later they could not afford to do so and when the feeding levels became too low, chicks started fighting with each other, resulting in the death of several birds.

Since the scheme was against the wishes of the group the men folk did not offer any cooperation. The chicks were sold in the market in violation of the rules of the scheme. As the beneficiaries were not given any technical or managerial training and the poultry was not brought under veterinary cover, the project started disintegrating. The group did not meet even once after the sanctioning of the loan. Only the convenor kept in touch with the ITDP office and there was no communication with the members. The members became suspicious of the group leader and felt that she was cheating them. In no time the group collapsed and became practically fragmented individual units. The group which was formed in order to satisfy stipulated rules did not survive for long.

By 1993-94 the scheme collapsed totally. None of the seventeen sheds is now being used for rearing poultry. They have been converted into living rooms or shops. Four of them have collapsed. Now group members are saddled with revenue recovery proceedings with each person having to pay on an average Rs.4800. The members are now of the unanimous opinion that they made a mistake in joining the scheme. They feel vulnerable faced with the debt and fear exploitation of their plight by politicians and officials. After painful analysis, the group indentified the causes behind their failure. They are summarised below.

1. The group was hastily created with the sole intention of satisfying procedural requirements of the scheme, to 'receive' assistance.

2. Right from the identification of beneficiaries, every activity was directed by officials - selection of group leader, deciding the project activity, finalising the amount to be invested, designing the poultry shed, choosing the variety of chicks to be reared, and so on. The group was never consulted.

3. Everything was given free which made the group members suspend their doubts and critical feelings and act against their instincts. They never got really involved in any activity.

4. There was no attempt to train the group members and equip them to carry out the project activities. Their traditional skills in poultry rearing were ignored, as well.

(ii) DWCRA Unit, Mundanpara

This is a dairy unit run by a group of 15 women of whom only two are tribals. The members form part of a larger women's group called Jyothi Mahila Sangam set up in 1991 at the initiative of Attappady Social Service Organization (ASSO), a church sponsored local NGO with a total membership is 70 of which 10 are tribal women. ASSO conducted awareness-building classes, at least one per month in the first three years. They also encouraged informal economic development activities by supplying vegetable seedlings, sewing machines and poultry units.

The idea of starting a larger economic development activity originated in mid 1992. After a series of discussions among themselves there was an interaction with the block functionary as follow up of information given to the group members by ASSO on possibilities of government assistance. Initially the block officials offered a poultry unit. This was totally resisted by the group and finally it was agreed that a dairy unit with two cows per person would be set up. The unit was formally registered in August 1994.

The assistance for purchase of cows was sanctioned even earlier in January 1994 at the rate of Rs.11850 per beneficiary; out of this Rs.9000 was meant for two cows and the remaining for the cow shed. The loans were obtained in the name of individuals. The scheduled caste/scheduled tribe members were provided Rs.5000 as subsidy and the other members received Rs.3950. The cows were selected carefully by the beneficiaries and most of the non-scheduled caste / scheduled tribe members contributed an additional amount of Rs.2500 to 3000 each to ensure that they got good quality cows. The production details indicate that the net yield averaged 5 to 6 kg. per day.

Since the group was well formed even before the activity was taken up it had no difficulty in identifying an active group leader. The project idea originated within the group. The group decided the ground rules for its functioning in consultation with the Extension Officer (Women's Welfare). Though the group had no clear sharing of responsibilities and norms for group disciplining, there was adequate sharing of information and benefits. It met regularly at a specific venue every month and maintained detailed records of its discussions and follow-up on decisions. All these were achieved in spite of the fact that the cows were reared in individual households and the milk marketed individually because the scattered households made group marketing difficult.

The group sorted out its individual and group problems. Even when, in the meetings, there was official presence, the decisions were mostly arrived at by the group itself. The members of the group had a very high level of awareness on matters related to its functioning, such as assistance received, amount of dues, interest rates, expenditure details, sales proceeds, etc. It also had some awareness about the objectives of the DWCRA and the role of the group. But the group did not show much awareness about the broader possibilities of the scheme.

The monitoring of the project was individually done. However, problems which affected more than one person were tackled by the group as a whole. The voluntary agency arranged training classes on dairying, management etc for the group. The repayment was found to be prompt except for one defaulter. This was achieved due to peer pressure and regular monitoring of repayments in the group meetings.

This group was confident of taking up additional activities not only for its members but also for the development of the locality. The group was active in the anti-arrack agitation in 1994-95.

This is the most successful group activity among the 30 DWCRA units set up in Attappady in the last decade. The members of the group proudly outlined the factors behind their success:

(i) The group had the advantage of being organised by an NGO. It was meant to function as an instrument to analyse and understand social and development problems, explore possibilities of group action to solve them with or without external support and to raise their voice against injustice. The NGO played the role of a catalyst conscientizing the groups and then withdrawing slowly allowing autonomy to the group.

(ii) Because of the reason mentioned above, the group achieved good cohesion. They could relate easily on an equal footing with the officials. As the group had a strong 'voice' it could get its priorities recognised. Instead of being a passive receptacle, it could act as a demand-raising force.

(iii) Participative decision-making and dedicated leadership helped the group sort out several problems.

(iv) The group went through a maturation phase of low-key participatory action before going for the bigger project.

(iii) DWCRA Unit, Elachivazhy.

This seri-culture unit was started with much fanfare by organizing 15 women, eight from the Elachivazhy hamlet and seven from Nattakallur hamlet which is three km away. Initially local demand was for a goat unit. This was not agreed to by the ITDP authorities. They persuaded the women into accepting a seri-culture unit. The acceptance was based on a general promise of high returns; the beneficiaries were not briefed about the various aspects of sericulture. They were just told that they need only follow instructions as and when given by the project authorities. The officials nominated the leader of the group as well.

Since the beneficiaries did not have land, 5 acres of land was leased in at an annual rent of Rs.300 per acre. The total investment of Rs.1.5 lakh was obtained through half the amount as loan and other half as subsidy. Though loan was taken in the name of the beneficiaries individually the money was handed over to the Vattulukky Girijan Cooperative Farming Society located about 15 km. away. This was done because the society was engaged in seri-culture activities and was expected to whole manage the unit including provision of inputs and technical help and marketing of produce.

Out of the 15 beneficiaries, seven from the neighbouring hamlets who could not walk six kms every day to take part in the activities dropped out. However, the loan and the subsidy meant for them was utilised by the society.

Training was arranged by the Central Silk Board Unit located in Attappady. But it proved to be superficial. One expert was posted as supervisor for the group at a salary of Rs.1000 per month. He worked as director of the group and the women members just obeyed his instructions without learning or initiating anything. They were paid daily wages on stamped receipt and for all practical purpose they worked as labourers.

The group met only to satisfy the procedural requirements involved in the withdrawal of money from the bank. It was not consulted on any strategic official decisions and was not kept informed of the financial conditions of the project. The purchase of materials were also done by the supervisor. The group was able to take 12 crops of cocoon weighing 243 kgs. which was sold in Coimbatore fetching a return of Rs.20,000.

There was a sudden collapse of the market and the society which had not anticipated such an eventuality could not make any adjustments to tide over the situation. The mulbery yield decreased due to the use of pesticides in the neighbouring plots of cotton. It also affected production of silk worms. The beneficiaries were not involved in any problem identification or suggesting of possible solutions.

In the midst of these problems, it was decided by the ITDP authorities that procedurally the co-operative society could not run a DWCRA unit for non-members. All of a sudden, the responsibility of running the unit was transferred to the group and the local VEO was asked to help the group. The unprepared and untrained group carried on activities till such time there was money to pay wages and then abruptly stopped functioning. Now coercive steps are being taken to recover the dues under law from all the beneficiaries including the seven who really never took any part except applying for the loan initially. This has created a rift between the two oorus. The group members have to pay back the arrears, for which they have to sell off atleast a portion of their property or borrow from the money lender. They are likely to end up worse off than they were earlier, after an investment of Rs.1.5 lakh.

The group after an animated discussion concluded that the reasons for the fiasco were:

(i) The group was artificially created with members from two oorus separated by a distance of six kms. It was not nurtured to grow into a cohesive entity.

(ii) There were no consultations with the group on their needs, capabilities and possibilities. The activity was imposed from outside.

(iii) There was no attempt to develop the required skills in the group - technical or managerial.

(iv) The group was not involved in any of the activities, even to the extent of being provided with full information.

(v) The group was weak in its relationship with officials and even with the professional employed with their money. It was meant to be a passive recipient.

Among these three cases, the second one is an exception while the other two confirms to the general pattern of Attappady DWCRA units, as is evident in the ensuing analysis of 12 DWCRA groups.

5.2.2.1 General Analysis:

The general profile of the 12 units could be seen in Table 5.5. Out of these 12 units, six are tribal groups, five are predominantly non-tribal with nominal tribal membership, and one unit is a mixed one. Two third of the units have dairying as the core activity. Though dairying offers scope for group action in procuring feed, marketing of milk, arranging verterinary care, it was attempted only in the Tazhe Sambarcode unit where it failed. The way the scheme is implemented in Attappady, dairying is solely an individual household activity. The group action is mainly in getting the loan and subsidy.

Yet analysing the performance of the units, all the seven cases where the groups are still recognisable are dairy units and two of them survived the collapse of the economic development activity. In contrast the three units which by the nature of their activity called for group action - readymade garments mattress and sericulture units - could not develop viable groups. Focus group discussions confirmed

that familiarity with dairying was responsible for the group staying together (in spite of it being run by individual households) as they could easily relate to the activity and discuss various things. As dairying did not stretch their capabilities, they could carry on with confidence. And the activity did not generate bickerings within the group.

It is seen that the performance levels of five out of the six tribal units are quite poor; no activity is going on now and revenue recovery proceedings under law have been launched against four of them. Asset retention and repayment are also lower in these units. Groups which took up innovative activities like garment making, mattress making and sericulture have performed the worst suggesting that the capability enhancing aspects of the programme were generally ignored. The general performance as evident through five indicators is presented in Table 5.6.

Table 5.5

GENERAL PROFILE OF DWCRA GROUPS

Sl. No.	Location	Activity	Year of Starting	Loan	Subsidy	Total Members	No.of Tribals	No. of persons in focus group discussions	
								Total	of which ST
1.	Thovalem	Readymade garments, Rexine bags	1989	64000	36000	10	3	4	1
2.	Kookumpalayam	Dairy	1993	107430	57650	13	6	9	4
3.	Chittoor	Mattress	1985	57000	33000	19	3	5	1
4.	Mundenpara	Dairy	1991	115350	58250	15	2	14	2
5.	Karara	Dairy	1993	72063	35742	15	2	9	2
6.	Bhoothivazhy	Poultry	1989	59500	59500	17	17	11	11
7.	Tazhe Sambarcode	Dairy	1987	60000	60000	20	20	12	12
8.	Vada Kottathara	Dairy	1988	21000	21000	14	14	8	8
9.	Pattimalam	Dairy	1986	64000	62000	16	15	9	8
10.	Moolakombu	Dairy	1994	76000	68000	12	11	9	8
11.	Elachivazhy	Sericulture	1989	75000	75000	15	15	11	11
12.	Pettikkal	Dairy	1995	108000	60000	13	1	8	1

TABLE 5.6

PERFORMANCE OF DWCRA GROUPS

Sl. No.	Group	Whether activity still going on	Percentage of Repayment of dues	Whether Revenue Recovery initiated	Percentage of assets in position	Whether group is still recognisable
1.	Thavalam	No	7	No	100	No
2.	Kookumpalayam	Yes	75	No	100	Yes
3.	Chittoor	No	78	Yes	85	No
4.	Mundanpara	Yes	93	No	100	Yes
5.	Karara	Yes	19	No	100	Yes
6.	Bhoothivazhy	No	5	Yes	Nil	No
7.	Thazhe Sambarcode	No	50	Yes	100	Split into 2 groups
8.	Vadakottathara	No	33	Yes	25	Yes
9.	Pattimalam	No	50	No	80	Yes
10.	Moolakombu	Yes	90	No	92	Yes
11.	Elachyvazhy	No	Nil	Yes	Nil	No
12.	Pettikkal	Yes	80	No	100	Yes

Group formation is the key to achieving greater involvement of the beneficiaries and is the core objective of DWCRA - and it is to form and coalesce organically. However, in two-third of the cases the impulse for coming together came from officials out to achieve targets. Only in one case it sprung locally and in two cases the NGOs provided the initiative. And the selection of beneficiaries also affected natural group formation, as only those finding a place in the official list of people below poverty line were included. The local consensus was that this list was prepared without consulting the ooru people. In the expansion of membership, group involvement was there only in three cases.

The selection of leader was done by the official himself in five cases. Even the best group did not clearly identify the objectives for which the group should function and the action points to achieve them. The officials also ignored this important cementing factor in group functioning. Similarly there was no attempt to lay down the internal rules of group governance - only formalities like registration, maintenance of minute books etc were insisted on by the officials (Table 5.7).

Judging the effectiveness of group functioning by ten indicators, gave the picture as shown in Table 5.8.

It shows that except in sharing of information, having common meeting place and sharing of benefits, the other indicators are weak. Though eight groups reported suo moto meetings, only half of them took independent decisions without the involvement of officials. Only a third of the groups attained some cohesion and just one group could involve itself in public action for common benefit, forcing the closure of a liquor shop. Among the tribal groups only one group out of six had the capability of taking decisions on its own.

The groups did not seem to have matured into viable organisations catalysing participation. A really functioning group could be seen only at Mundanpara, the unit described as the second illustrative case. There it was not only an active receiving machanism but also autonomous and capable of taking on additional responsibilities for common good, even in the form of opposing the liquor policy. The other groups appear to have been hastily cobbled up only to meet the procedural requirements of the scheme. Examination of the minutes book revealed an interesting fact supporting this view. Except in the case mentioned above, group meetings were very frequent till the receiving of assistance and then tended to be rare and less participative.

TABLE 5.7

PARTICIPATION IN GROUP FORMATION - WHO TOOK THE MAJOR INITIATIVE

Group No.	Initial coming together of members to form nucleus of the group	Further addition of membership	Selection of leader	Deciding the objectives of the group	Evolving rules rules of group governance
1.	official	official, the group	official	not done	not done
2.	official	official	official	not done	not done
3.	local women	the group	the group	not done	not done
4.	NGO & local women	the group	the group	the group	the group
5.	official	official the group	the group	not done	not done
6.	official	official	official	not done	not done
7.	NGO & local women	official the group	the group	not done	not done
8.	official	official the group	the group	not done	not done
9.	official	official	official	not done	not done
10.	official	the group	the group	not done	not done
11.	official	official	official	not done	not done
12.	official	official the group	the group	not done	not done

TABLE 5.8

PRESENCE OF INDICATORS OF GENUINE GROUP ACTIVITY

[Y = Yes, N = No]

Indicators	DWCRA Group Nos. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Sharing of responsibilities	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Sharing of information	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Sharing of benefits	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Method of enforcing group discipline	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Acceptance of group leader	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Attainment of group cohesion	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Common meeting place	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Suo motu Meetings	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y
Autonomous Decisions	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Public action by the group	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

The groups showed very low level of awareness of basic factual details regarding their operation. While they showed good awareness of the assistance received, the sales made and other items of expenditure, very few of them knew the interest rate or the monthly dues, two items which are crucial for the planning of activities and for the sustainability of the unit (Table 5.9).

With such low levels of awareness of factual details, naturally the awareness of conceptual issues was still lower. It was lowest in the matter of knowing the possibilities of DWCRA and other schemes being implemented in the locality. This would foreclose chances of group action to generate demand for local development, thereby eliminating the 'pull' factor characteristic of participatory development.

TABLE 5.9

LEVELS OF AWARENESS

	LEVELS OF AWARENESS OF DWCRA Groups											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A. Awareness of facts:												
Assistance received	H	H	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	H	M	H
Interest rate	L	L	M	H	L	L	L	N	L	L	N	L
Monthly dues	M	M	M	H	L	L	L	L	L	L	N	M
Sales proceeds	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	N	H
Expenditure details	M	H	L	H	H	L	L	H	H	H	N	H
B. Awareness of Issues:												
Objectives of DWCRA	L	L	M	H	L	N	M	L	L	L	N	L
Selection of beneficiaries	N	N	L	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
Possibilities of DWCRA	N	N	L	M	L	N	L	N	N	L	N	L
Role of the group	L	M	L	H	M	N	L	L	L	L	N	L
Role of Officials	L	L	M	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
Other schemes being implemented locally	N	N	L	M	N	N	L	N	N	N	N	N

H = High
M = Moderate
L = Low
N = Nil or No awareness

Consequently the levels of participation in the planning and implementation stages also were found to be very low. Only in two out of the 12 instances, did the people express the need for some development activity; in eight cases the promptings came from officials and in two cases by NGOs. The project idea was mooted by the group in just three cases, and by the officials in the remaining nine cases; in four of them against the expressed preferences of the group.

Generally the levels of participation were very low in the planning stages like strategy setting, estimating costs, activity scheduling and identification of training needs. Here the officials played the dominant role. But they seem to have withdrawn once the loan was formally agreed to. The market identification was left to the group.

At the implementation stage, other than getting the loan sanctioned from the banks, participation was high only where individual activity was there - like investing funds, purchase of items, collection and utilisation of sales proceeds. It is key managerial aspects like working capital management, quality control and division of responsibilities that were largely ignored. All these are summarised in Table 5.10.

As regards participation in monitoring , the main agents doing the monitoring of various activities are indicated in Table 5.11.

TABLE 5.10

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION STAGES

Stage of Involvement	LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT BY DWCRA GROUPS											
A. Planning Aspects :	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Strategy Setting	L	M	L	H	L	N	L	L	N	L	N	L
Cost Estimating	L	M	L	H	M	L	L	L	L	L	N	L
Activity Scheduling	L	N	L	M	L	L	N	N	N	N	N	N
Training needs identification	N	N	M	H	L	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Market identification	H	H	M	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	N	H
B. Implementation Aspects:												
Obtaining the loan	H	H	H	H	H	M	M	H	H	H	M	H
Investing Funds	H	M	M	H	M	L	M	M	L	M	N	M
Working capital management	M	M	M	M	M	L	L	L	L	L	N	L
Purchase of items	H	H	M	H	H	M	H	M	M	M	N	L
Division of Responsibilities	H	N	L	H	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Supervision of Work	L	N	M	M	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Quality Control	M	N	H	H	M	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Collection of sales proceeds	H	H	M	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	N	H
Utilisation of sales proceeds	H	H	M	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	N	H

H = High
M = Moderate
L = Low
N = Nil or no participation

TABLE 5.11

PARTICIPATION IN MONITORING - THE MAIN MONITORING AGENT

Activities Monitored	MONITORING AGENT IN DWCRA GROUP NOs. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Day to day activity	d	g	d	a	a	e	c	c	c	c	e	a
Time schedule	g	g	d	a	g	g	g	g	g	g	e	g
Inventory	d	g	d	f	f	g	g	g	g	g	e	g
Cash Flow	d	g	d	f	f	f	c	f	f	f	e	g
Sales	d	f	a	a	f	f	c	f	f	f	e	f
Collection of sales proceeds	d	f	d	a	f	f	d	f	f	f	e	a
Payment of dues	a	f	d	a	a	g	f	f	f	f	g	f
Problem identification	d	g	b	a	a	g	d	c	c	c	g	c
Suggestions for problem solving	d	g	d	a	a	g	d	g	c	g	g	c
Suggestions for expansion	g	g	d	a	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	e

a = group
b = groups and officials together
c = group leader and officials together
d = group leader
e = official
f = individual beneficiary
g = not done

This shows that monitoring is generally poor. And the individual beneficiary does the monitoring of cash flow, sales, collection of sales proceeds and payment of dues. The group leader with or without official support is saddled with the responsibility of monitoring of problems and following upon suggestions for solving them.

To facilitate participation of poor marginalised group of people, it is necessary to enhance capabilities through awareness building and technical and managerial training. In these respects the achievement levels were low in the DWCRA programme. Formal technical training was given only in the sericulture unit, management training in an attenuated form was given to the group leaders just to enable them to keep the prescribed registers.

However, all the groups showed enhanced confidence especially to interact with officials and put forth requests. But for one case this new-found confidence was not translated into any group action.

The DWCRA experience suggests that formal provisions in programme guidelines can not become realisable entitlements automatically. It brings out the difficulties and constraints in achieveing participation. The capacity of the official machinery in bringing about participation is seen to be severely limited. The experience also highlights the need for some organisation to bring about participation, through the negative examples of hastily assembled groups incapable of organic growth.

5.3 EMPLOYMENT GENERATION PROGRAMMES- JRY AND EAS

5.3.1 Possibilities for Participation:

The major employment generation programmes under implementation in Attappady are: Jawahar Rozgar Yojana [5] and the Employment Assurance Scheme [6]. The JRY has two main streams. 80 percent of the funds are routed through the village panchayats for implementing schemes decided by the panchayats themselves. The remaining funds are routed through ITDP for implementation. The main objective of the JRY is to provide wage employment to landless and other poor labour during the lean season and create durable rural assets which are of continuing benefit to the rural poor. The Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) is similar to the JRY and the only difference is the guarantee element - that is, the assurance of 100 days employment to two adults of the family'.

The salient features of these schemes which provide for participation of the people are :

(i) The choice of the scheme has to be based on local need as determined by the local people and brought to the attention of the panchayat. Even in the case of ITDP schemes the panchayat can send proposals justifying the priority. A well-reasoned shelf of schemes is required to be maintained implying elaborate planning from below.

(ii) Contractors are banned from even indirect involvement in these schemes. The implementing agency is the beneficiary committee of the local people including the Panchayat President and Member. The beneficiary committee itself is to be selected by a general body of all the likely beneficiaries of the scheme. Once a beneficiary committee is selected, it has to identify a convenor or nominee who would enter into an agreement with the ITDP/Panchayat for executing the scheme. The beneficiary committee is expected to meet often and supervise the implementation of the work since the work order along with the technical specifications, quantifications, etc. are given to the beneficiary committee through its convenor or nominee. It is expected to be aware of all aspects of the work and keep interacting with beneficiary groups for feedback. Muster rolls are to be maintained on the spot.

iii) Under these schemes, especially the EAS, the local people have to be provided work during the lean seasons.

iv) JRY provides for social audit, meaning that the local people have the right of access to information on all aspects of the work. Voluntary organizations can be actively involved in the implementation of any selected work.

Here again, the guidelines favour a highly participatory process [7].

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[5] Government of India (1994)

[6] Government of India (1993)

[7] The 1994 Government of India guidelines calling for participatory watershed management under EAS have not been brought into force in Kerala.

5.3.2 Participation Practice:

Twenty seven works were studied in this category after visiting the work site for direct observation, having community interviews in the beneficiary oorus, followed by verification of official records - 16 of the works were executed by the ITDP and 11 by the concerned Panchayats. The manner of implementation is best illustrated by representative caselets, five of which are narrated below - the first three are ITDP works and the remaining two Panchayat-sponsored.

5.3.2.1 Illustrative Caselets:

(a) Hamlet Protection Works in Dasanur

Hamlet protection works were taken up in Dasanur at a cost of Rs.4 lakh. Dasanur hamlet has the largest number of educated tribals - and many of the first generation educated people of Attappady are from this area. As a good number of the ooru people had land they felt that they needed some schemes for land development and improved irrigation. This hamlet of 36 families has a cultivable area of about 100 acres.

The hamlet came to know about the new EAS Scheme through a local tribal who is a clerk in the ITDP office. In response to the application submitted to the panchayat, the engineering staff visited the hamlet and took the necessary measurements. The inhabitants were told that a check dam would be constructed, as desired by them in the spot pointed out.

As the next step a beneficiary committee consisting of seven members was constituted. But it was not a representative committee and was not selected by the general body of the hamlet. It was got together by the would-be contractor's henchmen with the connivance of the officials. The tribal members of this committee affirmed that the only decision taken in the first meeting was to select the nominee of the committee, to carry out the work. Since the ooru people had petitioned for the check dam, and the engineers had visited the spot, it was presumed that the same work would be taken up. There were no discussions on this aspect - even the wages to be paid were not made known to this committee. Also this turned out to be its only meeting.

Only when the construction work began, did the ooru people realise that it is going to be a three-foot high compound wall enclosing the entire ooru. Though they did not like the idea of having a wall around their hamlet and though they protested against it they did not stop the work as they felt that being a free gift they should not discard it. It did not occur to them that they had the right to decide the kind of work which would be of benefit to them. Thus Dasanur became the first tribal hamlet in the whole of Attappady, with a compound wall around it.

The nominee chosen was a labourer working in the private shop run by the Panchayat President and he acted as the agent for the Panchayat President who was the defacto contractor. The local people could not supervise the work as the quantities involved, the specifications and the standards were not revealed to them. Local labour was used except for skilled works. About ten men and six women worked for three months to complete the work. At first the minimum wage was not paid. But due to the initiative of an educated tribal youths the contractor was forced to pay the minimum wage. Of course during the course of work complaints were filed to the ITDP pointing out the irrelevance of such work in the local context but this was not heeded to by the ITDP authorities.

Other than receiving the wages the ooru people did not bother to check about muster rolls and wage bills as they did not know the guidelines. The quality of work was found to be very poor.

(b) Check - dam in Sholayur Hamlet

When the EAS scheme was launched the prospective contractor along with the panchayat member came to the Sholayur hamlet of 120 families and suggested a check dam which would benefit the agricultural development of the hamlet. This was accepted by the ooru and they pointed out a site suitable for putting up a check dam which would give the maximum command area.

The general body meeting of the ooru people was never called for selecting the beneficiary committee. A meeting of just 20 persons selected by the would-be contractor met in the village extension office outside the precincts of the ooru and selected the beneficiary committee. The ooru mooppan was made the nominee and he handed over the work to the secretary of the local tribal cooperative society, a prosperous non-tribal. The secretary lives on the other side of the road near the hamlet in a larger concrete building with a dish antenna (for receiving satellite television). This relatively low paid functionary has also managed to control a large area of agricultural land. The check dam was finally located by the side of his house away from the hamlet and facing a different water shed from the one pointed out by the tribals. It benefits only the non-tribal settlers, particularly the agricultural land in the possession of the secretary. Thus the possibility of twin benefit - profit from the work and irrigation for his land - prompted him to act as the contractor for the work.

The tribals did not even participate as workers, let alone, getting involved in other aspects of the work. However, the quality of this work was the best among the 27 works studied - as the contractor had a personal stake in it as it benefited his land most. The ooru people made only muffled protests which were easily contained by the contractor.

The role of the ooru mooppan needs special mention. He colluded with the ITDP officials and the contractor. Since he had executed the formal agreement with the ITDP to do the work as the nominee of the beneficiary committee, he could easily have insisted on atleast the location of check dam at a site beneficial to the ooru. Yet he bartered away not only the rights of the ooru but also the future long-term benefits for a small personal gain.

(c) Side Protection Works in Kulkkoor Hamlet

The Kulkkoor hamlet lies at the border of Attappady. A stream, by name Kodungarapallam flows along the edge of the hamlet. During the rainy season because of degraded hill slopes floods were common which used to eat away the stream banks causing anxiety to the hamlet people. So the inhabitants wanted the side of the stream to be protected. The idea was utilized by the Panchayat President to get a pucca side protection work sanctioned under EAS for Rs.4 lakh. The local people confirmed that the bank could be protected properly using vegetative methods. Yet it was decided to go in for pucca side protection works using cement and rubble. The general body of the ooru was called and a seven member beneficiary committee was selected. Neither the nature of the work nor its amount was made known. Five local members were included in the beneficiary committee.

A local tribal who had no experience in construction was chosen as the nominee but the Panchayat President actually executed the work. It was to the President that the work order showing the specifications and standards was given. The nominee acted only as an ordinary supervisor working at the behest of the contractor and got paid only daily wages. The muster rolls were not locally maintained. They were prepared by the contractor and signed in bulk. About 15 people from the village were employed for the work.

There is an active youth club in the hamlet. The club members wanted to undertake the work, but their request was turned down. Some of the tribals had carried out similar protection works within the hamlet on their own. Though local capability for such works was available, the contractor was chosen from outside the locality. Suggestions for improvements were made by the ooru members during the

course of construction. But these were ignored by the contractor as well as the ITDP authorities. The quality of the work being very poor, a portion of the work collapsed just one month after construction for which the legal burden would fall on the poor tribal convenor who only lent his name as nominee of the work and executed the bond with the ITDP. But the officials and the local contractor knew from the beginning that being a poor tribal, government action against him would not go far and the whole matter would be closed after some time.

Because of the interest shown by the youth club, some youngsters kept a tab on the work done. Going by their calculations which mostly tallied with those of the tribal nominee, the actual investment in the work is only about 30 ot 35 percent of the amount paid to the contractor by the ITDP.

This caselet illustrates how formidable the forces arrayed against local participation are. The ooru people knew how to do the work; the youth club had the managerial capacity and could easily have mobilised the ooru people. Yet their legitimate claims could not be upheld even by a full meeting of the hamlet. The contractor who also had political clout as the Panchayat President and official support, could easily manipulate the meeting into agreeing to what he wanted.

But the persistence of the youth club paid off when the District Collector personally inspected the work acting on a well-reasoned out complaint sent by the club, and stopped further payments, besides ordering an enquiry. This would suggest that a well motivated local organisation can bring about participation, albeit through adversarial public action.

(d) Road Work in Vadakottaithara

This hamlet is situated almost by the side of a black topped road. Without the request of the local people, at the instance of the contractor, who is now member of the block panchayat, construction of a concrete road to the river was taken up. The ooru people were well organized and they wanted their agricultural land to be developed. When this was not agreed to they boycotted the work. Five workers from the ooru participated in the construction activity but they too left in protest against the poor quality of the work. The road serves no useful purpose to the local community. Earlier there was a well-beaten track to the river and now the road which stops abruptly is causing more inconvenience.

Before the start of the work, no beneficiary committee was convened as it was known that the local villagers would oppose the road construction. A non-tribal living in the vicinity was made the nominee of the work which was actually executed by the politician-contractor. Thus even a total boycott by the ooru could not deter the panchayat from going ahead with a work causing inconvenience to the people. This illustrates how an elected panchayat could act in an anti-participatory manner at the behest of the contractor.

(e) Land Development Work in Tachampady

This is an extreme case but a good illustration of the essentially non-participatory character of the selection and execution of local development works under employment generation schemes by elected panchayats. A relatively better off tribal family having about 10 acres of cotton cultivation by the river side was approached by the panchayat Vice President to lease out land to him in his private capacity for setting up a brick kiln. As per the terms of the agreement at the end of the stipulated period the land would be returned after filling up the trenches and levelling it.

Just before the land was to be returned a scheme was approved under JRY by the local panchayat in the guise of developing the agricultural land of tribal beneficiaries. A sum of Rs.60000 was spent on this work which settled the private contractual obligation of the panchayat Vice President. Of course, the work was done benami. There have been protests and complaints including press reports; but the work has been completed and the payments made.

This shows how political power achieved by exploiting groups/individuals could distort the development process itself overriding the participatory safeguards. In this case the Vice President could get the entire panchayat agree without dissent to approve a work for his personal benefit, even though the President of the panchayat and the majority of members were tribals.

These five instances indicate dramatically the non-participatory and even anti-participatory character of the implementation of employment generation programmes in Attappady. They reveal the mechanisms of manipulation and the flagrant distortions of participatory scheme provisions in practice, even while seeming to conform to them on paper. They also show how excluded the tribals still are from development and how powerful the processes of exclusion are. Another striking feature is the absence of any difference in the manner of implementation of these works between a bureaucratic organisation and an elected body.

The picture emerging from these case-narratives gets clearer and sharper in the following analysis.

5.3.2.2 General Analysis

The general profile of the works studied is presented in Table 5.12 .

Even the nature of works taken up indicates an element of manipulation. The EAS guidelines stipulate that not less than 50% of the funds should be earmarked for watershed management and ecodevelopment schemes, both of which are the crying need of a degraded area like Attappady. To satisfy these provisions on paper and in progress reports, the so-called protection works were taken up ostensibly to regulate the flow of water and protect agricultural land for cultivation. But on the ground, they are mostly small parapet walls and stone-pitched side protection works serving no useful purpose.

In the case of panchayat works, they are essentially low-budget road works, suggesting a frittering away of resources on low-priority items of work. With such small investments only temporary maintenance works on roads could be taken up with no long-lasting effect.

Table -5.12

A Profile of Employment Generation Works

Sl. No.	Type of work	Location	Scheme	Approved cost	No. of families in the ooru	No. of people participating in group interviews and discussions		
						Men	Women	Total
	A. IMPLEMENTED BY ITDP							
1.	Check Dam	Chindakki Veeranoor	EAS	4,00,000	10	6	9	9
2.	Protection works and drain	Naickerpadi	EAS	4,00,000	37	16	7	23
3.	Bridge cum weir	Kollakkara	EAS	2,00,000	68	13	11	24
4.	Protection works	Chundakulam	EAS	1,35,000	50	15	13	28
5.	Protection works	Kolappadika	EAS	2,00,000	65	17	21	38
6.	Road	Kolappadika	EAS	1,50,000	65	17	21	38
7.	Protection works	Donigundu	EAS	2,87,000	33	11	13	24
8.	Protection works	Cheerakadavu	EAS	2,00,000	44	17	19	36
9.	Protection works	Swarnagadda	EAS	4,00,000	44	19	12	31
10.	Road and drain	Mele Chavadiyur	EAS	4,00,000	28	14	9	23
11.	Drain	Tazhe Mully	EAS	2,00,000	35	11	6	17
12.	Compound wall	Dasanur	EAS	4,00,000	32	15	11	26
13.	Protection works	Kulukkoor	EAS	4,00,000	68	17	16	33
14.	Check dam	Shalayoor	EAS	4,00,000	80	16	13	29
15.	Protection works	Shalayoor	EAS	2,00,000	80	16	13	29
16.	Protection works	Varagampadi	EAS	4,00,000	13	9	8	17

Contd.

Table 5.12 contd.

B. IMPLEMENTED BY THE GRAMA PANCHAYATS

1.	Road	Pettikal	JRY	80,000	10	11	5	16
2.	Well	Keeripathy	JRY	30,000	9	5	3	8
3.	Road	South Kadampara	JRY	65,000	45	15	15	30
4.	Road	Vechapothy	JRY	53,000	60	16	10	26
5.	Road	Dundan	JRY	38,000	24	17	16	33
6.	Soil conservation	Mele Mully	JRY	50,000	56	13	10	23
7.	Road	Padavayal	JRY	60,000	45	9	12	21
8.	Road	Vada Kottathan	JRY	75,000	61	20	17	37
9.	Protection works	Cheerakadavu	JRY	47,000	44	17	19	36
10.	Land development	Thachampady	JRY	60,000	36	7	5	12
11.	Road	Pattimalam	JRY	50,000	42	11	15	26

The various indicators of participation seen in the JRY/EAS works are brought out as Table 5.13:

It is evident that even at the stage of expression of need, there was no genuine participation. A kind of manipulation was resorted to by the would-be contractor in collusion with influential local politicians - often Panchayat members, to get the ooru people to give a formal request for a work.

It is significant, that in none of the cases, the ooru people were told that they could make a choice from various alternative works. They were presented with the given work and their consent obtained. The ooru people gave the consent because it was coming gratis as an additionality and they felt that they should not look a gifthorse in the mouth. Out of the 16 works implemented by the Block ten works were taken up in this manner. Only in three cases did the request come from the ooru people for the work. Here also, in one case the location was changed. In three cases the ooru people did not know about the work at all and the contractor decided on the work against local opposition and got it cleared by the ITDP. In the case of panchayat works, eight were taken up in the manipulative manner and three solely at the instigation of the contractor and none came from local requests.

Even though the ooru people had finally agreed to most of the works, the lack of choice allowed to them resulted in low priority works being taken up. In all the hamlets when a participative ranking of needs was done, housing, drinking water and irrigation / water conservation come out as top priority. However, among the works studied, as many as eight ITDP works and four Panchayat works did not figure in the priority list of the ooru at all and only one was ranked as high priority.

As regards the meeting of the full ooru to discuss the proposed work and to select a representative beneficiary committee, this was done only in three of the ITDP works and in none of the panchayat works. In the case of the ITDP works all of them had beneficiary committees though four of them existed only on paper and never met even once. They are classified as pseudo committees. In the case of panchayat works only five had beneficiary committees. It is significant that none of the beneficiary committees met more than once. And even in this single meeting the only item in the agenda was to give the stamp of approval to a pre-selected convenor. Except in one case, there was no discussion about a possible alternative convenor. Facts regarding the work were not made known to the beneficiary committee members; only a general indication of the estimated cost was given.

Table 5.13

INDICATORS OF PARTICIPATION IN JRY / EAS WORKS

Sl. No. of	Exp-ression need	Priority to the ooru committee	Nature of beneficary committee	Nominee of beneficiary	Actual contractor	Participation as workers	Quality of work	Usefulness to the ooru	Remarks
	A. ITDP WORKS								
1.	M	Moderate	M	ST	N-ST	Low	Poor	Low	Located at the wrong site
2.	I	Nil	P	N-ST (defferent)	N-ST	Nil	Poor	Nil	Protests made
3.	S	Moderate	M	N-ST (some)	N-ST	Moderate	Average	Low	
4.	M	Moderate	P	ST	N-ST	Moderate	Poor	Moderate	
5.	M	Nil	M	ST	N-ST	Moderate	Poor	Nil	
6.	M	Low	M	ST	N-ST	Low	Poor	Low	
7.	M	Moderate	M	N-ST (different)	N-ST	Low	Poor	Moderate	
8.	M	Nil	M	ST	N-ST	Moderate	Poor	Nil	
9.	M	Nil	R	ST	N-ST	Moderate	Poor	Nil	Protests made
10.	I	Nil	P	N-ST (some)	N-ST	Nil	Poor	Nil	Boycotted
11.	I	Nil	P	ST	N-ST	Moderate	Poor	Nil	
12.	M	Nil	R	N-ST (different)	N-ST	Moderate	Poor	Nil	Protests made
13.	S	Moderate	R	ST	N-ST	Moderate	Poor	Nil	Locally Monitored Protests made
14.	M	High	M	ST	N-ST	Nil	Good	Nil	Site changed
15.	M	Nil	M	ST	N-ST	Low	Poor	Nil	
16.	S	High	M	N-ST	N-ST	High	Average	High	Not cost-effective

Contd.

Table 5.13 (Contd.)

B. GRAMA PANCHAYAT WORKS								
1.	M	Low	N	ST	N-ST	Moderate	Average	Moderate
2.	M	Low	N	ST	N-ST	Low	Poor	Low
3.	M	Low	N	ST	N-ST	Moderate	Poor	Low
4.	M	Low	N	ST	N-ST	Low	Poor	Low
5.	M	Nil	N	N-ST (some)	N-ST	Moderate	Poor	Nil
6.	M	Moderate	M	ST	N-ST	Moderate	Average	Moderate
7.	I	Low	N	N-ST (some)	N-ST	Moderate	Poor	Low
8.	I	Nil	N	N-ST (some)	N-ST	Moderate	Poor	Low Boycotted
9.	M	Nil	M	ST	N-ST	Low	Poor	Nil
10.	I	Nil	N	ST	N-ST	Nil	Average	Nil
11.	M	Low	N	ST	N-ST	Moderate	Poor	Nil

Expression of Need	Nature of Beneficiary Committee	Nominee / Convenor
M - Manipulative	M - Manipulative	ST - Tribal
S - Suo motu	P - Pseudo	N-ST - Non-Tribal
I - Imposed	R - Representative	

The role of the middlemen requires special consideration. In flagrant violation of the programme guidelines which have banned contractors, the work gets done by them. An ingenious manipulation is done by selecting a local person as the nominee or convenor of the beneficiary committee who just lends his name for the purpose of official records. But legally this person is solely responsible for handling funds, managing the work, ensuring standards and completing it in time. In practice, he allows a contractor to do the entire work and reap the profits. Interviews with six such nominees revealed that they did not get anything more than daily wages and a small lumpsum bonus, in return.

Typically, a local tribal is chosen as a nominee - this was done so in half the ITDP works and eight out of the 11 Panchayat works. In six ITDP works both the nominee and contractor turned out to be non tribals out of which only in two ITDP and three Panchayat works did the nominee himself execute the work. Discussions at the work spots confirmed that eight de facto contractors in ITDP works and seven in Panchayat works were directly connected to political parties. All the remaining contractors had the active support of the local political leaders of influence.

Benami works represent the negative extreme of participation. It indicates the excercise of power and reaping of benefits without any responsibility. This is possible only if the beneficiary groups are so marginalised as to let themselves be exploited in this manner.

In implementation too, participation was limited to being workers. Even here, though no one was refused work, it ranged from moderate to low in the sense that all the active workers in the ooru could not participate. This happened as the scheduling of the work was done to suit the contractor and not to match periods of local unemployment, thus negating the employment guarantee element, particularly, of the EAS.

None of the beneficiary committees met for the second time indicating the absence of any role in the important aspects of implementation like purchase of materials, ensuring adequate quantity and quality of work, watching payments etc. The result of this could be seen in the poor quality of the works - rated on direct observation validated by local opinion, as poor in 11 ITDP works and eight Panchayat works and good in only one work that too a check dam by a non-tribal contractor to benefit his land.

The combination of low priority of works and the poor quality of their implementation resulted in 11 ITDP and five Panchayat works being of no use to the village. Only in one instance, did it prove to be of real benefit. Thus the tribals could not even participate in sharing the benefits.

In this context it is worthwhile viewing protests and boycotts as an expression of heightened awareness and therefore as a kind of participative action. Though only two such cases of total boycott were there, it is a significant beginning considering the overall situation. It was reported that in 11 works, the minimum wage of Rs.40.50 was not paid in the beginning , but was extracted by effective demand on the part of the local workers who were motivated by three VEOs, and two NGOs with the support of educated tribal youths. This again is significant.

A non-participative and manipulative form of protest was reported in six of the ITDP works and three Panchayat works. Here the protests and threats of complaint were made to extract some 'silence' money from the contractor. The tribals did not view this as blackmail but interpreted it as the expression of their cynicism about development programmes.

Another negative feature about these works is the setting off of divisive tendencies by the acts of the contractors and officials. They tend to groom a group of henchmen which alienates others. Such bickerings were found in nine oorus.

All these together give a bizarre picture seeming to defy reason and belief. A plausible explanation lies in the scope for extracting uncommonly high rent coupled with the unequal power relations and the

obstacles in the realisation of the capabilities of the tribals (like illiteracy, low awareness, social dependence, poverty and the like, examined in depth in Chapter 7). By common consent the NGOs estimate that the actual investment in a work does not exceed 30 to 40 percent of the estimated amount. This tallies with the impression one gets on direct observation of the works. When so much is at stake, the genuine stakeholders get edged out and what is due to them as a community is usurped by a powerful collusion of outside interests represented by the politician-contractors and the conniving officials.

The whole process is given a veneer of legitimacy by what could be described as pseudo-participatory manoeuvres, which are nothing but adherence on paper, in official files, to various procedural requirements on participation like minutes of beneficiary committee meetings, agreements with the the nominee of the beneficiary committee and so on. It would appear that liberal funding and the need to spend the funds in time, pose serious dangers to people's participation in such programmes. A money-driven development strategy is antithetical to participation.

5.3.3 Levels of Participation - The Actors' Perceptions

Based on the field work, 30 statements on participation by the people, as provided by the guidelines on employment generation works, adapted to the local context were listed out (see Appendix 4), which were divided into the following categories:

1. Initial planning (3 nos.)
2. Manipulation in the selection process of groups (5 nos.)
3. Functioning of the beneficiary committees (4 nos)
4. Information sharing with the beneficiary groups (3 nos.)
5. Consultations with the beneficiary groups (2 nos.)
6. Implementation (6 nos.)
7. Benefits of the work (4 nos.)
8. Others (3 nos.)

The respondents were grouped as follows:

I. Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) (10 nos.).

II. Tribal Mooppans (23 nos)

III. Officials (25 nos)

IV. Tribal Youths (Male) (15 nos)

V. Tribal Youths (Female) (14 nos)

VI. Panchayat Members (Tribals) (17 nos)

VII. Panchayat Members (Non-Tribals) (16 nos)

The respondents ranked the statements on a five point scale, scoring as follows:

Strongly disagree	- 1
Disagree	- 2
Neither agree nor disagree	- 3
Agree	- 4
Strongly agree	- 5

The responses expressed clear disagreement with the statements implying that the actual levels of participation did not match the programme provisions. The responses to each category of questions are summarised below (Table 5.14):

Table 5.14

PATTERN OF RESPONSES TO CATEGORIES OF STATEMENTS

Category of Question	No. of Responses Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	137	77	37	34	89
2	356	109	42	58	35
3	189	92	31	66	61
4	236	67	18	24	14
5	130	58	18	18	24
6	445	140	43	37	32
7	245	101	43	53	42
8	150	80	46	50	37
Total:	1888	724	272	340	334

Thus in toto, while there are 2712 responses in disagreement, only 674 are in agreement and 272 indicate a neutral stance. This picture holds true even when seggregation according to groups of responses is made. Only at the level of individual statements is there any agreement - that too in the case of just three statements, one indicating that the ooru people have a say in the selection of works, the second stating that the local beneficiaries are involved in the maintenance of works after completion and the third regarding the existence of a system for grievance redressal regarding the works. Of course groups of respondents have agreed with certain individual statements but not whole groups of statements:

Group of respondents	Statements Agreed to
Tribal Mooppans	Nos. 2, 30
Officials	Nos. 2,5,6,7,23,30
Tribal Youth (Male)	Nos. 2,30
Tribal Youth (Female)	Nos. 2,4,21,30
Panchayat Members(Tribals)	No. 25
Panchayat Members (Others)	Nos. 2,4,21,23,30

Table5.15 summarises the average scores given by each group of respondents to each category of questions and the general averages:

Table 5.15

AVERAGE SCORES
(Respondent group-wise and statement category wise)

Category of Statement	Respondent Group 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average for Category
1	1.83	2.35	2.74	2.40	3.23	2.59	3.02	2.59
2.	1.62	1.27	2.86	1.27	1.37	1.72	2.39	1.84
3.	1.43	2.21	3.07	1.58	2.01	2.16	2.64	2.27
4.	1.07	1.53	2.00	1.34	1.54	1.57	2.17	1.63
5.	1.30	1.66	2.28	1.63	1.81	1.91	1.12	2.88
6.	1.51	1.61	1.92	1.42	1.45	1.53	2.17	1.64
7.	1.49	1.57	2.80	1.48	1.71	2.10	2.73	2.01
8.	1.60	2.16	2.84	2.39	2.12	1.96	2.69	2.33
Average for respondent group	1.44	1.72	2.47	1.58	1.81	1.90	2.48	
							Average for the whole = 1.92	

Beyond confirming the low levels of participation by the beneficiaries, certain interesting patterns in the response characteristics of different groups of respondents emerge. The NGOs with their activist stance and from their own grassroots level experience in participatory development, naturally take the most stringent view. However it is significant that all tribal groups-the ooru moopans, youth and even the panchayat members, ever exposed to the pressures of co-optation and manipulation - are not much different in their perceptions.

Equally striking is the similarity in the perceptions of officials and the non-tribal panchayat members, both of whom are widely considered by the tribals as the principal dilutors of the guidelines on participation. While these two groups also broadly concur that the participation is poor, it is less emphatic. This consonance of thinking , while it can not be interpreted to prove collusion, has several implications in the context of Panchayati Raj, as between them, they hold the power to decide how the practice of development should be.

Juxtaposing the markedly different pattern of responses of the tribal Panchayat members, only sets off this impression. Panchayati Raj even with deprived minority groups protected by reservations, need not be conducive to the participatory development of the poor. It could end up as an institution having an understanding different from the people and in practice, submerging the viewpoint of the excluded groups thus negating the possibilities of indirect participation of such groups.

The relative ranking of different categories of statements (according to the degree of disapproval) by the various actors is presented in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16

RANKS ASSIGNED TO STATEMENT CATEGORIES BY RESPONDENT GROUPS

Category of Statement	Rank of Disagreement by Respondent Groups							Total Rank
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I	8	8	5	8	8	8	8	8
II	7	1	2	1	1	3	5	3
III	5	7	8	5	6	7	5	6
IV	1	2	2	2	3	2	3	1
V	2	5	3	6	5	4	1	4
VI	5	4	1	3	2	1	2	2
VII	4	3	5	4	4	6	7	5
VIII	6	6	6	7	7	5	6	7

The most important failures to achieve participation are in information sharing and implementation (ie. groups IV and VI) and logically the second being a consequence of the first. This causes concern as it is these stages of a project / scheme which are most crucial to the proper utilisation of resources. To keep participation at the minimum in these stages would be in the interest of rent-seekers.

Naturally the next in order of importance is the category of statements concerning the manipulations resorted to by officials and would-be contractors to lull the people into uncritical acceptance of their designs. This conclusion is matched by field level realities.

There is relatively less disagreement on the statements relating to beneficiary committees (group 3) and least on those concerning initial planning. To understand this one has to refer to the conclusions of the field study. Both these stages are used to go through the motions of participation, to satisfy on paper the programme requirements. The field study shows that a semblance of participation is contrived at these stages and the ooru people believe that they have a say in these matters. This kind of participation is best captured in the words of a tribal mooppan: " Not a single pie can be spent in Attappady without getting our formal consent, but once the consent is given, not a pie goes to the tribals" - manipulative participation and pseudo-participation at their worst.

CHAPTER 6

SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS IN ATTAPPADY

Though the analysis of the levels of participation presents a bleak picture, there have been certain interventions in Attappady both by the Government [1] as well as by NGOs which were highly participative and produced encouraging results. Three such Government programmes and the experience of three NGOs are analysed below.

6.1 Government Interventions

6.1.1 Health Guide Scheme:

This scheme was initiated in 1988 to train selected tribal boys and girls who had studied upto standard X (SSLC) in preventive health care as well as simple first aid measures, so that they could function as barefoot paramedics. Departure was made from the earlier practice when political influence or official patronage used to be the decisive factor in the selection of tribals for various semi-official temporary posts like Anganwadi workers, Functional Literacy Instructors etc. It was decided to make the selection process transparent and merit based. All the tribal youth who had completed standard X, were called for a written examination and 39 persons, including 18 girls, were selected on the basis of merit out of the 107 persons who appeared for the examination. Later it was found out that this selection method, perceived as fair by tribal youth, boosted thir self-esteem and added to their dedication and confidence in playing the roles of change-agents.

A 45-day training programme was started in which two types of classes were arranged. One was to convey the factual and technical aspects of primary health care and the other to build up general awareness on the problems of tribals. Special care was taken to ensure that the classes were handled by the most competent individuals. After training, the health guides were assigned to different oorus.

They were given clear tasks to perform which were decided after a long dialogue between the officials and the trainees, and they were entitled to a monthly honorarium of Rs.300. These tasks included specific activities like immunisation, bringing sick people to the hospitals, follow-up of treatment measures, looking after pregnant women, arranging applications to be given on various government welfare pensions, filing applicatins for returning alienated tribal land, admitting students to schools and hostels, preventing drop outs and the like. They were also expected to look after general activities to build up awareness among the tribals about the duties of officials, possibilities of various schemes, harmful effects of habits like drinking and the need to strengthen artistic talents and preserve cultural traditions.

The health guides achieved some degree of success in their activities. They formed 49 youth clubs in three months for awareness building and local action. The effective strength in Attappady hostels went up from 590 to 1060 inmates and going by the estimate of ITDP authorities, 98 percent of children below the age group of nine were admitted to schools during the year 1988-89. A very significant achievement was the conduct of supplementary feeding programme for the tribals during the lean season in 1988. On such occasions in the past, with the entire expenditure borne by the government, there were frequent instances of leakages. With the health guides leading the scheme, government expenditure was

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[1] The government programmes were studied by going through official files and reports, followed by group interaction with former health guides, Girivikas students and beneficiaries of selected oorus as well as individual interviews with key officials.

limited to transport of food grains upto the nearest lorry point of the ooru. Thereafter motivated by the health guides the ooru people transported it to their villages and arranged for its cooking and distribution. This resulted in enhanced satisfaction on the part of the ooru people and a willing contribution as kind and labour estimated at 20% of the total cost. It helped voluntary mobilization of the tribals for a common activity.

Within a short span of six months the health guides could spread awareness in a major part of Attappady not only about government programmes but also initiate a particiaptory debate about the problems faced by the tribals and the possible ameliorative measures. Both officials and tribals testified that the role of the middle men had decreased and mis-information and corruption had come down very sharply as a result of the activities of these social animators.

However, the successful operation of the health guides invited opposition from contractors and political leaders. The possibilities of fudging records and using lesser qunatities of materials and labour were reduced by direct supervision by the health guides along with the youth clubs. Similarly, the political leaders found it difficult to draw out tribals for street demonstrations to show their party strength, since they found it hard to convince the tribals of the need for such demonstrations. There was also opposition from some officials because of the importance given to the health guides who kept the tribals population informed about various aspects of the schemes and gave regular feedback on the manner of implementation of the scheme. Naturally, in the context of such opposition the tribal health guides needed special support from atleast the senior officers. They required sustained motivation to carry out the tasks assigned to them, in the face of obstacles. Also their activities needed to be stepped up and enlarged. But after about 18 months the experiment had a slow death after the project officers who supported the experiment wholeheartedly left Attappady on transfer. The scheme was not wound up; but it languished without direction and support. The health guides were no longer given specified tasks to perform; their larger role of conscientizing the tribals was ignored; and their effectiveness was reduced as their reports and requests were not followed up in the ITDP office. In spite of the ultimate collapse, the experiment showed the possibilities of participatory action through the intermediation of social animators.

6.1.2 Girivikas Project:

Education is one of the important strategies for the development of tribals in Kerala. Attappady has 13 primary schools and four high schools. Also there are 11 hostels. In addition to these facilities lumpsum grants and stipends are given to tribal students to meet their cash requirements. Yet the achievement is very low. The results of the SSLC show that the pass percentage among tribals has been below 10 percent in all the years from 1985 onwards. The work of the health guides provided an impetus to educational activity in Attappady. The tribal youth became concerned with the quality of education and this concern was aired through the youth clubs.

In 1993, the Nehru Yuva Kendra, a Government of India organisation to which youth clubs were affiliated, initiated a scheme for remedial coaching to tribal boys who had failed in SSLC. Later, it was extended to girls in the next year. The scheme known as Giri Vikas was approved by the district administration.

The programme was intended not only to provide good quality education but also to boost the self-confidence of tribal youth and conscientize them on the problems and possibilities faced by the tribals of Attappady through learning, motivation and discussion. Even while career opportunities were made known to them, their role as change agents in their society was emphasized. Therefore enough time was set apart for awareness building classes by social workers and other persons of eminence. In the first year, applications for joining the special coaching classes were invited through a press release. Against a target of 25, there were only three respondents. Then the Nehru Yuva Kendra officials went to Attappady, called a meeting of all the tribal boys who had failed in SSLC during the previous year and finally 27 students joined the programme.

Instead of paid tutors, the services of volunteers were enlisted. In order to get enough number of volunteers, the scheme was located at the district headquarters. The voluntary tutors were paid for their travel costs and miscellaneous expenses not exceeding Rs.500 per person per month. All the board, lodging and educational expenses of the tribal boys were met by the project. A kind of 'gurukulam' approach was tried out. Health care including yoga and sports and games formed part of the co-curricular activities. Special efforts were made to foster self-confidence in the tribals through close interaction. In 1993-94, the first year, 24 out of the 27 boys passed the SSLC examination and in 1994-95, 19 out of 23 girls and 23 out of 25 boys passed the examination.

This compares well even with the general pass level of non-tribals students in the district and this was achieved at a cost of only Rs.7.02 lakhs making it cost effective as well. During the field work in Attappady it was found that the ex-participants of the Giri Vikas project formed an active local group and maintained frequent interaction with Nehru Yuva Kendra through leadership classes and youth camps. They were found to be very perceptive in their analysis of tribal problems and were keen on serving as volunteers in tribal development programme.

This caselet illustrates the possibilities of motivating tribal youth for public action even while giving them formal education. It underlines the necessity of a dedicated approach on the part of officials to achieve success in tribal development ventures.

6.1.3 Mallisara Project:

This project was initiated to achieve participatory forest management based on a model evolved by 'Prakrithi Samrakshanana Samithi', an NGO which did some work in Attappady in the second half of 1980s.

The project which started in July 1993, envisages an expenditure of Rs.348 lakhs spread over 12 years. It is managed by a small group of specially selected forest department staff - one Range Officer, two foresters, four guards and one driver - helped by 14 local volunteers, six boys and eight girls, all of them tribals. Called motivators, they acted as social animators interacting with the villagers and encouraging them to organize into local groups to express local needs, analyse problems and to take participatory decisions to sort them out. The motivators, who are paid daily wages at the rate of Rs.52.25 per day, were selected on the basis of an interview conducted by a board which included a tribal youth leader. This group was given informal training attached to two NGOs in Tamil Nadu.

The main items of work are fire protection, seedling protection, and digging of pits for soil and moisture conservation. About ten percent of the expenditure is on the motivators. In the normal forest department procedure, such works are done through convenors who are defacto contractors using the local tribals as labourers and these contractors make substantial profits. Since there is no tender in the process, influential persons get ensconced as convenors. In the present project, 'Paniyalar Sangham' (Worker's Society) has been registered. All the works are carried out by this society. It has officials as President and Vice President, but the remaining seven members of the Executive Committee are non-officials who are elected from the tribal oorus and they alone have the right to vote. Initially the general body of all adults from the 14 oorus within the project area used to participate in the elections. But now the system has been changed and an electoral college has been constituted with two representatives, a male and a female, from each ooru elected by the ooru people. This electoral college elects the Executive Committee of the Worker's Society. Now there is greater involvement by the people in the election than the earlier system, where out of the total electorate of 820, only 52,94 and 97 people participated in the elections held respectively in 1993,1994 and 1995. Alongside, Ooru Sabhas were constituted and weekly meetings are being held at fixed time on fixed days, mostly in the evenings after tribals returned from work. Though there was large enthusiasm in the beginning, participation is on the wane with the average attendence being 50 percent in the last three months of 1995. This is because the forestry project can not meet many of the local needs

Fifteen percent of the wages are deducted as Common Good Fund and kept in a separate account, mainly for the purpose of medical treatment of the members. A payment of Rs.250 is made for child births, deaths, etc. Now loans are also provided at 12 percent interest rate for agricultural purposes and the recovery is total. At the end of 1994-95, the corpus of this fund was Rs.4.07 lakhs.

Another 15 percent of the wages is kept in the bank accounts of beneficiaries jointly with the Vice President as a sort of thrift deposit. Analysis of a sample of pass books showed that withdrawals were more than 90 percent and frequent. From August 1995 an interesting experiment in informal banking has been started with a three-tier organisation. There is a primary group of five people which is separate for men and women. Eight such primary groups constitute a secondary group and normally there is one secondary group for each ooru. One male and one female representative from each secondary group constitute the project group and one leader is elected at the project level. A single joint account is maintained by the project level leader and an accountant who is a motivator.

Requests for loan are made to the primary group and is sanctioned by the secondary group on the recommendation of the primary group. Theoretically loans can be sanctioned upto the total savings within a ooru. Interest rates are flexible ranging from zero to 24 - in the case of sickness, interest is not charged and funds for cash crops could have an interest rate as high as 24 percent. The interest rate is fixed solely at the discretion of the group members who showed a keen sensitivity to the type of need before deciding on the interest rate. Weekly meetings of the groups are held and discussions on general issues taken up and minutes are kept by the motivator.

Community interviews were conducted in four out of the 14 oorus under the project to guage the impact of the project. Though it is too early to evaluate the thrift group experiment, the initial responses are very favourable. In Kolapadika ooru now nobody borrows from the local money lender. Also distress sales has come down in the last six months. Group meetings are held regularly and animated discussions are common.

However, there is not much of participation in deciding works under the project and carrying them out. The selection of species for planting, selection of sites for development works, timing of the works and measuring the works are all done departmentally. The participation is limited only to the utilization of the individual savings which is pooled together. But the 'low-end' participation in managing the fund created out of the wages and the effect of the work of the motivators have together built up a strong base for further participation, in the other activities of the project as well. The worker's society opposed the soil conservation department and succeeded in wresting a work to be done by the society instead of a middleman. The society also succeeded in closing two liquor shops, showing the possibilities for public action, by a conscientized group, beyond the pale of activity for which it was created. Still the motivators and the local people felt that the intensity of participation would be greater if people are fully involved in all the activities from the pre-planning stage itself.

The success story again exemplifies the role of officials, local organisation, and intermediation by dedicated volunteers from the community, and the need for a deliberate, planned strategy but at the same time capable being redefined, to bring about participation. It also reveals the slow-rooting nature of genuine participation.

6.2 NGO Interventions:

NGO action is limited in Attappady. However, three interventions deserve mention [2]. 'Sarang' which is essentially an organisation revolving around a teacher couple who have a strong ideological faith in organic farming, succeeded in regenerating forests through local action primarily by protection against fire and by gap filling using local species identified by the tribals. A micro water shed covering about 100 Ha. has been reforested and the dried up streams have been regenerated. All this was achieved at a very low cost. The critical factor of this success was the faith in traditional knowledge systems of the tribals.

The 'Parikrithi Samrakshana Samithi' took up afforestation in 100Ha in Bommianpady hamlet in 1985 through participative afforestation. The local people were motivated against sending their cattle for grazing to serve as a form of social fencing. Seedlings of local species were raised by the women of the ooru and planted by the ooru people. Campaigns were held against the evils of drinking. And within ten years the forest regained its earlier density and three streams were rejuvenated. The ooru people still refrain from grazing their cattle in this area. Powerful messages about the appropriateness of local techniques of regeneration of vegetation delivered by the charismatic leader of the NGO brought forth popular support. The focus on women made the social fencing very effective.

The third NGO intervention is by an organization called 'Nature', which revolves around a single dedicated individual and which is funded by both domestic and foreign sources. This NGO which in 1985 began its activities on community health care, attempted a participative water shed management in 1988. Even four years of work did not enthuse the local people to accept such a project. Initially they worked only as labourers without any middle men. Local species were planted and payments were made on the basis of survival rates. There was some local political objection, but it was patched up during 1995.

However, participative ventures picked up in 1994 - six years after the initial attempt. Now four committees have been formed in each of the four tribal oorus, where the NGO is active - housing committee, water supply committee, agricultural development committee and women's committee. Interest free loans were given by the NGO through the agricultural committee for planting, fencing, etc. Out of Rs.36000 given so far, 50 percent has been repaid. The water supply committee is in charge of the operation and maintenance of two local water supply schemes which were funded by the NGO. The operation and maintenance charges are recovered in full by the committee at rates decided on the basis of actuals. The women's committee is essentially a thrift group. It is given matching contribution by the NGO to the savings generated from among the members. The women's committee is also running two retail shops selling essential commodities. Its fund is utilised for giving loans at interest rates decided by the group. Repayment has so far not been a problem.

Eight tribal animators are working for the NGO. They have been given proper training. The achievement of the NGO in ensuring participation was rendered easier by these motivators and also by the fact that an effective entry point was chosen by the NGO by providing health care, which established their credibility. This caselet also indicates the essentially slow process of scaling-up of participatory activities and the need for community-based organisations to nuture local involvement.

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[2] NGO interventions were analysed by spot visits, community interviews in oorus benefited and discussions with the activists of the NGOs. Project records were verified in the case of "Prakriti Samrakshana Samithi" and "Nature".

6.3 Lessions from the Successful Interventions:

These relatively successful attempts at particiaptory development show that participation is possible even by excluded groups. But this process appears very slow and takes a long time to establish itself. It is liable to face local opposition whenever entrenched interests are hurt. Scaling up is very difficult and there is every danger of relapsing into the non-participatory recipient mode.

Small, intense projects with participation as a well-defined project output seem more successful, particularly if an entry point is made in an area immediately of benefit to the local people like education, health care, nature conservation etc. And these tend to invite less local opposition as they are less threatening to the local interests.

To promote participation, it requires dedicated effort on the part of the project agency - the human qualities of personnel appear crucial. These efforts need to be supplemented by a process of intermediation which can be best achieved by trained volunteers from the community, selected in a fair and transparent manner and specially trained in methods of conscientization of the Freirian kind like self analysis, reflection and action. Mere imparting of information on possible sources of assistance and ways of utilising them would not do. Deeper probing and analysis of the local situation by the participants is a common feature of all these successful interventions. Also capacity building and confidence building stimulated participation.

Sustained follow-up is required for the participation process to unfold. Local organisations matching indigenous patterns and rhythms of life allowing felxibility of procedure and autonomy of functioning can aid this process. Use of locally appropriate technology facilitates the involvement of the people. Even though participation can be induced, it requires vigilant nurturing for a long time for it to become sustainable.

PART III

WHY IS IT NOT ?.

CHAPTER 7

THE PROCESSES OF EXCLUSION

As indicated in the previous chapter, the levels of participation in poverty reduction programmes by the tribals of ITDP, Attappady are very low, and effectively non existent. This is in spite of the fact that the poverty reduction programmes have definite guidelines including binding provisions to ensure the full participation of the beneficiaries in various stages of each scheme. It is obvious that the entitlements to participate offered by the government programmes have not been realized in practice. Nor has there been any adversarial public action of any significance, in protest against denial of rights clearly provided for by the government but thwarted in their realisation by several factors. Thus even reactive protest as a form of participatory action has not occured in Attapady to any significant extent. To quote from the Human Development Report (1993): "Participation is a plant that does not grow easily in the human environment. Powerful vested interests, driven by personal greed, erect numerous obstacles to block off routes to people's political and economic power" [1].

It is pertinent to note that the government intervened in the first instance in the firm belief that the tribals have remained excluded from the development process and they need to be brought into the mainstream of development. The project document of the ITDP, Attapady, had clearly indicated that "Deliberate effort would be necessary to carry these underprivileged sections along the mainstream of socio-economic progress as the gap in social and economic development between these groups and the rest of the society has been widening over the generations" [2]. However, it appears from the ground realities that the exclusion of tribals has only been further reinforced. To understand the reasons for this paradox, it is necessary to analyse the processes of exclusion which affected the tribal way of life particularly since the active intervention of the government began.

In the case of the tribal population of Attappady the processes of exclusion could be grouped in the following seven categories:

(i) Historical processes

(ii) Demographic processes

(iii) Economic processes

(iv) Environmental processes

(v) Political processes

(vi) Social processes

(vii) Policy-induced Processes

7.1 Historical Processes

Anthropologists are of opinion that the tribals of Attappady are not aboriginals. While they differ in identifying the place of origin of the tribal groups and the exact dates of settlement in this area, they generally accept the fact that they all moved up from the adjoining areas of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, in response to persecution by invaders and aggressive migrants. Satish Chandran Nair [3] points out that in early 19th century European explorers had described the Attappady area as "trackless and

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[1] UNDP (1993)
[2] State Planning Board (1995)
[3] Nair .S (1989)

inhospitable" and "infested with wild animals". According to him the unrest in the southern Deccan plateau, following the collapse of Vijayanagaram and the unsettled political and social climate contributed to " waves of human migration by relatively small communities into sheltered regions like Attappady". These communities later seem to have imperceptibly merged with the aboriginals, if any. This view is strengthened by the fact that unlike many other parts of Western Ghats, the Attappady region is more easily accessible from the east.

Thus, historically the present-day tribals came to Attappady through a process of self-exclusion to escape from hostile socio-political situations. Initially they sought refuge in the wilderness for survival but isolation helped self preservation and engendered a sense of group identity and nurtured group habits and customs. In spite of near total isolation, these groups got acclimatized quickly to their new surroundings and through a process which could be described as development from within, even in the face of exclusion, they developed real autonomy in the social, political and economic sense of the term [4]. They developed sustainable livelihood systems in harmony with the local environment.

But once development activities were initiated to focus on these excluded groups, and attempts were made to undo physical exclusion, deeper and more destructive processes of exclusion come into operation. These are analysed in the remaining six categories.

7.2 Demographic Processes

Accounts of 1940s present Attappady as a land totally inhabited by tribals with a sprinkling of non-tribal settlers. The Board of Revenue, Madras, estimated the tribal population of Attappady in 1947 to be around 10,000 and the non-tribal population to be just a few hundred. But as per the 1991 Census tribal population is only around 39 percent of the total population. The decadal changes, (Table:7.1) show that after 1981 the population composition has stabilized. But for three decades from 1951, the population increased annually at a compound rate of 5.17 percent; while the tribal population increased at a normal rate of 2.36 per cent, the non-tribal population grew at a very high rate of 11.8 per cent. Thus, there has been a large influx of settlers, almost submerging the original tribal population.

TABLE 7.1

CHANGING POPULATION PROFILE OF ATTAPPADY

Year	Tribal Population	% of Total Population	Non-Tribal Population	% of Total Population	Total population
1951	10,200	90.32	1100	9.68	11,300
1961	12,972	60.45	8489	39.55	21,461
1971	16,536	42.21	22,647	57.79	39,183
1981	20,659	33.00	41,587	67.00	62,246
1991*	24,228	39.06	37,805	60.94	62,033

* Provisional Figure Source: Census Reports

[4] Hockings (1989)

The migration of people into Attappady had a clear pattern. In the 1950s the influx was more from the eastern side, from Tamil agriculturalists who came up from Coimbatore plains as they found agricultural operations becoming more difficult in their area. But this growth tapered off with the formation of Kerala State in 1956.

After 1956 the migration was mostly from the western side [5]. Initially it was in trickles from the plains of Mannarghat by people seeking livelihood, especially in timber operations. But soon the colonization trend appeared as settlers from the south-central region of Kerala moved in large batches into Attappady. It is of common local knowledge that many of the original settlers could not continue in Attappady because of the difficult terrain and they handed over their land to other groups of migrants and left Attappady. However, this aspect has not been documented or studied. The fact remains that the net increase in migrant population continued till 1981.

Another significant factor in the demographic process is that the non-tribals penetrated in strength into all the three areas of Attappady viz. Pudur, Sholayur and Agali. This is confirmed by the panchayat-wise distribution of tribal and non-tribal population (Table 7.2):

TABLE : 7.2

PANCHAYAT-WISE POPULATION OF TRIBAL AND NON-TRIBALS

Panchayat Population	Tribal Total	% of Population	Non-Tribal Total	% of Population	Total
Agali	9507	29.04	23231	70.96	32738
Pudur	7130	57.71	5224	42.29	12354
Sholayur	7591	44.81	9350	55.19	16941

Source: 1991 Census

The speed with which the demographic changes took place is noteworthy. The reversal of population dominance took place in two decades. Also the land settlement pattern changed drastically while the fertile cultivated areas particularly the valley portions and the less steep portions were occupied by the settlers, the tribals were pushed to less fertile degraded slopes.

The influence of the migrants was different in the eastern and western parts of Attappady. In the eastern areas the tribal cultural features still survive to some degree whereas in the western region they have been more submerged.

7.3 Economic Processes

7.3.1 Introduction

The tribal economy is often referred to as primitive and subsistence-based. A typical tribal economy is characterised by man's dependence for his living upon nature and his fellow human beings. The interaction is with the immediate natural and social environment to obtain goods for satisfying the needs. This economy is simple and self-contained with minimal dependence on the outside world. Such an economy is intimately connected with the surrounding natural environment, particularly forests.

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[5] Mathur (1977)

Majumdar and Madan [6] have listed the different characteristics of tribal economy as "absence of technological aids in productive activity, non-consideration of money as store and measurement value, co-operative and collective endeavour, low level of innovation, absence of regular market, consumption oriented production, division of labour based on age and sex, notion of property closely related to display, and expenditure of wealth rather than its accumulation".

The tribal economy is marked by the absence of profit motive and accumulation, where the community exists as a cooperative unit relying on exchange and barter; the economic activity is a socialised response and not an individual one. Such a distributive system does not consist of finding exact equivalants for the services rendered by the different factors of production. The level of production in the subsistence unit, according to Ramaiah [7], "would be limited only by the internal demand of subsistence products rather than the supply of factors of production".

The tribal economy is firmly based in the social system: the principles governing exchange are reciprocity and redistribution nor market notions. A mutual give and take policy exists in such an economic system which is largely based on human relations. And, the means of production in tribal economy are mainly land and labour.

The tribals of Attappady conformed to this typical description of tribal economy [8]. Till about three decades back they possessed vast extent of land for which there was no competition: they paid only nominal rent to the feudal land lord in the plains. They practised shifting cultivation and produced crops required for their livelihood like ragi, dal,maize,beans etc. In the early days community labour was used for agricultural operations. Though individual holdings were recognised any tribal family could move from one hamlet to the other and be given the extent of land required for subsistence. The produce was not traded though of course items like ragi, dal, and ghee were exchanged for clothes, ornaments and other simple consumer goods.

This economy was very much dependent on the forests. It has been documented that once cultivated crops got exhausted the tribals could rely on forest tuber and fruits; and they collected minor forest produce like honey, lac, incense, etc. and exchanged them with traders [9]. Also the forest met the fuel, fodder and timber needs of the tribal families.

All these changed within a generation with the advent of the migrant-settlers. Land became a commodity and its limited supply was soon realised. This process needs close examination.

7.3.2 Land Alienation and Related Processes:

Originally the entire Attappady area except reserve forests was under the domain of the Zamorin of Calicut. 'Jenmom' right of Attappady were vested mainly in the hands of three Nair chieftans viz. Mannarkad Moopil Nair, R.M. Palat and Eralpad Raja [10]. Jenmom right gave them the right to collect usufructs and rent; the right was inheritable. Though the landlords could not sell the land, they were allowed to give it on lease. Moopil Nair alone managed 70 per cent of Attappady land. In the first half of the 20th century, a few other land lords obtained lease rights in the western edge of Agali; about 6000 acres were given on lease to one Kunhammed Sahib of Mannarghat[11].

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[6] Majumdar and Madan (1970) - Page.191-192
[7] Ramaiah (1981) Page 32-33
[8] Nair .R.A. (1991)
[9] Singh (1994)
[10] Government of Madras (1951)
[11] Nair .V.C. (1986)

Towards the end of the 19th century Moopil Nair gave land on lease to the British for setting up plantations. Initially whenever the land was given on lease the tribal land was specifically excluded and only the private forests were given out.

With the formation of Kerala it became obvious that Land Reform laws would be enacted. The feudal landlords knew that their lands would be vested with the government sooner or later. So they started giving land on lease liberally to outsiders. The modus operandi was very simple. The agent of the feudal landlord known as 'Karyasthan' would give M.R. or Money Receipt [12]. Initially these were authentic but later with the vesting of the private forests in government under an Act of the legislature, the Karyasthans gave back-dated M.Rs. to circumvent the crucial date after which transactions became invalid. In this melee since the tribals could not afford any money they were left out. And because of the absence of land records and clear specification of boundaries, the non-tribals took possession of much larger area than they were entitled to, most of it from the tribal commons. The tribals generally concede that even at this juncture only a portion of their cultivated land was taken away by others.

Another process of land alienation began with the recording of rights which started in 1964. Till then the land in Attappady was unsurveyed and no title deeds or "pattas" were distributed. But after the survey formal assignment of land was made. During this process non tribal lease holders reportedly manipulated their holding rights and holding extent and obtained title deeds to a substantial extent of tribal land, most of it in the fertile valley areas and other areas with good communication facilities. The tribals who till recently possessed enough land, didn't realize the importance of what was happening and were slow in getting their rights recorded and often did not have cash to pay the nominal charges required to get title deeds and lost by default.

A more direct form of land alienation took place particularly from mid 1960s. This increased with the monetisation of the tribal economy and the increased cash needs of the tribals coupled with the land hunger of the settlers. The settlers started buying land directly from the tribals, initially using the dominant position of the ooru moopans, and later on, by direct dealing. The tribals who believed that they could always fall back on forest land, did not recognise that the base of their economy was being eroded. When the forest law became stringent in the second half of the 1970s, they lost access to their traditional place of refuge and became literally marginalised as far as land holding was concerned.

The ooru moopans and others estimate that bonafide land transactions would not cover more than ten percent of the alienated land. Underpayment, taking possession of larger area than entitled to, getting deeds registered by cheating the illiterate tribals, taking land on lease (kuthaga) or mortgage (bhogyam) and never returning it and,sometimes, even encroachment by force were some of the methods of taking over tribal land.

The Department of Economics and Statistics, Government of Kerala, conducted a survey in 1977 [13] and identified the land alienated by tribals during the decade 1966-76. The study found out that 546tribal families lost 9859 acres of land, 27.41 per cent of the area being transferred by means of lease 42.1 per cent by sale, 18.8 per cent by mortgage and the remaining area by oral transfer, and other means. The survey also brought to light the reasons which compelled the tribal people to sell their property. 49.2 per cent of the area was transferred to clear debts; 14.9 per cent for medical treatment; land encroached upon and land taken over by force came to 5.3 per cent. Since this survey was a kind of census covering every household in every hamlet and done under special supervision, its validity is very high.

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[12] Nair .V. (1984)

[13] Government of Kerala (1982)

The socio-economic survey of 150 families from 15 oorus done for this study throws light not only on the extent and type of land transfer but also the kind of land transferred. It is seen that all types of land have been alienated (Table 7.3).

Table 7.3

PATTERN OF ALIENATION OF TRIBAL LAND

	Type of Land	Total extent (acres)	% sold	%given on lease (kuthaga)	%given on mortgage (bhogyam)	%occupied by others by force
1.	Sloping land capable of being irrigated naturally.	395.45	12.93	12.77	1.52	14.72
2.	Sloping land not capable of being irrigated.	174.08	16.95	4.02	2.87	15.77
3.	Irrigated flat land.	86.23	29.11	6.38	2.90	-
4.	Unirrigated flat land.	34.50	-	5.80	5.80	-
5.	Fields	20.35	-	17.20	2.46	-
	Total	710.61	14.88	9.64	2.25	12.05

Source: Sample survey of 150 families done for this study.

Accessibilty seems to have been a major factor in causing land loss to the tribals. The 1977 survey clearly brings this out. Alienation of land is seen to be high in Sholayur and Agali Panchayats which are the most opened up areas in Attappady and least in Pudur which has the least developed road network. Similarly, loss of land is least among the Kurumbas who dwell in the inaccessible forest tracts (Table 7.4).

Table 7.4

ALIENATION OF LAND PANCHAYAT WISE / TRIBE-WISE

Panchayats/ Tribes	No. of families	Cultivated area (acres)	Extent of land alienated (acres)	Percentage of area alienated
A. Panchayats:				
Agali	1461	5112.37	4487.90	46.75
Pudur	1178	6841.89	1986.63	22.50
Sholayur	1304	4196.88	3861.66	47.92
B. Tribes:				
Irulas	4908	11580.89	8996.41	43.72
Mudugas	1691	1266.25	1083.78	46.12
Kurumbas	216	3304.00	26.00	0.70

Source: Government of Kerala - Survey of tribal lands, 1982

The new settlers in Attappady resorted to cash crops like cotton and sugarcane in the eastern areas and pepper, banana and spices in the western areas. This was in marked contrast to the tribal agricultural systems with reliance on traditional crops like ragi, millets, pulses, amaranthus, etc. The introduction of new cash crops which required agricultural labour beyond family labour and the alienation of tribal land had a combined effect on the tribal economy.The loss of good land naturally reduced production and productivity, disturbing food security. A PRA excercise conducted with a group of tribals from seven oorus brought out the productivity loss in traditional crops (Table 7.5).

Table 7.5

PRODUCTIVITY CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL CROPS

Crop	Production per acre (in no. of bags) 30 Years ago	Now
Makka Cholam (Maize)	10	1.5
Ragi	12	6
Thina (Italian millet)	6	0.5
Chama (Common millet)	6	0.5
Keera (Amananthus)	1.5	0.5
Thumara (Red gram)	15	1.5
Avara (Field beans)	5	2.5
Kadugu (Mustard)	0.5	0.25

Source: PRA conducted by Action Aid for 'Nature' an NGO at Mully on 18.9.1991.

The tribals were forced to buy food from the market for which they needed cash. This was obtained by working in the land of the non-tribals, which led to further neglect of their own crops leaving large extent of land as fallow. The survey conducted for the this study revealed that out of the total extent of land, 45 percent was left fallow and 86.5 percent of the fallow land belongs to holdings having an extent of 2.5 hectares or more. This corraborates the finding of the 1985 survey of the people below poverty line [14] which showed an abnormally high incidence of poverty among tribal small farmers compared to the non-tribals of the same category. 1195 out of a total of 3335 tribals below poverty line were small farmers. And out of this 753 belonged to the poorest groups with per capita annual income below Rs.350. Whereas the figure for the poor non-tribal small farmers is only 625 out of a total of 3315 (with only 226 falling under the category of poorest). This poverty level could be ascribed to the poor quality as well as the poor use of land. Consequently they were pushed further to work as agricultural labour for meeting the cash requirements. Thus both pull and push factors operated in this respect.

A sharp increase in the agricultural labour population with matching decrease in the cultivator population is evident while comparing the Census figures.since 1961 (Table 7.6).

Table 7.6

CHANGING PROFILE OF WORKER CATEGORIES

Type of Worker	Census Years			
	1961	1971	1981	1991
A. Cultivators :				
Male	3034	3300	2642	1365
Female	2626	951	1113	892
Total	5660	4451	2755	2257
B. Agricultural labourers :				
Male	706	1434	2598	4954
Female	647	1031	2564	4295
Total	1353	2465	5162	9248
C. Others:				
Male	341	221	591	366
Female	219	62	299	186
Total	560	283	890	552
D. Total Workers:				
Male	4081	4955	5833	6685
Female	3492	2044	3976	5373
Total	7573	8999	9807	12058
E. Non-Workers :				
Male	2405	3484	4186	5199
Female	2814	6136	5551	6079
Total	5219	9620	9737	11278
F. Marginal Workers:				
Male	-	-	407	296
Female	-	-	742	596
Total	-	-	1149	892
Total Population :	12972	16536	20659	24228

Source: Census reports

[14] By the rural development department in 1985

It is also seen that the non-worker population among the tribals is also on the increase. The survey done for this study also revealed a similar pattern (Table 7.7).

Table 7.7

Main Occupations

Occupation type	Male	Female	Total
Cultivators	73	47	120
Agricultural Labourers	157	121	278
Government servants	10	4	14
Other types of Work	26	31	57
Not specified	24	28	52
Total			521

Source: Sample survey of 150 families done for this study.

A CWRDM report reveals that 7.8 percent of the tribal households in Attappady are landless. The survey of 150 families, showed that 20 percent among them didi not have any cultivable land. Together they support the conclusion that there has been an economic marginalisation of the tribals of Attappady triggered off primarily by the loss of land. The situation is made worse by the fact that other avenues of economic activity have not opened up to any significant extent.

The alienation of land in all the parts of Attappady with the more in the fertile valley portions and other accessible areas, has resulted in the physical marginalization of tribals pushing them to the less fertile fringes of cultivated land. This type of invasive land purchases enabled the settlers to achieve a dominance-enforcing position both economically, socially and politically.

7.3.3 Other Economic Processes:

The deforestation which followed the influx of non-tribal settlers also affected the tribals. This coupled with the forest laws reduced their access to their natural resource base. Also their reliance on forests for supplementary nutrition as well as a source for fuel and fodder came to be reduced with the new legal restrictions and limitations on their access.

The settlers from the plains affected the tribal economy not only by reducing land availability but also by introducing cash economy. The operation of the market using money affected the tribal produce which did not have a rational exchange value in terms of money. This placed the tribals at a disadvantage and much of their wealth was lost in the initial days of unequal exchange. The poor returns fetched by their staple crops like ragi made them feel that such items of food were 'inferior' and this became one of the factors that contributed to the preference for rice over traditional crops which in turn affected their food security.

The impact of the settlers on the tribal economy was also felt on the cattle economy. Traditionally, the tribals had a vibrant cattle economy [15]. Though they did not consume milk, they used curd and exchanged ghee. They even exchanged cattle for obtaining some of their consumer requirements; yet as a local regular market was not there this exchange was resorted to only in times of absolute need. But with the market moving into Attappady and cattle being bought by the non-tribals a process of unequal transfer resulted. Now the cattle wealth of the tribals is very low and they seem to have even lost their capacity and confidence to rear their own cattle, as is evidenced by the failure of milch-cattle-scheme under the Integrated Rural Development Programme. A quick survey of the impact of IRDP on tribals made in early 1990s [16] revealed that only 20 per cent of the tribal beneficiaries retained the cattle purchased under the scheme and less than 10 per cent repaid the loan in full. Another evidence to prove this is the comparison of data from the 1977 survey by the Government of Kerala and the survey done for this study. In 1977, there were 452 cows in the 15 oorus for 690 families and in 1996 there were just 57 cows owned by the 150 sample families from the same oorus - ie: a decline from 66 cows per 100 families to 38 cows per 100 families in less than two decades and that too during a period when not less than 80 cows would have been given under IRDP to these oorus as per the estimate of ITDP officials.

The sudden introduction of the monetized market economy and the unequal exchange process resulted in increased demand for cash which made the tribals borrow money from money lenders and this furthered the process of alienation of assets particularly land and cattle. The tribals were not accustomed to handling cash and they had a tendency to spend money fast often on consumer items such as alcohol, tobaco, cinema and hotel food. They did not have the habit of saving cash. The survey of 150 families showed that only 12 families had savings in banks and another seven families had savings in cooperative societies or informal systems while 56 families had borrowed from banks and another 53 families from other sources. This habit of quick spending of cash without any savings increased the vulnerability of the tribals during lean seasons or during emergencies. On such occasions tribals had to borrow money.

A similar situation of indebtedness and dependence prevails even where the tribals are able to take up cultivation of cash crops. Out of the 66 tribal families which cultivated cotton from among the 150 surveyed, 30 used fertilisers and 53 used pesticides. It was found that inputs were obtained on credit in all but five cases and in 36 percent of such cases, the produce was sold to the same person who initially provided the inputs on credit. This inter-locking has reinforced the process of exploitation. Thus even the relatively better off tribals with some initiative and entrepreneurship get tied down from asserting themselves.

Thus, the changes which occurred were sudden and released impulses which undermined the tribal subsistence economy and set off a process of immiserisation. To recapitulate some of the indicators of this process:

(i) Families below poverty line		-	56.7 %
(ii) Agricultural Labourers		-	76.7 %
(iii) Workers in non-agricultural occupations		-	3.5 %
(iv) Non-Workers vs Main Workers -			
Male	5199		6685
Female	6079		5373
Total	11278		12058
(v) Landless		-	7.8 %
(vi) Illiteracy		-	39.28 %

[15] Thurston (Reprint 1990)

[16] An internal assessment report of ITDP (1993)

7.4 Environmental Processes

Unlike other communities the tribals have an organic relationship with the forest environment. Environmentalists are in agreement that the tribal utilization of forest resources is generally sustainable especially when the autonomous subsistance economy is in vogue. The tribals depend on the forest directly for timber, fuel, fodder as also fruits and roots: for the exchange economy the tribals collect forest produce like lac, honey, camphor, etc. and boost their power of exchange to meet their need for goods not produced locally.

The lush forest environment adds to the fertility of the tribal land and enables natural irrigation through uniform availability of water. The small population of the tribals and their scattered spread combine with the relatively modest material requirements for their livelihood to ensure that the relationship between the tribals and the forest is stable and maintained in equlibrium: it is never over extractive and depletive.

During the difficult dry season the tribals could depend on the forest for their daily food needs. Thus, forest to the tribals is a place of refuge in times of need and this aided by social rituals venerating the forest, elevates the relationship between the tribals and the forest environment beyond a material one into a spiritual one. The forests are ultimately a source of protection from vulnerability and give comfort and confidence to the tribals. Such a relationship existed in Attappady also.

The forests of Attappady were first disturbed by the clearfelling to make way for planatations in the south eastern portions. Unsuitability of other areas restricted the expansion of plantations and at present they constitute just 0.51 percent of the total area. Later the British felled timber to meet the requirements of railway sleepers and support the plywood industry [17].

The forests of Attappady suffered badly with the influx of the settlers both from the plains of Tamil Nadu and the midlands of Kerala. The settlers from Kerala who had no real knowledge of the montane forest environment brought in new forms of cultivation requiring clear felling of trees which further caused severe soil erosion. The fragile and thin top soil characteristic of moist tropical evergreen forests, earlier held together by dense root systems and protected by canopied vegetation and a thick layer of humus from the abundant foliage, gave way easily once the tree cover was removed and the soil tilled. The deforestation accelerated during the second half of the sixties when the feudal landlords became certain that they were going to lose their land due to land reforms measures. They stopped looking after their forests and were interested in creating fictitious tenancies. They also attempted to make quick money by selling timber. By the time the private forests were vested with the government in 1971, there was severe degradation but the momentum generated earlier for forest felling and transportation of timber to the plains continued even after the Forest Department took control of the land. The forests of Attappady except the reserve areas vanished by mid seventies. This process was aided by the opening of Attappady through roads ostensibly intended for the benefit of tribals.

With the influx of the migrants increasing the biotic pressure on the ecosystem, the shifting cultivation of the tribals became unsustainable as the cycles got shortened due to lesser availability of land affecting the regeneration of the land; Soon the tribals were forced to accept settled agriculture and pushed to the fragile upper reaches ecologically unsuitable for cultivation. Thus the tribals also harmed the environment though forced to do so [18].

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[17] ESRG (1989)
[18] Ibid

This set off a vicious circle - the environmental degradation impoverished the tribals, and the resulting poverty forced the tribals to graze other people's cattle in forests and act as cat's paw to extract costly timber for outsiders, further deteriorating the eco-health of the area. In the Mallisara project area, it was found that 16.5 percent of tribals mentioned grazing as an important activity. A CWRDM study cites grazing as the most important reason for the degradation of Attappady next to deforestation [19].

The pace of the degradation which occured in two decades from 1971 is brought out in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8

CHANGES IN LAND USE SINCE 1971

Category	Area in 1971 (Sq.Km)	Area in 1989 (Sq.Km)
Agriculture	178.10	52
Dense forests	406.37	164
Scrubs /Grassland	28.3	152.8
Barren / Rocky	-	233.8

Source: CWRDM (1994)

Note: The total extent of land reckoned for different purposes is not the same (cf Table 7.9). It is because natural boundaries based on watershed are taken for some purposes and the political boundaries for other purposes. Also use of different satellite imagery gives marginal differences in area.

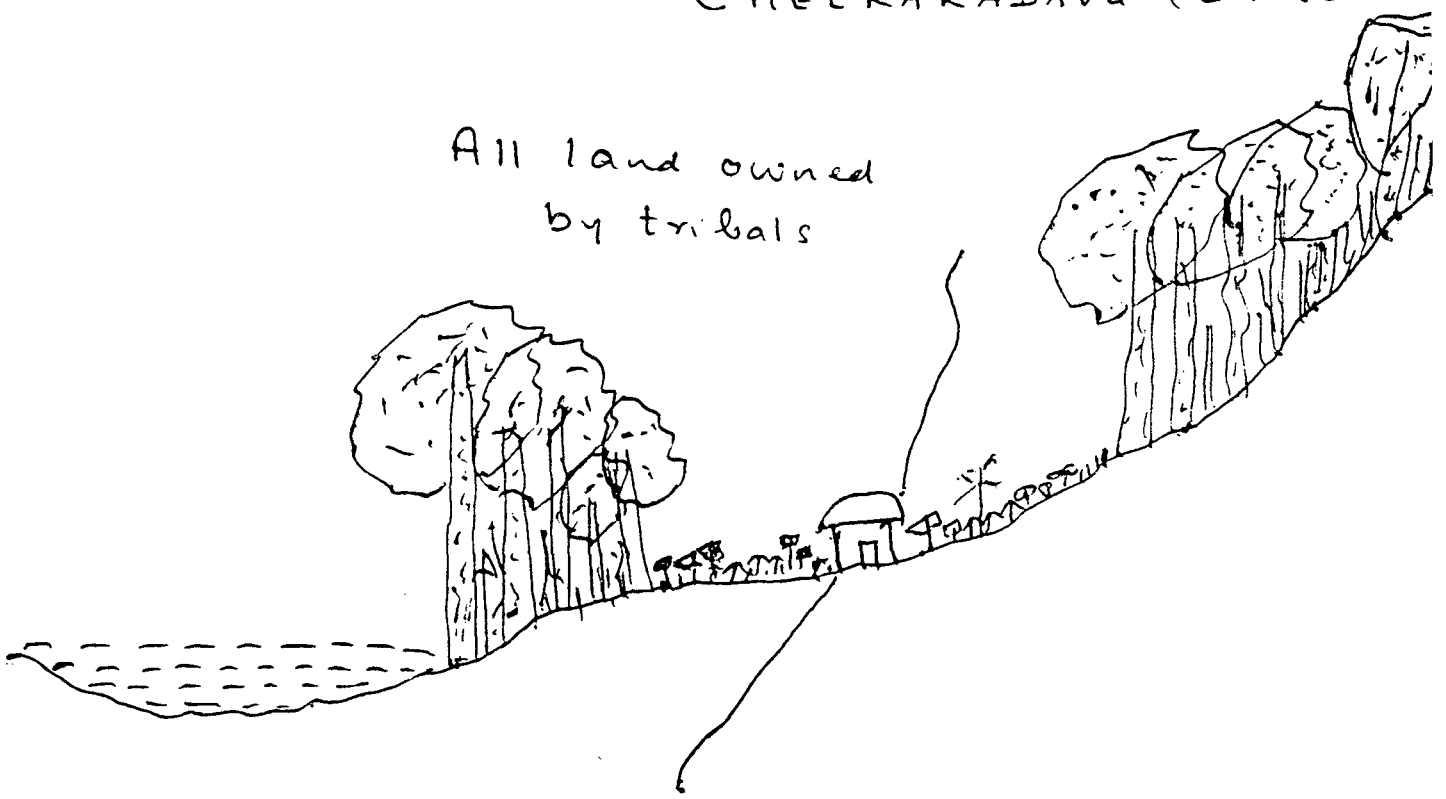
These changes are well illustrated in the historical and present transects of a typical ooru prepared by senior mooppans (Fig 7.1a and Fig 7.1b).

It is evident that good quality agricultural land has dwindled in area while barren/rocky patches have expanded. Similarly dense forests have been transformed into scrubs and grasslands [20]. From the ecological point of view the magnitude and the rapidity of the adverse changes are very significant. The tribals with their heavy dependence on the forests were the worst affected. Much of the land occupied by them became wasteland, that is, land unable to give the optimum yields it is capable of. The extent of wasteland has been calculated to be 21.04 percent of the total area, which works out to 52.09 percent of the non-forest area [21] (Table 7.9).

[19] CWRDM (1994)
[20] CWRDM (1994)
[21] Kerala State Land Use Board and NRSA (1994)

Fig 7.1a

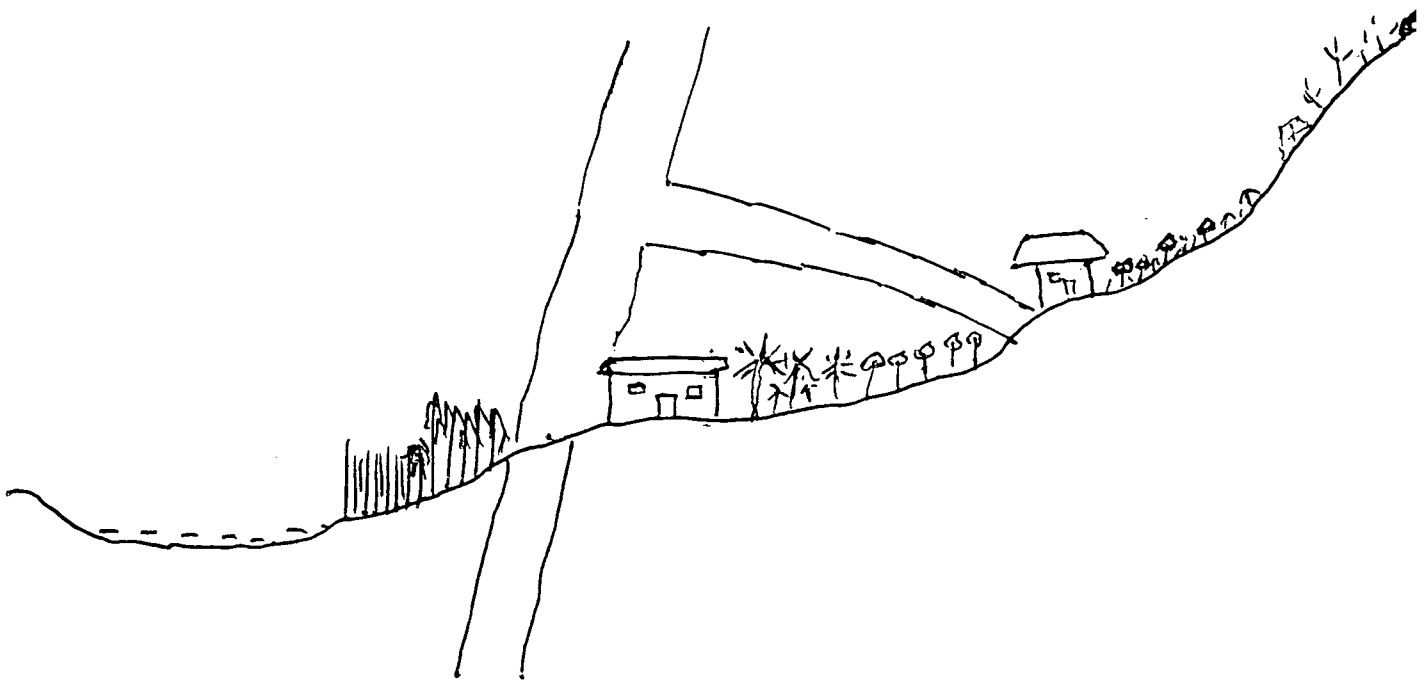
HISTORICAL TRANSECT OF A TYPICAL OORU - CHEERAKADAVU (C.1965)



[Source: P.R.A in Cheerakadavu with tribal elders, December, 1995]

Fig 7.1b

TRANSECT OF A TRIBAL OORU NOW - CHEERAKADAVU (1995)



River	River margin	Valley	Gentle slopes	Steep slopes
Less water - turbid during rains	Rice	Coconut	Tribal tiled house (by ITDP)	Mixed Crops
More flash floods	Sugarcane	Cotton	Sparse mixed crops eg: millets maize beans	Ineffective Soil protection Bund
	Banana	Bigger non-tribal house		Scrubs
		Road		Rocky outcrop.
	Non-tribal property		Road	

[Source: PRA in Cheerakadavu with tribal elders, December 1995]

Table 7.9

CATEGORIES OF LAND USE / LAND COVER IN ATTAPPADY BLOCK

Sl. No.	Land Use / Land Cover Categories	Area (hectares)	Percentage to total area
A.	**Forest**		
1.	Evergreen /Semiever green (dense)	146.16	19.62
2.	Evergreen /Semi evergreen (open)	40.38	5.42
3.	Deciduous (dense)	125.15	16.80
4.	Deciduous (open)	104.79	14.07
5.	Degraded / Under Utilised	21.55	2.89
6.	Scrub	1.08	0.14
7.	Blank	1.16	0.16
8.	Plantation	3.80	0.51
B.	**Agricultural Lands**		
9.	Kharif crop area (single crop)	44.88	6.02
10.	Kharif and Rabi area (double crop)	7.15	0.96
11.	Fallow	0.63	0.08
12.	Agricultural Plantation(Mixed)	77.65	10.42
C.	**Waste Lands / Degraded Lands:**		
13.	Land with or without scrub	88.93	11.95
14.	Barren rocky / stoney waste	3.10	0.42
15.	Permanent Fallows	64.61	8.67
D.	**Water Bodies (Major Rivers/Reserviors)**	10.72	1.43
E.	**Roads, streams etc**	3.27	0.44
	Total :	745.00	100.00

Source : Kerala State Land Use Board & National Remote Sensing Agency (1994)

7.5 Political Processes

The political processes of Attappady [22] only served to disempower the tribals and push them to the periphery as they were also linked to the demographic and economic processes. In the 1950s the Attappady tribals lived in an apolitical environment outside the pale of party politics. Then from early 1960s there was a period of single party dominance i.e. the communists held sway over the tribals till about the middle of 1970s. Here it is to be noted that there was an initial altruistic phase when non-tribal political leaders from outside tried to organise the tribals to oppose the excesses of the feudal landlord and also lobbied to bring in developmental intervention by the state government. Soon, however a phase of manipulative participation in political activity began. Local leadership and deeper political awareness were not encouraged: autonomous political functioning was not intended. The outside leaders used them as part of their larger political agenda especially in the fight for land rights. The slogan which galvanized tribals during the period was "it is our land and we will take it".

The influx of outsiders soon changed things drastically. They recognized the importance of political patronage and when it came to the game of numbers the political parties gradually started moving away from core issues of tribal development like land, food security and human development to peripheral issues of welfarist doles. The concern shifted to getting things from outside Attappady, ignoring the changing material relations within Attappady. Tribal development came to be seen as flow of funds from the state government and not in terms of improvement of the quality of life of the tribals.

At this stage, somewhere in the mid seventies, the number of parties also began to increase. At first the Congress and then the Janata Dal and the Kerala Congress came into being. Along with the coming of new political parties local political leadership began to emerge. In the initial stages, till early eighties there was a kind of dual leadership i.e. a fledgling local leadership being groomed by the party leadership of the district. But by mid eighties local political leaders with their own spheres of interest and influence emerged who could hold their own vis-a-vis their party. It is at this stage that the concern for the tribals shared by the top leadership of political parties came to be checkmated by their local leadership. The best illustration of this phenomenon is the way in which the Tribal Lands (Prevention of Alienation) Act, 1975 was implemented. All the political parties, though they brought in the legislation unanimously at the state level, thwarted it with unanimous vehemence at the implementation stage as they all joined to support the non-tribal majority.

Alongwith this process and in response to it there were feeble attempts at political action by the tribals themselves. Girijan Sevak Samithi (G.S.S.) was formed in 1973 and its activities peaked within a decade. Though it claimed to be non-political this was so only in so far as it did not belong to any political party, but its demands and actions were decidely political and often opposed to the stand taken by the individual political parties.A high point in the rise of G.S.S. was reached in the panchayat elections of 1988 when two of its candidates got elected in a rare instance of consolidation of tribal votes against the dominent political fronts. But this achievement was blunted by the process of co-optation. Both the members were adopted by political parties and made to join their group in running the panchayat deserting the G.S.S. At present the G.S.S. is practically defunct.

The senior moopans helped trace a historical time line showing the political changes in Attappady, which sums up the analysis made so far (Fig 7.2).

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[22] The processes were tracked mostly from key informant interviews with local political leaders, senior mooppans, and tribal panchayat members, and the perusal of old political pamphlets of the 1960s and 1970s which the senior mooppans had preserved.

Fig 7.2

HISTORICAL TIME LINE

Political Processes	Landmarks
Apolitical period	1950
	1957 First communist MLA elected from Mannarghat Assembly Constituency
Growing influence of undivided CPI - government intervention with party support	1960 Pilot Project Started at Mukkali
	1962 Tribal Development Block Created
Land agitations began	1964 Recording of land rights
Riding two horses by political leaders	1971 Vesting of forests
Congress emerges	
Parties develop local leadership	1975 ITDP formed
All the parties veer towards non-tribals	
	1985 PM's visit to Attappady
Parties openly support non tribals. yet tribals start developing confidence	1986 Land Alienation Act brought into force
	1986 IAS officer posted as project officer
	1987 Sub-Collector assaulted by non-tribals during inspection of alienated land
Girijan Sevak Samithi becomes strong	1988 Panchayat Elections
Middlemen regain influence	1991 IAS officers cease to be Project Officer.
Growing cynicism	1995 Panchayat Elections

Source: Traced by senior mooppans of Bommiampady region, on 15-12-1995

It is to be noted that the tribals are still apolitical in the deeper sense of the term. Though they show preferences in support, take part in activities like jathas and demonstrations, their political allegiance is perceived by the political leaders as well as by tribal mooppans and youth as superficial. Their loyalties often shift for no valid reason and at no great price. So political parties see them as passive vote banks which can be captured relatively easily through simple blandishments like liquor and free food. Development issues are not at all discussed and serious promises not made during elections. Elections are not used by the tribals as opportunities to express their collective mood, either of approval or of protest - the electoral participation is passive. The weak political consciousness of the tribals also prevented extremist ideologies from gaining influence in Attappady - unlike in most of the tribal areas of India.

Of late a cynical attitude is evident among the tribals. They seem to be losing faith in political parties. The prime cause for this disenchantment is the anti-tribal stand taken by all political parties on the land alienation issue. Illustrative of this cynicism is the following incident:

During the panchayat elections held in 1995 a group of tribal youths in the Bhoothivazhy hamlet who were relatively more educated and had better awareness of issues organized themselves into a youth club. They came to the conclusion that none of the candidates had any real sympathy for the tribals and they can not get anything postive from them after the elections. So they decided to auction their support to the highest bidder and decided to use the amount thus raised to construct a building for the youth club. Since they constituted a significant vote bank they were able to get Rs.6000 using which they put up the building for the youth club. The youths felt that this was better than casting votes on party lines in return for small favours like free liquor or free food. The club members knew that the successful bidder was one of the biggest contractors of the locality who had made his money out of the tribal developemnt works; but they felt that they now made him pay atleast a token 'fine' which the due process of law could never have done. They conceded that they resorted to this out of the cynical feeling that a collective excercise of tribal political power would never be made to pressurise an elected representative to respond to their needs.

Yet politicians can still divide and split hamlets on political lines and play off one group against the other. This is used effectively to smother any attempt to protest or to organise, on the part of the tribals especially in relation to development works.

The Panchayati Raj set up in Attappady needs closer examination. It was seen in the previous chapter that the levels of participation in panchayat programmes is as low as that of government programmes. This only proves that real political power is not in the hands of the tribals even when they hold nominal positions of power. In the three gram panchayats of Attappady the tribals held the position of Panchayat President in one panchayat, and Vice President in two panchayats; and the Block panchayat is headed by a tribal lady.

Though there are 17 tribal members of various panchayats in Attappady out of a total of 38, and the Pudur grama panchayat has a tribal majority, they have never been able to take up collectively or individually any general issue of tribal development other than requesting for more welfare assistance. However during individual interactions the tribal panchayat members showed a sharp awareness of tribal problems and the possible solutions. Such members however confessed that they could not take any political initiative to tackle the problems, but would give silent moral support to any dedicated official who could support the tribal cause. They conceded that they have been acting as accomplices to other powerful members in the misuse of tribal development funds and even admitted to taking samll cash gifts and "incidental expenses" in the process. Viewed in the overall context, it can not be seen as bribe-seeking on the part of the tribal members but only as the sign of manipulation and domestication of them by the more powerful non-tribal interests. Thus a culture of silence arising out of a sense of inadequacy and fear and perpetrated by small sops of power has taken over the elected tribal members of the panchayats, in effect, disempowering them.

A peculiar feature of the panchayats of Attappady is that a good number of panchayat members irrespective of their party are contractors,all of them weaned on tribal development programmes. The number of contractors among the members as well as among the defeated candidates in the recent panchayat elections is given in Table 7.10.

Table 7.10

INFLUENCE OF CONTRACTORS OVER THE PANCHAYATS

	Contractor-Members	Nominee-Members (proxy for contractors)	Members who are neither
Non-tribal Men :			
Winners	8	7	2
Losers	8	3	7
Non-tribal Women:			
Winners	0	0	6
Losers	0	1	4
Tribal Men:			
Winners	1	2	4
Losers	0	2	5
Tribal Women:			
Winners	0	2	6
Losers	0	0	8
Total :			
Winners	9	11	18
Losers	8	6	24

Note: 'Losers' indicates the candidates who came second in the elections.

Source: Workshop of tribal youths, Agali dated: 17.12.95

Thus Attappady presents a picture not just of contractor - politician nexus but that of contractor - politician identity. This rise of contractors as political leaders needs to be explained.

In the initial stages of the ITDP when money started flowing, the officials were under pressure to utilize the funds as quickly as possible. Since a participatory implementation of works and programmes would have taken time the project authorities resorted to the convenient tactics of identifying persons among non-tribals who had some initiative and enterprise and asking them to carry out the works as 'defacto' contractors but de 'jure' representatives of the tribal people in the role of 'nominees' of tribal

beneficiary groups.. These persons were initially under the absolute control of the project authorities and carried out works relatively satisfactorily. In this process they gained not only some profits but also visibility and command over gangs of workers. Successful contractors got more and more works and their importance grew. Yet at this stage they were the obedient agents of the I.T.D.P., dependent on project authorities who could extract good work if they wanted.

In a place which had no native political leaders, when the political parties from outside sought out persons suitable to look after their party interests in Attappady the contractors with their high visibility, local importance and sufficient command over the official system proved to be the natural choice. Once political power was obtained their relationship with the ITDP got reversed. They could dictate the terms; choice of works depended on the profitability of the works. Thus the contractor - politician came into being in Attappady, perverting and usurping development programmes. It is because of the influence of this group that works not benefitting tribals were taken up. Out of the 27 JRY/EAS works studied, none was of first priority to the local tribals and all of them were prompted by a politician and 58 percent of them directly implemented by politician - contractors.

At the same time no tribal could attain any position of power in the political parties - this is best illustrated by the case of a tribal mooppan who inspite of being Panchayat president for three decades has not acquired any real political influence.

These political processes were shaped by the demographic and economic changes which reversed the power relations in Attappady. They have resulted in the total marginalisation of the tribals. In such a situation, with the new Panchayati Raj system acquiring the legal and moral aura of participative local development, the tribals could be further exploited, unless a conscious decision to reflect the relative strengths of the social groups of Attappady in the political power-sharing is taken by the state level leadership of political parties. The attitude of the tribals towards Panchayati Raj is best captured in these words of an ooru mooppan: "Panchayat members are like leaseholders; who try to extract the maximum from the land in a short time without having any regard for the real owner. Their interests are limited to the five-year period. To such people should not be entrusted the task of tribal development which calls for a long-term vision".

7.6 Social Processes

Among these processes [23] the most crucial was the rapid destruction of the traditional forms of leadership. Though in the olden days the Ooru Mooppan and his assistants Kuruthala and Bhandari were often selected at the instance of the feudal landlord's agent or 'karyasthan', their interaction with and dependence on the agent was rather limited. The relationship with the feudal landlord was distant, formal and sometimes even ritualistic(as in the celebration of Mannarkad pooram) and the feudal lord did not have any need to manipulate the hamlet leadership. But this changed with the advent of migrants into Attappady. The Ooru Mooppan was the natural contact person. Earlier the Mooppans used to allow small traders to set up shop within the hamlet to meet the needs of the ooru people. Since the Mooppan had lot of control his influence was utilised by the migrants to acquire land from tribals. Thus Mooppans, unwittingly in the beginning, and later as a willing catspaws became the major factor in the alienation of tribal land. Then the Mooppans were also responsible for the loss of dignity of tribal women by condoning or even conniving in their abuse by settlers, and more so, by the officials. As regards officials except in rare cases, like that of the first Block Development Officer, they generally acted superior to the Ooru Mooppan who was considered to be primitive and less civilized and unworthy of respect as a leader. The Mooppans were used just as guides and helpers.

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[23] The core of these findings came out of discussions in the workshop of tribal youths held at Agali on 17.12.95. The information provided by the key informants supplemented this.

All these seriously eroded the power and credibility of the Ooru Mooppan. With the establishment of the political panchayat system, the Mooppan became further irrelevant as politicians and panchayat members were seen as bringing development to the ooru and people looked upon them for getting things done from the ITDP office.

An attempt was made to revive the institution of Mooppan by constituting the Mooppan's Council for the whole of Attappady in 1975. This council was given the powers of the Block Development Committee and could decide on most of the development matters particularly choice of schemes, choice of locations and identification of beneficiaries. In case the majority of villagers opposed a Mooppan, the Revenue Divisional Officer could conduct a democratic election and select the person who had the support of the majority as the Moopan. But this did not prove very effective among the community who could not understand the workings of competitive democracy. The analysis of the minutes of the various Mooppans Councils showed that initially they did have a voice in several decisions particularly regarding the type of the scheme being implemented and the location of the scheme. Soon the council came to be used in a manipulative fashion to give a stamp of approval to works decided on other considerations. Finally, since mid-eighties, it became practically defunct though it still exists on paper.

Along with the declining status of the Mooppan one can trace the gradual loosening up of the cohesion of the tribal hamlet. Because of the influx of settlers and the alienation of land there was physical scattering of households; tribal families moved away after selling their prime land and established new nuclear hamlets. There has been a 27 percent increase in the number of Irula and Muduga hamlets since 1975 when there were 106 oorus. Within oorus political divisions affected the cohesiveness. This process was further worsened by selective official patronage in the disbursing of official favours.

This decline could not be arrested by the new forms of organization which were attempted. As mentioned earlier the Girijan Sevek Samathi had only a brief active life in the 1980s. Earnest attempts were made to organise the youth through Youth Clubs and 49 such clubs were registered in 1988 mainly for the purpose of acting as social animators but within two years, but for three clubs all of them became defunct.

The social processes of exclusion also affected those sections among the tribals who could otherwise have involved themselves in public action. The loss of status of women has been much felt in Attappady. Till mid sixties men and women enjoyed equal status and both of them were fully involved in various items of work to support their livelihood. With the break-up of the traditional economy, women began to shoulder bulk of the responsibility of raising the family. She had to go out to work to earn money to meet family needs. As men indulged in new-found habits like drinking from arrack shops, the burden on the women increased. The environmental degradation gave the women the added task of fetching water and firewood from longer distances.

Unlike several tribal communities the Irulas and Mudugas had a strong sense of respect for women and resented outside contact[24]. This powerful sense of distance from outside males was broken first by the traders and settlers who mostly came alone to Attappady and often tried to seduce the tribal women. This process was hastened by the arrival of officials in large numbers, who carried with them the stamp of authority, and who could grant favours. During 1960s about 600 surveyors were sent to Attappady to prepare the record of rights to tribal lands. This large presence of outsiders proved to be a major corrupting influence on the tribal women. The frequent participation of women in political jathas outside Attappady worsened this problem. Finally abject poverty has pushed several women into selling their bodies for money. And now there are signs of organised flesh trade to the nearby city of Coimbatore. This decline took place in the space of one generation. Marginalisation of tribal women has removed a potentially active and aggressive group from playing a socially constructive role as a 'pull' factor in development.

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[24] Mathur (1977)

Similarly the plight of tribal youth is also of concern. They seem to be caught between two worlds, one dead due to ill-health and the other born dead. With the introduction of formal education, particularly through hostel life the tribal youths got cut off from their traditional moorings. Also they began to imitate the settler youths yet could not get full acceptance into their fold. These youths have become easy fodder to the political parties and have contributed to bickerings within the hamlet. They have no faith in the old ooru system; but they can not provide any alternative, either. There is general agreement that the youths of Attappady are directionless and they need outside intervention to develop a sense of purpose and motivation.

The migrants brought with them new habits like alcohol. The tribals of Attappady used to consume liquor only on ceremonial occasions. But with the introduction of arrack they have become addicts. It is clear that arrack and tobacco were used as weapons of exploitation by the non-tribals and they made the position of the tribals vulnerable. Of late, tribals have been showing a strong preference for hotel food resulting in both unnecessary expenditure as well as vanishing of traditional home recipes. In the sample survey of 150 households many families reported consumption of liquor even though prohibition had been in force for more than nine months; they also spent a lot on tobacco and hotel food (Table 7.11).

Table 7.11

PATTERN OF CASH EXPENDITURE ON SELECTED ITEMS

Item	No. of families reporting expenditure (out of 150)	Average annual expenditure (per reporting family)	Average Annual expenditure (for entire sample)
Food	143	10405	9919
Health	133	1081	959
Dress	139	1903	1764
Travel	134	548	489
Festivals	123	830	680
Education	56	887	330
Maintenance	31	1467	489
Hotel Food	105	3280	2296
Cinema	98	2458	1606
Tobaco/Cigarette/Pan	123	2537	2080
Alcohal	59	4193	1649

Note: The figures on expenditure are per se counterfactual as the poverty-sticken tribals do not have so much cash at their disposal - but it is more an indication of the poor numeracy among tribals. Since the main objective was to get idea of the relative expenditure-mix, the probing concentrated on bringing this out sponteneously from the respondents themselves, rather than on finer calculations.

What is significant is not the total amounts indicated, but the number of people reporting expenditure on the various items considered unnecessary and wasteful and the proportionate expenditure on those items - like hotel food, pan/tobacco, cinema, liquor - at the cost of neglecting essential items like house repair and education.

With the old leisure no longer there, and the new education taking away much of the traditional skills particularly in the arts like music and drama the tribals arts began to wither. The officials who did not understand the artistic nuances of these fine arts, vulgarised them by making the tribals dance and sing at every little offical function. This has destroyed the spontaneity of tribal music and dance. Similarly the modern agricultural practices ignored the traditional knowledge of the tribal mannukaran or 'soil-man'. Likewise the tribal medicine men were marginalized by the new forms of health care. Thus the tribals, with the best of their past being devalued, and with nothing much gained from three decades of development have lost their ethnic pride and have sunk to a feeling of inferiority and hopelessness, foreclosing options of autonomous participation by relying on inner strengths.

7.7 Policy - Induced Processes

All the processes which are described above seem to have got reinforced and aggravated due to several policy measures or their absence when there was a real need. The essence of tribal development strategy in Attappady has been development of infrastructure particularly roads and housing. It is estimated by ITDP authorities that 70 per cent of the funds have been spent on these two items in the last 15 years. While the emphasis was on creation of infrastructure there was no attempt to ensure that the infrastructure would be used. A probable reason is the scope for profits in road works due to the possibility of manupulating estimates relating to earth work, transport of materials etc. And a poor quality road invites less criticism than a poor quality school building as the latter implies risk to life. There is no other explanation for the construction of so many roads - for instance, Mamana has five roads and Melekandiyoor four roads leading to the ooru. A study of 13 interior hamlets showed that no tribal has ever used the roads to the hamlet for bringing inputs for agriculture or for transporting produce for sale. There was no consultation with the people to find out their needs and identify their capabilities. In short it was a works - centred development strategy as opposed to a people-centred one and money-driven and not demand-driven. This is best illustrated by the type of works taken up under JRY/EAS.

Also the employment generation opportunities thrown up by even the construction of unrequired roads were not properly used. The timing of the works was made to suit the contractor, which mostly coincided with the peak work season, when the needy tribals could not get work otherwise. It sometimes had another kind of harmful effect by luring away small farmers from tilling their land by providing relatively better wages, thus affecting traditional agriculture. If only these funds had been used on tribal agriculture land, for which there are adequate provisions in the guidelines, it would have created a double impact. The fewer work opportunities during the lean season forced the tribals to starve or to resort to distress sale of assets.

The inappropriate development strategies are equally evident in the agriculture and soil conservation schemes of Attappady. The tribals had an extensive knowledge of agriculture and produced a variety of crops both suited to the locality as well as sufficient to meet their nutritional needs [25]. The tribals used to broadcast a variety of seeds of plants giving different kinds of food, with different nutritional properties, (eg:millets, ragi, beans and dal varieties, amaranthus etc) maturing at different seasons, having different root systems tapping, different soil zones and having different tolerance levels to drought, wind or rain - in short, they knew how to make practical use of biodiversity. Agriculture or the whole was given a low priority in the development strategy: even where it was supported, the conventional

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[25] Luiz (1962)

cash crops, with requirements of pesticides, fertilizer and irrigation, were given importance imposing severe strain on the tribal farmers. But the agriculture department has not done much to arrange input services or marketing. In the survey done for this study it was found that farmers obtained their inputs on credit and often sold their produce to the same lender, getting paid atleast 25 percent less than the market rates. The survey revealed that traditional crops still covered about 53 percent of the area cultivated by the tribals - yet no effort was made to improve the productivity of these crops which in fact has declined over the years (see the earlier Table 7.5).

As regards the soil conservation scheme the accent was on construction of bunds and not on agricultural development after the conservation of soil. Large tracts of 'bunded' wasteland are visible in Attappady. The tribals have the right to carry out the works on their own as stipulated in the Kerala Land Development Act - and one of the few skills possessed by the Attappady tribals is the ability to construct stone bunds. But they were given to understand that the work can be better done through middle men and entire villages were lured into entrusting the work in their land to contractors and then working as labourers of the contractor in their own land. A 1988 report of ITDP showed that the rate for one metre of stone pitched bund was Rs.7.50 of which the tribal got only an amount between Rs.1.50 and Rs.2.50 as wages; the remaining amount was shared by the middle men and officials. Fifty per cent of the amount spent on soil conservation was given as loan and this was hidden from the tribals who because of illteracy and lack of awareness did not understand the intricate documents they signed. The extent of misuse can be gauged from the fact that from 1966 till 1995, a huge sum of Rs.12 crore has been spent on this item of work. Direct observation in 23 hamlets revealed that in all these places the bunds stand on relatively barren land with no attempt to develop agriculture in the conserved areas. Since the accent was only on construction of bunds, often the secondary growth of vegetation was uprooted to collect stones for the bunds, loosening the soil and closing the possibilities of natural regeneration.

Similarly education and health schemes also focussed on "modern methods" and ignored traditional systems totally. The non-availability of teachers and medical personnel in adequate numbers made these government interventions ineffective even while they destroyed the traditional systems. Only two out of the ten posts of doctors were filled as of January 1996. The current educational levels are illustrated by the Tables 7.12 and 7.13.

Table 7.12

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF TRIBALS IN A BACKWARD AREA

Education Level	Male	Female	Total	Percentage of total population
Uneducated	540	574	1114	75.5
Upto Std. IV	135	92	227	15.4
Upto Std. VII	37	20	57	3.9
Upto Std. X	9	4	13	0.9
Std X Passed	4	2	6	0.4
Other courses	29	30	59	3.9

Source: Census of 11 oorus in Bommiampady watershed conducted by students of University College, Trivandrum for the Mallisara project, 1992.

Table 7.13

EDUCATION LEVELS OF TRIBALS
(General Sample)

Education Level	Male	Female	Total	Percentage of total sample
No education	175	186	361	55.2
Std. I to IV	24	42	66	11.0
Std. IV to VII	38	57	95	14.5
Std. VIII to IX	28	35	63	9.6
Std. X failed	14	19	33	5.0
Std. X passed	9	17	26	4.0
PDC failed	3	6	9	1.0
PDC passed	0	1	1	0.02
Total sample	291	363	654	

Source: Sample survey of 150 families done for this study.

These tables indicate a heavy drop out rate at each successive level suggesting the poor service levels of government schools - and a comparison has to be made with the successful Giri Vikas project described in Chapter 6, section 6.1.2.

The land reforms policy was implemented without understanding the tribal land tenure system. As seen earlier this worked to the advantage of non-tribal settlers. Though a proposal for legislation to prevent alienation of tribal land was sent from the then Block Office as early as in 1962 formal legislation was enacted only in 1975 and it was notified and brought into force only in 1986 with retrospective effect from 1982. Though about 2500 applications have been filed for restoration of land, no land has been restored after 10 years. A policy decision has been announced by the Government to amend the Act to take away the retrospective effect which would mean that the tribals would not get back any land. When the Land Alienation Act was notified in 1986 it stirred some enthusiasm among the tribals and the Girijan Sevek Samithi was active in mobilizing people to file complaints. Yet the refusal of the Government to implement the provisions of this Act has resulted in demoralisation of the tribals and pushed them away from any form of public action.

The forest laws which do not take cognizance of the traditional rights of the tribals has shut them off from a valuable buffer resource base which they could tap in times of need. The Government decision to grant absolute titles to settlers who encroached upon forest land as on 1st January 1977 while ignoring the centuries-old rights of tribals over forests has caused resentment among the tribal people.

Even while the programme guidelines provided for a participative component, the implementation process did not follow them. This is because indicators of performance do not include any indicators of the extent of participation achieved. The monitoring mechanism concentrates only on funds expended and works completed. The process of participation is given the go by as the officials strive to meet the physical and financial targets within the time limit. This has made the officials resort to middlemen for quickening the pace of implementation. If there is shortfall in expenditure the concerned officials are pulled up immediately but when there is perceptible decline in the quality of life of tribals resulting from their marginalization, it is easy to escape from responsibility as such evaluation studies are made very rarely and too late for either punitive or remedial action. Two such reports were prepared in the 1980s but were never acted upon [26].

[26] Report of KIRTADS (1982) and the internal report of Murkoth Ramunni (1985)

Another aspect of the development strategy which has affected real participation is the welfarism implicit in most schemes. The heavy subsidisation and the liberal granting of discretionary doles have created a sense of dependence among tribals. It was noticed that 95 per cent of the tribals who approached the ITDP, came there in search of free grants [27]. These doles have dulled them into a thankful faith in the benevolence of government and made them forgetful of the larger issues of misuse of funds meant for long term local development. The largesse of the government has served only to co-opt the tribals. Most of the NGOs are of the view that these gratuitous programmes have killed the initiative of the tribals.

7.8 Combination Effect of the Processes

It must be noted that all these processes worked not independently but in combination. They not only reinforced each other but often followed a vicious circle of cause -effect alternation, sometimes resulting in maginfication. For example, the intrusion of migrants led to large scale deforestation and loss of tribal land. The degradation further marginalised what little land the tribals were left with. And the resulting poverty of tribals forced them to graze other people's cattle, causing greater degradation. Some of the intricate inter-relationships could be seen in the flow digrams (Fig. 7.3 and 7.4) prepared along with educated tribal youths.

All these processes have brought about a direct form of exploitation and this is very significant. Exploitation of the poor can be seen as of two types, sometimes both occurring together - (i) where the exploitation is direct, local and multi pronged with people living in the neighbourhood directly exploiting and gaining from it and (ii) exploitation by the larger system like outside markets unequal political relationships and so on. In Attappady it is the first kind of exploitation which predominates; the latter kind is there only in a minimal way. The non-tribals are in an exploitative dominance in land relations, money-lending, buying of tribal produce, getting the profit by carrying out tribal development works, and social relations especially sexual relations with tribal women. The political leadership being totally non-tribal, makes the power relations grossly skewed. And the rent-seeking officials, use state power mostly in collusion with this political leadership. All these point to the existence of powerful local exploitation. Two flagrant instances prove the enormity of this process. Out of the 115 Anganwadi workers only 18 are tribal women, though the ICDS guidelines stipulate the employment of local women irrespective of their qualification; similarly, in the Tribal Literacy project, when instructors were paid an honorarium, there were only 25 tribals among the 450 instructors, though about 150 of them were eligible to be posted. Thus the power of the local exploitation could extinguish even clearly-enunciated rights of the tribals.

In such an environment where a physical presence of the exploiters is there and since they control the political and official systems participation is extremely difficult. Participation involves a kind of empowerment; and 'power' describes a relationship and it is not a 'thing' which people 'have'. According to Nelson and Wright [28] there are three models of power currently being used to analyse different aspects of participation - 'power to', 'power over' and 'decentred power'. The third model which conceptualises power as subjectless, as an apparatus consisting of discourse, institution, actors and flow of events is not very relevant to the Attappady context. Normally participation seeks to enlarge 'power to', that is, power which can grow infinitely like human capabilities and need not negatively affect others. The second model of 'power over' suggests a zero-sum concept as in control over resources and institutions. In Attappady, the kind of generative power arising from enhancement of one's capabilities and opportunities, the 'power to' model of empowerment is stunted by the vast 'power over' situation enjoyed by non-tribals. In such a milieu the space for participation is severely restricted.

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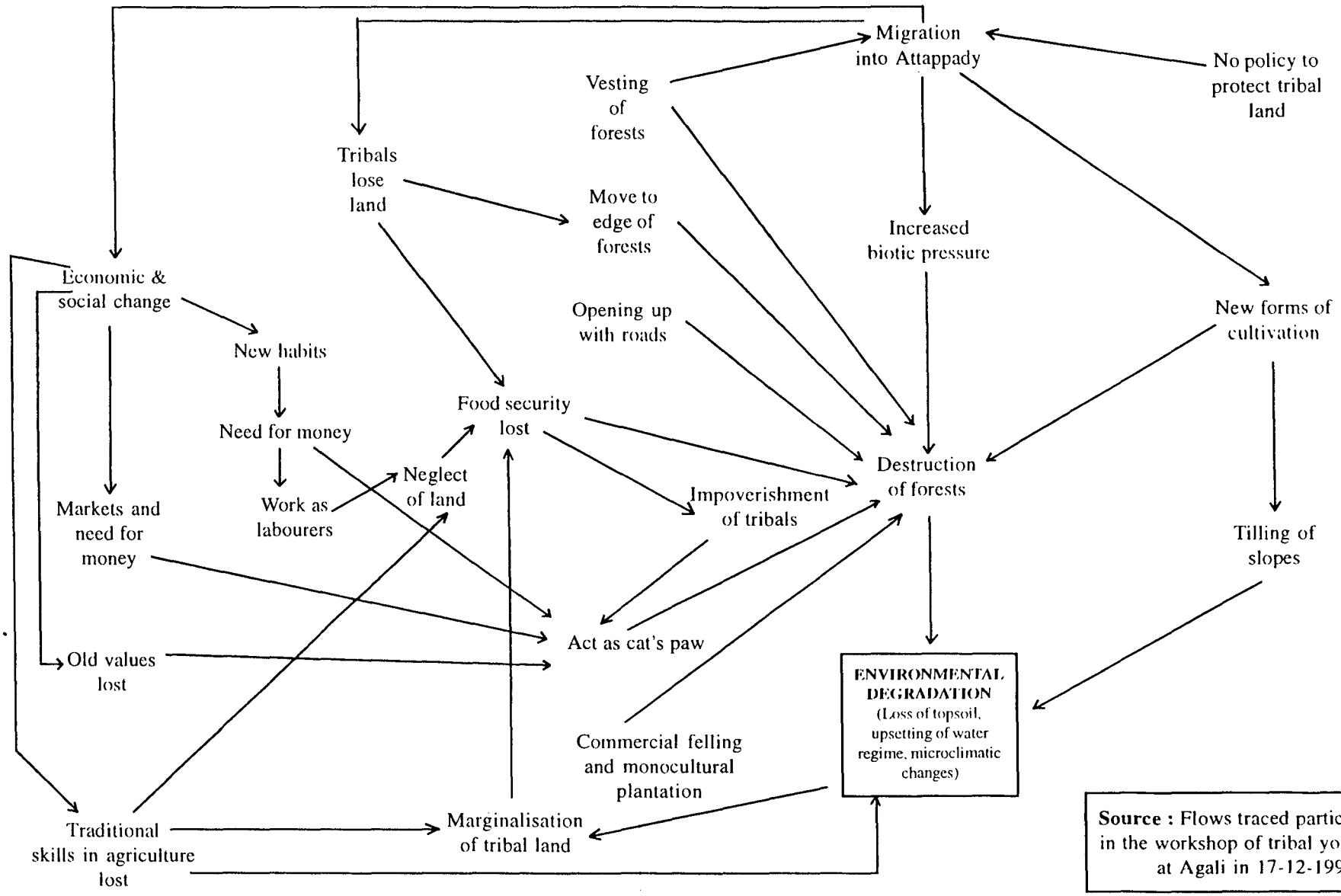
[27] Result of participant observation for seven days at the ITDP office.

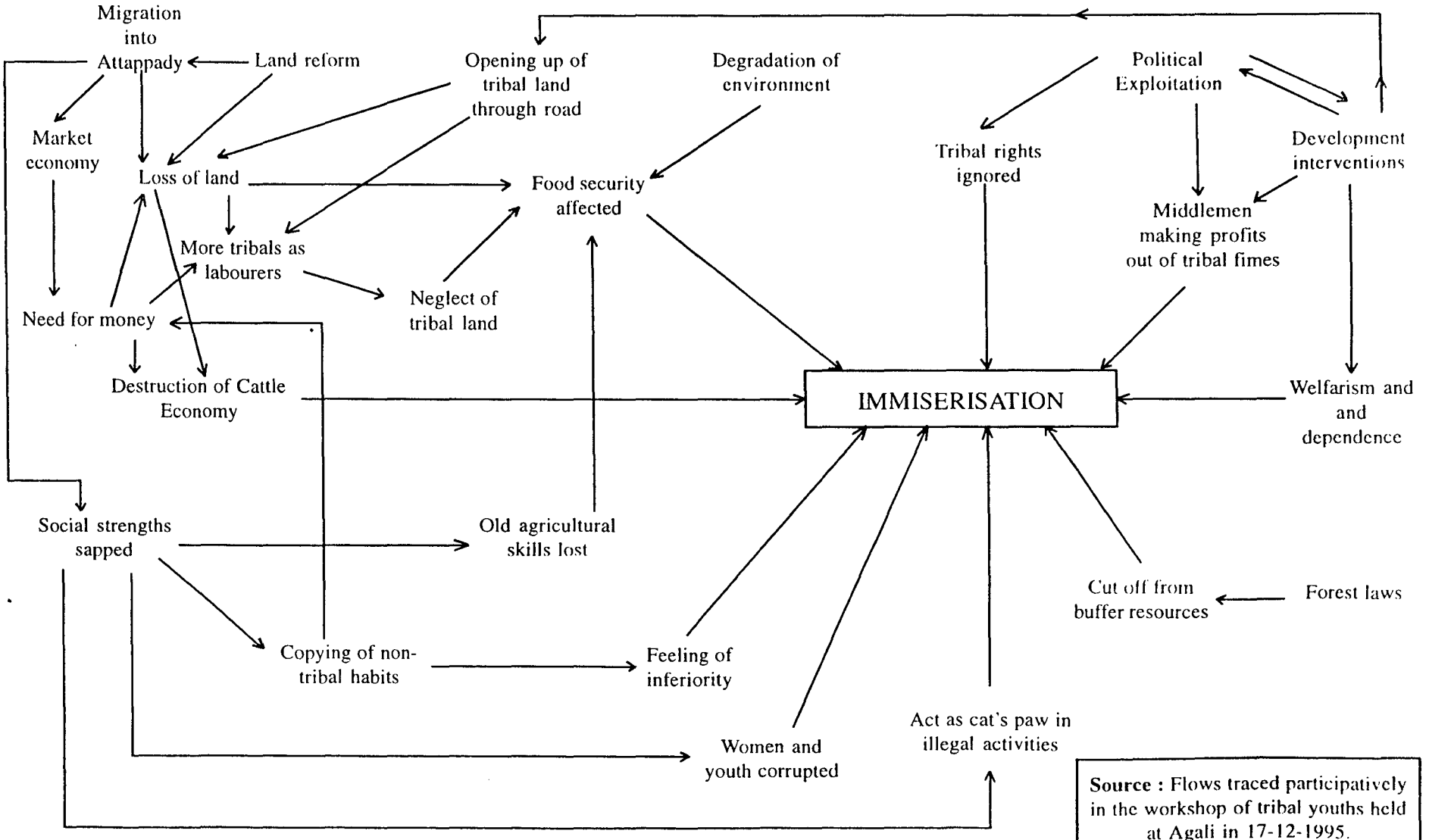
[28] Nelson, Nici and Wright, Susan (1995)

Fig. 7.3 DEGRADATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT - THE IMPORTANT PROCESSES AND THEIR INTERRELATIONSHIPS



Source : Flows traced participatively in the workshop of tribal youths held at Agali in 17-12-1995.

Fig. 7.4 IMMISERISATION OF THE TRIBALS - THE VARIOUS PROCESSES AT WORK



Source : Flows traced participatively in the workshop of tribal youths held at Agali in 17-12-1995.

CHAPTER 8

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

8.1 The Barriers

The study revealed several barriers to participation now in existence and most of them can be related to the processes of exclusion described earlier. The barriers to participation could be grouped into following categories:

(i) social factors

(ii) economic factors

(iii) political factors

(iv) factors arising from the development strategy

(v) factors arising from administrative procedures and

(vi) factors arising from the functioning of development personnel.

8.1.1 Social Factors

The social factors which prevent effective participation could be seen in the state of dependency which has been induced by the vanishing of traditional skills and knowledge. a loss of pride in one's own culture and the infusion of new social and personal habits. The marginialization in the social relations particularly in power relations is another barrier to participation. This is aggravated by the fact that there is no internal cohesion and organizational structure to provide for public action. The ethnic element in that the settlers are non-tribals having an entirely different socio-cultural set-up has come up as another barrier to participation. All these are compounded by the low levels of general awareness resulting mostly from the general illiteracy of Attappady and absence of community-based institutions.

8.1.2 Economic Factors

A major barrier of participation is the poverty of the tribal groups. The survey of people below poverty line carried out in 1992 shows that the percentage of people below poverty line is very high among the tribals at 56.7 percent compared to the figure for the whole state which is 34.2 percent. This poverty resulting from the depletion of natural resource base is aggravated by the fact that employment opportunities are limited. A study of 150 households showed that ordinarily the availability of opportunities of agriculture labour is 85 days per year. Even the wage levels are low (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1

WAGE LEVELS (as in January 1996)

	(Rs. /Day)	
	MEN	WOMEN
Eastern Attappady	30	20
Western Attappady	45	35
Rest of Palakkad	80	60

Source : Local enquiry

The fact that the number of tribals working as agricultural labourers is increasing suggests dependence on others. When groups are in search of work from private people and when the employers themselves exploit and control the power relations, the tribals do not have much scope for participation. Theoretically, the government sponsored employment generation works could have bridged the gap. But here again the control exercised by the contractors and politicians have marginalized the tribals. The new cash crop economy has also brought about the dependence of even the more enterprising tribals on outsiders for input services and marketing.

8.1.3 Political Factors

The major political factors which hinder participation of tribals are listed below:

(i) Minority status of tribals in a system where numbers are important in deciding political power is a severe handicap

(ii) Political consciousness has not evolved in the tribals so the political parties does't trust them as assured vote banks and refrain from long-term commitments.

(iii) The tribals do not have an effective leadership to press their demands and agitate for them (the old leadership has collapsed and no new leadership has emerged).

(iv) The contractor-politician nexus goes against tribal participation.

(v) The relatively low levels of awareness among the political leaders about possibilities of participation has prevented even those leaders interested in encouraging some form of participation from doing so.

(vi) Even long association has not enabled tribals to acquire important positions in political parties.

8.1.4 Factors Arising from Development Strategy

The following barriers are identified as stemming from the development strategies being followed:

(i) The tendency to give everything free has created a sense of dependence besides providing scope for manipulation by both officials and politicians.

(ii) The capabilities of the tribals are not utilized in the development programmes. This is particularly true of agriculture, and health care.

(iii) The upgradation of capabilities and creation of skills are not being given the importance they deserve.

(iv) Planning is ad hoc and non-consultative.

(v) The focus is still on infrastructure and not related to the immediate needs of the tribal population or to increasing productivity.

8.1.5 Factors Arising Out of Government Procedures

The procedural barriers include the following:

(i) There is overall secrecy in the process of preparation of plans, preparation of estimates, recording of quality,payment of bills etc. The language of estimates is not something which can be understood even by an educated tribal. It is concealed in technical jargon.

(ii) The guidelines stipulate that estimates should be prepared according to the PWD schedule of rates and there is a wide disparity between the schedule of rates and the market rates as indicated in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2

Differences Between Schedule of Rates and Market Rates (as in January 1996)

Materials	Unit	PWD schedule of rates (in rupees)	Approximate market rates (in rupees)
1. Rubble	Lorry (3 cum)	195	300
2. Sand	Lorry (6 cum)	360	900
3. Metal (20 mm)	Lorry (6cum)	1080	1600
4. Metal (6 mm)	Lorry (6cum)	1350	1750
5. Brick	per 1000	680	1000
6. Cement	per bag	95	175
7. Tar	per drum	4340	6500
(All these do not include conveyance and handling charges)			
Labour:			
1. Mason	per man day	60	110
2. Carpenter	per man day	60	120
3. Painter	per man day	50	80
Source : ITDP office and local enquiries			

Therefore, the engineer who prepares the estimates is allowed to fudge it, so that it tallies with the market rates. This license to fudge prevents people from examining details of measures, standards, etc and gives arbitrary power to the engineer to inflate the estimates.

(iii) There is a presure to implement physical targets and achieve financial expenditure with in a time limit. This discourages people from trying out participatory methods which are by nature slow, particulary in the initial stages .

(iv) Monitoring is limited to physical and finencial progress and not to qualitative progress like increased participation and the benefits flowing from such participation.

8.1.6 Factors related to development personnel:

The important factors which hinder participation resulting from the functioning of development personnel are listed below:

(i) The system of posting officials is not based on their inclination or aptitude. The officials generally feel that the posting to Attappady is some sort of punishment. This is proved by the fact that there have been eight Project Officers and 17 Assistant Project Officers in the ITDP in the last 10 years. This mode of posting affects the motivation of officials.

(ii) The officials are sent to Attapady without training even on the basics of tribal development. There is no evidence of discussion on the modifications of policy required to suit a trribal ervironment.

(iii) Rent seeking among the officials is very high. The tribals feels that no one is exempt from this behaviour. It is this tendency which makes ths officials collude with contractors.

(iv) Officials who are inclined to implement programmes in a participative manner are inhibited by the daunting power of the contractor-politician lobby. With no political or official will from above evident, such officials do not dare to take chances.

(v) The functioning of departments in water-tight compartments makes a mockery of integrated development schemes. Tribals are forced to go to differnt agencies and often sent from one agency to another. This has resulted in loss of faith in the official system.

It is to be noted that these barriers do not stand in isolation - they tend to have a collective force as most of them are interrelated. As they arise from the processes of exclusion, their origins have to be traced before viable strategies to surmount them can be formulated in a context-specific manner.

8.2 Perceptions of the Different Actors on the Barriers

An analysis of the perceptions of the various actors on the barriers to participation was done on a five point scale in the same manner as in the case of levels of participation in employment generation works.

The responses of the seven 'actor' groups to the 30 statements on the barriers grouped in six categories - social, political, economic, development policy related, government procedure related and government personnel related - are summarised in Table 8.3.

TABLE 8.3

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION (Average Scores)
BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Respondent group	Social	Political	Economic	Development strategy	Administrative procedures	Government personnel	Average score for each respondent group
NGOs	4.52	4.40	4.70	4.62	4.68	4.54	4.61
Moopans	4.63	4.44	4.70	4.57	4.58	4.60	4.57
Officials	3.94	3.65	3.61	3.80	3.58	3.51	3.68
Tribal Youth (Male)	4.56	3.92	4.59	4.42	4.56	4.26	4.39
Tribal Youth (Female)	3.96	3.92	4.18	4.15	4.01	4.00	4.04
Panchayat Member (Tribal)	4.36	3.80	4.18	4.13	4.27	4.18	4.15
Panchayat Member (Non-Tribal)	3.58	3.24	3.19	3.52	3.70	3.94	3.48
Average for each group of Barriers	4.28	3.99	4.27	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.19
Average for the whole set = 4.19							

It is clear that there is strong agreement on the various barriers to participation. While the majority in each group of actors attest to the existence of barriers there are differences in emphasis among the actors. Interestingly the actors could be grouped into three, based on the stand taken by them. NGOs and the tribal mooppans feel most strongly about the existence of barriers. The tribal youth both male and female and the tribal panchayat members agree on the barriers of participation but with slightly less intensity. The officials and non-tribal panchayat members even while agreeing with the barriers do so in a significantly less intense manner. These differences in emphasis though not very sharp do allow certain deductions to be made.

It is significant that the activist NGOs and the ooru mooppans, almost all of whom have seen the whole process share more or less similar perceptions. It is also to be noted they give almost equal importance to all the six factors. These levels of awareness of the mostly illiterate ooru mooppans would suggest the possibility of utilizing the ooru mooppans at least in a dialogic process of problem identification. Yet another interesting conclusion from the pattern is the way in which the tribal panchayat members have responded differently from the non-tribal panchayat members. This would tend to confirm the earlier conclusion that elected tribal members are in practice coopted in the larger political process and are ineffective in pressing their individual perceptions. Though the tribal panchayat members think differently they are not in a position to act differently from the non-tribal panchayat members.

The difference in perceptions between the male and female tribal youths is interesting. It is a likely indication of the relatively lesser role played by women in the development matters. This is why they have responded less intensily to various factors which serve as barriers to participation.

As seen earlier the officials and politicians seem to be in an alliance more harmful to thetribals than beneficial. Their perceptions on the barriers seem to support this view with their less active agreement on various barriers. The close similarities of their perceptions in this matter makes the suggestion made in the case of levels of participation, much stronger - indicative of a collusion-like sharing of ideas on tribal development between political power and official power, with negative implications for the tribals under the Panchayati Raj system.

On the whole the most important group of barriers is the social factors. This is followed by economic barriers and the three groups relating to development strategy, procedures and personnel. Political factors are seen as least important among the barriers. These perceptions underline the need for building capabilities among the tribals and looking towards strengthening their social cohesion and even cultural identity. The importance of policy and manner of their implementation by officials is again highlighted by the collective perception. Probably the political factors are just reflections of other realities.

It is interesting to list the five individual barriers which have obtained the strangest agreement and the five with least support.

A.	Strongest barriers	Average Score
1.	Harmful social habits like drinking, dependence on hotel food etc. make the tribals yield to temptations	4.58
2.	Loss of land and access to natural resource base have made the tribals dependent on others	4.57
3.	Welfarist doles make the tribals dependent	4.52
4.	Lack of awareness about various development programmes	4.51
5.	Poverty makes them barter away their rights for a pittance.	4.41

All the five relate to the vulnerability of the tribal population. It is significant that dependence and lack of awareness figure prominently as obstacles to participation, again reinforcing the feeling that development has to be from within.

B. The least strong barriers are : (Average score indicated in brackets)

1.	Politicians not aware of participation possibilities	(3.42)
2.	Minority status affecting political bargaining	(3.58)
3.	Inappropriate education did not develop skills	(3.71)
4.	Officials untrained to bring about participation	(3.84)
5.	Markets speeding up sale of assets	(3.84)

It is significant that even the least score is more than the neutral score of '3'. Also none of them relate to factors internal to the tribal society.

In addition, four options to ensure full participation were given to be ranked in order of importance. All the seven respondent groups were unanimous in deciding the first rank: - the tribals need to be conscientized, organised and their traditional skills strengthened. The ranking of other options was:

Rank 2: Ensure economic development with special emphasis on solving the land issue

Rank 3: Select dedicated officials for assignments in Attappady.

Rank 4 : Make Panchayati Raj functional.

This ranking is also in tune with the accent on strengthening the social base for ensuring participatory development.

PART IV

WHAT CAN BE DONE ? .

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 General Conclusions:

The analysis of participation in poverty reduction programmes indicates that participation of excluded groups will not occur just because programme guidelines have made a provision for participation at various stages. The nature and scope of these provisions need closer scrutiny. These guidelines normally indicate the areas for participatory action, their desirable extent and the instruments for participation. The methodology of participation suggested by the guidelines do not go beyond setting up of beneficiary groups and committees and suggesting awareness building exercises. It reflects the 'means' perspective on participation, viewing it as an aid to improved implementation and absorption of programme components. Though empowering through participation is recognised in the approach, it is only stated in a broad and diffuse manner as statements of intention rather than as operational instructions. Thus DWCRA groups are expected to "break social bonds that had denied them income-generating and self-fulfilling opportunities" by taking up activities as decided by the group to achieve cohesion " in the spirit of participation and co-operation of all members". The guidelines on employment generation activities speak of social control through village level committees of beneficiaries "to oversee, supervise and monitor the implementation of works", besides planning and monitoring. On co-operatives, there is the call "for a new mode of functioning and involvement of the beneficiaries".

There is no clear-cut methodology prescribed to induce participation in these programmes and no indicators are suggested to monitor the levels of participation. All these would suggest that the entitlements provided by the government to achieve participation are weak. And the objectives become diluted at each successive level in the official hierarchy whereas the policymakers have empowerment as the aim, the planners at the middle level see efficiency as the objective and to the implementing officials at the cutting edge, participation has only a ritualistic and procedural connotation.

The scope for participation is further restricted from outside. By definition target groups of poverty reduction programmes are people hitherto excluded from the development process. The experience of Attappady shows that such an exclusion is seldom the result of an accidental bureaucratic oversight, in the sense that the groups were not directly made the targets of governmental developmental assistance; nor is the exclusion due to difficulties of physical access. Often it is the result of the interlocked working of several processes which are well rooted in the socio-economic mileu and which reinforce each other to acquire a powerful centrifugal force.

The findings of the study indicate that such processes could include the following:

(i) Economic processes resulting from unequal imperfect economic relationships are compounded by a depleting resource base and dependent socio-economic position. This process causes progressive immiserization and economic marginalization.

(ii) Environmental processes : Degradation of the environment affects people particularly the poorer groups who are dependent on the natural resource base. Degradation of the environment worsens the poverty and it mutually interacts with the economic process.

(iii) Power relations are very crucial in the capacity to utilise opportunities for participation. Incapacity to organise and demand rights and facilities aggravates the economic marginalization.

(iv) Social processes : The general weakening of the social fabric and destruction of old institutions without being substituted by strong new institutions induces what Freire calls "the culture of silence" and makes people acquiescent and vulnerable.

(v) Policy-induced processes : When the above mentioned processes of exclusion are in operation inappropriate policy measures resulting from inadequate understanding of the exclusion processes only serve to strengthen other processes of exclusion.

In the face of these processes participation just will not occur; it needs to be brought about step by step as a definite programme component, if not as the primary output of the programme. To bring about participation it is necessary to trace in detail the working of the various inter-connected processes of exclusion. Then a multi-pronged strategy to contain and reverse these processes can be identified. Only such a strategy can help surmount the barriers to participation which spring from these processes of exclusion.

The major finding of this study is that if the exploitation of the excluded group is local and immediate then participation is difficult to achieve even at low levels unless carefully planned efforts are made. The presence of exploiting groups and circumstances insitu retards participation of even the rudimentary form for such participation threatens the existing socio-economic relationship and invites immediate resistance. In such circumstances the barriers to participation would be formidable calling for a matchingly forceful response. It would be difficult to expect such a response if the excluded groups form a minority, and more so, if there is the ethnic element as well.

The study reveals the inadequacies and limitations of conventional institutions of participation. The cooperatives which would theoretically appear to be ideal vehicles of participative action could easily be smothered by external influences and participation be restricted to a formal one not leading to any form of empowerment. At the same time, the Attappady experience indicates that co-operatives can consolidate the foundation for building further participative action through better awareness, collective preservation of the natural resource base if it is under serious threat of being usurped by better off groups etc.

Similarly panchayats too have their limitations in spite of clear cut reservation for the excluded groups. The Attappady experience shows that it is difficult for the elected tribals who constitute 45% of the panchayat membership to resist the pulls of co-optation and seek grass-roots level mobilisation. In spite of their significant numerical strength, they serve the dominant interests by allowing themselves to be manipulated. This points to the limitations of indirect participation through elected representatives.

Loose-knit groups like beneficiary committees and DWCRA groups are found to exist as passive receptacles to whatever flows from above. Still worse, most of them have let themselves be used to give the legal stamp of approval to gross acts of cheating and rent-seeking.

The study also underlines the dangers of pseduo participation. By going through the motions of participatory action much harm is done to the poor. This is best illustrated in the benami works where the dejure responsibility is with the beneficiary committee while the defacto contractor turns out sub standard works and reaps profits. This pretence of participation has bred unhealthy tendencies like participating groups which are expected to serve as watch dogs, themselves seeking rent in the belief that nothing tangible will be achieved through such a participation and they can atleast benefit from gifts and bribes which form just an infinitesimal portion of the profits that the contractor makes from resources earmarked for them . As long as participation is seen as a bureaucratic ritual to satisfy the formal requirements of programme guidelines the dangers of manipulation are very much there. In such situation a top down approach with responsibility on the bureaucratic machinery would appear to be more accountable and effective, for pseduo participation results in difficulties in ensuring accountability.

9.2 Policy Implications

The general conclusions narrated above need to be incorporated in any strategy for participation. The few isolated success stories in Attappady do indicate that participation is possible even in a not-so-favourable environment. The primary requirement is to "put the last first" as Chambers would describe it, i.e. give primacy to the people, their knowledge, their perceptions, their needs and their capabilities in any programme. The focus should be on participation as an end or at least as one of the ends, as a seperate component which can be monitored and evaluated separately as an important factor.

A process approach to participation is called for. It is not a thing which can be transferred by certain guidelines; it takes time to happen. Also small projects show greater promise in actualising participation. Small projects seem to be sustainable as far as participatory development is concerned. It is probably because there is greater attention and intensity and more possibilities of changes during the course without affecting the outcome; and, in an exploitative environment, it is easier to protect a small project as the low profile does not attract the opposition of the exploiters.

If participation is the end, there seem to be certain soft sectors like education and health where opposition from the immediate environment is less likely, while at the same time these sectors offer scope for consolidation of participation and later expanding to other sectors and tackling larger issues including structural ones.

To start with an interactive process would appear more appropriate. A stimulative approach based on the inclinations and capabilities of the participating groups seems suitable. Here the role of the external agents and the type of activity around which participation is built up deserve to be analysed. The study of Attappady shows that government is a major actor and participation of any meaningful extent can be achieved only if government machinery is geared to promoting participation. Of course, by its very nature there are several anti-participative forces working in a development bureaucracy; yet it is also true that without the active involvement of government functionaries participation by excluded groups will be very difficult. NGOs can play a major role in providing the initial push but scaling up is always difficult.

Social animators from among the excluded groups can bring about very good results in participatory action. Such animators could be used both by the government as well as non-government organisations. Training and conscientising a small group of motivated volunteers is relatively easy. Such trained persons can act as the nucleus for attracting local involvement, thus playing a bridging role between the provider and the participants. The important lesson from Attappady is regarding the acceptability of the animator both by the community and the programme implementing agencies. A fair and transparent selection followed by sensitisation on dealing with the community can go a long way in achieving this.

When government attempts to induce participatory development, the professionals have to change their attitude and develop the capacity to imbibe the knowledge of the people. Developmental talents within the community especially in agriculture, environmental conservation, and health care, need to be nurtured in any strategy for participatory development.

For government officials to promote participation, they need to be trained and sensitised. More than that, the aptitude of the official is relevant. In an environment of abject deprivation and total exclusion, as in Attappady, a dedicated and empathetic official would be, almost paradoxically, the best agent for bringing about people's participation. Equally important is the demystification of procedure through simplification, transparency and easy access.

The role of organisation is also crucial. Many organizations formed for participative action in Attappady collapsed as they did not match the indigenous pattern. At the same time the success of organizations like credit groups suggests that loose informal organizations in tune with the local rhythm

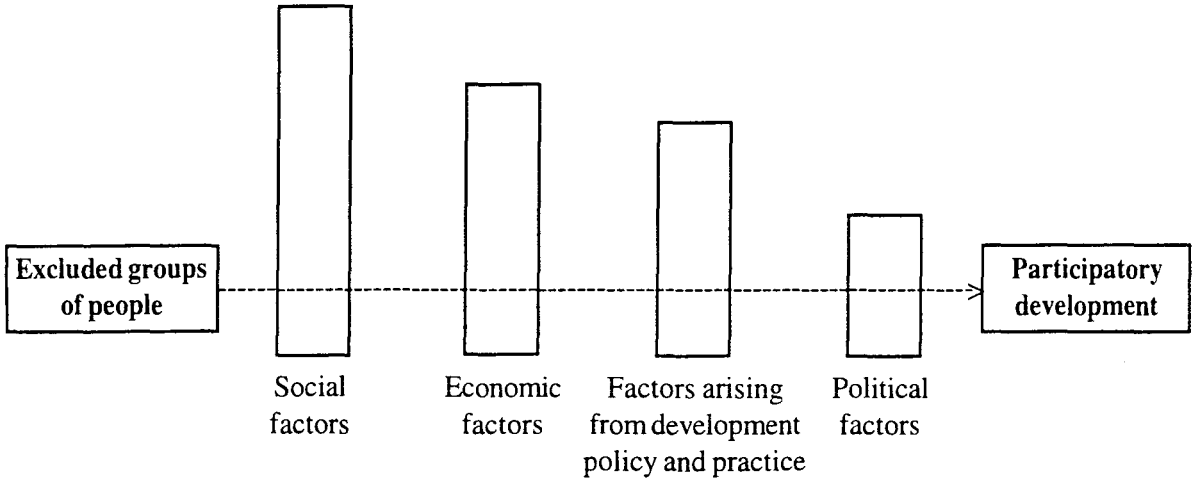
of life would be successful vehicles of participatory development - following rules in tune with native moral perceptions, transacting business as per local conventions, functioning with a lot of autonomy and growing organically out of the immediate socio-economic environment. The importance of education to achieve participation is highlighted by the Attappady experience. Conscientization where people need to understand their position and to analyse the possibilities of liberating action is more relevant to induce participation. This is best carried out through the social animators and the local idiom particularly socio-cultural expressions like song and dance.

Finally the need for an economic or social incentive to induce participation is again brought into focus by the Attappady experience. People are found participate in an activity that satisfies a felt need provided the need is immediate and local and there is a perceived certainity of it being fulfilled. However, the activity around which participation is to be built up is best determined internally by the group. It is seen that if participation is neglected in the initial stages of a project, it is very difficult to realise it in the later stages.

9.3 Surmounting the Barriers to Participation - a Model:

The identification of the barriers to participation and the study of the perceptions of various actors on those barriers could be modelled, based on the power of the various barriers to prevent participation (Fig: 9.1.):

Fig. 9.1
Surmounting the Barriers to Participation



This would suggest the most formidable barriers lie within - a social engineering approach to increase cohesiveness and self-esteem is necessary to break these barriers. If the society acquires the strength to break this obstacle, probably the next two could be broken with outside help from dedicated officials with the backing of top political leadership. Through well-planned and well-implemented programmes economic barriers can be broken. Then the last group of political barriers would crumble on its own.

It can even be suggested that if a people-centred social development is achieved, it may set off a process of breaking the other barriers through demand-driven social action. This would make the community capable of absorbing economic development programmes and of inducing responsiveness in the development administration. It would strengthen the bargaining power of the people vis-a-vis the political leadership.

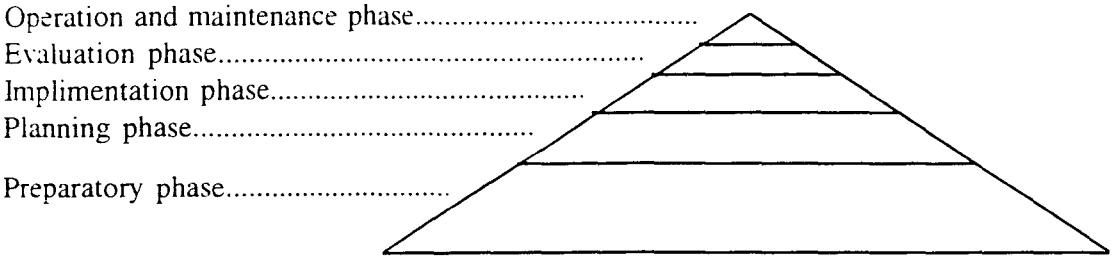
These two possibilities represent an induced, inter-active participatory development and an autonomous participatory development. In the former case, the capacity of the society needs to be reinforced by a supportive government system, whereas in the later case, the community has to be on its own in the utilisation of opportunities to develop from within.

9.4 Towards a Methodology of Participation

The practice of participation is yet to yield a firm, clear-cut and sure methodology. The study of what happened in Attappady, suggests that a general methodology for wide application may not be feasible. Local experiences and relationships would influence the steps to be taken to bring about the genuine participation of the excluded groups. However gleaning the results of the various analyses done on the practice of participation in Attappady, it is possible to bring together certain broad elements of a workable methodology of people's participation, particularly by the marginalised poor in government programmes intended for their benefit. In fact it is a framework of key stages in sequence which could be adapted to the context.

Participation requires a well thought out methodology which can be conceptualised as a pyramid with greatest effort and time being spent on the larger initial phase to prepare a community or group for participation and with the expectation that much less effort would be needed to ensure the sustainabilty of the project. It is diagrammatically represented (Fig 9.2) - the broader and bigger the base, the narrower and shorter the apex, suggesting less external effort in the running of the project.

Fig 9.2 Phases of a participatory project



1. The Preparatory Phase:

Unlike conventional projects, in a participatory project, the most crucial stage would be the preparatory stage on which maximum effort and much time need to be spent. Some of the important steps in this phase would be:

- conveying of the government intention to have a participatory process of development.
- Selection of dedicated project personnel and their sensitisation and training with special emphasis on local conditions and the possibilities and difficulties of participation.
- Initial interaction with the people to understand the causes of exclusion, and possible points of entry. This should be a dialogic process.
- Deepening this process through self-analysis by the people leading to a common understanding of the capabilities and limitations of the people, the local resources available, the local desires and needs and the possible avenues of development and the likely constraints. At the start of this phase, social animators could be identified in a transparent and fair manner and trained suitably to help mediate with the people and mobilise them.
- Determination of organisational needs.
- Evolving an appropriate organisational form and formulating flexible rules of self-governance, allowing natural leadership to emerge.

- Choice of project activity by the community which would serve an immediate need, strike at the roots of atleast some processes of exclusion and utilise and enhance the skills of the people.

From the very early stages of this phase, the native idiom should be used particularly the art forms for the creation of an environment conducive to participation.

2. The Planning Phase:

Once the choice of broad activity is made, the next steps would be:

- Evolution of norms or first principles by the people themselves (either by full groups or by organisations) to decide identification of individual beneficiaries, individual sites for works, weightage to various project components, selection of representative groups of beneficiaries etc.

This is the crux of participative planning. The group deciding the location of a work or finalising the name of a beneficiary straightaway is liable to be manipulated or is likely to generate internal bickerings, as the happenings in Attappady would show. But deciding on norms first and then using them to select individual beneficiaries or works strengthens group involvement and creativity. Similar norms can be evolved for evaluating benefits.

- Generating benchmark data in a participative manner.

- Scheduling activities like work, payment of wages, meetings etc. to suit the convenience of the local people.

- Identifying the rights and duties of the various actors at various stages of the project.

- Using local knowledge wherever feasible.

- Determining the skill upgradation and capabilty - enhancing needs and possibilities and making arrangements for required training.

- Demystification of procedures to make them as people-friendly as possible.

- Sharing of semi-technical details in a language understood by local people.

- Deciding resource commitments on the part of the beneficiary groups in terms of cash, kind or labour.

- Finalising resource flows from outside, their timing etc.

- Exploring possibilities of using local materials.

3. The Implementation Phase:

In this phase the people can participate not merely as workers but act as a supervisory body, keeping track of purchases, material use, quality of work, funds flow etc. They should be empowered to take decisions on the above mentioned functions to ensure that prescribed standards are maintained.

In the case of economic development projects, beneficiary groups could be encouraged to function autonomously in the use of funds, sale of produce, utilisation of savings etc. Small informal self-help credit and savings groups, particularly of women have shown great promise in raising self-confidence of groups and initiating autonomous participation with possibilities of enlarging the sphere of activity.

4. The Monitoring and Evaluation Phase:

In addition to the conventional methods of monitoring by the programme authorities, people's groups monitor progress against simple locally identifiable indicators and give feedback to the programme authority including suggestions for improvement. These groups also evaluate the effects of the programme collectively by tracing various impacts. Such monitoring and evaluation have a distinctively qualitative element in them. The process of participation is also to be monitored separately.

5. The Operation and Maintenance Phase:

The elaborate participative methods followed so far would ensure the sense of ownership of the assets created facilitating their smooth operation and maintenance, thus bringing about sustainabilty. The community based organisations set up in the preparatory phase can play the nodal role in this phase.

These phases require specific inputs and can produce the expected outcomes provided certain assumptions are fulfilled. This can be presented by adapting the logical framework [1] (Table 9.1).

In essense, the participatory process outlined above 'puts people first ' and gives them not only 'voice' but the power of 'choice' as well and makes them autonomous 'subjects' of development.

Table 9.1

Participatory Development - A Methodological Model

(Presented in an adapted version of the logical framework)

a) **Goal:**

Improved well being of the people so far excluded from development.

Means of achieving the goal:

Induce genuine people's participation in development programmes.

Assumptions:

Development becomes meaningful and useful only with people's participation.

b) Purpose:

Empowerment of the excluded groups.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the programmes meant for the excluded groups.

Means of achieving the purpose:

Provide 'space' for people's participation and 'scope' for people's 'vision' and create conditions for listening to people's 'voice', right from the conception stage of a project.

Assumptions:

People are capable of participating in the development process given a chance to do so and such participation will enhance effectivess and efficiency of the development programmes meant for them.

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[1] Adapted from Valdez and Bamberger (1994)

c) Stages of a participatory programme:

Stage of Participatory programme	Inputs	Outputs	Indicators of output	Assumptions
1.Preparatory Phase	(i) Official policy with participation as an end. (ii) Sensitised officers. (iii) Trained social animators.	(i)Communities/groups willing to participate. (ii)Community-based organisations formed. (iii) Analysis of situation done. (iv) Listing out of possibilities and constraints.	(i) No. of people in organisation. (ii) Awareness levels of problems and possibilities.	(i) Government can deviate from present policy and move towards participation as end. (ii) People trust government officials to be motivated by them to participate.
2.Planning Phase	(i) Resource commitment. (ii) Participatory data. (iii)Dialogue with people.	(i) Priority finalised. (ii) Activities under the plan scheduled indicating labour/ material inputs, timing, role of officials,people etc.	(i) A plan indicating rationale of prioritisation. (ii)Norms for selection of location, beneficiaries available.	(i) People can evolve consensus norms without conflict.
3.Implementation Phase	(i) Training and capacity building. (ii)Definition of powers of actors. (iii)Simplified government procedures.	(i)Work completed in time as per prescribed quality. (ii)Resource contributed by people. (iii)Transparent maintenance of records.	(i) Actual period of completion vis-a-vis projected peiod. (ii) Quality of work vis-a-vis prescribed standards. (iii)Resources locally generated. (iv)Percentage of local material used. (v)Levels of knowledge of work/payment details.	(i)Professionals can modify behaviour. (ii)Rent-seeking can be controlled.
4.Monitoring and Evaluation Phase	(i)Data availability to the people's group.	(i) Reports generated at regular intervals. (ii) Inpact analysis.	(i) Periodical reports. (ii)People benefited. (iii)Positive and negative impact lists.	(i)Feedback is utilised to make project changes.
5.Operation and Maintenance Phase	(i)Training to people. (ii)Autonomy to people's groups for running of project.	(i)Assets maintained in good condition. (ii)Management system financial and for running the project in position.	(i)Resources contributed. (ii)Percentage of assets in good condition. (iii)Levels of satisfaction among people regarding asset use.	(i)Local people have the ability to achieve the technical capabilities required.

In essense, the participatory process outlined above puts 'people first' and gives them not only 'voice' but the power of 'choice' as well and makes them autonomous 'subjects' of development.

APPENDIX 1

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APPENDIX 2

KEY INFORMANTS

Key informants were identified from among the various actor groups in Attappady based on their experience, knowledge and position held. On an average, the interaction with them lasted about two hours. In the case of tribal elders often the ooru people also chipped in with their comments.

To keep the interview focussed, discussions were initiated using a checklist which included points under the following broad heads:

- levels of participation
- reasons for non-participation
- changes in tribal society
- changes in tribal economy
- changes in the political milieu
- official interventions for improving participation

The key informants contacted were:

I. Tribal Elders (Men):

1. Shri. Koyan, Ooru Mooppan of Mele Manjikandi. He was president of Pudur panchayat for 30 years from 1965. Now he is a Panchayat member belonging to the Communist Party of India (CPI).
2. Shri.Punna Mooppan, ooru mooppan of Paloor, active in the various committees since 1960s.
3. Shri.Pirka Mooppan, ooru mooppan of Dhonigundu, active in the anti-arrack agitation.
4. Shri.Rangaswamy, Mooppan of Vade Kottathara. Involved in organising the youth to defend tribal land.
5. Shri.Manna Mooppan, mooppan of Dhanyam. One time activist of the CPI.
6. Shri. Kali, Mooppan of Thazhe Mully. A member of various committees since 1960s.
7. Shri. Maruthan, a tribal member of the block panchayat.
8. Shri.Nanchan Master - One of the first social activists among tribals - founder member of the Girijan Sevak Samithi (GSS).
9. Shri.Kakki - the largest land holder among tribals - an activist of the GSS - scion of the only tribal family which dared to physically challenge the might of the feudal landlords about 50 years ago.

10. Shri. Boddha Mooppan - an iterant social animator, well-trained by an activist NGO in Tamil Nadu - a fighter for land rights.

11. Shri.Mannan, an 80 year old repository of folk history belonging to Chavadiyoor.

II. Tribal Elders (Women)

1. Smt.Maruthi - the socially active wife of Dhanyam ooru mooppan.

2. Smt. Kathi - of Chavadiyoor, very knowledgeable about the events from 1950s onwards.

3. Smt. Chethy - of Kavindikkal, one of the first tribal ladies to take up common causes - an activist of the Congress party.

4. Smt. Jungi - an anti-arrack activist - recently arrested for joining a land agitation led by the naxalites.

5. Smt. Maruthi - a two-time Panchayat member of Sholayoor.

6. Smt. Mari - a director of the Pudur Girijan Service Society for the last seven years.

III. Tribal Youths (Male)

1. Shri. B.C. Sreedharan - a tribal working as VEO in the ITDP - an environmental activist and the leader of the GSS - specialises in socio-economic history of the local tribals.

2. Shri.T.R.Chandran - President of the GSS - an active organiser of tribal youth.

3. Shri.Rangaswamy - of Kulukkoor - an able motivator of local youth - a former health guide.

4. Shri.Kalimuthu - of Bhoothivazhy, heading the most active youth club.

5. Shri.Soman - of Adiyakandiyoor who led the ooru in the construction of houses under NREP, all by themselves - the first such instance in Attappady.

IV. Tribal Youths (Female)

1. Smt.Valli - working in the Central Bank - a former health guide.

2. Smt. Easwari Resan - Block panchayat president belonging to the CPI.

3. Kum. Kali - the most active among the motivators of the Mallisara project.

4. Smt. Sivalekshmi - a former health guide from Varagampadi - active in a local feminist group.

5. Smt. Beddhamma - of Tazhe Sambarcode - heads a DWCRA unit.

V. Officials

1. Shri. Sulaiman - Project Officer, ITDP, the highest - ranking official in Attappady.

2. Shri.T.C. Suresh - Secretary, ATCOFARMS, since June 1988, whose dedicated leadership turned around the farms.

3. Shri.Ashok Kumar - a Forest Ranger, the motive force behind the Mallisara project.

4. Dr. A.Radhakrishnan Nair - co-ordinator of the Nehru Yuva Kendra, Palakkad, who implemented the Girivikas project. Did his Ph.D on the forest tribals of Attappady and Malappuram.

5. Shri.Peer Mohammed - Assistant Director, Soil Conservation with experience in Attappady for about 10 years - including in the early 1970s.

6. Shri. P.V.Radhakrishnan - who worked as Village Extension Officer for 11 years since 1984 - Resident of Attappady since 1961.

7. Shri.P.S. Gopalakrishnan - Assistant Project Officer, ITDP.

8. Shri. Ramachandran - Retired Deputy Collector who had worked in Attappady for 27 years from 1960 - worked in the Block office when started in 1962 and later in Land reforms units.

9. Shri. Arumugham - came to Attappady in 1959 as Gram Sevak and stayed till retirement in 1986 - has vivid recollections of the 'development trends' at the office and field levels.

10. Shri.K.M. Pareed Kutty - a retired Block Development Officer (BDO) - well-versed in tribal arts and culture - had worked in Attappady from 1957 to 1965 and 1975 to 1983.

VI Political Leaders

1. Shri.Ibrahim - of the CPI. One of the first political leaders at the local level - in Attappady since 1968.

2. Shri.N.Sulaiman - of the Janata Dal - now the biggest 'contractor' of ITDP works - in Attappady since 1951.

3. Shri.K.N.Ramachandran - leader of the CPM - in Attappady since 1952.

4. Shri.Babu Thomas - of the Congress - former Panchayat president - the most 'successful' contractor of Attappady.

5. Shri.P.C. Baby - of the Congress - heads the works committee of the Block Panchayat - an active contractor.

VII NGO Activists

1. Shri.Rajagopal - started 'Nature' in 1985 for health care and has expanded into participative action.

2. Shri.Gopalakrishnan - exponent of organic farming, his 'sarang' brought back to full life, a micro-watershed in about 10 years.

3. Shri.Rajan Robert - an activist who gets involved in most of the tribal issues mainly through conscientization.

4. Sister Mariamma Kalathil - of Ushus, in Attappady for 11 years - believes in awareness-building - does not give monetary assistance, as a policy.

5. Fr.Thomas Prakash - Executive Secretary of the Church-sponsored Attappady Social Service Organisation (ASSO).

6. Fr.Mani Parampatt - in Attappady since 1974, is in the forefront of the anti-arrack campaign.

7. Shri.Bhaskaran Nair - an ex-serviceman, inspired by Gandhian ideals reached Attappady in 1950. Since then in his individual capacity has been helping tribals to register formal complaints and follow them up.

VIII Others

1. Shri.Kochunni Nair - in Attappady since 1947 - At present the Moopil Nair - his forefathers were the major feudal landlords of Attappady.

APPENDIX 3

SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY - A GIST

Based on the emerging features of the qualitative research, a survey was designed to collect quantitative data on certain socio-economic aspects of tribal life to cross-check and firm up the conclusions. A purposive sample of 15 oorus was taken and then a stratified random sample of 150 households from these oorus was surveyed with the help of 15 volunteers - tribal youths.

The details collected include the following:

- Land owned, alienated through different means, cultivated etc.
- Cropping pattern, input details, marketing
- Assets owned, other than land.
- Occupatinal pattern.
- Educational levels.
- Expenditure on selected items.
- Debt and savings.

The results of this survey were used extensively as supporting evidence.

APPENDIX 4

THE ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE VARIOUS ACTORS - HOW DONE

The indications on the levels of participation and barriers to participation which emerged from the primarily qualitative research into the working of government programmes in Attappady were codified into 30 statements each. This was circulated among the various actors and their perceptions obtained on the following scale:

Strongly disagree	- 1
Disagree	- 2
Neither agree nor disagree	- 3
Agree	- 4
Strongly agree.	- 5

All the NGOs and Panchayat Members and officials at the middle and senior levels in the ITDP and related departments, 23 tribal mooppans, 29 educated tribal youth of which 14 were females were administered the questionnaire. The sampling of the last three categories was done purposively giving weightage to geographical spread, levels of involvement in tribal development affairs as evidenced by membership of committees and organizations. The group-wise response is indicated below:

Groups of respondents	Number
NGOs	10
Tribal Mooppans	23
Officials	25
Tribal youth (male)	15
Tribal youth (female)	14
Panchayat members (tribals)	17
Panchayat Members (non-tribals)	16
Total	120

The questionnaire was in two parts: Part A and Part B.

PART A of the questionnaire.

This relates to the levels of involvement and the 30 statements which suggest things that ought have been done were grouped as follows: (the gist of the statements alone given)

Group 1 : Dealing with initial planning.

Qn.2 : Airing of need by the hamlet or ooru.

Qn.3 : Information sharing by officials on possibilities of schemes and mode of implementation.

Qn.4 : Stating of priorities by the ooru.

Group 2 : Manipulations in the selection process

Qn.5 : Cheating villagers by getting signed demand petitions by the would be contractor.

Qn.6 : Official manipulation by quoting rules to justify works not required by the ooru.

Qn.7 : Fear of losing a work making the villagers agree to it.

Qn.8 : Contractors weaning away key persons among villagers.

Qn.9 : Contractors picking on protestors and bribing them.

GROUP 3 : Relating to the functioning of the Beneficiary Committee

Qn.10 : Contractors getting their henchmen into the beneficiary committee.

Qn.11 : Villagers being properly represented in the beneficiary committee

Qn.21 : Follow-up on grievances raised

Qn.22 : Clearing of doubts raised

Group 4 : Relating to information sharing with ooru people.

Qn.12 : Information sharing on quantities of work and materials.

Qn.13 : Information sharing on quality of work and materials.

Qn.14 : Information sharing on costs.

Group 5 : Relating to consultation with ooru people.

Qn.15 : Consultation on work planning ie. layout,alignment,etc.

Qn.16 : Consultation on time scheduling of activities.

GROUP 6 : Relating to implementation

Qn.17 : Supervising the work

Qn.18 : Deciding on who should work

Qn.19 : Participation as labourers in the work

Qn.26 : Awareness of payments made

Qn.27 : Consultation on payments to be made

Qn.28 : Awareness of the measurements recorded for payment

GROUP 7 : Relating to the benefits of the work

Qn.20 : Contractors make profit

Qn.23 : Tribals get benefit

Qn.24 : Good quality assets created

Qn.25 : Capabilities of tribals enhanced

Group 8 : Questions relating to other areas of participation

Qn.29 : Suggestions for improvement arising out of monitoring the work.

Qn.30 : Clear role in the operation and maintenance of assets

Qn.31 : Contributions made to the work in cash or kind

Statements were worded differently to make them natural. But the scores were rationalised so that while analysing, strong approval would suggest adherence to the scheme guidelines and strong disapproval suggesting deviation from scheme guidelines.

PART B : Questions relating to barriers to participation

These statements are on the existence of barriers and are grouped into five.

GROUP 1 : Relating to social factors.

Qn.1 : Lack of unity and cohesion

Qn.2 : Low levels of literacy preventing awareness and knowledge.

Qn.3 : Destruction of the old order

Qn.4 : Vulnerability arising out of harmful social habits likedrinking, smoking and wasteful habits like undue indulgence in hotel food.

Qn.5 : Loss of traditional skills in agriculture, health and environment management.

GROUP 2 : Political Factors

Qn.6 : Losing in the game of numbers being a minority.

Qn.7 : Nexus between political leaders and contractors

Qn.8 : No real conscientization

Qn.9 : Politicians themselves ignorant of the possibilities of participation

Qn.10 : The number of tribals among political leaders is very low.

GROUP 3 : Economic Factors

Qn.11 : Loss of land and access to forest produce leading to dependance

Qn.12 : Environmental degradation destroying the natural resource base.

Qn.13 : Dependence created by exploitative relations in the incipient cash crop economy.

Qn.14 : The coming of markets and unequal exchange relations

Qn.15 : Poverty leading to bartering away of rights for a pittance.

Group 4: Factors Relating to the Development Strategy.

Qn.16 : Dependency bred by doles and welfarist approach.

Qn.17 : Ignoring traditional skills and capabilities while formulating schemes like agriculture, construction, etc. making the tribals just receipients.

Qn.18 : Inappropriate education strategies.

Qn.19 : Opening up of tribal areas through creation of infrastructure

Qn.20 : Absence of a system to identify felt needs

GROUP 5 : Factors arising out of administrative procedures

Qn.21 : Estimates, measurements and guidelines are prepared in a language not understood by the ordinary man.

Qn 22 : Bureaucratic delays coupled with official apathy dispirit the tribals

Qn.23 : Secrecy at all stages of implementation of work

Qn.24 : Lack of monitoring of participatory components by higher authorities.

Qn.25 : The pressure of spending money and achieving targets relegates slow-moving participatory components to the background

GROUP 6 : Factors relating to the performance of officials

Qn.26 : Declining service ethos among officials

Qn.27 : Collusion between officials and contractors for personal gain.

Qn.28 : Lack of training and sensitisation of officials.

Qn.29 : Fear of vested interests.

Qn.30 : Various departments functioning as watertight compartments with no horizontal coordination.

Options for Surmounting the Barriers:

At the end of the questionnaire four suggestions frequently received during the key informant and community interviews were listed and the respondents asked to rank them. The gist of the statements given is:

(i) The tribals need to be conscientized, organised and their traditional skills strengthened.

(ii) Select dedicated officials for assignments in Attappady.

(iii) Make Panchayati Raj functional.

(iv) Ensure economic development with emphasis on solving the land issue.

APPENDIX 5

EXPERTS CONSULTED

1. Shri. T.Madhava Menon - first senior official to trek to Attappady - right from his District Collector days actively associated with the formulation of development programmes implemented in Attappady till 1988.

2. Dr.Satish Chandran Nair - the environmentalist with the most comprehensive knowledge of the Western Ghats with emphasis on the livelihood systems of traditional communities.

3. Smt.Sugatha Kumari - poetess; led the successful NGO intervention in Bommionpary to regenerate forests.

4. Dr.Viswanathan - anthropologist with long field experience in Attappady. Now heads KIRTADS.

APPENDIX 6

TRIBAL OORUS VISITED

Sl. No	Name of ooru	No. of families
I. Agali Panchayat:		
1.	Bhoodivazhi	110
2.	Kothathara North	61
3.	Naikarpady	37
4.	Adiyakandiyoor	20
5.	Donikundu	33
6.	Kookkanpalayam	40
7.	Osathiyoor	35
8.	Chindakki Farm I	50
9.	Pothuppadi Farm I	47
10.	Pattimalam	42
11.	Dhundoor	24
12.	Karuvara Farm	18
13.	Veerannur	14
14.	Kallamala	81
15.	Chittoor	34
16.	Karara	36
17.	Chindakki Farm II	26
18.	Pothuppady Farm II	22
19.	Chindakki Farm III	21
II. Pudur Panchayat		
1.	Pudur	75
2.	Sornagadha	44
3.	Thachampadi	36
4.	Paloor	90
5.	Padavayal	45
6.	Dhaniyam	30
7.	Kolapadika	65
8.	Dodugatty	70
9.	Cheerakadavu	66
10.	Bhomiyampadi	31
11.	Elachivazhi	83
12.	Thazhe Mulli	46
13.	Male Mulli	89
14.	Moolakombu	33
III. Sholayoor Panchayat		
1.	Sholayoor	120
2.	Vadakku Kadampara	75
3.	Thekke Kadampara	45
4.	Varagampadi	74
5.	Vechapadi	60
6.	Kallakara	68
7.	Dasanur	36
8.	Kukukkur	68
9.	Vattulukki	85
10.	Chundakulam	50
11.	Mela Sambarkode	16
12.	Thzha Sambarkode	44
13.	Pettikkal	36

Total : 46 oorus (2325 families)