PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT: ROLE OF THE STATE AND THE COMMUNITY

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DECLARATION

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This dissertation entitled **"Participatory Development: The Role of the State and the Community"**, submitted to Prof. Sanjay Srivastava at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY, is an original work and has not been previously submitted, in part or full, for any other degree, diploma or other qualification of any university.

Pratichi Majumdar

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of MPhil Degree of this University.

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INTRODUCTION

My introduction to the hazy terrain of participatory development was through discussions about the Bharat Nirmaan Volunteer (BNV) Programme of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. This was a programme where the government called upon members of rural communities to actively participate in the development process. As a student of the sociology of development, I found it fascinating that community participation, which had been originally envisaged as a challenge to the state's involvement in the development process, was being supported and promoted by the state itself. So, how exactly could we understand this form of participatory development? And what were roles that the state and community played within it? These were the questions that this research was born out of.

The Research Problem

In its conception, the participatory approach was seen as an alternative to the state-led models of development – as "the end of 'top-down' strategies of action" (Rahnema 1997: 128). It aimed at involving the local communities in the design, formulation and execution of development programmes. However, today participation has gone from being a radical critique of the mainstream developmental practice to being "the new orthodoxy" in national and international development projects (Henkel and Stirrat, cited in Parfit 2004: 537). It has become the new 'buzzword' in the development industry with most international agencies and state projects espousing community participation in their projects (Cornwall and Brock 2005; Leal 2007).

The mainstreaming of participation has been viewed differently by various development thinkers and practitioners, broadly dividing them into two groups – those who see participation as a welcome change and potential solution to developmental needs; and those who critique it either for its execution or its theoretical foundations itself. The latter group argues that while participatory development is evoked as a

relief against the oppressive and ineffective state-centric development, participation itself can become potentially tyrannical (Cooke and Kothari 2001). Radical critiques of participation have called it a "Trojan's Horse that can hide manipulation and even coercion under a cloak of social palatability" (Slocum and Thomas-Slayter, cited in Gujit and Kaul Shah 1996: 9). Thus, it is seen as yet another attempt by which the state seeks to legitimise its own agenda under the garb of community participation. Participatory development is seen as too utopian and simplistic, ignoring the complex power differentials within the community.

On the other hand, the defenders of participation argue that while participatory projects do come with their share of problems, it would be unwise to throw the baby with the bathwater and dismiss participation as a possible development model altogether. They challenge the critics for their extreme position and lack of nuance in the concept of 'agency' and complexities of power relation between the state and community.

In this research I have attempted to look at these various perspectives and debates around participatory development; and without falling into either extreme position of utopian hailing or absolute censure, to understand and evaluate the arguments. The chief objective of the research is to understand the role played by the state and the community in participatory development, and how do they relate and interact with each other in this context. The aim of the research is to study and critically evaluate the concept of participatory development as existing on the ground level in the contemporary world. The idea is to arrive at a holistic understanding of the concept, with the state and the community playing key roles.

Methodology

This research can be broadly situated within the framework of critical development theory. Such a standpoint emphasises that "multiple perspectives which engage each other dialectically, in a process of mutual criticism and mutual correction, are necessary acknowledgement of the different contexts of experience, description and theorizing" (Tucker 1999: 16). Critical development thinkers have attempted to

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provide analyses of development which critique eurocentricism, orientalism and the cultural hegemony of the West which are prevalent in mainstream development theory (Nederveen Pieterse 1996). The aim is not only to decode and critique the earlier conceptions of development, but also to construct an alternative. Thus, it speaks of the "need for open models that emphasise process and dialogical exchange" (Tucker 1999: 22). My research seeks to look at the various debates and discussions around participation and participatory development, the various theoretical strands and arguments, through such a critical and holistic lens.

It is essentially an in-depth qualitative analysis of development models and theories through the use of secondary resources. I have heavily used ethnographic material from India and many other countries to ground the theoretical work in actual existing practices. My focus is not on an abstract notion of development, but on the everyday practice of development by the state and the community. So, I have looked at various case studies and works of different scholars on the day to day workings of development project mainly through anthropological and ethnographic texts and journals, but also newspaper articles and new bulletins, reports of the government and international organisations, publications by national and international development agencies, etc. At the same time, this research primarily focuses on the analysing various theoretical works. I look at different theories of development, state, and community to understand how these interact and relate with each other.

The concept of development is an inter-disciplinary one and has been studied from the vantage point of various disciplines – economics, sociology and political science being some of them. Therefore, this research is necessarily an interdisciplinary one. While the major texts used are from the Sociology of Development and Social Anthropology, I have also made use of material which would fall into the domain of Development Studies, Economics, Political Science, Social Work and others.

Conceptual Framework and Scope of Research

This research revolves around three main conceptual categories, which are reflected in the title of the research – the 'state', the 'community' and 'participatory development'. I explore these in the first three chapters of the research respectively.

Chapter one deals with the concept of the state. I begin by looking at how the state has been conceived in classical sociological literature in the works of scholars such as Durkheim, Weber, Radcliffe-Brown, Miliband, Poulantzas, etc. The main focus is on the concept of the 'everyday state'. I look at the works of scholars such as Phillip Abrams, Akhil Gupta, Timothy Mitchell, Fuller and Harris, and many others who argue that the state should not be understood as an abstract entity, separated from the society. Instead, the attempt should be to formulate an anthropological and cultural concept of the state. In this chapter, I explore the notion of the 'developmental state' and talk about how traditionally the state was envisioned as the primary agent of development. Using several ethnographic examples, I argue that an understanding of the 'developmental state' has to be based on the everyday-ness of the state. It is only in looking at the 'state-in-society' (Migdal 2004) that we can attempt a clearer idea of the developmental role of the state.

The second chapter deals with the next conceptual category – that of the community. I first deal with the definitions of the community which talk about the community as a homogeneous entity, rooted in tradition and face-to-face harmonious human relationships as opposed to the modern society. This is found basically in the works of classical scholars such as Tonnies and Durkheim, and also more recent works of Zygmunt Bauman and others. Benedict Anderson's 'imagined community' and Anthony Cohen's 'symbolic community' is also grounded in the community having common values, experiences, and a sense of belongingness, whether real or apparent. This chapter tries to argue against such conceptualisations and tries to show that the community is neither homogeneous nor cohesive. I use several case studies from Indian and outside to demonstrate that power relations and stratification along gender, caste, class, race, etc. are essential elements of every community. The main argument is that participatory development projects, when based on the unproblematised notion of the community, are removed from the ground realities and developmental needs of the people.

The next chapter examines emergence community participatory as a model for developmental. I deal with the historical and theoretical backdrop of this emergence and its need. The concept of participation and its most popular form in development discourse, Robert Chambers's Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is explored in detail. I cite various programmes and policies of the Indian state to indicate how participation, which had emerged as a 'counter-hegemonic' alternative to the state, has become a key feature of most state-led developmental programmes (Leal 2007).

The fourth chapter tries to bring together all these concepts to evaluate participatory development critically. Here, I look at the various critiques against participatory development both at a technical level and at a theoretical level. The later emerges mainly from the work of post-development scholars and broadly pertain to decision-making, the concept of the community, local knowledge and the de-politicisation of development. They argue that participation is only a mask worn by the state to carry out the same top-down development, essentially fooling the community to gain legitimacy. Following this, I discuss the defence of participation as provided by many scholars who argue that the post-developmental critique of participation is too extreme and lacks a nuanced understanding of agency. The community is not a passive agent, nor is the state a conspiring villain. Rather the community negotiates with the state to gain access to resources. They suggest that participatory development, when conceived in a theoretically sound way and executed properly, can play an empowering role for the community. In this chapter, I also discuss the role of the NGOs and civil society organisations as intermediaries between the state and community in the development process.

Finally, I conclude with the central argument that participatory development is a complex and dynamic process, which cannot be understood in a monolithic manner. There are pluralities of experiences which give a plurality of possibilities in which the state and community interact with each other. The relationship between them is undoubtedly one of power, but it is dynamic and not unidirectional. The present form of participatory development cannot be understood in the same way as it was conceived. Therefore, a holistic understanding of participatory development cannot be singular. It has to be open and flexible.

Limitations of Research

At this juncture, it is important to note some aspects which I have not dealt with in detail given the scope of the research. Firstly, the history and trajectory of the concept of civil society in social sciences are huge and varied. From the ancient philosopher like Aristotle to contemporary scholars, there has been a great amount of discussions and debates regarding it. However, in my research, I make use of civil society in a very limited sense of civil society organisations and the NGO sector. I do this because the primary objective of this research is to evaluate participatory development in term of the roles played by the two actors – state and community. I employ the category of civil society organisations only in its scope as it influences the interaction between these two primary actors. At the same time, I recognise that the civil society itself is a key player in the development sector and has been the primary focus of the study of development in various other research works.

Next, it is important to note that many of the terms used in the research originated in a western context and are difficult to translate to the Indian experience completely. For example, the term community originated in specific western context and does not have an exact synonym in the Indian languages. The Hindi words *samudaay* or *samaaj* are often used but only approximate the English term. I have tried to address this limitation by using several illustrations from the Indian contexts and works of Indian scholars. I hope to bridge the gap by supporting theoretical arguments with ethnographic examples. However, this does remain a concern not only for this research but most social science research done in non-western societies.

Finally, most of the research around community participation in India has revolved around the study of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and have mostly taken a governance angle in their study. My research does not focus on the PRIs much because, firstly, it has been discussed by several academicians, government agencies, and developmental organisations, and there already exists a vast amount of good quality, in-depth literature on it. Secondly, and more significantly for me, I have tried to locate my evaluation of participatory development within the discourse of sociology of development. This is not to claim that the discourse of governance and that of development are or can be separated. Indeed they cannot and inevitably are interconnected and overlapping. However, as B. Mukherji (1961) wrote, a panchayat

is a form of local government and functions according to predetermined legal and bureaucratic rules. The panchayat leaders are chosen by the people according to the procedures of the state. Therefore, for the purposes of my research, the PRIs as institutions of the state are not separate from it. They are only one of the several levels or branches of the state which interact with the community. Thus, I do not look at the PRIs as a different actor in participatory development. They are only a part of the broader concept of the state that I deal with.

Research Objectives

The primary objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To understand how the role of the state in the development process has evolved.
2. To look at the complexities within the community and how they affect its role in development.
3. To study the idea of participatory development, its emergence and nature, and to critically evaluate the concept.
4. To arrive at an understanding of the relationship between the state and society in participatory development.

Research Questions

➢ How is the 'state' conceptualised? How has its understanding evolved in social sciences?

➢ What is meant by the 'everyday state'? How can it help it understanding state-society relationships?

➢ How do we understand the concept of the 'developmental state'? What role did the state play traditionally in the development process? What role does it play today?

➢ How has the term 'community' been understood? What has been the trajectory of this term in sociological literature?

- What are the complexities and power relationships existing within the community?
- What role does the community play in the developmental process?
- What is the effect of community power structures on development projects and policies?
- How do we understand the term 'participation'?
- How and why did the concept of participatory development emerge? What was the socio-historic context of this emergence?
- What are the characteristics, nature and forms of participatory development?
- How is participatory development understood in the present day context? What is the position of participation in the development discourse?
- What are some of the government projects and policies in India and other countries that involve the community in the process of development? What were the roles of the community and the state in these projects expected to be? How did these play out at the ground level?
- What role does the state play in participatory development? What role does the community play?
- How do the state and the community interact with each other in the participatory development contexts? What are dynamics of power between them? What are the power structures within each of them?
- What is the Role of the NGO sector in the development process? How does it interact with the state and community in these contexts?

Sociological Significance

Development and underdevelopment are issues that have concerned policy makers and social scientists alike. In the recent times, community participation has been seen as a magic wand capable of bridging the gaps created by the earlier top-down developmental models. However, it is increasingly seen as even participatory models have not been able to ensure 'development' everywhere. Participation is a complex process with many dimensions and actors. It is necessary to understand the roles and relationships involved, that influence the developmental practice at the ground level.

The sociological literature available on the State-supported participatory development is limited and scattered. There is a need to put together various arguments and debates regarding participation in the present context and subject them to a thorough analysis.

The present research attempts to contribute to addressing this gap in the sociological discourse on development. Rather than taking a particular side in the debate around participatory development, it will help in understanding the complex and dialectical relationship between the State and the Community in the contemporary development practice. The research seeks to be an in-depth analysis of the phenomena, well-grounded in theoretical framework, along with ethnographic material for illustration.

-CHAPTER ONE-

STATE

"Few words are employed with their meanings so ill-defined. Sometimes by 'the State' is meant political society in its entirety, sometimes only a part of that society. Even when the term is understood in the latter connotation the limits determining the scope of its meaning vary in each case" (Durkheim 1986: 45).

The concept of the state has been a subject of sociological enquiry for a long time. How the term 'state' originated is not clear, but many scholars believe that it has been derived from the Latin term *status* that meant a person's legal position. In the middle ages, the term's use was transferred from individuals to "legally organised bodies of men" (Dusza 1989: 78). In the late medieval and early modern periods, it was used to refer to "the form of government or constitution" (ibid). Today, there is no single definition or meaning that can be assigned to the term 'state'. Various scholars have interpreted and conceptualised it in different manners, and it is used in different ways. Some of these include the idea of sovereignty, and the conflict and cooperation between different sovereign states (whether republics or monarchies); the discourse around governance where the state acts as the regulator of peoples' behaviour, acquires and distributes resources, manages the welfare of populations, takes care of security issues, etc.; discussions of state politics which includes the debates over state policies, as well as the political struggles of establishing nation-states (Asad 2004).

Thus, from the classical scholars to the more contemporary sociologists and anthropologists, 'the state' has been thought of and theorised differently. The present chapter tries to look at some of the various strands of how the state has been understood in sociological literature. The focus would be on a more cultural conception of the state and the idea of the 'everyday state' within which this research

locates itself. Also, I look at the concept of the 'developmental state' – how it emerged and came to be understood – and the developmental role that states play.

Traditional Conceptions of the State

Stephen Krasner talks about four different ways in which state was conceptualised in early writings – first, the state as government, i.e. as a group of people who occupy decision-making roles in the political system; second, the state as an 'administrative apparatus and institutionalised legal order'; third, the state as 'the ruling class'; and fourth, the state as the 'normative order' (cited in Dusza 1989: 75).

Durkheim's conception of the state can be placed within the first two categories. Giddens writes that for Durkheim, the state is seen as "an administrative staff or officialdom which is formally entrusted with the function of government" (Giddens, 1986: 2). For him, the state emerges only in the modern society, as a product of organic solidarity. It is the main (though, not only) institution that concerns itself with carrying out and development of individual rights. Its primary task is to articulate and expand the moral aims and sentiments that are diffuse in the conscience collective. However, he acknowledges that the state does not completely embody the collective conscience of society, which goes further than only the idea of the state. Thus, Durkheim defines the state as "a group of officials sui generis, within which representations and acts of volition involving the community are worked out, although they are not the product of collectivity" (Durkheim, 1986: 40).

The third and fourth categories in Krasner's scheme are best illustrated by the Marxist conception of the capitalist state and the structural and functionalist theories. This can be seen in the debate between Miliband and Poulantzas (Fuller and Harriss 2001). The former presented an instrumentalist view of the state in terms of the state apparatus furthering the interest of the capitalists. Poulantzas, on the other hand, presented a functionalist view that looks at the state as a cohesive factor. The structural and functionalist theories of the state look at the state as an institutions, or a group of institutions, in terms of its role in performing particular functions of governance, maintaining law and order, and addressing concerns of security (Sharma

and Gupta 2006). Similarly, the Parsonian view of the state focused on the state as a process.

Max Weber's notion of the state has elements from all four of Krasner's categories but goes beyond that. Dusza writes that Weber, in his understanding of the state, emphasises on the impersonal character of political rule in a modern state. He talks of the pre-established nature of rules; the obligatory and enforced character which gives validity to the order established by the rules; the way in which power is distributed among different organs of the state and bureaucracy in a specific manner, where every organ has its own clear jurisdiction; and the organisation of all these elements into a rational system of offices (Dusza 1989). Primarily for Weber, the state is an administrative, legal order. He speaks of the rational-legal state, which is a depersonalised and rule-bound political power. It is on the organisational aspect that Weber lays the most emphasis on. It is the particular mode in which the political rule is organised which makes a state historically unique. Weber defined the state as "human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" (cited in Rubin 2002: 110).

Weber's idea of the state has been one of the most influential ones for sociologists. In the Indian context, as well, the state has usually been studied through the prism of the Weberian organisation. However, Timothy Mitchel (1991) suggests that taking this idea of the state as an 'actual organisation' too far can imply that the state is a discrete entity, separate from the society. Further, Rubin (2002) opines that most scholars have chosen to focus on the idea of *physical force* rather than the idea of *human community*. This has resulted in looking at the state only as a political system instead of looking at the state as a 'subject'.

Thus, in the early anthropological works, therefore, "the state was assumed to be an inevitable or ghostly presence that shaped the meaning and form that power took in any given society" (Das and Poole 2004: 5). The idea of the state is so intrinsically tied to the idea of political power, that many times, the state is considered synonymous with all organised political systems. Scholars such as Radcliffe-Brown even suggested replacing the term state with 'political system', which he felt was a

more inclusive term which covered many aspects of the political processes that were not covered by the term state (Fuller and Harriss 2001).

The state as a cultural category – 'everyday state'

According to W.G. Runciman political sociology was founded on the separation of the political from the social, where the political usually referred to the state (cited in Abrams 1977). This is reflected in many of the traditional sociological works on the state, for example, those drawing from the Weberian concept of the state as an organisation which often leads to the assumption that the state is an isolated unit, separate from the society. Though scholars such as Radcliffe-Brown (1940) recognised, even stressed, that systems of politics, economics, kinship, etc. in any society are interconnected, but for the purposes of study, even these scholars suggested making abstractions, separating the various spheres from each other. However, in actuality, the state is neither isolated nor a unity in itself. The boundary between the state and the society are at best blurred with each permeating into the other (Fuller and Harriss 2001).

Many of the earlier writings on the state looked at culture as shaped by the state but did not consider the states as being produced by cultural processes (Sharma and Gupta 2006). This can be seen in Weber's understanding of the state where he says it is the specificity of the organisation that lends the state its historical specificity. Therefore, the nature of the state comes to be defined by its classification into categories such as 'liberal democratic' or 'bureaucratic authoritarian' etc. However, at the level of everyday practices, these categories may not be effective. At the level of everyday practices of state institutions, the bureaucratic processes of a totalitarian regime and a liberal democratic state may resemble each other (ibid). Hence, many scholars have emphasised on the need to move beyond such traditional conceptions of the state and to look at it as a cultural category.

Aradhna Sharma and Akhil Gupta (2006) write that an anthropological understanding of the state should help understand state formation and how its boundaries are constructed culturally. Further, it is tasked with shining light on how cultural

similarities and differences help in forming and informing states. Elements such as legislatures, militaries, bureaucracies, and laws are often considered as essential elements of the state and believed to be universal in their presence and form. What is considered to vary is the degree of their effectiveness. However in actuality state and its institutions are culturally shaped and situated.

Also, states interact externally with many phenomena, in many directions, often criss-crossing with each other. They interact with different cultures not only at the central level, but also at regional and local levels. This leads to the state having an internally heterogeneous character (Rubin 2002). Therefore, the state is not a homogeneous, unified entity as suggested by many of the previous writings. Mitchell (1991) suggests that the idea of the unity of the state is so widely preserved that the conflict between the different parts of the state apparatus is usually ignored or underplayed. These conflicts are important to be examined because they reflect how social conditions and differences are reproduced within the state processes and impact state policies. For example, Ferguson (1994) in his work in Lesotho shows how in the implementation of development projects there were several disputes between various organs of the state – local authorities and central ministries, or the local project managers and the central government authorities.

Philip Abrams writes that the state is "a spurious object of sociological concern" and that there is a need to move beyond the works of traditional scholars like Hegel, Marx, Weber, and others (Abrams 1977: 63). What is required is to make a departure from "the analysis of the state" and concern ourselves with "the actualities of social subordination" (ibid). He says that often, the state is seen as an object hidden behind the reality of political life. This focus on the state disguises the actual political practices at the ground level. Such conceptions of the state often lead to ignoring the internal differences and inconsistency in the power structure in the society. Thus, Abrams emphasises on moving beyond the idea of the state as a reified object. Rather, the focus of study should be a critical examination of the idea of the state as an 'ideological power'. However, he warns that we should not believe in the actual existence of the state even as an abstract entity. For Abrams, thus, the state is "neither a thing, nor a political reality that stands behind the state system (government agencies and political practices) and the state idea" (Sharma and Gupta 2006: 46).

Mitchell (1999) draws from Abrams but argues that the ideological and material forms of the state cannot and should not be separated from each other rigidly. Abrams had distinguished between the 'state-system' and the 'state-idea' as two separate analytical categories, where the former refers to the state "as a system of institutionalised practice", and the latter refers to the reification of this system (ibid: 76). However, according to Mitchell, what is understood as the state emerges from the techniques that enable the reification of the everyday material practices. Thus, for him the state-idea and the state-system are to be understood as two facets within the same process. Further, he suggests that the state should be seen as a 'structural effect'. That is to say, the state should be studied not as an actual existing structure, but as "powerful, apparently metaphysical, effect of practices that make state structures appear to exist", such as Foucauldian disciplines that create bureaucracies, schools, etc. (ibid: 89).

Drawing from Mitchell, Sharma and Gupta write that the seeming appearance of the state as a discrete and independent entity can be understood in itself as a process of reification as a result of day-to-day social and cultural practices (Sharma and Gupta 2006). The boundary between the state and the society is a function of power and social control. Once this is recognised, it becomes easier to develop an understanding of the state as an institution "within (and not automatically distinct from) other institutional forms through which social relations are lived" (ibid: 10). Within the framework of such a conceptualisation, the state is not assumed to be the centre of the society. Rather, the aim to understand if and how the state comes to occupy a position of power and what is the nature of such power in its interaction with other social institutions in everyday acts of governance and maintenance of law and order.

In most understandings, the idea of the state is usually linked to the idea of order. Even the traditional scholars had associated the state with the idea of social order. Thus, for a scholar like Radcliffe-Brown (1940), political organisation implied the maintenance of social order by an organised coercive authority. Within the state, this was done by meting out punishment to those who went against the law. Externally, order was maintained through war or armed force against other states.

This linkage of the state with the maintenance of order in society continues to inform the works of the contemporary scholars taking an anthropological approach to the

study of the state as well. Thus, often, the "presence of the state in local life" is sought out by anthropologists in administrative categories and hierarchies, which can be linked with political and bureaucratic apparatus (Das and Poole 2004: 5). However, instead of focussing on abstract ideas of sovereignty, anthropological studies look at the day-to-day workings of the state (ibid). People interact with the state through the process of documentation, everyday security and regulatory practices of the state. It is in such everyday bureaucratic practices, conflicts, etc. that the state can be studied most effectively as a cultural formation. Looking at the everyday state means looking at the blurred boundaries between the state and the society, "porous edges where official practice mixes with the semi official, and later with the unofficial" (Mitchell 1999: 81).

This can be seen in the work of Akhil Gupta (2006), who talks about how the discourse of corruption and the state is a part of the common parlance of people. He looks at the everyday practices of the bureaucracy to understand the significant cultural practices which become of the way in which the state is represented symbolically to both the masses, as well as the bureaucratic officials themselves (ibid). The government offices such as local courts, district magistrate's office, police stations, government hospitals, etc. became the sites at which common people experience the state, through the exchange of information and opinions regarding the state, policies and officials. He uses three case studies from his fieldwork in the village of Alipur to illustrate the wide range of ways in which the people interact with the state, through local officials. In the first case, he shows how state officials in the lower rungs of the bureaucracy exploit the inexperienced rural population for their own gain. The second case shows how a lower-caste person manages to protect himself from a powerful village headman by approaching a higher official in the bureaucracy. The third case illustrates the actions of the Bharatiya Kisan Union, a popular farmers' movement where the state officials are on the receiving end of the people's dissatisfaction and even manhandling. Similarly, he cites James Brow's study in Sri Lanka which shows how a government housing scheme makes the state visible to its citizens. Thus, Gupta writes that it is "through the practices of such local institutions that a translocal institution such as the state comes to be imagined" (ibid: 220).

Fuller and Harriss (2001) also talk about many ethnographic works that look at bureaucrats and bureaucracies in practice – such as James Manor's work in a Bangalore slum where many residents died after consuming illicit liquor, Paul Brass's study of police action in Uttar Pradesh, etc. Through such illustrations, these scholars make a compelling case of re-examining the traditional conceptions of the state and its interactions with the society, and to look at the 'everyday state' as a cultural formation.

An important element of how citizens experience the state in their everyday lives is through ideas of legality and illegality. However, as James Holston (cited in Rubin 2002) shows through his work on the Sao Paulo community of Jardim das Camélias, the lines of the legal and illegal are not fixed. He argues that in Sao Paulo there was no proper way of looking at land irregularities. Rather, laws kept being changed and formulated to legalise certain areas which were earlier seen as illegal. As a result, competing claims often each had certain elements of truth. Hence, we can say that "the state is a name given to various practices and institutions of the government, not only as an analytical concept but also as a locus of authority invoked and reproduced by an endless range of interventions – from validating documents and checking motor vehicles, to prohibiting substances or encouraging forms of behaviour that promote public health and so on" (Blom Hansen 2001: 34).

Studying the state organisation and action from a cultural standpoint enables us to look at the various dimensions of the state, at different levels – national, regional, local, etc. This is well-illustrated in Rubin's study (2002) of the leftist Zachotan movement, the COCEI (Coalition of Workers, Peasants and Students of Isthmus) in Juchitan, Mexico. He looks at the negotiation in power relations between the regional powers and the central state and shows how the state here was not a fixed entity concentrated in Mexico City. Rather, the state is a political institution with many different and irregular ways in which meaning and experience are constructed, through various and changing hegemonic forms. However, these act in an apparently cohesive and cooperative manner in terms of formulating and implementing public policies. The state is complex and situated in multiple locations. Hence, what is important to look at is not the fight between 'grassroots movements' and 'state' but

how "the place of region and ethnicity in the nation was envisioned and negotiated, how alternative economic and cultural modernities were forged" (ibid: 120).

Rubin opines that the idea of 'sub-national analysis' in Mexico has often been in the narrow ways of replicating the elements of national level analysis at the regional level. This results in missing out on how political practices and events are embedded into other phenomena, missing out on the historicity. Thus, he argues for the study of state at "multiple territorial levels" where national and regional levels of analysis are combined (ibid: 126). Fuller and Harris (2001) cite F.G. bailey's work on factional conflicts in the Bisipara village in Orissa, where he speaks of the role that factional leaders play in negotiating between local and state governments. They argue that while Bailey and other anthropologists give detailed accounts of political action at the local level, they do not actually study the state itself.

In many conceptions of the state, it is seen as either synonymous with the ruling class or acting only to further their interest. In the Neo-Marxist or dependency theory[1] framework, "capitalist-run development project [especially in the third world] is a fundamentally contradictory endeavour….The purpose of a development project is to aid capitalist exploitation in a given country" (Ferguson 1994: 11).

However, Achin Vinaik (cited in Fuller and Harriss 2001) looks at the Indian state as an organisation with different interests and motives than the dominant ruling class. This is further echoed by Rudolph and Rudolph, who talk about the state as a distinct entity and a "self-determining third actor" (ibid: 6). Asad argues that the contemporary state has "a life of its own" which is different from that of both the ruler or governor and the people who are being governed (cited in Das and Poole 2004: 29). As a result of this, the state has claims of loyalty and adherence from both the parties.

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[1] The Dependency Theory of Development first emerged through the study of Latin American countries, as a critique to the modernisation theory which had believed that development was an inevitable stage in an evolutionary process through which every society undergoes. The main proponents of this school were Paul A. Baran, Paul Sweezy, Andre Gunder Frank and others. The basic proposition of this theory is that the development of the First world is dependent on the continued underdevelopment of the Third world. That is to say that the progress in Europe was more a result of the destruction and impoverishment of the non-Western societies, than scientific development and innovations. Colonisation leading to acquisition of resources and surplus, and the destruction of the economy of the colonies contributed more to the development in the West than the process of rational modernisation as claimed by the mainstream development theories (Peet and Hartwick 2009). Thus, development and underdevelopment of countries must be seen mot as isolated phenomena but within a global perspective (Chew and Denemark 1996).

Thus, it may be more useful to look at the state as a "set of actors and institutions, set off from the society and acting upon it, at times in the interest of one or the other (usually elite) class or group, at times with autonomy" (Rubin 2002: 116).

Another view of the state, almost opposed to the idea of 'the state as ruling class', is to identify the state with 'public interest'. It is seen as the state's responsibility to take decisions which "hold good for the collectivity" (Durkheim, in Giddens 1986: 40). This view of the state is best illustrated in the concept of the 'Developmental State'.

Developmental Role of the State

The idea of the 'developmental state' first emerged in the modern context with Chalmers Johnson's work on the 'capitalist developmental state' in the context of high growth East Asian Economies. According to Johnson, a developmental state is one where "[e]conomic development, defined in terms of growth, productivity, and competitiveness, constitutes the foremost and single-minded priority of state action" (Onis 1991: 111). A commitment to private property and market underlies state intervention. Of key importance is a close link between bureaucracy and private business. The coexistence of high degrees of bureaucratic autonomy with public-private cooperation enables "to translate broad national goals into effective policy action" (ibid: 114).

This form of developmental state was popular in Japan and other East Asian countries where the state played an important role in nurturing leading private business organisations. Onis (1991) writes that the developmental state model is difficult to replicate in other countries since it emerges in particular contexts, related to severe external threats that these countries were confronted with and their specific geostrategic positions.

However, Bagchi opines that a developmental state can be understood simply as a state where the main concern of the government is economic development and which formulates tools and methods to achieve this objective (Bagchi 2000). Depending on particular historical conjunctures, the state governs the market or allows and supports the free market to operate. Ferguson writes that "Developmental state was

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distinguished by the central and direct involvement of the state in the appropriation of surplus value from the producers and by the dependence of the ruling elite" (Ferguson 1994: 267).

Historically, the Netherlands was one of the first developmental states to emerge in the 16th century. The relative absence of feudalism, considerable autonomy in taxes and their use among the local population, the successful revolt against the Hapsburg rule, all helped strengthen a state run by manufacturers and merchant princes, who had a strong nationalist feeling (Bagchi 2004). In the twentieth century, the two most impressive attempts at constructing developmental states were the Soviet Union and the Chinese state, born out of communist revolutions.

Often the modern understanding of development itself is traced back to the end of Second World War and the emergence of newly independent states. While the struggles for independence of the erstwhile colonies rejected the colonial rulers as the driving force of the development process, they did accept the idea of modernisation modelled after the western countries as the objective of development (Oommen 2004). The Cold War saw the two rival camps of the capitalist and the socialist trying to bring into their own fold the now decolonised independent countries. Harry S. Truman declared, the then President of the United States of America, in his inaugural speech in 1949, the Southern Hemisphere as 'underdeveloped areas' (Sachs 1997). These countries were seen as impoverished and destitute, abject with inequality, poor education and healthcare, oppression and marginalisation of the weaker sections. Therefore, development here meant addressing these problems and the Euro-American model was seen as the way to achieve this.

Coming out of long and difficult struggles against colonialism and for self-determination, these countries often saw the newly formed self-governed state as chief actor in development. It was seen as "primarily the job of the government to inaugurate and deliver the policies and programmes to bring about, sustain and expand development" (Haynes 2008: 11). It was the responsibility of the state to form and execute policies and programmes in order which would achieve developmental goals and advance the physical, material and social well-being of its citizens.

Thus, the control of the state over resources and the use of coercion and force were seen as necessary means to achieving and promoting such "public good" (Tandon 1991: 8). As a result of this, often there was a consolidation of state power. In several cases, the state became the all-powerful player which had control over all areas – political and economic policies, socio-cultural spheres, law and order, as well as market. Whether they chose to be under a socialist system or a capitalist one, the notion of national development justified the expansion of state power (Ferguson 1994). Development was seen as a self-evident and inevitable in the course of history.

From the 1970s onwards, there was a transition from the understanding of development as 'modernisation' or 'capitalist development'. Rather, development came to be defined in terms of 'standard of living' or 'quality of life'. Development was no longer "a movement in history" but a "social programme, a war on poverty on a global scale" (Ferguson 1994). However, in most mainstream conceptions, the state continued to be the primary agency that would deliver development. Fuller and Harriss write that such a conception of the state as the agent of development "appeals to a notion of a benevolent Leviathan chartered to bring about growth or eliminate poverty" (Fuller and Harris 2001: 3). However, this assumes that the state operates with a single, unified intention and internal cohesion, whereas, as demonstrated above, the functionaries of the state often work with motives which may be different or even conflicting. Rubin (2002) cites a study by Monique Nuijten of a group of *ejidatarios* (land beneficiaries) in Mexico. The study shows that contrary to the view that all state officials in Mexico are corrupt, there were many officials who favoured progressive social change and were taking strong anti-corruption steps. It is in the coming together of these officials and the *ejidatarios* that the state in Mexico becamea hope-generating machine, while simultaneously executing many policies that harm them.

Thus, the state is an important agent in the development discourse. A.F. Robertson attempts a cultural study of the state's development planning where he looks at planning as "a body of customs which are expressed in particular kinds of social process" (Robertson 2007: 2). Much like kinship or religion, planning is being seen as a symbolic system, visible in the everyday, seeking to organise time, resources, people, and ideas. He studies how the process of development planning has become

ubiquitous in all modern states, by looking at the interaction between the 'bureaucracy' and the 'community'. Through his case study of development planning in Malaysia, he talks about the organisational structure of planning and the institutional means by which the government functionaries try to put plans into action. He looks at a particular development agency – the Federal Land Developmental Authority and how it interacts with the state and the people.

Adrian Leftwich (1996) says that what matters for development in a society is not the type of government or regime (democracy or autocracy, monarchy or republic) but rather the type of state. The idea of state and politics lies at the very heart of the concept of development. He writes that development is most definitely political, but not in a managerial or administrative sense. Politics for Leftwich refers to "all activities of conflict, cooperation and negotiation involved in the use production and distribution of resources, whether material or ideal, whether at local, national or international levels, or whether in the private or public domain" (ibid: 6).

Looking at the development discourse in Lesotho, James Ferguson (1994) says that it is generally believed that the primary interest of the state is development. He examines in detail the formulation, planning and execution of a rural development project, the Thaba-Tseka Project, which is funded by the World Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). He argues that development agencies usually see the country's economy and society as if controlled by a national government which is always unbiased, unified and effectual (ibid). The state is, thus, seen as an neutral implementer of developmental plans and the government is seen as a tool to provide social services and promote economic growth.

This conception of the state gives a 'de-politicised' notion of the state. That is, it fails to see it as a political entity and excludes its class basis, or how bureaucrats and other elites use the state power and official positions for self-interest. These practices even when recognised are seen as inefficiencies and corruption. 'Development' is seen as a result of government action and the lack of development as a consequence of government neglect or incompetence. Hence, Ferguson says, development projects taken up by the World Bank and other international agencies inevitably fail, because they do not recognise local realities or take into account local knowledge. The role of the state as a mere provider of amenities ignores the political nature of the state.

Following Ferguson, Akhil Gupta (2006) writes that the development 'machinery' mainly focuses on delivering entitlements and in doing so eliminates the discussions on empowerment from the development discourse. However, he argues that the provision of amenities and the concept of empowerment are not entirely separate from each other. It is the gaps in the policy and failure in implementation, the contradictions and conflicts within the state machinery, that create space for potential political action and people's empowerment.

Elsewhere Gupta talks about how in independent India development became the chief 'raison d'être of the state' (Gupta 1998). Unlike many other countries, in India, mere economic growth was never seen as the aim of development, rather a wider social and cultural transformation was desired. His study in Alipur shows that the visions and evaluations of development are done differently by different caste and class groups, as a result of a contested narrative of the past. These political divisions influence how the state is viewed by people belonging to different groups and how state developmental policies, such as the green revolution, are experienced by them.

The post-independence Indian state, led by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, had planned development as a central feature. Partha Chatterjee (cited in Fuller and Harris 2001: 8) calls this dream of modernising and developing India through planning as a "new, supremely statist utopia". In most countries, state's development planning was strongly supported by capitalist bourgeoisie. However, in India, the elite did not get autonomy from the interests of specific groups in society and thus, could not pursue the goal of development easily. Thus, alliances between a progressive, modernising class and a rising rich peasantry began to be formed. Sudipta Kaviraj writes that these alliances meant that the state elites could "no longer dictate to them and instead began to reflect their interests" (ibid: 8). Nandy (1997) writes that unlike presumed by many academics and scholars, culture and tradition has not become weakened in the process of modernisation. Rather, it has often been the state which has accommodated and even given way to the particularities of culture when the two have been in conflict with each other.

The gulf between the modernising bourgeoisie and masses was huge and thus, they were unable to create a strong feeling of community among the entire polity. There also developed a huge gap between the elites at the upper levels of the bureaucratic

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hierarchy and the officials at the lower rungs. While the former fitted into the Weberian model of bureaucratic rationality, the latter corresponded to "vernacular everyday discourses" which "were not structured around the principles of formal rationality at all" (Kaviraj, cited in Fuller and Harris 2001: 8). The inability to bridge this gap is seen as one of the main reasons for the failure of the modern Indian state to successfully implement its policies. The policies are framed at the higher levels of bureaucracy and fail to be translated to the ground levels for implementation.

Conclusion

We can see that the role of the state in the development process has been and continues to be an immensely important one. However, it is not in an abstract idea of the state, but in its interactions with people in the everyday, that one can get a true sense of the developmental state. Mitchell (1991) writes that a Statist approach presumes the state to be a discrete unit, which is separate from and even opposed to the entity called society. Thus, what is needed is an alternative approach to studying the state which recognises that the boundary between the state and society is uncertain with each permeating into the other. An anthropological view of the state can give such an understanding.

Looking at the state through an anthropological perspective can enable us to examine the cultural constitution of the state. It helps understand people's perception of the state, how it is informed and shaped by their social locations and their interactions with the state processes and officials, and how they experience the state in their lives. Such a perspective of the state recognises that the state is not a cohesive unit. Rather it is fragile, contested and has the possibility of conflict. It is a product of "hegemonic processes that should not be taken for granted" (Sharma and Gupta 2006: 11).

Thus, it becomes important for us to look at the various state discourses and practices in their day-to-day roles. "The state indeed is a psychologically, culturally, and bureaucratically complex subject, and politics cannot be understood without taking this into account" (Rubin 2002: 125). This research attempts to look at the interaction

between the state and society within a scope of study which Migdal (2004) has called the 'state-in-society'.

The main concern of this research is to look at the role of the state in the development process, particularly in participatory development. As mentioned above, the state was seen as the main agent in the modern conception of development. Nandy (1997) writes a common thread running through most conceptions of the modern state is the concept of development. However, as was recognised soon enough, a state-controlled development process, no matter how grand its design did not provide a guarantee of achieving developmental goals. A large number of Third World countries did not go through the same stages of evolution as the western societies and did not achieve development as had been understood in the modernist conception. Rather, in many cases, development meant "only the development of the state itself or, at most, the state sector" and "the development of the state [became] the best predictor of the underdevelopment of the society" (ibid: 302). Such concerns prompted many scholars to look for alternative models of development where the community, and not the state, was at the centre of the development process. In the next chapter, we shall examine at length, the concept of the community, its evolution in sociological discourse and its role in the development process.

-CHAPTER TWO-

COMMUNITY

"Community is ultimately what people think it is" (Delanty 2010: xi).

The term 'community' like the term 'state' is a classical area of study for social sciences, especially sociology and social anthropology. And like the term state, 'community' too has been understood in many different ways and evolved greatly within the sociological discourse. Plant writes that "'[c]ommunity' is crucial to our social and political understanding but, at the same time, it is an elusive concept defying attempts at clear cut analysis" (Plant 1974: 1).

The community has been understood variously in terms of neighbourhood or locality; shared cultures, ideas and values; ideology; a sense of belonging; interest groups or minorities; as a way of life different from modernity, etc. Conceptualisations of the community may be based on ethnicity, religion, class, politics, etc.; they may be small or big; may have a strong or weak sense of attachment; they could be in line with the established political system or opposed to it; they may be classified as traditional, modern or even post-modern (Delanty 2010). Traditionally scholars such as Tonnies, Durkheim, and others spoke of the traditional community as against the modern society. Benedict Anderson spoke of the 'imagined community' as a socially constructed phenomenon. Anthony Cohen saw the community as symbolically constructed. More contemporary scholars give a more problematised view of the community as a complex and contested category.

Delanty (2010) gives four categories into which the sociological conceptualisations of community can be seen – firstly, the 'social' community (a group demanding civic rights); secondly, the 'cultural' community (ideas of belongingness or identity); thirdly, the 'political' community (in terms of 'collective action'); and fourthly, the

'technological' community (referring to the internet community). Certainly, these categories are not watertight compartments, and there are several overlaps and differences.

There are several other ways, in which the term 'community' has been studied. In this chapter, I look at the term and its evolution, in order to locate it within the development discourse. The object is to examine the role played by the community in development and the concept of community participation in the development process. The focus, therefore, will be on those definitions and conceptualisations of the community which have informed the participatory development concept and elements. I shall look at the traditional definitions of the community as a homogeneous entity as suggested by scholars Tonnies and then attempt to critique this understanding through ethnographic illustrations and some new theoretical strands in thinking about the community.

Social science concepts are contextual and emerge from specific historical situations and traditions. There are three major strands in the discourse of the community, emerging out of three major historical changes – the American and French revolutions, industrialisation process at the end of the nineteenth century and modern day globalisation (Delanty 2010). From these and other events emerged conceptualisations of the community as traditional village communities, to urban localities to translational and virtual communities. Thus, it is important to note at the very outset that the word community comes from the specific western cultural context. Interestingly, like several such concepts, it is difficult to find an exact equivalent for the word community in Indian languages. The words '*samudaay*' or '*samaaj*' are often used, but they remain at best loose translations and are not embedded the same historicity or contemporary contexts. This is a significant caveat to remember while using the term community in the context of multi-cultural contexts as in India.

The key aim here is to problematise the concept of community and make a case for using this problematised conceptualisation while analysing participatory development. This will help us situate and examine the concept of community as has been perceived by community development theories and projects, and in conducting a critical analysis of these in the further chapters.

Community as a homogeneous entity

The term community is defined in *The Oxford English Dictionary* as "a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common".[2] It is derived from the Latin word '*com'* which means 'with' or 'together' and '*unus'* which refers to the number 'one' or a 'singularity' (Delanty 2010: viii). Thus, the very origin of the term suggests oneness or homogeneity. The early studies of the community followed this trail of thought and conceived of the community as a homogeneous, undifferentiated unit.

In the late nineteenth- early twentieth century, the sociological analyses of the community began mainly as a response to the changes brought in by modernity and a reaction against the apparent disappearance of social cohesiveness of which the traditional community was seen as a repository. Thus, community was understood as 'traditional', as against the 'modern' society. This was a marked departure from the works of philosophers such as Aristotle, Rousseau, and others, where the community had been seen as the "essence of society", and not in opposition to it (ibid: 2). However, with the disenchantment with the rise of the industrial society, in the twentieth century, community and society were posed against each other as representing the collectivity and the individual respectively. Therefore, community came to be seen as the symbol of the 'thick' values of tradition, while society reflected the 'thin' values of modernity. Life in a community was seen as "opposed to the organisation and bureaucracy of modern mass society" (Plant 1974: 13).

The most popular work in this direction is that of Ferdinand Tonnies (1887), who spoke of the traditional community *(Gemeinschaft)* as against the modern society *(Gesellschaft).* For him, the community is based on "traditional face-to-face relations of a non-contractual nature" (Delanty 2010: 5). It represents familial relations, established from the time of birth. Community is seen as old, unadulterated and natural, whereas society is new and superficial. Tonnies asserts that the community has a "complete unity of human wills" (Tonnies 1887: 22). Thus, in his theory of *Gesellschaft,* people in modern society are individualistic and are disconnected from each other, as against the community where he felt people lived with each other in

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[2] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/community

peace and harmony. The essence of *Gemeinschaft,* according to Tonnies, is that the social relations in the community have a "real organic life", while in the modern society they are a "purely mechanical construction" (ibid: 17).

According to Plant (1974), in this way of conceptualising the community, an individual feels herself to be an integral part of the community. There is no conscious difference between the attitude and behaviour of the individual towards the community, and the overall organisation and articulation of community life. However, with the industrial revolution, there was centralisation of social, economic and political power and people became estranged from the social world. The concept of *Gemeinschaft* was, therefore, a proposed answer to this estrangement and isolation of the modern word, and a call back to that desired past where one was intimately connected with others around him.

Durkheim also drew a distinction between traditional and modern forms of social relationships. However, unlike Tonnies, for him, no form was more natural than the other. He turned the categories of 'organic' and 'mechanical' given by Tonnies on their head in his work *Division of Labour in Society* (1933). He says modern societies are characterised by organic solidarity. Here where people perform different economic, social and political functions but are essentially co-dependent on each other. On the other hand, in primitive societies, the form of social organisation is mechanical, with a uniformity of activities, beliefs, and sentiments. Thus, Durkheim's conception of the 'primitive society' is similar to Tonnies's idea of the traditional community. But distinct from Tonnies, he argues that modernity does not mean an automatic demise of social harmony and solidarity. Rather, traditional and modern societies exhibit different kinds of solidarities. He writes that primitive societies had very little scope for differentiation between individuals. The society is made up of homogeneous segments coming together mechanically. It is a 'solidarity of similarities'.

This idea of similarity giving rise to a sense of belongingness has been a common way of looking at the community. Members of a community are believed to be dominated by a sense of "unreflected generality" (Blackhaw 2010: 12). Wagner suggests that the term community implies an 'idea about belonging', as well as a 'particular social phenomenon' (cited in Delanty 2010: xii). That is to say, community

as a concept cannot be reduced to an idea nor can it be seen as synonymous to particular groups or territories. The community is something which is simultaneously ideal and real, an experience as well as an interpretation. Thus, there is a normative element that is embedded in the concept of community.

Zygmunt Bauman (2001) writes that the word community has a positive perception attached to it, it 'feels good'. He says it is precisely because modernity is alienating and isolating for a person that we long to go back to a time where we assume there was harmony and togetherness. He gives the concept of 'liquid modern communities' where people in the modern world come together forming 'communities' modelled after what they thought the traditional communities were like. However, he says that these liquid modern communities do not actually exist. They are utopian wishes, intended projects or postulations which the individuals desire to be a part of (Bauman 2000). The members of such a community are also aware of this difference between the "community of our dreams" and "the really existing community" (Bauman 2001: 4).

Thus, Blackshaw (2010) writes that Bauman's theory of the liquid modern community brings to light the paradox that it was only with the uncertainty about the existence of the community, that people began holding on to the idea of community and its values more tightly. Liquid Modernity carries a sense of isolation, uncertainty, and insecurity. The community is imagined an anchor of security. This feeling of insecurity and anxiety about safety concerns was one of the main reasons that led to the development of communitarianism[3]. However, Cohen (1985) writes that such an opposition between 'community' and 'modernity' is a spurious and tautological one because in these conceptualisations community is described specifically by attributing

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[3] According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* communitarianism emerged as a critical reaction to philosophical liberalism, especially John Rawl's work *A Theory of Justice (1971).* Rawl's theory suggested justice as a universal truth, regardless of the social or temporal context. Communitarian scholars argued that the idea of justice is contextual and must be situated within the culture and traditions of particular societies. As a philosophy, communitarianism is concerned with the relationship between the self and community and critiques the overly individualistic idea of the self in liberal theories (Etzioni 2003). Scholars such as Michael Sandel and Chares Taylor critique the atomistic view of the individual, and argue for a theory where the individual is seen as strongly integrated within the society. The second wave of communitarian scholars such as Amitai Etzioni and William Galston focused on the political sphere and emphasized on the idea of social responsibility and policies that would encourage communal cohesion and harmony in the fragmented modern society. (Accessed online at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/communitarianism/)

to it precisely the same social characteristics which are supposed to by definition be absent in modernity.

Adam Brown says that Bauman does not anywhere in his argument distinguish between 'consumers of community' and 'producers of community' who are strongly committed to its demands of solidarity and reciprocity (cited in Blackshaw 2010). Citing his work on communities of football supporters, he says that there are two types of such communities – one, where the members are only lightly attached to the community and the activities are more performative in nature; and second, where there is a strong attachment to the community. For the latter, the community becomes an important part of their cultural identity to the extent that they are not only heavily committed to it, but also try to politicise it.

However, Blackshaw (2010) writes that it is important to note that such groups are not a part of Bauman's conception of the liquid modern community which constitutes of members who come together in communities modelled after an imagined traditional community, due to a sense of isolation and anxiety in the modern world. These groups instead are 'collectivities', which he defines as "the kinds of institutions that form a bounded area of social order reproduced and recreated by actors who have a sense of membership of that social order, which are constituted by like-minded individuals, generous reciprocation and the necessary ups and downs that accompany them" (ibid: 38).

Another extremely prominent way of thinking about the community in social sciences has been Benedict Anderson's (1983) theory of the 'Imagined Community'.[4] Though Anderson's focus was on the growth of nationalism, his work has been used broadly to understand the concept of the community as a social construction (Delanty 2010). For him, the nation is 'imagined' because the people, who believe themselves to be the members of the nation, do not all know each other. Yet, there is a feeling of

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[4] Anderson's theory of imagined communities was developed a part of examination of the rise of modern understandings of nation and nationalism. He writes that ideas of nation-ness or nationalism are "cultural artefacts of a particular kind" which were born out of a particular historical context in Europe (Anderson 1983: 4). It was the growth of new technologies of communication, particularly print-capitalism which allowed people to imagine themselves as part of a national community with a common history, shared culture and shared goals of the nation. The nation is imagined as a limited, sovereign, community. 'Imagined' here does not mean false or artificial. Rather, for Anderson all nations are imagined. Communities should be understood not in terms being real or not, but rather by "the style in which they are imagined" (ibid: 6).

belongingness, of being a part of the same community simply by the virtue of being fellow members of the nation.

Kaviraj (2010) writes that the concept of imagined community was a new and different way of understanding community. The earlier works like that of Tonnies had been "more genuinely communitarian" (ibid: 188). The modern community, especially national community, according to Kaviraj, is founded on a perception of identity, "which is predicated in turn on some conception of difference" (ibid: 188). That is to say, members of a community are bound together because of a feeling of homogeneity with each other, and a difference with others. This 'otherness' becomes the basis of the 'sameness' within the community. Bauman (2000) writes that it is not that the members of the national community, the 'we', are identical in every respect. There are differences as well as similarities. But the differences get overshadowed by the similarities. Similarly, it is not that the 'other', the 'they', is separate or different from the 'we' in every respect. They might differ in only a single aspect. But for the purposes of the community, that single difference becomes the most important one to dwarf any number of other similarities. Thus, "the certificate of 'belonging' contains just one rubric" (ibid: 176).

Therefore, as Anthony Cohen (1985) argues the word community conveys a 'relational idea' – the similarity within the community, and more importantly, the opposition of one community from others. The creation of a boundary "marks the beginning and end of a community" (ibid: 12). He says that while the term community has been defined in many different manners in social sciences, what is important is to seek not the definition but the use of the term community. In Cohen's conceptualisation, the community is a symbolically constructed entity. A community is created not only through social practices but more importantly through imagery, customs, habits, rituals, etc. which convey to the members a sense of belongingness and identity. It is in the meaning that people attach to them and not their structural forms which make communities and their boundaries real and distinct. "The reality of the community is expressed and embellished symbolically" (ibid: 98).

Blackshaw (2010) writes that in Cohen's understanding of the community, symbols are indicators of a common reality of the members of the community. At the same time, they also help to mould that reality in the first place, inspite of being "on the

face of it merely imaginary social contracts of both insiders and outsiders" (ibid: 125). However, a key problem with Cohen's theory is that it goes on to emphasise the cohesiveness in the community to such an extent that it talks about inclusion in spite of difference. In fact, Cohen writes "[t]he triumph of community is to so contain this variety that its inherent discordance does not subvert the apparent coherence which is expressed by its boundaries" (Cohen 1985: 20).

Hence, even in such new ways of looking at the community, its homogeneity, or at least an apparent homogeneity, becomes a characteristic feature. Cohesiveness, belongingness, and uniformity are taken as given and become the traits used to define communities, whether traditional or modern. It is this idea of uniformity within the community (whether real or perceived) which becomes the fundamental basis for understanding a community even in many contemporary works.

However, with more and more examples of real situations proving otherwise, and the rise of the post-modernist school of thought, several scholars begin to question whether a community really is homogeneous.

Problematising Community

In the recent years, major social and economic transformations in forms of globalisation, migration, trans-nationalism, development of communication technology at an accelerated speed, etc., along with new theoretical strands of post-modernism, critical theories, and others, have had a huge impact on the idea of community (Delany 2010). The concept of community as theorised by the earlier scholars has been found to be utopian and unable to reflect the realities of communities existing on the ground. Many scholars have illustrated that a notion of the community based on internal cohesion and uniformity lacks the sophistication and precision of a concept required to conduct a critical analysis of contemporary societies (Blacksaw 2010). Through ethnographic examples as well as theoretical tools, they show that communities are not harmonious, undifferentiated units. Rather, they are complex entities with social and cultural hierarchies and power differences. Any understanding of community, therefore, must take into account these dynamics.

Therefore, the call is for a "more problematised approach to the analysis of communities" (Parfitt 2004: 540).

Amites Mukhopadhyay (2010) highlights such a problematised notion of the community through his case study of the *Ruidas* in Bilaspur. His work indicates the differences and conflicts between the various factions of the society in Ruidaspara. Using the illustration of the continued quarrels between the *Beldars* (*adivasis* appointed by the government for protecting and maintaining embankments) and the other villagers in Sunderbans, Mukhopadhyay ethnographically examines the possibility of internal conflicts in a community. Thus, he writes that while communities are generally reified as "bounded and impervious, occupying a space outside the modern"; they are neither of these (ibid: 325).

Another example where gender becomes a line along which the community differences are expressed is the work of Madhu Sarin (1995) on gender dimensions of the Joint Forest Management[5] programme in a Gujarat village. The project was an initiative of the government to establish a partnership between local community institutions and the state forest departments for sustainable forest management and benefit sharing. However, the programme did not recognise the gendered aspect of the local community's dependence on forest resources. As a result, it is the better-off village men who take the decisions. The women, in spite of being much more dependent on the forest for livelihood and sustenance, lack the power in the decision-making process. Therefore, women's needs and priorities were left unaddressed, and their interests were not looked after.

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[5] The National Forest Policy of India, 1988 proposed "a framework for creating massive people's movement through involvement of village committees for the protection, regeneration and development of degraded forest lands". The Joint Forest management Programme is an initiative set up under this guideline by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India. Post reviews such as that of Sarin and other scholars, several NGOs, report by State government etc. Ministry has issued guidelines to improve women's participation in the programme. These include –

i) Atleast 50% members of the JFM general body should be women. For the general body meeting, the presence of atleast 50% women members should be a prerequisit for holding the general body meeting.

ii) Atleast 33% of the membership in the JFM Executive Committee/ Management Committee should be filled from amongst the women members. The quorum for holding meeting of such Executive/ Management Committee should be one-third of women executive members or a minimum of one whichever is more. One of the posts of office bearer i.e. President/ Vice-President/ Secretary should be filled by women members of the Committee. (The website of the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Accessed online at http://www.moef.nic.in/sites/default/files/jfm/jfm/html/strength.htm).

For example, traditionally it is the men who collect timber for construction purposes, which is needed only occasionally, and women collect firewood for everyday use. The male decision makers ignored such daily needs of the women while making plans and taking decisions. Similarly, *tendu* leaf gathering is an important source of income for poor women. But, because it was the men who took the decisions, they failed to recognise this and have not taken any steps to secure this activity. Rather, the source of livelihood is on the decline as the *tendu* bushes get shaded out by other growing trees, in the absence of proper management. Further, the monitoring and policing roles that were earlier carried out by forest department were shifted to the village men. This undermined women's rights over forest produce even more because challenging male authority was not socially acceptable. The women's role was, thus, reduced to passively implementing the decisions or projects undertaken by the forest departments or male decision-makers, themselves having no say in the matter.

On similar lines, Guy Gran (1983), in his examination of the Agency for International Development's (AID) rice agriculture project in a conservative Muslim dominated area in Guinea-Bissau, shows how women remained excluded and uneducated about the project in spite of the primary role played by them in the actual work process itself. Therefore, as Guijt and Kaul Shah say "words like participation and community often provide a smokescreen for professionals to avoid intra-community struggles, notably the micro-politics of gender relations" (Gujit and Kaul Shah 1998: 11).

These examples show how people may have different experiences of the community based on their gender position. Institutions such as community organisations, markets, government offices or public service are not present in a vacuum but are embedded within the social structure, which is accessed by men and women differentially (Kanji, 2004). Similarly, categories of race, caste, religion, class and other areas which stratify communities may affect people's experiences. To take another example, Orlone's study of wool export in the Sicuani region in Peru (cited in Gran 1983) shows how richer peasants and *mestizos* (mixed race populations) have the resources to avoid community labour for the upkeep of roads and irrigation canals. However, they manage to benefit disproportionately in terms of the amount of water received and the use of the roads because they have greater resources to be used in the activities which require the use of these inputs. Thus, terms such as 'the people', 'the

oppressed', or 'the community', which appear to be inclusive and general, mask the hierarchies of power (Maguire, cited in Gujit and Kaul Shah 1998).

Blackshaw (2010) opines that in the past two or three decades, the understanding of community has been extended to the concept of 'the public sphere', to be used in policy making and implementation. Thus, there is the talk of 'community health', 'community care', 'community sports' etc. Even here, the underlying notion is that of belongingness, identity and security that has come to be associated with the term community.

In her critique of the Habermasian idea of the public sphere, Nancy Fraser (1990) wrote that conflict is not only accidental but constitutive of the public sphere. Habermas (1962) had visualised the public sphere as an open and accessible space for all, which bracketed all inequalities, and where individuals could enter to discuss and deliberate on public policy and matters of 'common concern'. Drawing from work of Joan Lande, Goeff Eley, Mary Ryan and others, Fraser shows how qualifications of class, gender, and race become important criteria for entering the public sphere. She also shows that alongside the male bourgeois public sphere, there are several alternative public spheres, which she calls 'subaltern counterpublics'. These different publics have their own specific interests and priorities and have contesting relationships with each other.

Fraser's critiques of the bourgeois public sphere can be applied to the concept of the community as well. Like the public sphere, most conceptions of the community also treat it as an undifferentiated, level-playing field. However, the community essentially is stratified along different lines of gender caste, class, race, ethnicity, region, etc. This implies that there are different interest groups and conflicts. And these conflicts are not exceptional situations or a rupture in the fabric of the community. Rather, these are often defining characteristics of particular communities, as naturally embedded in it as any sense of belongingness. The notion of the harmonised, cohesive, egalitarian community where everyone shared common values, rights and interests certainly does not exist today and is doubtful to have ever existed. The community may be as fragmented and unequal as the society (with which it was contrasted) was believed to be.

The traditional writings on the community ignored the question of power and power relations within the community. But the moment we recognise that there may be differences and inequalities within the community, whether on the basis of gender or caste or class or any other dimension, the concept of power comes to the forefront of studying communities. Paul Mott writes that "[c]ommunities, like all human organisations, contain power and centres of power" (Mott 1970: 85). He proposes a model of the community as a set of power-centres. The configuration of these centres in relation to each other is influenced by various social and economic factors. He also suggests how existing political authority, control over resources can be related to underlying power configurations within the community and can impact community affairs. Thus, in such studies of the community, the dimensions of power become important elements. These scholars argue that for a well-rounded understanding of the community, it is essential to focus on these differentials and abandon the motion of an undifferentiated community.

Blackshaw (2010) argues that in modern societies, it is not a singular community that we are concerned with, but a plurality of communities. So, we talk of not only women, but a range of sexualities ('gay', 'lesbian', 'transsexual', 'bi-sexual' communities); not only different ethnic groups, but also 'neo-tribes'[6] (social and cultural groups which share lifestyles and tastes of leisure). Etzioni (1996) suggests that this plurality of communities or plurality within communities is not only a modern development. Even in earlier times, communities were never homogeneous and unified as is presented. Communities always had internal divisions and had a potential to be culturally oppressive. Therefore, like Fraser's theory of multiple and competing public spheres, we can also suggest that multiple and competing communities can exist within a seemingly undivided community. These may be gender-based communities, ethnic communities, religious communities, caste communities, etc. competing, conflicting or even overlapping with each other.

The post-modernist view of the community becomes founded on this idea of multiplicity and difference. Here, the sociological study of communities is based on

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[6] The concept of neo-tribes was first proposed by Michel Maffesoli (1996). He suggested that the tribe is more ambivalent and flexible form of social organization than the rigid modern form we are used to. The tribe is a 'state of mind'. Maffesoli predicted that in the post-modern era, as modern forms of solidarity declined, people would go back to the tribal form of organization, giving rise to what he calls the neo-tribe.

difference rather than identity, ambivalence rather than certainty, and going beyond unity to embrace a liminality. For example, while the modernist idea of the nation-state meant a culturally unified and homogeneous nation, denying differences based on language, or customs, or ethnicity; the post-modernism recognises this as unrealistic. Instead, the emphasis is on cultural pluralism, multiculturalism and globalism (Bauman 2001). The post-modern community is, therefore, seen as a 'fractured community' that "emerges along with the creation of non-foundational, heterogeneous societies" (Delanty 2010: 105). In such versions of the community, there are multiple levels of belongingness. The "group boundaries are also ambivalent, porous and not based on an underlying unity" (ibid: 118).

However, it is important to note that critiques of the idea of the homogeneous community are not entirely new. Especially in the case of India, we find such strands of thinking even in the early works of M.N. Srinivas on the idea of the village community in India. Early writings about the Indian villages, by British administrators, Indian nationalists and scholars, argued that the Indian village was a self-sufficient, isolated community in itself (Srinivas 1996). Sir Charles Metcalfe saw the Indian villages as 'little republics', i.e. they were almost independent of all outside contact and self- sufficient within themselves. This view was echoed by many scholars such Marx and Maine who felt Indian villages were characterised by harmony political autonomy and economic self-sufficiency, which remained impervious to the changes in the ruling dynasties in the country. This follows from a school of thought that suggests that a model community is one which is a '*compleat mappa mundi',* that is to say, a complete world in itself, having within itself everything that may be needed for its members to lead significant and meaningful lives (Bauman 2000).

Srinivas showed that Indian villages were interdependent on each other economically and cooperated with each other on a regular basis. Neither were they politically isolated. They were influenced by and had frequent interactions with the centres of political power. He also argued that socially and religiously as well, the Indian villages were anything but self-sufficient. He agreed with scholars such as Dumont and Pocock, who suggested that there were large inequalities within the village and that the village solidarity was only the solidarity of the dominant caste. However, he

argued that egalitarianism is not essential to community formation. Groups that are unequal but live in small clusters with face-to-face relations with each other may also form communities (Srinivas 1996).

Such an idea of the community, recognising that there may be power relations at play and inequality of location and experience is similar to the post-modern conception of the fractured community. However, Srinivas too talks about "common interests" which bind together the members of these unequal groups (ibid: 21). Post-modern conceptions recognise that communities are neither "homogeneous entities nor do they have a harmony of interests" (Wignaraja 1991: 199).

Role of the community in Development

Owing to the ideas of homogeneity and belongingness associated with it, the community is often believed to be a moral entity. The term community is not only an empirically descriptive one referring to a social structure, but also a normatively toned ideal (Plant 1974). Perhaps, owing to the way it was traditionally conceived by scholars such as Tonnies, as disintegrating in modern times, the community becomes something to be valued and desired. Blackshaw writes that

> "'Community' is a word most agreeable to modern ears, or so it would seem. Not only does it come ready-made with its own inner glow, but it also has a hand-made, homemade quality about it" (Blackshaw 2010: 19).

Hence, it is not surprising that 'community participation' has become one of the most invoked chants in the development discourse.

In the first chapter, we saw that after independence it was the state which had occupied the central role in the development process. However, the inability of the state-led model to meet the developmental objectives prompted scholars to seek an alternative model of development which was based essentially on community participation. This transition of mainstream development discourse from looking at the state as the agent of development and the community as the recipient, to one where the community was given an active, even primary, role in the development

process will be explored in detail in the next chapter. In this section, we shall look at how the different conceptualisations of community that we discussed above inform and influence the idea of participatory development. I will highlight how the traditional view of the community as a homogeneous entity dominates the participatory development discourse. The attempt will be to bring out the problems in such a conception and argue for bringing in a more problematic sense of the community.

Most community development programmes are founded on an oversimplified, and even, naive conception of a homogeneous community and continue to ignore internal differences within the community. Gujit and Kaul Shah write that this "mythical notion of community cohesion" pervades most formulations of community participation programmes (Gujit and Kaul Shah 1998:1). As a result of this, the biases, due to which the views and opinions of the less powerful are sacrificed in favour of those who are more dominant and can express their views easily, remain masked. In his critique of neoclassical economics, Guy Gran says that it masks the fact "that a project process does not enter a neutral universe, a world of equal economic men" (Gran 1983: 107). The same has become true for participatory development projects in the present context as well.

For example, Barron et al. (2006) examine how the Kecamatan Development Project (KDP) of the World Bank and Indonesian Government interacts with social tensions and conflicts. They show how the introduction of new resources impact local power structures and balances. KDP and other such projects frequently generate conflicts or interact with the existing disputes, often due to resistance by local elites to programmes aimed at empowering the marginalised groups. In some cases, the elites resist steps taken to involve marginalised sections in decision making, greater transparency and accountability. In other cases, the elites may try to appropriate the projects for their own economic and political gain. Also, there may be a conflict between competing elite groups themselves, each trying to capture the project for its own interest. The research finds that conflicts arise between different groups over which projects and proposals should be prioritised and funded, especially when there are charges of lack of transparency or corruption against the decision-makers.

Similarly, development projects in Peru villages were surrounded with conflicts along the lines of economic activities, conflicts between indigenous and *mestizo* populations, between people of different neighbourhoods, religions, or political beliefs (Whyte and Albert, cited in Gran 1986). Such conflicts can hinder development programmes by preventing communication between groups, or even prioritising the needs of one group over others.

Madhu Sarin's (1995) work cited above shows how failing to take into account the gender aspects in the Joint Forest Management programme affected the lives of the women who were the primarily dependent on the forests. Similar issues can be seen in the Sumi Madhok's (2013) work on Women's Development Programme (WDP) in Rajasthan, which spoke of women's participation and involvement in development programmes. It emphasised on the family as a unit of development and emphasised on strengthening the institution of the family. In doing so, it failed to address issues of oppression of women within families that perpetuated the low morale and physical worth of women. It also painted the picture of a monolithic third world woman, with a singularity of experience and voice (ibid). Citing the example of a particular case in the Sri Rampur Panchayat Samiti, Madhok shows how there is no reference to the caste identities or the varying socio-economic status of the women in the WDP documents. It generically describes them as belonging to families of marginal farmers. This is in spite of cases of social ostracism, and cases of unequal familial and social relations which affected the way the group of women in question received and participated in the development programme.

Vadivellu (2011), in his examination of the Department for International Development (DFID) funded Karnataka Watershed Development Agency (KAWAD) project, shows that notwithstanding the general belief, participatory practices need not assure a transparent and corruption-free development process. He illustrates how local power groups often get a chance to collude with the higher authorities, thereby increasing corruption and malpractices rather than decreasing them. His study of KAWAD shows the differential treatment of landholdings depending on their size, how boulders were removed from one site to be put in the other, or farmers were even paid money to negotiate positive feedback for the project. Corruption is not something that occurred only at higher echelons of the government, but is present, and more

rabidly so, within the community. A homogenised idea of the community fails to recognise power hierarchies present within the community which make such collusions and malpractices possible.

Once the power hierarchies within the community are recognised, the high moral pedestal on which community participation has been placed, also begins to shake. In simply talking about involving the 'community' in decision making, participatory development projects do not acknowledge that decisions taken have different costs and benefits for different groups. Social and cultural hierarchies play an important role in deciding which group within the community can actually participate in the decision-making process. Thus, in spite of the assured objectives of including all sections of the community, they do not acknowledge the complexities and differences of age, economic status, religion, caste, ethnicity, gender, etc. which adversely affects their success (Gujit and Kaul Shah 1998). Further, to look at the community as a unified entity effectively means to ignore the present and potential diversities of cultures and opinions within it. "Social norms are seen as part of a 'local culture' for development programmes to respond to, without necessarily unpacking that culture, or seeing it as the product of internalised power relationships" (Williams 2004: 562).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen that the term community has been conceived in very different ways in the sociological tradition. Bell and Newby write that "[t]he concept of community has been the concern of sociologists for more than two hundred years, but even a satisfactory definition of it sociological terms seems as remote as ever" (Bell and Newby 1974: xliii). My attempt has been to show through various examples and illustrations that the classical view of the community as a cohesive unit and a normative ideal does not exist empirically.

However, this is the view that continues to dominate many schools of thought and heavily influences community development programmes. These projects more often than not sprout jargons of 'participation', 'community', 'local knowledge', 'people's involvement' etc. However, in their mission to involve the local community, they fail

to consider that the community itself is not uniform. Rather, it is fragmented and stratified, and is composed of various, often hierarchically placed groups.

We have looked at several arguments against the community as a unit of analysis. These can be summed up as – firstly, it is poorly defined and ambiguous in nature; secondly, the conceptualisations of community are highly romanticised and never existed in reality; third, it is assigned a normative quality, which ignores concerns and problems with the traditional community; fourth, the minority groups always lose out in this process; and fifth, it is potentially culturally oppressive and there may be huge social pressure to follow even oppressive cultural norms (Etzione, cited in Gujit and Kaul Shah 1998: 8).

Peter Oakley writes that "participation cannot be wished or forced upon people. It must begin by recognising the 'powerful, multi-dimensional, and in many instances, anti-participatory forces' embedded in the community" (Oakley 1991: 4). By looking at the community as homogeneous and ignoring the internal power differences, participatory development projects have a potential to become tyrannical themselves (Cooke and Kothari 2001). I will explore this and other arguments in more depth and detail in further chapters. The aim is to evaluate participatory community development critically and while doing so ask the key question – Who participates?

-CHAPTER THREE-

PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT– EMERGENCE AND CHARACTERISTICS

"[T]here has been a growing acceptance regarding the importance of local involvement. At the root of this 'consensus' is the belief in not relying on the state - the prime institution of modernity - for development" (Mohan 2001: 2).

The concept of 'development' in the modern sense is believed to be born from the 'Truman design' of 1949. As discussed in the first chapter, Harry S. Truman, in his inaugural address on the 20th January 1949 spoke of the Southern Hemisphere as 'underdeveloped areas' (Haynes 2008; Rahnema 1994; Sachs 1997). This had been in the backdrop of the Cold War between USA and USSR, where each side was trying to enlist the newly independent countries into its own camp. Development became synonymous with economic growth and the way to achieve it was to emulate the aspirations, values, cultures and technologies of the 'developed' countries (Rahman 1994). These so-called 'developed' countries provided financial and technological aid to the 'underdeveloped' world with a sense of their own superiority on the development scale.

Conventionally in such modality of development, no matter within which of the two rival camps, the chief actor in development process had been the state. Deciding the developmental goals of a society and designing and implementing policies for meeting them was exclusively the function of the state. However, continued and often increasing poverty, the depleting natural and financial resources, the ever widening gap between the haves and have-nots, soon led to disenchantment with the State-as-the-command-system model. The state had failed to deliver development, and the

reason for this failure was accorded to a lack of people's participation in the development process. Thus, development thinkers felt the need for 'alternative approaches' to development. The aim was to build and strengthen institutional and social mechanisms which encouraged and supported initiative and control by the local community, accountability to the people and a self-reliant process of development (Korten 1987). The concept of participatory development emerged in this backdrop of a declining faith in the state and a call for a more 'people-centred' development.

In this chapter, I shall examine in detail at the concept of participatory community development, how it originated and how it has been understood by social scientists and development thinkers. I will trace its emergence and look at some of the major characteristics that are often attributed to it. A major emphasis is on Robert Chamber's concept of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) as one of the earliest and most popular avatars of participatory development. Also, I look at the Community Development Programme in India and some recent programmes and policies of the Indian government that give emphasis to participatory development. This chapter will focus on the various reasons as to why a need for these programmes was felt and how participation gradually transformed from a radical alternative to an integral part of the mainstream developmental discourse. In the following chapter, I will try to critically evaluate participatory development, especially with reference to the role played by the state and the community.

Paradigms of development: Alternative Perspective of Development

"A development paradigm is an agreed school of thinking about how to view development and how to investigate and assess reality for development policy and action; in broader terms, how to generate knowledge relevant for development" (Rahman 1991: 216). Like most themes and concepts in social sciences, the idea of 'development' has also evolved in different ways. T.K. Oommen (2004) broadly categorises three major ways of looking at development – mainstream perspective on development (MPD), alternative perspective on development (APD) and the post-developmental perspective (PDP). In this chapter, we shall look at the first two

perspectives in detail. The Post-Developmental Perspective, which rejects the very idea of development and aims to look beyond development, shall form the core theoretical vantage point for the next chapter.

Within the 'mainstream perspective of development' (MPD), development was understood as western modernisation to be executed by the state. Economic growth through industrialisation became the major objective of development. This perspective looked at development as a unilinear process, with some countries higher on the hierarchy than others and therefore being able to 'guide' others on this path. The newly decolonised 'Third World' was given the choice between two models – the 'natural modernity' of the capitalist democracies which talked of equality of opportunity through the welfare state; or the 'enlightened modernity' of the socialist state which pursued economic growth alongside distributive justice.

Initially, the "problems of underdevelopment" were seen as "technical issues" which could be resolved by suitable training, appropriate policies and adequate resources (Haynes 2008: 11). However, because of the continued failure of the state to achieve the laid out objectives, its predominant position in the developmental process began to be questioned. The primary reason for the persistent poverty and inability to meet developmental goals was attributed to the lack of involvement of the community to which the development programme was targeted. Till now, the state had been the agent of development and people were its recipients. Thus, there were two categories of actors – "those who do things and those for whom things are being done", the agents and beneficiaries (Samarayanake 1996: 49). But soon, it was found that the hierarchical government administration, with the programmes and policies planned and directed from above, was unable to relate itself to local populations and policies. It failed to see the multitude of development possibilities and resources which could be accessed only at the local level (Jain 1985).

The lack of any substantive change in the social or material well-being of the citizens began to raise questions about the capacity of the state and even its intentions. Rahman writes that "[t]he machinery of the state is constituted by structures which have enormous power over the people; such power inevitably invites bids to take them over or control them in some way or other to promote private interests. This is the central lesson of the present century's experiments with social governance through

the instrument of nation-states: it has systematically undermined the people's own governing abilities and imposed social orders – e.g. capitalist, 'mixed', socialist – which have predominantly served the interests of the minorities of society" (Rahman 1991: 226). It was seen that the government administration is often allied with the elite sections of the society, further diminishing access to development resources for the marginalised. A lack of community involvement meant not only lack of development but also the perpetuation of underdevelopment in the form of increasing poverty and inequality. Thus, L.C. Jain writes that, in such a scenario, "not only is development a sufferer but there is a growing loss of respect for the very institution of government" (Jain 1985: 15).

Further, it was believed that even if the government machinery were able to effectively manage the task of development on its own, to do so was not "conducive to the growth of democracy" (Peter 1966: 145). Participation of people in the development process was thought to be important for the functioning of a healthy democracy. The failure of development policies was accorded to the "top-down, blueprint mechanics" of the state, and there was demand for more "people-friendly, bottom-up approaches that would 'put the last first' as declared by Robert Chambers (Leal 2007: 540). It was believed that people are invested in the development process only when they have control over the activity and its fruits. Thus, there was a call to "democratise the economy by participatory development" (Gran 1983: xiii).

Another major concern was with economic growth as the core objective of development. There were demands to widen the concept to include social, cultural, psychological and environmental concerns. Thus, scholars began to call for an alternative model which was effective, holistic, and grounded in community participation. This gave rise to what T.K. Oommen (2004) refers to as the 'alternative perspective of development' (APD).

Oommen classifies two types of alternative theories which challenge the principles of the mainstream development perspective. The first type is where the goal of development is modernisation like the mainstream perspective. However, the means to achieving this goal are different. They involve instruments and method which are participatory and people-oriented. The agency of development shifts from the state to the local community. The second type of alternative perspectives visualise not only a

different means but also a different goal for development. Development is people-centred and aims to meet the requirements of the community which are "endogenous, self-reliant and in harmony with the environment" (ibid: 17). Thus, the APD was fundamentally defined and understood in opposition to the MPD.

Tandon (2001) defines the characteristics of alterative practices of development using this binary with the state-led development process. According to him, firstly, APD focuses on grassroots development as against state's macro-level development policies that tend to homogenise the whole development process. Second, it is to be characterised by small-scale and local-level development processes, and not big projects on a national or countrywide scale. Third, APD sees development as a holistic process which integrates all the spheres of local communities. State-centred development, on the other hand, is divided into separate economic, social and political spheres. Fourth, community participation in the process of development is an important focal point of the alterative perspective. Finally, APD strongly emphasises on leadership building and community organisation which gives this way of thinking an ideological and inspirational character.

Rahman (1991) talks about three key features that characterise the APD. Primarily, it talks about the 'endogeneity of development', that is to say, it rejects the idea that development is something to be 'delivered' to the community from 'above'. Development is an organic and creative process that has to be understood within the context of the local community. The planning, design and implementation of development has to be endogenous. While "[t]his process may be stimulated and facilitated by external elements, but any attempt to force it towards external standards can only result in maiming it" (ibid: 217).

Secondly, any development programme must espouse 'non-hierarchical human relations'. Any development process which is endogenous and people centred must allow and empower people to relate to each other and with institutional structures in a horizontal and non-hierarchical manner.

And finally, 'relations of knowledge' are equal. That is, local and endogenous knowledge of the community is treated at par with technical and scientific modern

knowledge. The development process has to make use of both to be effective and holistic. In the mainstream perspective which focussed on modernisation, tradition and local knowledge were perceived as barriers in the path of modernity and hence, development. The APD seeks to bridge the gulf between tradition and development (modernity). Under the alternative perspective, the 'community', which had been seen as an impediment to modernity, was taken in by the global development agenda (Mukhopadhyay 2010). Therefore, as T.K. Oommen (2004) suggests APD finds its epistemological roots in local knowledge; its implementation is based on the decentralisation of the economy and polity; and has as its hallmark methodology – participation.

Participation

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term participation as "the action of taking part in something".[7] Mallika Samarayanake writes

> "Participation basically means taking part or sharing. In a development context it goes further, with implications as to who shares, with whom, and in what context" (Samarayanake 1996: 46).

It was during the 1950s that the terms 'participation' and 'participatory development' first made an appearance in the development jargon (Rahnema 1997). APD advocated "the end of 'top-down' strategies of action and the inclusion of participation and participatory methods of interaction as an essential dimension of development" (ibid: 128). The emphasis was on the need and significance of the participation of the community concerned in the development process in all stages of planning, formulation as well as the implementation. Thus the idea is that development programmes are to be designed and executed at the ground level by the members of the local community. Hence, participation of the community became the fundamental requirement in this model of development.

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[7] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/participation

However, while participation of the community becomes an important element in APD, what exactly is meant by participation is something that has been understood in various ways. Somesh Kumar (2002) lists a few such definitions to illustrate how the term 'participation' is not a monolithic one. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America (1973) participation means "a voluntary contribution by the people in one or another of the public programmes supposed to contribute to national development, but the people are not expected to take part in shaping the programme or in criticising its contents" (ibid: 24). Thus, here people's participation was limited to people performing certain activities as asked by the administration. They are neither involved in the decision making nor the evaluation of development programmes. It is a unilateral process, where information is not shared with the community, nor are their responses taken into account. This is referred to as 'passive participation'.

However, in other contexts participation is seen as 'interactive participation' where people are involved in the design of action plans as well as the analysis of the programmes along with their implementation. Cohen and Uphoff write that "[p]articipation includes people's involvement in decision-making processes, in implementing programmes, their sharing in benefits of development programmes and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes" (ibid: 24). Similarly, the ACC task Force and working Group on Rural Development Programme Harmonisation, Rome (1978) saw participation as "an active process in which the participants take initiatives and actions that are stimulated by their thinking and by deliberations over which they exert effective control" (ibid: 24).

The Food and Agricultural Organisation in 1982, took it a step further and defined participation as a "process by which rural people are able to organise themselves and through their own organisation are able to identify their own needs, share in design, implement and evaluate participatory action" (ibid: 24). This is what Kumar refers to as 'self-mobilisation' where development initiatives are taken by members of local communities, independent of external institutions. While, they may have contact with such institutions and seek advice or assistance, the control over resources and decision-making lies solely with the community in question. He writes that while "passive can disempower community, both interactive participation and participation

by self-mobilisation can be highly empowering" (ibid: 26). This is echoed by Ghai et al. who talk about the "inherent strength of participation as a means of articulating genuine needs and satisfying them through self reliance and mobilisation" (cited in Samarayanake 1996: 47).

Gran writes that a participatory development project should necessarily include "popular participation in project initiation, design, implementation and evaluation, participatory mechanism for distributing surpluses created and for defence of such surplus by the beneficiary; cultural feasibility and economic soundness; process enhancing self-reliance, self-sustaining progress, and self-directed learning, and a scale of resource use and job creation appropriate to social need" (Gran 1983: 107).

For Ponna Wignarajara, "[p]articipation implies mobilisation, conscientisation, and organisation" (Wignaraja 1991: 203). Berger finds the call for participation as a way to render a "cognitive respect to all those who cannot claim the status of experts" (cited in Gran 1983: 20). Pierce and Stiefel note that "[p]articipation involves organised efforts to increase control over resource and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control" (quoted in Samarayanake 1996: 47)

Therefore, participation is a dynamic concept which is not 'measurable' by standard quantifiable techniques. Rather, it is through the examination of people's experiences of it that we can begin to understand the form and shape of participation. It is a process of 'social development' where people are the subjects and not objects of development; and communities themselves "seek out ways to meet their collective needs and expectation and to overcome their common problems" (Samah and Aref 2009: 45).

Participatory Rural Appraisal

Robert Chambers, a leading proponent of participatory development, put forward the concept of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) which he defines as a family of continuously evolving "approaches and methods to enable local people to share, enhance and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act"

(Chambers 1994: 953). Chambers writes that PRA "seeks to enable local and marginalised people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor and evaluate" (Chambers 2004: 7).

Participatory Rural Appraisal, also known as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), was mainly born out of its predecessor, Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). RRA had developed as a research tool because of growing 'rural development tourism' (that is, development professionals and administrators were people from outside the community), the failure and frustration with questionnaires and surveys, and the absence local people in the development process (Kumar 2002). The mid-1990s saw the term 'participatory' being increasingly used with RRA. It was in an international conference on RRA at the University of Khon Kaen that Participatory Rapid Rural Appraisal emerged as one of the types of RRAs.

PRA emerged out of two parallel events – one in Kenya and the other in India. In Kenya, in 1998, an RRA conducted by the National Environment Secretariat (NES), in collaboration with Clark University, led to the development of a village resource management plan. This was referred to as Participatory Rural Appraisal. In the same year, the Agha Khan Rural Support Programme, India (AKRSPI) with the support of IIED, London, conducted RRAs in two villages which were also called PRA (ibid).

PRA includes a variety of approaches like mapping and modelling, trend and change analysis, well-being and wealth ranking and grouping, etc. done by the local population themselves. It uses methods of meetings, group discussions, socio-drama, collective research, production and knowledge sharing through various forms of folk, oral, written, and visual arts (ibid). The process extends to analysis, planning and action across several sectors like natural resources management, agriculture, poverty and social programs, health and food security, etc. There are four major pillars of PRA – methods and tools, process, sharing and attitudes and behaviour.

Kumar (2002) looks at the concept of PRA in detail and tries to understand what it may mean in today's context. He writes that PRA, notwithstanding its name, is not only 'rural'. It has been used in urban areas as well and in fields such as adult education, policy influencing and advocacy, organisation development. Further, it is more than only 'appraisal' and extends to planning and action as well. Thus, he

extends the definition of PRA as a "body of methods to enable local people to share, enhance, and analyse their knowledge of life and the conditions to plan, act, monitor and evaluate" (ibid: 29).

PRA is based on the belief that "poor and marginalised people are capable of analysing their own realities and that, they should be enabled to do so" (ibid: 30). According to Rahman, it is based on the fundamental belief that "a self-conscious people, those who are currently poor and oppressed, will progressively transform their environment by their own praxis" (Rahman 1994: 13). It has drawn its methodology and tools from various sources such as research action; farming systems research; agro-ecosystem analysis; Rapid Rural Appraisal; applied anthropology etc (Kumar 2002). The influence of applied anthropology on PRA is strongly felt in three major ways – firstly, the emphasis on field work, staying in the field for extended periods of time, and participant observation; secondly, the importance of rapport building with local people; and finally in drawing a distinction between *etic* and *emic* perspectives. *Etic* perspective is the outsiders' point of view while *emic* represents the insiders' perspective. PRA, like anthropology, emphasises on the importance of the *emic* perspective in obtaining a better understanding of the local situation.

Chambers (2004) feels that PRA had turned many of the conventional developmental practices on their head. It is these reversals that give PRA its popularity and power. Drawing from Chambers, Kumar (2002) tries to describe some major differences between the conventional development practices and PRA.

Firstly, PRA aims at a change from a predetermined and 'closed' to an 'open' system in terms of all methods, behaviours, and processes. Thus, the local people are involved not only in conducting research for development but also determine the criteria and categories and judgement. Secondly, PRA's focus is not on measurement but on comparison, which is a simpler, quicker, more cost effective, and less sensitive process than measurement of developmental achievements. Thirdly, there is a shift of focus from the individual respondent to working with groups, which can give more in-depth information in a shorter period of time. Fourth, PRA aims at a 'democracy on the ground', that is, the planning process is shifted from higher levels of administration to the local ground level. Fifth, it aims at a movement from verbal to visual methods of research. And finally, there is an emphasis on building rapport.

According to Chambers, PRA helps "enhance people's awareness and confidence, and to empower their action" (Chambers 1994: 954). The philosophy and vocabulary of PRA stress on two important themes – firstly, the idea of equity and empowerment of the marginalised enshrined in the question 'Whose reality counts?', and secondly, the primacy is given to personal behaviours and attitudes in exercising judgement and responsibility (Chambers 2004: 7). Thus, Williams (2004) observes that while PRA had essentially emerged as a research technique, for Chambers and his followers it soon developed as a means of empowering the community.

Samarayanake writes that "[a]ttitudes and behaviour are an integral part of PRA" (Samarayanake, 1996: 56). The emphasis is on change not only in concepts, values and methods but also on behaviour and attitudes. This aspect of PRA is the hardest to achieve. This is because a change in attitudes and behaviours cannot be achieved through technical tools or material resources. It involves challenging dominant social norms, bureaucratic hierarchies, professional and career standards and movement from expert-based knowledge to local awareness. It also necessitates the decentralisation of power, recognising diversities and empowerment. Further, PRA is not limited to individual projects but focuses on the process of community participation itself. Therefore, it emphasises sharing experiences of different projects and different people among each other.

Chambers' concept of the PRA has been an extremely popular one in contemporary development studies. However, the concept has also been critiqued heavily on many technical grounds. A major theoretical issue with it is his understanding of 'social capital' for emphasis on individual development and empowerment and ignoring the power differentials within the communities. I shall elaborate on this further in the next chapter.

PRA is one of the most popular, albeit not the only form of participatory development. The ideas of community participation in the planning and implementation of development projects, the use of local resources and knowledge, and evaluation and appraisal of development projects by the local population characterise participatory development projects.

Participatory Development: Characteristics and Advantages

Some of the major advantages of people's participation according to Kumar (2002) are as follows. First, it increases efficiency as available resources are more utilised in a better manner, and thus, it becomes more cost-effective. Second, when people get involved and have a say in the decision-making process and implementation, it becomes more effective. Montgomery cites studies to show that people's participation in management and decision-making processes can "increase the effectiveness of farmers' organisations" and "improve the outcome of land reform programmes" (Montgomery 1983: 90). Third, many development strategies lead to a 'dependence syndrome' where people depend on the government for a solution to all their problems. Participation increases the 'self-reliance' of people because people realise that many of their problems can be locally solved through available skills and resources. Thus, it increases responsiveness, self-assurance and control over the development process by the community in question. Wignaraja writes that "[p]articipation and self-reliance are two sides of the same approach….In this sense, participation is also a basic human need" (Wignaraja 1991: 202). Fourth, participatory development has a wider coverage as it is a better way of making sure that the rewards of development reach the intended groups. Also, cost-effectiveness provides better coverage. Fifth, participatory projects are more likely to be sustainable because being involved in the development process. Further, the utilisation of local resources means the community to which the project is targeted has a sense of belongingness and ownership towards the project. This is essential for the development process to sustain even after the withdrawal of the external agencies in terms of funds and technical assistance.

Similarly, Gran (1983) lists some positive consequences of participation such as – increase in productivity by better use of local resources, more local creativity via applied learning, better compatibility with local conditions and ecology, greater diversity, less alienation of local population with the goal of national development, and less outside manipulation and dependence. Further, it raises mass human consciousness as a result of which "a less materialistic, more humanistic person will emerge" (ibid: 24).

This idea that participation in the development process will create a more conscious citizenry has been echoed in the works of scholars for a long time. Mukherji wrote that one of the key features of the Community Development programme in India was the idea of 'extension education' which aimed at "improving the quality of human being as member of his community" and to develop her skills and knowledge "as responsible citizens of a progressive democratic State" (Mukherji 1961: 35). Wignaraja suggests that participatory development, in taking the people as the subjects and building on their own knowledge and awareness, ultimately improves not only their resource position and technological capacity by the achievement of development objectives, but also imparts "greater community consciousness in a continuous process of praxis" (Wignaraja 1991: 191). Participatory development and people's organisations, if cooperating with each other, can lead to the emergence of a new consciousness and even a new structure of development practice. In the long run, such a system has the potential to develop a "collectivist consciousness, unleashing the creative potential of the people" (ibid: 201).

A key selling point of participatory development lies in its use of local knowledge. As specified earlier, in Rahman's (1991) scheme participation involves a change in the relations of knowledge whereby popular local knowledge is placed on the same pedestal as technical and professional knowledge. Development means not to distance oneself from traditional knowledge as done in the mainstream development theory. The conventional developmental approach of economic growth had suppressed local processes. One of the major reasons of poverty was believed to be ignorance of modern science and western knowledge systems. Participatory development recognises that people are intimately acquainted with their environments and can have ways of thinking which are "far superior" to many "experts" who come from outside (Wignaraja 1991: 217).

In participatory development, local knowledge is embraced and advanced. It involves allowing expressions and assertions of existing local knowledge and giving people the chance to develop this knowledge through self-enquiry, and even providing assistance if required for the same. Further, it provides an opportunity for reviews and analyses of experiences to further build up on this knowledge. Thus, participatory development aims at "[b]reaking the monopoly of knowledge at the hands of the elites" (ibid: 195).

A broader framework of knowledge provides the people with a greater choice in terms of methods and technology.

James Scott, in his book *Seeing Like a State* (1998), shows through various ethnographic examples that developmental programmes imposed on communities through the authority and agency of the state more often than not fail to achieve their goals. He talks about Le Corbusier's planning of the city of Chandigarh in India. While road intersections in India had traditionally served as places of public gathering, this new planned city prevented such street scenes. The city planning was an attempt to "transcend India and present Chandigarh's citizens – largely administrators – with an image of their own future" (ibid: 132).

Much like in Holston's study of Brasilia (1989), Scott shows that in Chandigarh too there developed an unplanned city at the margins and periphery challenging the schematic order planned by the state. Looking at many such examples, Scott finds that many of the great schemes of social ordering failed because of an amalgamation of four different elements – 'administrative ordering of nature and society', 'high modernist ideology', an 'authoritarian state' and a failure on the part of civil society to resist these schemes (Scott 1998: 4-5).

He evokes the Greek concept of mētis which he defines as "a means of comparing in the forms of knowledge embedded in local experience with the more general, abstract knowledge deployed by the state and its technical agencies" (ibid: 311). Using this concept, he tries to make a case for the use of local knowledge and informal processes which he feels are more effective and open to improvisation.

Thus, in the alternative development process which aims to correct the mistakes of the state-led development process, local knowledge is given a key role to play. It recognises that traditional activities and processes may be more sophisticated and subtle than a unilinear and single-dimensioned view-point emerging from a ethnocentric knowledge system of the West, which dominated the mainstream development theory (Wignaraja 1991). Many Participatory Action Research (PAR) projects in South Asia since the 1970s and 1980s focused on how people's creative innovations and knowledge systems can help in providing alternative modes of

development in communities. The aim was to see how these processes could build a countervailing power over existing processes that affect their overall development.

Along with this, another important tool is the training and sensitization of animators or agents of development. These include the people who actually work for the development programmes, including administrative workers, members of voluntary organisations, and local population involved in the development process. Wignaraja (1991) argues that this training is not same as the lecture methods used in conventional development processes which only imposes the subject-object divide. Here, the animator becomes "an integral part of the process of collective action and reflection through which the community actualises its potential" (ibid: 192). The local population is provided with greater technical expertise, introducing them to scientific knowledge of their economic, political and physical environment and elaborating their own local knowledge systems. The aim is to at the same time give them "a greater confidence and community consciousness" (ibid: 200).

Tilakaratna (1991) says participatory processes comprise of three main elements – awareness build-up, organisational consciousness and actions of self-reliant change. Awareness build-up, here, means a process where the people develop an understanding of their environment and factors responsible for their conditions of poverty and deprivation. This is not a one-time, unilinear act but a continuous process of learning and improvisation, which is different from the predetermined and closed framework of analysis that was often used by conventional development thinkers.

The second key element is organisational consciousness. This refers to the growth of organisations which are "organic entities created by people, shaped and patterned according to designs and modalities as decided by them, and collectively managed and operated by them to serve as instruments to create change" (ibid: 224). These serve as spaces to practice democracy at the ground level, with greater scope for flexibility and creativity as against mainstream development's attempt to organise people to rigid and closed structures to achieve objectives set by outsiders.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, participatory development aims at self-reliant actions of the local community. Organised groups undertake initiatives which are designed and

decided by themselves. Often these provide resource bases and enhance people's material well-being and provide them greater control over their livelihood.

Thus, the chief objective of participatory development is to involve the local populations in the development programmes which are targeted at them, and over which they have traditionally lacked any power or influence. Cooke and Kothari (2001) write that it is perceived as a way of empowering the economically and socially marginalised to make decisions about their own lives. The advocates of participatory development argue that a non-hegemonic and decentralised model of development which was centred on people and not the state would be more successful, egalitarian and well-rounded in approach. The emphasis of participatory development is on the 'local' – local knowledge, and implementation at the local level. Therefore, it presents "an alternative to donor-driven and outsider-led development" and is often "justified in terms of sustainability, relevance and empowerment" (ibid: 5).

Mainstreaming of Participation

Increasingly, the key principles of APD have become accepted in the national and international development discourse. The term 'participation' has come to be widely used, even over-used, in current development discussions regarding developing countries, civil society, the private sector, local authorities, women and marginalised sections, always stressing the importance of promoting the participation of these groups (Green and Chambers 2007). "Participation", as Peet and Harwick put it, "was no longer perceived as a threat, was politically and economically attractive, was a good fundraising device, and was part of a move toward the privatization of development as part of neoliberalism" (Peet and Harwick 2009: 218). The main principles values, on which participation is based – self-reliance, community empowerment and self-sustainability – have gained acceptance and are being endorsed by the mainstream theories of development.

Participation of the local community as an important way for meeting developmental goals has become the *modus-operandi* of all popular development programmes. Even

the most centralised development institutions include within their ambits some elements of decentralisation and community participation. 'Participation' has been incorporated into the development discourse to such an extent that Henkel and Stirrat refer to participation as "the new orthodoxy" (quoted in Parfitt 2004: 537). What had emerged as a radical critique of the conventional and mainstream development strategies, has now become "a staple of international development practice" (Christens and Speers 2006). Leal writes that while participation had been conceived of as a "counter-hegemonic approach" it soon "gained legitimacy within the institutional development world" (Leal 2007: 539).

According to Williams (2001), one of the most significant changes during the 1990s was that participation became the buzz-word to be included in the official goals of the national governments and international development agencies. He writes that this move of participatory development 'from margins to mainstream' was clearly illustrated in the World Bank's *World Development Report 2000/1: Attacking Poverty* (WDR, 2001)[8] (ibid: 557). The idea of participation as a key element in the development of the community was found in the discussions and actions of international organisations like the United Nations, World Bank, and other development agencies. Organisations of the UN such as UNESCO, ILO, and the United Nations Institute for Social Development brought our reports, held conferences and funded researches which emphasised on the inclusion of the marginalised sections in the development process, as an absolute key to their development (Gellar 1985). Initiatives such as Global Compact, Type II partnerships and agencies such as the UN Fund for International Partnerships have participation as a constantly re-emerging theme. Many landmark documents such as Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Millennium Development Goals, and the Monterrey Consensus evoke the concept of 'participation' (Chambers 2007).

Apart from international organisations, states too have begun to include participation as an important element in its development agenda. States make policies and programmes which not only support participatory projects, but enable and encourage more and more such programmes at the local levels. Thus, while APD was in its

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[8] https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11856

inception conceptualised in opposition to the state, as a counter to the state-based model of development, it has now been encompassed within the state's development discourse. The state makes policies to support and encourage the involvement community in development projects. In the case of India, soon after independence, the state made several policies which aimed at endorsing and encouraging community participation. In the following section, I provide some such illustrations from the Indian context that will illustrate how participatory development has entered the state's discourse of development.

Participatory Development in India

Rajni Kothari writes that a "centralised state modelled on Western style parliamentary democracy in which effective power rests with the executive, and within the executive with the Prime Minister" is not a suitable for a "highly diverse, socially plural (as distinct from mere political pluralism of the West) and culturally multi-centred society like ours which is continental in both size and complexity" (quoted in Jain 1985: 10). Initially, it was believed that power and resources should be concentrated in the centre because it could better deal with issues of poverty, unemployment, inequality, etc. However, soon it was felt that the state policies were faulty and what was needed was an alternative policy framework. Kothari feels that the major problem is with the very structure of the development process and the assumption that the state machinery would be able to resolve local problems. What is needed is to build a structure of participation. "Such a structure of participation is inherent in the democratic premise on which the Indian policy is supposed to be based" (ibid: 13).

In India, participatory development models are often located within a Gandhian framework. For Gandhi, the village was to be the smallest unit of a decentralised system, the building block of participatory democracy, which would allow everyone to participate directly in the decision-making process. According to Gandhi, the major cause of rural economic problems was the absence of people's participation in administration and economy (Kurien 2010). Decentralisation, through limiting the power of the state and creation of people's institutions and processes, was essential for a holistic development. Thus, the affairs of the community were to be decided, and

problems were to be solved through the participation of the members of the community themselves.

Community Development Programme

One of the key initiatives of the participatory model of development in India was the Community Development Programme, launched soon after independence in 1952. Mukherji (1961) mentions some key definitions from which the Indian programme took inspiration. The 1948 Cambridge Conference defined community development as "[a] movement designed to promote better living for the whole community, with the active participation and if possible on the initiative of the community, but if this initiative is not forthcoming spontaneously, then by the use of technique for arousing and stimulating it in order to secure its active and enthusiastic response to the movement" (ibid: 1). The United Nations saw community development as "the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress" (ibid: 1-2).

Carl C. Taylor spoke of how the impulse for community development in India can be traced partly to the independence struggle where 'the consciousness of the citizens' was roused for self-improvement, village improvement and community development movement (cited in Mukherji 1961: 21). The principles of community development were seen as enshrined in the Indian constitution and the Indian communities were to embark on the path to development using the same principles of democracy, harmony and social justice on which a young Indian nation was seeking to build itself. Therefore, community development was to have faith in democracy and individual dignity and choice. It was to be based on a method of persuasion rather than coercive force. It was to be grounded in local culture. And most importantly, it was to help in bringing about social justice by helping out weaker and marginalised sections. The aim was to achieve community solidarity and cooperative action by harmonising conflicting interests. The first Five Year Plan mentioned Community Development as

the method to initiate a "process of transforming the social and economic life of the villagers" (ibid: 19).

The goal of this programme was the holistic development of the communities along three aspects – economic, social and political (Moorthy 1966). Economic development was seen in terms of land reforms, consolidation of land holdings, modernisation of agriculture, etc. Community development was to encourage political development in that it created awareness of civic rights and duties and fostered democracy. And finally, in the social sphere, it aims at developing the quality of life of the community through education, family planning, medical assistance, efforts to remove caste disabilities, etc. For this, the two main instruments that were used were people's participation; and the state providing technical assistance and other help to encourage people in becoming self-reliant and taking initiatives.

Participation of the community was a key element in the programme. It was suggested that how people are involved "in the process of improving themselves through their own effort determines very largely what programme of activities the communities should take up, how these should be initiated and developed and how the agencies of government should assist the people in executing these programmes" (Mukherji 1961: 6). The programme aimed at dealing with local problems which could be best deciphered and resolved at the level of the community itself.

However, in the early stages of the programme, participation simply meant getting contributions from the people, in labour, cash, gifts of land and material. Hardly any importance was given to involving them in the actual process of formulation of the plan. Hence, it was only a passive form of participation by the people. Gradually, there were attempts to make the participation more interactive. The Balwant Rai Mehta report stated that "[p]eople's participation should not be regarded as merely as providing a certain portion of the cost of a particular work in cash, kind or manual labour, but it is their full realisation that all aspects of community life are their concern and that Government's participation is to only assist them where such assistance is necessary" (cited in Mukherji 1961: 30). Therefore, it was suggested that the Community Development Programme in India needed to be converted from "a Government's programme with people's participation into a people's programme with the Government's participation" (ibid: 29).

However, most f this remained only on paper and the programme could not bring forth substantial community participation in the development process. Any participation remained at best only passive and limited to implementation of the government's models and policies. There was no active participation in decision-making or policy formulation stages, and there lacked a sense of ownership and taking initiatives by the community.

The Community Development Programme in India identified with a 'back to the village' movement. It made "nostalgic references to the village community as a living symbol of harmony and prosperity in the past" (Mahapatra 1966: 108). It evoked the notion of the village as 'a little republic'. As seen in Chapter Two, this understanding of the village community saw Indian villages as cohesive and self-sufficient units in themselves. Though scholars like M.N. Srinivas (1996) substantially showed that this notion of the Indian village as unchanging, harmonious and self-sufficient is misplaced and do not correspond with the villages that exist on the ground, the Community Development Project continued to take this idea as its basic assumption. Even today most of the participatory development projects in India are based in rural areas and continue to have romanticised notions of the Indian village.

A few other illustrations of participatory development programmes in India currently are as follows.

Bharat Nirman Volunteers and other programmes

In the recent years, participation has become even more prominent part of development policies and programmes of the Indian state, such as the importance of the Gram Sabha in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), community-based integrated rainwater harvesting programs, etc. One of such programmes is the Bharat Nirman Volunteer (BNV) programme launched by the Ministry of Rural Development in the year 2010. A BNV is conceived as a member of the community who is trained to act as an organic link between government departments and the community to help access benefits available under various government schemes. They are expected to generate awareness about state schemes to ensure transparency, accountability as well as help in better planning and

quality implementation.[9] However, an assessment of the programme in 2013 showed that it was difficult to involve women and weaker sections of the society (Ministry of Rural Development 2013). In many cases, it seemed more of a move by the government officials to get the prescribed numbers than self-motivated action.

Hiware Bazar - the Model Village

Another illustration is found in the form of the state adopting some villages which have been successful cases of participatory development as 'ideal villages' to be taken up and replicated in other parts of the country. One such village is Hiware Bazar in Maharashtra, where the Gram Sabha took several steps – such as free labour, a ban on grazing, ban on tree cutting, a ban on liquor, taking family planning initiatives, etc. – to transform the village into a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable region.[10] It was termed as the 'ideal village' following the Gandhian ideals of self-reliance, self-sustainability and self-governance and has been adopted by the state government as the model village. A report submitted to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj declares that "Hiware Bazar stands testimony to the fact that village level planning can effectively harness the local resources to address local problems. Though the financial support of various government agencies was utilized the vision and the direction to the development activities was provided by the village" (Ministry of Panchayati Raj 2009: 26). The government of Maharashtra is aiming to create five model villages like Hiware Bazar in every district under the 'Adarsha Gram Yojana'.[11] This clearly emphasises the state's support of a participatory, people-centred model of development.

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[9] http://pib.nic.in/newsite/efeatures.aspx?relid=79730

[10] Hiware Bazar Gram Panchayat- official website (http://hiware-bazar.epanchayat.in/)

[11] '*Hiware Bazar village becomes model of development, economic progress*', IBN Live, February 18th, 2014. (http://ibnlive.in.com/news/hiware-bazar-village-becomes-model-of-development-economic-progress/440959-3-237.html)

Mana Vooru Mana Pranalika ('Our Village Our Plan)'

This is an initiative by the government of the recently formed state of Telangana. The program aims at decentralising development planning to the village levels. The aim is to "democratize development planning and increase transparency in government spending"[12]. This is to be done by strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Budgetary allocations are to be made based on data collection and need-assessment from each gram panchayats in the state.

There are several other programmes and policies of the Indian government which call for people's participation. It is widely held that in such a large country with a diversity of geographical and cultural conditions, a top-down model where plans are made by the state become largely ineffective. Local conditions and problems can be best understood at the local levels and hence development programmes have to be grounded at the local level. However, at the same time given the centralised nature of the state and calls for national integration and cohesion imply that there is an emphasis on concentration of development programmes in the hands of the state. In such a scenario, a participatory development programme which is sponsored and encouraged by the state seems a way out. However, the effectiveness of such programmes as well as their intent (whether they are truly participatory in nature) is debatable. In the following chapter, I will look at some of these debates in detail and try to carry ut a critical evaluation of participatory development programmes.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the emergence and evolution of Participatory Development. We saw how the call for alternative development approach based on community participation emerged in the backdrop of the failure of mainstream developmental perspective, whether the state was the primary agent of development and the community its recipient. It was believed that "the development policy and

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[12]Telengana State Portal - http://www.telangana.gov.in/news/2014/12/19/mana-vooru-mana-pranalika

action of the hierarchical structures dominating society [were] responsible for the dismal state of so many individual nations and of the world as a whole" (Rahman 1991: 217). Participatory development was espoused as an alternative which seeks to involve the local population in the formulation, practice and evaluation of development programmes. We have also examined in detail Robert Chambers's concept of PRA as one of the leading forms of participatory development.

Participation speaks of bridging the binary between the doer and recipient of development. It argues that if development has to be achieved in the true sense of the term, the community, which is to be the receiver of development, must also be its agent. It encourages the use of local knowledge and aims at empowering the population by giving them control over resources and decision-making power. According to Wignaraja, "Participatory development approach is based on the idea that in the nexus of contradictions between rich and poor, powerful and vulnerable, oppressor and oppressed, there may be considerable space for the latter groups of locally develop countervailing power and organisations, not only to keep the local economic surplus in their hands and set in motion a new accumulation process, but also to move to an all round development of their lives which is sustainable" (Wignaraja 1991: 191). It sought to provide a holistic conceptual framework and strategies which are flexible and take into account local complexities.

However, along with the advance in the concept of participation, so also has evolved the role of the state within it. Though the concept had originated as an alternative form of development, different from the mainstream state-led model, today, it sits comfortably within the same discourse and even occupies the apex position. This is evident in the many policies and programmes where the state itself encourages community participation.

At the same time, as we have seen, while there is a general agreement within the dominant development discourse that participatory development is the way forward, there is no consensus regarding the definition, nature or form of participation. Different scholars have defined and used participation in their own way. Similarly, the different policies and programmes which talk about participation do not agree on its conceptual understanding.

Nevertheless, the idea of participation has become an important part of the dominant development discourse. With its mainstreaming, participation has also come under criticism at both technical and theoretical levels. In the next chapter, I will discuss in detail these critiques as well as some responses given by defenders of participatory development.

-CHAPTER FOUR-

PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT – A CRITICAL EVALUATION

Modern jargon uses stereotype words like children use Lego toy pieces. Like Lego pieces, the words fit arbitrarily together and support the most fanciful construction.... 'Participation' belongs to this category of words" (Rahnema 1997:127).

As we discussed in the previous chapter, participation today has become an integral part of the conventional development discourse. Most developmental programmes of the state and international organisations have elements of community participation within them. The mainstreaming of participatory development evokes different reactions from different scholars. The range of opinions and responses to participatory development can be classified into two broad categories – first, those who see participation as a welcome change and a way forward to achieving developmental goals; and second, those who critique participatory development either in its implementation or in its very conception.

In this chapter, I will look at these diverse perspectives about participatory development in order to undertake a critical evaluation of the concept of participatory development. I shall first examine in detail the critiques that are at a more technical, implementation level. Secondly, and more importantly, I will focus on the critiques which are at a more theoretical level and challenge the foundational ideas of participation. The main emphasis here will be on arguments by scholars such as Kothari and Cooke, Rahnema, Stirrat and others, who regard the very concept of participation as potentially oppressive.

On the other side, I will look at the works of some scholars who have attempted to defend participatory development against these criticisms. The attempt is to look at these various standpoints and debates around participatory development; and without falling into either extreme position of utopian hailing or absolute censure, to understand and evaluate the arguments. The primary objective of this chapter is to provide a nuanced assessment of participatory development as it exists today.

Critique of Participation

In chapter three, we discussed how participatory development had emerged as a critique of the conventional development paradigm. It had been "originally conceived as part of a counter-hegemonic approach to radical social transformation and, as such, represented a challenge to the status quo" (Leal 2007: 539). However, soon it was integrated within the mainstream development discourse and what was earlier aimed at subverting the development orthodoxy, became routinised. It was as if participation had been found as "'the answer' to complex development problems" (Bastian and Bastian 1996: 3).

Becoming mainstreamed, participation has come to occupy "a moral aspect, according to the ethically defined nature of the goals it pursues" (Rahnema 1997: 127). Today, participation has become almost a moral concept, occupying various normative positions, ranging from 'do it yourself', to 'community-driven strategies' to "radical democratic notions of expanding the boundaries of the political" (Cornwall and Pratt 2010: 2). As a result, participation began to be taken as a virtue in itself. It became a moral and general good to an extent that its practice or consequences were initially free from any critique. However, subsequently, several scholars began to question this 'moral' claim of participation and critiques of participatory development and PRA began to unfold.

Rahnema (1990) says the dominant development theories recognising that participation was gaining ground were quick to incorporate it within their own sphere. Some of the main reasons why participation was readily mainstreamed are – firstly, it is longer perceived as a threat; second, it is seen as politically attractive; third, it is

also economically attractive; fourth, it is believed to be highly effective and seen as a new source of investment; fifth, it is a good fundraising device; and sixth, it can be used to served the purposes of private players and privatization.

For the purposes of clarity, I classify these critiques into two broad categories, which challenge participatory development models different levels of analysis. Firstly, there are those critiques which may be sympathetic to the spirit and the aim of participation but question its implementation and rigour. On the other hand, the second type of critique comes from perspectives which draw attention to the theoretical, political and conceptual limitations of participation and question the very core of participation as faulty and misguiding (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Brown et al. 2002).

Technical Challenges

The first type of critiques of participation does not challenge the ideology of participation *per se.* Rather, they focus on tools of participation, their effectiveness and accessibility and the methods of implementation. The belief is that while participatory methods are indeed most appropriate to achieve developmental goals, the way they are being implemented is perhaps faulty and has to be improved.

Kumar (2002) draws from the work of Oakley and others to point out some arguments against participation that fit into this first type. Firstly, participatory processes are usually slow because of their emphasis on in-depth fieldwork and may lead to a delay in attaining the physical and financial targets of the development project. Secondly, participatory processes may lead to greater requirements of material and human resources in the initial stages for mobilising people to participate in the programmes. Thirdly, participatory projects may not move along expected lines and planners have to be prepared for greater unpredictability and lack of control.

Oakley et al. (1991) identify three major obstacles that participatory development faces at the implementation level – structural, administrative and social. The structural obstacles come from the fact that central political systems are usually not amenable to people's participation and often act as an impediment. Further, the administration is usually control-oriented and has to operate within strict guidelines and predetermined

procedures. Thus, the local population usually gets very little space to make their own decisions and gain access and control over resources. And finally, at the social level, there are problems such as 'a mentality of dependence', 'culture of silence', strong domination of the local elites and their reluctance to relinquish positions of power, etc.

Most of the criticisms against Robert Chambers's concept of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) fall into this category of technical issues with participation. The first major issue is that of definition. When PRA was introduced, in the spirit of keeping it flexible and dynamic, the formulators avoided assigning to it any fixed definition or focus areas. This was one of the main reasons for its immense popularity. However, because PRA is not and cannot be clearly defined, it often becomes only a name that most developmental projects adopt without any substantial change in their activities. Cornwall and Pratt quote an NGO manager in Kenya saying that "we're in a mess – everyone is doing something and calling it PRA" (Cornwall and Pratt 2010: 3). This clearly illustrates the crisis in PRA. Participatory methods have become such a staple of the development discourse that today it is difficult to find a development project "which does not in one way or another claim to adopt a participatory approach involving bottom-up planning, acknowledging the importance of indigenous knowledge, and claiming to empower local people" (Stirrat 1996: 67).

A second criticism that PRA faces, is that it has become increasingly bureaucratised. Hierarchies of the nature of the conventional bureaucracies have developed with the agencies practising PRA. The labels used and the technical requirements all serve bureaucratic purposes. PRAs have largely become a quick, short-term research projects, acting as tools for mainstream economic research rather than actual anthropological work (Richards 1995).

Another main problem is seen to be that PRA methods may be too fast (when in the form of Rapid Rural Appraisal) or too slow (on account of anthropological field work) and do not move according to the people's own pace. When it is perceived as too fast, they are seen as ineffective and not taking acknowledging important details. When perceived as too slow, they are seen as incapable of meeting development targets on time.

Further, on the one hand, PRA became a way of getting funding where development organisations would simply tweak their existing project proposals to include the word 'participation' to get better funding without any actual change in their activities or methodology. Leal (2007) argues that with its mainstreaming, participation became an important currency in terms of negotiating project contracts, an essential element with which one could get development aid from multinational and government agencies. On the other hand, the coming of PRA meant putting more pressure on the local people to fund their own development from their own resources. Paul Richards (1995) shows that with the popularisation of PRA, Britain began to withdraw its aid from Africa.

Therefore, Brown et al. (2002) say that PRA projects have to be questioned along several lines – how is PRA understood; how is the staff trained and how effective is the training; how is PRA applied in the field what is the effect of PRA on the capacity of community organisations; who participates in the PRA projects and how do they contribute to the development process; how sustainable and cost-effective is the PRA project; whether the project gets recognition from the government; and, is the project still used by the local community once the implementing agencies are removed from the field. Using these questions to analyse four different participatory projects in Gambia on the West Coast of Africa, they show that, while in many cases PRA does contribute to a greater awareness and some strengthening of the local capacities, in most cases it is applied in a mechanical manner. It is hardly used by the communities outside of the project context and did not lead to the growth of any new development projects and programmes by the community independent of the development agencies. Further, the use of PRA as a technique is highly unlikely to be sustained on withdrawal of the external stimulus.

Thus, these criticisms look at participatory development as a theoretically sound concept which faces technical challenges and difficulties at the level of implementation due to several reasons. Many of them recommend different methods and tools, emphasise on attitudinal and behavioural changes, and organisational adjustments and adaptations, to help PRA become more effective. Thus, the problem is not that of the concept of participation, but 'bad practice' and faulty execution.

Post-Developmental Perspective and Radical Critiques

The second category of critique, however, is more serious and more radical in nature, challenging the fundamental principles of participation. This type of critique comes from primarily from the post-development thinkers who challenge the very theoretical foundations and the basic assumptions upon which the concept of participatory development is founded.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, T.K. Oommen (2004) categorised developmental theory into three broad schools of thought – Mainstream Perspective of Development (MPD), Alternative Perspective of Development (APD) and the Post-Developmental Perspective (PDP). We examined MPD and APD in detail and saw how APD arose as an alternative to the state-led development model. PDP is the next stage in development theory which rejects the notion of development conceived by MPD and APD and advocates "the death of development" (ibid: 19).

MPD saw development as modernisation, and APD argued for multiple modernities and developments and alternative routes to achieving them. PDP rejects the very idea of modernity and development. It suggests that development and underdevelopment had been defined by the West within its own historical context and to serve its own economic and political ambitions. Underdevelopment and poverty are first "invented" and then development is presented as a solution to eradicate it (ibid: 20).

Wolfgang Sachs, a proponent of PDP, writes

> "The lighthouse of development was erected right after the Second World War.... Today, the lighthouse shows cracks and is starting to crumble. The idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape" (Sachs 1997: xv).

As the different models of development failed to bring about any considerable change in the poverty, hunger, illiteracy, inequality etc., post-development scholars came to reject the very notion of development. They saw development as having been "a misconceived enterprise from the beginning" (ibid: xviii).

The post-developmental critique of participatory development comes from a similar strain of thought. PDP scholars question whether participatory development is actually bottom-up and empowering as it claims to be. They believe that participation has a tyrannical potential which "is systemic, and not merely a matter of how the practitioner operates or the specificities of the techniques and tools employed" (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 4). They challenge the criticism aimed at "methodological revisionism" and seek to address "how the discourse itself and not just the practice, embodies the potential for an unjustified exercise of power" (ibid: 4).

This category of critics argue that participation is "bad in theory, limited in methods, and is based on weak epistemology" (Stirrat cited in Bastion and Bastion 1996: 12). They argue that claims of participation and empowerment are only a legitimising tool for the same old top-down modes of development. It sees the ideology of participation itself as potentially oppressive and susceptible to being co-opted by the state and local elites (Brown et al. 2002). This is best brought out in Cooke and Kothari's work *Participation: The New Tyranny?* (2001) where they talk about three different ways in which participation can become tyrannical for the local community which it claims to empower.

Decision Making

The first tyrannical potential of participation, under Cooke and Kothari's scheme, is 'the tyranny of decision-making and control'. In the development projects, it is usually seen that the use of local knowledge is constrained by the bureaucratic rules and practices. Such constraints make decentralisation in the true sense of the term very difficult. In spite of the rhetoric of role reversal and empowerment, the actual powers of taking decisions continues to lie with the government and the access of the people to any decision-making authority, if at all exists, is extremely limited (Maru et al. 2009).

On major critique that came up in the evaluation of the development programmes of the state and was recognised even by several earlier scholars was that in many cases, participation is limited to contributions from the local population in labour, cash or

kind and the true decision-making power still lies with the state or project planners. The same was seen in the case of the Community Development Programme in India where participation of the people was only in the sense of contributing labour or gifts of land, material or money. Little importance was given to giving them "a role in the planning of programmes and in formulating their needs for the fulfilment" (Mukherji 1961: 29). Even later, when an attempt was made on paper to involve people more in the planning process, it was hardly translated into reality due to strong bureaucratisation and reluctance of planners to cede any space for the people to occupy.

Recent scholars such as David Mosse (2001) show how participatory development often has to accommodate organisational practices. Giving the example of Kribhco Indo-British Rainfed Faring Project (KRIBP) in western India, he says, often there is a compromise between the desires and expectations of the local population and the objectives of the project. Project managers initiate activities as ways of "meeting new social obligations, demonstrating their influence and retaining their status as educated experts" (ibid: 23). Further, the wider institutional set-up of the project, its relationship with local governments, donor agencies and senior management also influence the kind of projects taken up. Moreover, the delivery and choice of programmes are within the constraints of organisational systems and procedure such as time-frames, systems of approval, sanction, funding, etc.

Samarayanake (1996) in her evaluation of irrigation projects in the Kurunegala and Moneragala districts in Sri Lanka found that most of the tanks which had been rehabilitated by the development agency were poorly maintained by the local farmers. On field interaction, she found that this was because the farmers had been expecting further external assistance for maintenance. She argues that this was because there as a lack of involvement in decision making and a thus, a lack of sense of ownership.

The argument here is that 'participation' is only another way in which the state tries to achieve its own interests, while masking it under the veil of community empowerment. Participatory development quickly becomes moulded within established planning systems and becomes amenable to bureaucratic control. Often,

participation becomes nothing but an investment tool, or a fundraising device, or even a more cost-effective instrument of achieving greater productivity (Rahnema 1997).

Further, participation becomes merely a legitimising tool through which the state gets validity and authenticity for its actions. "The notion of empowerment was intended to help participation perform one main political function: to provide development with a new source of legitimation" (ibid: 134). Many scholars argue that participatory methods, for all their claims of empowerment and group involvement, are only a way of the state "extracting information". PRA is no different from questionnaires and survey methods where the planners aim to gather information about the people to use for their own purposes (Cornwall and Pratt 2010). Thus, Rahnema observes that participatory development "has already provided most developing countries, including the poorest, with relatively sophisticated systems of control over their populations" (Rahnema 1997: 129).

Giles Mohan (2001) argues that while participation has been conceptualised in many different ways by different scholars, the concept of participation is primarily a question of power. While it claims to be a process of empowering the weak and marginalised, Mohan finds participation to be a political struggle by which the already dominant and powerful fight with the weak and marginalised to retain status-quo and thereby continue their privileges (ibid). This can be illustrated by the fact that most supposedly pro-participation agencies continue to be immensely powerful and are reluctant to cease control. For an illustration, he shows how in the work of Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India) (AKRSPI), participation was mainly used as a way to smoothen the passage of an already formulated project. He says that previously, the state had been responsible for the provision and management of dams for the farmers. However, with increasing operational costs and lowering water table, the AKRSPI became involved and introduced a participatory scheme which basically meant getting contributions from the farmers. The farmers in question were not given an option but to become involved.

Madhok (2013) shows that the Women's Development Programme in Rajasthan, which was initially conceived as flexible and independent of the state development bureaucracy, has increasingly become a way of supporting the state's delivery mechanism. The programme had described itself as a "pioneering attempt to improve

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the status of women by raising their awareness levels and thereby increasing access to various developmental interventions" (ibid: 75). The women were not to be passive recipients of development programmes, but actually be involved in deciding the priorities of development. However, the administrative mechanism in this case, as in other state programmes, remained hierarchical, with the actual development workers or *sathins* forming the lowest level of the hierarchy.

Similarly, giving examples from parts of Africa, Gellar (1985) says, in almost all these projects, the central objective was to have the local community implement the projects designed and planned by the government. There is no community participation in stages of planning and evaluation, nor is there any attempt to involve all segments of the population in it. In spite of attempts to initiate people's involvement in the planning process, the developmental process in Africa remains largely top-down and controlled by the bureaucracy. Gellar says this is, firstly, because of a colonial legacy in the administration which gives a sense of superiority to the development workers vis-à-vis the peasants. Thereby, the bureaucracy is not only reluctant to cede control but often even overreaches in areas even beyond its control. Secondly, most projects are born in the state capital and are drawn from national rather than local developmental priorities. And thirdly, most projects in Africa depend on foreign aid, and the terms are therefore negotiated between the donor agencies and the senior officials, rather than between the government and the local communities.

Using the illustration of a plan-meeting for a so-called participatory development project in Uganda, Cornwall and Brooke (2005) show how all decisions and discussion was done by the civil servants, all men, who sat at the podium in the front. Much less take the view of the locals, there was hardly any interaction with them. The charts and figures shown were hardly legible beyond the first few rows of the audience, and the discussions were done in English and not the local language. They write that rather than living up to its claims of giving decision-making powers to the community, here the "'participatory' process is one in which participants cannot ask questions, and are told what to do" (ibid: 1054).

PDP scholars critique participation as a mask through which the state continues with its top-down approaches. According to them, therefore, participation does not live up

to its claims of empowering the people to make decisions in most cases. Participation is nothing but a process of "continued centralisation" wearing the mask of decentralisation (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 7).

Community

Second in Cooke and Kothari's scheme is 'the tyranny of the group' which focuses on issues of diversity and differentiation. In Chapter Two we saw how looking at the community as a harmonious and homogeneous unit implies ignoring the power difference within the community. Participatory development projects have "a tendency to treat communities as singular and unproblematic in their spatial boundaries, rather than multiple and overlapping" (Williams 2004: 561). They operate on over-simplified notions of the community as is evident in the advocacy of 'community meetings' as the forum for decision-making, talking about representing views on 'the community map' and drawing up 'community action plans' (Gujit and Kaul Shah 1996: 7). All this assumes that every person is able to express themselves freely and equally at community meetings, there is a single perception within the community that can be plotted on a map; and that there can be a single operational plan which will address the needs of the entire community.

Stirrat (1996) finds that the vocabulary used in the participatory development discourse, 'community', 'village', 'poor', 'empowerment', etc. bears a strong resemblance to the vocabulary of orientalism. Hence, he refers to this way of thinking as 'Neo-Orientalism'. It romanticises the idea of the community, evoking the image of an idealised community life. Such visions influence how official and non-official agencies involved in the development process view communities. 'Local people' are seen as "an undifferentiated mass, and implicitly (at times explicitly) these people are represented as sharing common interests" (ibid: 72).

This often means that the marginalised communities are left out from the decision-making processes and the development agenda is dominated by the local elites and their interests. The weaker sections like women, lower castes, lower classes, as a

result are not able to voice their issues and concerns and do not get the same priority in the development programmes as the upper caste, upper class men in the village.

Development projects operate within a socio-political context. Brown et al. write that it is "highly unlikely that participatory tools will themselves be able to transcend the ideological context of their application" (Brown et al. 2002: 12). Through their case studies in Gambia, they show that the participatory projects do bring about some amount of community mobilisation, but this is limited to the elite sections of the society. They suffer from the problem of 'idealisation of the community' and thereby privilege the literate sections of the society. There is hardly any evidence of empowering the marginalised or any challenge to the status quo. The participatory tools are easily subsumed within the existing power relations. Treating the community as homogeneous and initiating 'community participation' in this way has potential to do more harm than good (Mohan 2001). It may lead to power and authority being passed from the bureaucracy's hand to that of the elites, further marginalising the weaker sections.

Richards (1995) cites William Murphy's analysis of a public meeting among the Mende in eastern Sierra Leone, where he shows that the village elders create space for voicing different opinions in the name of participation and consensus building. But they retain control over the meeting and continue to manage such public space, through say, chairing the meetings. As a result, most decisions made are in favour of the village elite.

Many times, development projects see a nexus forming between the state, the development agencies and local elites, worsening the situation of the marginalised even further. Montgomery's (1983) work on the irrigation programme in India well illustrates this problem of collusion between the state development agencies and the local elites. The development agencies often enlisted the local political leaders in order to gain wider legitimacy and to be able to deal with local people and organisations in a better way. However, this resulted in sharing the power with the local leaders and elites. Thus, an attempt at decentralisation and participation so as to prevent "over centralised bureaucratic decision-making" may lead to in an "internal colonization by local elites at the same time" (ibid: 100).

In the chapter two, I highlighted Madhu Sarin's (1995) work on the Joint Forest Management Programme in Gujarat, which illustrated how, though the women are much more depended on the forest, they lack the power to define priorities according to their needs, and it is the better-off village men who take the decisions regarding the development process. This means that the women's needs and interests are often de-prioritised or even ignored. I also discussed Sumi Madhok's work on Women's Development Project in Rajasthan, which failed to acknowledge the potentially oppressive nature of the family as an institution. The project failed to recognise divisions of caste and class within the target group of women farmers.

The case studies of Meera Kaul Shah (1996) and Meena Bilgi (1996) of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India) (AKRSP) also show how gender relations in the society affect participatory development projects. The AKRSP was established in 1984 and had as its central objective to provide "an enabling environment for rural communities to manage and develop their natural resources in a productive and suitable manner" (Kaul Shah 1996: 244). It was envisaged as a participatory project and tried to involve both men and women in the project. But, it was not socially acceptable for the men and women in Bharuch district to share the same public platform. To overcome this, the project stressed that two members per household would be eligible for membership in the project, one man and one woman. While there were an equal number of men and women participating in activities such as tree plantation and tank construction, the meeting of the village institutions remained largely dominated by men. Even when the women attended the meetings, they sat at the back and rarely expressed their opinions. Thus, the gender relations embedded in the social structure of the community could not be overcome by the development project.

Similarly, Meena Bilgi (1996) writes how women often complained of the heavy workload, which could be easily reduced by purchasing devices such as pressure cookers, flour mills and threshers. Most of the time the projects did have the budgetary capacity to buy these devices. However, it was men who controlled the cash and resisted such purchases. They argued that the workload was not heavy and if the women had more free time they would while it away in pointless gossip. This

further attests how the priorities of the men and women within the community are different.

The questioning of the employment of the term community as a homogeneous, monolithic category has had a substantial history within the development discourse in India. K. Ranga Rao (1966), in his examination of the Community Development Programme in India, shows that when participatory projects attempt to challenge the existing leadership in villages, the old authoritarian leadership concentrated in the 'dominant caste'[13] group resists against the creation of secondary or multiple leaderships. His fieldwork in the Vishakapatnam district illustrates that the dominant *velama* caste worked strongly against the growth of democratic leadership. Village officials and other traditional incumbents of positions of authority increasingly became what he calls 'benevolent despots' and took to different methods to maintain their power positions. This included becoming patrons of different development projects, giving gifts of land and money, or starting schools, hospitals, etc. in their names. There was no overt caste antagonism, but they resisted the idea of rise in status of the lower castes.

The Community Development programme in India operated under the assumption that the "leadership in the village community affairs is broad-based and is generally informed of social purpose, not merely of sectional interests and tends to subserve the overall national ideology and objective" (Mahapatra 1966: 104). As a result, it ignored the key dynamics of caste, gender and class relations in the Indian villages, often increasing the inequalities and strengthening caste and class interests. Thus, participatory development projects may not only be inadequate at addressing the existing inequalities within the community, but may also perpetuate either actively or unintentionally.

The above illustrations clearly indicate that participatory development projects by presenting a homogeneous idea of the community ignore the dynamics and complexities within societies. They are often based on "naive conceptualisations of

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[13] The concept of the dominant caste, as given by M.N. Srinivas, refers to large and powerful caste group within the village, which may not be very high in the caste hierarchy but enjoys great economic and political power. Often numerically too it is the largest group in the village. They are usually the propertied caste comprising of big landowners, more educated and literate than others. This group, usually, inspite of being in the middle of the ritual hierarchy commands the respect of other groups in the community (Srinivas 1994, 1996).

power and an equally naive analysis of power relations" (Stirrat 1996: 76). As discussed in chapter two, to see the community as singular means having a deeply truncated view of the community which cannot account for the varieties of cultures and opinions exiting within communities in reality. "Social norms are seen as part of a 'local culture' for development programmes to respond to, without necessarily unpacking that culture, or seeing it as the product of internalised power relationships" (Williams 2004: 562).

Local Knowledge

Thirdly, Cooke and Kothari talk about 'the tyranny of method'. They argue that often participatory development projects over-emphasise on particular methods and techniques which mean that other methods, which may be more suitable for specific cultural sensitivities and for including the weaker sections of the society, are ignored (Maru et al. 2009). The methodologies, instruments and techniques used in projects are often selected on the basis of external models and interests of the aid-giving agencies, and may be unsuitable for implementation in a particular community.

For example, participatory development projects, especially those drawing from PRA emphasise on the use of tools such as maps, matrices, calendars, rankings, scorings, etc. These techniques may be helpful in some contexts, but when they become fixed, they may lead to the same problems as the tools in the conventional development practice of the state. Often, there is a tendency to slip into a fixed pattern of methods and predetermined sequences, leading to a mechanical application of tools ignoring the need and context (Cornwall and Pratt 2010). This leads to development becoming a homogenised and uniform process, losing the diversity and variety provided by culture. As participatory development becomes institutionalised, it also acquires lacuna of the mainstream development models of becoming a "package of standard available inputs" (Ferguson 1994: 259). Subsequently, the projects that truly demand new and unusual elements, the very things participatory development had initially sought out to be, become difficult to be approved by the development authorities. Further, there are great chances that these tools are used in a superficial manner and

become reduced to developmental tourism. The projects do not have any safeguards against this (Brown et al. 2002).

As seen in the previous chapter, one of the major virtues of participatory development is believed to lie in its use of 'local knowledge'. A major claim of participatory models has been that it reverses the relations of knowledge, where the popular ways of thinking are placed on the same pedestal scientific models and theories. It makes use of local systems of knowledge and ways of doing, which are better suited to local conditions. Thus, the claim is that participation not only empowers the people to take their own decisions but also instils in them self-confidence by alleviating the status given to their own knowledge (Wignaraja 1991).

However, Robertson suggests that in the process of development planning "very little attention has been paid to indigenous or 'folk' understandings of 'development', ideas which do not share the same historical roots as those prevalent [in the west]" (Robertson 2007: 189). Often, local knowledge is seen as inferior to existing ways of analysis or forms of planning. As a result of this, the process of planning is marred by n unnecessary and uncomfortable binary between the people and the state (ibid).

Based on his experience of the KRIBP, David Mosse (1996) shows that 'local knowledge' generated by PRA is shaped by relations of power, authority and gender. It privileges the opinions, priorities and representations of the key village leaders, while muting those of the subordinate social groups. Further, the local knowledge produced is highly influenced by "'outsider' objectives, intentions and analyses" (ibid: 146). People's ideas about needs are determined by the concerns of the project and conditioned by the relation between the villagers and their perception of the agency.

Drawing from Mosse's work, Cooke and Kothari show that "'local knowledge', far from determining planning processes and outcomes, is often structured by them" (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 8). 'Local need' is often informed by the people's perception of what the state or the agency in question can be practically expected to deliver. Therefore, participatory planning more often than not becomes the adoption of a 'new planning knowledge' by the community in question rather than the projects incorporating 'local knowledge'. Development projects often ignore that what is

understood as "'people's knowledge' is itself constructed in the context of planning and reflects the social relationships which planning entails" (Mosse 1996: 138).

Further, participatory projects often have a tendency to downplay 'technical' or 'expert knowledge', in favour of local knowledge. This positing of 'local knowledge' as against 'expert knowledge' itself is problematic and emerges from the same Neo-Orientalist mode of thinking (Stirrat 1966). It ignores that "there is no one 'indigenous technical knowledge' but rather competing knowledges" (ibid: 85). Moreover, it ignores that, in the age of globalisation, no knowledge system exists in isolation but interacts with each other in a global platform. Ironically enough, this situation exists alongside the context where categories of western thought continue to be used to judge and categorise the knowledges of others differently as 'knowledge' or 'myth' or 'superstition' based on their proximity to western science.

De-politicisation

Another major line of critique of participatory development is based on the argument that by using terms like community involvement, local participation, etc. it 'de-politicises' the notion of development. Adrian Leftwich (1996) argues that politics lies at the very core of development. As discussed earlier in chapter one, Leftwich defines politics as "all activities of conflict, cooperation and negotiation involved in the use, production and distribution of resources, whether material or ideal, whether at local, national or international levels, or whether in the private or public sector" (ibid: 6). The de-politicisation critique suggests that participatory development glosses over these differences and conflicts and what they entail. "[T]he gaps between the actual outcomes of participation, and the representations of agency it puts forward that lead to claims that [participation] is acting to 'de-politicise' development" (William 2007: 563). This means that participatory models merely focus on minor superficial changes, and do not attempt to bring about major systemic transformations. Thus, they do not adequately address the concerns in structural power.

Michael Pitchford and Paul Hederson (2008) in their study of the evolution of community development in the UK, talks about the changing nature of community

development, from a confrontational and campaigning role in the 1960s and 70s to a partnership model of working in the recent years. By the partnership model, they mean that on recognising the importance of community participation in development, the State has emphasised on working 'in partnership' with the community. In doing so, however, it has reduced community development to better implementation of state projects. Development workers instead of "social change agents" (ibid: 97) have become the "commissioning agents" of the state (ibid: 99). They argue that in the process of 'technical capacity building' and 'professionalisation', community development has become de-politicised and thus, de-linked from its goals of social justice, equality and empowerment.

Cornwall and Brock write that political ambivalence and definitional vagueness of the term participation can be used "both to enable ordinary people to gain political agency and as a means of maintaining relations of rule for neutralising political opposition" (Cornwall and Brock 2005: 1046). Building on this Leal (2007) suggests that the political haziness surrounding participation has been used to maintain status quo of power relations. The term has been adopted within the mainstream development discourse and delinked from social contradictions of caste, class, gender, etc. Therefore, "participation became another ingredient in the prevailing modernisation paradigm" (ibid: 543).

However, Leal argues that the 'de-politicisation' of participation is in itself also a political act as it often seeks to justify and legitimise the current political hegemony. Leal's critique of participation is not one of de-politicisation but of re-politicisation. He says that by losing its radical nature, participation becomes "re-politicised in the service of a conservative neo-liberal agenda" (ibid: 544).

Participatory projects often emphasise on the use of 'social capital'[14] by people to organise and participate in the development process. The concept of social capital was

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[14] The concept of social capital has been discussed by several scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and others. Putnam's conceptualization of social capital has been one of the most popular ones within the development discourse and has been adopted by several development agencies including the World Bank. According to him, social capital "refers to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (Putnam 1993: 167). Social Capital is productive, facilitates spontaneous action and is a public good which diminishes with disuse. Trust is key component of social capital. It can be leveraged to expand the credit facilities to groups without access to the market credit system. Just as conventional financial capital, those who have more social capital tend to accumulate it more.

popularised by Robert Putnam's (1993) work on North Italian communities. Robert Chambers (2004) draws from this and links 'social capital' to PRA. Drawing from Pretty and Ward, he defines social capital as "relations of trust, reciprocity, common rules, norms and sanctions, and connectedness in institutions" (Petty and Ward quoted in Chambers 2004: 17). This includes but is not limited to relations of friendship, mutual aid and cooperation, respect, social networks, solidarity and social cohesion, etc. Social capital can show the importance of social factors in development issues. Chambers (ibid: 18) cites a study by Narayan and Pritchet, which links household poverty with the lack of social capital. He relates this to the concept of 'sustainable livelihood' which includes not only various forms of financial, social, natural and human capital, but also institutions.

However, Chambers recognises that the idea of social capital can become a liability. The concept of social capital can be a greatly de-politicising influence of the development discourse. Often, it is the "better educated, relatively wealthy, middle-aged men who enjoy most of the social capital" (Harris 2007: i). The marginalised have very little opportunity to invest in social capital even within the family. The focus on social capital ignores equations and complexities of power, wealth, etc.

Babajanian's (2007) research in Armenia illustrates that the presence social capital in a community does not automatically lead to active participation of the members in the development process. The Community Driven Development (CDD) programmes in Armenia aimed at strengthening social capital by promoting small fund micro projects. It was believed that by "promoting the formation of community groups, bottom-up interventions can create spaces for community participation and interaction" (ibid: 1302). It was thought that by encouraging participation in decision-making and problem-solving activities would lead to the empowerment of the local population.

Armenian society, traditionally, had strong social networks with kinship ties and communal affiliations playing important regulatory functions. Even during the Soviet rule, informal kinship and friendship networks and personal relations became important ways of accessing resources and economic and social opportunities, safeguarding against social risks, securing rights and pursuing interests and identities.

However, the participation of the community was restricted to the contribution of physical assets of labour, cash and kind. They rarely took up leadership roles, independent of the state. Poor governance environment, rampant corruption, informal rules, cronyism and personal relations all prevented the Armenian citizens from participating in the development process. Thus, Babajanian argues that the presence of social capital need not be converted into a case of effective participation by people in development.

Rajni Kothari talking about village councils and participation says that what they have actually done is to help "the rulers to contain the forces of revolt and resistance and prevent public discontent and turmoil from getting organised" (cited in Lietan and Srivastava 1999: 15). Participation often becomes a way by the state to prevent the marginalised from acting against it by involving them in the development projects in minor capacities. Terms such as 'participation', 'empowerment', etc. give a sense of involvement to the people without giving them any real power. Rahnema says that

> "The fact that entire populations are robbed of their possibilities of relating and acting together, in their own best interest, is indeed a most serious issue. This represents a state of violence which cannot leave anyone indifferent, and it, no doubt, calls for action" (Rahnema 1997: 138).

Thus, we see that participatory models have failed along several dimensions to bring about the radical change that they set out to. In most cases, the participatory development processes, instead of offering any major challenge to the conventional development modalities, have actually proved to be "compatible with the top-down planning systems, and have not necessarily heralded changes in prevailing institutional practices of development" (Mosse 2001: 17).

The main criticisms of participatory development can be summed up as follows – firstly, the emphasise in on minor and superficial changes within the existing system instead of a major reform through political struggle; secondly, it masks the intra-community power dynamics and diversity of interests; and thirdly, the language of participation is used not to empower the grassroots but to bring the marginalised into the fold of capitalist modernisation (Williams 2004). Therefore, the APD, when mainstreamed and integrated within the state's development practices becomes yet

another way in which "traditional top-down development agendas [are pursued], while giving the impression of implementing a more inclusive project of empowering the poor and the excluded" (Parfitt 2004: 538). The chant of participation and community empowerment is only a way to mask the concealed agenda of the state.

Cooke and Kothari suggest that the claimed reflexibility of participatory methods, such as that of Chambers, is narrow and even "verging on narcissism" (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 15). Thus, they call for a rigorous self-reflexibility within participatory development.

Defence of Participation

In recent years, a new set of opinions has emerged which finds that the post-developmental thinkers have been too extreme in their critique of participatory development. This school of thought argue that the mainstreaming of participation and its inclusion the development policy of the state should be seen as a success of participatory models, rather than their failure (Hickey and Mohan 2004).

Within this framework, Glynn William (2004) argues that to see the state's promotion of participatory projects as a concealed way of spreading its own agenda is exaggerated and carries an air of conspiracy. It reads as if development is "an intentional project capable of being controlled by a narrow set of interest groups", whether it is the state or the local elites (ibid: 565). Moreover, in their extremism, such critiques suffer from a 'reductionist view of power'. If participatory development suffered from naive analysis of power because it saw power as a zero-sum game between the poor local population and the unscrupulous landlord, traders and capitalists (Stirrat 1996), the critics of participation often fall into the same trap, positing the state and the people on two ends on the scale. They seem to suggest that the community is a passive recipient of the state's agenda and policy, with no voice of its own and acting exactly how the state wishes it too.

To understand the state-community dynamics in this way is to completely strip of the community of any agency. However, the reality is far more complex than this

simplistic equation. "People are not passive beneficiaries of development, but active agents deeply aware of their entitlements" (Mukhopadhyay 2010: 330). People in a community are also active members with agency of their own, which they can and do use to negotiate with or even defy the action plans or models proposed by the state.

Similar to many development planners, the critics of participation also "fail to account for ways in which project participants actively re-interpret, negotiate or manipulate development interventions in pursuit of locally defined social and political goals" (Mosse 1996: 139). Participatory development actually involves new interactions and bargains between development agents or state representatives and the local population.

Sumi Madhok, in her book *Rethinking Agency: Developmentalism, Gender and Rights* (2013), says it is important to see how agency can be conceptualised within oppressive contexts. She draws from Escobar's concept of developmentalism as a "mode of being as well as discourses, practices and institutions that accompany any 'development' as a technical, political and intellectual project" (ibid: 2). Thus, analysis of a development process should not be restricted to the assessment of processes, structures and institutional forms, but have to focus on the informal and discursive practices through which people experience development as a lived experience.

Her work on Women's Development Programme (WDP) in rural Rajasthan and the village women development workers or the *sathins* focuses on the interaction between them the bureaucracy, NGOs, the academic community and feminist trainers. She showed how these interactions help produce new subjects and subjectivities among the *sathins*. They helped the coexistence of different development perspectives within the programme. The training programmes not only familiarised the *sathins* with their work and the administrative organisation of the WDP and the state bureaucracy, but also develop solidarity with each other. This helped them negotiate with the traditional patriarchal structures as well as bureaucratic hierarchies. For example, as a collective deliberating group, they could claim public spaces and participate in public deliberations and discussion about the panchayat or village issues.

Thus, while third world women are often painted as passive and as victims, they actually exercise their agency and are able to negotiate with structures of power, both bureaucratic and traditional. In social science scholarship 'agency' has been understood variously as "free will, free action, resistance, practice, praxis, performativity, motivation, desire, behaviour, choice, preference, individuality, dignity, independence, critical self-reflection, liberty, self-rule or sovereignty and moral authority" (ibid: 5). However, most of these definitions revolve around a central idea of 'free will' or 'free action'. Madhok believes this is an 'action bias' and calls for a change in the scholarly understanding of agency.

Further, while the community's participation in the development process does not eradicate the power differentials within the community, it does give a greater currency and bargaining power to weaker and poorer sections of the society against with these structures and relations (Hickey and Mohan 2004). It provides a better scope of negotiation with the elites and dominant groups in the community. For example, in case of a *gram sabha* meeting the marginalised sections, say women or lower castes, can act as an interest group or a vote-bank, which allows them to yield some influence, atleast to a greater extent than in the absence of such institutions. Further, being aware and conscious of their rights can give them a bigger voice and weight in community decisions. "The particular mechanisms, by which power is exercised, and the discourses and practices through which the power of participatory development works always have space for movement and contestation" (Williams 2007: 573).

As discussed in chapter one that in response to James Ferguson's argument that developmental role of the state de-politicised it, Akhil Gupta (2006) wrote that the developmental and empowering roles of the state are not mutually exclusive. Rather, it is the failures and gaps, the ruptures and contradictions which allow the possibility of political action. The same can be said for the de-politicisation critique of participatory development. No doubt there are many gaps in the participatory programmes, especially in the relationship between the development agency (usually the state) and the community. However, participatory projects can generate awareness and provide some expertise. And the very conflicts and fissures can become potential spaces for political action by the community. Gupta writes "I see critical reflection on

the discourse of development as a point of departure for political action, not as a moment of arrival (ibid: 231).

As we saw in chapter three, there is no single way in which the term 'participation' can be understood or defined. The effectiveness or claims of participation have to be judged depending on the way it has been defined within a particular project. Kumar (2002) draws attention to the distinction between passive participation, interactive participation and self-mobilisation, as discussed in the previous chapter. Passive participation is where people lack decision-making power, and are made to follow predetermined guidelines and blueprints of a development project. Here, planning and information sharing is a unilateral process.

On the other hand, in 'interactive participation', people's participation is not a means to achieve predetermined goals, but a matter of their right as citizens. They participate in the analysis, formulation of action plans, and setting up or strengthening of local institutions. Finally, self-mobilisation may be defined as a situation where "people participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and the technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used" (ibid: 25). According to Kumar, the effectiveness of a programme depends on the type of participation conceptualised within it. A project based on passive participation may be ineffective and disempowering, whereas one with interactive participation or self-mobilisation can help the people be actually involved in the process of development.

Taking this further, Kumar says that what is required is not 'participatory development' but 'participation in development'. He says while the two are often seen as synonymous, there is a distinction between the two concepts. Participatory development is a more prevalent practice and can be understood as a way of approaching the "conventional project practice in a more participatory and sensitive manner" (ibid: 27). However, it is introduced within the same project structure, with the same pre-decided rules and regulations, and operates within the same hierarchical framework where all the decision-making power lies with the management. On the other hand, participation *in* development is more open, flexible and radical and is rooted in the understanding that underdevelopment and poverty arise out of structural

factors. It is a bottom-up form of participation where the complete control and say regarding the project and its process lies with the local community.

Peter Oakley et al. (1991) draw a distinction between 'participation as a means' and 'participation as an end'. As a means, participation becomes a way to achieve some predetermined objective and a way of utilising the existing resources for this purpose. Thus, the emphasis is more on the set goals and not on the act of participation itself. It is a short-term, passive type of participation. However, 'participation as end' attempts to allow people to be more meaningfully involved in their own development and to increase their role in the achieving as well as determining the development objectives. The focus here is not on merely achieving the developmental goals, but at improving people's abilities, and to empower them to participate. Thus, participation is a long-term, active and dynamic process.

Building upon this distinction, Parfitt (2004), says that how one understands the power relations within the process of participatory development is necessary influenced by how one defines participation itself. If participation is understood as the way to achieve a particular type of development and a means to mobilise people towards achieving already decided goals of this development, then there will be no difference in the power dynamics of a participatory process and that of the state-led top-down models of development. However, if participation is seen as 'an end I itself', a process by which the local populations determine their own developmental objectives and the ways to achieve them, then the community can be seen as "empowered and liberated from a clientelist relation" with the state (ibid: 539). ,

Moreover, participation as a means is a short-lived project and is imposed on the community superficially by the state and development agencies. It ends a soon as the particular project is over. On the other hand, as an end, participation takes a "a more problematised approach to the analysis of communities" (ibid: 540). It acknowledges the power dynamics within the community and can critically look at who participates and who is empowered. Therefore, as an end in itself, participation has a politically radical character to it which challenges the existing power structures and relations.

Similarly, John Montgomery (1983) shows that extreme views such as 'participation is always harmful' or 'participation is always helpful' are too simplistic. Rather, it

depends on a particular context of the development project as to whether participation may be helpful. He cites the example of the 1970s programme of the Indian government to set up Command Area Development Authorities (CADA) at local levels. The CADA had an independent budget and administrators and was to act as a united office to handle functions earlier carried out by four different ministries – irrigation, agriculture, soil conservation and cooperatives. These schemes all tried to reorganise irrigation services at higher levels of the bureaucracy and had no space for prior local claims and customs. Irrigation faces many natural constraints, such as water flows downhill, and reductions in quantity as water passes through a canal. The development project should be such that water is brought through the shortest possible route which is suitable for the terrain and ensures least possible wastage. Thus, many local decisions have to be taken independently of, and sometimes, in contradiction to the national water laws and administrative regulations. However, if irrigation was to be determined by each local situation, it would probably fail because users may be incapable of or averse to cater to the requirements of all. Hence, while local participation may aid some aspects of irrigation development, it need not benefit all such projects equally.

Hence, Montgomery suggests that decentralisation or participation just for the sake of it may not be beneficial always. The call for participation should not mean that the local population is always better-equipped than the state to address developmental needs. Rather, the idea should be to focus on behaviours and performances and to link the efforts of planners and administrators to the knowledge and resources of the people so as to produce better results. Wingnaraja suggests that

> "[t]he very nature of participatory self-reliant development activities is such that they eventually attract the attention of the power structure. Some activities are co-opted, others are exterminated, some are repressed, some survive. Those who survive, existing in isolation, do not add up to much in terms of social transformation. But if they are properly linked and if they multiply themselves, they can become a countervailing power in the societal context and help to widen the political space even further" (Wignaraja 2001: 203).

Therefore, we can see that the concept of participation is broad and diverse. Its nature and experience vary from case to case. Many examples can be provided to illustrate

both the success as well as the failure of participatory development models. Also varied are the roles of the state and community within it and their relationship. In some cases, the state dominates over the community, in others the community poses challenges to the state's developmental agenda. In the next section, I will briefly outline the role of a third actor, the NGO sector in development. The study of the civil society and NGOs in itself has a long tradition within sociology. In this section, however, I will only look at this sector with reference to its role as a mediator between the state and community in the development sector.

Role of NGOs and Civil Society Organisations– A critical evaluation

The growth of the idea of participation development and the call for community involvement in development saw a parallel rise in the importance of civil society in the development sector, embodied in the image of the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs). In contemporary contexts, civil society is largely defined in relation to the state, often as what the state is not. Thus, Fischer defines the civil society as "that segment of the society that interacts with the state, influences the state and yet is distinct from the state" (Fischer 1997: 447). Ghosh (2009) writes that what is common amongst the several different definitions of civil society is the emphasis on the individual autonomy, protection of individual freedoms and rights, egalitarianism and equal right to access the decision-making apparatus, and framework of popular participation.[15]

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[15] Though not directly relevant to my discussion, it is important to note Partha Chatterjee's distinction between Civil Society and Political society (Chatterjee 2002). He writes that the civil society as a concept originated in the specific historical context of modernity in the West and its domain is fairly restricted in the non-western societies such as India. He suggests the category of 'political society' which refers to the domain of political transactions taking place outside of the formal institutional framework of say, the judiciary or bureaucracy, and acts as the mediating between the civil society and the state (Joseph 2002). It is through the informal means of the political society that the poor in India negotiate access to resources. Chatterjee argues that the political mobilizations in many cases are founded on violations of law. They make demands of the state as a matter of 'right' and these demands are collective, rather than individual in nature. Further, their recognition by the state depends on the degree to which they are able to exert pressure upon it (Chatterjee 2002).

While it is largely believed that the mushrooming of NGOs is due to the "declining legitimacy of the state" (Baviskar 2001: 6), there are various theories within this broader notion. Sama (2010) examines three such theories – firstly, the performance failure theory, which holds that NGOs emerged to meet the demand for public goods in the society; secondly, the contract failure theory which holds the NGOs act as reliable mediators between the people and entrepreneurs; and thirdly, the theory of partnership or interdependence which propounds that the relation between NGOs and government can be conflictual, interdependent or a partnership, depending on the context. Thus, most of the theories agree that NGOs emerged to undertake those developmental activities that were earlier the domain of the government. Hence, the civil society with its NGOs and voluntary organisations are often referred to as the "Third Sector" of development (the first being the government and the second being the corporate sector) (Tandon 1991).

K. O. Peters (1966) highlighted this idea of the NGO as an intermediary between the government and the people, aiding both in the development process and the growth of a healthy democracy. He suggested that voluntary organisations provide an "effective way for people to participate in development programmes" (ibid: 144). NGOs can guide people towards modern and scientific knowledge and make them aware of the social legislations

Wignaraja writes that if the civil society organisations are linked to each other, they can help sustain each other by exchanging of ideas and experiences, which can eventually lead to the emergence of "a new consciousness" as well as "a new kind of structure" (Wignaraja 1991: 200). Such a system would allow for decentralisation of power and people's participation in the development process in the true sense of the term. This could act as a safeguard against the prevailing inequality and repressive conditions in the society.

Nikkhah and Redzuan (2010) examine the role of NGOs in promoting sustainable community development under two heads – firstly, 'empowering people' which is seen as a merit of the organisations; and secondly, the strategies undertaken by NGOs to bring about empowerment. They define sustainable community development as a process by which equilibrium is maintained between the concerns of development and

concerns of environment, which at the same time fosters community relationships (ibid).

NGOs help to meet economic needs while enhancing and protecting the environment and promoting more humane societies through three broad functions – firstly, providing microfinance (i.e. providing access to loans ad saving services which were earlier unavailable especially to women); secondly, capacity-building (developing skills and knowledge base of residents either as a means to achieve economic and social needs, or as an end in itself, but always as a continuous process); and thirdly, promoting self-reliance (allowing people to get control over local resources and technology and using them and their own initiatives and abilities for their own development). Activities of the NGOs to promote these three goals would, it is suggested, lead to economic, social and individual empowerment and eventually lead to sustainable community development.

The contemporary development thinking emphasises on human development, community development, sustainable development, etc. The NGO sector speaking about all of these ingratiates itself with the advocates of people-centred development. The World Bank defines NGOs as "private organisations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development" (Ghosh 2009: 232). However, it is important to note that NGOs are far from monolithic. NGOs are variously defined by different people, based on their different perceptions of NGOs' origins, capacities, objectives and impacts (Fischer 1997).

Differences in definitions notwithstanding, most scholars seemed to agree that the NGO plays an important role in people-centred development and the necessity of the state being accountable to the civil society. It was largely believed that civil society's involvement in the developmental activities aids the process of democratisation and encourages people to mobilise and manage their own local resources (Korten 1987). Tandon (1991) writes that it is the civil society which is "supreme", and not the state. He says there is a need for state institutions and practices to be rooted in the morality, norm and values of civil society. There is a need to allow the civil society to question, debate, critique and reject state policies and agencies. Also, civil society organisations are seen as important mediating factors between the government institutions and

individual families. He says that while the state represents a "politics of domination", the civil society represents a "politics of consent" (ibid: 9; see also Chatterjee (2002) cited above for a problematisation of the notion of 'civil society' for post-colonial contexts).

This general optimism about NGOs, according to Fischer, is derived from a sense of NGOs as "doing good" – "unencumbered and untainted by politics of government or the greed of the market" (Fischer 1997: 442). This is illustrated by the fact that they are described as non-governmental, private voluntary and non-profit. However, Sama (2010) shows how such connotations may be problematic. The term 'non-governmental' implies a distance from the government and makes it difficult to categorise many foundations, inter-governmental organisations, quasi-non-governmental organisations or organisations belonging to the indirect public administration.

In India, from the seventh Five Year plan onwards, the government has encouraged NGO participation. The relationship between governments and civil society is both "ambivalent and dynamic, sometimes cooperative, sometimes contentious, sometimes both simultaneously" (Fischer 1997: 455). In many cases, participatory development only means the "NGO acting simply as a delivery mechanism for a pre-determined development agenda" (Mohan 2001: 10).

Again, the virtue of NGOs is often held to be that they are politically neutral and hence in the interest of all. However, the civil society organisations are inspired by a particular vision of society. The values of different organisations may differ, but they are not value-neutral. Thus, Fischer (1997) writes that though NGOs may present their own views as objective facts or standards, which are outside of the possibility of political contestations, these are actually ethical judgements and therefore, essentially political. Moreover, the belief in the neutrality of NGOs disguises the fact that many of these are organised and financed by commercial or political interests of individuals or groups. Writing about NGOs in India, Beteille noted that they are unable to escape the institution of kinship and are highly influenced by family, religion, narrow party politicking (cited in Ghosh, 2009). Often civil society organisations become covers for organised crimes, platforms for failed politicians, and masks for ethnic mobilisation and insurgent activities. Increasing cases of scams and corruption reveal

that the NGOs often suffer the same problems they accuse the government of having. The authority structures of NGOs can be highly idiosyncratic, paternalistic and authoritarian in nature.

The relationship between the civil society organisations and the market is another problematic area. While some see the NGOs being opposed to economic growth and private enterprise (Tandon 2001), others see it matching the neoliberal agenda of government roll back and decentralisation (Ghosh 2009). The rise of market, media and middle class post the liberalisation policy of the 1990s is seen to be providing a stimulus to the growth of NGOs. Increased competition often leads to compromise in the quality and a blind chasing of higher numbers. Also, their relation to funding organisation is Janus-faced. While, on the one hand, donor agencies provide access to resources and influence in global forums, on the other, it means the NGOs have to operate within the guidelines and principles laid down by those agencies, largely limiting their autonomy. Often, patron-client relations are forged between the donors and the civil society organisations, leading them to promote certain political or commercial interests.

Another dilemma faced by the civil society is that between resistance and reform (Tandon 2001). Most civil society organisations today focus on resistance against certain programmes and policies that are seen to be inimical to the interest of the society (anti-dam, anti-mining, anti-caste movements, for example). However, they remain largely ineffective or even inactive in bringing about institutional and policy reforms. Further, the emphasis on civil society may lead to a competition between local NGOs. This may result in weaker organisations being ignored in favour of large, semi-commercial organisations (Mohan 2001).

Thus, a critical evaluation of the idea of NGOs and civil society organisations shows that though they were designed to be the bridge between the state and the community in the development process, they pose their own set of contradictions and problems. The role of the civil society as an intermediary between the state and community is a highly complex one. One hand, the civil society is believed to be closer to the modern democratic state with its principles of equality, freedom, individuality, etc. and opposed to the community. On the other hand, it is seen as closer to the community in opposition to the state. Therefore, if the state is repressive, people want the civil

society to come out of its control; if the state has a large but ineffective presence, they demand creation of other bodies which can address developmental needs; and if the state is unresponsive, the demand is for grassroots organisations for voicing concerns of the marginalised sections (Kaviraj 2002). In each case the demand and significance are different, but the demand is for a revival of civil society.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to evaluate the concept of participatory development critically. The critiques of participation have been discussed along two lines, viz., the technical and the theoretical. The former apply to more technical issues such as effectiveness, time, etc. but agree that the principle of participation is sound and the most suitable manner to pursue the goal of development. The latter, however, are more nuanced and question the principles of participation. Broadly, they pertain to decision-making powers of the community, the question of divisions and conflicts within the community, the idea of local knowledge and the de-politicisation of development. Further, I have dealt with some responses given to these critiques in defence of participation. Lastly, I have discussed the role of the NGO sector in the development process as a mediator between the state and community.

The main picture that comes through from the multiplicity of experiences and theoretical strands is that participatory development is a very multifaceted and vibrant process. It cannot be defined or understood using a single theoretical vantage point or a particular empirical context. Examples supporting both the critics and defenders of participation, many times from the same case study, can be found. The nature, form and experience of community participation are wide-ranging and varied. Equally diverse is the role played by the state and community within it, and the ways in which they interact with each other. Sometimes the state through its monopoly of decision-making or its domineering bureaucratic structure hinders the community to gain any space in the development process. In some other cases, the community through active mobilisation and political action within the very scope of the development project, resist state domination and voice their concerns. It yet other cases, the community

through its social structure and traditions resists state's attempt to bring about development.

Therefore, participation is a complex and dynamic concept. A radical critique or a utopian hailing of participation, both are too crude and ignore the sophistication and complexities of this model. In the present day context, participatory development, cannot be understood in its earlier *avatar* – that of a substitute for the top-down state-centred development. The relationship between the state and community is complex and dialectical. Each influences the other and in doing so gives birth to mixed forms of development which do not completely fit into either of the earlier modes (Oommen, 2004). It is not simply a local-level development practice, but one where the outside – comprising of the State and other organisations – actively support to bring about an indigenous development.

PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT: ROLE OF THE STATE AND THE COMMUNITY

"The word 'development' [is] a very powerful means of expressing the conception of societal progress as the flowering of people's creativity." (Rahman 1994: 214)

"Development gradually acquired a new face – the face of a repentant saint, ready to amend, to work in a new fashion with the poor, and even to learn from them…. To give itself a participatory face, and a saintly mission to serve and work with the poor, was thus the last temptation of development" (Rahnema 1990: 201-202).

Cohen (1985) wrote that the term 'community' is a word that is used frequently and easily in everyday speech without much difficulty in comprehension. However, once introduced into the social science discourse it immediately becomes problematic. The same also be said for the all the keywords that have formed the basis of this research. The terms 'state', 'community' 'participation', 'development', all seem like innocuous, even bland, ordinary words. But ones we start to examine and analyse them, it is like the opening of a Pandora's Box. Variations, complexities, dynamics all come to the forefront. This research has been an attempt to open and understand a small part of what is inside this box.

A key observation that has of this research is that the state is a cultural and social institution. It shapes and is shaped by cultural process (Sharma and Gupta, 2006). The abstract notion of the state given by classical works may have led to grand theories, but to study contemporary states and understand their relationship with the people, it

is important to take an anthropological view which talks about the 'everyday state'. The formal and informal processes of bureaucracy, the interactions at the government offices, the dealing with state officials, are all way through which people relate to and experience the state. In the same way, in its developmental role, it is not only the political or economic orientation of planning that is important. Rather, questions such as who plans the project; where are they planned; how is the plan implemented; who implements it; how is the project evaluated and who is the evaluating agent; and finally, how do the state officials interact within themselves and with the community during each of these processes of formulation, execution and appraisal; etc. which inform people's opinion and experience of the developmental state.

Moreover, the state is not a neutral or unitary entity. The institutions and official of the state come from within the society and carry the same biases, inequalities and hierarchies which are present in the social structure. As Ferguson's study in Lesotho shows development discourses by painting the state as an unbiased executor of developmental plans is removed from reality and potentially de-politicises the notion of the state (Ferguson 1994).

Therefore, the understanding of the state as an actor in development must be grounded in the processes and ways in which the state interacts with society on a day to day basis. It is only in looking at the state as a complex and multifaceted institution can we begin to understand the developmental role of the state.

Nederveen Pieterse says that the "career of development has typically been one of state intervention" (Nederveen Pieterse 1996: 549). We saw how initially the state was envisaged as the primary, if not the sole agent of development. Subsequently, the alternative models spoke of community participation and removal of the state. Pitchford and Henderson's work (2008) effectively brings forth tensions and contradictions present in the role of the state in community development today and the anxieties this causes in the communities as well as in the development practitioners. They find that on the one hand, there is a growing centralising tendency with the decision-making power of the communities being heavily curtailed. At the same time, one can find the state withdrawing in many instances, encouraging the community to deal with its own problems.

A second key fact that is highlighted in this research is that the community is essentially a fragmented, unequal space. The classical definitions of the community as a homogeneous and cohesive unit, lack the sophistication to relate to the ground realities of actual communities. Communities are neither homogeneous, nor harmonious, nor impervious to the modern sphere (Mukhopadhyay 2010). And the unequal, hierarchical and power relationships within communities are not an exception, but a rule. 'Traditional' communities were no more egalitarian or cohesive than the modern ones. Rather, these inequalities and biases are part of the very characteristics of communities, though they may be so deeply hidden in the cultural practices that they are rendered invisible.

The participatory development models often ignore these fissures and conflicts within communities and are "naive about the complexities of power and power relations" (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 14). The various ethnographic examples cited in this work show that inequalities within the community do not disappear with the coming of development projects. Rather, they mould and influence the execution and consequences of these projects. For example, the works of Madhu Sarin (1995), Sumi Madhok (2013), Meera Kaul (1996), Meena Bilgi (1996), all show the gendered way in which participatory development projects operate at the ground level. Men and women participate differently in projects, are benefitted differently from them and thus, experience development differently. Therefore, power is an essential component that must be considered in the participatory development programmes. People's positions in the community, their economic or political status, impacts all stages of development projects, from information sharing, to participation in implementation, to reaping the rewards of development.

Therefore, we can see that the state and community are both dynamic concepts and so are their respective roles in the process of participatory development. Thus, it is inevitable that their relations and interactions would be complex and dynamic. As suggested by various post-developmental scholars, this relationship is undoubtedly one involving power. However, it is not unilateral or static. In some cases, the state's support of participatory development may mean the usurpation of the decision-making power supposedly given to the community by the state officials. Sometimes, the knowledge or the model being used maybe a part of pre-packaged developmental

programmes of the state. However, in some other cases, it maybe the community which influences the state models and moulds it on the basis of local process and culture. Sometimes, the power structures within the community may lead to the benefits of development reaching only the elite or powerful group. Other times, participatory development can generate enough awareness and space for local groups to negotiate with the state for access to resources and benefits. As a result, it is impossible to draw from the same cloth all interactions of the state and community in the process of participation.

Similarly, we saw that the trilateral relationship, between the state, community and civil society organisations, is complicated and changing from scenario to scenario. As Kaviraj (2002) has pointed out, civil society as an intermediary between the state and community responds differently in different scenarios. Sometimes, it appears closer to the state in opposition to the community, and at other times it appears closer to the community and against the state. Further, the state may encourage the growth and involvement of civil society as done in India after the seventh Five Year Plan (Sama 2010). At other times, the involvement of NGOs may be seen as synonymous with the removal of the state from the development sector.

The next issue that we have observed through this research is that development itself is not monolithic, and neither is development theory. There is no, and never has been, single cohesive development theory. Rather, there is a multiplicity of different, sometimes divergent, sometimes overlapping and sometimes contradictory, theories, paradigms, models and schools of development (Nederveen Pieterse 1996). We have seen, through the various perspectives discussed above, the wide range within which development theories may vary. The diverse perspectives about participatory development originate in this character of the sociology of development – having a multiplicity of theories.

This research is influenced by the critical development theory model which calls for "multiple perspectives which engage each other dialectically, in a process of mutual criticism and mutual correction" (Tucker 1999: 16). Thus, the main argument that I have tried to make is that participatory development is not a singular or unitary experience. It is a broad, dynamic, vibrant process which a range of characteristics and experiences. I have cited ethnographic material which both supports participatory

models and contradicts them. As if evident from Montogomery's work (1983), many a times these arguments can be supported within the same development project. Therefore, to have a static view of participation, that either supports or refutes it is too simplistic and naïve. As Gujit and Kaul Shah note the "[c]ommon use of the term 'participation' conceals divergent views about its aims and practice" (Gujit and Kaul Shah 1983: 9).

Through this research, I have tried to argue that participatory development discourses must incorporate within them these complexities of the state and community within them. That is to say, analysis of participatory developmental programmes must understand that 'state', 'community' and 'participation' can be understood differently both at the level of conceptualisation as well as at the level of experience. We need to problematise these concepts in order to study them in a more comprehensive and holistic manner. Thus, a study of participatory development would find it helpful to look at the state in terms of its everyday interactions with the community, which is essentially heterogeneous and fragmented. It has to account for power and conflict, both between as well as within the state and community. Looking at the state and the community as opposing forces involved in a zero-sum game of power relationships is not helpful in understanding the true nature of participatory development processes.

The present practices of participatory development are not the same as was conceived by the original proponents of the concept, nor the one discussed by its critics. It is not counter-hegemonic but has entered the mainstream discourse to become a buzzword itself (Leal 2007). It is not opposed to the state, but gets active support and encouragement from the state. It does not operate within the context of a neutral, egalitarian community but one ridden by inequalities and conflicts. So also, it cannot be understood as one where the state entirely dominates over the community. Rather, what exists today can be best described in Oommen's terms as a 'mixed form' (Oommen 2004) – one where local level development is an enterprise where community and society interact with each other in a dynamic and dialectical relationship.

I have tried to argue that an analysis of participatory development has to move beyond participation as 'good' or 'bad', 'positive' or negative'. It can be both, empowering or tyrannical depending on the context. Thus, to take an extreme position, either in its

critique or defence seems unhelpful in understanding it, as it can be easily contradicted with arguments from the other side. Instead, what is needed is a nuanced argument moving beyond the radical critique or a utopian hailing of participation.

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