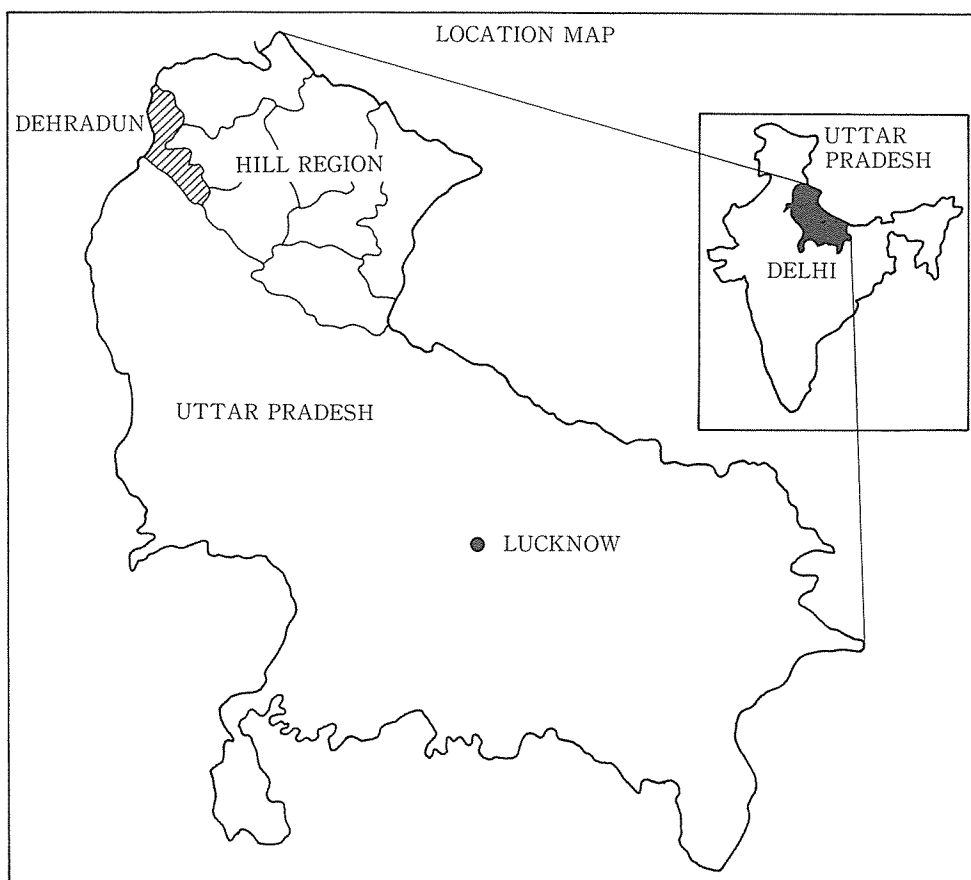


Sustainable Development Through Participatory Processes : A Case Study from India

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This paper attempts to illustrate through a case study of participatory development from India, how new approaches are emerging as alternative models of development which are economically viable and cost effective to tackle the problems of poverty and environmental degradation. In evolution of these approaches, a significant contribution has been made both theoretically and practically by Prof. Nagamine Haruo. It has been his foremost mission throughout his life to develop suitable concepts and methodologies for participatory planning



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and development management at the regional and local levels which can take care of the upliftment of the poor and vulnerable sections of society in Third World countries. Through his intellectual pursuits and field work in real world situations he has been successful in demonstrating how rural communities in developing countries can develop their own capability for self-reliant and sustainable development. Though coming from an altogether different background he has a genuine empathy for the poor and has worked for months together with those people without any inhibitions.

Nagamine visualised during early 80s that the macro-economic paradigm adopted by Third World countries (especially in South Asia) was not capable of solving the problems of poverty and unemployment as it did not take into consideration the people's participation as the basis for development. For sustained participation of the people he has been advocating creation of broad-based institutional mechanisms which should be autonomous, financially viable and can deal with higher level institutions on equal footing.

He has been a great supporter and promoter of mutual learning and training of official and non-official development functionaries. He believes that it is always useful to learn from the experience of developed countries and also that experts should learn from the developed countries as to how local level institutions and development systems are evolving there. In this context, he organised several studies in which Japanese and other international experts visited some of the developing countries and some experts from these countries were invited to do some fieldwork in Japan. The purpose was to find transferability of Japanese experience.

As a part of the above exercise undertaken on the occasion of Tenth Anniversary of United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), he initiated a study entitled 'Social Capability for Development : Learning from Japanese experience.' Although he was sure that it is difficult to find transferable elements from one culture to another culture-specific situation, he was keen to identify some replicable elements which were related to the mode of functioning of people's institutions. He could of course get some critical prerequisites for efficient functioning of institutions as perceived by an Indian development practitioner.¹⁾

Nagamine continues to think of how regional and local development management systems could be made effective while ensuring participation of weaker sections of society. He believes that without strong institutions at the local level the development cannot be sustained. It is his firm conviction that the essential needs of the people should be the point of departure for all development activities. Meanwhile, the community participation in its true sense of the word is the only way to identify people's needs correctly as well as to organise actions for meeting those needs overcoming a host of hurdles and bottlenecks. If it is so, it

follows that all the development actions need to be conceived, organised and carried out by people themselves in a self-reliant manner rather than to be provided and guided by so called specialists coming from outside the community.²⁾

In his paper, *Capability Building for Development Management : Paradigm and Operational Principles*,³⁾ he introduced the concept of development management capability (DMC) as one of the most essential elements for promoting development in a self sustained manner. He presented a paradigm and operational content of DMC after examining relevant key concepts and actual examples a kind of which this paper also envisages to discuss. With the permission of the original author, the following six sections, viz. *Styles of Development, Development Management System in Third World Countries, Development Policies from International Perspective, Development Policies at the National Level, Regional Development Policies*, and *Capacitation : A Paradigmatic Model*, extensively quote the Nagamine's paper.

Styles of Development

According to Nagamine, the people of a particular country should themselves decide the style of development suitable for them. He gives an example of some crucial indicators of development. Such as the level of per capital income of a country often expressed in US dollars most commonly used for measuring the level of welfare of the population concerned. For example, the per capita income of Japan is more than 40 times that of China. However, it is difficult to say that the Japanese people on the whole are living in a situation more than 40 times happier than their Chinese counterparts. As a matter of fact, it has been widely recognized that the two indicators of Adult Literacy Rate (ALR) and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) often are better indicators in that regard.

In the meantime, one may naturally assume that the higher the per capita income, the higher will be ALR, and the lower will be IMR. Reality, however, is not always that rational. A glaring case is Brazil. Despite its per capita income more than six times higher than that of China, IMR of the former is worse by twice that of China. Even compared with Thailand whose per capita income is more than twice that of China, being considered as one of most dynamically growing economies only second to NIES, the IMR of China is better by a large margin than that of Thailand. On the other hand, China and Sri Lanka, both belonging to the lower income group even in the economically poor Asia, have achieved quite favourable levels of both ALR and IMR.

Although one has to be cautious to conclude that China has been much more successful than many other nations in the Third World in bringing about a favourable level of welfare based on such a simple analysis as above, it would be fair to say at least that the amount of

income alone is by no means the only assurance for improving the welfare status of the masses. Mitigation of inequalities, among other things, must be one of critical factors accounting for the significantly favourable performances as registered in China or Sri Lanka.

In the meanwhile, it would be only too natural for a country like China, to aspire vehemently to raise their income level, comparable to already industrialized nations like EC, Japan or U. S. A. At this juncture, we would have to confront the nasty question of the environmental capacity at the global level : whether the obvious limit of environmental and resource capacity of the Earth could permit that or not in the foreseeable future. Here comes the critical question of selecting the style of development. The kind of development styles the 1.2 billion people of China, 800 million of India, 200 million of Indonesia, 500 million of African nations would choose in the coming years will have a decisive effect upon the prospect of survival of all mankind.

On the other hand, it would be a sheer infamy if, for example, a rich, well-dressed Japanese “expert”, riding a big black Toyota sedan, would visit bare-foot villagers in a poor country and preach that they should not change their life style because of resource and energy constraints. It is a very uneasy question to be addressed not only to people in poor but in affluent nations as well. The critical point thus boils down to the question of who should select, through what kind of process, what kind of life styles for our future. No answer would be plausible except resorting to the principle of self-determination : People should decide themselves. Thus, the task at issue for development planners is how to *facilitate* their decisions towards a reasonable direction (i. e., selection of the style of development), never forgetting the fundamental principle of *participation* in its true sense of the word. The very cause of development planning, particularly at the local level, consists exactly in tackling this critical question.

Development Management System in Third World Countries

Development management needs to be undertaken commensurate with the progress of the development process. In the first place, let us think why we plan for development. It is because we have *problems* such as poverty, inequality, inadequate provision for meeting basic human needs, environmental disruption, deficiencies in the government management system, so and so forth.

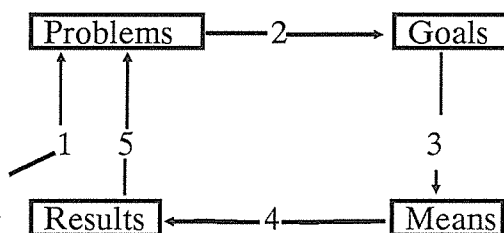
Identifying all the important problems we are faced with is not an easy task but, for the time being, let us assume that we have identified them properly. In usual situations, however, the numbers of problems are quite large. Therefore, for the sake of systematizing our approach to development, we have first to select those development tasks which are urgently

needed by the majority of the population (i. e., short-term objectives), as well as to identify long-term goals towards which a systematic scenario for action (i. e., development plan) be drawn out. The selection of the style of development, discussed in the foregoing section, very closely relates to this task of *goal* formulation.

After the long-term and short-term goals are identified, we must tackle the task of formulating *means* to achieve these goals. These means include plans, programmes and projects, articulating all the resources, manpower and institutional requirements for carrying out these plans, programmes and projects (i. e., implementation).

Through our effort to implement all these, we obtain *results*. More often than not, our targets are not fully achieved. In some situations, the target may be more than fully achieved but unexpected negative consequences may also ensue. The serious environmental pollution that followed the dynamic growth of Japanese economy since late fifties to mid sixties (In fact, the economic growth target of “Income-doubling” was achieved in seven years’ time, which was planned for a ten-year period) is a typical case in point.

Therefore, a critical *evaluation* of results achieved through development efforts is an essential step to move forward, namely, the second round of plan formulation, starting with the setting of long-range and short-range goals. Thus, it would be pertinent to conceive our development process in a cyclical manner, as described in the chart below.



The arrow line (1) indicates the first entry action : Problem identification. Arrow line (2) indicates the action related to policy formulation. Arrow line (3) is plan formulation. Arrow line (4) means implementation. The last arrow line (5) means the evaluation or problem identification in the new round.

DMC is required for all these activities involved in the development process. Furthermore, it should be noted that the operational content of DMC varies in accordance with the administrative level such as central, provincial and local governments or village communities where development management activities should be undertaken.

Needless to say, DMC is of highly situation-specific nature, for it has greatly to do with the political, administrative and other institutional environment in which the development process takes place.

Development Policies from International Perspective

Out of current literature published by key international organizations, several essential concepts seem to emerge as, say, common denominators that bear upon the formulation of development goals and targets of the 1990s, particularly in the context of Third World nations. These essential concepts include poverty alleviation, removal of inequalities (among nations, social classes, or genders), enhancement of participation (particularly among those deprived), and protection of environmental assets and resources.

Even more striking is the fact that the World Development Report advocates two main strategies for achieving the goal of poverty alleviation, namely, i) spread of employment opportunities beyond metropolitan areas, and ii) spread of facilities to meet basic human needs of the poor masses. Indeed, these two were clearly spelt out in the series of UN Socio-Economic Council Resolutions ever since 1965, calling for the promotion of regional development in Third World countries. On the one hand, the advocacy of the two strategies in 1990 very clearly betrays the extremely disappointing accomplishments made in the last three decades along these lines. On the other hand, it may be a reflection of a sober fact that there is no short circuit way out of the poverty trap. Given all sorts of progress and learning from bitter experience during the past decades, one has to recur back to the square one : the development strategies conceived long ago are still valid. Our target remains valid : it is our methodologies that have been deficient, which did not take full note of political, administrative and other institutional dimensions for improving our development performance, and have largely confined our planning operations within the realm of conventional technocratic planning.

In order to keep the record straight, one point should be noted here. While it is quite valid to observe that very little change has been brought about in terms of fundamental development goals such as poverty alleviation in the last three decades, there does have emerged an important change, among others, in the way the role of government is understood. Earlier, it was more or less taken for granted that, if there was a serious problem or a development task, the government should take the central role in solving/initiating it. However, a number of noteworthy development experience particularly in Asia, seem to indicate that there are certain actions of crucial importance which governments have failed to undertake, and that the non-government organizations (NGOs) have made quite significant contributions in filling the gap of government capabilities.

In the meanwhile, at a more formalized enterprise level, a number of state enterprises are being privatized even in developing countries in Asia, as a radical means to remove inefficiency and distortion in resource allocation. Privatization at an organized level, and the

expanding role of NGOs particularly at the grass-root community level, are two parallels that have emerged out of the development experience in Asia during the 1980s.

Development Policies at the National Level

A report sponsored by the UNESCAP in early 80s has enlisted following seven policies as those commonly emphasized in the national development plans of many Asian countries :

1. Higher productivity and higher economic growth ;
2. Equal distribution of fruits of development and elimination of inequalities ;
3. Meeting the basic human needs (BHN) of the majority ;
4. Generation of employment opportunities ;
5. Enhancement of participation particularly at the grass root level ;
6. Enhancement of self-reliance in the national economy, and
7. Promotion of environmentally-sound (i. e., sustainable) development.

It is felt that all of them would stand quite valid at present as well, after the lapse of about a decade since the report was published. However, it would be pertinent to add three new items in response to the problems and issues that attracted worldwide attention during the 1980s. These are ;

8. Structural adjustment (and immediate measures to overcome its by-effects, such as poverty alleviation largely in the short term context) ;
9. Privatization and facilitation of NGOs' activities ;
10. WID (Women in Development), Education for all, etc. as a means of sharpening the focus of actions required for the task of inequality eradication.

Presumably, all these policy goals are well taken, and each of them is extremely important in its own right. One thing we should take heed about however is the fact that some of them contradict each other, at least in the short run, though largely concomitant in the long run. For example, theory tells us that the income inequality among regions widens in the process of economic growth. It is only after achieving a considerable level of income that the gap between the rich and the poor (social classes or geographical regions) starts to converge. In the same vein, if investment in BHN-related facilities and activities (e. g., building of schools, training of nurses) is increased, it would result in the reduction of investment in modern factories and equipments leading to higher productivity and higher economic growth. Which do we mean in fact, apart from stated principles ? This is a perpetual question of development planning. Right solution can be found only when the ultimate decisions are based on the sound process of participation in its true sense of the word : Final choice should be left to the people. The role of professionals in this regard is to participate actively in their

decisions, by way primarily of providing as much and reliable knowledge and information as possible, and facilitating their appropriate decisions.

Regional Development Policies

Meanwhile, the policies of countries in South and Southeast Asia specifically related to regional development can be summarized as follows.

1. Strengthening of regional development system, with emphasis on three components, viz. i) Upgrading planning capability, ii) Upgrading implementation capability, and iii) Strengthening coordination capability ;
2. Promotion of rural development (In Asia, almost three quarters of total population still live in rural areas) ;
3. Strategies for special problem-prone areas (e. g., areas vulnerable to frequent droughts, floods, isolated islands, snow-bound areas) ;
4. Decentralization of development activities (i. a., factories, industrial estates development, etc.)
5. Decentralization of financial authorities for development management.

These policy guidelines are those which emerged out of a cross — national review made in the early eighties, making use of good documentation available at the UN Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD). The three-item addition made at the national level policies mentioned above are relevant for the regional development policies as well.

It should be noted, in relation to the item 4 above (i. e., Decentralization of development activities), certain concrete approaches have been introduced in some countries, with their focus on provincial towns. The World Bank-assisted project called PREMIUMED in the Philippines and IUIDP Project in Indonesia are examples.

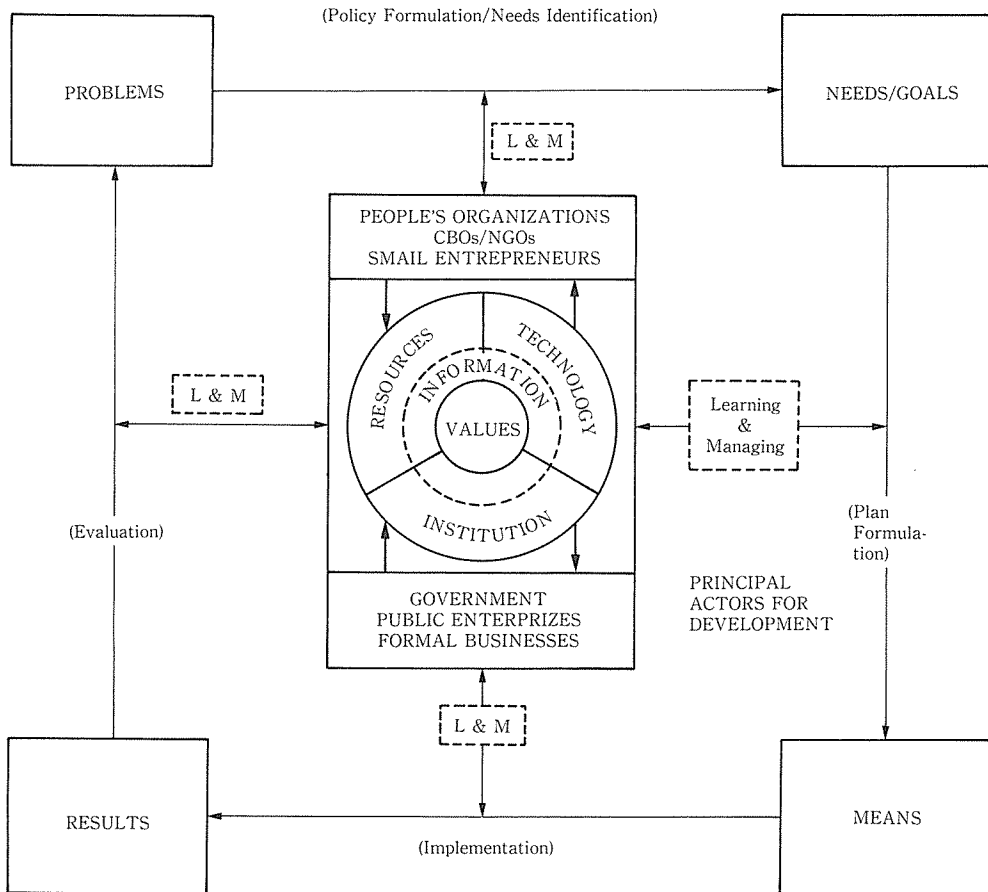
Capacitation : A Paradigmatic Model

While concluding his paper, Nagamine adds that the concept of DMC (Development Managemnt Capability) is the same in essence with that of *capacitation*, a developmental concept once advocated by the United Nations. A conceptual definition of *capacitation* in a paradigmatic form. given in Figure-1 provides its diagrammatic illustration.

First, the concept of *capacitation* (or, for that matter, DMC as well) pertains to all the stages of the Problem-Needs/Goals-Means-Results cycle.

There are two principal actors operating in the process, namely, the people and the government. Powerful Non-government Organizations are headquartered in advanced

Figure 1 *CAPACITATION* : A Paradigmatic Model



countries. Some European countries are particularly active in this regard. Meanwhile, there are NGOs of purely local nature, established and managed by local voluntary organizations, although they may receive financial assistance from overseas. The latter are called Community-Based Organizations, or CBOs. Artisans, craftsmen, carpenters, keepers of small businesses operating in the community market would also be a part of the people and people's organizations.

Meanwhile, well-organized large-scale businesses, public enterprises as well as trans-national corporations would constitute a part of "government". Those have huge financial resources and advanced technologies, but it is unfamiliar with the problems, needs, values and aspirations of the majority of population at the grassroots.

On the other hand, the former group (People and related organizations) are in far disadvantaged position in terms of access to power, resources, modern skills and technologies. But it is huge in number, and has a good knowledge about needs, aspirations and quite often are well versed in pragmatic solutions for meeting their needs.

Obviously, the strengths and weaknesses of the two groups of actors are exactly complementary to each other. It follows therefore that the management of the development process will be most viable when the two actors work cohesively together at various levels of planning and development operations such as provinces, prefectures or village communities.

Both actors, in order to be viable, require basic attributes. Of these, resources (natural and financial as well as manpower) and technology (both advanced high technology and grass-root based appropriate, labour-intensive skills) are perhaps self-explanatory and therefore would hardly require further elaboration. As repeatedly pointed out, the popular participation in its true sense of the word is indeed the key for ensuring viable and harmonious development. In order for people to be able to manage the process through which all important decisions are systematically made on the basis of full participation, the introduction of sound and practical institutional arrangement is essential.

By the same token, the government side should make utmost efforts for introducing innovation in the administrative system based on constant monitoring and evaluation. A bureaucratic system, no matter how elaborate and established with benevolent intent, is bound to fail to cope with the changing needs of the society over time unless it continues to listen to the voice and responsibilities to be shared among various levels of government, for example, is of critical importance for facilitating the management of the development process.

As regards the “values” put at the centre of the attributes circle, it should be noted that our life does not consist in material well-being alone. Human happiness is ultimately a matter of mental perception. Selection of style of development, discussed at the outset, also relates very deeply with this concern.

Information is mentioned because in most rural areas where the majority of Asian people still reside, there is indeed a serious dearth of information. Villagers struggling strenuously for improving their living conditions or productive capability, a series of simple information about successes and failures being experienced by those striving hard for similar objectives — of course available in a language easily comprehensible to them — would be invaluable.

Similarly for government functionaries, information about administrative and financial management systems being practised in other countries (advanced or at comparable stages of development) would be far more useful than books of abstract theories and esoteric techniques.

The bi-directional arrow lines L & M (i. e., Learning and Managing) connotes the process of learning by doing through trial and error. Any government bodies or people’s organizations must manage the process with whatever capability they have off-hand. As a result, they

may succeed or fail. Important point is that they should learn from mistakes (For the mistakes are inevitable anyway), and build up their management capability based on their own learning rather than jumping from one model to another, borrowed from textbooks published elsewhere.

Needless to mention, the scale and types of resources, technology or institutions required of each development actor should vary from country to country, from level to level within the government hierarchy, from stage to stage of progress of socioeconomic development and institutional transformation. Nonetheless, the author is convinced that the concept of *capacitation*, or development management capability (DMC) as presented here in a paradigmatic form, would serve as a point of departure for further articulating the required actions for local and regional development in the Third World countries.

The ideas expressed above by Nagamine provides useful guidelines for initiating a process of participatory sustainable development. He emphasizes that, as a point of departure from the dominant development paradigm, that people are one of the greatest assets and a strategy based on creative involvement of the people can help bringing large number of the deprived sections of society in resource poor developing countries in the mainstream of development process.

During the same period many other agencies were engaged in similar kind of intellectual enquiry. It began with the realisation as already discussed that 1980s has been a lost decade for development following upon the golden years of 50's and 60's and the illusionary debt led growth of 1970s. For many countries development has gone into reverse (although this is not entirely true of some aspects of South Asian Countries especially India). At the same time the dominant macro-economic paradigm has moved away from the Keynesian consensus of the Golden Years to a sharply monetarist and neo-classical type. However, given the present crisis of development, increasing doubts are being felt about the validity of this dominant paradigm. Many of these doubts are related to emphasis on human and social basis for sustainable development and growth and the importance of participation for the credibility of development strategies.⁴⁾

It was realised that the crisis that had emerged particularly in South Asia which was not only further marginalising large numbers of people (in economic and political terms) and a crisis of survival for them but was also destroying the environment and their natural resource base generating a reverse flow of resources from the region and creating violent unmanageable social conflicts which could lead to societal collapse and anarchy. The studies undertaken in this context highlighted the fact that :

-In the four decades since independence, national income has increased without significantly alleviating poverty and that agricultural growth has increased food output without affecting

the nutritional status of the poor.

-Foreign aid dependence is increasing while there is a continued reverse flow of resources from South Asia to the rich industrialised countries.

-The strategies pursued were not culturally relevant.

In sum, as a result of uncritical continuation of past development strategies, development (even in its own narrow economic terms) was being undermined. Poverty within these countries is reproducing itself and economic disparities are increasing. They are nowhere near 'take-off' to catch up with the rich countries.⁵⁾

In order to develop a comprehensive alternative approach, a group of South Asian scholars under the auspices of United Nations Asian Development Institute attempted to understand the reality, question the development intervention that had taken place and systematically began to generalise from this new understanding. These early studies which were published by Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in their Journal : *Development Dialogue* 1977, later republished under the title, *Towards a Theory of Rural Development*.⁶⁾

Participatory Approaches

The beginning of the alternative approach did not rely on *a priori* theorizing or merely on borrowed thinking from western social sciences. It was essentially based on looking at the South Asian reality and formulating a more rational intellectual framework for dealing with the problems of mass poverty. The material basis of their generalisations on alternatives was provided both by the negative impact of a quarter century of development on large numbers of people in South Asia as well as by the first generation of positive experiments at the micro-grass roots level. Similar kinds of efforts were continued by Nagamine also by organising field studies every year in Southeast Asia. It is remarkable that the conclusions drawn by both these teams of experts have most things in common. For one thing, they point out that there is possibility of incorporating social justice and participation into a process of accumulation and economic growth which would involve and benefit the vulnerable for their all round development. For the other, there was increasing evidence that such processes were sustainable at the micro level. The broad perspective of this alternative development given by the UNU network, which is again akin to the ideas of Nagamine, reads as follows :

"Development here is viewed as a process of human development, a process of social transformation in which man is both the subject and the object and in which he participates at all levels of decision making ; Self reliance is both a means and an end in this process. It is a process which starts with the release of the creative energy of man, assumes equal access to and a rational use of resources to the poor and vulnerable groups, tends to eliminate the

difference between mental and manual labour and uses the full range of technological choices available from both the knowledge the people have and knowledge from other sources properly adapted. This kind of a development is not only more humane but also represents a new man, nature and technology mix. In the participatory process which results, growth, human development and equity are not trade-offs.”⁷⁾

There is now a sufficient body of experience at the micro level to suggest how participatory development can be initiated or reinforced. It can be judged, however, from this experience that uniform prescriptions cannot be made for application in all situations as each country and socio-cultural environment has its own specificity. It would be based on a holistic approach and evolved from the still inadequate inter-disciplinary analytical tools that are available. This is an extremely difficult intellectual exercise requiring a collective reconceptualisation of macro-micro level processes underway so that countries can move on two separate inter-related fronts i. e., the modern industrial base as well as on a clearly articulated micro grass roots level poverty alleviation strategy.

Development problems cannot be solved by means of rigid ideological orientations and purely technocratic prescriptions of the past given the similarity of the crisis of confidence in South Asian countries with regard to the open economy, the welfare state and interpretation of socialist experiments, these countries need to find alternative driving forces for growth and social change through a different people/nature/knowledge relationships than that which currently pertains to industrialised countries.

Methodological Issues

Nagamine has been involved from late 1970's in developing suitable methodologies for regional and local development planning applicable in developing countries. A comprehensive methodology was developed by him designed as Methodology for Planning for Comprehensive Regional Development (MPCRD) which had a strong participatory element. He also developed a participatory method of social survey named as Problem Structure Analysis, which was totally community based, utilizing the well-known KJ Method invented by Dr. KAWAKITA Jiro of Japan.

In later developments several participatory methods were evolved which were called as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Participatory Action Research (PAR), Participatory Action Learning Methods (PALM), PRAXIS etc. PRA originated in Chiang Mai and Khon Kaen Universities in Thailand.⁸⁾ It was taken up by the International Institute of Environment and Development, London and later developed in India by a number of agencies like MYRADA, Bangalore, PRIA, New Delhi.⁹⁾

Now many NGOs in India and other developing countries are engaged in such exercises and have been successful in developing community's own capability in planning implementation monitoring and evaluation leading to self reliance and sustained development.

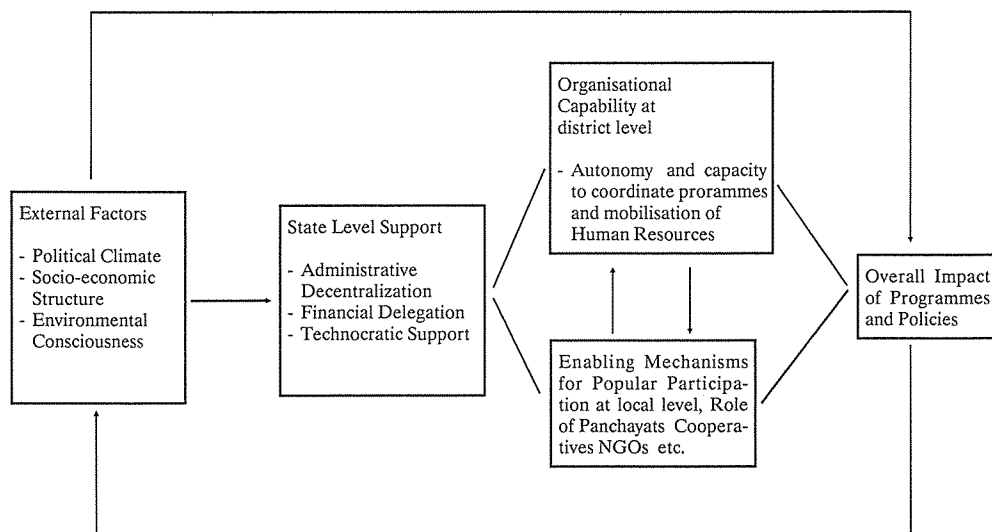
Underlying Philosophy

The underlying philosophy of PRA as given in different manuals mentioned above lays down that the key to this method is that outsiders should have and show appropriate attitudes, demeanour and behaviour. These include basic respect for people, interest in what they know, say and do, unhurried patience, participation by the outsiders in local activities, humility and materials and methods which empower local people to express, share, enhance and analyse their knowledge. Even before these methods were finalised Nagamine evolved guiding principles for 'people centred' development. He gave basic principles of a local people's plan in the form of some axioms.¹⁰⁾

- I) It should be built around the community's existing knowledge and resource base, skills and the belief that the people, however poor, ignorant and illiterate, have the capacity.
- II) Effective organisation of the disadvantaged and lasting people's structures are a prerequisite to effective local planning.
- III) The participation of the poor right from the stage of identifying their priorities through planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation is one of the foundations of local level planning.
- IV) Development workers should see themselves as 'enablers' or 'catalysts'.
- V) All means available should be mobilised for the community's own quest for community capacity-building.

Nagamine thinks beyond PRA also. He advocates systemic changes at the macro level to sustain local level planning so that external factors also support people's efforts at the micro level. Under these factors he includes political climate congenial to decentralised participatory planning, socio economic structure at the local level, environmental consciousness, administrative decentralisation, financial devolution and delegation, technocratic support from official agencies, organisational capability at sub-state levels and human resource development. His focus on HRD (Human resources development), it being for enhancing the capability at local level so that the people acquire technical and managerial competence through training. Also the people's institutions should have full control over the field level functionaries. He is in favour of developing enabling mechanisms for popular participation at the grass-roots level. His ideas can be expressed in the analytical framework shown in Fig. 2.¹¹⁾

Figure 2



The above framework implies that the final impact of decentralized planning and development management in the shape of better production and productivity levels and equitable distribution of benefits depends on four clusters of related variables, viz, (1) External factors, (2) State-level support to district and local leveles, (3) Organisational capability at the district level and (4) Effective enabling mechanisms for popular participation at the grass-root levels. The hypothesized linkages between the components of the above framework further imply that the administrative decentralisation, financial delegation and technocratic support by the State government will largely influence the achievement of plan objectives or overall impact of programmes and policies through enabling mechanisms which could be created only through adequate organisational capability at the district level (intervening variables). It is posited that external factors which include political climate, socio-economic structure and environmental consciousness will affect achievmnt of objectives of development directly as well as indirectly through State level support and the organisational capability at district level depending on autonomy and capacity to coordinate programmes and mobilisation of human resources. It is necessary that external factors change according to the feed back received from the field if they are sensitive to the needs of the poor.

Participatory Watershed Management : An Appraisal

Participatory Watershed Management Project has been selected for an analytical study because it is a novel experiment taken up with the objective of building up community's own capability to manage and improve their natural resources. It therefore aims at arresting and

as far as possible reversing the ongoing degradation of the eco-system in Doon Valley in Lesser Himalayas in India and improving the quality of life of rural people through their positive involvement in managing their environment. The processes adopted and developed in this project also provide material for finding out as to which of the aspects of 'Participatory Approaches' evolved by Nagamine and other experts implementable here. Their framework have been found feasible here.

It is one of the experiments which presents an alternative model of development as discussed in the foregoing sections of this paper. The point of departure from earlier efforts in environmental restoration is that the community is motivated and assisted in preparing their own village integrated plans, the project staff drawn from various disciplines provide the technical and financial support whenever necessary. Thus, the role of government functionaries is restricted to acting as 'catalysts' or 'facilitators'. The local community is motivated to mobilize their own resources and create a fund of their own which is called revolving fund. Institutional mechanisms are evolved by the villagers. Beneficiary groups and self help and user groups are formed by the people which essentially focus on development of women and weaker sections guided by their own decisions in all regards.

The project has started a participatory process so that village communities develop their own capability, skills and wherewithal for a self-reliant and sustainable development. A proper mix of indigenous and modern technology in various components of the project is evolved. These components include social forestry, livestock, agriculture, horticulture, minor irrigation and energy conservation, all of which have a bearing on environment.

Project Particulars

The Doon Valley is located in Dehradun District in the lesser Himalayas in the Hill Region of Uttar Pradesh (India). In the hills, watershed has been accepted as a unit of development planning because of environmental considerations. The project area covers seven sub watersheds spread over 1850 km² (location map annexed). It has steep slopes deeply incised old terraces, gently sloping pediments and steeply dissected terrain of the Siwalik Hills. Elevations range from 500 to 2500 m. The area is geomorphologically unstable which has been exacerbated by destruction of forest cover, increases in rural population pressure, industrial development and urban expansion. Doon Valley has good deposits of lime so that lime quarrying took place here unabated on large scale. However it is now stopped by the Honourable Supreme Court of India.

Lot of public concern was shown against deteriorating environment and ecology. The project has been taken up by the Government of India and Government of Uttar Pradesh

with the assistance of the European Commission (agreement 1991**). The project authorities are being assisted by a technical assistance team comprising Indian and expatriate experts in different disciplines. The project has been in operation now for the last 18 months.¹²⁾

With its focus on participatory approaches the project is basically 'process oriented' leading to convergent planning and bringing about attitudinal changes in functionaries working at the micro level and the policy makers at the macro level. The experience gained so far shows positive results and provides insight into how a workable model of participatory development can be built up and sustained. An analysis of strengths and weaknesses should help in replicating the processes elsewhere particularly in similar socio-cultural contexts.

Past Experience

Earlier, a Himalayan Watershed Management Project (HWMP) was implemented in 1984-1992 which was funded by the World Bank. It covered a large area of 3000 km² of the upper catchment of the Ganges. The Forest Department was the main coordinating agency and it was implemented through various sectoral departments without a unified line of command.¹³⁾ The project components were almost the same as also the objectives of this project. For achieving these objectives, restoration and augmentation of both the common property resources and individual household resources was the main strategy.

The HWMP was commissioned rather in a hurry without realising the full implications of an altogether new concept of watershed management. Adequate consideration was not given to the fact that this was an exercise in micro-level planning. The conventional top-down approach was followed resulting in conceiving and handing over targets both in community and individual works from above sacrificing area and community specificity. Peoples's participation was sought in implementation of a pre-determined package of programmes. Further, in a project of pilot nature, a large area was covered and that too without any established and successfully tried technologies known to the project functionaries. The focus was on techno-economic issues leaving little room for incorporating sociological issues. The project functionaries did not have proper sensitivities to handle community organisation. As a result, it became largely a target-oriented government-run project.

In development of common property resources the consent was obtained from the Pradhan (head of the village assembly) to take over community land for forestry. No thought was however given to develop institutional mechanisms required to maintain the work later. The people were hardly consulted in deciding priorities and usufruct implications of the new

** The views expressed in this paper are the personal views of the author and have nothing to do with the Project's and EC's official policies or programmes.

works. Gender issues which are predominant in hilly society were not given sufficient consideration.

With regard to augmentation of household resources the focus was on distribution of inputs without considering whether the recipient was really deserving and the input or device will be properly used and maintained by him. It would not be known whether there was any impact on the individual household's income or standard of living through its use. Since the project staff had to complete the targets, there was confusion in the whole implementation process. The policies with regard to individual contributions went on changing compounding it further till such time as a proper implementation mechanism could be evolved the project came to an abrupt close. A good experiment could not succeed.¹³⁾

This points out two major lacunae in the approach adopted by HWMP. The first was that community participation was not understood in the right perspective. The second was that the functionaries handling such a sensitive project had never heard of participatory methods and had not been exposed to the techniques of communicating and working with the communities in partnership.

It was presumed that the community would be sufficiently motivated through the consultative process adopted in the HWMP and it will take over and maintain the assests created by the project. But as soon as the project was wound up there ceased to be any effort for maintenance of assets created. The worst part was that the communities did not own the plantation and other community works. It was supposed to be the government created and imposed thing. In some villages the people were so negative that they tried to destroy these assets rather than looking after them.

Evolution of This Project

Not to repeat the past mistakes, the entire structure of the Doon Valley Integrated Watershed Management Project (IWMP) is built around community participation as the key to ensuring success of convergent planning and joint project implementation. The community participation will therefore provide the basis for integrated sectoral activities in village watersheds by addressing to the problems faced by the people either in their productive activities or life support systems. In the areas identified on the basis of degree of erosion and receptivity of the people the project staff through local resource persons mobilise local communities, assess their priorities and explain the project objectives. Subsequently, beneficiary groups, user groups or self help groups are constituted by the people of course with the assistance of field staff. These should essentially include women and persons from the weaker sections. From within these groups local leaders or motivators are identified.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) has formed a fundamental tool for a better understanding of community dynamics the resources, aspirations and needs of the villagers and in generating realistic plans.

The sustainability of project activities is expected to be enhanced by involving the local communities from the initial stage of planning through implementation monitoring and evaluation. Through this process the project is expected to ensure that the beneficiaries perceive project interventions as their own and therefore will be committed to maintain them. This will be further encouraged by introducing reciprocal obligations on the part of local communities formalised in mutually agreed memorandum of understanding (MOU) as a precondition to delivery of project inputs and to ensure that benefits are equitably shared and project outputs are subsequently maintained.

Training is a major component of the project strategy. It has been seen as a critical tool to bring about attitudinal changes in the staff. The training will equip the staff especially the field level functionaries, with appropriate knowledge, skills and sensitivities to act as facilitators or catalysts to enable communities to build their own capabilities to help in achieving project goals.

As a point of departure from the earlier projects, it did not prescribe targets from above and allowed sufficient time for getting the communities motivated. It underlined the need of not taking any hasty action because in a process of social change envisaged through project a single wrong step could defeat the very purpose of participatory development. Moreover, the task of self-reliant development could be started only after de-conditioning the rural communities from the legacy of subsidy oriented development or the 'dependency-syndrome' and their mistrust for government programmes or the government as such.

Even during the first fortnight of working of the project it was realised that most of the functionaries (there was no women functionary at that time) are accustomed to work according to the hierarchical structure of the organisation and the grass-roots level functionaries would just blindly carry out the instructions of their superiors. They could not be expected to work with the communities as the team spirit was totally lacking. It emerged therefore that training and reorientation should be started forthwith, realising that learning and working can go hand in hand. Team building was chosen the first subject with other subjects to follow. Simultaneously PRA exercise (with practical training) was started in the selected villages of the project to prepare PRA based village plans. For this some well known PRA experts were retained by the project. In this job as well as other project activities, cooperation of NGOs was also secured.

Simultaneously with the above tasks, an exercise of prioritisation of villages was taken up and those villages were selected which were experiencing the highest degree of erosion.

The project staff visited these villages and discussed with the villagers the problems of environment degradation and their other felt needs. The villagers were explained that it would be their plan to be implemented and maintained by them. The project will lend technical support and gap fillers wherever necessary. In the first instance those villages were shortlisted which showed receptivity and environmental awareness.

Current Status

Initially, the project faced several problems. Besides lack of motivated workers many positions were vacant and mid-course transfers posed problems. It was difficult to have women functionaries but ultimately project succeeded in getting three women workers. The methodology of approaching the people was not known. NGOs were not forthcoming to help the project staff. To overcome these difficulties a dialogue with NGOs was started and one of the NGOs offered to train the project staff in PRA. The PRA created awareness and sufficient motivation amongst the villagers especially women to work in partnership with the project staff. They were motivated not only to augment their household resources but also to take up community works such as plantation in community land, construction of minor irrigation works etc. A village plan with the usual PRA data on social mapping, resource mapping, economic ranking, transect walks and other information along with prioritisation of problems and needs could emerge. This developed confidence in project functionaries and created a congenial environment in the whole area. Gradually through this method plans of around 20 villages have been prepared so far. The implementation of these village plans has been started.¹⁴⁾

One of the most striking features of the PRA exercise has been that while working in the village in the first two three days, the project functionaries could find some activity in every village which would enlist the cooperation and participation of all or the majority of the inhabitants of the villagers irrespective of economic and social differentiation. This activity was promoted in the first instance by mobilising internal resources and by providing notional funds from the project. This helped in establishing the credibility of the project functionaries and build confidence amongst the villagers.

This provided an entry point for the PRA team to carry out their exercise further. During the course of PRA when sufficient motivation was created among the villagers and they realised that they had the capability of preparing a plan for their own development, some of the project objectives were interlinked to the entry point which was readily agreed upon by the villagers. For example, in one village the participating women in a tailoring centre were motivated to raise plantation in the community land. The women did it and are keeping a

strict vigil so that it is not damaged by stray cattle and the villagers. They are in the process of developing a system of 'social fencing'. The project helped them to have a tie-up with the Village Industries Board which has given them substantial order for stitching of garments on piecemeal basis. This has given them supplementary income. It has taken care of the backward and forward linkages for viability of the activity.

This has gone a long way in increasing the receptivity and reciprocity of not only women folk but the men folk also who found their family income augmented within a short period of time. This has developed in them a spirit of self organizing and collective working. There is a willingness to take up community works for which motivation was absent earlier. It has also been possible to mobilize people's resources and pool them to take the shape of a revolving fund which would be used for maintenance of assets created during project implementation. Later it would also be used for the benefit of those who cannot take advantage of project activities right now as they are mostly land based and the landless will have to wait till the supply of fuel and fodder is increased.

Almost in every village self help groups and user groups have been constituted. A broad institutional set-up is also in the offing as per the choice of the people. Community land has been planted in selected villages. Other community works such as minor irrigation, soil conservation works have also been started. Local resources have been mobilised and is being used as revolving fund.

Strenghts of the Project

The following strong points have emerged from the project so far :

1. Village planning with broad based participation including that of women and other weaker sections.
2. Conscientisation of people about environmental issues.
3. Building of self capability in villagers to take up development activities on their own and treating the government functionaries as their partners.
4. Active role of women in decision making.
5. Villagers identifying themselves with project objectives as their own.
6. Evolution of institutional mechanisms for sustainability of participatory processes.
7. Focus on development of women and vulnerable sections of society.
8. Mobilization of community resources and raising a revolving fund for viability.
9. Emergence of new leadership from women and weaker sections of society.
10. Awareness about self-reliant development and doing away with dependence on government.

Constraints

It has not been a very smooth sailing so far and there have been many constraints and inhibiting factors. In the state of Uttar Pradesh this is perhaps the first project based on participatory approach. There are in built contradictions between participatory approach (in which every proposal emerges from below) and conventional planning which follows a top-down approach. While under this approach systemic changes are introduced at the micro level, the macro level systems are still conditioned by the non-participatory bureaucratic or technocratic procedures and rules and regulations. It is not possible to fix sectoral targets in the participatory approach as the community life cannot be divided into sectoral segments and it takes into account the holistic or integrated view of development. Whereas the sectoral ministries insist that there should be physical and financial targets broken into broad sectors with certain prescribed requirements to be adhered to which go against the very spirit of people's participation.¹⁵⁾

It has to be realised that adopting a participatory approach in a particular project is not merely an administrative decision. As already discussed in Nagamine's framework it has to do with the entire administrative culture because the essential pre-requisites for the success of a participatory approach include decentralisation, delegation of powers and devolution of funds. This requires radical changes in the entire system. It also requires attitudinal changes at different levels of decision making so that they are prepared to give away their powers to down below to the people's institutions.

For a long time, the local communities have suffered from a 'dependency syndrome' since the government would offer subsidy for acceptance of a scheme by individuals. Consequently, the community or a collective spirit disappeared. There was no motivation to take up work on common property resources. This posed a serious inhibiting factor for the project functionaries to work in the villages. It has become quite customary that when functionaries from a new project go to the village, the villagers first ask about the amount of subsidy being offered. Although through PRA and identification of entry point these difficulties have been overcome to a great extent, in the villages where they are working the development departments still continue to follow the former approach.

Another problem faced by the project functionaries was that the priorities as perceived by the people through PRA exercise did not always pertain to the objectives of IWMP. For example, in most of the villages the people asked for roads or for other infrastructure which did not fall in project components. Thus the priorities of the people differed from the project objectives. It posed difficulties for the project staff in smooth functioning and guiding the community to approach concerned authorities.

It may be summarized that there have been lot of changes at the micro-level and local level institutions have been developed according to the ingenuity and social dynamics of the people. However, the systemic changes or enabling mechanisms for sustainability of these institutions at higher level have yet to take place.

Synthesis and Conclusions

It may not be justifiable to draw definite conclusions from the above analysis or to measure the impacts of the project in such a short duration. The only possibility is to trace the direction of changes in the village communities which have been initiated by the participatory processes adopted here.

The most important change or the direction of change is that the people and the government functionaries have started working together and there is an attitudinal change in the government functionaries from paternalistic to that of an enabler or facilitator. On the other hand rural people have moved away from 'dependency syndrome' to a self-reliant development orientation.¹⁶⁾

The control and management of common property resources and equitable sharing of their benefits have developed in them a sense of self confidence. It demonstrates that sustainable development based on the mobilization of creative energies of people and the use of local resources and keeping the people's surplus in people's hands leads to a holistic development. A kind of empowerment of people is a significant development. Participation of women on equal footing in decision-making is expected to change the entire texture of development schemes. The weaker sections of society have become vocal and demanding.

With this new consciousness, the people are organized, institutional mechanisms are evolving and they are asserting themselves to have improved delivery of services. Many line agencies have responded positively while others have received the right signals. Gradually the facilities and services delivered by the government have started improving with some finances at the disposal of the community some small repairs and breakdowns are rectified by themselves. A number of government agencies are now inclined to hand over their services/facilities to the community for maintenance.¹⁷⁾

Participatory process has emerged not only as a strong instrument for planning, but participatory monitoring and evaluation systems, though informal, have also started operating. This has helped line agencies in having direct feedbacks from the people and improving their own delivery systems. They have started realizing that these systems are viable and cost-effective.

Another far-reaching change can be noticed in terms of local resource mobilization. A

community having become totally dependent on government subsidies for a long time, deciding to mobilize its own resources and to use it as a revolving fund should be reckoned as a revolutionary cultural change. it is a firm path to self-reliance in terms of maintaining their own assets and multiplying them. it could help them to take care of the vulnerable sections of society also. Earlier experiments failed only because of not having funds of their own.

Participatory process has its own multiplier effect. The 20 villages covered so far by the project under PRA has motivated adjoining villages to have similar changes. The radiation effect may spread to the entire Doon Valley within a short time. Development of a proper mix of indigenous and modern technology is also of far reaching consequences. In the near future, the villagers may develop their own technologies and innovative ideas.¹⁸⁾

Since in the participatory system, there is a great deal of transparency involved the line agencies would find it more and more useful for delivery of their services. it is expected to eliminate pilferage and corruption in their own systems. As people's institutions become stronger and stronger, the line agencies will have to transfer and delegate more and more powers to the former. Furthermore, the people-government-NGO partnership in development is ultimately expected to lead to lasting solutions to problems of poverty and sustainable development.

So far, we have enumerated the favourable changes which can be noticed from the participatory processes. But if we revert back to or discussions and the pre-requisites for the success of participatory development as enunciated by Nagamine also we find some crucial gaps. As a matter of fact, the participatory processes at the local level cannot sustain and multiply unless commensurate changes at the policy level are made. In this case also, even if there is lot of activity and change is taking place at the local level but the sectoral ministries continue to act in an isolated and disintegrated manner fixing their own targets viewing the village life in segments and compartments. Similarly, the bureaucrats or technocrats at the macro level usually do not have any faith in people's institutions. It would tantamount to curtailment in their own powers. Because of this, the integration of ongoing programme and project activities has not taken place which is detrimental to convergent planning as a goal of the project.

As a matter of fact, the line agencies of the government, other than IWMP, should also have a positive role in Doon Valley Project because the broad goal of environmental improvement and restoration is crucial for all departments. Because this is the first project being implemented by community involvement, it should be welcomed by and extended to all the agencies. The processes and procedures being evolved here would be of immense value to them since their replicability is assured. This is imperative also because of the empowerment

and strengthening of the Gram Panchyats, Kshetra Panchyats and Zila Panchayats (rural and urban local bodies) in pursuance of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1994. The Act envisages a process of planning from below and involvement of the people in the planning process so that the people's needs and priorities are realistically reflected in the plans. The government functionaries will be required to work with them. It would help in developing appropriate district planning development systems.¹⁹⁾

Therefore, IWMP can serve as a model to be followed in preparation of integrated plans which will soon be required to be formulated by peoples' institutions at the village block and district levels.²⁰⁾

In view of this, it is in the interest of all the departments to learn and adopt participatory approaches as soon as possible. To sustain these approaches systemic changes are required at various levels of decision making so that sufficient support is provided to promote micro level participatory planning. Thus, micro and macro systems need to work in complete unison and complementary and supplementary to each other.

If sustainable development in wider human terms is to result, a flexible global system with national counterparts is needed to be evolved to supplement and support the micro level development efforts identified here and be mutually enforcing. Putting a sensitive support system in place would require structural changes at the macro level both within countries and at global level as well as the initiation of a selective delinking process at the global level with an orderly linking into a New International Order. A mere statement of a New International Order by itself means little unless alternative development strategies are pursued within the countries and supported sensitively from outside.²¹⁾

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[SUMMARY]

With the realisation that 1980s has been a lost decade for development following upon the golden years of 50s and 60s and illusionary debt led growth of 1970s, the quest for a new development paradigm had begun. It was mainly because of the reason that the poor and vulnerable sections of society were left out of the mainstream of the development process. In the meantime, the macroeconomic paradigm has moved away from the Keynesian of the Golden Years to a sharply monetarist and Neo-classical type. Again, given the present crisis of development, increasing doubts are being raised about the validity of this dominant paradigm which lacks emphasis on human and social basis for sustainable development and growth and the importance of participation for strategies thereof.

The above crisis especially in South Asia which is not only further marginalising large

numbers of people but was also destroying the environment and their natural resource base necessary to maintain their life support systems.

In the development of new approaches and paradigms, scholars and field practitioners from different parts of the world have been actively engaged. Nagamine Haruo both as a scholar and practitioner has made valuable contribution. He had visualised during early eighties that the macro-economic paradigm adopted by Third World countries was not fully capable of solving the problems of poverty and unemployment as it did not take into consideration people's participation and priorities and capacities as the basis for development. For sustained participation and mobilisation of resources of the people he emphasized the essentiality of autonomous, financially viable broad based institutional mechanisms which can deal with higher level institutions on equal footing.

Nagamine has been involved from late seventies in developing suitable methodologies for regional and local level planning and development management. He has developed a comprehensive framework working out micro-macro level linkages and principles and modalities for participatory development. These provide practical guidelines for those who are working in this area. They are largely in tune with the recent methods developed elsewhere like PRA, PRAXIS, Participatory Action Research etc. This paper attempts to pretest this framework through a field application in a watershed management project in lesser Himalayas in India. It illustrates how participatory approaches are evolving as alternative models of development and indicates that these are economically viable and cost effective to tackle the problems of poverty and environmental degradation. However, there are many severe constraints and inhibiting factors in the process and it requires perseverance to achieve this kind of socio-economic transformation.