STUDENT ARTICLE

Participatory Approaches for Rural Poverty Alleviation needs a CDM model for sustainable Rural Development and Management

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India is more like a continent than a single country. It contains a sixth of the world's population and ranges from the highest Himalayan peaks through scorching plains, to the tropical cape in the Indian Ocean. Its people are famously diverse, speaking 1600 different dialects and forming a rich blend of cultures, religions and ethnic groups. Many of the 35 states and Union Territories are significantly larger than European countries. Despite this vibrant diversity, democracy and peace have been largely maintained since Independence.

The Indian village societies consists of people following different religious paths and traditions. The formation of the Indian village society largely varies from one region to another. Though there is some similarity in the religious practices and cultural activities in most Indian village societies, their education system and the position of women differ from each other. People in most of the villages share various common utilities like ponds, grazing grounds, temples and shrines, cremation grounds, schools, sitting spaces under large shade trees, wells, wastelands, etc. Village systems are like plants and trees, village communities have sustainable livelihoods, there are around 6,38,365 villages in India sheltering 70 percent of Indian population and contributing to 42 percent of national income. The grass root democracy (Panchayati Raj Institutions) in India provides a massive scope and opportunity to develop human resource or human capital through research education and training of the elected representatives on the one hand, and educating more than 400 million adults in rural India as members of the village councils (Gram Sabhas) on the other. It is envisaged that in the next 10 years, India shall be the largest functional grass root democracy. Until, recently the Western scholars were either not informed of this revolutionary measure or were apprehensive. Of late, the scenario is changing with

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the scholars, institutions, such as the European Commission coming forward to collaborate and also sponsor studies and programmes to strengthen the grass root democracy. Hence there is a need for developing a suitable Clean Development Mechanism(CDM) Model for sustainable rural development

Key words: Ergopolis, Clean Development Mechanism Model, Rural Infrastructure Development. participatory rural appraisal.

Introduction

The term 'participation' has recently come to play a central role in the discourse of rural development practitioners and policy makers. At the same time, people's interpretations of the term – and criticisms of other people's interpretations – have multiplied, and the intentions and results of much participation in practice have been questioned or even denounced. In other words, participation has become a hotly contested term, in a debate with deep implications for the ways in which community, society, citizenship, the rights of the poor and rural development itself are conceived, and for the policies that are formulated about and around some of these concepts and the social realities to which they refer.

This paper considers participation in rural development and rural poverty alleviation. It examines Indian experience and provides brief overviews of past interpretations and practices and of current debates. Its main purposes are to identify some of the main challenges facing the use of participatory approaches to rural development and poverty alleviation in India, and to propose a number of topics for discussion.

Optimizing local potencies is an important way to sustain rural development. In exploring local potencies such as human, natural and social capital is used participatory approach and community empowerment. To understand participatory approach and community empowerment, the aim of participatory, ethics on using participatory approach and developing collaborative are important before using tools of participatory approach and community empowerment. Participatory approach and community empowerment needs Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods. In applying PRA methods requires several skills such as partnerships, social mapping, promoting stake holder, participatory assessment planning, participatory program management, integrating participatory monitoring and evaluation are necessary.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a focus on people-centered development (a form of rural reconstruction) that describes a new family of approaches and methods for empowering and learning. Participation was promoted by providing information to generate people's support to the

development programs. Indigenous farming technology and practices were considered as primitive and obstacle to development, and were therefore neutralized with the introduction of modern agricultural technology. Increased agricultural production was seen as the solution to the problem of massive rural poverty. PRA is a tool for participatory approaches and community empowerment in the introduction of modern agricultural technology in the rural area.

Participatory Approach and Community Empowerment

Empowerment is the process by which people in general, and poorer segments in particular, acquire the capability to understand, analyze and effectively respond to situations affecting their lives and livelihoods. Historically, empowerment has been achieved through a process of organization of people to voice demands for political and economic rights. In the context of poverty, empowering the poor through concerted efforts could be seen as long-term solution to poverty alleviation and ultimately, eradication of poverty. In this sense, creation and enhancement of basic capabilities-both economic and political-should be seen as an enabling process for achieving empowerment of the poor.

'When we talk about participation for poverty alleviation, we are affirming that all people involved in the development process need to work together, on equal footing, if development interventions are to have any real hope of success and sustainable achievements. Participation for development means that all people affected by the development process, and regardless of age, gender, ethnic background, religion etc., have a right to participate in their society, to express their needs and to work together with others to help to get their needs met. In this way, the right to participation is also a responsibility; if participation is to work, people must be willing to join in the development process, and they must be enabled to do so to the best of their abilities.

Enabling people to work towards their own development is part of the process of community empowerment. Defining what we mean by the "community" is never easy. Groups of people living in the same geographical area do not always have same needs or goals in life. But, in working for poverty alleviation, it is vital that people gain from the synergy of working together and organizing for community development. People who live in poverty and social disadvantage to not feel that they have any ability to get their voices heard or their needs met. Using participatory approaches can help them identify new ways of finding solutions to their problems. As groups of people begin to realize that there are ways in which their efforts can make a difference, they feel more powerful and are better able to contribute to the development process.

Participatory approaches are all those methods by which we can encourage people's active and equitable contribution towards their own, and their society's development. Using participatory approaches can ensure that development interventions are better targeted; that they are more appropriate to people needs, and can be more effective, efficient and have better impact. Since using participatory approaches implies a process of sharing information and understanding between governments, development organizations, civic organizations and communities, the traditional boundaries between development "providers" and "beneficiaries" are broken down and people feel greater "ownership" of the development process.

The philosophy, principles and practice of PRA

The philosophy of PRA is humanistic and people centered philosophy of development. It is founded on a set of beliefs about the basic problems of the rural poor and their inherent power to solve those problems. It is also a vision of what the rural poor can do for himself and his family, his community, his nation and the world.

The past decade has witnessed more shifts in the rhetoric of rural development than in its practice. These shifts include reversals from top-down to bottom-up, from centralized standardization to local diversity, and from blueprint to learning process.

A reversal of learning-to learn from rural people, directly, on the site, and face-to-face, gaining from local physical, technical and social knowledge. Poor people are creative and capable, and can should do much of their own investigation, analysis and planning.

Participatory Tools

When we use Participatory Approaches, we need particular methods to work with stakeholders and increase their sense of ownership. We call these methods "tools" because, like any other tool-kit, they do not provide the solutions in themselves, but do provide us with ways to reach the solutions. The tools we use help us to communicate in better ways with stakeholders and assist stakeholders to share their information and understanding with us. With experience, we learn to use the right tool in the right circumstances, and to develop new tools to meet our particular needs in different circumstances. The tools we use are accessible, any of the people we are working with are not literate, and then we do not use tools which involve writing or reading skills. We might use drawing, model-making or symbols instead.

The types of methods used in PRA are largely a more participatory mode. Some of the methods of PRA are:

- i. Secondary sources-such as files, maps, RS images, GIS Maps, articles and books;
- ii. Do-it-yourself-asking to be taught to perform village tasks e.g. transplanting weeding, ploughing etc. which were missed out from indigenous roots.
- iii. Key informants-enquiring who are the experts and seeking them out;
- iv. Semi-structured interview -it can entail having a mental or written checklist, but being open-ended and following up on the unexpected;
- v. Groups of various kinds (causal, specialist/focus, deliberately structured, community/ neighborhood);
- vi. Sequences or chains of interviews-from group to group or from group to key informant;
- vii. They do it-villages and village residents as investigators and researcherswomen, poor people, volunteers etc.;
- viii. Participatory mapping and modeling, in which people use the ground, floor or paper to make social, demographic, health or farm maps;
- ix. Participatory analysis of RS images and GIS Maps;
- x. Transect walks-systematically walk with informants through an area, observing, asking, listening, discussing, seeking problems, solutions and opportunities;
- xi. Time lines-chronologies of events, listing major remembered dates in a village;
- xii. Trend analysis-people's accounts of the past, or how things close to them have changed e.g. customs and practices;
- xiii. Livelihood analysis-stability, crises and coping, relative income, expenditure, credit and debt;
- xiv. Wellbeing or wealth ranking-indentifying clusters of households according to wellbeing or wealth;
- xv. Analysis of difference-especially by gender, social group, wealth/poverty, occupation and age;
- xvi. Key local indicators-such as poor people's criteria of wellbeing,
- xvii. Participatory planning, budgeting and monitoring-in which villagers prepare their own plans, budgets and schedules, and monitor progress.

Typologies of participation:

Degrees of participation -An influential participation typology has to do with degrees or levels of participation. Writing in North America, Arnstein (1969) defines participation as the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes;

to be deliberately included in the future It is the strategy by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society (p. 216). She puts forward a model that consists of a ladder with eight rungs, as illustrated in Figure 1 below. Arnstein stresses that the ladder is a simplification and that the eight rungs are an imperfect representation of what is really a continuum, where a clear distinction between levels is not always possible. Still, she claims, it helps to illustrate the fact that there are different degrees of citizen participation.

Figure 1: The ladder of participation



Source: Amstein, 1969

This model is not neutral: as pointed out by Hayward et al. (2004: 99), 'reading the ladder from bottom to top, it suggests a hierarchical view that promotes full participation as the goal to be achieved. This value-laden view deligitimises non- and/or peripheral participation'. Something similar may be said of the typology of participation presented in Figure 2 below, although of course here, unlike in Figure 1, lower generally tends to be 'better'.

Type of Participation Some Components and Characteristics Passive Participation People are told what is going to happen or has already happened. Top down, information shared belongs only to external professionals Participation in information giving People answer questions posed by extractive researchers, using surveys etc. People not able to influence the research Participation by consultation People are consulted and external agents listen to their views. Usually externally defined problems and solutions. People not really involved in decision making Participation as consultation Provision of resources, e.g. labor. Little incentive to Participation by material incentives participate after the incentives end, for example much farm research, some community forestry **Functional Participation** Groups are formed to meet predetermined objectives. Usually done after major project decisions are made, therefore initially dependent on outsiders but may become self dependent and enabling. Participation as organization. Joint analysis to joint actions. Possible use of new Interactive Participation local institutions or strengthening existing ones. Enabling and empowering so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices Already empowered, take decisions independently of Self-Mobilisation external institutions. May or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and

power. Participation as empowering.

Figure 2: A participation typology

Source: Pimbert and Pretty, 1994.

Efficiency and empowerment views of participation:

Both Arnstein's ladder and the typology in Figure 2 carry the implicit assumption that different positions correspond to different degrees of one and the same thing (i.e. participation) and that therefore it would be possible to move gradually from one level to another. However, much of the theorizing of participation is based on a distinction that for some people implies a rejection of this assumption. This is the distinction between the efficiency argument and the equity and empowerment argument. The former envisages the use of participation instrumentally, to achieve better project outcomes or greater sustainability in rural development terms, for instance by mobilizing beneficiaries' contributions through their involvement in implementation, or by increasing project acceptance, local ownership and sustainability. The latter regards participation as a process that empowers the poor and strengthens their capacity to take independent collective action in order to improve their own situation (and can, in some cases, even lead to changes in the distribution of power, as successful collective action and the associated increase in awareness and self-confidence lead the poor to claim a larger share of power and resources in the rural community). Its advocates dismiss instrumental uses of participation as inadequate, since they rarely if ever lead to the effective empowerment of the majority, particularly the poor and oppressed. Against this, some people argue that some beneficiary involvement is usually better than none, and that instrumental forms of participation may, over time, lead to more comprehensive and more empowering participation, particularly if care is taken to protect rural development projects from elite capture. In other words, they claim that it may be possible to move gradually from the forms of participation mentioned at the top of the table in Figure 2, towards the deeper forms below. Social scientists caution that institutions do not usually work like that, and that processes of empowerment can stop or move backwards as much as they can move forwards.

Participation in India: a partial overview around some themes

I. Diagnosis, community planning, project identification and formulation

This includes all efforts to involve the local population in defining their own problems, diagnosing the situations that give rise to such problems, setting priorities for their resolution, and identifying and formulating project interventions that may help solve some of those problems. An important distinction here is between cases where organizations or projects come into an area with certain interventions in mind and involve the local population in decisions that do not change this broad design, and those where, in line with the principles of PRA mentioned above, local people are called upon to determine even the kind of intervention that is needed. The former case tends to be found more often, because organizations, even in the non-governmental sector, are constrained by their mandate and mission or by conditions placed upon the use of funds at their disposal.

II. Research and extension, innovation, knowledge

Part of our second theme borders with the first: there is a difference in degree but not in quality between cases where local people participate in diagnosis or planning and those where they play an active role in research. This is partly a consequence of a shift in perspectives concerning the complex question of indigenous knowledge and its status. After the implicit assumptions concerning the superiority of scientific knowledge that prevailed during the XIXth and most of the XXth centuries, the spread of postmodernism towards the end of the latter century ushered in extreme relativist positions according to which all knowledge (and belief) systems are basically equivalent so that there is no sense in even asking questions concerning the superiority of one over another. Together with other, less felicitous, consequences, this had the advantage of restoring respectability to indigenous — or folk, or vernacular,

or, in agricultural contexts, farmer – knowledge, and to open up the possibility of serious research on this important subject, which tended to reveal situations far more complex, nuanced and dynamic than had been assumed before (see e.g. Jewitt, 2000; Price, 2001; Gurung, 2003). Another was a substantial increase in the recognition and acceptance of the role that farmers can play in agricultural research, development and extension, particularly from the late 1980s onwards.

Agricultural research was for a long time seen as the exclusive domain of scientists, with extension as the (one-way) delivery of the scientists' findings to farmers, whose own role was seen to be in implementation, basically limited to adopting the technological innovations handed down to them.

This kind of agricultural research and extension was criticized for, among other things,

- The relative isolation of agricultural research stations, leading to research (i) which is not always relevant to farmers' needs and circumstances;
- Excessive focus on yield, which is only one among several variables (ii) farmers consider when making choices (others include risk, food security and dietary preferences);
- A top-down approach to extension, disregarding farmers' knowledge (iii) and experience; and
- (iv) Ignorance of or disregard for the socio-economic constraints facing farmers.

III. Natural resource management

Within the broad field of rural development, natural resource management development is a main area of application of participatory approaches. In general terms, the purpose of these interventions is to improve the living conditions of local people, particularly the poor, by helping them manage the natural resources available to them or under their control with greater effectiveness, sustainability and equity.

Participatory approaches are naturally complemented, in some of these cases, by the use of a sustainable livelihoods framework, which considers that a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. Because it takes into account not only agricultural but other assets and activities as well, the livelihoods approach is particularly suited to natural resource management, where very often the resources being dealt with are not of a strictly agricultural nature. Reddy et al. (2004), for example, analyse the impact of India's programme of watershed development on the livelihoods of rural communities, by looking at its impact on the five types of capital assets and strategies required for the means of living. They also analyse the vulnerability and stability of those capital assets as well as the participation in the programme. They conclude that, even in difficult environmental conditions where the watershed cannot bring direct irrigation benefits on a large scale, watershed development, if supported with other programmes, has potential for sustaining rural livelihoods.

IV. Governance and decentralization

Governance plays an important role in determining the conditions under which participation can take place and, through its mechanisms, processes and institutions, it critically affects the possibility of participation as well as its likely success. Good governance makes it possible for citizens, individually or in groups, to articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and negotiate their differences. Within the broad area of governance, decentralization, which brings decision-making closer to the local level, is potentially important to participation, since it may, if it is done well, lead to more responsive government and new opportunities for citizens to participate.

The qualification is important, since there is also the danger that decentralization may provide little space for the poor to participate in local decision-making, may be misused by powerful sections of the community and end up fostering clientelism and strengthening local elites. One of the ways to 'do it well' is by strengthening participation at the same time as the decentralization is carried out.

Mathew (2004) reviews recent Indian experience of empowering the panchayats, rural (and urban) local government bodies, following constitutional amendments in 1992 that sought to institutionalize the idea of decentralized planning by autonomous panchayats, with participation of the local communities. He finds that, largely because of a lack of administrative and financial resources, panchayats have at best become the implementing arms of state governments rather than institutions of self-government. In addition to this, and despite important steps to include marginalized communities in the power structure of local government institutions, 'it cannot be said that panchayats have been able to take effective measures for removing the economic and social deprivation of the marginalized people' (p. 3). Mathew concludes that there are grounds for cautious optimism and that local government institutions need various kinds of support from higher tiers of government to succeed, such as legislation, constructive directions, monitoring, training and resource transfers.

The challenges of participatory rural development: some reflections and points for Discussion are a good enough participation. Despite our best efforts,

perfect, transformative, empowering participation is probably unattainable most of the time, except perhaps where it was not necessary to begin with. The question then is whether we can have a 'good enough participation', what that would look like and what it would require. Perhaps the main criterion would be that the interventions associated with it should do no harm, and preferably some good, in terms of the main objective of poverty alleviation, while at the same time contributing towards creating at least some of the conditions that enable participation, agency and the full exercise of citizenship by the poor to take place. If such interventions remove some of the constraints of everyday life, by increasing the productivity of agricultural labour or bringing clean water closer to where people live, alleviating the burden of disease caused by malnutrition and lack of hygiene, decreasing vulnerability to natural disasters or to the vagaries of climate and rainfall, or making people less dependent on relations of patronage for daily subsistence, they are a step in the right direction (Cleaver, 2004). If this is done for instance through the permanent and expanding presence of an organization that offers 'better technology and more affordable inputs rather than autonomy and independence' (Mosse, 2001: 34), it may not fit in with the fashion for empowerment and farmer-managed development, but may still represent significant progress.

Multidimensional rural poverty and the sustainable livelihoods approach:

The complexity and multi-dimensionality of poverty in general and rural poverty in particular, are generally accepted nowadays. A recent ESCAP document calls for ... a deeper knowledge and understanding of the emerging dynamics and local processes that cause and maintain rural poverty. The rural poor face multiple deprivations from lack of assets, isolation, alienation, dependence, powerlessness, vulnerability and lack of freedom of choice. Disparities also exist within rural areas: in particular, disparities between ruling rural elites and small farmers or landless households; and disparities among farmers over access and rights to fertile lands. In this context, a distinction between the different but closely related dimensions of poverty is important:

- a lack of income and productive assets;
- a lack of access to essential economic and social services; and (b)
- (c) a lack of power, participation and respect. These different dimensions of poverty reinforce each other, keeping the poor trapped in poverty (ESCAP, 2007: 8).

Lack of awareness of this multi-dimensionality, or a reluctance to confront it, may explain much the failure of past rural development strategies in reducing rural poverty. The implication is clear: new, sharper, multi-targeted rural

development strategies are called for, taking this complexity and multidimensionality fully into account and going beyond the old approaches that were based solely on the growth of agricultural productivity and focused almost exclusively on the small farmer. An approach to rural poverty and rural development that appears capable to encompass this complexity and multi-dimensionality is the so-called sustainable livelihoods approach (Scoones, 1998; Ellis, 2000). As Ellis and Biggs (2001: 445) emphasize, this approach 'embodies no prior requirement for the poor rural individual or family to be a "small farmer". The livelihoods approach takes an open-ended view of the combination of assets and activities that turn out to constitute a viable livelihood strategy for the rural family'. The same authors add that empirical research indicates that farming amounts on average to only about 40-60% of the livelihood 'package' put together by rural households in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africal I, and conclude:

If a new paradigm of rural development is to emerge, it will be one in which agriculture takes its place along with a host of other actual and potential rural and non-rural activities that are important to the construction of viable rural livelihoods, without undue preference being given to farming as the unique solution to rural poverty. It is in this sense that the cross-sectoral and multi-occupational diversity of rural livelihoods may need to become the cornerstone of rural development policy if efforts to reduce rural poverty are to be effective in the future. Such paradigm will probably combine participatory approaches with rural livelihoods, given their compatibility and potential for mutual reinforcement.

Contextual factors and the role of the state:

The success or failure of participatory rural development interventions depends as much on the conditions surrounding the particular intervention as on the quality of the work done at the local level. Among the conditions most frequently mentioned are economic growth, a favorable political and administrative environment characterized by administrative decentralization and more generally good governance at the macro level, and the presence of cultural traits or ideologies that favor participation, self-reliance and collective action by the poor.

Conclusion:

Through PRA, rural people express and share what they already know, learn through their expression and sharing, investigate and observe add to their knowledge, analyze and become more aware and reach new understanding plan and implement what they have planned take command, and further learn

through the experience of action. The participatory orientation of PRA has given new impetus to the development of methods.

As nations have progressed it has been emitting carbon both in urban and rural areas, or gases which result in warming of the globe. Some decades ago a debate started on how to reduce the emission of harmful gases that contributes to the greenhouse effect that causes global warming. So, countries came together and signed an agreement named the Kyoto Protocol.

The Kyoto Protocol has created a mechanism under which countries that have been emitting more carbon and other gases (greenhouse gases include ozone, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and even water vapour) have voluntarily decided that they will bring down the level of carbon they are emitting to the levels of early 1990s.

Developed countries, mostly European, had said that they will bring down the level in the period from 2008 to 2012. In 2008, these developed countries have decided on different norms to bring down the level of emission fixed for their companies and factories.

A company has two ways to reduce emissions. One, it can reduce the GHG (greenhouse gases) by adopting new technology or improving upon the existing technology to attain the new norms for emission of gases. Or it can tie up with developing nations and help them set up new technology that is eco-friendly, thereby helping developing country or its companies 'earn' credits.

But Indian rural way of living which we largely forgotten or not practicing has its own way of mechanism that produces least GHG, hence Indian rural way of living should be refurbished. It would be a base for developing suitable CEM Model for sustainable rural development and also supports FDI where India can't afford is spent on rural poverty alleviation programs.

India, China and some other Asian countries have the advantage because they are developing countries. Any company, factories or farm owner in India can get linked to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and know the 'standard' level of carbon emission allowed for its outfit or activity. The extent to which we are emitting less carbon (as per standard fixed by UNFCCC) we get credited in a developing country. This is called carbon credit, hence there is need to develop a appropriate Clean Development Mechanism model to earn carbon credit by sustainable lifestyle and livelihoods of Indian rural community.

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