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Participation In Social Development And Integration In Sub-Saharan Africa

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Introduction

Popular participation is a concept that has been identified at many levels as making a singularly important contribution to the development of countries and to the integration of all social groups in society. Participation has not been seen only as an end in itself but also as a means of achieving stability, prosperity, peace and social justice. There is unlikely to be peace and stability in a country if certain groups feel discriminated against or identify themselves as socially deprived in one form or another. Further it is unjust not to involve people in areas that affect their lives. It is argued that it is through the process of involving people in development, and in decision making, that such groups feel well integrated into their communities. They feel that decisions that have been made are also theirs because they have played a part in formulating them. Further they are more likely to implement the decisions meaningfully.

Of critical importance in the implementation of popular participation as a strategy for development, as well as for social integration, is the part that people play in decision making in the identification of a problem and its solution. A more comprehensive view of the decision making process involves four stages: a) defining the situation requiring a decision; b) choosing the preferred alternative; c) determining how best to implement the decision once it is made; and d) evaluating the consequence of the action taken. (UN, 1985). These steps are taken on any decision made, whether it is in a political, social, cultural or economic setting, whether at national or local level and whether in Government or non-Government organisation, political party, trade union or youth or women’s organisation. Another critical factor of participation which will be discussed later in this paper is how, when and why people participate in decision making. Measures should be taken to ensure that meaningful participation is achieved rather than “token” participation in which people are passive and only endorse the decisions already made elsewhere. These complex issues of popular participation will be addressed within the context of the socio-political and cultural development of society. However, it should be mentioned that, though the concept of popular participation is desirable, it varies from one

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country to another and is also viewed from different perspectives depending on the nature and type of government that is in power at a given time.

The countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are of different ideological persuasions. There are some that follow the principles of market economy; for example, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal and Lesotho. There are others that have devised radical approaches to development and have clearly articulated their ideologies; for example, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. There are still others, ruled by military regimes, that have not been able to articulate the direction of their development other than that they have taken over power from civilian governments in the interests of the masses. The military governments of Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Sudan and Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) are in this category. These governments vary in their interpretation of development and social integration. Their concept of popular participation will vary as will their implementation of programmes of action to reduce the inequalities between and among various social groups and regions.

However, there are certain groups of people who are deprived of services, and whose quality of life differs and who are without resources for living.

Nigeria, for example, one of the richest countries in Africa, has a life expectancy of 48 with 20% of its population only having access to a clean water supply. Further, Zaire which is rich in minerals has only 15% of its population able to read and write and with only 10% of its people having access to a clean water supply.

The above figures indicate that the increase in the Gross National Product (GNP) does not necessarily mean an increase in development and social integration. They confirm that there are still large sections of communities that cannot read and write, whose life expectation is low and whose ratio of doctor per population is very high. It has however been argued that popular participation is an important method of achieving social development and social integration of less advantaged population groups coupled of course with other development strategies of self-reliance. It is suggested that these deprived groups should be involved in the decision-making process and should participate in development projects such as mass literacy campaigns, provisions of clean water supply, increasing food production and improving health and educational services.

When subjecting the above figures to critical analysis, it is found that women are worse off than men in literacy, education and employment. Further the majority of women are resident in the rural areas where social services are minimal if non-existent. Yet another interpretation of these figures is that the rural poor suffer more from ignorance, disease and hunger. They are more likely to be illiterate and suffer from more preventable diseases than those in the urban areas.

The aged, the disabled and the landless peasants, who in many cases do not have a political voice, are others groups that experience social deprivation. To integrate these groups into social and economic
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development requires their active and meaningful participation. The extent to which they can participate and the level at which their participation becomes effective depends upon the political system that exists in a particular country. This study, therefore, analyses such experiences in a few selected countries south of the Sahara.

Economic And Social Development

Development in this context is conceptualised as the development of an individual as a social being, aiming at his liberation and at his fulfillment. Development should be geared to the satisfaction of needs beginning with the eradication of poverty, ignorance and disease. The satisfaction of basic needs constitutes development. In an effort to reduce these problems and inequalities between and among social groups in society, the people themselves must be involved in decision making on strategies for a solution.

The distribution of land in many countries of the region has often been highly unequal, while the relationships between social groups and their distribution of power are primarily a function of land ownership or of their relationship to the land, in the case of tenants, sharecroppers and the landless agricultural labourers. Access to water, credit, technology and extension services and thus the potential for income growth, are closely related to the amount of land under one’s control. Such satisfaction creates relationships of dependency between social groups: for instance, the landless, labourers and poor peasants depend on the rich or middle class peasants to give them employment and poor groups depend upon money lenders. Stratification also influences the amount of family labour available for production since the women, and sometimes men of certain groups, may not work in the fields. Such socially deprived groups are therefore alienated from the main stream of society. A participatory development process, as a way of integrating such alienated groups, must focus on the conflict of interests between different groups in agrarian society. This is so because local ownership is synonymous with control of wealth, social prestige and political power. In an attempt to remove all these barriers to interaction the government must take action in which the people themselves are involved.

There are several ways in which these disparities can be removed and where land, for example, has been in the hands of a few, it has been found necessary to pass a law which allows the land to be distributed to certain deprived groups such as the landless peasants. Such laws should be tight so that the big land owners or absentee landlords have no way of undermining it. In the process of integrating socially disadvantaged groups, various governments have found it necessary to involve the beneficiaries on each step towards social integration. The first logical step in any such programme is to identify a problem or a need, analyse its basis and propose
some solutions for action that will create a more desirable state of affairs. On all these steps the beneficiaries should be actively involved, for it gives them a way of influencing the decision-making process.

**Participation of less advantaged groups in the formulation and implementation of socio-economic planning**

The less advantaged are poor because they have limited political and economic resources. Some have low status, a low-grade education and little weight in the political process. In the rural areas, they are the majority and they are poorly organised. They have some potential power from the use of force and in terms of their numerical superiority, but this potential can be strengthened or weakened by the coercive capacity of the state. Some of these poor people include such heterogeneous groups as undernourished children, farmers' widows barred by law from acquiring or owning land, unemployed migrants to urban slums suffering from endemic diseases and people unable to read and write. The members of such diverse groups would not necessarily find their condition alleviated by every single action that society can take. Some of these poor people are not readily accessible through conventional public programmes because they may be scattered, isolated, highly mobile, located on illegal squatter settlements or alienated from the government and disinclined to co-operate with its representatives. They often live in remote or hard to reach areas or suffer their greatest privations during the wet season when they cannot be approached by ordinary overland routes.

From this brief analysis of the problems of the less advantaged, it can be seen that the correction of such inequalities is not an easy exercise. There is no one government ministry or department or single programme that can solve such problems at once or in a single manner. What such problems require in terms of formulating and implementing a programme of solution is an integrated approach which includes all government departments, non-government organisations and the less advantaged people themselves. Various governments have attempted to solve these problems in different ways. The following are the most common strategies that have been formulated and implemented:

1. Legislative land reform

Land reform is the first step in the redistribution of political and social power in the villages. In carrying out the land reform, the national leadership should not take the simple way of merely relying on administrative decrees and bestowing land on the peasants at a village level to organise themselves (peasants or women's association) in the land redistribution. The participation of the peasantry through their own organisation is essential to ensure a self-propelling force in which land reform can become a stimulus to further progress through progressive
organisations of co-operatives. A reduction in inequality brought about through a redistribution of landed property and supported by measures such as the provision of credit and marketing facilities is likely to raise total production and is certain to raise the income of the poor. These measures of land reform were introduced in Mozambique, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

2. The organisation of the landless.
Where land reform has taken place the peasants themselves must be organised in such a manner that they consolidate the powers that have been given to them so that they are not manipulated by powerful interest groups. Such groups supported by government co-operatives and associations and linked with local organisations of scale, can be effective especially when they are aiming at the fuller utilisation of the available labour force in infrastructure building (roads, irrigation channels, extension and credit services, community education). Greater equality of incomes has often been associated with extensive participatory rural organisation, not merely as a receiving structure for inputs from the top, but also as actively interacting with higher levels of decision-making for mobilising local resources as well as claiming outside assistance. The task of promoting the participatory organisation of the rural poor should be seen not as that of initiating any predetermined form of organisation but of mobilising the rural poor for specific action generated by their own deliberations, which in turn generate organisational patterns appropriate to the context and action decided upon.

3. Integrated rural development.
This is a multi-sectoral approach to problems of rural development. This includes government ministries, non-government organisations, local groups and the poor people themselves in identifying the problems, implementing programmes of action and monitoring and evaluating such kinds of programmes. In Gambia integrated rural development projects were initiated in the past by various government ministries, for example, Agriculture, Education and Health. In Nigeria, the most recent example is the IMO state integrated water and sanitation project that was initiated with the support and collaboration of UNICEF and WHO. Two federal ministries of social development and water resources are involved at the highest level. In Lesotho the district co-ordinator works with other sectors and non-government organisations in the planning and implementation of activities. Other integrated rural development activities have been formulated in Zimbabwe, Uganda, Tanzania and Botswana.

4. Special Interest groups
Some time ago planners considered fair distribution of land to all landless peasants, without due regard to unique problems of certain socially deprived groups such as women, youths and the disabled, as their goal. Rural women comprise 70-90 percent of the female population of African countries. They do 60 percent of the agricultural work and provide many of
services needed for feeding the family; 44 percent according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ILO 1981). In relation to land, women have only secondary rights and only through males. If there is increased privatisation of land, women’s access to land becomes more difficult because they are compelled to reply on the individual men’s willingness to let them use their personal fallow land, instead of being allocated a piece of common land as was done traditionally. With such political, social and traditional constraints in mind, governments should pass legislation which removes all these barriers for women. Further, women should be made to participate in both the identification of the problems as well as in the implementation and monitoring of such programmes.

Participation of Ethnic and National Minorities
In many of the African countries south of the Sahara there are hundreds of ethnic groups. Zambia, for example, with a total population of 5.3 million (1978) has about 72 ethnic groups who speak different languages with different cultures. Nigeria has more than 200 of these small ethnic groups. This pattern is repeated in many countries. Some ethnic groups such as those in Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana and the Sudan are nomadic and have no fixed place of abode.

These different ethnic groups played different roles before independence. Some, because of their proximity to industrial or mining centres, were in contact with the penetration of capital in Africa. Where mines or industries were established the ethnic groups around such centres sought employment there. Some were forced to work for the Europeans who first came into these countries. Some of the ethnic groups such as the Bemba in Zambia were among the first ethnic groups in the country to be employed on the copperbelt where copper was mined. Such groups became more vocal as they became involved directly with problems of exploitation by capital. They were the first in Zambia to be involved in trade unions and nationalist politics. These groups have become conscious of development issues because of their relation to capital.

Equally there were other ethnic groups who were exposed to Christianity. They were the first groups to be able to read and write. Thus they became conscious of their position in society and began to be involved in politics long before independence. Still others became politically conscious when their land was taken away by the colonial governments such as the Kikuyu in Kenya, and the Shonas and Ndebeles in Zimbabwe. Such ethnic groups became involved in politics up to the time of independence. Their historical experiences, therefore, enabled them to dominate national policies and governments. They have since been involved in national and regional planning in their respective countries. Some governments, realising the need to involve all ethnic groups and national minorities in development have
coopted representatives of such groups into their governments. This has been practised in Zambia and Tanzania. In Zimbabwe representatives of national or racial minorities, for example the whites, have been coopted into the cabinet while coloureds (people of mixed blood) and Asians have been appointed to high positions in the diplomatic and public service. In Tanzania, there is a Cabinet Minister who is of Indian descent. Mozambique has a number of cabinet ministers of European descent.

There are still some ethnic groups that have been reluctant to be involved in development planning. Some of the pastoral ethnic groups, such as the Maasai in Somalia and Tanzania, the Turkana of Kenya and the Bushmen of Botswana are still illiterate. These societies are cattle-centred cultures with public status, marriage and wealth revolving around the acquisition of large herds of cattle. Cattle herding is the man’s domain. From observation, cattle are the economic base from which men hold all political power and status, and women hold a secondary and inferior position in social, economic and political life of a group.

In Zimbabwe, there is one very small nomadic group, the Dema people, who live in the north of the country. They are illiterate and have not participated in national development. The government is making every effort to improve the welfare and status of these people by introducing income-generating projects. Nomadic ethnic groups are also very oppressive on their women folk, in their patterns of life and distribution of power. Most governments have brought aid to these ethnic groups with the hope that there will be changes in their socio-economic organisation. Some governments are well informed and sensitive to the internal socio-economic and political interaction of the community, to the possible realignment of power, wealth and dependencies of members of households as a result of various intervention strategies of development. Some of these intervention strategies offer new technologies and techniques in agriculture, cash crops, animal husbandry, primary health care or education, the effects of which can bring about the desired changes. These changes are likely to have an effect on the distribution of social, economic and political power within the ethnic group itself. Economic development, particularly when there are changes from one productive system to another, often leads to a situation where men may lose their status. For instance by encouraging women to participate in income-generating projects women begin to control the money and make decisions on household activities. It increases their purchasing power. Where pre-schools have been introduced, women have had an opportunity of attending meetings and being involved in planning activities on issues concerning their village. By introducing literacy classes, governments are actually giving skills to the illiterate with which to increase their degree of participation in regional as well as national development.

Such development planning has an effect on the culture of these societies. In many African countries, women are victims of health hazards caused by
puberty rites, for example amongst the Kikuyu of Kenya there is a customary practice of female castration. In other ethnic groups in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique, women are required by custom to retain the most nutritious foods for the use of their husbands even in the case of pregnant or lactating women. Further, in rural areas, economic and cultural obstacles prevent many girls from attending school. The main causes for this situation are the lack of educational facilities and non-school tasks expected from girls, such as the fetching of water and wood. The governments, by introducing primary health care programmes, literacy classes, preschools and education, with the full participation of the beneficiaries themselves, are convinced that indigenous populations will change for the better. Such a change, it must be remembered, is a gradual one.

The role of trade unions and other workers’ organisations
The task of the trade union is to defend the interests of workers. They deal with all issues pertaining to the welfare of their members. The members vary in accordance with the nature of employment that they are engaged in. The trade unions as organisations are responsible for conscientising their members on laws passed by governments or rules and regulations regarding their employment. They are a bridge between government and employees. In one party states the trade unions and the ruling party work harmoniously as they may be fused. In other words the party is aware of the trade unions’ problems, much as the union is aware of the ruling party’s problems. Because of this fusion, in Tanzania, the trade unions are involved in the formulation and the implementation of policies because they are one in terms of their organisations and interests.

In Zimbabwe there are many trade unions affiliated to different political parties and this is due to the historical development of workers organisations. However, there are attempts to unify the trade unions so that the workers are represented by one overall organisation which caters for their own interests. The umbrella organisation formed about three years ago appears to be making a tremendous effort to bring splinter organisations into one. This umbrella organisation is consulted by government on many bills such as the proposed Labour Bill. The trade union is also involved, together with the ruling party, in raising consciousness among the workers, especially on May Day. Further, in Zimbabwe, in each place of employment where there are more than fifty workers, the government encourages the formation of workers’ committees. The committee is elected by workers at one factory and represents the interests of the workers themselves. Together with the local management of the factory or firm, the workers’ committee attempts to solve all problems of communication, wages of employees and their conditions of service. Such an organisation goes a long way towards the
establishment of harmonious relationship between management and workers. Together with the government, the trade union has been able to let government pass legislation which allows women unpaid maternity leave and which guarantees their privileges and status. Women are now given one hour off work to feed their babies. Pre-schools and creches are now being set up to allow many more mothers to be engaged in employment and to be involved in more productive work. Minimum wages have been legislated for all categories of employment in Zimbabwe. Some countries such as Zambia, Kenya and Nigeria have not yet established the minimum wages for all categories of employees.

**Participation in community development**

Community development, as a concept, has largely been used by former British colonial territories. It has its roots in India where it was initiated in the 1950s as an approach to provide services in the rural communities. Since then approaches to community development have changed over the years in terms of content, objectives and the training of cadres. Some countries such as Angola and Mozambique do not have community development as an approach but prefer that activities for community development are implied in rural development. In many countries community development is under a particular ministry. In some countries community development has a ministry status. Despite these differences in status, the common thing is that it has a generic approach to problems of the community. A generic village community development worker is trained for a few months and is expected to guide a particular community through a process of:

1. identifying community felt needs;
2. prioritising these needs to determine which problem to attack first;
3. obtaining resources from government and non-government agencies through village self-reliance activities;
4. implementing community action to fulfil the need;
5. evaluation of the process so that community leaders become increasingly self-reliant.

These community development programmes are much more general in nature, involving the participation of other ministries and non-government organisations. They include: health, literacy, nutrition, agriculture, women’s emancipation, youth projects, pre-schools, education etc. As these projects are identified and experienced at a local level, their solution has always involved the participation of all groups of people in a village. In such a programme women have participated more than any other socially disadvantaged groups, perhaps because they are the majority in the rural areas and they have suffered more than any other group in literacy, primary health care etc. Youth have been engaged in a lot of income generating projects such as poultry raising, basket making, farming of cash crops etc. Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia are among the few countries where
community development is practised in such a manner. Women in Nigeria and Ghana are well known for their high degree of control and involvement in marketing clothes and food. In Kenya women have been involved in credit unions, co-operatives, fish, tobacco and vegetables. In Cameroon, the primary savings and credit co-operatives are run by the villagers themselves in the production of commodities mentioned above.

These types of community development programmes are much more of a welfare service in which the locally less-advantaged groups participated in planning as well as in the implementation of programmes. Although they are intended to integrate people in national and local development and meant to reduce poverty they do emphasise human development at the expense of increasing rural incomes. Such programmes do not tackle the social and structural constraints on development programmes intended to reduce poverty effectively. Patterns of land ownership, the domination of the elites and the powerlessness of the poor meant that many of the benefits of the community accrued disproportionately to the non-poor. For if the powerful rural elites are involved in the same community development programme with the rural poor, the more powerful groups are likely to take the benefits of such a programme. It was in the light of these views that the community development programme in Zimbabwe was formulated. As a result the Zimbabwe programmes appear much more radical than in other countries. They are radical because they involve land distribution to the poor, reduce power of the local traditional chiefs and aim at enabling the local people to control their own resources with assistance from the central government where necessary. It is only when oppressive customary practices are removed that the poor can be meaningfully mobilised and be integrated in development programmes effectively.

**Participation and agrarian reform**

Different countries have used various methods of participation at certain periods of their development. The following are some of the methods used:

1. In countries where land was in the hands of a few and where poor people were crowded on to poor soils, governments’ following independence, have passed legislation which not only distributes land to the poor but also imposes ceilings on the size of private holdings. This happened in Kenya and in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe land was a critical factor over which the masses went to war to remove the oppressive regime then in power. The ruling party has also gone to the extent of limiting the size of any land holding of the party leaders to no more than 50 acres. This was done to avoid what occurred in other countries where the leaders enriched themselves following the achievement of independence.

2. Once there is legal distribution of land, the peasants and the poor should form themselves into organisations to consolidate what they have achieved. Such organisational activities help the poor to increase their sense of
individual efficiency and allow them to deal on equal terms with the rural and urban elites and the bureaucracy which tends to identify with the interests of the modernising elites.

Active participation by the poor can be a way of obliging competing government agencies and private organisations to adopt a more co-operative relationship. These bodies will be dealing with the rural poor, as organised groups rather than as isolated individuals. In Zimbabwe, the settlers of new lands have been organised into village development committees which, among other things, seek to identify the problems faced by the settlers and to solve those problems together with the villagers.

Studies of popular participation show that, in sharply differentiated rural societies, promoting participatory initiatives is more likely to lead to dynamism and vitality if the poor peasantry are mobilised separately from the well-to-do. The stimulation becomes stronger if the class interest of the poorer peasantry (for greater social powers) overlaps with economic incentives and competent measures in this direction, by way of careful planning of the development of productive forces where production relations are being changed seem to be an important pre-requisite for avoiding a frustrated participatory incentive.

3. The governments provide training facilities to the landless peasants as well as supporting the infrastructure. In Zimbabwe, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia, governments have trained community development workers and village health workers from among the poor people themselves so that they can effectively deliver the goods and services. Such kind of recruitment for training avoids barriers to communications if workers come from another region which speaks a different language altogether. Governments also provide in-service training courses and conduct workshops and seminars on many subjects with the participation of community members.

4. Governments have designed measures of changing customary tenure systems as a way of enabling poor peasants to participate in development. Some governments arrested trends towards unequal privatisation of rights and absentee ownership and protect the rights of small cultivators and nomadic populations. In Tanzania, the government designed and implemented programmes for more efficient utilisation of pastoral resources, ensuring that the benefits accrued to pastoral people.

Although some governments have given considerable assistance to men in tending and harvesting industrial or cash crops, very little has been done to assist women’s living in the rural areas, who bear a heavy responsibility of producing the foodstuffs needed for their families’ subsistence. No rational planning of rural development can ignore this major contribution. Having recognised this fact, the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development stated that rural development based on growth with equity will require full integration of women, including equitable access to land, water and other natural resources, inputs and services and equal
opportunity to develop and employ their skills. In this view various governments have gone a long way towards the promotion of women into the development process. In Botswana, for example, women traditionally took no public part in the affairs of the tribal authority and political offices were almost exclusively held by men. The Kogtla (village council) was reserved for men and in most cases inaccessible to women. The government has since created opportunities for women to take part in the Kogtla and women are now members of the village development committees and there are women councillors and cabinet ministers. In this regard the change in customary or traditional laws accelerates the participation of women in agrarian reforms.

In general, the type of problem that has to be solved by the community determines the form and method of participation. If a problem requires special services then there will be more specialists selected by the community to undergo training and return to help. These may be community workers, village health workers, family planning extension workers. Participation can also be made by way of contributing labour, money and other services as the cases in Kenya and Tanzania.

In some cases local pressure groups are formed which help to conscientise both the administration and local people regarding the problem to be solved. All these forms of participation are made possible when governments decentralise their machineries so that they are accessible to the population at large. Local and intermediate levels of planning bodies are invested with appropriate legal powers, financial resources and trained personnel so as to secure their effective operation.

Different groups in the communities decide on whether they should participate through groups’ representatives or through village development committees. Depending on the nature of the problem the villagers may decide when they should participate. In literacy programmes in Zimbabwe the peasants decide whether to meet in the evening when everybody is back from the fields or in the afternoon because some have to travel a long way to attend a literacy class. Equally some groups prefer to meet in the morning because of the presence of wild animals, such as lions, in their respective communities.

**Participation and the expansion of basic services**

UNICEF points out, “The State of the World’s Children 1984”, that “with each passing minute, ten children die and another ten children become deaf, blind or mentally retarded from six diseases which can be prevented by immunisation; diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, measles, poliomyelitis and tuberculosis.”

The majority of these children who die are in the third world countries and Africa accounts for a substantial number. A lot of these children suffer from malnutrition, disease, poverty and poor child care. More recently
thousands of children have died from famine in Ethiopia, Chad and countries in the Sahel region. In Chad, for example the government reported the deaths of 1,000 children in the past four months. This was disclosed by the Chad's Minister of Information, Mr Mahamat Soumailia, after a Cabinet meeting on the 27th September, 1984. Famine is now threatening a third of Chad's five million people. Further, life expectancy in Africa is much lower than in many parts of the world.

These problems are serious and therefore, require urgent attention and meaningful strategies for solution. As can be seen the causes of these problems have political, economic and social bearing and must be conceptualised in that context. From a political and economic point of view, ill-health amongst the poor is a result of inequitable distribution of resources in all sectors of the economy, whether in education, health or agriculture. Poverty and its corollary, social injustice, are now generally diagnosed as the major obstacles to socio-economic development and the improvement of the quality of life. From this analysis, it is argued that one of the most effective ways of improving the quality of life and promoting primary health care is community involvement. Through involvement and participation in health activities, as individuals, as families or as groups and communities, people can identify with and feel responsible for such activities, so that they cease to be passive receivers and become individuals interacting with the health care system in full awareness of the decisions they have to take. Participation thus means a process of involvement in thinking, in decision making and in actions.

Forms of participation differ in accordance with the political system existing in a country. Health of a population is also affected by such social and economic factors as nutrition, water supply, waste disposal, housing, education, income and its distribution, employment, communication, transport and social structure. All these factors reflect the political and powerful forces that play a dominant role in the shaping of the health services of the community through decisions on resource allocation, manpower policy, education, choice of technology and the degree to which the health services are to be made available and accessible to the masses.

The question of importance that has to be addressed is how can people participate in such a manner that they influence the allocation of health, education and other services aimed at reducing poverty? Further, how can popular participation be an instrument for increasing the integration of less advantaged people? The following are some of the ways which have been found to useful in practice:

1. Appointment of local leaders to positions in government bureaucracy. This may be done in the form of ward leaders, members of the district or town councils being appointed to government or parastatal bodies. If government machinery has to function, it must represent people from all
shades of opinion and from various social groups. The government of national unity in Zimbabwe is an attempt to make representatives of different groups have an opportunity to influence the allocation of public resources.

2. Community's choice on the final plan from among predetermined options. This entails consultation by development planners with the people at the community level. Such consultation occurs after technocrats have completed their plans when they can call a meeting with the community to explain the plans and state its views. It is in such a forum that people can express their views regarding the allocation of resources. The problem with this method is that the masses are not qualified nor knowledgeable about the amount spent on education or health to be able to make a fair assessment of all resources available.

3. Embarking on sustained efforts to mobilise available resources within the community. If priorities should be determined in terms of needs and resources, then people must make efforts to mobilise the resources that are available and at the same time develop potential new resources. Mass campaigns against malaria, and other diseases would need to have people mobilised and conscientised on ways of combating it. In this regard governments and non-governmental organisations are involved in, not only disseminating information, but also in taking steps to eradicate the disease. In such involvement of organisations, the allocation of health resources, whether human or financial, becomes an important point for the solution of problems which require resources.

4. People's organisations such as the village development committees, pressure groups, co-operatives, peasants associations etc. are involved in the allocation of resources. Heated debates often arise out of people's participation on the allocation of resources: for example, where to build a clinic, a school, how many nurses or teachers per district, since all these resources are scarce.

5. Participation of women as social group in the promotion of primary health care is a vital factor. Women's role and experience in infant feeding is unique and the importance of women gaining greater control of actions affecting this aspect of their lives must be emphasised. Such kind of participation should involve: (a) increased representation of women in all follow-up meetings and action in government and non-government organisation, for example industry, trade unions etc.; (b) the increased recognition and involvement of women's organisations in the community, national and international efforts for the promotion of improved infant and young child feeding and related primary health care efforts; (c) the increased involvement of women in policy formulation and decision-making at all stages of planning and implementation of related national programmes. (d) women should be given information regarding health, nutritional status of women, breast-feeding, weaning, family planning etc.
The approach should be multisectoral and multi-purpose. This is happening in most primary health care programmes in Lesotho, Botswana and Ethiopia. In Lesotho, for example, 115 out of every 1 000 children die before the age of one and another 20 to 25 will not live beyond the age of 5. Expanded immunisation programmes which require full participation have been increased in Lesotho.

**The participation of the youth**

The participation of youth in development projects aimed at the improvement of conditions of work and income have been seen from three perspectives. Firstly, some governments deliberately set programmes for youths through the legal machineries. Secondly, government can encourage non-governmental organisations such as the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) or Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, by way of grants-in-aid, to cater for the welfare of the youths. Thirdly, the ruling parties in some countries have often had youth wings of the main parties to take care of the youth employment programmes and political education.

In Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi, governments have established specific ministries of youth or departments to deal with issues relating to the youth. Such government institution have been encouraging the youth to form co-operative income-generating projects in which they could have opportunities to increase their income. In Zambia, many young people formed co-operatives for poultry and piggery. In Zimbabwe youths have been given skills in carpentry, building and agriculture so that they can form themselves in what is generally referred to as youth brigades or building brigades. Young people are also involved in social development projects such as assisting in literacy mass campaings and health issues; for example, cleaning the streets, mobilising people for immunisation programmes etc.

Young people have also been involved in non-governmental organisations such as Catholic Youth Group, YWCA Young Farmers’ Club etc. In such organisations the youth themselves make decisions on what projects they want to embark upon. The activities might involve religious teachings in addition to a more concrete type of work.

However, much as the African leaders are interested in maintaining full employment of youth in the rural areas, they are faced with the limited means with which to create that employment. In most countries, urban unemployment has grown and is aggravated by a rural exodus, particularly among young people of working age. In an attempt to rectify the situation some governments have taken steps to modernise the country-side and above all to create jobs which are likely to keep, not only youths, but also rural inhabitants, both men and women, from moving to the towns. Thus many activities have been undertaken in connection with the education and training of craftsmen in rural areas, the promotion of small-scale industries to process agricultural products and food stuffs, to organise the servicing
and production of equipment at the village level and to decentralise industrial enterprises from the cities to the countryside. One of the basic objectives of the economic and social development plan of Tanzania, is to restructure the industrial sector in order to promote small and medium sized industries which are easy to establish and using simple technologies. Within the industrial framework of the small industries development organisation (SIDO) established in 1973. Such projects, with external assistance, have been implemented in Liberia, Botswana, Burundi and Gambia. The government of Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) created rural education centres which, in 1975, were transformed into training centres for young farmers. This educational system, which is organised by the Ministry of Rural Development, forms part of a broader national community development approach under which training is given by and for the group concerned. Training programmes place particular emphasis on the village community participation in the life of the centre through the village council, so that the system is better integrated into the environment, a new type of relationship between teacher and trainees and teacher and the villagers from which any trace of the traditional teacher-pupil relationship is totally absent, and the need to reflect the requirements and potential of the college and the options of the regional development agencies. Similar programmes have been implemented in Sierra Leone where the role of the youth is emphasised by its participation in various government, community and privately sponsored self-help rural work programmes.

In Ethiopia all high schools and college students (approximately 60 000) participated for two years in the “Development through Co-operation Campaign”. This involved the mobilising and politicising of villagers as well as putting into effect the land reform programme.

Conclusion

National governments have joined regional and international organisations that promote social integration through popular participation. From the above discussion, it can be seen that the majority of governments in the region have recognised that there are socially disadvantaged groups in their societies and, equally important, they are taking various steps to correct the imbalances. One of the most effective and meaningful ways of integrating the less advantaged, has been to involve them in decision making at local, regional and national levels. Various methods and forms of participation have been discussed and it has been found that strategies differ in time,
understanding and ideological commitment. All these ideas vary in accordance with the socio-economic and political system existing in a country. In the area of women's participation in development, many governments have joined the United Nations which is sponsoring and financing projects, through its agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, ECA, CSDHA etc.

In these projects, the poor people and women are recognised as prime beneficiaries. In areas of literacy UNICEF, UNESCO and FAO have taken a lead in providing both financial and human resources and have collaborated with various governments. Such co-operation has been experienced with many of the United Nations agencies such as in health, education, agriculture, environmental protection and administration.

At regional levels, African governments have formed various regional groups to assist each other in economic and political fields. Countries geographically situated on the west of Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa have formed themselves into blocks; for example, the Preferential Trade Area (PTA), Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC), and Front Line States of East, Central and Southern Africa.

Because the African countries, south of the Sahara, share developing characteristics such as the pattern and incidences of poverty, disease, hunger and inequitable distribution of resources, there is need for them to co-operate with each other in an effort to design strategies for finding the solutions of these problems. These countries also share a political and economic history of having been colonised before independence, of having experienced racial discrimination and of being under-developed. This common experience and background should serve as a unifying force for co-operation in solving their problems. Although the concept of popular participation has been accepted and is being implemented in different ways by various governments, there is a need to examine the concept critically and jointly evaluate programmes which are used as a means of integrating socially deprived groups.

Co-operation with international organisations is important in terms of obtaining assistance and resources, in correctly conceptualising their problems, prioritising them and, indeed, in designing solutions for the problems that have been identified.

One area that needs to be researched is the sharing of information on development issues among African countries. Information about other countries is usually obtained either from former colonial governments or from the international agencies. The free flow of information on development and social integration should be encouraged at all times.

The other question that needs further investigation is the dependence of African countries on the developed countries in areas such as external capital, and technology, human resources, trade marketing of minerals and
other cash commodities. This dependence brings with it conditions such as those generally imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The common prescriptions for assistance are devaluation of currency, removal of food subsidies, increases, exports, control of wage rises etc. These conditions seem to increase rather than decrease the inequalities that are in a country. The question is then asked: to what extent does this dependence affect popular participation in decision-making processes? Further, to what extent can social integration take place under conditions determined from outside the country in which local people have no control? These questions would be of interest to students of popular participation in development and social integration.

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