CHAPTER III
WOMEN PARTICIPATION - A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The models of 'alternative development' have transcended the narrow boundaries of existing development discipline and have proceeded with a multidisciplinary approach. The nature of development programme has changed from indifferent bureaucratic exercise to dedicated democratic expression. Participatory development has turned to be the catchword of development planners and practitioners. "There is growing consensus at national and international levels about the importance of participation both as a means and as an objective of development".

Participation is a sensitive issue and women participation is more sensitive. The issue is made complicated by the indiscriminate application of the term 'participation' irrespective of the contexts. Hence there are plenty of words analogous to the term participation, viz., involvement, support, empowerment, mobilisation, joining-in, co-operation etc. The exact meaning of the term can be correctly conceived only if the objectives, values and the contexts in which it is used are explicitly expressed. Hence, any systematic study of the problem of participation warrants an indepth insight into the matters such as scientific
definition of the term, rationale of the issue, means/methods involved and interrelations among the various variables influencing the problem. Women participation and related variables highlight gender dimensions of the issue. It brings to one's notice the polemics of status of women, gender bias in development, sexual discrimination etc. The subject matter of the present chapter is organised as an attempt to answer all these basic issues involved in the problem. It is presented as (i) definition of the concept (ii) role and rationale of participation (iii) means and methods (iv) factors of participation (v) women participation and its determinants (vi) a model for participation and (vii) conclusions.

3.1 Definition of the concept

Participation is a catchword not only in development literature, but in all disciplines dealing with social change. But considerable degree of confusion prevails with policy makers and social scientists as to its meaning, substance and implications. Hence it may be correct to say that "the problem with the banner words like participation is their vagueness and confusion to which they give rise to"^2. Confusions are mainly due to the application of the same terminology in innumerable contexts with varying implications.
In the common parlance, 'participation' is supporting a programme of government departments or voluntary agencies by the beneficiaries. For government, participation is a means to secure confidence and support for their programmes from the public. It can be a means to mobilise resources or to create awareness. To many of the private development organisations, participation is a vital ingredient for the success of their programmes. It can be used as a means to influence decision-making and as a method to empower the participants. It seems that, in accordance with the objectives, the meaning of the term 'participation' varies. But people participate because the specific activity either affects them or they get some benefits in return. Participation is a voluntary action of an individual. Therefore, participation is the voluntary involvement of the people concerned, in the affairs which affect them on a quid-pro-quo basis.

Governmental organisations (G05) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) organise development programmes for the people and the people for whom the programmes are planned are asked to participate in the areas permitted by the sponsors. This is a case of limited participation. Effective participation is possible only if participants and organisers are one and the same. This is possible in a situation where people themselves form an organisation to satisfy their felt
needs. Thus, beneficiaries and organisers are members of the same organisation, or the programmes of the members are planned, implemented, shared and evaluated by the members and for the members. It implies that real and effective participation exists only in the need-based people's organisations. But in almost all studies, participation means involvement of the people in the programmes of governmental or non-governmental organisations, and not the other way, that is, governmental or non-governmental participation in people's programmes. The major reason for this is the lack of self organisations and predominance of GOs and NGOs in development activities. Hence, participation implies involvement of beneficiaries in the programmes of third-party development organisations and effective participation is the rate of actual participation compared to maximum permissible participation.

Participation is self-doing in the context of a group. It implies that without group, participation has no relevance. In a democratic group, all are equally important but direct participation fails when the size of the group is big. Larger the group, greater will be the chances for representative participation. Practically the development department of a democratic government and a large people's organisation resemble in the indirect participation of beneficiaries. The
differences with people's organisations are (a) membership is voluntary (b) extent of work is limited and (c) interests are homogenous. Direct participation is possible only in a viable size of organisation.

In a democratic socio-political context, participation at macro and micro levels have different dimensions. At the macro level, participation is the right of the people in the resources and regulatory institutions of the society. For instance, a radical of model Dag Hammarskjold Foundation says that, "community participation involves collective action of the people against socio-economic and political forces of oppression within the community and with wider national and international contexts". UNRISD holds the view that participation is a recent manifestation of an old aspiration for a just society and opines that "the central issue of popular participation has to do with power exercised by some people over other people and by some classes over other classes". Since economic malady in the society is a function of power and resources, participation is a struggle for redistribution of power from power holders to powerless. Hence the idea of participation held by UNRISD throughout their publications on participation is that "participation is the organised effort to increase control over resources and regulatory institutions in given social situations on the
parts of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control. Thus participation at social level implies redistribution of power in favour of powerless.

Many adjectives are found associated with the term participation which provide a classificatory knowledge of the concept, viz., passive participation, development participation, ritualistic participation, real participation, administrative participation, effective participation etc. Acceptance of programmes and their benefits without any opposition is called passive participation. Development participation is access to resources and distribution of benefits. Ritualistic and real participation are different in degree of control over decision making by the concerned participants. Administrative participation transfers citizens into a reliable instrument for achieving administrative goals. Typology of participation can be arranged from zero participation (even negative) to perfect participation as a measurement of degree of participation as illustrated by Sherry Arnstein.

Effective participation is normally defined as the ratio of actual and required rate of participation. Greenley arithmetically calculated the rate of participation and defined effective participation as "a ratio of actual involvement over involvement required to effectively pursue
specific activities at a given level of representation for the group concerned. As long as the required participation is a normative concept, quantification of effective participation will be arbitrary.

Thus, the term participation, as such, does not convey too much, unless it is expressed with respect to given objectives, values and social contexts. Under different contexts, the term can imply a value, a right, a process, means etc. However, it is generally conceived as the involvement of the people in the affairs which affect them. Size of the organisation constraints direct participation. In a broader framework, participation is the right of the people in controlling social resources and regulatory institutions. But, real participation emerges only in the context of self organisations or people's organisations, where, participants and organisers are one and the same. Since need-based self-help organisations are meagre in number, relevant organisational contexts for participation are governmental or non-governmental agencies and their programmes. In a nutshell, participation, as one finds today, is the involvement of beneficiaries in the programmes sponsored by governmental or non-governmental organisations.
3.2 Role and rationale

The role and rationale of people's participation vary according to the philosophy of organisers, nature of the programmes and objectives of the participants. The role assigned by development practitioners to participation is wide and varied. In general, participation is accepted as a development input to improve delivery system, to heighten commitment, to enable change with minimum protest, to ensure distributive justice, to devise realistic plan, to bring the under privileged to the mainstream, to mobilise local resources/initiatives, to prevent alienation process, to create better linkages, for better use of overheads etc.

ESCAP observes that "the participation of people can be seen as an added resource helping to expand the organisational, financial, skills and service resource base for social development programme administration"\(^\text{12}\). In a democratic country, participatory development process is complementary to the political system. Economic reasons for participation are its potentialities as a development input to mobilise resources and to ensure success of the programmes. Participation of the people for whom the programmes are chalked out is a moral compulsion. And socially, participation process enhance social learning and
Thus participation as a principle and policy has political, economic, moral and social reasons to prevail.

Participation is inevitable for realistic planning. "Participation, thus, provides a better information, mutual understanding and more realistic planning." Without the involvement of the people for whom the projects are made, all development efforts are a waste. Participation makes the organisations responsive to the views, aspirations and needs of the beneficiaries. It is not an utopian ideal but a pragmatic tool. Therefore, "popular participation in development was desirable not only for ethical and moral reasons, but also for functional, utilitarian reasons as well."

Though there is a general consensus about the imperative of people's participation irrespective of the nature of the political system and the degree of development, there are a few anti-participation ideologies also. While a few people accept intervention as an effective alternative strategy, some others consider participation as a compromise with real issues. There are a few others who argue for limited participation on the basis of competency and efficacy. Thus, the anti-participation ideologies are three, viz., (a) limited participation (b) intervention and (c) encounter.
There are academicians who challenge the basic assumptions of participation, viz., (a) people are the central theme of development (b) people know their problems better than others (c) people are competent to solve their problems and (d) participatory group is above parochial and hierarchical considerations. Those who question the validity of these assumptions argue for limited participation.

Elizabeth Howe holds the view that certain projects like construction of roads and bridges do not require any participation but responsive administration only. She considers beneficiaries as clients and not as masters of administration. Dantwala Committee, while accepting the wisdom of participation, cautioned that, "if we wish to plan for the weak, the plan may have to be imposed from the above and cannot be a product from below, in which below is dominated by the rich and the strong". In brief, Sherry Arnstein presents the arguments of limited participationists as: "it supports separatism, it creates balkanisation of public services, it is more costly and less efficient ....... it is incompatible with merit system and professionalisation". Thus limited participationists justify their arguments on the grounds of competency, cost, cohesion and compatibility.

The encounter model presumes that participation in a governmental programme is a compromise, crippl...
interests of the people and a sabotage attempt to procure actual control over resources and regulations. It will prevent the transfer of power from the powerful minority to the powerless majority. Radical views of UNRISD, PIDER, Dag Hammarskjold Foundation etc. are in line with these ideas.

Intervention as an anti-participation ideology is based on the assumption that there are cases where others are better informed about the interests of beneficiaries than the beneficiaries themselves. Development experts are supposed to know what can improve the lot of the poor than the poor themselves. Hence, according to this ideology, an "enlightened intervention" can do only good to the people than the passive participation of ignorant people.

All the anti-participation ideologies assume participation as a means only. They never treat it either as a principle or as a value. They are also afraid of transfer of power from administrators, politicians and other power centres to powerless people. Anti-participationists never believe that competency can be created or hired and commitment can compensate efficiency. Rather than offering a correct solution from above, let the people commit mistakes when they do and correct themselves, so that participation can be a learning process. It will also ensure the right of the people. Participation is not merely a policy or strategy
alone. "Today the principle of participation has become part of a body of universal human rights and social values, formally accepted by the United Nations and its member states".18

Though the logic of people's participation is universally accepted, in practice planners and policy makers are not ready to promote effective participation. The divergence between promise and performance is presented as "the idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach; no one is against it in principle because it is good for you. Participation of the governed in their government is, in theory, the corner stone of democracy - a revered idea that is vigorously applauded by virtually everyone. The applause is reduced to polite handclaps, however, when this principle is advocated by the have-nots".19 ILO has also observed that "it is important to realise that this is an issue that much talk and somewhat less action has placed in the forefront of the social and economic scene".20 Organised effort is required to improve the conditions for effective participation of people and appropriate methods have to be evolved for this purpose.
3.3 Means and methods

For the success of a programme means should be adequate, methods effective and objectives feasible. The present problem is how to ensure effective participation of beneficiaries in the programmes of governmental or non-governmental organisations for getting maximum benefits.

Though means and methods have wide range of combinations, there are certain universal strategies and arrangements based on the general nature of human beings to ensure and enhance people's participation in development programmes. In-built institutional arrangement for participation is one among them. Institutional means are membership in organisation, participation in meetings, contribution in kind/cash/service, contact with organisational personnel, sharing cost/benefits, offering opinions etc.

Participation can be developed as a social technology to harness development potential. It requires a sociological understanding of society, institutions and people. Information dissemination, feedback, identification of local needs/initiatives, flexibility in procedures, contribution to cost etc. have been developed as a part of experiments for effective participation by PIDER. Planning Commission of
India has also observed a case where participation has been
developed as a social technology.22

For governmental organisations decentralised
administration is a conventional method of people's
participation. Voluminous literature is available on this
aspect in micro-level planning. Need for forming people's
organisation or beneficiaries' associations to facilitate
participation is stressed by various authors/institutions such
as ESCAP, UNAPDI, ILO, Hanumantha Rao Committee and Dantwala
Committee.23 Glass suggested structural techniques such as
advisory committees, review boards, task forces etc. for
better participation of clients.

Participation cannot be an ideology without
methodology. It is the effectiveness of means and methods of
participation which makes participation real or passive, or
participatory development a success or failure. It is correct
to say that "participation can be used for many purposes and
that different purposes require different mechanisms."25
Since the methodology has to suit the requirements of
organisers and participants, who are, in turn, influenced by a
lot of variables, these determinants have to be identified at
first. This is an essential prerequisite for any attempt to
formulate an effective mechanism for people's participation.
3.4 Factors/forces of participation

The degree of participation of participants in a development programme is determined by a host of factors affecting the organisers, participants and programme. The society in which all these factors exist will also affect the extent of participation as an exogenous determinant. Many studies have identified such variables and the underlying interrelations among those variables. But the major constraints are the non-predictability of human behaviour and heterogeneity of participatory conditions. They reduce the replicability of strategies and universality of conclusions. However, certain determinants and their interrelations under given conditions can be pointed out from a few studies in this field.

The relevant variables determining participation in a development programme as observed by the Planning Commission are institutional arrangements, respectful leadership and association with professional experts. The style of functioning of developmental personnel is another factor. "It is the way they function and contribute to development that really matters". With regard to the role of sponsoring organisations one development practitioner finds that "the mode and the amount of people's participation varies according to the orientation and ideology of the external group that
initiates the process of education"\textsuperscript{27}. Sharma feels that "the crux of the problem of people's participation in general, therefore, is to find viable institutions and techniques for ensuring equitable share of benefits of development by the poor themselves"\textsuperscript{28}. He finds direct benefit, homogeneity of groups, regular monitoring, group organisers and association of beneficiaries for effective participation.

Many authors have highlighted the generic difficulties in active participation. CIRDAP\textsuperscript{29} in a detailed enquiry has found that the factors which inhibit participation are general backwardness of people, unwillingness to participate, absence of committed workers, political interference, easy availability of funds, rigidity in programmes etc. The obstacles to constructive participation as enumerated by ESCAP\textsuperscript{30} are absence of organisation of the poor, limited access to technology, lack of local leadership, feudal agrarian structure, hierarchical social relations etc.

Marshall Wolfe\textsuperscript{31} says that class composition of the society, conflict in the under privileged group, attitudes of bureaucrats/technocrats and culture of people are against participation. Gran Guy concludes that "either too much or too little project management works against participation, both are endemic"\textsuperscript{32}. Edmund Burke remarks that "difficulty stems from society's idealised value premise concerning
citizen participation coupled with an inability to make it work in policy-making".  

In general, the different determinants of participation identified by the various studies are the following:

(i) inbuilt organisational and institutional arrangements.

(ii) nature of leadership-local or organisational.

(iii) socio-economic characteristics of participants - social values, gender bias, income class, literacy level, etc.

(iv) nature of programme - type of benefit, cost, requirements etc.

(v) orientation and ideology of organisation and organisational personnel.

(vi) anti-participation ideology in the society.

(vii) programmes for participation - education, training and extension.

The determinants denoted are too general and each organisation has to develop its own strategy for participation on the basis of its objectives, values, nature of programme.
and attitudes of participants. Besides these factors, all the variables which influence the role and status of women will also affect their participation in the development programmes which are explained in the commencing parts of this chapter.

3.5 Women participation and its determinants

Even when the logic of participation is widely accepted among all the planners and policy makers, women participation is not a matter of serious concern to many of them. The ideology, methodology and urgency of participation are equally or even more applicable to women. In fact, the general theory of participation is gender neutral. However, the status of women is secondary in all the developing countries, with differences only in degree. Reasons for the discrepancy and their significance may be different. The rationale of women participation and the factors which determine it are presented herewith.

3.5.1 Women participation

If one can accept the wisdom of people's participation in the development programmes, the same logic is equally appealing in the case of women who constitute about 50 per cent of the human resources in any society. Various studies all over the world have demonstrated the necessity and urgency of women participation in development. "There is a close
relationship between the status of women and the state of economic development in any given country. So long as countries regard women as chattels, their development will be slow and painful"\textsuperscript{34}.

Since the objective of development is to improve the living conditions of society, it was generally assumed that development will automatically improve the status of women. The belief has been belied by recent researches which point out that development can have even a deterrent effect on women. "Women have been displaced from the development process instead of becoming participants in it"\textsuperscript{35}. With the low participation of women in development activities, they lost credibility as economic assets to family and society. Hence the Commission on the Status of Women remarked that "women and men should participate equally in social, economic and political development, should contribute equally to such development, and should share equally in improved conditions of life"\textsuperscript{36}.

Women's problem is a non-issue to the majority of the development agencies. The principle of equality of men and women has only skin deep sincerity. The situation is aggravated by women's powerlessness arising from social inhibitions and organisational deficiencies. "Equality cannot be achieved as long as women are seen as marginal to the
existence of men, society or development"\(^{37}\). A social crisis will result if women are left out of social decision-making process. "It is painfully clear that women have been, and in many ways are still being, left out of development at very great cost"\(^{38}\). Special strategy for integration of women in social development is the need of the day. "It goes without saying that women's integration in development is a gradual process that, in the end, will benefit not only women, but the whole society of men, women and children"\(^{39}\). Therefore, existing gender dimensions of development should be recognised as a reality and measures should be adopted by all developmental agencies for increased participation of women in the development process. For attaining this objective, agencies which promote women participation should know the determinants of the same.

3.5.2 Determinants of women participation

The factors and forces which promote or prevent women participation are wide and varied. Different authors also vary in their opinions regarding the influence of these factors which may encourage or discourage women participation. However, several authors and studies have identified economic, political, legislative, technological, social, demographic, cultural, religious, institutional, organisational and
attitudinal factors as important determinants of women participation.

The reasons of work for men and women may not be the same. It was found that "the primary reason of work was economic for men and both economic and non-economic for women". By and large, women are forced to work to supplement family income. They have no choice but to work.

It is generally observed that the male children are not participating much in farming while the female children are participating actively. As Boserup puts it, "to carry the burden of agricultural work, women find it necessary to take the help of their daughters. Regrettably, the result is that fewer girls than boys can benefit from attendance at village schools - where such schools exist".

To be employed in the modern trade and service one needs to be literate. Consequently, the fact that illiteracy rate are nearly always higher among women than among men is a major factor limiting women's contribution to economic and social development. The failure to educate and train girls and women equally with men limits women's roles and makes them inadequately trained for those employment opportunities that may be available.
Upgrading of the labour force during the process of economic development is likely to be a threat to female participation. It is seen that training women for jobs that men usually do creates hostility between men and women. The access of women to employment is also determined by types of occupations available and social conventions. In less developed areas, where the scope of self-employment for women is limited due to lack of skills among the female labourers, wage employment has better chances of involving female labour in the development activities.

There are dissenting opinions also on the role of education on women participation. In the words of Miche, "education and wealth are not necessarily pre-requisites for the emancipation of women." The increase in overall female educational participation has not led to a corresponding increase in female labour force participation. While Kerala has the highest female literacy rate in India, this has not guaranteed women's economic power. As Papanek et al. rightly put it, "the higher levels of education achieved by some of the younger women have not (or not yet) impelled them into the labour force."

It is being pointed out that the average sex-ratio of female workers in non-household industry is less than that in household industry. The low social and economic position of
women, their low literacy and technological levels, impediments in the way of development of skills and the social taboos against unescorted women going out to work are being pointed out as the factors responsible for the employment of higher proportion of females in economic activities at the household level than in non-household economic activities.

Another reason for the low participation of women in economic activities is the belief among the employers that they cannot expect the same level of job performance from women as from their male counterparts. According to them, most women employees consider their job as of secondary importance only. Thus "a belief in the universal subordination of women has continued to hamper efforts to take up systematic research of factors which eroded women's access to and control over resources, the nature of their participation and value of their work"46.

Women are being forced into unemployment more frequently than men when agriculture and industry went through economic changes. According to Subbarao, "Women face three types of uncertainty in employment. One is because of the seasonality of agriculture, the second is due to illness, maternity etc. and the third due to mechanisation"47. Women work in the least skilled sections and when rationalisation
takes place, there will be reduced demand for unskilled labour which displaces women from their jobs.

On the other hand, the share of agricultural work done by women is increasing in many countries where urban development creates a widening gap between incomes in urban and rural areas followed by a large migration of male youth from the villages. And migration of male workers to the urban areas increases the work load of the women workers left behind.

Government policies in many developing countries do restrict entry of women into technological fields or in the use of technology. It occurs because men control the policy planning agencies of a country, and, not understanding women's economic role in rural areas, fail to provide means for them to improve their productivity. The reality is that many countries do not have sufficient funds to adequately service both men and women and consequently, of the two, men win out. The 1975 United Nations Conference on Women remarked that women generally are disregarded or underutilised in the rural improvement strategies of developing countries for a number of reasons. This occurs mainly because planning groups are dominated by Western planning experts. "This argument is supported when one considers the documented efforts by international agencies to introduce improved agricultural
techniques to men in African countries where women perform all the agricultural tasks.49

The welfare approach which treats women as passive consumers of development is another obstacle to women participation. Welfare oriented programmes exclude women as participants from the broader development programmes. In the model of economic growth followed by the Indian planners until recently, women were being included in the category of poor and treated primarily as beneficiaries and their participation in development not encouraged, for it was assumed that they are ignorant and irrational.

Lack of organisation among women and unions as being representative of male workers are other reasons for the decline of women workers. The male-oriented trade union movements have had the effect of reducing the ambit of blue-collor jobs for women.

The role of grass-root level organisations and voluntary agencies in the mobilisation of women is a critical factor for the development strategies of the future. Without organisation, poor rural women cannot get their rightful share of the productive resources or participate in the decisions that affect their lives.
The National Committee on the Status of Women have pointed out the forces which have most affected the role of women in the Indian economy, viz., general decline of handicrafts, increasing pressure of population in agriculture, increase of poverty in the rural sector, development of modern industry with its increasing technological advance and increasing cost of living.

The Population Crisis Committee is concerned about the low status of women and discrimination, especially in the least developed countries of the world. It is being stated that world-wide, women grow about half the world's food, but most own no land. They are one-third of the official paid workforce, but are concentrated in the lowest paid occupation. They are grossly under-represented in the institutions of the government.

The subject of female-headed households has been discussed throughout the U.N. Decade for Women. Some have argued that female-headed households do not exist, because by law, no woman can head a household; legally only men can be heads of households. Although statistics prove that world-wide, approximately, one-third of all households are headed by women and the number of such households are rising, in some countries women cannot legally be heads of households.
The consideration of family as a unit where women's role and prospects are mostly neglected has been argued as the main reason for the failure of schemes and plans to bring the desired results for women. A very significant aspect of women's role as a worker is that one can never separate her work role from her responsibilities in the family. The tyrannical family setting, forces women not only to accept wage work, but may compel her to accept adverse terms of employment as this work at least temporarily liberates her from the patriarchal atmosphere of the family.

There is clear-cut compartmentalisation between men's work and women's work. The job of secretaries, typists, pharmacists, teachers, nurses and trained midwives working in private firms or government, have been open to women for several decades and have been considered acceptable and even desirable for women of lower-middle and middle-class status, although not for the upper class elite.

A linkage between the demographic trends of declining sex ratio, lower life expectancy, higher infant and maternal mortality, declining work participation, illiteracy and rising migration rates among women from the poorer sections exists in the society. The dynamics of social change and development has adversely affected a large section of women, particularly among the poor and has created new imbalances and disparities.
Equal status and equal opportunity are demanded with the desire to achieve the possibility of development under favourable circumstances of education and opportunity for women.

It is understood that the various factors and forces which influence the status and role of women determine their degree of participation in development activities and organisations. The influence of these factors and forces which promote or prevent women participation may vary from country to country depending on the status ascribed to women, the political set-up and the level of advancement of the society. It is because of this, that a particular determinant which is favourable to women participation in one country may be detrimental to women participation in another country. However, from the above discussion, the following factors can be identified as the major determinants which promote or prevent the participation of women in various fields and activities.

(i) Economic necessity
(ii) Illiteracy, education and training
(iii) Political, social, cultural, religious and demographic factors
(iv) Sexual division of labour
(v) Gender based models of development and resultant economic advancement
(vi) Rationalisation/technological development
(vii) Migration
(viii) Welfare approach to women programmes
(ix) Discriminating policies and programmes of government and employers
(x) Protective legislations
(xi) Institutional reforms
(xii) Attitudes of men, employer, government and trade unions and
(xiii) Presence of grass-root level organisations and voluntary agencies.

3.6 A model for participation

People mean the beneficiaries of a development programme of a GO/NGO whether they are men, women or both. In the general theory of participation women constitute a special category influencing the actual level of participation than the expected participation. Hence general theory of participation is equally applicable to men and women.

By taking people as the subject and object of development, alternative growth models assumed people's participation as a human value and as a basic right irrespective of the gender dimensions. But the contemporary significance of people's participation stems from the failure of development programmes due to people's lethargy and bureaucratic indifference which necessitated the need for
participatory development process. Planners and policy makers accepted the wisdom of participation, not necessarily as a principle but as a means. The basic thrust is to enhance the sense of identity of beneficiaries with development programmes and organisations by active participation. Almost all development organisations adopted certain inbuilt institutional arrangements for participation. Certain programmes were specially contemplated for women target group to overcome gender bias. However participation has not been developed as a social technology to improve the impact of development programmes. Besides the lukewarm attitude, lack of theoretical knowledge and sound operational details aggravated the poor state of present affairs. Therefore, by taking the relevant variables and contexts, a theoretical model for participation is attempted here under optimum and sub-optimum conditions. The model will also enable the present study to have an idea about what ought to be the relevant variables and possible relations. The model is built on the basis of general applicability to men and women and the difference, if any, will be tested in the field investigations.

In general, participation is the involvement of the people in the affairs which affect them. It is also agreed that participation is a process, a value, a right or can be a
means or input. It implies that, the exact meaning of the term participation can be understood only if the context in which the term used is explicitly expressed. At present, participation is used as an input by development organisations. As such, effective participation can be defined as active involvement of progressive beneficiaries in a directly beneficial programme sponsored by a governmental or non-governmental organisation.

Though participation normally implies people's involvement in the programmes of governmental or non-governmental organisations, there can be governmental or non-governmental participation in the programmes of people. Here the need-based people's organisations chalk out programmes for the satisfaction of their needs and external elements like government, experts, voluntary agencies etc. participate with people's programme. Participation of members in their own organisation to achieve their own needs makes participant and organiser one and the same. Larger the organisations or associations of organisations, greater will be the chances for representative participation. Unlike GOs or NGOs, people's organisations or self-help groups are meagre in number, leaving participation as a concern of the former.

Nature of benefit influence the degree of participation. Benefits can be directly applicable to the
participants or common to a larger group. If benefits are immediate and direct, participation will be high. If benefits are income from employment or output from production programme, participation rate will be higher compared to a facility from sanitation/housing or a skill from training or awareness from education.

Like the organisations and programmes, beneficiaries are also of different types. Certain people are purely egoistic, standing for personal benefits only, while social minded co-operative people do not mind if benefits are applicable to a group at large. Certain people are neither individualistic nor co-operative but indifferent to benefits. Participation of egoistic people can be enhanced by directly productive individual programmes. Only co-operative people can be expected for effective participation in socially beneficial programmes like literacy mission, flood relief, social overheads etc.

Women are constrained not only by the type of organisation and nature of programme, but by social values and customs. Due to the present social set up, women are generally introverts unless warranted by family compulsions or progressive values. Gender bias adds one more dimension to the problem of participation.
Since participants, organisers and their programmes are functioning in a society, participation is also influenced by societal forces like social values, institutions, organisations, socio-economic infrastructure, technological advancement, leadership, media etc. It implies that exogenous factors are equally relevant as endogenous factors in participation.

The interrelation of various variables involved in a development programme and the extent of effectiveness of participation as a means to enhance project performance are intimately interrelated. The exact degree of participation cannot be predicted in advance. However some generalisations can be made about the behaviour of certain known variables with given assumptions. The basic assumptions are the following.

(i) People are interested in monetary benefits.

(ii) Participants can be broadly classified into egoistic, co-operative and indifferent.

(iii) Participatory values deteriorate as the divergence between participants and organisers increase.

Based on these assumptions and general behaviour of human beings, a simple model of participation is presented in
Table 3.1 which takes nature of benefits, type of organisations and behaviour of participants as relevant variables and highlights possible interrelations of these variables in 36 combinations.

Table 3.1 A simple model of participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. Nature of No. benefit</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Co-operative</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GO</td>
<td>NGO</td>
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1. Individual monetary
2. Individual Non-monetary
3. Social monetary
4. Social Non-monetary

Note: 1. Type of organisation
   a. GO - Government Organisation
   b. NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation
   c. PO - People's Organisation

2. Degree of participation
   a. VH - Very High
   b. HI - High
   c. MO - Moderate
   d. LO - Low
   e. VL - Very Low
   f. NL - Nil
With six degrees of participation there are 36 combinations varying in participation with respect to varying nature of programme, organisation and participants. Egoistic and co-operative people can be motivated for increased participation by necessary changes in returns or expectations and inbuilt arrangements.

Indifferent people represent all sub-optimum conditions where rationality assumptions may not work. The reasons for indifference may be (a) lack of confidence (b) lethargy (c) preference for intervention (d) acceptance of encounter model and (e) disagreement with organisational personnel/values etc. Indifferent participants have to be identified and counselled through appropriate methods for improved participation.

The major observations from Table 3.1 are the following.

(i) As the benefit from the programme changes from individual-monetary to individual-non-monetary, social monetary and social non-monetary, the degree of participation declines.

(ii) As the nature of the participant changes from egoistic to co-operative and indifferent, the rate of participation declines.
(iii) The type of organisation affects the rate of participation adversely as it moves from people's organisation to NGOs and GOs.

(iv) Higher rate of participation demands democratic organisation, directly beneficial programme and progressive beneficiaries.

(v) Actual degree of participation is an outcome of all the variables involved.

As presumed, monetary returns alone need not be the basis of a rational participant. A participant may be motivated by the esteem of the organisation, intimacy with the development personnel, commitment to democratic values etc. Hence it can only be generally stated that higher the returns and higher the inbuilt arrangement, higher will be the rate of participation.

In the model it is assumed that male and female participants behave uniformly, for instance, egoistic male and female behave alike. By bringing gender as an explanatory variable, new reasons can be attributed to the change in participation. In fact, the status and role ascribed to women in our society are hindering their effective participation. But those factors will be considered as forces influencing the participant or beneficiary. Even men and women of the same
social status may participate differently due to changes in the ascribed role of women. It may be part of sub-optimum conditions. Thus, gender may be a negative determinant for effective participation, of course, to be proved empirically. Even then, the general theory of participation, as enunciated in the simple model (Table 3.1) stands valid to explain the causal relations of variables involved.

3.7 Conclusions

Ideal performance is the result of ideal conditions. Actual participation varies from ideal participation as long as actual conditions are varying from ideal conditions. Ideal conditions for participation exist where participants and organisers are one and the same, programme is directly beneficial as the expression of the felt need of beneficiaries and participants are progressive. Since self organisations are meagre and GOS/NGOs are playing the predominant role, participation implies involvement of beneficiaries in the programmes of GOS/NGOs. Besides this, participation is treated as a means to ensure better performance than as a right or value. However, by using the term indiscriminately under different contexts, the meaning of the term is getting confused. Though the actual degree of participation is the outcome of multiplicity of factors/forces, gender is a significant variable determining the degree and direction of
participation. The general theory of participation assumes gender bias as a suboptimum condition, adversely affecting participation, along with many other relevant variables which promote/prevent effective women participation.
Selected References


23. See the various publications such as


27. Fernandes, W., *Development with People*, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 1985, p.2.


30. See the publications


44. Hanna Papanek, Laurel Schwede, "Women are Good with Money - Earning and Managing in an Indonesian City", Economic and Political Weekly, 29 October 1988, p.ws74.


49. Ibid, p.144.

50. ICSSR, Status of Women in India, Allied, New Delhi, 1975.

