CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The word 'participation' has become a part of the popular vocabulary since the last few years. But it has got different connotations to different people. For some, it refers to voluntary contributions of money or labour; for others, it is a moral imperative; and for still others, it is a broad catch-all for any activity that involves a sufficient number of people one way or another. This confusion seems to have emerged from the miscellany of themes to which the word has been attached.

The Concept of Participation: A Retrospect

The ideational genesis of the term 'participation' can be traced back to the days of the Athenian experiment of direct democracy, the central principle of which was the equal right of every citizen to participate in the process of government. From the period of the demise of the classical Athenian culture, and for almost two millennia, interest in systems of government, particularly their philosophical and ideological bases, was dormant until the liberal awakening of the seventeenth century. The revival of the democratic spirit was associated with the significant commentaries of Thomas Hobbes followed by John Locke and Montesquieu. The commentaries of these philosophers are significant benchmarks in the evolution of the modern practices of participatory democracy. However, the greatest weight of significance rests on the works of Rousseau, Mill and Cole. The theory of
participatory democracy discussed by them is built around the central assertion that individuals and their institutions cannot be considered in isolation from one another. There is continuing inter-relationship between the working of institutions and the psychological qualities and attitudes of individuals interacting within them. It is within the popular participatory institutions that the good management of the affairs of the society can be achieved by means of promoting the existing faculties of its members. Therefore, in the words of Pateman, "the major function of participation in the theory of participatory democracy is an educative one, educative in the very widest sense, including both the psychological aspect and gaining of practice in democratic skills and procedures".¹

Attached largely with political aspects of life, the word 'participation' gained currency during the sixties under the impetus of demands, notably from students community in France and by various other groups in England and America for the practical implementation of the rights of participation that were there in theory. In view of the facts revealed from empirical investigations into the political attitudes and behaviour of the masses during such agitations, the political sociologists warn that the 'classical' picture of democratic man is hopelessly unrealistic and that an increase in political participation by present non-participants could upset the stability of the democratic system itself.² Despite these impediments of the

2. Ibid., p. 3.
risks endemic to such participation, there seems to be a universal consensus on "the desirability of considering the ramifications of citizen participation... (and the) commitment to the wide-spread use of participation strategies".  

**Participation in Development: A Global Concern**

Recent developments in global scenario have acted "to extend participation beyond strictly political boundaries" not only in ideological overtones but also in policy initiatives and actions relating to "economic and social sphere(s)" of development. In the field of economic development, the concern for people's participation is reflected partly by the failure of the 'trickle down' model according to which the benefits of development resulting from the growth in national economy were supposed "to trickle down to the poorer sectors of the people". But this was not destined to happen. Despite sustained efforts of planned development, the problems of modernisation remained entrenched in most developing countries with their small affluent community of maces and old feudal guards in the midst of an ocean of mass poverty. Obviously, no socio-political system can survive over time with this phenomenon. The question of stability arises when the pauperised masses start to perceive the nature of the emerging neo-feudalism and come face-to-face with the interest

and value structure of the ruling elite. But before they become conscious of the social reality in a devastating manner, a "search for involving the masses" in national development has become "a necessity". This shift of attention from elite to mass participation in development is being visualized as a vehicle for total social transformation where the focus is basically on qualitative and distributional changes in the structure of societies through the elimination of discrimination and structurally determined exploitation than on quantitative problems of the production and use of resources only.

Although participation of people in development activities has been realized as a necessity for nation-building, yet differences regarding the modalities of participation remain to be the main issues of debate. While "elitists warn against the potency of an encroaching mob (of the destitute), others, with a view to augmenting the power of the people... sound warnings about the engulfing power of the state". These two streams of thought appear to crystallize into two different approaches while trying to promote people's participation in the task of nation building. The first approach is

paternalist because it assumes that the elites have some kind of monopoly on wisdom, intelligence and virtue over passive and incapable masses who have nothing of these qualities, and "consequently, everything must be done for them" by the enlightened elites. An opposing view is the populist approach which assumes that the people at large are all-wise, all-knowing, and all-virtuous and "vitaliy interested in change and completely capable of transforming their communities, if only the politicians and bureaucrats would leave them alone". In line with these two approaches of thinking, the differences between the parties to the underlying debate, as Raggatt puts it, "highlight a distinction between a 'strong' and a 'weak' sense of participation. In the former sense, it implies that participants influence decisions; in the weak sense, the participants may well be consulted but they do not necessarily influence the decisions". In most developing countries, the question of participation is not actually as much a tussle for power between governments and people as between the landed aristocracy and the stranded culture of poverty. Since the elites have an upper hand in the power game in most of the countries, government policies usually reflect the paternalist approach where people have to be carefully guided in participation exercises in order to break the apparent inertia so characteristic of the masses.


10. Ibid.

Meaning of Participation

There appears almost on universal acceptance to the fact that popular participation is an indispensable component of development in order to secure equitable distribution of the fruits of development among the masses. Participation of the masses ensures democratic governance at the political level, equitable distribution of the benefits and allocation of resources among the people at the economic level, and equality of social relationships irrespective of caste and creed at the social level. It is in this sense that the U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs has identified mass sharing of benefits of development, mass contribution to development and mass involvement in decision making process of development as the basic ingredients of participation. While the first of these ingredients is an end in itself, the latter two are the part of the participation exercise towards the attainment of that end. As the end is a sequel of the means, mass involvement in decision making and implementation of development efforts constitute the basic criteria underlying the concept of participation process. This is evidently indicated in the U.N. definition where popular participation as a process has been defined "as active and meaningful involvement of the masses of people at different levels (a) in the decision making process for the determination of resources to achieve them, and (b) in the voluntary execution of resulting programmes and projects".

12. UN, op. cit., p. 4.
13. Ibid.
The concept of people's participation in development has been more exquisitely elucidated in a monograph prepared by Cohen and Uphoff. They suggest that participation can be understood in relation to three basic categories or dimensions which provide a framework for examining the meaning of participation in development. They are as follows:

i) The kinds of involvement (the 'what' of participation)
ii) The types of people involved (the 'who' of participation)
iii) The mechanism and characteristics of the involvement (the 'how' of participation).

The first of these categories indicates to what participatory activities people are involved in. Cohen and Uphoff suggest that, in order to have a meaningful participation, people have to be involved in (a) decision-making, (b) implementation, (c) benefit sharing, and (d) evaluation. The second dimension is concerned with the types of participants. The types of people to be involved in any development programme requires to take into account the populace which is directly affected by it. The third category is related with the structure of participatory initiatives in the policies and programmes or the organizational mechanism of the system. Participation by all relevant people in the above mentioned activities can obtain in a decentralized institutional framework. Obviously, power has to be devolved from the central to the peripheral agencies where participation takes place at a functional level.

Thus, the basic constituents underlying the concept of participation are the people themselves, their meaningful activities, and the environment of social, economic and political imperatives in which they operate. In relation to development, participation assumes significance when people have opportunity to decide and implement any programmes so that tangible as well as intangible benefits accruing from it could be equitably shared among themselves. Therefore, to conclude, in the words of Butterfield, participation connotes "the willing, disciplined, and organized involvement of the rural poor in most aspects of the development process that directly affect them." 15

The global concern for evolving a workable participation strategy indicates a subtle desire for the cultivation of participant democratic culture. Popular participation in the affairs of a nation is a gauge of democracy. The central theme underlying an effective participation strategy is the smooth power sharing among the various constituents, from the central government agencies to the local forums of people. But the main impediment to an effective participation strategy appears to be a common fallacy that power is a fixed quantity and that an increase in one's power can only come at the expense of the other. Accordingly, government departments in most developing countries are reluctant to share power with local agencies. Expert opinion in this connection, however, tells that "central-local relations are not zero-sum relations; the gain of one is not necessarily the

loss of the other. It all depends on the objectives sought.\textsuperscript{16} Actually, it is the nature of relationship between the government and people that really determines the climate for initiative and participation by the public.\textsuperscript{17} Therefore, efficient participation strategy needs a working power balance to be struck between the government departments and the local institutions of participation. Both populist and paternalist approaches of participation are fallacious. Upheff suggests that "the most productive approach is to try to draw on the respective strengths of both",\textsuperscript{18} the elite bureaucracy and the rustic citizenry in a two way collaboration. In this context, power sharing does not necessarily mean the absolute surrender of power from the government to the people. It is rather a question of because power sharing sharing is not a zero-sum game. It may increase in the actual sense if there is sufficient sharing among people.

In this frame of reference, people's participation in development becomes meaningful at the local level. The local level is where the greatest number of people can be most meaningfully involved in decision making. At this level, means can be designed to bring the maximum number of people directly into the decision making process

\textsuperscript{16} Upheff and Eman, op. cit., p. 13.

\textsuperscript{17} United Nations, \textit{Popular Participation in Development: Emerging Trends in Community Development} (New York Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1977), p. 768.

\textsuperscript{18} Norman T. Upheff, "Problems Inhibiting Achievement of Broader People's Participation" (pp. 68-77), \textit{People's Participation in Rural Development in Nepal,} op. cit., p. 75.
since most communication tends to be face-to-face through open meetings, consultations, participation in collective implementation activities and joint efforts to review and assess progress. Therefore, the willing, disciplined and organized participation of the village people is absolutely necessary if the development process is to be successful.

Education and Development

Education and development are closely related with each other. The definition of development as contained in the United Nations Development Decade Report says that "development is growth plus change; change in turn is social and cultural as well as economic, and qualitative as well as quantitative." But the social and economic changes are essentially human activities. It is in the change of the human society that education has played a significant role. Although education has long been the means employed by societies to perpetuate their way of life, civil organization and value system, it has also been a vital force in effecting changes in the value systems and thereby changing the organization and way of life of the society itself. In this sense, education is a means of development.

The concept of education as a means of development is concerned with the development of human resources which is the process of building the knowledge, the skills, the working abilities and the innate capacities of all the people in a society. It is through these developed

19. As quoted by Frederick Harbinson, "Human Resources and Development" (pp. 59-68), Economic and Social Aspects of Educational Planning (Paris: UNESCO, 1964), p. 59.
abilities that the citizens can contribute their best in the development of their nation. Therefore, human resource development is a realistic and reliable indicator of the stage of modernization.20 Since the stages of the development of human abilities and the educational institutions which cultivate them roughly correspond to the stages of modernization in a country,21 educational development, in the widest sense, becomes an essential component of national development.

Participation In Education

Education is a means as well as an indicator of national development. Therefore, for a nation to prosper, emphasis on good education is of vital value. This emphasis is usually reflected in the educational system of a nation. A good educational system is that which reflects national aspirations and the faith of its citizens. People posit their faith in the education system if it becomes the real embodiment of their collective effort. Collective effort becomes meaningful at the community level and can materialize through effective people’s participation. People of the community participate in education when they find opportunities to exercise control and authority in decision making, implementation and sharing of benefits of the educational development in the community. The availability of these opportunities will not only enable them to exercise their democratic

20. Ibid., pp. 61-62.
rights but also the right to participate in the management of their educational establishments and in the definition of policies. Involvement in management and policy decisions throws responsibilities on the shoulders of people and creates conditions for further motivation and responsibility. This is the educative function of participation. Therefore, in the words of Faure, et al., "participation of the greatest number exercising the highest responsibilities is not merely a guarantee of collective efficiency, it is also a precondition for individual happiness, a daily assumption of power in society and over things, a way of freely influencing fate. The citizen's job is no longer to delegate power but to wield it, at all levels of society and stages of life". 22

This concept of participation in education suggests a partial shift of power from government to people. But the kind of power that government should bestow upon people may be in the form of sharing rather than surrendering the authority of running the enterprise. Under such scheme of things, the total amount of power may increase with both parties benefitting. Increased opportunities to exercise power within the system may further increase people's involvement in the identification with the system and hence increase their participation in it. In other words, decentralization of decision making, of responsibilities and resources is a necessary condition for participation. Thus, broad participation of all concerned people in determining and carrying out educational activities and sharing of

the fruits of educational facilities is a desirable condition for a viable system of education for national development.

Background of the Study

The history of local-state partnership in modern education in Nepal started in the real sense with the dawn of democracy in 1951. Following the establishment of democratic set-up in the country, people started to open schools on their own and sought for the recognition by the government later on. There was also a tremendous growth in the number of institutions and their enrolments. It is found that the number of educational institutions had increased from 321 primary and 11 secondary schools in 1951 to 7236 primary and 1065 secondary schools in 1970. Similarly, the enrolments at each level had also increased from 5503 and 1680 to 449141 and 102704 in the same period.  

The educational institutions established by local people were financed by charity funds or donations and the tuition fees paid by the students in addition to the government grants-in-aid which was neither uniform nor payable to each and every institution. The government adopted a very liberal education policy and the management of the local educational institutions rested completely with the local school committees.

Planning and systematization of educational growth started with the implementation of the National Education System Plan 1971-75 (NESSP).  

The NESF changed the then existing educational set-up and put it into a new footing. It was promulgated in order to orientate the education system to the overall national development system and speed up educational growth in the country. As a result of a decade's sustained effort, the number of primary and secondary schools had reached to 10130 and 4236 respectively. Moreover, the respective enrolment at each of these levels had also reached to 1067912 and 512434 students in the same period.\footnote{24}

With the implementation of the NESF, the government adopted a policy of direct intervention in the educational affairs of the country. A uniform practice of subsidising to the educational institutions was followed. The government subsidies to local school units started to be forwarded through district education committee which was deemed responsible for the development of education at the district level. The local school committees were ascribed assisting roles in mobilizing local resources and made subordinate to district education committee. The new arrangements made in the educational reorganization put a heavy financial burden on the government.

Thus, the main problem encountered in the realm of local partnership in education in the Pre-NESF period was unmanageably tremendous growth of locally managed educational institutions with deteriorated quality, while the crucial issue which emerged in the Post-NESF period was the increasing expenditure of education in

government budgets. Concerned government officials and politicians most often complained about popular apathy and indifference towards education. Therefore, the problem of people’s participation in education stands as a question of central versus local partnership in education.

Nepal is a country of villages where more than ninety per cent population lives in villages. Most of the school level educational institutions are in rural areas. The school is the only institution in the village which is most closely associated with the village-dwellers’ life. Thus, the question of people’s participation in education has the greatest relevance at the village level. With this frame of reference, people’s participation in the Nepalese educational enterprise raises a series of questions. What is the nature of people’s participation in education at the village level? What is the role ascribed to people in educational decision-making and implementation? How far the village people have benefitted from the expansion of educational facilities in the locality? Above all, what are the socio-personal factors responsible for people’s participation in the educational enterprise? For seeking answers to these questions there seems to be a genuine need for empirical research studies in the area of people’s participation. This study is a modest attempt in this direction.

Statement of the Problem

This is a study of people’s participation in education in relation to their socio-personal factors in two village localities.
of Nepal. The problem can be precisely enunciated as "A Socio-
personal Study of People's Participation in Education in the village
Communities of Nepal".

Scope and Significance of the Study

This study has focussed on the investigation of people's
participation in school education. The empirical core of the study
consists of an analysis of participation in local educational affairs
in terms of informal participatory activities, school enrolment of
children, donations of money and labour and involvement in formal
participative forums. Being a study of two village localities, it
permits comparison between two cases of local participation in the
development of school education in the community.

In Nepal, there has been, during the recent years, a growing
realization on the part of policy makers and educators for the need of
studies in the field of local participation in education. However,
very little work has been done so far in this direction. At this
juncture, the study of people's participation in education assumes
significance.

Objectives of the Study

This is a comparative study of people's participation in
education in two village communities of Nepal. It was proposed to
examine the following aspects of community participation in education.
1. The historical perspective and environmental setting of participation in education.

2. People's involvement in informal participatory activities in the development of education in the community and their perception of the local school programmes.

3. The modalities of school enrolment in the village communities.

4. The patterns and practices of monetary and labour donations in the implementation of educational facilities in the community.

5. The nature of participative forums in education and their working.

6. People's involvement in participative forums.

7. People's preferences and perceptions of local participative forums in education.

8. The socio-personal factors related to participation in education.

**Review of the Literature**

To speak of scientific research in Nepal is to speak of snakes in the Ireland. This is because the research base in the country is very poor. There are few empirical studies with scientific rigor. In fact, studies on people's participation in education are virtually nil. The few available studies related one way or another to participatory activities in education are more dialectic or recommendatory in nature than empirical in spirit. The paucity of research studies makes a systematic survey of relevant literature a tough task.
However, an attempt is made to present a brief review of the existing literature in this section so that it could be used as a frame of reference for the purpose of the present study.

Although exhaustive studies of people's participation in education with scientific precision are non-existent in Nepal, yet a general impression of dissatisfaction regarding lack of popular support for education prevails among the leaders as well as the laity. An expression of this concern can be found in the observations made by Dr. Suresh Raj Sharma, the secretary to the National Educational Committee of Nepal. Reviewing his observations of the past few years, he found that, owing to the lack of decision-making powers, the school committees were not effective in mobilizing local resources and support for the successful operation of the educational institutions under their purview. Expressing concern over the contemporary education, he observed that school committees should be entrusted with more authority to deal with matters relating to administrative and financial management of schools.

In a study on higher education in Nepal, Tiwari and Pant found that under the present organization of the Tribhuvan University, local participation of people in decision-making or implementing the programmes had no room at all. They further observed that higher education in Nepal was highly centralized and did not provide any forum for local initiative.

It was found in an action research project undertaken by the Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Development\(^\text{27}\) that the involvement of village community in the planning and implementation of the project was a promising feature in bringing about positive changes in the attitudes and interests of people towards education. It was observed that the village people who were provided opportunity in local planning and implementation of the functional adult education project took keen interest and extended their full support for the successful functioning of the programmes.

In a national seminar on Financing of Education in Nepal,\(^\text{28}\) it was found that the main hurdle in the path of eliciting local support for education was the defective education policy of the government. Of the many problems relating to the government’s policy on education, the two problems identified as most closely associated with participation in education by the seminar participants who comprised top level executives, planners and educationalists of the country were as follows:

i) Lack of clearcut line of action for eliciting public support.

ii) Lack of authority on the part of school level committees to discharge their functions effectively.

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In the mid-term evaluation study on the implementation of the NESP, it was found that the local education committees did not have necessary power to undertake activities in connection with the many-sided development of the school. The school assistance committee meetings were more of a formality to ditto the wishes of the school and district education administration than to take any real decision pertaining to local school affairs concerning to the village people.

Shrestha, in a study of the role of the district education committee in the development of education in Kabhre District, found that the school assistance committee was inactive owing to inadequate power provisions made under the existing rules and regulations. He was tempted to suggest that the school committee should be entrusted with such powers as fund collection, teacher nominations and the like.

Pokharel, in a study of people's participation in rural development in Gorkha District, found that people's participation activities in education at the village level were mostly in the form of labour donation which was coercive rather than self-induced or voluntary. The share of monetary donations was considerably small as compared labour donation. He further observed that although the need for sending children to school was gradually increasing among village-

dwellers yet the actual school enrolments were largely comprised of
the male children.

So far as people's participation in education in terms of
their children's schooling is concerned, the low enrolment rates at
village level are further enunciated in a study done by Upadhyya32
who traced some of the parental reasons for not sending their children
to school. In a survey of Pokhara Town Panchayat area, the researcher
found that the most frequently expressed for not sending children to
school was either poor economic condition of the parents or engagement
of school age children in domestic work. Interestingly enough, the
most significant factor in the case of female children was that most
parents felt little value in education for girls.

The foregoing discussion shows that while the need for research
in the area of participation is being realized, yet studies on the
nature of public participation in education in rural communities are
lacking.

Design of the Study

The design of the study was basically non-experimental. However,
the study sought to establish some relationships between people's
socio-personal characteristics (independent variable) and their parti-
cipation in education (dependent variable).

32. Shree Ram Prasad Upadhyya, A Survey of Parental Reasons for Not
    Sending their Children to School in Pokhara Town Panchayat Area
The Independent Variables

The variables considered significant and determinative of people's participation in education were: (i) age, (ii) education level, (iii) caste, (iv) size of landholding, (v) size of family, (vi) role position, (vii) nature of residence, and (viii) ethnic background. These factors have been termed as socio-personal factors in this study.

Age. Being an indicator of maturity, age was included in this study for the purpose of examination. Maturity of an individual can be thought of as determinative of participation in any human activity.

Education. The level of education attained by an individual can be considered as an important factor in determining his behaviour towards certain activities in life. Therefore, an attempt was made to examine whether education level of an individual was associated with his participatory activities in local educational affairs. Since most respondents were either literate or illiterate education factor, in fact, indicated the literacy.

Caste. Caste has played and is still playing a dominant role in segmentalising and shaping the behaviour of people in traditional societies. There was reason to believe that it might be determinative of shaping an individual's participation in education.

33. A categorical description of each of these factors is presented in the second section of Chapter-III.
Size of Landholding. Land is one of the indicators of the economic status of an individual, particularly in rural areas. Thus, it was intended to examine whether landholding had any influence on participation or not.

Size of Family. The number of members in the family determines the size of the household. Both nucleated and joint families can be found in the village committees of Nepal. Therefore, it was considered appropriate to examine whether the size of family had any bearing on the participation of the head of the family.

Role position. In Nepal, the village people have to perform different social roles such as the village headman, member of the panchayat or any of the class organizations under the panchayat system. Therefore, it was considered to examine whether participation in education was related to the role position of the respondent or not.

Nature of Residence. This factor was incorporated in the study because it was found that one of the village locality under reference had a sizeable proportion of in-migrants in the population. Therefore, it was intended to see whether the natives were any different than the migrants in regards of participation in education. For this purpose, respondents staying for more than 20 years were considered natives.

Ethnic Background: Three ethnic groups were identified namely Parvats, Rana and Dangaura. The people with hill origin were called Parvats whereas the Tharus had two distinct ethnic groups known as
Ranas and Dangatras.

**The Dependent Variable.** Participation was considered as the dependent variable in this study. Four existing forms of participation were taken into consideration. They were (i) informal participation, (ii) school enrolment, (iii) donations of money and labour, and (iv) formal participation.

**Informal Participation.** Informal participation was considered to involve three informal activities of people. They were (i) school visits, (ii) talking about local educational affairs in the community, and (iii) discussing with the relevant local school authorities. These informal activities were taken as the indicators of informal participation in education.

**School Enrolment.** School enrolment was considered in relation to the proportion of school attending children out of the total school age children in the family.

**Donation of Money and Labour.** Donation of money and labour were considered with respect to the frequency of donations.

**Formal Participation.** Formal participation of general respondents was considered with respect to their involvement in two types of formal participative forums. General forums included two formal activities, namely, attending school functions and general meetings. Participation in institutional forums was considered with respect to the two indicators membership and office held in school committees.
Member’s participation in school committee was examined in view of
the frequency of involvement in these four activities (i) attending
committee meetings, (ii) raising relevant issues in meetings, (iii)
devoting time to school supervision, and (iv) communicating with people
about the activities of the committee.

The Village Communities

The term ‘community’ is so confusing that it connotes different
meanings to different people. Sociologists have tried to develop
specific criteria and definitions of community so as to remove the
confusion. According to Bardin H. Nelson, the primary criteria of
a community are the presence of ties or bonds that hold a group of
spatially related people together and interaction among these people.
Mercer has defined community as a functionally related aggregate of
people who live in particular geographic locality at a particular
time, share a common culture, are arranged in a social structure and
exhibit an awareness of their uniqueness and separate identity as a
group. According to another sociologist, Lowry Nelson, the term
community refers to a group of people inhabiting a limited area, who
have a sense of belonging and who, through their organized relationships,
share and carry on activities in pursuit of their common interests.
Butler describes community as having certain territorial limits and

34. Bardin H. Nelson. “Neighbourhood and Community Organization and
Trends” (pp. 76-87), Alvin L. Bertrand (ed.) Rural Sociology: An
Analysis of Contemporary Rural Life (New York: Macmillan Book
35. Blaine Mercer as quoted by Bardin H. Nelson, Ibid., pp. 76-77.
36. Lowry Nelson, Rural Sociology (New York: American Book Company,
37. Edgar W. Butler, Urban Sociology: A Systematic Approach (New York:
as being organized in some fashion to meet human needs. Sanders\textsuperscript{38} views community in three different conceptual, frameworks or paradigms, namely, The Social System Model, The Conflict Paradigm, and the Social Field Paradigm. The Social System Model views the community as a relatively enduring system of interaction, centred around some locality. The Conflict Model sees the community primarily as a stratification pattern in which there is unequal distribution of resources, wealth, power and prestige. The third way to view the community is as a field of interaction which can best be understood by concentrating upon actions. However, Hillary\textsuperscript{39} adopts an eclectic approach. He says that the three major elements present in the concept of community are area, common ties and social interaction. Thus, for all practical purposes of this study, community refers to a village panchayat locality characterized by a limited area, common sharing of certain services and amenities among people and sufficient physical proximity to personal face-to-face relations.

This study was conducted in two village localities belonging to two districts in the Far Western Development Region of Nepal. They were Sidhawar Village Panchayat of Dedi District in the Hills and Sripur Village Panchayat of Kailali District in the Tarai. Each of these village localities\textsuperscript{40} fulfilled the previously determined criteria.


\textsuperscript{39} G.A. Hillary as quoted by Ewry Jones and John Eyles, \textit{An Introduction to Social Geography} (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 15-16.

\textsuperscript{40} These localities will, henceforth, be referred to as the Hill locality and the Tarai locality respectively.
of a community viz limited area, common sharing of certain services and amenities, and sufficient physical proximity to personal face-to-face relations. Both panchayat localities contained a definite land area inhabited by a sizably moderate population. Being politically defined geographical territories comprising a number of villages, people inhabiting them shared certain services and amenities that existed in and provided by the panchayat. Moreover, it was found that the walking distance between any two villages within each panchayat locality was not greater than 2 hours. Owing to this physical proximity, people in either panchayat locality frequently met one another and had sufficient face-to-face relations.

The researcher was interested to identify such localities which could be regarded as pioneer in educational development in their respective districts. It was found through consultations with concerned district education authorities, social workers and informed sources that the pioneer work at the village level toward establishing educational institution local initiative and support were undertaken in Uchapot village of Doti district and Sripur village of Kailali district. The official records also showed that, at the time of the preliminary survey during January-February 1981, the peripheries of these two villages which roughly coincided with the two panchayat localities, namely Sidheswor and Sripur, had more educational institutions than any of the other panchayats in either district. Therefore, it was thought that the study of the two village panchayat localities in relation to their educational growth would provide a sound comparative frame of reference for the analysis of data and
that they might serve as examples of unique case studies of people's participation in education.

The basic rationales for the selection of the two panchayat localities could be summarily listed in the following manner:

i) Systematic work for the establishment of educational institutions on local initiative and support had started almost simultaneously in either locality.

ii) Both localities were pioneer in the establishment of educational institutions at the village level in their respective districts.

iii) The number of schools in either locality was more than any of the other village panchayat localities in the district at the time of the study.

The Sample

As the study intended to relate some socio-personal characteristics of people with their participation in education, the research design permitted the availability of a large number of respondents for the purpose of analysis. However, in order to obtain more meaningful information, the sample of the study included only the heads of households and the members of the school committees. The reason for the selection of respondents was the assumption that "the basic unit of the villagers' life in traditional societies is the household which is also significant unit of everyday cooperation. Moreover, all social, political, and economic decisions are made by the head of the household
and he is primarily responsible for the conduct of household members.\textsuperscript{41} Therefore, it was thought that the head of the family would be an ideal subject for the study of participation. This implied two additional conditions: respondents being male and adult.

During the preliminary survey, a comprehensive list of the names of the heads of households with their villages was prepared for each locality. The cases of minors and females as heads of households, although few in number, were deleted. For, inclusion of the minors would not serve the purpose of the study. At the same time, female respondents in rural areas could produce certain unwarranted problems as they might not be willing to be interviewed by a male\textsuperscript{42} and it was very difficult to find educated female interviewer to visit the villages. Therefore, it was decided not to include female and minor respondents although the inclusion of them would have provided greater coverage. The final list of the heads of households above the age of twenty was drawn for each panchayat locality. There were 798 households in the Hill locality and 705 households in the Tarai locality. Out of this, ten per cent of the respondents were randomly selected. The list for each locality was arranged with names in alphabetical order out of which every tenth name was marked and the sample of respondents was finally drawn for contact and interview. In this way, 80 respondents were selected from the Hill locality and 70 from the Tarai locality. Besides the general respondents, all of the school committee members.


belonging to each locality at the time of the survey were also included in the sample for the study. The names of the members were taken from the school records.

**Data Collection**

For the purpose of data collection, different tools and techniques were used in this study. In general, they consisted of the preliminary survey of the localities, study of relevant documents, interviews and observation.

**Preliminary Survey.** In the first phase of observation, an informal survey of the concerned localities was made during January-February 1981 in view of the available opportunities and prevailing participatory practices in education. Several local leaders, social workers and concerned educational authorities were interviewed and questions regarding people's participation were discussed with them. This survey provided the researcher the vision for identifying the main areas of participation that would constitute the core of the study.

Following the general survey of the field, a study of relevant documents was made. These comprised mainly the publications of the government and related agencies such as Education acts, Rules, and Gazetteers, reports of different education commissions, statistics including educational and population censuses. In addition, records of local schools and panchayats were also studied.

**Interviews.** In the light of the preliminary survey and informal interviews followed by the study of relevant documents, two interview schedules were constructed, one each for general people and the school committee members.
The schedules were tried out during October–November 1981 on a small sample of people in the two localities in order to examine the relevancy of items for their form and content. Some questions were modified with necessary adjustments and the final forms were prepared.43

The interview schedule was administered by the researcher himself during January–June 1982 in face-to-face contact sessions and responses were recorded verbatim. After the respondents were identified in the manner described previously, each was contacted and informed that his views were wanted on certain questions relating to educational development in the panchayat. While interviewing, the emphasis was on making the respondent feel free and relaxed. In order to remove apprehensions, he was assured that his views and responses would be kept confidential and would be used only for research purpose. The interviews were conducted individually with each respondent in his mother tongue. The researcher had to adjust his meeting with the respondent according to the convenience of the latter. Therefore, interviews were conducted either at the respondents' home or farm and during the day or before meals in the night. On the average, it took 2 hours for interviewing a respondent. So, not more than 2 or 3 respondents could be interviewed in a day. Almost half as much time was spent in arranging appointments and setting the environment conducive for an interview. The interviews were conducted during January–March in the Tarai locality and from April to June in the hilly locality in the year 1982.

43. The English version of the interview schedules is given in Appendix -A.
Observation. The researcher visited all the schools and panchayat offices of the two localities. He also attended almost all panchayat and school meetings and functions held during the data collection period. In addition to this, other important places of gathering and gossiping were also visited and informal observations were duly recorded.

Documents. A comprehensive study of school records pertaining to the number of meetings held each year, attendance in meetings, formation of school committees, agenda discussed in meetings, enrolment registers and other relevant documents was made. Moreover, agenda relating to education in the panchayat meetings were also examined. The question of school or panchayat publications did not arise as there were none.

Data Processing and Analysis

In the beginning, most of the processing work, tabulation and some of the calculations were made manually since no mechanical device was available at the researchers disposal. Later, an electronic calculator was used for computations and statistical analysis.

Extensive use of Chi-square tests of significance was made to establish associational relationships between variables relevant for the study. Rank difference correlation test was also used on quite a few occasions.

Problems of Data Collection

The problems of data collection, particularly in the village
settings are so numerous and varied that it is cumbersome to explain them in short. One who has practically experienced can only understand them. Hafeez Zaidi,\textsuperscript{44} in a study of the East Pakistan village culture, has presented a lucid description of the difficulties to be faced by the investigators while studying illiterate or semi-literate societies. The researcher also encountered several problems regarding interviews as well as the study of official records of schools and panchayats. The main problem was related with the feeling and attitude of the village respondents. It was found that the villager would not like to express his response to a stranger because of apprehensions regarding his identity. On the other hand, if the researcher tried to familiarize with the villager the latter would so underrate the significance of the former's work that he would at once try to neglect the encounter with him. Generally, a villager takes an educated stranger as a government official. In such a condition, any interaction with the stranger would conceal genuine responses on the part of the villager because he becomes apprehensive of possible troubles that may come across in future. But if the villager knew that the stranger was not a government official, then he would try to avoid him because to him a person without a government service was non-entity and he found no use of giving answers to questions relating to reforms to a person who stood nowhere in the scene. And it was very difficult to maintain a balance between these two positions. The

\textsuperscript{44} S.M. Hafeez Zaidi The village culture in Transition: A Study of East Pakistan Rural Society (Honolulu: East West Centre Press, University of Hawaii, 1970), pp. 7-11.
researcher actually faced this problem during the pre-testing sessions. Therefore, with his rural background and long experience of village life together with personal acquaintance with local leaders and workers, he was, however, successful to keep off the apprehension, as well as the neglect of the villagers for which he took the help of the more knowledgeable villagers in the course of data collection. When the importance of the work was explained, the villagers were generally so convinced that they thought that by extending cooperation they could contribute to the development of education in their own locality. So far as the time, energy and expenses were concerned, a number of problems were encountered in seeking appointments, privacy, convenient place and economy of time.

Certain problems were also encountered during the investigation of official records. It was observed that there was no efficient recording system in schools. Some schools had no almirahs and so useful documents were huddled into tin trunks without arranging in any identifiable order. It was very hard to come across useful documents while rummaging through various files, registers and papers which had been stacked over the years. Some of the earlier records were either missing or were found with the then headmasters or secretaries of school committees. Even if the required records were traced, they were found unsystematically maintained and often incomplete. Almost all documents were hand written and often with illegible writing except a few letters or circulars from the government departments or office. The documentation system in panchayat offices was even worse. At any rate, the required information could not be obtained without much effort and time. Obviously, most of the problems were related to the under-developed nature of the society.