CHAPTER-VII
Findings and Suggestions

7.0 Findings:
The beneficiaries, people representatives, Government and NGO functionaries covered under the study are all in matured age group whose experience in different walks of life has helped them to draw a picture as to what is going on at the grass root level in so far as Government programs are concerned. Whether they are able to translate their experiences into tools for implementation of programs, and whether they perceive rural development are critical to policy framing.

7.1 Local factors/ Socio-Cultural factors that determine the effective community participation:

One of the main cultural factors is caste. It is a system of stratification but this stratification is not a primordial reality. Like any social system, caste too undergoes change. But the problematic or theoretical question is whether Sanskrit Tradition can represent numerous communities and identities. It has been considered as a normative category to explain away or homogenizing everything that is different. Hence, when we say caste as a phenomena that hinders or fosters certain process either in enhancing peoples’ participation or hindering that participation, any development person has to think twice to strategize caste or redefine its workings. The dynamics of each stratified group in rural development programs should be taken into reflection and create space for dialogue and arrive at concrete steps to negotiate to fulfill day to day needs.

The study, without overstating it, has considered by grouping the plethora of the castes and communities into four categories viz.; Forward castes, backward castes, Schedule castes and schedule tribes. People and People representative respondents
have been selected at random from all these castes and different religions to assess their feelings, opinions, aspirations and experiences about Government programs.

Success or failure of developmental programs whether initiated by Government or NGO depends mainly on educational level prevailing in the area as awareness/participation is directly related to the capacity for understanding and analyzing. More the literacy rate among beneficiaries, it is easier for implementing of programs. It helps in understanding the objectives of the programs and this paves way for new orientation. While the educational level of people representatives has been considered low, the literacy rate of respondents was of the order of 59%. But intriguing fact is that most of the respondents are just literate and have studied up to primary level. The educational level of sample NGOs is usually good. People with good education and rich experience are key persons in motivating the people and initiate changes consciously.

The sample beneficiaries pursued different occupations for livelihood. The people's representatives too fall into same category. Most of them have taken agriculture as their occupation. There are People with different occupations apart from agriculture such as, laborers, housewives, dependents, teachers and Government servants who constitute the community, but numerical strength of agriculturists and laborers has been high (see table : 4.5.1).

The socio-economic status of the people depends on their income level. The income level of people of SC/ST and backward class has been low (see table 4.6.1), bringing to focus the efforts needed to alleviate poverty, create self employment opportunities and negotiating for the fruits of developmental programs to them. Preparing them to derive these and benefit their community hinges largely on their level of awareness.
The findings related to facilities available in the village and whether they have been utilized, awareness about Government programs, Gram Sabha, participation in Government programs, on water supply systems, on health programs etc, emphasize the need to rise the level of awareness among the beneficiary. NGOs role in training the people to asses their own situation and evolve strategies for dialogue and capacity building is very significant. These findings correlate various aspects including pros and cons of the study objectives and have their own implications in development initiatives.

SUGGESTIONS: For the effective community participation in developmental activities one needs to look into the following sensitive issues:

i) The accessibility to resources is determined by one’s caste. Hence, one could be aware of the dynamics of social relations that condition the community participation.

ii) In cost sharing of programmes like water and sanitation the Non-SC/ST people were able to share the cost where as the SC/ST people were not able to share. This creates conflicting situation. To resolve this, one has to map the wealth of the each community and arrive at an amicable understanding between the communities.

7.2 Community Awareness:

Each program undertaken by Government aims at a specific objective. Though the Government has been undertaking many developmental programs during each year and during each plan period, the present study tries to understand the programs relating to Education, Health and Economic realities. It has been assumed that govt. has come out with plenty of programmes in the field of education. But it is found that their awareness among the rural people is rather wanting. They are quite ignorant about the basic amenities that are available in their own villages and surrounding villages. This can be attributed to a large-scale illiteracy prevailing in the area. There is a dearth of awareness about the developmental programmes despite the presence of PRIs, GOs and NGOs.
The beneficiaries have mostly received information about Government programs through other villagers, while the Gram Sabha, which should have been foremost among information dissemination machinery, has taken second place (see table 5.7.2). The awareness through other media services is very poor which calls for greater role for Govt. machinery to ensure that adequate publicity is given. This is seen from the present study finding that only 43% of the households in both districts are aware of the conduct of Grama Sabha. There is also a large gap between the level of awareness and level of participation (see table 5.6.1).

The people’s awareness of Government programs among the selected districts is conspicuously uneven. Consequently the level of utilization of program benefits has also been different (see table 5.6.1).

Awareness with regard to water supply project, it is revealed by the study that the households have not understood their responsibilities properly. The awareness regarding the management of the system, repairs of taps/Pipes, and motors, is low. There is large scale ignorance among respondents as to their responsibility in proper O and M. Majority of them are unaware of the O and M cost and the present O and M cost payment. While 96% are unaware of the overall cost, 69% (see table 5.9.15) are unaware of the conduct of Grama Sabha for planning of the present water supply system and the utility of the Grama Sabha proceedings in this context. The community has not played its role in planning exercise. They are not involved in the process. The community is largely unaware of basic issues related to the meetings. About 92% are unaware of the sub-committee formation and representation to communities and others there in (See Table 5.9.7).

All these findings lead to the conclusion that there is a necessity of bringing awareness among people to a desired level on various programs. Therefore, they cannot utilize the benefits extended by the Government fully; and also have a say
on programs planned for their benefit. The involvement of people raises their level of awareness about development programs. It is seen that awareness is not there in a section of the population that suffered by not availing the benefits extended by Government. The program awareness is better among the educated (Table 5.8.1). Hence, those endowed with better education, higher social position and better economic potentiality should try to ensure equitable distribution of program benefits. The GOs, NGOs and people representatives also must think over this and initiate appropriate measures to create proper awareness among the rural folk. Until and unless the issue of ignorance is tackled with utmost seriousness, the rural people will remain in darkness and the programs fail to deliver the goods to the people.

SUGGESTIONS: i) Education (both formal and non-formal) is the backbone for the community participation in developmental activities. It opens a world of information to the community.

ii) Grama Sabha still plays an important role in providing water and sanitation facilities to the people. Its structure and functioning have to strengthened.

7.3 Community Participation:
As we have said earlier it is necessary to create awareness. However, it is seen that mere awareness is not sufficient to enlist people’s involvement in development programs.

As caste plays an important role in program participation, so also land holdings and education. The poverty and illiteracy among the people disturb their participation. Freedom from hunger is the first priority of any development.

The present study found that 57% of beneficiaries, did not participate in any developmental programs of the govt.
The type of participation in Government programs should relate to the identification of needs, planning process, awareness building, and mobilization of community, implementation and cost sharing. The percentage of those who did not participate ranges from 67% to 92%. So far as participation in Grama Sabha is concerned, a significant percentage i.e., 52% had participated. The level of participation in Grama Sabha was by way of 'seconding' and this was the highest followed by way of 'proposing'.

The study brought to focus that the perception of Grama Sabha and its functionality vary from person to person; the impact of Grama Sabha is only on some of the decisions and not on all. Though respondents described Grama Sabha as "fully democratic" only a section of people in the village attended it and the attendance of women was not satisfactory. Though there are many problems, which could be settled in such forums many of the villagers have not understood the value and importance of Grama Sabha.

General opinion is that the information supplied by the Grampanchayaths and their participation is not enough. Therefore, people's participation is necessary at the level of problem identification. As ours is a democratic set up, decisions on Government programs are taken at various levels. Some of the major problems in involving the community in development programs are paucity of funds, lack of interest and non-cooperation from both the people and government functionaries. To overcome the problems, suggested means of solution are negotiations, compromises, consultation with others, regulating and right approach for speedy consensus.

The findings of the study tell us that there is every need to enlighten the rural mass about the need of their participation. The poorest are likely to be excluded from
program participation as they cannot demand, bargain or influence the delivery of services under various programs. Proper care is required for equitable distribution of benefits. The NGOs, GOs and all awakened people concerned with Government programs should undertake to mobilize resources to broad base their publicity and arriving at consensus on various programs.

There is a certain set of procedures for the implementation of rural development programs. For instance, the beneficiary will have to be selected in the Grama Sabha; preference should be given to the individuals who are having no assets and belonging to the class of poorest of the poor. Preference given to others based on extraneous consideration violating the actual criteria laid down for selection of beneficiaries frustrates the very purpose of the schemes.

To ensure proper participation, a feeling of security has to be created in the minds of individuals who hesitate to participate. Otherwise he/she may shy away. A trust has to be developed in the minds of people that the Government programs are genuinely meant for their development and that they have a right for the benefits. Above all, GOs, NGOs and the people representatives have to be very sympathetic to the needs and aspirations of the people. There must be a coordinated effort to help the poor. Once promises are made to the people they must be fulfilled to repose faith in the implementing authorities otherwise people would lose faith in the democratic process.

7.4 Opinion of the Community and People’s representatives:
The works related to rural drinking water supply, sanitation and Health promotional programs are being executed by different agencies. The opinion of the community and the people’s representatives goes a long way in successful implementation of Government programs and in delivering goods to the needy.
Participation in any program involves three factors viz.; people should be apprised about the Government program, they should be motivated to accept the same and they should be made to utilize them. Keeping this in view it was found necessary to assess how far these objectives have been achieved.

During the course of the study, it was revealed that many of the respondents were unaware of their duties and responsibilities regarding drinking water supply systems. About 48% have not received any benefits from Government. Some of them are unaware of the tax to be paid for water supply systems and many of them have not paid the tax at all (see table 5.9.19). The involvement of the poorer sections in Government programs is not properly enlisted. The opinion regarding initiatives in the current water supply system greatly varies. About 52% could not contribute on account of their poverty. Some have revealed that contribution is the responsibility of Government (see table 5.9.16). Some say they have not been asked for it (see table 5.9.20). There are stagnant water points in the villages that breed various diseases. Information supply from the GP is poor. Thus the tendency has been negative. The only positive aspect is that NGOs have made inroads into the people’s lives because rapport with the people. Therefore they prefer NGOs interventions more than the govt.

Only 30% of PRs have said that they are fully satisfied with the works and the rest are somewhat happy. There needs to be works carried out in time with quality. A section of people representatives have been given training in understanding the importance of people’s participation. They have found that the training arranged for them are useful and they are satisfied with the training (see section 5.10). All of them are required to be trained in vital areas of development for proper orientation.

SUGGESTIONS: The appraisal and effect of Government programs needs to be done critically. The people are yet to understand the objectives of the Government
programs and they are not fully utilizing the assets created by Government. The policy makers, administrators, experts in the field, research workers and all those who are connected with the Government programs must think over these aspects and create a new methodology for the implementation of program through appropriate participatory tools. Above all, the literacy rate has to be improved among the backward caste, SC and ST and Minorities to overcome many of the problems one confronts while implementation. Awakening masses is the right solution.

7.5 Problems Encountered by Implementing Agencies:

The implementing agencies are facing many hurdles. Among them, the following are problems that were noticed during the course of study.

Illiteracy level is more in rural areas and hence the people are not in a position to understand the programs undertaken by Government.

Caste is also playing an important role. The dominant community is trying to grab the benefits extended by the Government. And thus they could influence the program implementation.

Lack of funds and qualified personnel, corruption practices, red tapism, lack of human concern are the main problems that confront the bureaucratic system that tries to reach out the people. Neither the people are aware of their roles and responsibilities towards maintenance of the works executed. The people hesitate to attend the Grama Sabha and other meetings and are not sharing the cost either in the form of cash or kind and labor as required under certain schemes. Instead they are under the impression that it is the duty of Government to execute works.

People are not aware of health and sanitation programs that are being implemented in rural areas. The people's representatives themselves revealed that
the people are unaware of the Grama Sabha and their need to participate in it, hence, attendance in meetings is poor.

There is no proper representation for women in the organization. The Government programs are being concentrated in particular areas on account of the influence/pressure by the people's representatives. More works are being taken up in areas where people's representatives are strong in power relations. This may lead to regional imbalances that would lead to social tensions.

If the quality of work is not maintained and assets are created it would lead to apathy on the part of the people. The villages which are located in the nook and corners, are not being considered for coverage of development activities. Even at the planning stage, the works executed in the previous years were not finished. If people are equally participating in the implementation of the programs, they will become responsible in monitoring the programs meant for them.

SUGGESTIONS: i) The officials of both GO and NGO's could undergo training in participatory approach to understand and overcome the community dynamics.

ii) A committee comprising of all sections could be formed in the village for social responsibility and promotion of peoples participation.

iii) An interdependent approach among various organization is a need of an institutional setup.

7.6 Measuring factors for Community Participation:
When we say measuring factors that mean certain indicators that enhance the roles of different stakeholders in any programme. In the Study context the roles of
PRIs, Govt functionaries and the NGO functionaries who play a critical role in processing the developmental schemes.

The people's representatives, whether they are elected by the people or nominated by Government, are responsible ultimately to the people. They must be aware of all the development programs executed through Grama Panchayat, Taluk Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat. They could help people to avail their time and ensure that the benefits extended by the Government are equitably distributed.

They could evince interest in improvement of literacy rate, encourage SCs, STs and weaker sections to avail of the benefits extended by Government and properly utilize them. Assessment of the needs of the people in each village is to be made in a well-attended Grama Sabha meetings; and community participation enlisted for execution, operation and maintenance of systems. People's needs are to be brought to notice of Government at appropriate level and pursued for taking needful action and funds from various sources including Government could be channelized for betterment of the people.

The Government functionaries need to play a managerial role in implementing the developmental programs. It could provide grants and assistance to the concerned implementing agencies as per the requirement and periodically review the progress achieved. While bringing changes in the guidelines for implementation, Government has to ensure involvement of Non-governmental organizations and people institutions at grass roots and make provision for adopting new innovative participatory approaches in implementation of development works.

It is essential that while implementing any Government program the people at the village level need to be involved in one way or the other as to avail the benefits.
The NGOs could play a mediator role in dispersing the prejudices involved in approaching govt. machinery. A proper communication between various stakeholders should be facilitated. One may carefully handle the power relations democratically keeping the end objectives of community development.

The only methodological implication is to have a people’s centered planning, implementation and evaluation of the activities for long term sustenance with a process oriented approach. It implies that all the three stake holders: the community, the people’s representatives, the Govt & the NGOs together move towards an interdependent coexistence and not towards independent or dependent confrontation.

7.7 Factors for Success or Failure for community participation:
It is widely believed and experienced that the sustainability of development projects/programs would depend very much on the participation of local communities in the development process of planning, implementation, Operation and Maintenance. If the communities were to develop a sense of ownership, they have to share part of the program either in cash, kind or labor. The participatory rural appraisal (PRA) exercises will go a long way in involving people in Government programs. The officials of various departments and NGOs could take part in PRA exercises to educate people and learn from the people. A small committee at the village level would be ideal for any kind of developmental work. The development process must enable people to make deliberate choices about their needs and priorities and about technologies available, affordable and locally suitable. It must improve their access to and control over the resources and must equip them with necessary skills and capabilities to manage their resources and institutions and also articulate their concerns. The process of community participation involves mainly generating awareness, motivation and mobilizing contribution and organizing committees based on the local conditions. The facilitating agencies like Government and Non-Government organizations have a
greater role in promoting the participatory approaches. They to have mutual cooperation and coordination and flexibility in dealing with developmental programs. The official’s contention about community participation is another area where lot of change is needed from attitudinal point of view. The participatory appraisal has emerged as a popular method of obtaining information and involving people in the planning process and later stages of all developmental programs. This method is to be extended and applied to each and every Government sponsored developmental program. If the community is involved in all the stages most of the problems would be solved easily, especially Operation, Maintenance, and sustainability of schemes.

7.8 Implications of the study for social work professionals:

The services of social work professionals have been enlisted at top echelons of Government machinery and at central office levels of most NGOs. With increased role of facilitators at sight to mobilize the community to plan, execute and maintain community infrastructure, there is a need for more social work professionals to engage themselves with this sphere of activity. Preparing the community to take active part in development requires a professional approach. Here the social worker has significant role to play in the Govt. set-up as well as with non-Govt. organizations.

Social work professionals wherever involved, as it was found from the study, were using social work methods viz. social casework, group work and community organization and also adopting other relevant participatory approaches.

Hence development initiatives were successful or at least they were positive in their outcome. Lack of social work professionals in the Govt. set-up, could be attributed to the failures in community initiatives. Because the Govt. officials lack professional approach. They need to be oriented/trained continuously towards participatory approaches, social work, and skill oriented programs to
enable them to become more effective in working with people. It was found in the study that out of 33 Govt. officials, no body had social work background, but among the NGOs, there were 6 social work professionals out of 12. There is a greater need of professional social workers in Government set-up.

7.9 Further Research:
The research methodology adopted empirical observation and interview method to collect the data and analyzing the data. Most of the time the controversy surrounding this methodology is that positive science dominate the social science research. But the verification of the various conclusions that is drawn from the analysis of the data show that social reality is not so simple as empirical evidence appears. It gives one the impression that this methodology labours without complexity. Because as I got into the research I found that I was caught up with the observed data of social inequality and the violent reinforcing of the same reality, giving the impression that the hegemonic power position of the respondents as a naturalized phenomena.

Therefore, the present study has its limitations of not recording the researchers agonies in the field and also with the interviewed persons. It means the methodology has its own pit falls. If at all empiricism has to have its further breathing and life it has to take care of the experiences of both the observed and the observer. Thereby come to an interpretation of that experience not absolutizing its implications but to give way towards a process oriented participatory methodology of meaning systems.

The results of the study above point their fingers at the need for further research in the area to evolve reliable and valid indicators of community participation in development programs which will aid in monitoring and evaluation of rural development schemes in terms of people's participation. An action research project will facilitate validation of the indicators through field-testing.
Applied research is needed to examine at length the nature and magnitude of linkages between Government agencies entrusted with the task of program formulation, awareness building through information transfer, implementation and the agencies engaged (NGOs) in input transfer at local level. Such a study could help initiate corrective action to minimize gaps in awareness among beneficiaries of rural development schemes. Thus, in view of its importance, different facets of participation need detailed empirical investigation.

While the application of PRA/CNAA/TFA, other RD components could be analyzed in details. Time, services and data for carrying out the above may also form the appropriate agenda for future research.

It is then assumption of the researcher that development is not an event but a continuous process in which citizens and their communities would freely participate and articulate their autonomous yet interdependent selves.