CHAPTER V

FACTORS INFLUENCING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (CP)

Interest in Community Participation (CP) in health care is not a new idea. There was community support for healers in past centuries and is still a feature of traditional culture. It was recognized in the 19th century as a fundamental factor in the public health movement. Today many international agencies and organisations, including UNICEF and WHO, emphasize the importance of community involvement in health care. It is looked upon as the foundation of better health throughout the world.

The stress now laid on CP has resulted from two trends that emerged after the second world war. With the advent of decolonization, the new nations had neither a suitable infrastructure to sustain the hospital based treatment system (Western medical system) nor the money to support its high cost. Moreover, since it was based mainly in the urban areas and available to those with money to pay for the services, it denied care to the majority of the people, who lived in rural areas, where they had little access to any type of health care. To deal with this health crisis a shift of emphasis to new technologies involving preventive measures and decentralized, community care based on epidemiological priorities was proposed. Health service delivery was seen in terms of social policy rather than technological development. Planners believed that providing people with knowledge regarding their health is enough to improve health. But mere provision of knowledge handed