CHAPTER I

PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS
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Participatory development has long been a widely discussed concept in development debates. Though its intellectual origins may be traced to the notion of development conceived and popularised by Mahatma Gandhi in India even decades before independence, various institutions and agencies in the advanced capitalist countries tried to offer a recipe for development in the post-war period under various themes like "community development programme," "rural development," etc. for the Third World. Many Third World governments also sought to incorporate the framework of this development formula into their socio-economic programmes and policies. The concept of participatory development got further momentum when the global financial institutions and agencies such as the World Bank promoted "basic needs" approach in development. Even as such attempts were under way, many began to argue that participatory development could emerge as a "radical alternative" to the mainstream growth path. The ascendancy of the concept in recent years, however, must be situated in the paradigmatic shift in development strategy, which is integrally linked with the transition in international political economy from Keynesianism to monetarism/neoliberalism.
As indicated earlier, much before this transition and the paradigmatic shift, there were attempts – both at intellectual as well as policy levels – to offer a participatory framework for development. For instance, while the writings and perspectives of Mahatma Gandhi provide insights into the potential of an alternative people-centric development in the anti-colonial era, the vision of the Latin American intellectual, Paulo Freire, is reckoned today as the strongest affirmation of the value of participation in the postcolonial era. The Gandhian and Freirean views are briefly presented in this chapter for a critical reading of the contemporary development strategies and to examine how global financial institutions and agencies make use of such intellectual traditions for advancing and legitimising participatory techniques in capitalist development. This chapter tries to comprehend the evolution of the concept of community/people's participation in development and various experiments under way along these lines during the decades preceding the collapse of Keynesianism in the 1970s. It also provides a historical setting to the analyses in the forthcoming chapters, and the issues raised here would become relevant points in the debates on the theoretical underpinnings of participatory development in the era of globalisation.

Alternative Visions: Gandhian and Neo-Gandhian Perspectives

Though the concepts of 'participation' and 'participatory' appeared for the first time in development lexicon during the 1950s, attempts at grassroots involvement in social, political and economic transformation could be seen in India much earlier. Mahatma Gandhi's critique of modern civilisation and western path of development, as appeared in his writings, including *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, was perhaps the earliest of such endeavours. Tracing the origin of "local participation and governance," John P. Lewis observes:

Localism – grassrootism – development from the bottom up – has been enjoying one of its periodic surges in the realm of development-policy discourse in the past couple of decades. Indians, if they wished, could claim a measure of paternity for the phenomenon, for one of the latter's gurus, assuredly, is Gandhi.

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4 John P. Lewis, *India's Political Economy: Governance and Reform* (Delhi, 1997), p. 371. Lewis was the head of the USAID Mission to India in the mid-sixties and consultant to various international organisations including the Ford Foundation.
Marglin identifies Gandhian thought as the “only well-articulated alternative to industrialisation,” while other theorists characterise it as “an outstanding thought from the Third World.”

A complex personality though he was, Gandhi’s political and economic ideas emerged from his socio-cultural, ethico-religious perspectives. Thus, Gandhi’s political and economic thoughts formed an integral part of his general philosophy of life. Unlike his contemporaries, Gandhi was not so bewildered by the Western model of development as to overlook the dehumanisation and ecological degradation associated with industrialism. According to him, development had to be justified on social and ethical grounds, the former serving only as a means of realising the latter objectives. Repudiating the basic tenets of modern political economy whose basic premise has been the constant pursuit of wealth and increase in the standard of living, Gandhi displayed his farsightedness even decades earlier than what the futurists associated with the Club of Rome could do in the 1970s. Writing in the 1930s, Gandhi said:

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6 See Rajni Kothari, Rethinking Development: In Search of Human Alternatives (Delhi, 1988), p. 63.

7 The reference here is to D. L. Meadows et al., The Limits to Growth (New York, 1972).
The incessant search for material comforts and their multiplication is such an evil; and I make bold to say that the Europeans themselves will have to remould their outlook if they are not to perish under the weight of the comforts to which they are getting accustomed.8

He asked: “And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?” 9 Gandhi’s approach to the whole question of development has to be read along with his treatment of politics too. He says: “For me there is no politics without religion - not the religion of the superstitious and the blind, religion that hates and fights, but the universal religion of tolerance. Politics without morality is a thing to be avoided.” 10 Writing in Young India in 1931, Gandhi characterised political power not as an “end” but “one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life.” 11 It was in this context that he put forth his thesis on “enlightened anarchy”:

If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state every one is his own ruler.

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10 Ibid., p.435.

11 Ibid., p.436.
He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no state. But the ideal is never fully (realised) in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that government is best which governs the least.\(^\text{12}\)

Gandhi’s contribution to the participatory discourse has to be viewed within the broad premise as laid above. In the early phase of his thinking, as exemplified in *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi could see only evil and no good in modernisation. According to him, machinery, the chief symbol of modern civilisation “represented a great sin,” and it had no scope in the independent India dreamt by him.\(^\text{13}\) He envisaged that India should be satisfied with the consumption of only those articles which could be produced without machinery. Thus, “it should reject mill made cloth, instead it should re-establish in thousands of households the ancient and sacred handlooms and buy out the cloth that might be thus woven.”\(^\text{14}\) Gandhi was for a reorientation of the village communities so as to ensure the participation of direct producers in social life. Thus,

\(^{12}\) Ibid.

\(^{13}\) Gandhi, n.3, p. 94.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p.95.
...when production and consumption both become localised, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. All the endless difficulties and problems that our present-day economic system presents, too, would then come to an end.\textsuperscript{15}

Stressing the need for a revival of village communities, he said: "Indian villages produced and supplied to the Indian towns and cities all their wants. India became impoverished when our cities became foreign markets and began to drain the villages dry by dumping cheap and shoddy goods from foreign lands."\textsuperscript{16} Discussing the nature and structure of panchayats, Gandhi said:

My idea of village \textit{swaraj} is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus, every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth....

The government of the village will be conducted by a Panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{15} Selected Works, n.9, p.383.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., pp.382-83.
\textsuperscript{17} Harijan, July 26, 1942.
Just a year before independence, Gandhi wrote:

Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or panchayat having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world.18

However, this did not mean that Gandhi was doctrinaire and utopian in his method of thought. Gandhi's subsequent writings, following his initial statements in *Hind Swaraj* should be an eye opener for those who had caricatured Gandhi to be anti-science and anti-technology. In 1919, Gandhi wrote:

Pure *swadeshi* is not at all opposed to machinery ... Opposition to mills or machinery is not the point. What suits our country most is the point. I am not opposed to the movement of manufacturing machines in the country, nor to making improvements in machinery. I am only concerned with what these machines are meant for ... And if legislations were in my hands, I would penalise the manufacture of labour-saving machines and protect the industry which manufactures nice ploughs which can be handled by every man.19

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18 Harijan, July 28, 1946.

19 Young India, September 17, 1919.
Elsewhere he said:

The heavy machinery for work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the state and used entirely for the benefit of the people. I can have no consideration for machinery which is meant either to enrich the few at the expense of the many, or without cause to displace the useful labour of many.20

Writing in *Harijan* in 1937 - in response to a question whether he was against machine age - he said: “To say this is to caricature my views. I am not against machinery as such, but I am totally opposed to it when it masters us.”21 Gandhi was fully aware of the immense potential of science and technology in the forward march of humankind, and he had a rational and practical perspective on industrialisation too. He said: “As a moderately intelligent man, I know that man cannot live without industry. Therefore I cannot be opposed to industrialisation.”22 This should not be interpreted to mean that Gandhi had an uncritical approach to mechanisation.

Writing in the 1920s, he observed:

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20 *Harijan*, 22 June 1935.

21 *Selected Works*, n.9, p.382.

22 Gandhi, n.8, p.22.
What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such ... Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the back of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might.23

Gandhi's preoccupation with the empowerment of self-sufficient village communities and concern for decentralisation did not stand in the way of his recognising the need for state-regulation of large industries where the dangers of private ownership were most manifest. Responding to a question relating to large-scale industries, he replied:

Yes, but I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be (nationalised) or state-controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as the motive.24

Obviously, Gandhi was not against industries, nor against state control over them, if needed, but only against 'industrialism' or "industrial civilisation." He emphasised: "Our concern is... to destroy industrialism at any cost."25 Placing himself against the position of

23 Selected Works, n.9, p. 380.
24 Ibid., p. 382.
25 Ibid., p. 348.
Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi said: “Pandit Nehru wants (industrialisation) because he thinks that if it is socialised, it would be free from the evils of capitalism. My own view is that the evils are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of socialism can eradicate them.”26

Thus, a reading of Gandhi’s writings makes it clear that he was a critic of modernity and industrial capitalism, and became the first national leader who posed the problem of an alternative to the Western model of development.27 Surinder S. Jodhka observes:

 Apart from the critique of western civilisation and colonial rule that he attempted through counterposing the village and the city, his polity was perhaps also a pointer to the shift that he brought about in the nationalist movement, from an elite-bourgeois activity directed at mobilising the newly emerging middle classes to a popular movement with growing participation of the peasantry from India’s hinterlands.28


27 Gandhi was also the first to talk of an ‘appropriate’ or ‘intermediate technology’ much ahead of Schumacher’s formulation of the concept in 1965. See E. F. Schumacher, “Industrialisation through Intermediate Technology,” in Ronald Robinson (ed.), Industrialisation in Developing Countries (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 91-96. Gandhi could be seen improvising quite a few improved varieties of spinning frames and farm implements even while he was leading the political struggle against the British. P.C. Joshi, Mahatma Gandhi: The New Economic Agenda (New Delhi, 1996), p.118.

Having deeper roots in the indigenous Indian tradition, Gandhi, in his search for alternative was willing to draw inspiration from diverse sources. This may be seen from his perspectives since the writing of *Hind Swaraj* in 1908. However, as a mark of continuity in political and economic thoughts, Gandhi’s basic distrust of industrialism remained intact throughout his life. Underlying his rejection of the Western model was not the reliance on any unchanging dogma but a fundamentally different view of life and society and an uncompromising commitment to the cause of the vast masses of small producers in the villages. The centrality of the self-employed small producer participating in sustaining community life and the emphasis on the role of indigenous institutions in development are the crucial aspects of the Gandhian vision on development. As noted by Joshi, “the identification of the small producer as the key element of Indian society and the definition of Indian development in terms of the welfare of this vast mass of working humanity constituted Gandhi’s signal contribution to thinking on human development.”

During the freedom movement, it was this Gandhian vision of self-sufficient village community that provided the ideological ground for

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29 Joshi, n.27, p. 26.
planning from below. And, a participatory structure of local government originating at the level of village panchayat and integration at successively higher levels going up to the centre was part of the Gandhian Constitution for Free India formulated in 1946.\textsuperscript{30} However, this proposal did not find favour mainly on tactical grounds that it would mean a complete revision of the constitution which was then at the drafting stage, and, as a compromise, village panchayats found mention among the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution enacted in 1950.\textsuperscript{31} Article 40 of the Constitution provides a directive that the state shall strive to organise village panchayats and endow them with powers of self-government. Notwithstanding this constitutional commitment, successive governments in India did not show much enthusiasm in putting the Gandhian vision of village panchayats into practice. In fact, the Gandhian concept of village panchayat fundamentally conflicted with the capitalist path of development followed by successive governments in India.

However, the emerging discourse on participation has once again put Gandhi into the debates on development thinking. The new trend


perceptible in this discourse is what Joshi calls "neo-Gandhism" or "ossified Gandhism." "Neo-Gandhites," as identified by Joshi, are those "who seemed to interpret Gandhi in an unhistorical and dogmatic fashion and had totally missed the non-doctrinaire and creative quality of Gandhi and his method of thought." This traditionalist and culturalist interpretation of Gandhi arises from the desire to uphold a "static view of Indian social institutions and values." Parekh, Chatterjee, and Sharma more or less follow this approach. Parekh argues that Gandhi has been the most influential proponent of a resurrection of past glories counterpoising tradition as an alternative to modernity. In other words, Gandhi's greatest contribution was his ability to resist the onslaught of modernism and rationalism and to defend Hindu tradition and its authority. Thus, in tune with the "ossified Gandhism" mentioned above, Parekh identifies the Gandhian discourse as purely an

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32 For an exposition of this terminology see Joshi, n.27, pp.81-83.

33 Ibid., p. 82.

34 Ibid., p. 83.

35 Ibid., p. 31.

36 Bhikhu Parekh, Colonialism, Tradition and Reform: An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse (New Delhi, 1989).

37 Partha Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World - A Derivative Discourse? (Delhi, 1986).


39 Parekh, n. 36, p.32.
“encounter between ancient and modern (civilisation).” While Gandhi often took recourse to Hinduism in the particular historical context of anti-colonial mobilisation, Parekh is suggesting this as a basis for action in a dogmatic manner.

In fact, the postmodern writers also tend to disrupt Gandhi’s mature and creative politico-economic perspectives, including their anti-imperialist undercurrents, in order to overstress the romantic and reviverist traditions associated with his name. Some of them have even gone to the extent of characterising Gandhi’s views as not only modern but also “post-politics.” It is often this version which helps international financial agencies such as the World Bank to invoke the name of Mahatma Gandhi in the theorisation of the relevance of culture in participatory development. Much the same way, the Gandhian concept of “enlightened anarchy” is now used by postmodern writers in their anti-state discourse in the context of the

40 Ibid., p. 72.
41 Ibid., pp. 19-20.
42 See Sharma, n.38, p. 59.
44 For instance, see Arun Das Gupta, “The Gandhian Alternative in Indian Politics,” Man & Development, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, 2001, pp. 5-11. In fact, Gandhi was not against the relevance of state. While pinpointing Gandhi as “not positively hostile to government,” John P. Lewis characterises the adherents of “new-wave localism” as “extremists.” See Lewis, n. 4, p. 371.
growing interest in participatory development. Rather than being "a non-threatening official voluntarism acting as an adjunct to the Indian state," the anarchism associated with the name of Gandhi is presented in the neoliberal discourse as an alternative "in the face of the alarming growth of the power of the state." However, the most significant appropriation of Gandhism is discernible in the realm of political economy of development. In the context of a paradigmatic shift in political economy dictated by global capital (as explained in the following chapter), the Gandhian emphasis on the rural and local community has become the focal point of attraction.

Thus, the 'local' has emerged to become the unit for discharging the development and welfare functions in the new discourse on participatory development. However, even those who have apparently made an objective evaluation of Gandhi seem to have come around this "new alternative." According to Joshi:

The centrality assigned in new development economics to local community institutions in the search for new paths of well being and in the fight against destitution bridges the vast gulf which earlier separated conventional growth economics and Gandhian economics. This new trend of thinking puts Gandhi in the very


46 Gupta, n. 44, p. 11.
centre of development thought and praxis as a seer and a pioneer having deep insight into the economic problems of Asian societies.⁴⁷

This thinking that probably fails to see the essential anti-colonial content of Gandhian political economy is echoed by Mukherjee and Ramaswamy though in another context of a perceived “decline in political theory.” According to them:

From the ecologists and environmentalists to pacifists, feminists and originators of the new protest and social movements all of them derive something or the other from Gandhi. One of the most significant facts about the life and vocation of Gandhi was his discovery of the East through the West. However, in the contemporary context, through the mediation of Gandhi, the West is picking up the issues which once dominated our thinking and in this process of assimilation an alternative framework, which has a great deal of similarity with the ideas of Gandhi, is emerging. ⁴⁸

Thus, the neo-Gandhian approach interprets Gandhi in disregard of the historical context in which his views had emerged. It is this neo-Gandhian version that has attracted various international agencies

⁴⁷ Joshi, n. 27, p. 40.

and global institutions which began to popularise the new paradigm of participatory development. 49

**Global Initiatives**

Concerns over the exclusion of people at the lower levels from the process of development had been well documented since the late 1940s. 50 Along with the origin of development profession and the theory of modernisation 51 in the immediate post-war period, the concept of local level development had also evolved and often the "modernising agents" themselves participated in building up development "from within and from below." 52 The publication in 1952

49 It may be noted that global financial institutions like the World Bank have invoked the name of Gandhi for popularising participatory development and decentralisation.

50 See United Nations, *The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems* (New York, 1950); United Nations, *Measures for Economic Development of Underdeveloped Countries* (New York, 1951). These two reports prepared on the basis of information gathered by a group of experts appointed by the Secretary General of United Nations focused attention not only on the general economic backwardness of Latin American and Afro-Asian countries, but also on the pitfalls of existing strategy of development in creating widespread inequality and poverty within countries.

51 George Rosen identifies 1945-1955 as the period during which the theory of modernisation and the profession of the political economy of development had grown into maturity. To quote, "before 1945 there was neither a recognised pathological situation of underdevelopment nor any accepted theory of development ...to understand the key variables of the change from underdeveloped to developed." George Rosen, *Western Economists and Eastern Societies: Agents of Change in South Asia 1950-1970* (Delhi, 1985), p. 19.

of the first *Report on World Social Situation* by the United Nations gave a new impetus to this line of thinking which encouraged social workers and field activists to pursue for a bottom-up approach to development in view of the perceived failure of top-down strategy of development. Accepted as an ideal at the international level, international financial and development agencies and institutions began to talk of "the inclusion of participation and participatory methods of interaction as an essential dimension of development." Highlighting the long drawn out link between development aid and participatory development, an official report indicated that "the word participation had long been used in connection with foreign aid." "The emphasis on community participation," it says, "was originally on improving the sustainability of individual projects by mobilising the support of indigenous local (organisations) and traditional technologies in developing countries." However, the UN-sponsored bottom-up initiatives and rural development policies could not proceed on expected lines in the absence of land reforms in developing countries. Further, experts associated with the participatory

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53 United Nations, *Report on World Social Situation* (New York, 1952). Published periodically since then, these Reports highlighted the social reality in various developing countries.

54 Rahnema, n. 2, p. 156.


56 Ibid.
initiatives of the UN during the 1950s themselves documented how successive US governments had "systematically blocked" such "radical reformist" programmes through "overt and covert, direct and indirect" means. Instead, the United States wanted to impose its own agenda of "community development" which formed part of Harry Truman's Point Four or the "Bold New Program," as a "containment policy to halt the advance of communism" in Afro-Asian-Latin American countries, an aspect to be discussed in the following sections. Meanwhile, as the socio-economic profile of developing countries did not show any sign of improvement, the UN launched what came to be called the Development Decade in the early 1960s, together with the rejuvenation of the Economic and Social Council in 1962. This was followed by the establishment of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development in 1963. These two initiatives reflected the UN emphasis on the social dimension of development, which again manifested in the Second Development

57 For a detailed discussion on this aspect, see Huizer, n. 52, pp. 282-91.

58 Ibid., p. 291. For an elucidation of the link between CDP and Point Four, see Rosen, n. 51, pp. 8-10.


60 Implicit in the creation of Economic and Social Council and Research Institute for Social Development by the UN as its specialised institutions is an acknowledgement of the importance of social factors in development including an integrated view of both social and economic aspects of development.
Decade declared by the UN in the 1970s. Here, the UN seemed to be interested in incorporating the ideals of popular and community participation into the concept of social development which was interpreted by itself as "a process of planned institutional change to bring about a better correspondence between human needs on the one hand and social policies and programmes on the other." As a result of the initiatives of the UN, the concept of popular participation had become a persistent theme in academic circles too. For instance, after a detailed study of the participatory self-help projects and community development programmes under way in several countries, Almond and Verba called this "participatory explosion" as a "political revolution going on throughout the world." Drawing attention on the dilemma between top-down planning and grassroot bottom-up efforts, Grosser contended that the issue of people's participation versus governmental control has been a major problem of the welfare state. According to Cook and Morgan,


63 Huizer calls it the "radicalization of UN-sponsored policies." See Huizer, n. 52, p. 282.


compared to traditional democratic representation, participatory
democracy implied the "direct involvement of amateurs in
authoritative decision making."\textsuperscript{66}

Meanwhile, the UN itself had undertaken evaluations on the various
participatory and self-help projects then in operation in different
countries. These evaluation studies depicted a dismal picture of the
entire efforts related to participation. For example, a 1970 UN Report
on Latin America portrayed the participatory self-help projects as
mere "action technique" which oriented more towards "system
maintenance" than "social change."\textsuperscript{67} In particular, a review of the
community development projects in Latin America indicated that local
people were primarily mobilised to provide labour power and material
resources for the improvement of projects and not in any way to take
part in shaping programmes.\textsuperscript{68} It also became known that government
attempts at promoting or controlling citizen participation and
community involvement in projects often depended upon their
compatibility with state policies.\textsuperscript{69} Experiences from other countries

\textsuperscript{66} Terance E. Cook and Patrick M. Morgan, \textit{Participatory Democracy} (San Francisco, 1974), p.4.


\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., p. 304.
had also shown that in most cases popular participation had generally assumed a status quo orientation which favoured the already privileged groups.\textsuperscript{70} This opened up the possibility of antagonism which was clearly the antithesis of what one expected from the ideal of popular participation. It was also found that the apparent official concern for participation in several countries was dictated by political expediency of legitimising power, thereby benefiting national leaders than peoples.\textsuperscript{71} In fact, consistent with the legitimising requirements and basic approach inherent in the welfare state, the UN itself was trying to evolve a consensual form of participation that would reduce tensions in the developmental process. To quote the UN,

\begin{quote}
In practice, the best approach may be a combination of an institutional structure which permits an adequate level of participation by popular representatives, based on a parity between technical requirements for decision-making for which local officials and technicians are given a decision-making role and socio-political requirements for which popular representatives are needed.\textsuperscript{72}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., p. 80.
This explicit shift in UN position towards a status quo orientation and the consequent decline in participation will be elaborated further in the following section.

**The Community Development Programme in India**

By far the most extensive participatory experiment ever tried in the Third World in the immediate context of decolonisation had been the Community Development Programme (CDP) in India. Supported by the Ford Foundation, USAID and other US agencies, CDP emerged in India as part of "an internationally sponsored strategy in the early 1950s mainly as a reaction to the Chinese revolution." Citing the urgent need for a Foundation programme such as CDP which would foster gradual trickle-down improvement in the countryside, Chester Bowles, the then US ambassador to India wrote a letter to Paul Hoffman, President of Ford Foundation, which inter alia says:

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73 Rosen provides a detailed account of the genesis, development and transformation of the CDP in India under the institutional network sponsored and funded by research institutions and aid agencies such as the Ford-Rockefeller Foundations, MIT Centre, USAID, etc. all from the US. Rosen, n.51; also see Lewis, n. 4, pp. 72-107; and Huizer, n. 52, pp. 290-95.

The critical danger as I see it lies in the possibility that economic conditions may improve in China while the Indian situation remains stagnant... If such a contrast developed during the next four or five years, and if the Chinese continued their moderate and plausible approach without threatening the northern Indian boundary... the growth of communism in India might be very great. The death or retirement of Nehru might then be followed by a chaotic situation out of which another potentially strong communist nation might be born.\textsuperscript{75}

This was not an isolated view. Even Loy Henderson, Bowles’ predecessor in India also had a similar sensitivity to Indian developments. Looking at the intense peasant uprisings that were reported in various parts of the country during the late 1940s and early 1950s, and acknowledging government’s obvious incapacity to implement land reforms, he said: “In a period of rapid change peasants’ appetites would be whetted far more than was forthcoming, and landlords embittered. It was then that the greatest danger of communist influence existed.”\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{75} Quoted in Rosen, n. 51, p. 9. Explaining the context in which Chester Bowles assumed the ambassadorship in India, the Ford Foundation spokesman said: “India is the key point in the entire East, and a country which we simply must learn to live with a whole lot more successfully than we are doing at present. If we lose India, as we lost China, we shall certainly lose South-East Asia with the repercussions running all the way through Africa. It is difficult under such circumstances to see how Japan could be held in line, and it would not be too long before we would find ourselves driven back into a citadel”. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p. 10.
asserts, the CDP was “part of a global confrontation, the cold war, capitalism versus communism.”

The CDP, which was formally launched on Gandhi’s birthday in 1952 and became part of the First Five Year Plan, had been entirely designed and implemented jointly by the Ford Foundation and US Technical Cooperation Mission (which was to become USAID since 1961) in collaboration with technical experts from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and MIT Centre for International Studies. It was often presented as a continuation of the pilot project launched in the Etawah district of Uttar Pradesh in 1948 by the US American Agriculture Mission and led by its expert Albert Mayer. In consonance with Truman’s Point Four and cold war objectives, as noted by Rosen, the aim of this programme in India would be “to help build up democracy at the village level and at the same time bridge the gap between the village level and a necessarily strong central Indian government.” In the background of the developments taking

77 Huizer, n. 52, p. 291.

78 See Rosen, n. 51, pp. 8-10; also see Lewis, n. 4, p. 72.


80 Rosen, n. 51, p. 10.
place in rural China, the CDP and agricultural extension programmes were designed as an alternative to the much-needed structural reforms in the agricultural sector. When started in the early 1950s, the declared objective of CDP was to replicate in Indian countryside through voluntary effort what China gained through the communes. To quote Rosen:

The Chinese cooperative system was given major credit for increasing agricultural output in that country... in India it could be done on a voluntary basis. For this the Community Development and National Extension Programmes were to mobilise local labour and resources to raise farm output. Underemployed village labour, properly organised was to be used to construct local roads, minor irrigation works, and other small projects that would increase output...

Elaborating the scheme further, he said:

The Ford Foundation grants in support of Community Development and the National Extension Service were important in the Indian government’s programmes to develop new village

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81 The immediate post-revolutionary situation in China exhibited substantial improvement in agriculture and rural life. While having a centrally planned economy, China had a decentralised system of production and provision of essential social services through its communes. On account of a comprehensive plan formulated at the local level, grassroots democracy was extended through effective delivery of service care which included medical care of a high calibre and minimum quality of food to every commune member. See Jan Myrdal and Gun Kessle, China: The Revolution Continued (New York, 1970), p.53.

82 Rosen, n. 51, p. 72.
institutions and to use village labour for investment in kind in the villages. In the training establishments that the foundation helped to start, approximately 35,000 village-level workers were trained in the 1950s.83

Later it was estimated that “approximately 50,000 extension workers were trained under the Ford programmes over two decades.”84 During this period, the Ford Foundation continued to be the biggest aid donor for India, the largest recipient of grant aid from the former till early 1970s,85 when Ford Foundation’s operations in India began to decline in the context of an espionage charge against the MIT project in India,86 which was also a part of the Point Four. Since the 1970s, as the Ford-Rockefeller activities in India seemed to have subsided,87 the legacy left over by them was gradually incorporated into the

83 Ibid., p. 73.
84 Ibid., p.82.
85 Ibid., pp. 56-57.
86 When the issue became sensitive, the US government was forced to wind up the MIT operations in India. Ibid, pp. 145-46. Similar situations were reported from elsewhere too. For instance, DELTA (Development Education and Leadership Training for Action) had been a participatory project involving church organisations and NGOs introduced into African countries in the early 1980s. It was mainly based on “Freirean principles of conscientisation” (see subsequent discussions) and “US derived management training principles and, originally biblical messages.” However, the so called “listening surveys” and “consciousness raising” programmes led by “Community Animation Teams” associated with Anglican Church and Catholic Pastoral Centre later provoked “open conflict at village level” in Sierra Leone. Afraid of “provoking insurrection” the government of Kenya was forced to ban it. For details, see Melissa Leach, “Delta and Village Level Planning in Sierra Leone: Possibilities and Pitfalls,” in Amitava Mukherjee (ed.), Participatory Rural Appraisal: Methods and Applications in Rural Planning (New Delhi 1995), pp. 192-94.
87 This was a general trend. In Pakistan too, for instance, the entire operations of Ford Foundation were taken over by the World Bank in 1965 itself. See Rosen, n. 51, p.66.
strategy of the World Bank operations with the promulgation of McNamara's "Basic Needs Program." In brief, the decline of foundation-led grassroot initiatives in the 1970s marked the end of the first phase of participatory development efforts in India.\textsuperscript{88}

Meanwhile, during the early 1960s, efforts were made to reorient the CDP in accordance with the requirements of the new agriculture strategy, namely, the Green Revolution. When the agricultural situation worsened and food crisis began to deepen in the late 1950s, an American expert team led by Sherman Johnson, chief economist of the USDA visited India for three months and submitted the \textit{Food Crisis Report} which was published in 1959.\textsuperscript{89} The Report laid the foundation for the formal launching of Green Revolution in the country. Based as it was on the Ten Point Programme recommended by the "food crisis team," the CDP got merged with the expanded Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP) that "provided for the concentration of packages of improved practices, inputs and technical and extension personnel on a selection of the country's most

\textsuperscript{88} The 1978 Asoka Mehta Report on Panchayati Raj and Decentralisation may be regarded as an epitaph of this first phase. See India, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, \textit{Report of the Committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions}, (New Delhi, 1978).

\textsuperscript{89} Government of India, \textit{Report on India's Food Crisis and Steps to Meet It} (Delhi, 1959). Interesting it may seem that this was an official report of the government of India signed by US experts only. Though Indians were also members of the "food crisis team," they did not sign it.
productive and promising rural districts." While one-third of the entire cost of IADP was still borne by the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the USDA, USAID and American land-grant universities engaged themselves in establishing agricultural universities and in developing agricultural research institutions in India as part of Green Revolution, which later came to be catalogued in the jargon of "participatory technology development." An outcome of this large-scale entry of US agencies into Indian rural sector has been the introduction of the techniques of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Resource Mapping and farm data collection modelled on the practices developed by USDA. In addition to the external

90 Lewis, n. 4, p. 72.

91 Ibid.; also see Rosen, n. 46, p. 59.

92 Stephen Biggs and Grant Smith, "Beyond Methodologies: Coalition Building for Participatory Technology Development," World Development, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, 1998, p. 242. Making a line of demarcation between the methodology and technology of participatory development, the authors identified the role of Rockefeller and Ford Foundations in India in the context of Green Revolution as an example of the latter. On the other hand, the various techniques of data collection and information gathering pursued by NGOs and other agencies in the context of local level development were generally grouped under the methodology of participatory development. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) were too well-known methods in this regard. For an authoritative discussion on the subject, see Robert Chambers, "Rural Appraisal: Rapid, Relaxed and Participatory," in Mukherjee (ed.), n. 86, pp. 1-61.

93 Of crucial significance here is the application of Soil Taxonomy developed by USDA in mapping soil and the use of it as a vehicle for transferring agro-technology associated with Green Revolution. For a long time, the USAID has been encouraging the USDA Soil Taxonomy in countries including India. Experience indicates that with the exception of professional soil scientists who are often trained in the West no one in developing countries could understand the classification systems or the international language associated with it. The maps and reports collected, though technically excellent and full of data were seldom useful for local planners. "The main market for the soil maps appears to be visiting consultants who can utilize the data ..." For a detailed discussion see Barry Dalal-Clayton, "Confessions of a Reconstructed Planner," in Mukherjee (ed.), n. 86, pp. 179-80.
interests involved, it has also been shown that such participatory techniques often favoured the more powerful sections in society.\textsuperscript{94} Thus, CDP, the earlier version of participation\textsuperscript{95} in India, was part of US strategic intervention dictated by the cold war considerations of the time. Rosen aptly sums up this:

Western countries, by providing aid to India in the form of foreign exchange and technical assistance from the fruits of their experience, could assist India to overcome the initial hurdles to development and thus put it on the road to sustained economic growth. This would avoid a possible Indian move to communism and show other less developed countries the possibilities of non-communist paths to development as well as the advantages of aid from the West.\textsuperscript{96}

The CDP that belonged to the “Carnegie-Rockefeller-Ford model of social change”\textsuperscript{97} has been a subject of serious analyses from different persuasions. The Balvantrai Mehta Committee focused on the absence


\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{96} Rosen, n. 51, p. 229.

\textsuperscript{97} This phrase is used by Karl N. Stauber, “Mission-Driven Philanthropy: What Do We Want to Accomplish and How Do We Do It?,” *Non Profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Vol. XXX, No. 2, 2001, p. 395.
of popular participation in CDP. This is also confirmed by Hansen in the mid-1960s, as, by that time, all the grassroots efforts to have "people's participation" in development had proved futile. In fact, the CDP conceptualised 'community' as a homogeneous entity. The application of this "classical definition of community" to the context of heterogeneous Indian villages, according to Selvan, "will lead to conceptual blunders." In a context in which village dwelling and community feelings have been organised primarily on caste basis, conventional approach to community participation is inappropriate to Indian reality. Myrdal and Frankel in their studies on India's political economy of the decades following independence also have thrown light on the widening inequalities in social and economic life in spite of the participatory attempts such as CDP. As noted by Myrdal, despite all the efforts on the part of CDP teams, the poorer peasants still lacked incentives while the rich agriculturists and landlords were able to appropriate their surplus, leading to a widening

98 The Mehta Committee, which made a review of CDP, was appointed in a context when it was felt that the CDP was losing steam in the 1950s itself. India, Planning Commission, Report of the Team for the Study of Community Projects and National Extension Services, Vol. 1 (New Delhi, 1959), p. 22.


of social and economic divisions in the country. The CDP and agricultural extension programmes enabled rulers to keep themselves aloof from land reform and other structural changes. Even the nominal land reforms announced were weakened due to half-hearted implementation and, in the process, landless and poor peasants were totally excluded, thereby keeping the social structure intact.102

Frankel also noticed a widening of existing inequalities such that the better-off sections reaped the entire benefits from new agricultural practices at the expense of landless labourers and poor peasants even in the midst of the talk on decentralisation and people’s involvement in planning.103 While the official posture on self-reliant development in agriculture, agro-technology transfer, and people’s involvement in planning continued to be in high spirits, the Green Revolution, in fact, was creating a massive dependency on external agencies for the entire technology.104 Huizer saw the growing disharmony and conflict in rural India as the direct fall-out of CDP. In his view, in areas where CDP and Green Revolution “were most successful, rural contradictions and violent conflict emerged most frequently and

102 For details see Myrdal, n. 101, pp. 97-138.
104 See Frankel(1978), n. 101, pp. 270-80.
strongly and (destabilised) the countryside. Landlessness rapidly increased to more than half the population, a level that compared with that of China in the 1920s."\(^{105}\)

More critical studies are available on the foreign-sponsored participatory experiments. They relate to the very orientation, nature and scope of community and social work as well as social science research that have evolved over time in developing countries. Studies by Arnove,\(^{106}\) Mandal,\(^{107}\) Midgley\(^{108}\) and Hyden\(^{109}\) are worth-mentioning. Arnove views charitable foundations such as Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie as mere tools of American foreign policy. As such, the research projects and social work programmes evolved in countries like India served more the political needs of US administration rather than the development requirements of host countries.\(^{110}\)

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105 Huizer, n. 52, p. 295.
110 Arnove, n. 106.
Mandal elucidates how the social work model that came most systematically through the American consultants and social work educators belonging to the Ford-Rockefeller Foundations and MIT Centre "was harmful to India on account of its disjunction with the needs of Indian society." A corollary of this tradition has been "the extensive use of American books and journals" in schools of social and community work and in social science disciplines in India. "The American model of social work," says Mandal, "is unfit for India and other developing societies whose problems and development needs are substantially different from those of a developed capitalist society." In spite of the repeated stress by UN agencies on the need for the development of an "indigenous approach to community work," according to Mandal, "the fundamental assumptions remained within the general framework of American social work education." He says:

...most of the personnel responsible for drafting of UN reports and research notes had their social work training in the US or they are influenced by it directly or indirectly. As a matter of fact, most of the UN documents as well as UN representatives tacitly assume that the American model is not only superior, but appropriate for developing countries.\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{111} Mandal, n. 107, p. 2710.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., pp. 2710-2711.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p. 2711.
Midgley also shares the same perspective. An evaluation of the evolution of community work and social research in developing countries has led him to coin the term "professional imperialism" to describe the dependent relationships developed during the period. Dependence on Western institutions and funding agencies had led not only to exploitative links, but "inappropriate ideas, institutions and technologies had been replicated in the third world."\textsuperscript{114} Midgley explains how alien theories and techniques, unsuited to the cultures and development needs of developing countries have been imposed on them claiming that participatory social work has a universally relevant methodology and international professional identity and, in the process, how Western research consultants and social workers exert a powerful influence over their Third World colleagues.\textsuperscript{115} Hyden expresses more or less a similar view. According to him, most policy makers from the Third World pass, at some stage or other, through the tertiary institutions of advanced societies, where they internalise much of this Western intellectual tradition leading to what he calls

\textsuperscript{114} Midgley, n. 108, p. xiii.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
"trained incapacity."\textsuperscript{116}

\textbf{Freirean Orientation to Participatory Development}

As in the case of Gandhi, the Brazilian intellectual Paulo Freire's\textsuperscript{117} perspectives have been widely used in the theory and practice of participatory development since the beginning of the 1970s. Very often, scholars\textsuperscript{118} tend to place Freire's teachings and writings in the category of liberation theology,\textsuperscript{119} evolved and sustained by popular religious opposition to the consolidation of capitalist social process in Latin America. According to Weiler,

\textsuperscript{116}Hyden, n. 109, p. 211. 'Ujaama's Villages' is the local or indigenous name given to the participatory development efforts introduced in Tanzania which emulated the CDP in India in many respects. In fact, most of the African and Latin American countries have been hosts to such foreign sponsored top-down experiments. See, for details, United Nations, n. 70, and; Mukherjee (ed.), n. 86, pp. 178-212.


\textsuperscript{119}West defines "liberation theology" as "an anti-imperialist Christian mode of thought and action" and traces "the emergence of this most important third world development in religious practices" to "the monumental reforming impetus of Vatican II (1962-1965) and the ground breaking counter hegemonic posture of the Medellin Latin American Bishops' Meeting in 1968". See West, n. 118, p. 178; also see Huizer, n. 52, p. 298. In fact, the prelude to this Bishop's Conference and the consequent genesis of liberation theology in Latin America, where over 200,000 base Christian communities exist as concrete praxis centres was provided by Pope Paul VI in 1967. In the context of the turbulent 1960s, in his famous Encyclical, the Pope writes: "Individual nations must raise the level of the quantity and the quality of production to give the life of all their citizens truly human dignity, and give assistance to the common development of human race." See Pope Paul VI, \textit{On Promoting the Development of Peoples} (Rome, 1967), p. 20.
Freire's pedagogy developed in particular historical and political circumstances of neo-colonialism and imperialism ... In Freire's initial formulation, oppression was conceived in class terms and education was viewed in the context of peasants' and working people's revolutionary struggles. Equally influential in Freire's thought and pedagogy was the influence of radical Christian thought and the revolutionary role of liberation theology within Latin America. As is true for other radical Christians in Latin America, Freire's personal knowledge of extreme poverty and suffering challenged his deeply felt Christian faith grounded in the ethical teachings of Jesus in the Gospels. Freire's pedagogy is thus founded on a moral imperative to side with the oppressed that emerges from both his Christian faith and his knowledge and experience of suffering in the society where he grew up and lived.120

Freire's writings provide one of the strongest affirmations of the value of participation, particularly among the hitherto poor and dominated or oppressed social classes. As Freire points out, whenever any social class becomes oppressed and is reduced to a culture of silence, that section is denied participation in the creation of its own humanity and, as such, becomes only an object of knowledge. When this group is mobilised to participate in decision-making for social development, the group begins to create its own history and engages in its own process of development. To quote him:

At all stages of their liberation, the oppressed must see themselves as women and men engaged in the ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. Reflection and action become imperative when one does not erroneously attempt to dichotomize the content of humanity from its historical forms. The insistence that the oppressed engage in reflection on their concrete situation is not a call to armchair revolution. On the contrary, reflection—true reflection—leads to action. On the other hand, when the situation calls for action, that action will constitute an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection.\footnote{121}{Freire (1996), n. 117, pp. 47-48.}

The pedagogical aspect of this praxis is very important:

It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves. This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be a praxis.\footnote{122}{Ibid., p. 47.}

At the heart of Freirean pedagogy is his insistence that all people are subjects and knowers of the world. The “conviction as subjects, not as
objects"^{123} is indispensable for critical intervention in the world. On the other hand, attempts "to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated."^{124} Freire sees the manipulated or populist forms of participation led by "naïve professionals" as arising from a "focalized view of problems rather than on seeing them as dimensions of a totality."^{125} In this context, Freire's observation on the externally-directed community development projects in developing countries as an "oppressive action" of "divide and rule" is very revealing:

In 'community development' projects the more a region or area is broken down into 'local communities', without the study of these communities both as totalities in themselves and as parts of another totality (the area, region and so forth) – which in its turn is part of a still larger totality (the nation, as part of the continental totality) – the more alienation is intensified. And the more alienated people are, the easier it is to divide them and keep them divided. These focalized forms of action, by intensifying the focalized way of life of the oppressed (especially in rural areas), hamper the oppressed from perceiving reality

^{123} Ibid., p. 49.
^{124} Ibid., p. 47.
^{125} Ibid., p. 122.
critically and keep them isolated from the problems of oppressed women and men in other areas.\textsuperscript{126}

Freire’s pedagogy insists on a deep connection between the culture of everyday life and praxis for social liberation. Cultural action that transforms existing structure or that serves liberation is called ‘dialogical’ cultural action; and that preserves the system or that serves domination is called ‘antidialogical’ cultural action. While the former “surmounts antagonistic contradictions of the social structure, thereby achieves the liberation of human beings,” the latter “involves conquest of the people, their division, their manipulation, and cultural invasion.” Dialogical cultural action, as Freire puts it, is “historical action.” It “is an instrument for superseding the dominant alienated and alienating culture. In this sense, every authentic revolution is a Cultural Revolution.”\textsuperscript{127}

Freirean methods of praxis, action and reflection, conscientisation, cultural action, etc., are crucial instruments of people’s participation in social life. These methods are aimed not only at liberating the oppressed but ultimately the oppressor too. The difficulty involved in achieving this is ascribed to the lack of “critical consciousness” which

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., pp.122-23. Parenthesis in original.

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., pp.160-161.
is an ongoing process that grows out of praxis and leads to further praxis. In Freire's view, in dependent societies the popular consciousness of the oppressed has not evolved into a critical consciousness so that the conscientisation exercises, the action-reflection process, may not be effective during the transitional period. It is here that Freire invokes the crucial role of the progressive intellectuals who are capable of transcending their class interests and lead the masses in praxis. \textsuperscript{128} Here, the Freirean formulation excludes the possibility of a contradictory experience of oppression among the oppressed. It is assumed that the oppressed, both "teachers and students,"\textsuperscript{129} are submerged in a common situation of oppression and their shared knowledge of that oppression will lead them to collective action. According to Freire,

Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators. In this way, the

\textsuperscript{128} Freire (1975), n.117, pp.57-71.

\textsuperscript{129} In the Freirean pedagogy, teachers refer to leaders and students to people. See Freire(1996), n.117, p.51; In the literature on participatory development, the Freirean teacher has several reincarnations such as animator, initiator, catalyst, facilitator, promoter, activist, change agent, group organiser and so on. See S.Tilakaratna, The Animator in Participatory Rural Development (Geneva, 1987), p.44.
The presence of the oppressed in the struggle for their liberation will be what it should be: not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement.¹³⁰

This Freirean assumption of placing the leadership or teacher always on the same side of the oppressed, however, raises some conceptual problems. As Weiler remarks, “the teachers are not abstract, but are raced, classed gendered individuals of particular ages, abilities, etc. The teacher will be seen and heard by students not as an abstraction but as a particular person with a certain defined history and relationship to the world.”¹³¹ As she perceives, “the transparency of the subjectivity of the Freirean teacher” and “the vision of the oppressed as undifferentiated”¹³² are debatable issues. In a sense, this may be viewed as arising from the eclectic range of theories from which Freire draws his pedagogy. It can be seen that with his orientation in the principles and precepts of liberation theology, Freire is immune from the rigidity of models and methodological paradigms. This has prompted commentators to characterise his pedagogy as an

¹³¹ Weiler, n.118, p.17.
¹³² Ibid., p.18.
“anti-method”\textsuperscript{133} that visualises dialogue as a form of social praxis. However, at a time when theoretical and political positions marked by pessimism are emerging from various quarters, Freire stands out as a major intellectual figure offering optimistic responses to current conditions.

Yet, as is the case with Gandhi, major efforts are under way across the world to appropriate the Freirean thought - in total disregard of the historical context in which it has evolved - notwithstanding the note of caution exercised by Freire himself. In an interview, he says: “I don’t want to be imported or exported. It is impossible to export pedagogical practices without re-inventing them. Please tell your fellow American educators not to import me. Ask them to recreate and rewrite my ideas.”\textsuperscript{134} However, it has almost become a common practice among various institutional agencies and grassroots activists to co-opt and distort Freire, resulting in what has been termed the

\textsuperscript{133} Donaldo Macedo, “Preface,” in McLaren et al. (eds.), n, 118, p. xviii. Though Freire works within a predominantly modernist perspective, characterised by struggle and hope grounded in the noble project of human liberation, postmodernists, who have virtually arrived at a dead end regarding the politics of liberation, are increasingly attracted to Freire’s anti-method pedagogy and theoretical avoidance. An implied point in this regard is Freirean insistence on a deep connection between culture and radical politics as well as the emphasis on liberation through cultural context. McLaren writes: “Freire’s work - which stands at the borderline of modernist and postmodernist discourse- can be used as a touch stone for a postmodern materialist politics that is concerned with cultural power as much as cultural politics.” Peter L. McLaren, “Postmodernism and death of politics: A Brazilian reprieve,” in McLaren et al. (eds.), n,118, p.204. This postmodern affinity towards “anti-method” and cultural politics will come in the context of the discussion on the theoretical underpinnings of participatory development later in this study.

\textsuperscript{134} See Macedo, n.133, p.xiv
“pseudo Freirean perspective” which *inter alia* implies “the use of Freirean terminology and method without its substance as a smokescreen for the continued domestication of Third World peasants and workers in the interests of foreign capital.” An example is the extensive use of Freirean literacy techniques by the World Bank and USAID in their investigation into the potential of non-formal education in incorporating small and marginal peasants into the new production technologies associated with Green Revolution. These funding/donor agencies found in Freire’s terminology “a progressive gloss which could make their approach marketable in the Third World. By co-opting Freire’s terminology and concepts, they could hope to influence the direction of political change in the Third World.”

A number of concepts, techniques and methodologies such as PRA, Resource Mapping, Activist Participatory Research, etc. have been widely used in participatory development. Several of them are

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136 Ibid.
designed in agencies and by experts linked with the United States.\textsuperscript{137} Obviously, one cannot find any reference to such concepts in Freire's work. He is also against dragging his name for giving legitimacy to such alien concepts. But the irony is that even leading practitioners of participatory development are turning to Freire for legitimacy. Chambers is a classic case. He writes:

\begin{quote}
The term 'activist participatory research' is used to refer to a family of approaches and methods which dialogue and participatory research to enhance people's awareness and confidence, and to empower their action. Activist participatory research in this sense owes much to the work and inspiration of Paulo Freire, to his book \textit{Pedagogy of the Oppressed} (1968) and to the practice and experience of (conscientisation) in Latin America.\textsuperscript{138}
\end{quote}

However, the attempts to appropriate Freire are not confined to Western thinking. Even concerned Asian scholars who are in search of an alternative approach to development are also trying to imitate

\textsuperscript{137} For an authoritative account of this, see Rosen, n.51. In an autobiographical note, W.W. Rostow, a prominent figure in the U.S. power-elite think tanks notes: "... the struggle to detect and contain the thrust for expanded communist power would be long; and that new concepts would be required to underpin U.S. foreign policy in the generation ahead, quite aside from the task of dealing directly with the communist world. We believed that a portion of academic talent should be devoted to generating these concepts...." See W.W. Rostow, "Development: The Political Economy of the Marshallian Long Period," in G.M. Meier and D.Seers (eds.), \textit{Pioneers in Development} (Washington D.C., 1984), pp. 227-261. For an elaboration on how concepts associated with development are evolved by US. Social Science Establishment see, Richard A.Higgot,\textit{Political Development Theory} (London & Sydney, 1983), pp. 1-36.

\textsuperscript{138} Chambers, n.92, p.2.
Freire or the ‘methodology’ of “people’s praxis, i.e. the action-reflection-action-process” as Wignaraja calls it. To quote him:

Since Paulo Freire first enunciated (conscientisation) methodologies for political struggle, a great deal of experimentation and refinements have been undertaken in training methodologies for animators, development cadres and activists. This training implies (sensitisation) to develop an identity with, and commitment to resolving the development problems of the people. The new training methodology for facilitators and animators is organic to the praxis and cannot be separated mechanistically from the reflection and action which are the more obvious elements of the process.”139

**Basic Needs Strategy: Entry of the World Bank**

The initiatives taken by the World Bank in the sphere of participatory development towards the close of the 1960s and early 1970s also deserve mention here. These initiatives, as discussed in detail in the following chapters, have been slowly and steadily evolving into a full-fledged strategy in the post-cold war neoliberal period when the World Bank emerged as the chief patron of the theory and practice of participatory development. The World Bank could, thus, offset the impact of the decline of the Foundations by the late 1960s, though

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the formal retreat of the "welfare state" was yet to begin. In fact, by the 1960s itself, the initial optimism on development had been lost and a sustained critique of the political economy of development was gradually emerging.\textsuperscript{140} The macro-economic perspectives and writings of Baran,\textsuperscript{141} Frank\textsuperscript{142} and others, coupled with the militant resistance and peasant movements\textsuperscript{143} that proliferated across all continents, enhanced the importance of the need for radical structural reforms within the UN system itself.\textsuperscript{144} This situation also offered an opportune moment for the World Bank to enter the agrarian societies in a big way with a new strategy of alleviating poverty.\textsuperscript{145}

The large-scale entry of World Bank into the social and rural sectors of developing countries coincided with Robert McNamara's assumption of office as President of the World Bank. In his address to

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{140} See Higgot, n.137.
\item \textsuperscript{141} See P.A.Baran, \textit{The Political Economy of Growth} (New York, 1957).
\item \textsuperscript{143} For a discussion on such movements see Saral Sarkar, \textit{Green-Alternative Politics in West Germany: Vol.1. The New Social Movements} (New Delhi, 1993).
\item \textsuperscript{144} United Nations, \textit{Report of the World Land Reform Conference} (New York, 1968). The Report highlighted the growing concern and increasing interest shown by UN in the need for structural changes including land reforms in developing countries.
\item \textsuperscript{145} The World Bank's thinking during this period may be seen from a 1983 report on China in which the Bank has acknowledged, albeit with reservations, the social advancement made by China due to land redistribution, establishment of co-operatives and communes, etc. See The World Bank, \textit{China: Socialist Economic Development} (Washington DC., 1983), p.28.
\end{footnotes}
the Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the World Bank held in Nairobi in 1971, McNamara stressed the “basic needs strategy” aimed at extending certain minimum standard of living to all. Analysing the failure on the part of large segments of population in developing countries to gain from the economic development of the 1950s and 1960s, he called for “new forms of rural institutions and (organisations) that will give as much attention to promoting the inherent potential and productivity of the poor as is generally given to protecting the power of the privileged.” However, as various studies have shown, this posture of the World Bank had only rhetorical value and lacked substance. The World Bank’s attempt seemed to have been to ensure the success of Green Revolution by extending the imported technologies to the small peasants in the rural areas along with the provision of credit and other government services. The land reforms and other structural changes had been of no significance in the agenda. The aim of the “basic needs strategy” has been to incorporate peasants into the new production system under the banner of people’s participation. Even some of the

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147 Ibid., p.11.


149 Ibid.
theorists of participatory development became critiques of the basic needs strategy. For instance, Korten says: “The basic needs strategies that gained prominence during the 1970s are a variant of, usually an add-on to, a classical growth-centred development strategy.” In his view, “basic needs strategies” aim at getting people “to participate as co-producers in implementing service delivery projects initiated and controlled by government. This form of participation is more accurately described as mobilisation than as empowerment.”

The foregoing discussion thus sought to analyse the early attempts at participatory development under various forms that persisted until the collapse of the welfare state in the 1970s. During this period, since state provision of basic social services was an inalienable part of the development agenda, the institutional participatory efforts that evolved over time had been intended to supplement the activities of the welfare state. The truly genuine and indigenous bottom-up initiatives of Gandhi and Freire that evolved out of concrete historical contexts have often been co-opted by various international donor agencies and financial institutions such as the World Bank in total disregard of their basic framework and theoretical underpinnings.


151 Ibid., p.44.
This trend, in fact, began to gather further momentum since the late 1980s when neoliberal policies got under way in many Third World countries as illustrated in the following chapters.