SUMMARY & CONCLUSION
INTRODUCTION:

Many a development programme fail because of lack of response on the part of the people on one hand and the systematic disadvantage they have on the other. It is believed that participatory methodology enables the development of the rural poor on self-reliant and sustainable basis and in promoting empowerment among them. The present study is carried out to test the efficacy of the ‘Participatory Methodology’.

The objectives of the study are:

I. To test and document the effectiveness of participatory method in:

(a) Motivating and mobilising the rural poor in identifying their own economic and social developmental needs;

(b) Changing their perceptions and attitudes about self-reliance and self-determination in the matters of their own welfare and development; and
(c) Improving their empowerment capabilities.

II. To identify and document the social, economic, cultural and political factors and problems involved in motivating and mobilising the people towards the goal of development.

III. To document the strategies and processes initiated by the researcher in neutralising the negative forces and harnessing the positive forces to achieve the developmental goals of the poor.

IV. To identify and document the strategies and processes required for the development of the poor on the self-reliant and sustainable basis.

THE METHOD OF STUDY

The study is a participatory action research adopting participatory methodology which involves generation of critical consciousness, mobilisation and organisation, analysis of social realities and seeking or searching alternative options for development, promotion of abilities and skills in social mobilisation, promotion of leadership skills, skills of conflict resolution, abilities for formulation, implementation, monitoring of microplans, mobilisation and management of resources, promotion
of positive changes in the attitudes and behaviour and to catalyse socio-cultural reforms and development.

UNIVERSE

The poor of the depressed section of Andhra Pradesh constitute the universe of the study.

SAMPLE

For a manageable action study, the study is limited to four habitats of the depressed communities viz., Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. The four habitats were selected on the basis of multi stage random sample. Accordingly, East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh, Prathipadu Revenue Mandal in East Godavari District and habitats of four revenue villages in Prathipadu Mandal were selected. The unit of the study was habitat. The period of action study was between the years 1988 to 1993.

To test the efficacy of participatory methodology, two entry programmes viz. Non-formal education and women's empowerment programmes and two sustainable development programmes viz., Land Reclamation and Housing for the Poor were carried out in the selected habitats. The Outreach International India, a voluntary organisation was made use of as
facilitating VOLGA and the researcher himself acted as facilitator to initiate and test the participatory process.

Following are the major findings and brief discussion of the efficacy of the participatory methodology in relation to the study objectives.

I. MOTIVATION AND MOBILISATION

To motivate and mobilise the rural poor the researcher made use of Non-formal education as an entry point. The Non-Formal education exercises enabled the people to come together and formed a basis for their self-mobilisation for social mobilisation. To carry out Non-Formal Education activities without any hindrance and with their own resources made them to mobilise themselves into COLLECTIVE SOCIAL ACTION GROUPS in the form of SANGHAMS. Thus once the social mobilisation took place, eventually, it led to situational analysis of their social realities, socio-economic developmental needs and the search for alternatives could begin.

The frequent meetings led to the exchange of experiences, ideas, fears and apprehensions and airing of their aspirations, desires and dreams which gradually dispelled their inertia, invoking determination and urge for empowerment. This was
furthered by the discussions in the NON-FORMAL EDUCATION exercises by imparting critical consciousness.

The exercise of ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT of women enabled the communities under study to participate in the participatory development process. The exercise carried out by the women by forming into action groups, (social mobilisation/Sanghams) enabled them to gain communication and leadership skills, skills of situational analysis, search for alternative opportunities, abilities of conflict resolution, resources mobilisation and management and finally achieving the goal of economic empowerment through milch cattle and dairy programme in a sustainable manner. This achievement made all the communities under reference to realise and believe in the significance and the efficacy of the Participatory Methodology.

Further, the success of the women’s empowerment through participatory process led to the changes in their perceptions and attitudes from resignation and inertia to confidence in self-reliance, self-determination and in their abilities to achieve welfare and developmental needs.

The further efforts of the Men’s Sanghams in achieving their welfare and development needs such as land reclamation and housing for the poor establishes that participatory methodology is
effective, reproducible and sustainable. These participatory efforts have helped the depressed sections in their own social mobilisation and enabled them to identify their own socio-economic developmental needs and inculcated a positive change in their perceptions and attitudes about self-reliance and self determination in the matters of their own development and welfare.

The participatory development exercises such as women’s Economic Empowerment, Land Reclamation and Housing for the poor, facilitated by the researcher resulted in the empowerment of the depressed groups under reference, in identifying their problems, search for alternatives, gain communication and leadership skills, abilities of conflict resolution, resource mobilisation and management, thereby gaining empowerment so as to negotiate with others for their rights and rightful needs.

II FACTORS AND PROBLEMS

The participatory exercises facilitated by the researcher revealed the following factors and problems in motivating and mobilising the people:

- the first and foremost problem encountered was rigid and closed culture of the depressed group on account of
centuries long oppression and denial of their rights. This is manifested in inertia, lack of self-confidence and determination and alienation in the participation of government welfare programmes.

- The social problem relates to existing social barriers of stratification and lack of social empathy on part of bureaucracy, people’s representatives and others in general.

The local petty issues which are politicised, apprehension of status deprivation by the local politicians, inter and intra-political party rivalries, factional feuds, radical ideologies are some of the factors that intervene and influence the participatory development process and if not resolved can become insurmountable barriers. Dire poverty and below subsistence existence, unemployment are the major economic problems.

For example, the problems caused by the ex-Munsiff in housing the poor at Madiga palem of Uttarakanchi, the presence and fear of naxalites, the callous delay caused by the bureaucracy in tracing the official documents, the lukewarm responses on part of the people’s representatives during early efforts, the plea by the beneficiaries for subsistence assistance and part financial support
from Outreach International reflect the above mentioned problems.

III STRATEGIES AND PROCESSES INITIATED

The researcher had adopted Participatory Methodology for achieving developmental goals for the poor. For this purpose he made use of a voluntary organisation which believes in social mobilisation of the people for achieving welfare and developmental needs. The researcher facilitated and adopted participatory process resulting in social mobilisation as a strategy for neutralising the negative forces and empowerment process for harnessing positive forces.

Formation of Sangham is an example of social mobilisation and collective actions taken up by the Sangham is an instance of empowerment of depressed groups. The apprehension on the part of the poor to take up bold ventures, becoming defaulters by falling prey to middlemen and temptations, social resistance in the form of delay and many such other negative factors and forces have been neutralised by the collective effort of the Sangham. In other words social mobilisation enables the people to face such constraints.
The empowerment of the people on account of Sangham and its collective action empowered the depressed groups, enabling them to resolve conflicting situations amicably in their favour and brought out the hidden positive strengths of these neglected people. Persuading the ex-Munsiff to donate land for house sites, people's representative to sanction housing programmes and controlling the erring members, working for a common goal collectively sacrificing individual interests, are some of the examples for harnessing positive forces.
CONCLUSIONS

Based on the experiences and the findings of the present study, the following broad conclusions are drawn that are applicable to similar such other situations.

The first conclusion is that in meeting the developmental and welfare needs of the rural poor the best suited method is Participatory Methodology. The Participatory Methodology enables the people to come together and analyse the problems, challenges and resources, alternative solutions and strategies for realising the developmental goals.

The second conclusion is that the Participatory Methodology can also be an instrument of self-destruction if it is facilitated by negative forces. In exercising Participatory Methodology the facilitators need to be extremely patient and persuasive. The Participatory Methodology in other words is a slow, enduring labourious but sustainable process. Sensitization, articulation, motivation, timely interventions are must and be ensured continuously.

The third conclusion is that the participatory method is reproducible in meeting out the needs of the people in different
situations with suitable adaptations and modifications. It is essentially a part of Bottom-up approach initiated by intervening agencies.

Finally based on the experience of the researcher and results of the action programme it can be said that VOLGAS have a pivotal role in the promotion of Rural Development. Their role is more of a catalyst, facilitating agency and that of intervening agency for critical inputs. It must not be mistaken that voluntary agency can shoulder the total responsibility of ushering rural development. On the other hand VOLGAS and Government Organisations have to work in a complimentary role where the government agencies play the role of policy making, implementation of the policy by way of providing infrastructure, finding and auxiliary support. The Volgas on their part strike a balance between the people and the Government agencies, at times, including people's representatives.