

**MODALITIES OF POPULAR PARTICIPATION
IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED
AFRICAN COUNTRIES: THE CASES OF
GHANA AND TANZANIA**

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

12 MAR 1990

LIBRARY
ADDIS ABABA



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
1989**

UN
630(667:678
.2)
M6895 c. 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | <u>Pages</u> | <u>Paragraphs</u> |
|---------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 | 1 - 4 |
| I. GHANA | 2 - 12 | 5 - 43 |
| II. TANZANIA | 13 - 17 | 44 - 63 |
| III. LESSONS LEARNT | 18 - 20 | 64 - 72 |
| FOOTNOTES | 21 | |

MODALITIES OF POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN
SELECTED COUNTRIES: THE CASES OF GHANA AND TANZANIA

Introduction

1. The ECA-sponsored Regional Conference on the Integrated Approach to Rural Development, 1969 1/ was the pioneer in the advocacy of the concept of integrated rural development, with equity and people's participation. The conference anticipated the famous Nairobi speech of McNamara (1973), ILO's World Employment Conference with its basic need approach (1974) and FAO's World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD), 1979, which obtained a global consensus in favour of poverty-alleviation oriented rural development, with growth as its economic base.
2. The report of the WCARRD categorically declares, inter alia, "Participation by the people in the institutions and systems which govern their lives is a basic human right and also essential for realignment of political power in favour of disadvantaged groups and for social and economic development. Rural development strategies can realize their full potential only through the motivation, active involvement and organization at the grass-roots level of rural people with special emphasis on the least advantaged..." 2/.
3. The adoption of either a report or a concept by global consensus, although satisfying by itself, is meaningful in real life only when the required follow-up actions are taken even if in phases. The purpose of this empirical study is, therefore, to present the findings of the two case studies of popular participation in practice from Ghana and Tanzania. The concept itself will be covered in this paper only to the extent necessary in the context of this object since the concept has been discussed in another recent ECA publication 3/ besides in many others.
4. The study is divided into three parts. The experience of Ghana is given in Part I and that of Tanzania in Part II. These experiences were derived at micro level. Part III tries to bring out the commonality and contrasts in rural development, with people's participation in these countries and draw some lessons from them for future guidance.

PART I: GHANA 4/

Background

5. Ghana continues to be a rural economy, with agriculture as its predominant sector despite three decades of efforts for economic growth since independence in 1957. The country suffers from a pervasive dualism both in production organization and consumption patterns with its associated poverty for the majority. In both urban and rural sectors, a large labour labour-intensive sub-sector exists side by side with a small capital-intensive sub-sector with hardly any linkages between them. The urban sub-sector has a demand structure, which is mostly met by imported goods while the rural sector, which largely pays for the imports, generally survives on its own production.

6. In the rural sector the pattern of resource distribution, specially land, which in principle implies equitable access to productive assets, in reality indicates inequity in access to resources and income-generating opportunities. The over-all Gini coefficient is 0.64, which is very high by African standard and points to serious disparity in Ghana. Poverty has been worsening in the rural areas, which implies most of the rural population have not been participating in the nation's socio-economic development.

People's Participation (1950-1980)

7. The need for people's participation has been implicitly emphasized in Ghana in all its development plans since 1950, which varied in length, comprehensiveness, ideological bias, strategies and other characteristics. Some of them adopted the social amenities approach, others, the sectoral approach, and yet others, the regional approach besides others. The two settlement farming schemes, rural banking and the pre-co-operative promotion scheme were illustrative of these approaches in Ghana.

8. These were intended to benefit the farmers and the rural poor. Their thrust had been to improve access to resources through improved delivery of services and inputs, transfer of technology, infrastructural improvement, extension etc. to raise rural productivity and income. But, the participatory processes involving intended project beneficiaries (participants) were explicitly spelled out and institutionalized. No project, therefore, understandably had a monitoring and evaluation system involving the beneficiaries.

9. Thus, the critical elements of what kind of participation, who participates in a project and how could not generally be specified until 1979. In fact, the concept of popular participation in rural development as it is understood today, was developed and endorsed only in 1979 by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD), which was organized by FAO and held in Rome.

10. To initiate the development process, with equity, FAO started the WCARRD follow-up programme, entitled "People's Participation in Rural Development through the Promotion of Self-Help Organization" (hereafter referred to as PPP in short). The PPP was started in Ghana, with external technical and financial assistance, in 1983 initially for three years but was extended in 1987 for another three years. The project covered two areas 290 km apart in two districts: Begoro (Eastern Region) and Wenchi (Brong-Ahafo Region).

Objectives of PPP

11. The objectives of the project were in brief to:

- i) convince the rural poor that they themselves can solve their developmental problems through group self-help action if guided by certain principles;
- ii) demonstrate to Government and others the potential scope of maximising the effectiveness of their services to the rural poor through the latter's own groups; and
- iii) promote the acceptance, adoption and replication of this strategy by both the poor and the services agencies in their wider rural development efforts.

The aims of the project were, thus, institutional, economic, social and methodological. It aimed at supporting the employment and income raising activities of local people's self-help organizations at the village level in order to improve the economic and social conditions of their members, promoting people's self-help capabilities through their own organizations and stimulating linkages with existing national and local rural servicing agencies.

Key-elements of the PPP strategy

12. The key elements of the PPP strategy were the following:

- i) focus on the rural poor;
- ii) formation of small homogenous groups;
- iii) concentration on income generating activities,
- iv) training and use of resident group promoters (GPs);
- v) involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- vi) introduction of group savings;
- vii) establishment of a guarantee-cum-risk fund;
- viii) provision of group credit with collective liability;
- ix) participatory monitoring and on-going evaluation (PMOE); and
- x) establishment of effective linking mechanisms at the inter-group, local and national levels.

Expected Results of the Project

13. In the first phase, the following, besides others, were expected to be the results of the project:

- i) One hundred twenty groups were to be formed, each consisting of eight to fifteen members. The total number of members was expected to be 14,400 from 2,400 households of an average of six persons each. In each group, unspecified number of women were to be included. These groups would then form into several inter-group associations, with common interest. They were expected to be involved in making any decision affecting them and undertake joint social activity to benefit the community;
- ii) These groups were to have adequate and equitable access to inputs and services due to:
 - (a) increased effectiveness of concerned Government agencies in providing support to rural development; and
 - (b) guarantee-cum-risk fund with bank for group loans and investment;
- iii) Given (i) and (ii) above, the groups were expected to undertake joint production on a relatively small scale for increased food production, its marketable surplus, diversification of agriculture and for establishing cottage industry;
- iv) (iii) above, in turn, was intended to raise the personal income of the members. The increased income should result in savings, self-reliance and growing capacity in self-management so that the groups become independent of outside support and leadership. The groups would thus internalise and institutionalize the gains and sustain them after the project period is over and external assistance-financial and technical-phased out;
- v) Participatory monitoring and on-going evaluation (PMOE) was to be introduced to assess the performance of the project; and
- vi) It would be replicated in other areas.

14. The project was extended into a second phase to allow time to consolidate the progress made under the first phase and to implement project components, which were not started or not significantly advanced under Phase I. Thus, (a) the PMOE system was hoped to become fully operational and (b) the number of self-help groups raised to 250 in the second phase. And some refinements were added too. For example, measurable indicators and means of evaluation were suggested, whenever possible, for the expected outputs. Thus, the anticipated percentage increases in food production and income etc. were specified (increases of 20 percent were expected).

Implementation Arrangements

15. The actual implementation of the project was entrusted to two non-governmental organizations (NGOs), viz, the Sunyani Diocesan Development Committee of the National Catholic Secretariat for Wenchi area and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana for Begoro area. The co-ordination and technical back-stopping of the project were carried out by a national Project Review Committee (NPRC). NGOs and FAO were represented in this Committee. The other main governmental institutions involved in the project were the Ministry of Rural Development, Co-operatives and Local Government, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and Ministry of Agriculture.

16. At the field level, project staff in each area consisted of a number of group promoters (GPs), who worked under a project Co-ordinator (PC). The latter reported to a local Project Implementation Committee, which in turn was responsible to NPRC. Project staff in each area consisted of six GPs and one PC.

Establishment of PPP: Field Action

17. Setting up PPP itself involved participatory processes, although it necessarily also involved intervention by those who were officially responsible for implementation and funding of the project. PPP, like any other project, could not be established overnight. It had to start in selected areas with small unit-groups engaged in simple activities and spread over time into a network of groupings with a variety of activities over a wider area.

18. The formation of groups required group promoters. The spread of activities needed co-ordinating structures. The planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities were to be done by participants themselves with the aid of field workers (or other external agents) if necessary. Procedures suggested for action to secure participation of the rural poor in their development by the PPP approach included the following:

- (a) selection of pilot areas;
- (b) recruitment and training of GPs;
- (c) formation of small groups of the rural poor (after survey, etc);
- (d) selection of group production activities;
- (e) establishment of administrative and co-ordinating structures;
- (f) adjusting the delivery system (linking delivery and receiving (group) mechanisms); and
- (g) establishing participatory monitoring and evaluation system.

19. The rationale of intervention was to create enabling conditions for the rural poor to participate in development by linking them (through their organizations) with the delivery system (inputs, services, technology, credit sources) so that the former became more acquisitive and the latter more responsive.

20. The process of selection of beneficiaries began with the identification and selection of villages and village-clusters. A set of criteria based on distance, road quality, population size, infrastructure and services and the economic potential of the village/cluster-village was used.

21. Using a team approach, GPs carried out field visits to the cluster centres where they identified local leaders/linkmen with whom they discussed the project and its objectives and who later introduced them to the village chiefs and other leaders. The latter then called a general meeting of the community who were briefed about the project. Villagers were encouraged to form groups by themselves, after which socio-economic surveys using questionnaires were carried out by GPs among members of the self-formed groups. Those with high socio-economic status were considered not qualified to participate. Potential participants were ranked according to family size, household employment pattern, household income and expenditure pattern, structure of family indebtedness, access to credit, family nutritional intake, land-holding and tenure characteristics, access to improved inputs, etc.

22. The results of the socio-economic surveys were then discussed with the self-formed groups. Selected individuals were encouraged to meet, identify with whom they wanted to work, and select income-generating activities through discussion. After this the GPs met with the self-formed groups for the election of group leaders and executives.

23. Thus, from the outset, the processes of group formation and identification of group activity were participatory - they involved the local people themselves. Other interventions made to enhance their participation in development included:

- (a) formation of links with various agencies for delivery of inputs and services (e.g. banks for credit);
- (b) promotion of group savings for capital;
- (c) use of training workshops for extension of new ideas; and
- (d) design and introduction of a PMOE system.

Evaluation of Performance

24. The performance of the project is noted below in the same order in which the expected results were stated earlier in the paper.

Group Formation

25. One hundred eighty seven groups, with an average of about fifteen members each and two inter-group associations, primarily around crop production were formed. The occupation of 89 per cent of them was crop farming. The total number of beneficiaries of the project stood at 11,800 persons or 2,622 households as against 14,400 or 2,400 households which were envisaged in the plan of operation of the project. The large number of groups, thus formed was an indicator of success. The most cited motivating factors for joining the groups were the possibilities of better access to credit, input supply and of eventual socio-economic improvement. The majority of the members joined the groups due to promotional work of the group promoters, group leaders and others.

26. The groups were given training in the form of non-formal adult education, based on presentations, discussions and on the experience of group members themselves. The groups were thus generally involved in the issues of their concern although they felt their participation in identification of their needs could be more.

27. However, contrary to the project's aim to increase the participation of women in development, the membership of women in groups was only 4 to 5 per cent while the promotion of women group leaders was even less - only 2 per cent. Moreover, the process of the formation of the groups was slow. Over 30 per cent of them in the Wenchí area was less than two years old.

Access to Services and Inputs

28. The need for credit, which is one of the critical factors in the development process, was met only modestly. Some 60 per cent of the groups were beneficiaries. However, demand exceeded savings deposit growth, suggesting limited progress towards financial self-reliance although an increasing number of groups opened group accounts with the Ghana Commercial Bank to gradually build up capital. The major source for other input supply was the project. The supplies were irregular and their prices higher than expected, but the distribution was considered fair.

Group Enterprises

29. Most of the groups were formed around joint production of cereal-maize, which is quite reasonable, given the fact that food is the most basic of all basic needs. The number of such groups is on the increase. The other joint activities included charcoal production, pito brewing, gari-making, fishing and community development. Group enterprise was also seen as a means of building up capital for investment, loan collateral and members' welfare. However, group socio-cultural activity was minimal which is rather surprising.

Increased Income and Self-reliance

30. Most members felt that they had made economic gains, increased their incomes and capacity to save and reduced their dependence on money lenders. The income distribution also seemed to have improved, leading to better confidence in group enterprise. Over 50 percent of the groups organized bulk purchase of farm inputs and thus saved in production costs for their members. Some pooled their labour to assist in weeding members' farms in rotation to reduce paid labour cost on private farms. However, the majority of the groups were not yet ready to be able to do without the help of the GPs.

Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation (PME)

31. Record keeping of group activities was gaining ground, especially in cases with group savings and credit. There was evidence that this was aiding group business management. The PME system, which was originally comprehensive was later simplified and introduced to a few groups for testing.

Problem Areas

32. It will be seen from the above that the project made progress in different directions. But, progress was not without problems. Some of them were:

- i) institutional linkages by which inputs, services and new knowledge were to be acquired were weak. For example, the extension services were only marginally better than before;
- ii) a good number of groups were either inactive or dormant for a variety of reasons such as infrequent visits by GPs due to inaccessibility of the group, non availability of credit and/or lack of group enterprise;
- iii) the rate of acquisition or adoption of new technology appeared limited or slow;
- iv) inadequate management system with which to evaluate the performance of project staff and groups.

Obstacles to Popular Participation

33. The concern to promote popular participation in rural development is based on the experience that there are obstacles to popular participation in the existing environment which leave sections of the population marginalized. These obstacles may be structural, cultural or operational. The most important instance of structural obstacle related to land tenure and participation in the Begoro area. In this area, a significant proportion of the farming population are immigrants or migrant farmers. As such, they do not belong to the land-owning group, the Akyem. They are tenants but have a locally acknowledged record of industrious farming. There is always some tension between them on account of that. In the initial stages of the project, when it appeared that they (the immigrants) would be the exclusive beneficiaries on the ground that they were "landless", there was some resentment among the local land-owners. This ominous development was defused by the inclusion of the local land-owners willing to participate according to project rules. But for this problem, a perennial one in that area, there are practically no reported cases of structural (class) obstacles. Indeed, in some groups of "mixed" backgrounds, the not-so-poor appear to be exerting a positive influence on others and on group performance. Perhaps PPP sounds modest and not militant or expropriative in aim, even if "empowerment" of the poor must imply some change in socio-economic relations. It must also be noted that popular participation is the declared aim of the political processes and economic reform under way; so that the current "ideology" of Ghana can be said to be supportive of PPP-type approaches.

34. Culturally, it is a familiar judgement that rural people have passive attitude of aid recipients who, by considering themselves powerless, perpetuate a top-down (master-client) relationship with their environment. This does sound harsh but is not altogether untrue. It is one of the problems PPP seeks to overcome through group action.

35. The examples cited above in the two categories could be considered as problems that development in general and the project in particular seek to address. Operational problems are not exactly the same; they arise from the project or in relation to it; they are acts of omission or commission by group actors which impede its implementation. The following are examples:

- lack of operational definition of poverty for identifying the "target" group initially created confusion and led to unintended departures in participant selection;
- there is still a dominant preference among project participants for individual production over group enterprise. The latter is becoming accepted but rather slowly and needs more promotional effort and guidance;
- project staff turnover and inactivity among some groups have hampered progress;
- it took a long time in the first phase to sign the contract for implementation with the NGOs. This delay created an uncertainty in various ways which affected project staff morale and performance;
- a related factor was the time it took to harmonize FAO and NGO procedures;
- the major service linkage formed for the participants was with the Ghana Commercial Bank for credit. Credit delivery was usually late and deemed inadequate, frustrating productive use; in other words, the service/input to be delivered needed critical study;
- other institutional linkages were weak; in particular public services (such as extension) were tardy.

An Overall Assessment

36. The focus of the project was the rural poor from the start who constituted the rural majority in Ghana. Before group formation by self-selection, they were to be identified through socio-economic household surveys. In practice, however, surveys notwithstanding the problem of operational definition arose in applying it, which continued to persist. Groups with members of different socio-economic circumstances were formed for various reasons: GPs were under pressure to meet target numbers; the pressure from apparently better-off villagers to participate was hard to resist when they were known to be "good" people.

37. The poverty criteria failed somewhat. Eventually, the operational definition of the poor adopted by and for the project was/is: "those households that are prepared to engage in collective self-help to improve their situation, to gain access to more means of production (e.g. capital) or to utilize better the means they presently have (e.g. land). Collective self-help is the key." On the whole, in spite of some heterogeneity, groups showed considerable harmony in their working relationship.

38. While this project was one with participation both as end and means to that end, it was also interventionist. The project beneficiaries thus had no opportunity to decide either the objectives or the priorities. These had been spelt out in the project document. Participation began with group formation and group production ("project") identification, credit application and recovery, etc.

39. However, the project objectives were relevant and realistic, given the resource situation in the areas covered by it. At the time of the introduction of the project, there were severe persistent and widespread shortages of all types of basic goods in the rural areas. The input supply system had virtually broken down; and access to such stocks as existed was constrained by transport difficulties, high prices and discriminatory trade practices. Only the better-off could obtain them. The project sought to show how the rural poor could improve access to goods and services. Initially, the project itself was a source of supply to the groups, thus making it popular and attractive. It became clear toward the end of the first phase that more time was needed for the learning processes and the various elements and mechanisms of the project strategy to take root. Hence the pilot phase was extended for another three years.

40. Participants were involved in project implementation in the following ways, among others: group formation (including processes leading to it and after); formation of various links (inter-group associations, input suppliers, etc); and commitment of their own resources (e.g. labour, cash and material) to group activities.

41. Involvement in evaluation was in the form of participation of selected group leaders and members (as representatives) at national evaluation workshops. When the PMOE, now being tested in a sample of groups, becomes operational, groups will have the opportunity to conduct self-analysis and self-evaluation on a continuing basis.

42. As the project is still in the pilot phase, it is not possible at this stage to anticipate its sustainability once the external assistance is phased out. At the end of Phase I, it was realized that the capabilities of groups to sustain themselves beyond the duration of the project had not been fully developed. Groups will become self-reliant and sustain themselves when their self-help capabilities are developed such that they can:

- (a) mobilize internal resources for their operations, and when necessary mobilize external resources to supplement their internal efforts;
- (b) manage their own affairs, plan together, and resolve their own differences;
- (c) procure services from supply sources; and
- (d) capable of undertaking self-analysis, self-evaluation and self-strengthening using appropriate information systems (e.g. PMOE).

43. The lessons that emerge from this case study and their implications for the promotion of participatory rural development are summarized below. Since this is a pilot project, the elements of its approach are focal points of experience.

- 1) Focus on the Small Homogeneous Rural Poor: Those who are best assisted to participate in development are not just the poor, but the poor (or people of limited resources) who are willing to engage in participatory processes. Small size of groups, say 10 to 15 members each, encourages participation and facilitates collective responsibility. Homogeneity fosters solidarity and stability. It can be attained by sex, kinship, age, location or other criteria relevant for the purpose of the group. Inter-group linkages, both horizontal and vertical, can be a means of strengthening primary groups through advantages of economies of scale.
- ii) Income-Generating Activities: Group enterprise can help build up group capital, raise group members' incomes (through resource pooling, cost reduction and improved terms of trade) and provide security. Experience shows that technical assistance is crucial in helping the poor identify alternative investment opportunities.
- iii) Group Promoters: Trained and motivated technicians who can identify with the poor are necessary as catalysts for the group approach to participatory development. GPs have demonstrated the possibilities of forging links with delivery system (even if the record is limited to credit) extension officers and promoters of co-operatives can follow. In time, their success in building group self-reliance may make them redundant.
- iv) Non-Governmental Organizations: A permanent leadership role of central government in local development is undesirable: it limits the growth of local initiative, autonomy and participation. NGO involvement helps to show the possibilities of initiative and responsibility sharing outside government structures. NGOs know the local people well and tend to operate at low cost. Of course, they suffer from limited access to technical information necessary for those they seek to help. To overcome this, there is need for collaboration between governments and NGOs.
- v) Group Savings and Credit: Group savings can help build up capital, improve access to credit and foster self-reliance. It has been demonstrated that group credit with group liability for payment reduces the need for collateral and enhances access to credit. The banks are also learning through feed-back about how best to deliver credit (and other services) - adequate size of loans, timeliness of delivery, flexibility in recovery, etc. The provision of Credit Guarantee Fund reassured the banks to serve the projects' target group but has had no impact on the beneficiaries themselves. A suggestion is that it could be coupled with the groups' savings to provide a secured revolving fund for participants.

- vi) Participatory Monitoring and On-Going Evaluation: The PMOE system is intended to involve groups to collect and analyse data on their activities and develop the capacity to strengthen their activities thereby. It has taken time, but slowly a simple information system with simple indicators has been worked out and introduced. Progress in using it would be a major gain in the task of building up group capacity for self-learning and self-reliance. It needs to be stressed that factors that help local people (e.g. farmers) to develop self-sustaining capabilities and become self-reliant are the means to authentic participatory development.

PART II: TANZANIA 1/

Background

44. Tanzania, soon after independence in 1961, showed enlightened appreciation of the need to develop its rural sector. It thus initially adopted both the "transformation approach" and the "improvement approach" simultaneously for rural development. The former one involved settling people in designated areas and taking care of their basic needs and social amenities by the Government. The latter required, again at the cost of Government, an out-reach programme of the extension services for the spatially scattered peasantry. Both the approaches, contrary to the expectations of the Government, mostly benefitted the already better-off and locally influential segment of the rural population. In fact, a trend of rural stratification in which the poor were getting poorer and the rich richer was developing. 2/

45. This was unacceptable to the ruling party of the country since it was politically committed to "prevent the exploitation of one person by another or one group by another" 3/ and facilitate the emergence of a classless society. The ruling party and the Government, therefore, decided to adopt socialism or Ujamaa and self-reliance as State principles as enunciated in the famous Arusha Declaration (AD) of 1967. It also emphasized the development of the country's rural sector.

Mareu Ujamaa Village

46. It is in this context that 19 families of the Mareu village of the Arusha region, under the enlightened leadership of a priest-cum-wealthy land owner of the area, decided to form themselves into an Ujamaa village in 1971. The immediate motivating factor for the villagers was the memory of the 1960's endemic famines and for their leader the realization "... the word of God is not well received by hungry people. They need food first..." 4/

47. These families decided to live together, pool their separate farms together, introduce co-operative farming and marketing and equitably distribute income. They also agreed to start other non-farm activities, such as small scale industries, distribution centres and shops. These decisions were collectively taken. Homogeneity of their interests and aspirations for better life were largely based on the bitter memory of famine of the sixties and the prospect of shared prosperity in future. Being only 19 families, they knew each other well, developed mutual confidence and cohesion. Hence, their participation in the decision-making process and in follow-up actions was authentic.

48. This initiative on the part of the Mareu villagers needs to be seen in the light of the overall national approach to development. Having opted for Ujamaa, Tanzania decided to nationalize all land. The peasants/farmers were thus given users' rights only. The privately owned retail shops in rural areas were abolished and substituted by village shops. The old Co-operative Unions and local Government authorities, which were the preserve of the influential people, were also abolished in 1971 and 1976 respectively and replaced by village committees in a bid to re-empower the people.

49. But village committees and their general assemblies, besides being formal in procedures and too large in membership, are rather far away from some clusters of families living together. The informality and intimacy with which such families can get together to discuss their common problems and matters of mutual interest and arrive at consensus get eroded in a village Assembly of some hundreds. Hence, participation at sub- or mini-village level, is expected to be more authentic and decisions arrived at in such a process more binding. In Mareu there are sub-village structures of 11 people each, with common interests. These people choose their leaders, meet frequently to discuss with them their problems and later air them in the village council.

50. The process of raising awareness of their potential collective power is further facilitated by the linkage of the Mareu village with the reorganized co-operative structure at district, regional and national levels. While ideology gives them direction, democratic organization at sub-village and village levels helps them draw up their priorities and programme of work on the basis of consensus. The initial home-work for reaching a consensus is done by groups of eleven people. The groups then meet as an Assembly and elect a village council, with several subject-matters, sub-committees. Ideas of each group are placed before the village Council/Assembly in their weekly meetings.

51. The Mareu Ujamaa village, and all others, are registered co-operative societies in Tanzania. But, unlike others, it has been able to keep to its objectives due to the very high literacy rate of the members. Education released them from the culture of silence and passivity. Part of the education is political, more specifically in the principles of socialism, which is given by party cadres at district, regional and national levels.

52. People's power, to be sustained, needs, besides organization and leadership, an economic base. Tanzania, therefore, decreed "national pricing policies and taxation policies must be designed to ensure the retention of rural surplus in rural areas." ^{5/} The old agricultural marketing system dissolved and was replaced by Crop Authorities. They were unfortunately given monopoly power and consequently had adverse, although unanticipated, consequences on the well-being of the farmers.

53. With ideological conviction, education and appropriate organization, in 1971 the Mareu Ujamaa villagers started their communal life and collective activities with co-operative farming, keeping to themselves small private plots around their houses as kitchen gardens. The manual work of weeding, harvesting, weighing, packaging, loading and unloading was jointly done by family labour until 1976/1977. There was a change in top leadership in that year, who did not exactly share the vision of the founder-leader (i.e. the priest-cum-wealthy land owner). While the mechanized activities continued to remain socialized, the manual work was privatized. Thus after land was prepared and sown, each member was given an equal amount of land for weeding and harvesting, which indirectly encouraged the propensity of private gain. However, this arrangement was reversed and the original one restored, with the consent of the villagers, after the founder-leader was voted back to leadership; since the latter was found to be more efficient.

54. The villagers of Mareu moved gradually towards prosperity and self-reliance by extending their acreage under cultivation. The area increased from 248 acres in 1971/72 to 620 in 1974/75. They mechanized ploughing and sowing but carried out other activities manually. They also built a rural infrastructure by shared labour. Their first tractor was bought on credit in 1972/73 but the second one with cash in 1973/74. Similarly, the building materials for office building, poultry sheds, dairy cattle shed, dairy cows and storage were bought with the Development Fund of the village. To further promote self-reliance, the village established a saving scheme in 1985/86. The members of the scheme were paid their sales proceeds by credits in their savings passbook - which was another step towards the self-reliant process of their development.

55. The surplus of income over expenditure was allocated, in order of priority, to the following:

- i) Village Development Fund;
- ii) Social Security benefits for the elderly;
- iii) Emergency Fund to help the members during natural calamity; and
- iv) The balance was utilised for payment for participation in communal work. The payment was made according to the work points and nature of work.

This arrangement continued until 1976. In 1976 the group system of work was partially modified as noted earlier. Similarly, only 50 per cent of the output was given to the Ujamaa account and the balance retained by the individual members.

Problems Faced by the Mareu Ujamaa Village

56. The very basis of the original 19 families of Mareu for getting together was communal users' right of the land pooled together. This right proved to be shaky since it ran counter to customary land tenure despite the political proclamation nationalising all land. These families did not get legal title deeds of the land they cultivated to the exclusion of others until 1988. The receipt of the title deed did not, however, correct another technical problem. The problem was that, according to the constitution of the Mareu Ujamaa village, the membership of the village was exclusively reserved for those, who originally cleared and pooled land together. The question of inheritance of this right by their children was not anticipated. Similarly, the landless members remained excluded from this privilege. These technical issues did not create any problem initially when the enthusiasm was high, the number of landless members nominal, land-man ratio in the area, was not too adverse and the village experienced economic prosperity due to fast expansion of farm and off-farm activities.

57. The situation changed over the years. The population increased, reducing per capita availability of land. Job opportunities declined as some of the economic ventures failed. Some of the original members died, leaving their children technically without any right to communally held land. The number of the landless increased. The egalitarian spirit suffered in the face of these new realities and a propensity developed to oblige the landless members to leave the village.

58. The other problem this village faced was that there was no structural provision to federate all Ujamaa villages, which were scattered all over the country. A secondary level of Ujamaa village would have brought their representatives together who would be capable of establishing contacts with the central decision-making authorities. Instead it had to suffer membership of the conservative co-operative union, with divergent interest until 1976 when the non-Ujamaa co-operative system was dissolved.

59. But dissolution of the system and its substitution by the Crop Authorities did not solve the problem of representation in the hierarchy of power. No villager could become a member of the crop authorities. They were expected to establish their own farms in competition with the villagers. Thus, in the distribution of farm inputs the villagers got low priority and had to be satisfied with the residual amount. The initial economic activity of the Mareu villagers was farming. However, the village, over the years, gained in membership, acreage of land and expanded its activities to off-farm as well. The number of people employed rose to 220. To manage this expansion in membership, land holdings and economic activities it did not have trained managerial skill. Hence, it suffered some loss and had to close down a few non-farm ventures. In fact, it possibly reached a point of diminishing return with the given management.

60. It has been suggested that, with competent management, it is possible to re-start the off-farm activities. Pigs are in strong demand in the very village and the neighbouring region, Kilimanjaro. As the members of the village are Christian, they have no restrictions on handling pigs or eating pork, which opens up the possibility of raising pigs for marketing. Furthermore, the village has milling machines. It could sell semba (maize flour) instead of selling maize grains. The by-product of maize milling could then be used to feed pigs.

An Overall Assessment

61. Mareu Ujamaa village shows that the poor peasants, if given an opportunity, dedicated leadership and support, are capable of taking initiative, resolving their problems and overcoming absolute poverty. In 1971, 19 families decided to live and work together for shared benefit. They jointly cleared 248 acres and consolidated them into one bloc in that year. The acres increased to 620 in 1974/75. The number of families grew to 110 in 1988. They relied on their own resources and made progress largely on their own steam despite the difficulties of the mid-seventies.

62. Mareu and other Ujamaa villages could have done better if the Government policy and support from the officials at various levels were consistent. To illustrate the point: the concept of Ujamaa was not a shared ideology specially at the village level. Some were its adherents and others opposed to it. Both were free to exercise their judgement and option. But the co-operative structure of the country was dominated by those, who did not subscribe to the Ujamaa concept. The Ujamaa villages were scattered all over the country and were in a minority and that also a spatially divided minority. Hence, they could not have a federation of Ujamaa villages and an unified vocal lobby specially at the national level to be advocates of their interest and concern.

63. If one talks of re-empowering the people then there must be ways and means of ensuring that the decisions of the people reach the seat of power. Emphasizing the point, the architect of the Ujamaa concept himself said, inter alia, people "must mount effective pressure nationally ..." He also advocated "... if the people are to be able to develop they must have power... At every stage of development people do know what their basic needs are ... if they have sufficient freedom they can be relied upon to determine their priorities of development and then to work for them...." 6/

PART III: LESSONS LEARNT

64. WCARRD, 1979 proclaimed, by consensus of 145 national delegations, besides others, that participation was a basic human right. The proclamation was subsequently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and endorsed by ECOSOC and the governing bodies of other UN agencies. It was later incorporated in FAO's Peasants' Charter of 1981. A proclamation could be a statement of fact - *de jure* recognition of a *de facto* reality or of practice or of logical culmination of a process in progression. Or, it could be a formal statement of intent.

65. The 145 nations, including 48 of the African regions were sovereign independent states. The citizens of these states, irrespective of their occupation, income bracket, productive asset base, should then, by definition, be sovereign both in law and in practice. Their sovereignty would be reflecting aspiration of human beings for equality, fraternity and liberty for all. However, the reality was different even in the twentieth century. In the mercantile days of the late eighteenth century it was perfectly in order for a nation to be rich while the bulk of its citizens were poor. In fact, the poverty of most of the citizens was taken as a necessary condition for the affluence, military might and imperial and economic aspirations of the nations. Reflecting history the twentieth century witnessed another paradoxical situation in which a large number of nation states emerge as sovereign but their citizens continue to await the full enjoyment of the fruits of freedom including the right to participate at all levels of the decision-making process. One of the sad inevitable effects of this paradox was the marginalization of the increasing number of people, non-utilization of their dormant productive potential leading to their needless poverty and socio-economic stagnation of their nations.

66. A global consensus to correct the irony was needed since thought precedes action. And that is what WCARRD in 1979 did, leaving it to the nation states to take the initiative to bridge the gap between national sovereignty and individual freedom from besides others, hunger and want. Such initiative should have, under ideal conditions, started at national level by sweeping away and dismantling all forms of barriers - structural and otherwise - to enable all to feel free and participate in adding substantive and material contents to national freedom. However life is not only norms. It is a continuing exercise in adjustment between norms and reality.

67. And reality prevailed in Ghana and Tanzania besides many other countries, despite the declaration that people's participation is a basic human right. These countries opted for the pragmatic path of getting used to exercise of rights, with accountability at micro level and in matters of immediate concern to people themselves. Africa continues to remain largely rural. Hence, the exercise was primarily initiated in the rural sector and in matters relating to development.

68. In Ghana the process of people's participation in rural development was re-initiated by FAO, as a part of its follow-up of the WCARRD, 1979, with financial assistance from a donor-country and collaboration of non-governmental organizations, besides others. The resident Group Promoters played a major role in organizing small groups of villagers, with a fair degree of common interest and concern and agreeable to mainly joint production of cereal. These groups gained better access to inputs, institutional credit and managed to increase their income and attain some degree of self-reliance but under close watch and guidance of the Group Promoters and other project functionaries.

69. In Tanzania Ujamaa (socialism) was a state policy. Land, the most important factor in production, was nationalised, administration decentralized and village co-operatives established (later substituted by Rural Production Co-operatives) to ensure socio-economic development, with equity and people's participation. It is this national policy and spirit, which encouraged the villagers of Mareu to voluntarily and spontaneously decide in favour of communal life and joint production, under the inspired leadership of a local wealthy farmer-cum-clergy. The villagers made considerable progress mostly on their own steam, reached a plateau of communal spirit and shared prosperity and then levelled off indicating the need for higher level of technical competence, better management, education and sustained commitment in the face of increasing demand on their resources (specially land) and income by growing population in the neighbourhood, who were not direct descendants of the founding members.

70. It will thus be seen the common factor in all these two country exercises is their limited scope and level. The scope was limited to rural development and level to micro. Besides this commonality, the countries followed their own path. The villagers of Mareu in Tanzania spontaneously got together to form the Ujamaa village. The WCARRD, 1979 follow-up actions in Ghana were the major explanatory factors leading to the formation of groups by the residents of Bogoro and Wenchi rural areas in Ghana. These two cases show the great diversity of mechanism, which was adopted to facilitate participatory rural development. The initiative in the case of Mareu Ujamaa village of Tanzania was taken by the villagers and settlers themselves respectively. The initiative in cases of Ghana rested with the Government-appointed Group Promoters. The former case could, therefore, be taken as spontaneous form of participation and the latter induced. And there is quite a difference between the two forms when it comes to success and sustainability of the process of rural development.

71. The concept of "people's participation", being normative, will continue to be discussed. Being normative, it is also a moving par: its understanding and application move from a given level of sophistication to a higher level as people's potential capability to self-govern and self-develop unfolds and graduates from one stage to another. The possibility of such development is infinite.

72. Meanwhile the cases of Mareu Ujamaa village and of rural areas of Bogoro and Wenchi rural areas in Ghana suggest that if:

- i) there is a widely shared understanding of the concepts;
- ii) there is homogeneity of interests and enlightened leadership;
- iii) there is organizational arrangement for active involvement at all stages;
- iv) political pronouncement is backed by legal cover;
- v) activity to be undertaken reflects felt needs and is within the managerial competence of the target group of the rural population;
- vi) factors external to the proposed activities and to the target group of the rural population are favourable; and
- vii) the incremental benefits are equitably shared;

then the probability is that the people themselves will take initiative for their development.

FOOTNOTES

Part I

- 1/ The conference was held at the Co-operative College, Moshi, Tanzania from 13 to 24 October 1969.
- 2/ FAO, Report of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Rome, July 1979, p.8.
- 3/ ECA, Modalities of Popular Participation in Rural Development in Selected African Countries (ECA/SDA/IRD/88/1.1.(11)(a)), Addis Ababa, 1988, pp 1-7.
- 4/ The basis of this part of the paper is Dr. J.A. Dadson's paper, Modalities of Popular Participation in Rural Development in Ghana, November, 1988 (unpublished cyclostyled paper).

Part II

- 1/ The basis of this part of the paper, unless otherwise indicated, is Mr. T.J. Mahuwi's draft paper, Modalities of Popular Participation in Rural Development in Tanzania, Mareu Ujemba village, Moshi, Tanzania, September 1988.
- 2/ Ibid, p.1
- 3/ Ibid, p.1
- 4/ Ibid, p.2
- 5/ Ibid, p.2
- 6/ As quoted in FAO, Report of the High Level WCARRD Follow-up Mission: United Republic of Tanzania, 16-29 September 1981, FAO, Rome, 1981, p.1.