

Conceptual Framework for Analyzing People's Participation in Development

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Abstract:

Intention of this study is analyzes the people's participation in development at the grassroots level. This study also attempts to examine why people's participation is more important than the government's 'top-down' development approach and why the NGOs have been playing more vital roles in development programs at the grassroots level. After the World War II, many development programs have been implemented worldwide by the United Nations, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, international development institutions, and also by the industrialized developed countries to improve socioeconomic condition in the developing countries. After seven development decades, the World today is richer than it was in 1950. But still in most of the developing countries a substantial portion of the population are living under the poverty line, and cannot meet even their Basic Human Needs. The major factor is that the 'top-down' development approaches bypass the poorest of the poor who are left out of the mainstream of the development process. People's participation in development means beneficiaries' involvement in all stages in the process of development, which includes decision-making, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and management of their own development programs. The participation of the beneficiaries is an important factor, because the community people are the key element to authentic analysis of the reality of their own social problems and the means of solving them. People's participation is a process that improves the overall socioeconomic condition of the poorest of the poor at the grassroots level. This study is also very much concerned with people's participation in development and the role of NGOs at the grassroots level in developing countries. Throughout the analyzing of people's participation in this study, try to focus an effort on the concept of people's participation, development approaches, and NGOs that emerged as major actor on the international development scene after the World War II, and in particular since 1980s.

<keywords>

Participatory Development, Top-down and Bottom-up Development Approaches, NGOs

1. The Concept of People's Participation

People's Participation in development means beneficiaries' involvement in all stages in the process of development which includes decision-making, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and management of the development programs. The participation of the beneficiaries is an important factor, because the community people are the key

element to authentic analysis of the reality of their social problems and the means of solving them. 'The words 'participation' and 'participatory' appeared for the first time in the development jargon during the late 1950s. The social activist and field workers who had joined the development bandwagon in the hope that they could help the oppressed.¹ People's participation is a concept that is 'sine qua non' for the development programs at the grassroots level. Participation is a process that improves the economic, social, cultural and political situation of the poorest of the poor at the grassroots level. Participation is not a new term. Since the 1950s, it has been used as a process for development programs. After a couple decades this concept is still popular among the development professionals in developing countries.

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) showed that 'the central issue of people's participation has to do with power exercised by some people over other people. Participation in this sense is not about how and where to begin, about intermediate and long term goals, about organization and continuing open-ended process, and as the most current jargon has it, empowering people.² The process for self-reliance will help to promote an equitable and participatory pattern of development through encouragement of autonomous democratic and self-reliant organization of the poor. 'A participatory process implies that in achieving these relatively limited tasks, the people would acquire greater technical expertise, building on their own knowledge and an associated scientific awareness of their economic, political and physical environment.'³ It is widely recognized that the strengthening of the power of the poor and the deprived through their own organization is the best guarantee for an equitable development pattern at the grassroots level.

2. Necessity of People's Participation in Resources Management

People's participation is necessary in resources management for the sustainability of management system. In the participatory management the beneficiaries can take part in all stages of the management system, such as decision-making, implementation, monitoring, conducive to learning to the requirements of the program and performance evaluation of the development activities. Many governments have now begun to recognize this reality; irrigation policies both in Nepal and Sri Lanka, for example, farmers' active participation as the foundation stone of irrigation development. In Laos, financial, institutional and equipment constraints have convinced the government of the necessity of developing small scale irrigation schemes with the participation of local farmers. Beneficiaries' participation in management systems undoubtedly provided a new model in the Brantas river basin of Indonesia. The willingness of the people's participation with financial contribution or physical labor is necessary for a resource management system to make it happen. However, through the active participation of the people in their

¹ Wolfgang Sachs, 'The Development Dictionary' Zed Books, London, 1993, p. 117

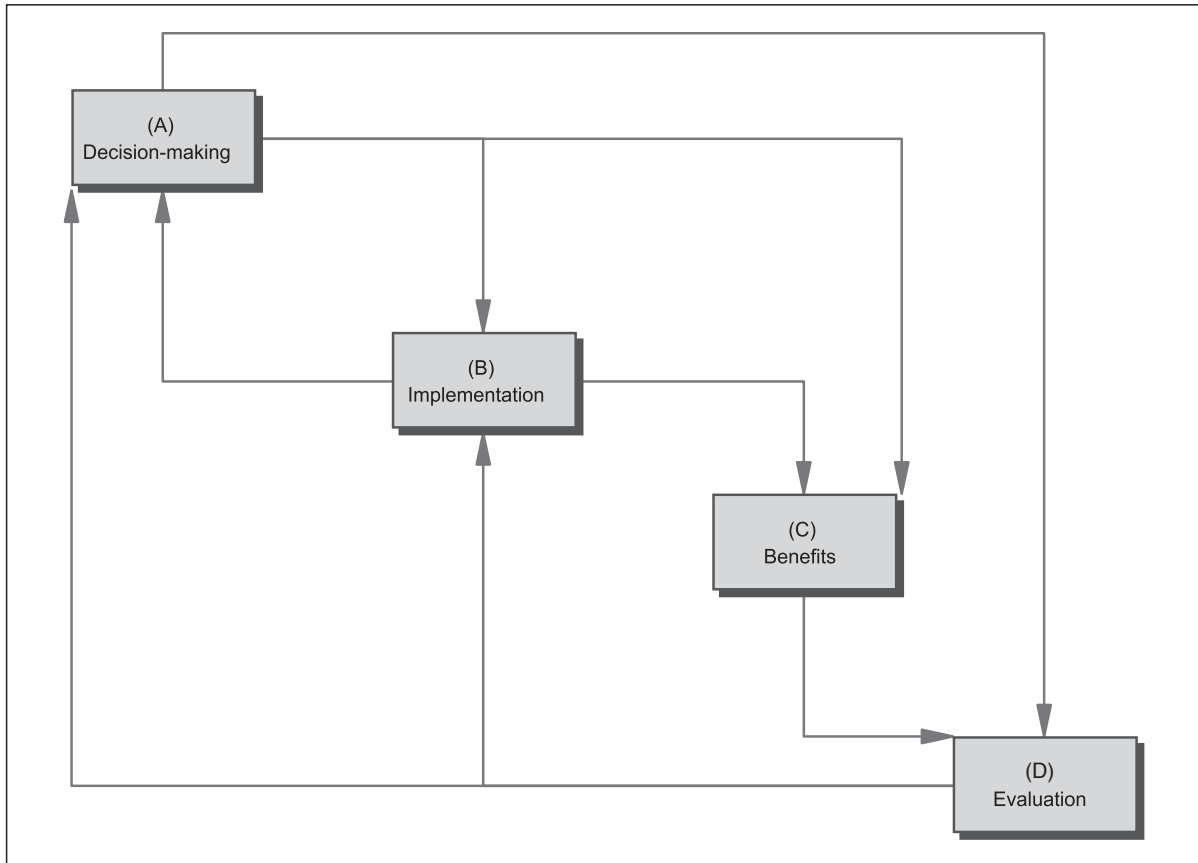
² Hasnat A Hye, 'Community Participation' BARD, Bangladesh, 1990, p. 2

³ Ponna Wignaraja. 'Towards Praxis and Participatory Development-in Participatory Development: Learning from South Asia' United Nations University, Tokyo, 1991, p. 200

own development and resource management would be enormous for achieving their goal at the grassroots level.

In the literature on participation, the following conceptual framework is generally used: (a) participation in decision-making, (b) participation in implementation, (c) participation in benefits and (d) participation in evaluation.

Figure 1 Four Kinds of Participation



Source: Uphoff Norman. Feasibility and Application of Rural Development Participation. A State of the Art Paper, Cornell University Rural Development Committee. 1979, p. 219

‘Each discipline has its own ideas for conceptualizing participation. For the political scientist, participation in decision-making is regarded as the prime criteria for assessing the extent of participation, whereas the economist views participation in economic benefits as the sole criterion.’⁴ Participation of the beneficiaries in the project or in the program is a dynamic approach because beneficiaries’ experience leads to greater understanding, to increased capacity and awareness building. These experiences later help them to discover their own problems, decision-making powers, implementation as well as problem-solving capabilities. There are four kinds of participation in development activities at the grassroots level which is illustrated in (Figure 1). There are all equally important to organize a participatory process at the grassroots level for the development in the developing countries.

(a) Decision-making is the initiative stage of any program. In this early stage, many things are discussed regarding a program’s vision, mission and goals. Here, beneficiaries’ participation is an important factor because the

⁴ A C. Chowdhury, ‘Let Grassroots Speak’ University Press Limited’ Dhaka, 1990, p. 12

beneficiaries can play a vital role through their practical experiences in finding the authentic problems of their known society.

(b) Participation in implementation greatly helps by putting the beneficiaries first. Their active involvement ensures a good start and tends to stimulate the program. Since they are the ones who have a better knowledge of the authentic problem, there is a greater possibility of steering the program in the right direction to solving the problems.

(c) Among the four kinds of participation, participation in benefits is the most important factor. Because, benefits is the sole criterion for the target people of the development program. Once beneficiaries start receiving benefits from the project activities, their participation in the program becomes much stronger.

(d) Participation in evaluation is the last stage of the program. It has a direct relationship with the other three stages, particularly, decision-making. In this final stage, the beneficiaries' participation is rather important in evaluating all of their program's activities. The purpose of participation in evaluation is to improve the services for delivering them, and to link the evaluation process closely to decision-making.

‘The Participatory approach to development has now covered almost every sphere of socioeconomic development. Many national and international agencies associated with development are pursuing this concept. The most frequent users of his concept are perhaps the non-governmental organizations, which operate at the grassroots level and work with the poor and the disadvantaged.’⁵ The World Bank’s document (Bhuvan: 1992) also states that people have to be placed at the center of planning and decision-making. ‘People's participation in rural development activities is accepted as a policy imperative in all the countries of the region and the de-concentration or decentralization of power is seen as an important step in the right direction.’⁶ People’s participation in economic production, ownership in the means of production as well as participation in decision-making.⁷ The World Bank has learned from its experience that participation is important for the success of projects economically, environmentally, and socially. The most important lesson has been that participation is a question of efficiency, as well as being desirable in its own right. In one study, the Bank evaluated twenty-five projects five to ten years after completion. Strong beneficiary organizations (an instrument of facilitating) proved to be key factor in determining project sustainability (World Bank: 1985).

Needless to say, many of the best formulated programs and projects have failed when the latter did not take into account either the local people's willingness or the practicalities of community life. Many conflicts between

⁵ F H Abed, ‘BRAC: Promoting Popular Participation-World Bank Discussion Papers’ Washington D.C., 1992, p. 31

⁶ CIRDAP, ‘People's Participation in Rural Development’ CIRDAP, Bangladesh, 1984, p. 27

⁷ S M Saifuddin, ‘Non-Formal Education and Women: Experience and Outlook, Dhaka, 1992, p. 82

government officials and the local people could have been avoided if both parties had joined together in an effective 'social' participatory partnership characterized by decentralized authority and free-flow communication.⁸ Development projects have succeeded through many NGOs projects when the beneficiaries' were given first priority in the development activities. People's active participation in any kind of development activity can guarantee equity and sustainability which are necessary to improve the overall conditions of the under-privileged people in the society.

3. Development is a Multi-Dimensional Process

Development may be defined in many ways as it has multi-dimensions. Development may be perceived as a fundamental human right. In this paper the term 'development' will be used to describe a process to reduce, *poverty, illiteracy, disease*, and to *improve the environment and empowerment of the poor people*. 'Development is a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.'⁹ Its purpose is to make people aware of their latent potential and make them ready to actively participate in improving the overall development of the poor people's life at the grassroots level. If there is an opportunity even a little, then the latent power of the poor people can be explored and their capacity increased to reach the goal of development of their own and subsequently, improving their socioeconomic and political conditions. 'The orthodox economist might define development as the achievement of economic growth and hence improved living standards. It is achieved by improving the use made of a country's human, natural and institutional resources. The Gross National Product (GNP) provides the obvious measurement of progress according to this definition.'¹⁰ It has seen in many countries both in developed and developing countries that GNP itself does not have any social impact without equitable distribution of economic growth of a particular country to its population. Yunus stated "Development should be looked at and handled as a human rights issue, not simply as a question of economic growth. Development should mean positive change in the economic status of the bottom 50 percent of the population in a given society." As Todaro stated, "development must, therefore, be conceived of as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of absolute poverty."

4. Factors Affecting Development Process in Developing Countries

There is on-going debate on the actual impact of aid in developing countries. Who are actually enjoying the aid? What actual portion out of the total aid reaches the real beneficiaries? Could developing countries do better without aid or with less aid? And a host of similar questions agitate the minds of many. On the other hand, there is a strong

⁸ Krasae Chanawongse, 'Rural Development Management' Khon Kaen University, Thailand, 1991, p. 12

⁹ David C Korten, 'Getting to the 21st Century' Kumareen Press, New York, 1990, p. 67

¹⁰ John Clark, 'Democratizing Development' Earthscan Publications, London, 1991, pp. 19-20

view that developing countries' progress, even survival, is dependent on foreign aid. The truth is likely to be that while foreign aid is needed, the country should mobilize domestic resources much more than has hitherto been the case so that aid does not become the engine but plays a supportive role. Historical observation of development activities over the past decades conclude that many of the development programs could not achieve their goals and that the targeted people had not tasted the fruits of development. So before discussing development in developing countries, it might be worthwhile to review the factors that affected development in the past, and to take into account the reasons for the past failures.

The Aid Program is not without benefit to people from within the donor countries. This follows because a large portion of the aid coming into the country is not even spent in developing countries. It is used to purchase commodities from donor countries (sometimes at inflated prices), pay inflated freight rates and pay lucrative fees to foreign consultants whose expertise in most situations is no superior to that of their counterparts. 'Well placed members of the state bureaucracy may also receive unofficial compensation for their services in the disbursement of foreign aid...Aid has thus created a new rich class in Bangladesh. Almost all the members of this class are urban. Upper echelon bureaucrats have played a pivotal role in support of this development.'¹¹ One contributing reason is that in the most development cases conventional 'top-down' strategies were adopted both by the government's bi/multilateral development programs which bypassed the country's poorest of the poor, while non-governmental development organizations have significantly improved in their multifaceted development activities through 'bottom-up' approach at the grassroots.

Presently, developing countries' have a multitude of problems and some of them are very crucial, such as, poverty, education, health and nutrition, housing, and the environment; especially a good number of percent of the total population who are living under the poverty line. Considering all those above mentioned realities and present situations of developing countries, it is necessary to taking into account the benefits for the poor people in the development program. There are many development approaches that are in accordance with the geographical, cultural and socioeconomic conditions of an individual country or from one region to another. Most of the development planners emphasize Basic Human Needs (BHN) such as shelter, food, wearing clothes, health facilities, and education for the individual country or region. So, what kind of development approach should be taken in the developing world and for whom? What are the real problems? And what will be the main components to be mentioned in the development program? Again, an emerging question in the development community is: is the community organizing the best mechanism to encourage participation of the poorest of the poor in the development process?

¹¹. Rehman Sobhan, 'From Aid Dependence to Self-Reliance' University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1990, p.144

To answer all these questions, it is necessary to reflect once more on the past. In the past, most of the country's 'top-down' development programs tended to bypass the real beneficiaries of the development at the grassroots level. Unfortunately, in the past none of the plan documented that human resource development as the central element for the overall development activities in targeted areas. As a result, most of the population were not able to improve their well-being nor tasted the fruits of development of the country, because poverty was not alleviated, health and nutrition condition are still very poor and literacy rate remains low. 'NGOs-inspired by volunteerism and public service have ventured beyond traditional civic-oriented activities into organizing for grassroots development, educational and skills training programs, and other concerns directly benefiting local communities. In marked contrast to bureaucratic government agencies, they work closely with the people, involving them in project planning, implementation, and decision-making.'¹² The experts suggest two things. One is that success and viability of outsider-facilities development efforts can only go so far as to how much such efforts got integrated into the local 'informal' social structures. And two, it must not be assumed that all members of the poorest sector will sooner or later join formally-organized groups once they recognize the need for it. In today's context of participatory development may be seen as 'one that refers to integration rather than transforming'. As such, the more urgent issue in participation is whether people have the means to define the terms and nature of participation rather than whether or not they are participating. So far, in most of the development projects, the terms and nature of the participation have been largely dictated by the proponents.

5. Two-Way of Development Approaches

Usually, the development professional and as well as policy makers throughout the world, follow two choices of development planning approaches. In general, most of the governments, including UN system bi/multilateral development projects, follow 'top-down' administrative style in their development plans. However, the non-governmental development organizations follow 'bottom-up' approach plans in their development programs to lift up the disadvantaged people at the grassroots level. The 'top-down' development approach failed to achieve its goals over the past development decades. In recent days, most of the non-governmental development organizations in developing countries emphasize development from below, through 'bottom-up' planning in their development programs in order to empower the poorest of the poor.

'In a purely top-down system, higher levels have more power, and the flow of information upward tends to become distorted; there is impaired learning, motivation, community participation and action.'¹³ Since the top-down approach in development planning at national levels have controlled everything, from decision-making to evaluation, regional levels are unable to start fulfilling their own roles until they receive direction or guidance from the top. Then, the field level has to wait for its plan of action to come from regional levels (see Figure 2). The

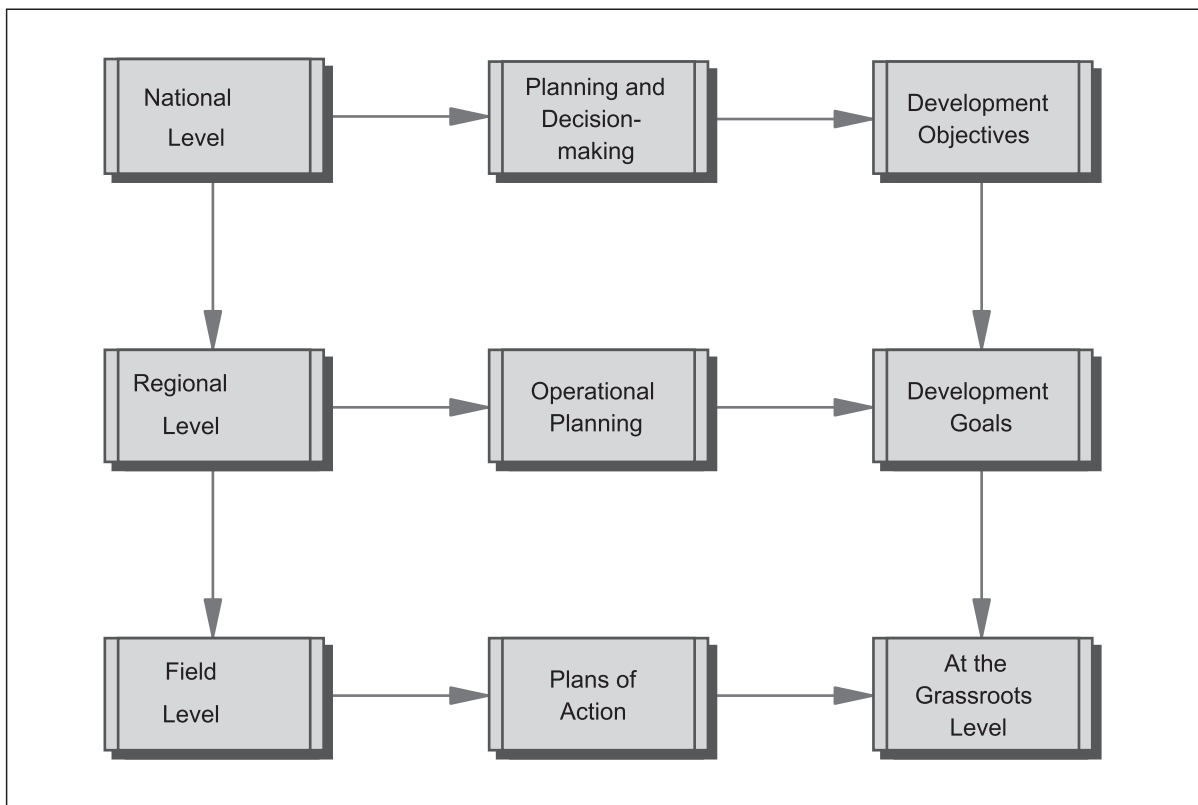
¹² A T Morales, 'Solidarity Journal, Manila, Philippines, July-September Issue, Manila, 1990, p.35

¹³ Krasae Chanawongse, 'Rural Development Management' Khon Kaen University, Thailand, 1991, p.12

heartland of the development ‘grassroots level’ just carry on by doing what they are told to do by both the national and regional levels.

Top-down approach bypasses the people’s will and direct participation in development, because the national level does not emphasize the importance of listening directly to people’s problems at the grassroots level before coming to a decision. As a result, the real beneficiaries of the development activities are not invited to participate in planning, decision-making, monitoring, and evaluation of their own development. Consequently, many conflicts and development failures have arisen, in developing countries. Developing countries are heavily dependent on international donor agencies and rich countries for their development budget, and even some countries are dependent on donors for a substantial portion of national budget too. Such funds are usually granted on condition that the donor’s policies and expertise are also incorporated into the recipient country’s plans or projects. Therefore, they have to follow their funders’ guidance and that is the ‘top-down’ administrative style.

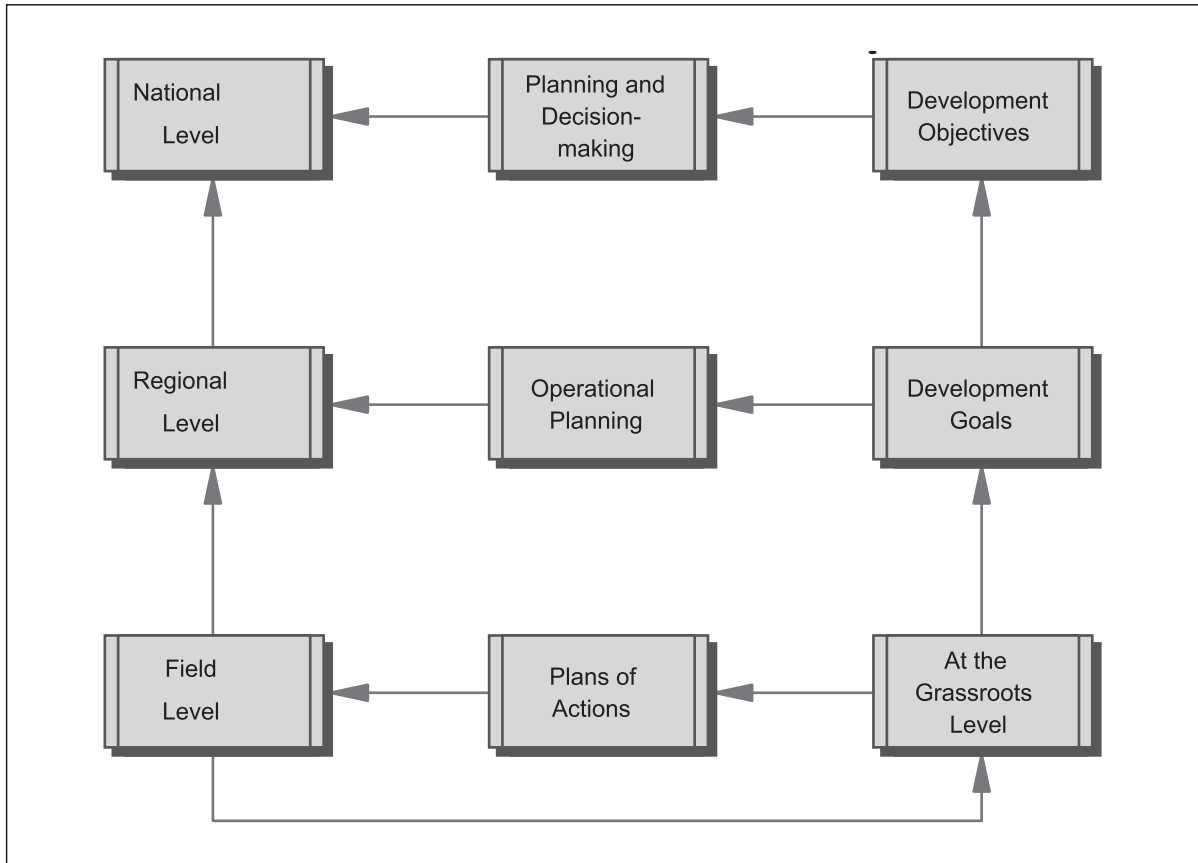
Figure 2 Top-Down Approach in Development Planning



The bottom-up approach in development planning is the reverse of the top-down approach. This approach means that both the national and regional levels do not have the right to decide the development strategies, objectives and goals unless they first investigate the authentic problems of the people and their desires in solving them at the grassroots (Figure 2). The bottom-up approach has some limitations such as resources, technology, information, and manpower problems, and higher levels have more power in this system too. However, the bottom-up approach gives the people access and opportunities to state their opinions to the higher levels, as there is free flow

communication between the top level and the grassroots level. Because, 'Effective development strategies require a process of planning and implementation which enables local people and officials to equally express their needs and to share in deciding what is to be done.'¹⁴

Figure 3 Bottom-Up Approach in Development Planning



The people's participation in development activities needs to have the effective linking of both *technical* and *social* aspects of the beneficiaries' active involvement at the grassroots level (Figure 3). These two aspects can facilitate a wide range of community and beneficiaries' participation and cooperation for overall development management activities, and thus ensure higher effectiveness and coordination of the development program. These two aspects are essential prerequisites to ensure people's participation support in every stage for sustainability and implementation of the participatory development approach. The *technical* aspect mainly focuses on training and technical skills improvement. The central function of the *social* aspect is for awareness building of the participants through motivation and non-formal education and training.

6. NGO is an alternative Institution in Development Arena

'NGOs have become important actors in development assistance for various reasons: (a) their scale; representing some 12 percent of total development assistance, (b) their ability to reach poor people especially in inaccessible

¹⁴. Krasae Chanawongse, 'Rural Development Management' Khon Kaen University, Thailand, 1991, p. 23

areas, (c) their capacity for innovation and experimentation, which are difficult for official agencies, (d) their representability; often having close links with poor communities, and (e) their skills of participation.¹⁵ An NGO (Non-governmental Organization) means an institution or organization which works outside the government structures but that an institutional legal framework of the respective country. The terminology NGO includes all those institutions and organizations that are involved in the multifaceted development activities for the disadvantaged people at the grassroots level, such as awareness building, group formation, poverty alleviation, education, health and family planning, women in development, and the environment. The United Nations defined NGO as- A non-governmental organization is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions, bring citizen concerns to governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights, environment or health.

In general, after the World War II organizations were very often religiously inspired, such as CARE (1945), OXFAM (1948). Even secular NOVIB (1956). It was in 1960s that this situation began to change. In a number of countries, the national governments began to make funds available to NGOs for the purpose of development projects. In the 1970s, NGOs in the North experienced a rise in recognition. An NGO means an institution or organization which works outside the government structures but that an institutional legal framework of the respective country. In terms of development work, many of them have evolved from relief and welfare services, to community development and last three decades to people centered sustainable development approaches. 'The NGO sectors in different countries have developed widely differing characteristics according to the history of the state, the amount of development assistance received and the gaps perceived in public service provision.'¹⁶ Since the 1980s, international donor agencies/governments came to realize the importance of working with NGOs, in the process of their dynamic and innovative approaches in their development programs.

The NGOs are playing important roles as intermediary organizations, bridging the gap between donors, beneficiaries, policy makers, and the national government. NGOs are considered as the key element of development in developing countries, for the poorest of the poor, at the grassroots level. They provide a wide range of activities in the community such as awareness building, group formation, advocacy, poverty reduction, education, health and nutrition, income generation and empowering women. 'A number of NGOs through the world are paying attention to the definition and projection of a people -centered development vision that embraces the transformation agenda. This vision looks to justice, sustainability and inclusiveness as the defining principles of authentic development. It

¹⁵ Michael Bratton, 'The Politics of Government: NGO Relations in Africa' Mimeo, London, 1988, p.35

¹⁶ John Farrington, (edit). 'NGOs and the State in Asia' 1993, p. 30

views development as a people's movement more than as a foreign-funded government project.¹⁷ Most of the NGOs are working on multifaceted development activities including *conscientization* in the rural areas and some of them are working in the urban. NGOs aim to have people's opinions reflected in these international conferences. In Beijing, at the Fourth World Conference on Women, women around the world participated in the NGO forum meeting held parallel to the United Nations meeting. In the forum's 10 days meeting, participants exchanged information, organized and prepared to lobby governments at the official conference on issues vital to women.

NGOs advocate 'bottom up' approach through 'people's participation' in the development projects which poor beneficiaries directly participate in income-generating activities by microcredit program that improve their socioeconomic conditions. In the developing countries context, in development activities, an NGO itself is very unique with its innovative approach for the disadvantaged people within a small group or narrow spectrum of activities at the grassroots level. Due to the wide range of development activities that an NGO undertakes, it (e.g. Southern) experiences lot of constraints, such as, financial, manpower and institutional capacity. With many limitations, Southern NGOs are directly working in the rural areas as an intermediary between their Northern (NGOs) counterparts and with other international donor agencies for the poor people. They are good at organizing people through awareness building at the grassroots level.

7. How NGO Does Became an Important Actor in People's Participation

NGO became an important factor in participatory development 'Because of their independent status and direct links to local communities, NGOs play a vital role in the United Nations system. NGO forums have grown in size and importance in recent years, becoming a permanent fixture that is integral to the success of major United Nations conferences. NGOs have achieved progress in key environmental, development and human rights areas.'¹⁸ Since the 1980s, international donor agencies came to realize the importance of working with NGOs, in the process of their dynamic and innovative approaches in development. Many developing countries governments and UN systems have already started their development programs with or through NGOs to achieve their development goals. 'DeMars and Dijkzeul...suggested that NGOs perform bridging behavior; global governance accommodates this behavior and the multifaceted linkages that it creates, highlighting the bridges among the global, transnational, state, and sub-state, as well as bridges between the public and private and within society, between family and market'¹⁹ In recent days, the NGOs are playing important roles as intermediary organizations, bridging the gap between donors, beneficiaries, policy makers, and the national government.

NGOs are considered as the key element of development in developing countries, for the poorest of the poor, at the

¹⁷ David C Korten, 'Getting to the 21st Century' Kumareen Press, New York, 1990, p.87

¹⁸ The U N. 'leaves NGOs on their own' The Japan Times, Tokyo, 5 October 1995, p.18

¹⁹ DeAMars & Dijkzeul (edit.) 'The NGO Challenge for international Relations Theory' Routledge, London, 2015, p.69

grassroots level. Over the past decades, NGOs played important roles through their direct participation at the grassroots level in Asia, Africa and Latin American countries, with the collaboration of the international donor/development agencies, government and corporates. Because of their independent status and direct links to local communities, NGOs are playing a vital role in their multifaceted development activities. NGOs have become an important institution in development assistance for various reasons: (a) their scale, (b) their ability to reach poor people especially in rural areas, (c) their capacity for innovation and experimentation, which are difficult for official agencies, (d) their close connection; often having close links with poor communities, and (e) their skills of participation. NGOs are organizing poor people in the community and helping them to make an organization through the conscientization approach which aims at addressing the needs of the rural poor in a society through development activities.

NGOs advocate ‘bottom up’ approach through people’s participation in the development programs which poor beneficiaries directly participate in income-generating activities by microcredit program that improve their socioeconomic conditions, among the local-level communities or groups, regional and the national level of government and international donor agencies’ initiatives. In terms of development activities, many of them have evolved from relief and welfare services, to community development and community organizing, and recently to people centered and sustainable approaches.

NGOs are also organizing people in the community and helping them to establish organizations by themselves through *education*, *awareness building* and *conscientization*, and by addressing the needs that they themselves identify. Some NGOs are working for human rights, peace, gender equity and institutional building of the poorest of the poor. Over the past decades, NGOs played important roles through their direct participation at the grassroots level in Asia, Africa and Latin American countries, with the collaboration of the international donor agencies.

8. Dynamic Bottom-Up Approach of NGOs through Tripartite Collaboration in Development

The NGOs’ relationship with the government and corporate varies according to their social commitment, as well as the individual country’s socioeconomic, cultural, political and geographical conditions. South and South East Asian countries NGOs are playing the part as an intermediary among the government and corporates in their multifaceted development programs. Much of the debate centering among the government, NGOs and corporate collaborations is concerned with the regulatory powers of the state. The fundamental issue relates to the rights of NGOs to pursue their objectives, unhindered by state coercion, and the state agencies authority to ensure acquiescence of NGOs to specific laws. Government, NGOs and corporate could work together in drawing on their past experiences in development activities and analyze what they can do collectively in the future to improve the country’s development strategies.

NGOs can work as facilitators through their innovative approaches to organize the poor in the remote areas in the institutional capacity building of the rural poor. And the corporate would play the pivotal role to enable the poor people to learn business skills. 'Japan Platform used more than US\$5 million of government fund and \$0.5 million of private donation in Afghanistan operation. More than ten NGOs deploy mainly in Afghanistan and work in different fields. The key issue is to enhance the NGOs capabilities through the accountability and the transparency.'²⁰ Government-NGOs interaction will help to avoid the government administrative 'top-down' development approach, which until recently bypassed the poor people who are at the bottom of society. NGOs generally recognize their limitations in terms of scope and resources and most seek more active collaboration with government. In countries such as India and the Philippines, the earlier phase of attempting to control NGOs has now clearly been abandoned.

Over the past decades, the relationship between government and NGOs have evolved from one of mutual suspicion and even hostility to a situation today in which the government provides substantial funding directly to NGOs for a range of innovative projects. Although there are many factors involved in implementing a development program to a less developed society, region or country, infrastructural facilities and institutional capacity building are basic and essential factors. Besides providing these facilities the government has to work together with NGOs and corporate in tripartite relationships to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the poor. However, in South and South-East Asia many NGOs are receiving support and funds from the government for their multifaceted development activities, the country wide Government-NGOs interaction in development and the NGOs network system is not yet developed.

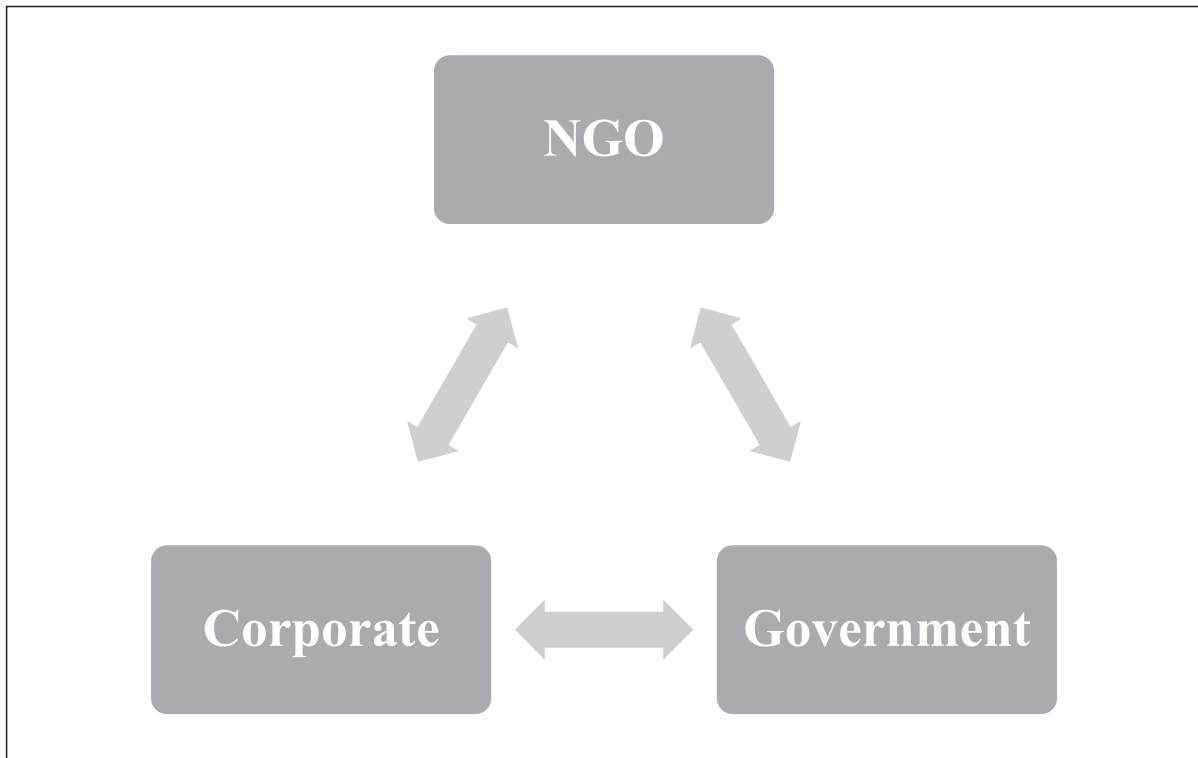
Government-NGO interaction can form a bridge not only between the government and the poor people, but also between the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' development approaches, from the top government officials to the people at the grassroots. In government, NGOs and corporate collaboration in development, a tripartite relation among the government, NGOs and the business sector is an essential factor in achieving development goals at the grassroots level. Since NGOs have an access and close contact with rural disadvantaged people at the bottom, it is easier for them to organize/motivate people through education, awareness, and institution building. At the same time, they can take the initiative to convince the government to invest in social infrastructural development, such as roads and communication. Furthermore, NGOs can influence government to allocate a higher share of the budget for the physical facilities of schools and medical professionals to the rural health centers.

The corporates have enough fund, skills and marketing knowledge, innovative and technical knowhow. As shown in figure 4, the corporates, NGOs and local government could collaborate in all together in drawing on their past experiences in bottom-up development activities, and figure out what they collectively in the future to improve

²⁰ Ide Tsutomu, 'Japan Platform: Collaboration between Government-Business and NGOs' GISPRI, Tokyo, 2002, p.3-4

social development strategies. Besides providing these facilities the government has to go to the people with a motivational purpose, together with NGO including local people's, private, and volunteer organizations. Only through this tripartite relationships can the development goals at the grassroots be reached. However, in Bangladesh, although some NGOs are receiving support and funds from the government for their development activities, the country wide Government-NGO interaction in development and the NGOs network system is not yet developed.

Figure 4 Tripartite Collaboration of Bottom-Up Approach in Development



In the Philippines, the cooperation between government and non-governmental development organizations contributed to the great success in the country wide preventive health campaign program in 1993, (which was called “23 in 93”). One report states that, except for some parts in the Southern part (Mindanao) of the Philippines achieved almost 100 percent in its Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI).

In South and South East Asian countries NGOs believe that the existence of effective democratic institutions and values is a pre-requisite for a sustainable development. They felt that this is possible only ‘*when the majority of the people participate effectively in the development processes ranging from planning to management and implementation ...*’ NGOs are initiating such democratization processes aiming at restructuring the existing power-relations through the empowerment of the rural poor and development of their organizations through a continuous process.²¹ In Bangladesh, there are many development organizations working to achieve the country’s development goals in different fields, such as

²¹. UPL, ‘Report of the Task Forces on Bangladesh Development Strategies for the 1990s’ UPL, Dhaka, pp.375-376

poverty reduction, health and family planning, and functional education and non-formal education both for adults and children. So, if there is an effective collaboration among the local government and corporates in participatory development, duplication of services can be reduced and it will possible to reduce unnecessary costs.

9. Limitation and Concluding Remarks

This study has had an attempt to examine why people's participation from below is more important than the 'top-down' development approach. Why the NGOs have been playing more vital roles in development programs than the government at the grassroots level in developing countries. 'Many NGOs, especially in the South, argue the need for an alternative development vision that views progress in terms of just, sustainable and inclusive improvements in human well-being. This vision encourages moderation in physical consumption, financial self-reliance, and the conservation and recycling of resources.'²² Following the above discussion the author tends to argue that the based on people centered participatory bottom-up development approach has the potential to create on overall development of the disadvantaged people at the grassroots level.

In developing countries context, political instability is an obstacle for NGOs to carry on their multifaceted activities. Without public accountability, very often country's political and economic institutions will become corrupted, thereby reducing their efficiency and also failing to separate the functions of the government and the functions of the development collaboration with other agencies. 'It is now widely advocated by western official aid agencies that effective development requires not only appropriate macro-economic policy, but also a healthy political environment- what is termed 'governance.'²³ Besides the political instability, bureaucracy and corruption at the highest levels of the government is recognized as a critical obstacle to development. So the achievement of the development goals of the disadvantaged people in developing countries, needs not only their participation in development, but also their direct involvement in the country's political affairs.

Over the past decades, NGOs played very important roles with or without governments' development programs as an intermediary between the rural poor and the respective government. Examples, non-formal education, health and nutrition in Bangladesh, by Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), health and family planning in Thailand, by Population and Community Development Association (PDA) and institution building at the grassroots level in the Philippines, by International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR). NGOs cover a wide spectrum, from small local organizations to nationwide federations and in international networks. NGOs Innovations and replications are going on in other developing countries. NGOs sometimes grow out of one people's organization, extending its principles and ideas to other places. Or they can be an amalgam of people's organizations together.

²² UNDP, 'Human Development Report 1991' UNDP, New York, 1991, p. 225

²³ Sarwar K Lateef, 'Governance and Development' World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1992, p.25

Again, NGOs are organizing poor people in the community and helping them to make an organization through the conscientization approach which aims at addressing the needs of the rural poor in a society through development activities. Developing countries have been emphasizing to improve their citizens' overall socioeconomic condition through multifaceted development activities. Unfortunately, due to economic constraints, lack of manpower, political instability and bureaucracy government cannot reach the goal. So people's participation is a new paradigm. Many governments have now begun to recognize this reality; participatory development through 'bottom-up' is as the foundation stone of grassroots development.

The NGOs' collaboration with the government and corporate varies according to their social commitment, as well as the individual country's socioeconomic, cultural, political and geographical conditions and three parties interest as well. As discussed earlier in this study, government and corporate could work together with NGOs in drawing on their past experiences in development activities and figure out what they can do collectively in the future to improve in development strategies. It is recommended that the government become involved in social infrastructure and corporate can play a vital role to providing fund and business skills. The poor people have indigenous knowledge and some kind of business skills, so the corporate can acts as a partner with them to turn the poor into social entrepreneurs.

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