

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
IN LESOTHO

by

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Declaration

I declare that *Rural development and community participation in Lesotho* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SUMMARY

Rural development efforts in Third World countries often fail to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged members of society. The privileged continue to get a disproportionate share of the fruits of development. This is so in spite of the fact that development thinking has changed from the days when the poor were expected to benefit from development through the "trickle down" effect. It is now widely recognised that development should be focused on people in their local communities (human development) and not on the economy *per se*.

To achieve this type of development requires an appropriate strategy of development, and people's/community participation is such a strategy. People's participation in development takes place through community based organisations. The organisations facilitate the development of the human potential of members. This study investigates the conditions under which rural community participation takes place in Lesotho. The Thabana-Morena Integrated Rural Development Project is used as a case study.

The first objective is to determine the appropriateness of the organisations through which community participation was promoted in the project.

The second objective is to isolate the political and administrative factors which affected participation in the project.

Thirdly, the study tries to identify factors at the village level which influenced participation in the project.

Fourthly, the study evaluates the effectiveness of the project in experimenting with participatory approaches, given that development projects are basically mechanisms for testing the appropriateness of national policies before applying them on a wide scale.

Finally, a set of principles is developed on the basis of which participatory development can be facilitated.

Key terms :

Rural development; Human development; Rural development strategies; Community participation; Community organisations; Community development; Integrated rural development; Basic needs approach; Learning process approach; Rural development projects; Rural development approaches; Bureaucratic reorientation; Nongovernmental organisations; Decentralisation; Lesotho.

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SIGNIFICANT ACRONYMS

BCP	-	Basutoland Congress Party
BNA	-	Basic needs approach
BNP	-	Basotho National Party
CD	-	Community development
CTA	-	Chief Technical Advisor
FAO	-	Food and Agricultural Organisation
GO	-	Group Organiser
ILO	-	International Labour Office
IRD	-	Integrated rural development
LCN	-	Lesotho Council of Nongovernmental Organisations
NGO	-	Nongovernmental organisation
PPP	-	People's Participation Programme
SADCC	-	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SHG	-	Self-help-group
TMMPCS	-	Thabana-Morena Multi-purpose Cooperative Society
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNIP	-	United National Independence Party
VA	-	Village assembly
VDC	-	Village development committee/council
WCARRD	-	World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE SETTING

1.1.1 The focus of rural development

The importance of the position occupied by the rural sector in Third World development cannot be overemphasised. Three quarters of the global population of about 5.5 billion lives in the Third World and of these nearly two thirds are based in the rural areas. (Todaro 1994). However, unlike the situation in the rich countries where rural life usually evokes feelings of nostalgia and affection among people, the countryside in poor countries is often associated with the most severe forms of human deprivation (Redclift 1984: 45-46; Foster-Carter 1985: 51). Chambers aptly characterises rural deprivation as:

... a web in which poverty (lack of assets, inadequate stocks and flows of food and income), physical weakness and sickness, vulnerability to contingencies and powerlessness all mesh and interlock (1983: 22).

Because rural development efforts need, therefore, to be focused on the poor and underprivileged, it is necessary to identify this category of people clearly. The World Bank (1975) suggests that this group includes "small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless". Other writers such as Waterston (1979) and Lacroix (1985) while recognising that there are different categories of poor people in the rural areas nevertheless single out small farmers for special attention. Lacroix forthrightly states, for example, that:

The primary target population of rural development is the small farmer, and the other groups will benefit only indirectly from most rural development projects (p.4).

The apparent bias in some quarters in favour of small farmers is understandable. Because of their numerical significance in many developing countries, Lesotho included, small-farmer development could in fact be equated not only with rural development but national development. But the growth in the proportion of landless rural dwellers, as well the growing trends (which will be elaborated upon in Chapter 2) in which rural development has ceased to be equated with agricultural development suggest that all poor people regardless of whether or not they are attached to land deserve special attention. In this context, Chambers (1983) uses the phrase "integrated rural poverty" to describe the multiplicity of problems facing the rural poor.

1.1.2 Approaches to rural development

Griffin (1973) as well as Lea and Chaudhri (1983) distinguish between three broad approaches to rural development administration. These are the technocratic, the radical and the reformist approach.¹ These three approaches differ in terms of their objectives or the emphasis they place on different objectives of rural development, the dominant pattern of ownership and control of productive resources, the groups which stand to gain from the development process, and their underlying assumptions about relationships of power in society

1 On the other hand, Moris (1981), for instance, uses a four-fold classification of approaches to rural development which comprises the "top-down" or *bureaucratic* approach, the "outside-in" or *commercialisation* approach, the "bottom-up" or *participation* approach and the "inside-out" or *mobilisation* approach. These two forms of classification are not entirely irreconcilable. However, in this study I will stick to the above-mentioned three-fold classification because of its relative simplicity.

(Griffin 1973). Moris (1981) identifies similar distinguishing factors among the approaches he suggests.

1.1.2.1 *The technocratic approach*

The technocratic approach is basically aimed at increasing agricultural productivity, and this is underpinned by its focus on the provision of infrastructure and agricultural input facilities in the rural areas (Cheema 1985). The main beneficiaries are usually the rich and powerful because the need for redistributing productive resources is often ignored.

This approach is associated with top-down initiatives in rural development whereby decisions about what is needed in the rural areas and how it should be provided remain entirely in the hands of bureaucrats. The technocratic approach is paternalistic (Stiefel & Wolfe 1994: 5). The emphasis in this approach is on delivering services to the rural areas rather than building the capacity of the rural poor to meet their own needs. In addition, the technocratic approach gives rise to the blueprint approach in which rural development projects are planned in advance and from a distance by experts.

1.1.2.2 *The radical approach*

The main objective in the radical approach is the achievement of social change and the redistribution of power and influence, through which the most disadvantaged members of society stand to gain (Griffin 1973). The understanding is that unequal power relationships, based upon differential access to assets, are the root

cause of poverty. Sometimes the proponents of this approach are motivated by socialist ideals (Lea & Chaudhri 1983).

This approach advocates confrontation between the privileged and the underprivileged groups and in its extreme form sees a revolutionary transformation of society as the final solution to the problems of the poverty stricken rural masses (Korten 1984a). Since the rural poor are considered to be capable of bringing about their own development without outside help, this approach calls for exclusively bottom-up processes in which all initiatives for development come from the poor themselves.

1.1.2.3 *The reformist approach*

While recognising that conflict of interests often exists between the rich and poor both in the rural setting and in society as a whole this approach unlike the radical approach seeks an amicable solution to this conflict (Cheema 1985). As it aims at the redistribution of wealth and income the reformist approach is associated with the "Redistribution with Growth" strategy of the 1970s (Abasiokong 1982). Because of the mutual causal relationship existing between the redistribution of wealth, on the one hand, and the redistribution of power, on the other, the two processes go hand in hand.

The reformist approach accepts that local people have knowledge and skills to contribute towards local development. At the same time it acknowledges that outside help is necessary to facilitate rural development. Therefore, rural development is seen as entailing a combination of top-down initiatives by outside agencies and bottom-up initiatives by the local population. Consequently, this approach

leads to the learning process approach to programme delivery in which the development agency and the local people jointly contribute towards the success of an assistance programme.

It should be noted, though, that these approaches are ideal types and that they represent the extreme points (technocratic and radical) and the middle point (reformist) on a continuum. Because they are forced to adapt to local circumstances, they rarely exist in their pure forms. As a result, it is often difficult to fit specific cases neatly into one category or the other (Griffin 1973; Lea & Chaudhri 1983).

1.1.3 Participation - a conceptual framework

1.1.3.1 *Aims and objectives*

As Cao Tri (1986a:11) and Rajakutty (1991:39) demonstrate, participation can be seen both as an end in itself and as a means to an end. Participation is an end in itself in the sense that people have a democratic right to take part in making the decisions which affect their lives regardless of whether or not any benefits will follow from their involvement (Vasoo 1991: 2; Malhotra 1980: 19). From a more instrumentalist perspective, participation has been associated with the following specific objectives:

- (a) Empowerment - this entails a reversal of trends in the Third World in which local people have no say in making the decisions which affect their own communities (Gran 1983; Rowlands 1995; Hughes 1987). The idea of empowerment is

closely interlinked with the creation of a democratic society which Nyong'o (1991), Ghai (1988) and Cao Tri (1986b) consider to be a primary objective of popular participation.

- (b) Capacity building - through participation the ability of the local people to deal with the challenges which face them is strengthened by equipping them with organisational as well as technical skills (Bryant & White 1982; Gow & van Sant 1985; Ghai 1988).
- (c) Benefits sharing - the power which the local people acquire through the process of empowerment enables them to influence allocative decisions in their favour (Bryant & White 1982; Cohen & Uphoff 1980; Paul 1987).
- (d) Sustainability - when local people assume responsibility for local development they develop a sense of ownership over local resources as well as an interest in caring for what belongs to them, for their own sake and the sake of posterity. The capacity of the people to do things for themselves also ensures that in the long run development can go on without significant outside intervention (Machooka 1984; Rajakutty 1991; Bamberger 1991).
- (e) Efficiency and Effectiveness - in the long run efficiency will be achieved as participation promotes agreement between the local people and outside agencies. This reduces conflicts and delays, and leads to a smooth flow of development programmes. Development becomes effective when community involvement contributes to a more accurate identification of local needs (Paul 1987; Korten 1980; Bamberger 1991).

- (f) Self-reliance - through participation local people take responsibility for bringing about the changes necessary for the improvement of the quality of their lives. Self-reliance is necessitated by the fact that the flow of outside resources is not unlimited (Kolawole 1982; Okafor 1982; Garcia-Zamor 1985b).

1.1.3.2 *A strategy for human development*

Without denying the validity of any of the objectives stated above, this study starts from the premise that the primary objective of community participation is the attainment of human development (Oakley et al 1991; Finsterbusch & van Wicklin 1987). As Rugumayo and Ibikunle - Johnson (Braithwaite 1995: 128) note rural development is also primarily concerned with the development of people. Thus, *people's participation is a strategy for achieving people-centred development*. To this end the aims of empowerment, capacity building and democracy, which includes the ability of the poverty-stricken people to have an equitable share of the benefits of development, play a central role.

It must be noted that empowerment is, in this study, viewed from a reformist standpoint outlined in sub-section 1.1.2.3. From a reformist perspective empowerment follows from a mainly pedagogic process of equipping the local people with the skills and knowledge which build their confidence and enable them to deal with other role players in development as equal partners, and also enhance their capacity to

deal with factors affecting their lives.² As part of this educative process which leads to human development, community participation prepares the local people to play a meaningful role in regional and national developmental issues. It facilitates:

... inculcation of democratic values and education in rights and obligations of citizenship as well as developmental education (Consultative Committee 1980: 163).

On the other hand, the existence of a democratic polity is indispensable for the success of local participation. Therefore, the recent trends towards democratisation in Third World countries should be seen as a harbinger of genuine community participation (Stiefel & Wolfe 1994; van Hoek & Bossuyt 1993). Thus, a mutual causal relationship exists between local participatory development and democratic governance. Local participation instils democratic values among the local people and prepares them for participation in supra-local issues. Conversely, pluralist democracy creates conditions conducive to local participation.

Different terms are used to describe participation. These include community participation, popular participation, grassroots participation, people's participation, local participation and citizen participation. In this study these terms are used interchangeably. The reason is that whatever context a particular term is used in, it is usually accompanied by a concern over the plight of the disadvantaged members of society.

2 See Rowlands (1995), Hughes (1987) and Ghai (1988) for different ways of interpreting empowerment.

1.1.3.3 *Organisational development*

It is not inconceivable for people to participate in development as individuals, and examples of this type of participation are not hard to find. One can make an individual effort to develop one's own area, and one can benefit from community development efforts individually. But participatory development, properly understood, entails group action, that is, working in concert with other members of the community to achieve common goals (Oakley et al 1991: 9-10; Paul 1987: 2; Finsterbusch & van Wicklin 1987: 7). It is difficult to imagine the achievement of empowerment and capacity building for sustained development outside community action. Thus, the establishment of community organisations gives practical expression to the idea of popular participation.

Organisational development is especially significant for the rural poor who as individuals control few economic resources and have little political influence and therefore must rely on group effort to exert pressure on those who control the development process to heed their demands (Esman & Uphoff 1982: 62; Fox 1992: 2). Village level organisations also facilitate the direct participation of the people in the development process, and not just indirect participation through representatives. It will be demonstrated in this study that self-help groups or action groups in the village are the most important organisations for developing human potential for the purpose of achieving a people-centred form of development.

For the purposes of this study community participation may, therefore, be understood as *organised efforts which increase the*

*capacity of the rural poor to deal with factors which affect their lives.*³

1.1.3.4 *Projects in development*

Development projects are, to quote Rondinelli (1993), "policy experiments." They provide the opportunity for testing the applicability of particular development policies on a small scale before they can be implemented at a national level. By testing policies first on a small scale it is easier to refine and adjust them to suit local conditions (or to abandon them before applying them on a large scale if they prove to be completely unsuitable), thereby avoiding costly mistakes.

In the context of the present study development projects should be seen as mechanisms for developing and testing institutional structures and procedures through which community participation can take place. The effectiveness of projects should, therefore, be judged in terms of the extent to which as testing grounds they provide replicable lessons which can be used to promote rural participation on a national scale.

1.2 **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Today development is no longer thought of in terms of economic

3 This definition is adapted from one provided by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (Stiefel & Wolfe 1994: 5) in which participation is seen as "the organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control".

growth.⁴ Rather, it has increasingly come to be seen as a moral issue (Abasiékong 1982: 93; Weitz 1986: 15). As well as being geared towards enhancing human potential, as noted in sub-section 1.1.3.2, as an ethical question development necessarily implies the participation of the people whose lives it affects to enable them to determine the type of development they want (Coetzee 1980: 32; Cao Tri 1986a: 5).

The challenge then is to develop participatory structures which will best serve the goal of enhancing the capacity of local communities to bring about a form of development which is acceptable to them. In this study the problem to be researched may, therefore, be formulated in the following terms:

Under what conditions does the establishment of organisations which promote effective participation at the local level take place?

And

Which factors militate against the establishment of effective community organisations?

1.3 MOTIVATION

The virtues of participatory development are espoused not only by academics, researchers and nongovernmental agencies of development. On the contrary, governments in developing countries equally express their eagerness to use this approach to achieve

4 For a discussion of the shift from a straightforward growth oriented conception of development to a more normative view see, for example, Bryant and White (1982: Ch.1), Conyers and Hills (1984: Ch.2) and Ingham (1993).

effective rural development.⁵ The government of Lesotho is no exception in this regard.

Since the late 1970s rural development policy in Lesotho has been directed towards facilitating community participation. Lesotho's Third Five Year Development Plan (1980-1985) and Fourth Five Year Development Plan (1986-1991) made it quite clear that the aim of rural development was to actively involve the disadvantaged in local development. In the light of this objective, the Thabana-Morena Integrated Rural Development (IRD) Project (hereafter referred to as the Project) was initiated to develop and test an institutional framework to promote and support rural participation in Lesotho (Lesotho Government 1983).

My keen interest in rural development and in seeing the objective of human development through participation being realised has motivated me to review and evaluate Lesotho's efforts to reach this goal through the Project. It is hoped that the findings of this study will not only be of benefit to Lesotho, but that they will have a wider applicability and relevance, and be of assistance to the entire development fraternity in Southern Africa in the search for an effective strategy of rural development.

Theoretically, the study seeks to contribute towards a deeper appreciation of the significance of the changes which have taken place in development theory in so far as they affect participatory

5 In this study rural development (and development in general) is seen to be effective only if it enhances human potential, regardless of whether or not it contributes to measurable economic or infrastructural growth.

development. It also aims at facilitating a clearer understanding of the principles underlying community participation.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following from the research problem presented in section 1.2 this study specifically seeks to:

- (a) *determine the appropriateness of the organisations through which rural participation was promoted in the Project;*
- (b) *isolate the political and administrative factors affecting community participation in the Project;*
- (c) *identify factors at the village level which influenced participation in the Project;*
- (d) *evaluate the effectiveness of the Project as a testing ground for community participation; and*
- (e) *develop a set of principles which can form the basis of effective community participation.⁶*

6 This study aims to develop a set of principles or broad guidelines rather than a detailed model. Participation is situation specific and local conditions are changeable. Since a model would be based upon particular conditions at a particular time when these conditions change the model would not be helpful in facilitating participation. On the other hand, a set of principles will be able to accommodate such changes. This point is further clarified and illustrated in Chapter 8.

1.5 STUDY AREA

1.5.1 The country

With a population estimated to be just under 2 million and a land area of 30,350 square kilometres Lesotho occupies the unique geographical position of being completely surrounded by one country, the Republic of South Africa. The country's rugged terrain is prone to the hazards of soil erosion, and this constitutes a threat to the continued availability of the limited amount of arable land (Ntene 1993: 1) - about 13% of the land area is arable. In spite of the recent acceleration in rural-urban migration (Fair 1990: 30), over 80% of the people still live in the rural areas;⁷ while a 1993 survey found that 28.2% of the population was landless (Gay & Hall 1994: 43).

The rapid growth of population, estimated at between 2.6% and 2.9% (Gay & Hall 1994: 6), has increased the pressure on arable land; and this has led to the parcelisation of land into increasingly small, uneconomic units (Lesotho Government 1983). Because of the low industrial base, and the lack of off-farm employment opportunities in the country rural families in Lesotho have over the years been heavily dependent on migrant labour remittances from South African mines (Murray 1980, 1981).

Increasingly, however, there has been a decline in the number of jobs available to Basotho mine workers in South Africa (Sekhamane 1989;

7 Source: Lesotho population data sheet, 1992 (Lesotho Government 1993).

Matlosa 1992). Under these circumstances the need for intensified rural development efforts in Lesotho is clear.

1.5.2 The project area

Thabana-Morena is situated in the Mafeteng district, south-west of the country. The project area covers approximately 30,000 hectares of land, and 19 villages. When the project started a survey established the population of the area at about 13,500. Problems of poor and eroded soil as well as low and unreliable rainfall were identified as major factors limiting agricultural production in the Thabana-Morena area (UNDP 1983). These adverse conditions, together with the relative neglect of the area in terms of the provision of government services, contributed to the area being chosen as the location of the Project.⁸

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, 60% of the working male population in the area migrated to South Africa for employment (the national average was 45% of adult males). Women actually constituted about 73% of the adult population residing in the area. The beneficiaries of the Project were, therefore, to be predominantly women (UNDP 1983: 4). Nevertheless, the Project was not designed to address the specific needs of women. It was just by coincidence that the majority of its beneficiaries were going to be women.

1.5.3 The project

This project was designed to facilitate the establishment of village

level institutional structures for promoting rural participation in Lesotho (UNDP 1979a: 8). The structures included self-help-groups (SHGs), village development committees (VDCs) and village assemblies (VAs). The Project was seen as a testing ground for an appropriate institutional framework which would subsequently be applied throughout the country.

It is precisely for this reason that this project has been chosen to form the basis of the present study. The study sought to determine the effectiveness of the Project in facilitating rural participation in Lesotho. Activities in the Project included the following: (1) Fodder production, (2) wheat production, (3) Vegetable production, (4) Poultry (Egg) production, (5) Fish - cum-duck farming, (6) Rabbit keeping, (7) Fruit production, (8) Wool and mohair spinning, (9) Machine knitting, (10) Bakery, (11) Concrete-block making, (12) Afforestation and soil conservation, (13) Road building and (14) Water supply.

To keep the study within manageable limits only one self-help activity was selected for detailed investigation; namely, poultry farming. Poultry production was chosen because together with spinning, vegetable production and concrete-block making they were regarded to be the most successful of the group activities initiated under the Project (UNDP/FAO 1994: 10,17). Thus, poultry groups represented the best of the efforts in group formation within the Project. Another factor which contributed to the choice of poultry farming was that it was spread over a greater number of villages than the other more successful activities - 6 villages (spinning - 1 village; vegetable production - 3 villages; concrete-block making - 1 village), which suggested that it was popular.

The Project was funded through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with a substantial part of the money being contributed by the government of The Netherlands. The UNDP as the donor agency commissioned the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) to be the executing agency. Under this arrangement the FAO became the overseer of the Project and was responsible for recruiting international staff. The project was implemented jointly with the government of Lesotho through the Ministry of Rural Development, which supplied counterpart staff and made other counterpart contributions, financial and material. This Project was implemented in three phases: the Preparatory Phase (starting in 1979), Phase I (starting in 1983) and Phase II (starting in 1988).

1.6 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

1.6.1 Literature study

The review of literature enables one to know what others have done in the chosen area of study and therefore to be "better prepared to attack with deeper insight and more complete knowledge the problem [one] has chosen to investigate" (Leedy 1980: 64). The search for related literature in this study started at the library of the University of the North West. Subsequently the researcher also made use of the library facilities at the University of South Africa, the Institute of Southern African Studies of the National University of Lesotho and the National Library in Maseru.

The disciplines on which the literature study focused were Development Studies/Administration, Public Administration, Political Studies and, to a lesser extent, Sociology and Economics. The main

areas covered included development theory; rural development strategies; people's participation, the learning process approach and the role of development projects; the role of NGOs in development; as well as decentralisation and the role of the bureaucracy in development.

The purpose of the literature review was primarily to establish a theoretical and historical basis for the study. The aim was not only to gain a deeper understanding of the issues involved but to do so from a historical perspective. Consequently, the investigation into the problems surrounding community participation in Lesotho also followed a historical line; the intention being to understand the present situation in a historical context. On an ongoing basis, the literature study was used to throw more light on the issues under investigation and as such served as an aid in the analysis and interpretation of data.

The literature study revealed that the learning process approach plays a crucial role as a method of institutionalising community participation. It also became clear that much of what has been written on the learning process approach, draws inspiration from David Korten's work, particularly his study entitled *Community Organisation and Rural Development: A Learning Process Approach*, published in the journal *Public Administration Review*, Volume 40, Number 5, 1980. Although other writers, such as Oakley and Marsden as well as Rondinelli, further contributed towards a deeper understanding of the methodology of institutionalising participatory development, Korten's study remains a milestone in this field.

In order to keep track of the sources consulted the researcher made a card for every bibliographic item. The card recorded information about the author, the title of the book or article (and name of the periodical in the case of a journal article), year of publication, the library from which it was obtained and a brief note indicating what the source dealt with. The cards were then arranged in alphabetical order in a container for easy retrieval. In addition, extensive notes were kept on each item read. To acknowledge the sources consulted, the reference style used in this study is the Harvard system as outlined in the *Guidelines on reference techniques*, prepared by the University of South Africa.

1.6.2 Research method

This study was based upon qualitative research methods. As van Maanen (1979: 9) observes, qualitative research seeks to "come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world". Because social phenomena cannot be understood outside the context in which they occur fieldwork plays a crucial role in qualitative research. It enables the researcher to gain a deeper insight into his or her subject matter by experiencing, first hand, the social situation surrounding it. To permit the flexibility necessary for dealing with the complexity and fluidity of social situations instruments and procedures used to collect data are not standardised.

McClintock et al (1979) suggest that informant interviews, observation and archival/documentary analysis are the data collection procedures commonly used in qualitative research. To achieve a more holistic portrayal of the object of the study it is necessary to use

multiple methods of investigation, a process referred to as *triangulation*. Jick (1979: 138) notes that:

triangulation may be used not only to examine the same phenomenon from multiple perspectives but also to enrich our understanding by allowing for new or deeper dimensions to emerge.

With these objectives in mind, interviews were used in conjunction with observation and documentary analysis in this study.

1.6.2.1 Interviews

This study was based on semi-structured interviews. The reason for conducting partially structured interviews was that while they indicate the boundaries within which the interviewer should work - thereby giving focus to the study, they also give the interviewer the freedom to adapt the interview to specific circumstances and to tap the special knowledge, experience and insights of different respondents (Singleton et al 1988). Thus, to the extent that semi-structured interviews attempt to capitalise on the strong points of each individual, they are not standardised.

Different categories of people were interviewed. These included beneficiaries of the Thabana-Morena IRD Project, officials of the Project, government officials and other strategically placed people. The methods used to select respondents are explained in sub-section 1.6.3 below.

The interviews were conducted during June/July 1993, December 1993/January 1994, June/July 1994 and June 1995.

1.6.2.2 *Observation*

Field observation was carried out with regard to the activities of group organisers and project beneficiaries. Group organisers were observed during their interaction with their respective groups, which took place on the days when group members assembled to bring their produce (eggs) together before it was delivered to the market. It was also during these meetings that the researcher was able to observe the poultry farmers as groups.⁹

Beneficiaries were further observed as individuals either collecting eggs from the chicken houses, feeding the chickens or cleaning the chicken houses. During these observations (both group and individual observations) questions were posed to the people being observed so that to some extent observation and interviews happened concurrently. These observations were done during the period December 1993/January 1994 and June/July 1994.

According to Singleton et al (1988: 104), "observation provides direct and generally unequivocal measures of overt behaviour, but it also is used to measure internal states such as feelings and attitudes". Thus the researcher observed the subjects of research not only to determine how they did their work but also to determine their feelings and attitudes towards their work.

9 During the time of the field work no other types of group meetings took place. This issue is dealt with in Chapter 7.

6.2.3 *Documentary analysis*

Data was also gathered from different types of documents. These included progress reports, evaluation reports, minutes of official meetings, records kept by group organisers and records maintained by the groups themselves. In some cases it was not the contents of records but the absence or the inadequacy of such records which proved to be instructive.

6.3 **Sampling techniques**

Three forms of sampling were used in this study - random (probability) sampling, quota (non-probability) sampling and purposive/judgemental (non-probability) sampling. Random sampling gives all elements of a sampling frame an equal chance of being selected. Quota sampling is used to select a sample which is representative of different categories of people in a group such as, for example, a sample which represents both leaders and rank and file members of an organisation. Purposive sampling helps in the selection of a sample of people who, for a particular purpose, are strategically placed to provide the necessary information (Babbie 1979).

For selecting interviewees among members of the poultry groups random sampling was used, to ensure that group members had an equal chance of being interviewed. The researcher did not know anything about the people in the groups being studied and did not have time for a protracted interaction with them in which he could identify knowledgeable informants among them. He, therefore, felt

that the best way of choosing people who would accurately represent what was happening in the groups was through a random selection.

Random sampling was used in combination with quota sampling to ensure that both committee members and ordinary group members were represented, thereby allowing for a variety of perspectives to emerge on the issues under investigation. In all, 41 people were selected for interviewing out of a total of 82 people in the poultry groups. Because of the relatively small sample population of 82 people, the researcher decided to extract a 50% sample which would be big enough to work with. To obtain the sample, all the 82 names were listed and every third name was selected. If a name was selected twice the second time it was ignored. Judgemental sampling was used to select interviewees from project officials (including group organisers), government officials and people from other organisations. All these were people strategically placed to provide relevant information. Thirty two (32) people were selected purposively, bringing the total number of people interviewed to 73.

The three sampling techniques were used to complement one another in the spirit of triangulation of methods which as pointed out in sub-section 1.6.2 helps to bring different perspectives and insights into a study and deepens the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon being examined.

1.7

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

CHAPTER 1 - serves as a general introduction to the study. It highlights the issues of concern in rural development and elucidates some of the basic approaches followed in rural development

administration before attempting to define community participation. After stating the problem to be researched and outlining research objectives this chapter describes the study area and gives reasons for its selection. Finally, the chapter delineates the research method used in this study, and outlines the structure of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2 - provides a theoretical and historical background to rural development participation. It sketches the historical evolution of development theory and relates changes in rural development strategies to changes in the general theory of development. The current emphasis on people's participation in rural development is traced to its roots in the earlier strategies of community development, the basic needs approach and integrated rural development.

CHAPTER 3 - presents a theoretical exposition of the strategy of rural development participation. It discusses the conditions under which effective rural participation takes place, and the role of community organisations in bringing it about. Forms of decentralisation and other institutional factors relating to the role of government, the bureaucracy and nongovernmental organisations in facilitating local participation are underscored. The learning process approach as a methodology for effecting community participation is explicated, as well as the part played by development projects in experimenting with participatory techniques.

CHAPTER 4 - analyses the shifts which have occurred in rural development policies and strategies in Lesotho, as underlined by the shift away from emphasis on agricultural growth as the focus of rural development, to people's participation. These changes are set

against the backdrop of the broader changes in development thinking alluded to in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 5 - looks at the administrative framework for rural development in Lesotho. In particular, decentralisation policies in Lesotho are examined against the theoretical construct developed in Chapter 3. In both Chapter 5 and Chapter 4 parallels are drawn between Lesotho and other countries in Southern Africa and elsewhere; and together these chapters form the background against which the Project is investigated.

CHAPTER 6 - makes a critical appraisal of the approach followed in designing and implementing the Project. Efforts in this connection are measured against the requirements of the learning process approach discussed in Chapter 3. The extent to which the Project featured as an experimental station for developing replicable lessons in community participation is determined on the basis of the discussion made in Chapter 3 about the role of projects in development.

CHAPTER 7 - presents the findings of the inquiry into the successes and failures of the efforts in group formation in the Project. The aim is to evaluate the degree to which participation in the self-help-groups served the goal of human development. In both Chapter 7 and Chapter 6 findings of studies done elsewhere are used to strengthen the observations made about the Project.

CHAPTER 8 - pulls together, by way of a summary, the different strands of the argument developed in this study, and draws conclusions on the major issues raised herein. Recommendations are then made relating to different courses of action intended to achieve

more effective community participation. On the basis of the findings of the study, a set of ground rules is developed. These are intended not only to contribute towards a clearer understanding of the participatory strategy but also to serve as a guide to action in the implementation of this strategy.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I examine the changes which have taken place in development theory and strategy, the intention being to look at participatory development from a historical perspective. The chapter tries to show that although the modernisation theory and the dependency theory differ in terms of their perception of the factors which affect development, both theories conceive development in terms of economic growth. Normative issues were introduced into development thinking by the humanist-liberationist approach, the basic needs approach and concern about sustainability of development.

With emphasis being placed on ethical issues, development came to be seen mainly in terms of human development. In the area of rural development this shift was reflected by a move away from agricultural growth to people's participation as the primary objective. However, attempts to promote participatory development through community development, the basic needs approach and integrated rural development have failed to address bureaucratic and other impediments to people's participation.

2.2

THE GOALS OF DEVELOPMENT

There is a general agreement among scholars that both the theory and

practice of development assumed a fresh significance after World War II, with the political emancipation of the former European colonies and the birth of what has come to be known as the Third World. Dubhashi (1987: 21) surmises that the newly:

... free countries dedicated themselves to development. They looked upon their "political freedom" as a means of "economic freedom" ...

To the departing colonial masters on the other hand, it seemed appropriate that they should work in tandem with the new leaders to improve the living conditions of their peoples.¹ Yet to those theorists whose ideas formed the basis of the efforts to bring about the required change in the emerging states, as well as the "experts" whose task it was to advise the fledgling governments, the complexity of the process of development appears to have been lost. As Toye (1987: 11) notes:

The original theory of socio-economic development that accompanied the post - 1945 decolonisation of Asia and Africa rested on the idea of modern society as the goal of development.

Thus, to the proponents of this "modernisation paradigm of development", the development of the Third World simply meant that it should acquire the characteristics of western societies.

1

Writers arguing from a dependency (neo-marxist) perspective - whose basic tenets will be highlighted in sub-section 2.2.1 - maintain that the continued presence of former colonial masters in the newly independent countries was not really intended to benefit the poor countries but to serve the interests of the rich countries themselves under a new form of colonialism -neocolonialism (see, for example, Turok 1987: Ch.1).

2.1 Pursuing material wealth

In keeping with the image of the First World, developing countries were to lay heavy emphasis on the attainment of rapid economic growth (Dube 1987: 41). Other equally pertinent issues such as questions of wealth redistribution, for instance, did not feature prominently in this kind of development thinking. It was assumed that either through the operation of market forces such as the rising demand for labour, higher productivity, higher wages or lower prices, or through corrective action by governments which naturally are concerned about the fate of the poor, economic growth would spread its benefits widely and speedily (Streeten et al 1981). When any attention was given to the question of redistribution, only lip service was paid to it (Seers 1981).

The expected "trickle down effect", however, did not materialise in spite of the fact that many developing countries achieved impressive rates of economic growth (Rondinelli 1979: 392), and by the late 1960s and early 1970s this development strategy was being called into question. The "Redistribution with Growth" strategy of the 1970s as propounded, for example, by Chenery et al (1974) can thus be seen as a reaction to the failures of the "growth only" policy. In Stewarts' (1985: 10) view, the basic aim of this new approach:

... was to continue with the high growth strategy but redistribute the fruits of growth in the form of investment resources to be conferred on the poor, who would then be able to raise their income in a sustained way.

Pourgerami (1991: 8) also notes that this new model of development was based on the understanding that growth and equity are not

necessarily incompatible and that the choice of the developing countries is not between growth and equity but between the type of economic growth which benefits only the already affluent and the one in which the benefits are widely distributed.

What is perhaps worth re-emphasising above all else in the pattern of development so far reviewed is that objectives are, essentially, couched in economic terms. Within this paradigm, priority has been given to certain specific goals at different times - the attainment of high levels of per capita income, employment creation and the raising of the income earning capacity of the poor, as well as the equitable distribution of assets and gains of growth - which in the final analysis are all based upon an economic interpretation of the process of development. Such structural and institutional changes as are considered necessary outside the sphere of economics to complete the modernisation process are seen as mere appendages of an essentially economic phenomenon, either flowing invariably from it or helping to facilitate and sustain it (Hoogvelt 1978: 56). These include the change, as visualised by Talcott Parsons, from diffuse to functionally specific institutional structures, from ascriptive to achievement oriented behaviour patterns, from particularistic to universalistic norms (Coetzee 1989b; Dube 1988; Goldthorpe 1984).

One might have been led to believe that the rival dependency school holds a radically different conception of the basic aims of development. But the following formulation by Frank (1979: 108) suggests otherwise:

... the satellites experience their greatest economic development and especially their most classically industrial development if and when their ties to their metropolis are

weakest. This hypothesis is almost diametrically opposed to the generally accepted thesis that development in the underdeveloped countries follows from the greatest degree of contact with and diffusion from the metropolitan developed countries.

Thus, as Blomström and Hettne (1984: 76) also observe, dependency theorists maintain, in contradistinction to modernisation theorists that more self-reliance and less dependence on the First World will bring about development in the underdeveloped countries. But the kind of development to which they refer is, notably, similar to the one that modernisation theorists are concerned with - that in the realm of the economy - cum - industry (Webster 1984: 92). So, the real difference between dependency and modernisation theories is not so much in the type of development being sought as it is in the way in which that development can be achieved in the Third World, as well as their understanding of the causes of underdevelopment. As Mabogunje (1980) and Roxborough (1979) illustrate, the dependency school blames it more on external variables epitomised by adverse terms of trade for Third World countries while modernisation theorists focus on endogenous factors in the form of archaic social institutions and old-fashioned ideas.²

2.2.2 Non-material goals of development

The materialistic interpretation of development has been discussed not only to highlight its shortcomings earlier in the history of Third

2 For a discussion of these two theories see also Emmett 1983; Tipps 1973; Palma 1978; Vorster 1989.

World development but also because, as Korten (1984a: 299) points out, in spite of its limitations it continues to play a significant role in the current thinking on development. Gran (1983: 154) also laments as follows:

The world system is spreading the consumer mentality to billions of people who cannot attain great material wealth with the prevailing exclusionary social orders and scale of use of resources.

Notwithstanding the persistence of this particular conception of development, fresh outlooks have emerged over the past two decades or so. The "Basic Needs Approach" constitutes one such a departure from conventional wisdom in development. This approach as espoused, for instance by ILO³ (1978) encapsulates certain minimum requirements of a family for private consumption (food, clothing, shelter, etc) as well as essential services provided by and for the community at large (public transport, health, education, etc). But then, the provision of basic needs should be placed within a broader framework of protecting basic human rights (ILO 1978: 32; Machooka 1984: 62). Seen in this light the strategy draws attention to the necessity for emphasis to be placed on the achievement of non-material goals of development (Stewart 1985; Streeten et al 1981). Among other things, these targets:

... include the needs for self-determination, self-reliance, and security, for the participation of workers and citizens in the decision-making that affects them, for national and cultural identity, and for a sense of purpose in life and work (Streeten et al 1981: 32).

The basic needs strategy clearly has something in common with the "humanist-liberationist approach" to development in so far as they both stress the attainment of non-material and moral goals of development. For humanists, development is synonymous with liberation; and, in fact, to them the term liberation better captures the essence of the transformation process required to take place in Third World societies (Freire 1972a, 1972b; Goulet 1979, 1971; Kruijer 1987). On this issue Goulet (1971: xv) says:

To substitute for "development" the term "liberation" is to engage in what Brazilian educator Paulo Freire calls "cultural action for freedom". Liberation implies the suppression of elitism by a populace which assumes control over its own change processes. Development on the other hand, although frequently used to describe various change processes, stresses the benefits said to result from them: material prosperity, higher production and expanded consumption, better housing or medical services, wider educational opportunities and employment mobility, and so on (Emphases in original).

It is important to note that the argument being made is not that the quest for material wealth should be totally negated. Obviously, a certain amount of wealth is necessary to sustain human life. Indeed humanists too recognise that humanisation must also imply the satisfaction of material needs (Freire 1972b: 43; Goulet 1971: xiv). Rather, what is being asserted is that the almost fanatical obsession with material wealth cannot justifiably be universally advocated because of the ethical questions raised by the fetishism of material possessions, as well as the negative effects of the spread of western consumerism on world development and its sustainability. These issues are highlighted in sub-sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4, respectively.

2.2.3 Ethical issues in development

Two related ethical questions deserve serious consideration because it would appear that the solution to the problem of development depends, at least in part, on providing satisfactory answers to them. On the one hand, it is the question of what constitutes a good life or a good society. On the other hand, it is the issue of who should decide on the nature of the good life or society (Bryant & White 1982: 3).

The assumption that Western society symbolises the most desirable form of social organisation is flawed basically for its ethnocentrism, including its attempt to overlook the drawbacks of western culture - the word culture being used here to mean ideas, norms, lifestyles and the social, political and economic configurations that mark a given society (Wils 1984: 118). Western civilization is not necessarily the most preferable because human well-being is not only a question of material wealth. It also depends on value systems, the erosion of which in rich industrial countries has caused the alienation of the individual as reflected by "suicide rates, alcohol and drug abuse, criminal activity and other trends destructive to both individual and society" (Weitz 1986: 19).

There is a strong indication too that Western Society is not seen to epitomise the ultimate in human values even by many of its own members who feel that:

... economic growth is not everything, that it should not be enshrined as the supreme human value, that caring and sharing, in the ultimate analysis mean much more than acquisition and consumption (Dube 1987: 44).

Therefore, while they need to strive to eradicate poverty, developing countries should avoid a situation in which their road to material prosperity is "strewn with the ruins of previously useful value systems" (Weitz 1986: 19).⁴

In this context, the concept of a "culture of poverty" can play a useful role in shaping our perception of the process of development and our appreciation of its complexities. In one sense, the phrase contains negative connotations when it is used to denote limiting factors which cause people to resign themselves to poverty and not seize opportunities to improve their lives (Worsley. 1984; Emmett 1989; Galbraith 1979). From a different viewpoint Radhakrishna (Kotzé 1983: 13) notes that there is a positive side to the acknowledgement of a culture of poverty as a source of alternative value systems which allocate a lesser place to material achievement. Like the basic needs and humanist approaches, then, the call for a culture of poverty as a common thread running through different societies implies the need to give impetus to the achievement of non-material goals of development.

Because cultural values are an intrinsic part of development, and bearing in mind the pitfalls of western-style development referred to above, the people for whom development is intended ought to be given the opportunity to imprint their own values on the process (Bryant & White 1982; Kotzé 1983). In other words, it is the people who are affected by the development process who should determine what a good life is for them. This, therefore, suggests that the active

4 See also Apthorpe 1982; Kuper 1984.

participation of people in the act of development should be facilitated (Korten 1984a: 301; Coetzee 1980: 32). However, western economism, as a development paradigm, continues to hold sway over many non-western societies because its exponents fail to see this occurrence as an invasion of the orbits of one culture by another, since "many a western or western-trained development expert is culture-conditioned to be culture-blind" (Nieuwenhuijze 1984: 19-20).

2.2.4 **Sustaining the process**

To be sure, concern for the environment has not always been a prominent feature of the overall thinking on development and only over the recent past (the first international conference on the environment was held under the auspices of the United Nations Organisation in 1972) has the question of sustainability come to dominate issues of development. At the same time O'Riordan and Turner (1983) note that notions that man has an endless technological and organisational capacity to solve all his problems, or that nature could always be counted upon to restore the ecological balance in its own way (including natural disasters such as disease epidemics which kill off huge sections of the human population) are becoming less acceptable.⁵

Kotzé (1983: 10) looks at this problem within the context of "development pathology", and suggests that there is need to address the negative side effects of development, by arguing that:

5 But this view could be vindicated, at least to some extent, if a cure for AIDS is not discovered soon enough.

[t]here has been rather a naive assumption that development would always be in the general interest; a forward movement. ... It was not realised that certain forms of development could have adverse social and political results; things which could be regarded as development pathology, such as pollution, slums, inequality, industrial diseases, inflation etc.

It could be argued that the position that one holds on ecological questions is determined by one's perception of the relationship between man and his environment. On the one hand, there is an "exploitative" world view and, on the other, a "mutualistic" world view. Sprout and Sprout (Seitz 1988: 142) opine that:

[a]n ... exploitative attitude would be one that envisages inert matter, non-human species, and even humans as objects to be possessed and manipulated to suit the purposes of the exploiter. In contrast a ... mutualistic posture would be one that emphasises the interrelatedness of things and manifests a preference for cooperation and accommodation rather than conflict and domination.

It could well be said that an exploitative world view forms part of the philosophical underpinnings of western consumer mentality. In this vein, Bawa's (1989) comment with regard to the concern now being raised about the link between western-oriented development and environmental degradation is particularly apt. He writes:

*There are many who feel that development, as it is commonly understood in the sense of **catching up with the west**, is a threat to the environment and ecological system; and thus to the future welfare of humankind (p. 143. Emphasis in original).*

Both in terms of the scale of use of resources as well as the types of production technologies employed (Redclift 1984), the westernisation of non-western economies is now deemed to be endangering not only

the future livelihood, but in some instances even the present livelihood of humankind (Vivian 1991; Adams & Thomas 1993; Todaro 1994; Lélé 1991).

In the light of the issues raised in sub-sections 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 above, concerning material goals, non-material goals, normative issues and sustainability of development, respectively; the next sub-section develops a working definition of development for the present study.

2.2.5 **Defining development**

In sum, our view of the process of development must be based upon an appreciation of its multi-dimensional and complex nature. It must be informed by the various "contributions and critiques" made by different people, from different perspectives, over the entire period of the evolution of development theory. As Hettne (1990: 4) observes, development paradigms tend to accumulate rather than replace each other. While newer models seek to overcome the shortcomings of earlier ones, they, nevertheless, assume their positive characteristics.

According to Coetzee (1989a: 1), as development theory evolved not only has the conception of development broadened but its focal point also shifted. The entry point is no longer the economy but human beings. He notes that a further shift of emphasis has occurred from macro-level to micro-level analysis, and local community issues now take precedence over national and international considerations. In other words, development is currently seen mainly in terms of improvements taking place in local communities.

On this score, Bryant and White (1982) succinctly capture the essence of the process by proposing that development should be understood in terms of increasing the capacity of people to influence their own future. They go on to elaborate in these terms:

*Development as an increase in the capacity to influence the future has certain implications. First, it means paying attention to **capacity**, to what needs to be done to expand the ability and energy to make change. Second, it involves **equity**; uneven attention to different groups will divide peoples and undermine their capacity. Third, it means **empowerment**, in the sense that only if people have some power will they receive the benefits of development. And finally it means taking seriously the interdependence in the world and the need to ensure that the future is **sustainable** (p.15. Emphases in original).*

Basing myself on the views expressed by Bryant and White above, I choose to see development as *an increase in the capacity of people (defined in terms of a community) to interact with their social and physical environments on a sustainable basis, with the aim of achieving the goals that they set for themselves*. This is the form of development which has been described as human, people-centred or social development (Korten 1980, 1983; Thomas 1985; Coetzee 1989a).

In section 2.3 below, I examine the manner in which the changes taking place in development theory have affected rural development strategy.

2.3 STRATEGIES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

2.3.1 From agricultural growth to people's participation

Efforts to improve the lives of Third World dwellers after their release from colonisation attached secondary importance to rural development in spite of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the people lived in the rural areas, and earned their means of livelihood there. Dasgupta (1982) and Siddle (1978) argue that the basic understanding in development circles was that the rural sector ought to play a supportive role to what was regarded to be a more dynamic industrial sector. The former was expected to provide food to feed the growing urban centres, the raw materials and labour required in industry and a market for industrial products - a situation which Spalding (1990) terms "agricultural surplus extraction". The same views are expressed by Coombs (1980: 9).

What this means is that rural development was seen in terms of the contribution which could be made by agriculture to the growth of the economy in conjunction with industry, but as a junior partner to it. It was assumed that with time excess labour would shift out of agriculture into industry. This would lead to a relative shortage of labour in the rural areas, which would in turn result in the equalisation of wages and living standards between the urban-industrial sector and the rural-agricultural sector (Rondinelli 1986). Dasgupta shows that this "particular type of approach towards the problems of rural development" was indicative not only of the dominance of economics in development thinking but also of the fact that:

Whether explicitly stated or not, inequality as a component of state policy was seen as an engine of growth, not as a menace. If not actually encouraged, it was tolerated by governments as indispensable within the general scheme of things (1982: 117).

Thus, as Lee (1981) also observes, questions of income distribution were not seriously considered because of the belief that the benefits of industrial growth would filter down to the rural population. In sub-section 2.2.1, I indicated that these assumptions about the "trickle down effect" of economic growth were the assumptions on which development thinking in general was based.

However, Mabogunje (1980: 10) and Sterkenburg (1987: 7) note that along with the changes taking place in the ideas about the development problem in general, from a simple and straight forward growth orientation, views on rural development also shifted emphasis to the circumstances under which the majority of the rural residents earned their means of subsistence.

The realisation that agricultural growth alone did not improve the living conditions of the lot of the rural poor brought with it some innovative changes in strategy. The new strategies of rural development, whose central focus was on people's participation, were community development (CD), the basic needs approach (BNA) and integrated rural development (IRD).⁶ It is to these strategies that I now want to turn my attention.

6 Strictly speaking, community development and the basic needs approach are not applicable only in the rural areas although CD, in particular, has been more widely applied in that context.

2.3.2 Community development

The first attempts to seriously address the problems of rural communities in developing countries can be found in community development and rural animation in the 1950s and early 1960s. Because the two strategies are very similar in their basic philosophies and aims (Jeppe 1985: 32) methods (Charlick 1984: 1) and shortcomings (Coombs & Ahmed 1974: 71) the discussion will focus on CD as it is the more widely publicised of the two. Another reason for focusing on CD is that it is the one which is directly relevant in the case of Lesotho.

Edwards and Jones (1976: 137) see community development as a type of change which:

... is especially directed by the local people toward objectives which they regard as beneficial to the community.

In this connection, Coombs and Ahmed (1974) maintain that the main objective of CD is social development rather than economic development. Expressing a similar sentiment Edwards and Jones (1976: 140-141) argue that:

... community development as a process tends to focus upon the dynamics inherent in the interaction among community members who seek to deal with community change ... [and therefore] the terms community development and community organisation can be used interchangeably.⁷

Although community development came to be widely practised in Third World countries, the promise which it seemed to hold for the betterment of rural communities failed to materialise,⁸ and by the mid-1960s this approach had fallen out of favour (Holdcroft & Jones 1982; Lacroix 1985; Swanepoel 1987). It had not been successful in meeting either the economic or the political development objectives intended (Ruttan 1984). Basing themselves on the experience of Asia, Ruttan as well as Jones and Wiggle (1987) note that the fall of community development was followed by the rise of the "green revolution strategy" which signalled a shift of attention to programmes narrowly focused on the enhancement of agricultural production.

Consequently, this strategy also failed to address the needs of the poor. The main weaknesses of the green revolution are that it was only in areas with favourable environmental conditions that high yields were realised; and that because this approach overlooked the need for redistributing assets, only the richer farmers, who could afford the new seeds, fertilizers and other technological innovations which formed the basis of the green revolution, actually benefited. Thus the strategy led to uneven development between regions and between people (Griffin 1973; Cleaver 1979; Harrison 1983; Karim 1985).

The disillusionment surrounding the failures of the green revolution led to a resurgence in the 1970s of strategies which sought to address the developmental needs of the poor rural masses. These approaches

8 Some explanations will be offered in sub-section 2.3.7.

were represented by the basic needs approach and the integrated rural development strategy (Ruttan 1984).

2.3.3 **The basic needs approach**

Two points need to be highlighted about the basic needs approach. First, the strategy is much more concerned with reducing or eradicating poverty than it is with bringing about equity - "subsistence is seen as having precedence over fairness" (Spalding 1990: 1). This fact notwithstanding, one is inclined to agree that few societies can desire a situation in which the primary needs of the people are met within a framework of sharp differences in material welfare and access to communal services (ILO 1978: 35). In fact, as Lee (1977: 67) points out, a reduction of inequality would actually facilitate the satisfaction of basic needs.

It should be noted that the resources of this world are finite, and so at some point the satisfaction of basic needs must entail redistribution from those holding a disproportionate share to those who either have too little or none at all. It is in this context that Otzen et al (1979: 1) and Ghai (1977: 3) suggest that the basic needs strategy follows logically from the redistribution with growth approach, as defined in sub-section 2.2.1. Redistribution of assets and income makes it possible for the basic needs of the poor to be met.

So, much as the basic needs strategy is geared towards fighting poverty rather than ensuring equity, in the real world issues of poverty and equity are closely interlinked. The second point to note about this policy is that:

[e]ssentially, the Basic Needs Strategy concentrates on defining an end-state ... which it is the purpose of 'development' to attain (Lee 1977: 62).

This view is supported by Streeten and Burki (1978: 412) who feel that this approach represents a shift from a preoccupation with means to a renewed awareness of ends. However, to say that the basic needs approach focuses on the end result and not on the process of development as such is not to suggest that it neglects this aspect of the phenomenon altogether. Lee (1977: 60) concedes that satisfying the basic needs of the poor also involves issues of organisation and institutional rearrangement - a point with which Ghai (1977) concurs.

2.3.4 Integrated rural development

Sharma's (1979) observation is that hardly any agreement exists on the nature and coverage of integrated rural development while Fuguitt (Lea & Chaudhri 1983: 13) goes as far as to say that "what is integrated depends more on the writer than anything else". In spite of the lack of agreement over the precise meaning of IRD, two broad types of integration are discernible from the literature dealing with the subject. On the one hand, there is sectoral integration and, on the other, there is objective-based integration. Omer (1980: 124), for example, looking at integrated rural development from a sector-based perspective defines it as a:

... holistic venture rather than a piecemeal fragmented effort of one sector of the economy or the attempt of a particular government department to promote its departmental activities [noting that] [a]s problems faced by people do not necessarily

fall within one sector or one discipline, solutions suggested ... may use intersectoral and interdisciplinary strategies.

Objective-based integration would then be a process of trying to cater for the achievement of different goals of development in a single coordinated effort. Yadav (1980: 86) provides a comprehensive list of objectives which includes increased agricultural production, the creation of employment opportunities, equitable distribution of the benefits of growth, provision of public services and the fostering of popular participation in development, and concludes:

These objectives are inter-related and hence an integrated approach to development implies that any trade-off between or among [them] should be minimised.

Recognising, nonetheless, that it is difficult to deal with all the problems of the rural areas in one stroke Bryant and White (1984: 4) suggest an incremental approach in which the key is:

... to identify which of these components is likely to have the greatest multiplier effect on the other factors as well as those where some leverage exists for bringing about change.

While, in certain circumstances, it may be expedient, as Bryant and White (1984) argue, to start by concentrating on the agricultural sector and to add other components of rural development over time, Kotter (Abasiokong 1982: 2) stresses that the objectives of rural development must go beyond those of agricultural development to include factors such as increased social justice, eradication of absolute poverty and changes in the power structure since these:

... are not good things to be pursued after economic growth has been achieved, but they are basic requirements for setting economic development in motion.

It would, however, be misleading to say that objective-based and sector-based forms of IRD are mutually exclusive for a lot of overlaps can and do exist between them. For example, the establishment of rural industries could, in one sense, be regarded as a form of sectoral integration between industry and agriculture. At the same time, it could represent the integration of the objective of creating more employment opportunities in the countryside with that of distributing national resources more equitably between the rural and urban areas. It is more appropriate, therefore, to think of the two forms of integration not so much as alternative approaches but rather as being complementary to each other and forming part of a single whole. Viewed from this perspective neither one of these two types of integration would be complete without the other.⁹

2.3.5 A comparative analysis

Commenting on trends in community development Batten (1957: 7) says:

One is for the agencies working in the same area in agriculture, forestry, health, water-supplies, education and so on to plan and work together in a more co-ordinated way ... so that the work of each agency strengthens and complements the work

9 See also Rondinelli 1979; Koppel 1987; Sterkenburg 1987; Lacroix 1985; Armor et al 1979; Wang 1986, on integrated rural development.

of others. A second trend is to work with groups rather than with individuals 'in the mass', and the third to get people to take as active a part as possible in their community's development. Lastly, more attention is being paid now than in the past to people's ... actual wants as distinct from the agency's conception of their needs (Emphasis in original).

From what Batten says, it is clear that from the very beginning the concept of CD had within it the notions of integration of efforts, satisfaction of human needs and people's participation. Coombs (1980: 1) has similarly established the link between these strategies by identifying a:

... new international consensus [calling] for a massive multi-faceted rural development effort aimed at meeting the "basic needs" of the rural poor [which] differs drastically from the fragmented sector-by-sector, top-down strategy that has been universally followed ever since the short-lived "community development" boom of the 1950s; [adding that] the new strategy calls for an "integrated" approach, combined with extensive "Community Participation" (Emphases in original).

If there is such a close relationship between these strategies are we then to agree with Cornwell (1986: 13) that:

[f]rom all this one may well conclude that writers on community development and related approaches are involved in a search for new titles and slogans rather than in a questioning of underlying principles?

Yes, I agree that the basic principles are not being questioned but no I do not agree that it is, therefore, purely a question of semantics. Ruttan (1984) is closer to the mark when he says that there is a difference between CD and the rural development policies of the 1970s and that the difference lies in a shift of emphasis. But I disagree with him in saying that this represents

"a major difference" (p.398). All the three strategies - CD, BNA and IRD - lie within the same mould, attempting to deal with the problems of the underprivileged mass of the rural population directly, and yet emphasising different aspects of the task.

Sanders (1964: 310), for instance, characterises community development as *a process*¹⁰ and not the end result thereof (also refer to section 2.3.2). Conversely, van der Hoeven (1988: 7) argues that a basic needs approach is concerned more with the objectives of a development process than with the process itself (also refer to section 2.3.3). Thus, CD emphasises the process or the means to an end while the BNA reverses the approach and starts from the end or the objectives of the process of development. On the other hand, integrated rural development signifies a synthesis of the two. In this regard, Kotzé and Swanepoel (1983: 11) suggest that:

[i]t is therefore an integration of objectives as well as an integration of efforts.

This means that IRD could be regarded as a logical outgrowth of CD and the BNA. It reconciles the two approaches and underlines the significance of giving equal attention to both the means and the ends of development to avoid the drawbacks inherent in concentrating too much on one and ignoring the other.

10 He also notes that it is sometimes seen as *a method, a programme or a movement*. But the essential thing is that in all cases the focus is on the means to an end and not the end itself.

2.3.6 The unifying factor

The crucial factor unifying the three strategies of rural development is to be found in the concept of people's participation, and this bond of unity appears to be far more important than the differences discussed above. Also, unlike Cornwell's (1986: 11) suggestion that community participation should be seen as one of the variations of community development it seems to me that it is more appropriate to view it as a common theme running through all the strategies which seek to tackle the problems of rural development seriously. In Chapter 1, I presented a conceptual framework of the participatory strategy. Capacity building and empowerment, the establishment of a democratic polity and the participation of the poor in benefits sharing were identified as defining characteristics of this process.

Many writers indeed consider community participation to be a basic ingredient in all three strategies. Mial and Mial (Sanders 1964: 312) as well as Kotzé and Swanepoel (1983: 2), for example, argue that popular participation is a fundamental aspect of community development. Similarly, Ghai and Alftan (1977: 25) together with Keeton (1984: 283) regard community involvement to be a crucial element of the basic needs approach. Although, as indicated in subsection 2.3.3, Ghai (1977: 3) acknowledges the close relationship between the basic needs approach and the redistribution with growth strategy, he observes that the difference between them lies in that the former takes the latter beyond the realm of economic concerns and highlights the normative issues in development. Earlier in this chapter, I argued that this appreciation of the moral aspects of development has led to a call for people's participation. Therefore,

the difference between the BNA and the redistribution with growth approach is that while the BNA emphasises popular participation the other strategy does not. In a like manner, Wang (1986: 559) and Yadav (1980: 86) see people's participation as a central feature of an integrated rural development strategy.

Ironically, the failure of these strategies to bring about widespread and effective rural development in the Third World can be linked to their inability to institutionalise community participation as a means of creating local development capacity.

2.3.7 Problems of participation in CD, BNA and IRD

In community development programmes, the tendency of village level workers to work through the village elites enabled these elites to capture most of the benefits of development to the exclusion of the poor majority who became disillusioned and withdrew their participation (Holdcroft & Jones 1982; Lacroix 1985). Secondly, the implementation of these programmes was carried out through established line ministries which were geared towards centralised decision-making, and therefore not receptive to genuine community participation (Holdcroft & Jones 1982; Lacroix 1985; Gow & van Sant 1981; Hall 1988). In part, these tendencies followed from the assumptions that village communities are homogeneous and all people will therefore benefit equally from development programmes; and that civil servants have all the answers to the problems of the rural areas and so there is not need to allow any input from the bottom (Jones & Wiggle 1987).

Regarding the basic needs strategies Ghai (1977: 16) posits that although they emphasised "structural transformations" and recognised the importance of unequal relations of power in development programmes they remained largely technocratic exercises. Ruttan (1984: 398) notes that there is a contradiction between the attainment of community participation and the attainment of measurable improvements in basic needs. This point is supported by van der Hoeven (1988) and Spalding (1990) by observing that because people's basic needs have to be met within the shortest possible time, the mobilisation and organisation of the rural poor is often replaced by bureaucratic approaches to programme delivery. So, the sense of urgency infused by the basic needs approach militates against the achievement of people's participation.

This means that while the needs of the poor have to be addressed as quickly as possible, a distinction ought to be made between short-term relief operations and longer-term programmes aimed at building local capacity for self-sustaining development. This study will, however, demonstrate that relief operations and development programmes can be (and should be) effectively integrated. About IRD, Abasiokong (1982: 95) reports that:

[a]lthough popular, local or community participation is readily advocated for successful integrated rural development projects, promoting and sustaining it is not without problems.

Specifically, integrated rural development projects have been criticised on two main counts, the effect of which has been to undermine effective popular participation. Firstly, they have tended to accentuate inequalities by providing credit, marketing outlets, agricultural inputs and other facilities in such a way that only the

better-off are able to take advantage of them (Momin 1987; Roth 1994). IRD shares this weakness with the green revolution strategies, alluded to in sub-section 2.3.2. Secondly, extensive outside financial resources have been used in IRD projects, thereby undermining local self-reliance. This over-reliance on outside resources has also meant that only a few localities could partake in and benefit from these programmes (Jones & Wiggle 1987; Rondinelli 1979).

As a result, Afxentiou (1990: 250) has concluded that these strategies of rural development have failed to produce the expected results because while they emphasise popular participation they do not pay sufficient attention to the problems which impede its realisation - such as the absence of a conducive political and bureaucratic climate. Oakley and Marsden (1984: 10) express a similar view.

Despite the problems associated with implementation, the call for people's participation appears to resurface each time the disadvantaged majority of Third World dwellers face a desperate situation, as in the case of IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programmes. While these programmes represent a regression in development thinking to the days when development was seen purely in terms of economic growth (Tandon 1991; Loxley & Campbell 1989; Pastor 1987), their negative impact on the "vulnerables" has brought community participation to the fore as an effective way of redressing the situation (Adedeji 1991). A 1987 study of the human cost of structural adjustment by UNICEF¹¹ (Tandon 1991: 4) says:

11 United Nations Children's (originally, International Children's Emergency) Fund.

... community participation can play a critical role in helping formulate policy, in providing the administrative mechanism for aspects of the programme ... and in providing the resources of labour and food to pay for some basic services ... (Emphasis in original).

Evidently, because people's participation is such an important variable, one of the most pressing tasks in rural development is how to overcome the hurdles both at the central and local levels to ensure that genuine participation takes place.

2.4

CONCLUSION

Changes taking place in development theory have had an impact on rural development strategies. With the change of emphasis from economic to normative issues, rural development strategies equally shifted from concentrating on agricultural growth to promoting people's participation. Nevertheless, the failure of the new rural development strategies to cater for the well-being of the rural poor seems to be related to their inability to overcome obstacles to community participation.

CHAPTER 3

FACTORS AFFECTING PARTICIPATORY RURAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the problems which often impede participatory development. In this chapter I look at ways in which these problems might be addressed. The chapter starts by discussing the functions of participatory organisations and their characteristics. Subsequently, the manner in which the type of activity undertaken by a group can affect the quality of participation is highlighted. Furthermore, the influence of the local socio-economic environment on the participatory process is examined, particularly the role of local elites and that of indigenous organisations.

The discussion then shifts to factors beyond the local level, where I discuss the relationship between decentralised structures of government and rural participation. In addition, the role of the bureaucracy in facilitating participation is dealt with; as well as the need for a conducive political climate. The contribution which nongovernmental organisations can make towards encouraging governments to follow participatory policies is also alluded to. Finally, the chapter deals with the learning process approach as a method of institutionalising participatory development. In this regard, development projects are seen as mechanisms which enable developers to focus attention on specific problems, in order to learn how to deal with them better.

3.2 LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

It was pointed out in Chapter 1 that community organisation is a necessary ingredient of the participatory strategy. This fact is also recognised by the ILO (1978: 35) within the basic needs approach, for example, in observing:

... participation is severely hampered by lack of organisations that can express the views and aspirations of the poorest population groups, especially those in the rural areas ...

While the International Labour Office recognises the crucial link between local organisations and people's participation, it devotes no attention to the process of organisational development except to remark:

... an attempt to involve the people in the setting of basic-needs targets will provide a welcome stimulus to the establishment of such organisations (ILO 1978: 35).

In this section, the basic principles underlying community organisation will be discussed.

3.2.1 Functions and types of local organisations

3.2.1.1 *Functions of local organisations*

Community organisations can perform the following specific functions in rural development :

- (a) they can facilitate the provision of public services by supplying accurate information on the needs, priorities and capabilities of

local people and by providing a reliable feedback on the impact of government initiatives and services;

- (b) they can provide a basis for mutual assistance and collective action - mobilisation, deployment and application of resources (money, labour, materials, managerial skills) which in turn creates the basis for self-reliance and local capacity building;
- (c) they can empower the local people by equipping them with a voice and capacity to make credible demands on government and others in charge of resources and public policy;
- (d) they can act as mechanisms for planning local development as well as receiving and utilising outside help (Esman & Uphoff 1982: 8-9; Clarke 1980: 110-111; Wang 1986: 574; van Heck 1979: 64).

Although people's organisations have the right to make claims on outside agencies this may have the undesirable effect of retarding self-reliance (Rémion 1986; Alamgir 1989). This suggests that there is a potential conflict between the role of local organisations as vehicles for self-reliance and their role as conduits of external assistance. One way of resolving the conflict is to use outside resources only to supplement local resources and therefore to have the first priority as developing and utilising local resources (Korten 1984a).

From this it follows that one of the first tasks in local participatory development is a careful analysis of available and potential resources - financial, human and otherwise - on an individual, family and community basis (Cernea 1986). According to Dichter (1989: 135), even the poorest rural dwellers have the capacity to make

contributions, including financial contributions, if they are convinced that this is in their best interest.

3.2.1.2 *Types of local organisations*

Esman and Uphoff (1982: 22-23) categorise rural organisations into Local development associations, Cooperatives and Interest associations. Local development associations - e.g., development committees, are defined by geographic boundaries. They bring people together in a community, area or region to promote development through self-help and/or by lobbying the government for assistance. Although local development associations share some common characteristics with local government structures, they do not have the same legal powers and their responsibilities are not as comprehensive. They are, therefore, extensions of the community rather than the government, even though their formation is often inspired by the government (Goldsmith & Blustain 1980; Uphoff 1986).

Cooperatives are defined by their economic functions. They are organisations in which members pool their resources in the form of capital (savings societies), labour (rotating work groups), land (production cooperatives), purchasing power (consumer cooperatives) or products (marketing cooperatives). These organisations differ from local development associations in that their benefits accrue privately to members while the latter contribute mainly towards the provision of public goods such as roads and dams (Wang 1986; Esman & Uphoff 1982; Peterson 1982b).

Interest associations have as their defining characteristics the

common features or interests of their membership. Examples of these organisations are women's associations, ethnic associations, landless labourer organisations and youth clubs. Interest associations are less encompassing than local development associations, which are more inclusive and multi-functional. But they are broader than cooperatives because they are concerned with social as well as economic interests, and with private as well as public goods (Swanepoel 1992; van Heck 1979; Esman & Uphoff 1982).

Among local organisations, van Heck (1979: 24-25) distinguishes between standard and participatory organisations. Standard organisations are formed and controlled by outside agencies - usually governmental; they are elite dominated with the result that this group gets most of the benefits; they have formalised structures and follow standardised procedures; and they "are based on foreign concepts and inspired by abstract principles". In contrast, participatory organisations are started and managed by the people themselves; they are more informal in arrangement and flexible in objectives; and their establishment is related to and inspired by the day to day needs of the people.¹

Without denying the basic validity of van Heck's classification, care must be taken not to see all organisations inspired by outside bodies as standard. Participatory organisations can still be established by outside agencies (Esman & Uphoff 1982: 45; Korten 1980: 495-

1 Leonard (1982a) and Peterson (1982a) describe organisations which specifically seek to protect the interests of the poor as "alternative" organisations and distinguish them from "regular" organisations which serve the interests of the rich.

496). The crux of the matter is that once established the founding body should gradually loosen its hold while simultaneously training the people to take full control of the organisation in the end. From the onset the role of the outsiders should be to help the members of the organisation to learn to do things for themselves and not to perform their tasks for them, which thing creates dependency and undermines autonomy (Nilsson & Wadeskog 1986; Swanepoel 1992; Ghai 1988). That way the group will develop an internal dynamic for self-sustaining growth.

For the purpose of expedience it is necessary to start with a more informal organisation. This would then become more formal if and when the need arises and as the organisational ability of the group members develops.² In addition to their informal nature, and in some ways related to it, organisations intended to facilitate authentic participation of the rural folk in development have the following characteristics:

- (a) they are uni-functional rather than multi-functional, at least at the initial stages of their development;
- (b) their small size allows for the exertion of peer pressure which induces group cohesion and loyalty;³ and

2 But the distinction between formal and informal organisations is one of degree rather than kind. One should thus think more in terms of a continuum rather than absolute categories. Formalisation implies, e.g., the specification of roles and rules for the organisation, including the legality of its status; having a written constitution or by-laws; office bearers with specified duties and responsibilities; and maintenance of written financial and other records. Different organisations may, therefore, be more formal in some aspects and less so in others.

3 A large organisation/group consists of more than 100 members, a medium-sized group 50-100 and a small group under 50 (Esman & Uphoff 1982). Oakley and Marsden (1984) suggest that an ideal group should have between 15 and 35 members.

- (c) they function on the basis of open management, consensual decision making processes and democratic principles (Peterson 1982a; Rémon 1986; Verhagen 1986).

The relatively small size of the participatory organisation, its uni-functional nature and its informal structure are important attributes. They ensure that the organisation remains simple enough for the rural people to participate fully in its activities and to retain control over it (van Heck 1979; Wang 1986). But a more complex organisation demands higher administrative skills which the rural masses may not have, and this could be seen as a justification for external control.

3.2.2 Factors influencing participation in local organisations

3.2.2.1 *The type of activity*

It should be borne in mind that participation is a form of investment and that people will participate in collective action so long as the gains from doing so are greater than costs (Bryant & White 1984; Uphoff 1986). Hence community organisation should take place around those issues which people consider to be important; and tangible gains must accrue to participants in the short-run since benefits which are realised in the long-term are unlikely to attract much participation (Nilsson & Wadeskog 1986; Chinchankar 1986).

Cohen and Uphoff (1977: 124) distinguish between three types of group activities or projects - complementary, substitute and foreign - and suggest that a development activity or project which has the greatest chance of succeeding is one which complements existing practices in the area, and builds upon the technologies and natural

interests of the people. On the other hand, substitute activities are somewhat more successful than foreign ones.⁴ Related to these three types of activities is the level of technology. High technology causes beneficiaries to become dependent on outside experts or technicians, and inhibits participation in both decision making and implementation because it is not within their range of skills and knowledge (Finsterbusch & van Wicklin 1987: 9; Cohen & Uphoff 1980: 225).

It is also possible that a "public good" could fail to attract much participation unless it can be converted into a "private good" that is, unless one can get a direct personal benefit from it (Bryant & White 1984: 34). This would mean that the planting of a communal forest can be expected to attract better participation than the construction of a feeder road because the former can more easily be turned into a "private good". Leonard (1982a) and Uphoff (1986) add another dimension to the problem by showing that some activities are by their very nature vulnerable to inequality and therefore that the poor are unlikely to benefit from them, which suggests that they will not be easily drawn into participating in them.⁵

In discussing collective action one must also bear in mind the problem of the "tragedy of the commons" as outlined by Hardin (1983). Using communal pastures as an example, he argues that a farmer

4 complementary - e.g., upgrading the breed of cattle which pastoralists have traditionally reared;
 substitute - e.g., introducing dairy cows to people accustomed to beef farming, or broilers to people used to keeping layers.
 foreign - e.g., introducing new lines of production such as poultry farming to pastoralists.

5 E.g., water systems piped to individual households rather than communal use-points and road construction in situations where only a few people will be engaged in production for the market.

makes a rational decision to put an extra animal on the grazing land because while he benefits alone from this move, the cost, in terms of the depletion of the grazing land through overgrazing, will be shared with others. In some cases, this problem presents itself as the "free rider problem" in which people attempt to benefit from public goods without incurring any costs at all and letting others bear all the costs (Bryant & White 1984: 20-21). In this situation, Hardin (1983: 293) suggests that:

[t]he tragedy of the commons as a food basket is averted by private property or something formally like it.

In other words, privatisation creates conditions in which people not only benefit as individuals but also suffer as individuals for abusing public goods. On the other hand, Stillman (1983) feels that the solution to the "tragedy of the commons" or the "free rider problem" lies in changing the attitudes of the people so that individuals can feel obliged to participate in development activities out of concern for the community or the group and not only out of self-interest.

Ultimately, the question of which activities are likely to attract popular participation in a given situation, and under what conditions this will take place is a complex issue. Many factors are at play and operate in different directions, some acting as a positive stimulus and others a negative influence on people's involvement in group activities. A careful appraisal is thus necessary to determine the causal links between the different factors and people's participation in particular instances as it is likely that the same factor may operate differently in different circumstances and in combination with different other factors.

Social factors

An important consideration to make in areas where organisational structures already exist is whether to build on these or to create new ones. Goldsmith and Blustain (1980: 20) feel that available evidence indicates that it is better to build upon existing organisations though they still maintain:

There is probably no 'right' solution to this controversy, for the appropriate strategy would seem to be highly variable, and dependent on social, economic and political characteristics of the rural area in question.

In an area with a history of community organisation it might be easier to establish new organisations because people are already accustomed to cooperative action, and may also have some of the requisite administrative and organisational skills (Uphoff 1986: 204-207). Account must, therefore, be taken of traditional forms of organisation and cooperation and of what lessons can be drawn from them (Rondinelli 1993: 176). In this regard, Uphoff et al (1979: 48) argue that an analysis of what an indigenous organisation is depends on whether it was developed locally or imported from outside, as well as the length of time it has been functioning in the community. This means that even an imported organisation such as a cooperative becomes indigenous when it has been with the local people for a long time and has become assimilated into their social fabric.

Nevertheless, if people's experience with particular forms of community organisation has been a bitter one they may not be enthusiastic about their revival (Cohen & Uphoff 1977, 1980). In that instance the choice may well be to start new organisations. A

case in point would be the experience of the rural people with different types of cooperatives. As a result of inadequate government support and domination by elites cooperatives have, in general, been inimical to the interests of the poor (Roy 1981; Peterson 1982b; Swanepoel 1987; Momin 1987; Wang 1986). Consequently, members of this group may be weary of rejoining cooperatives. However, Uphoff et al (1979) also demonstrate that cooperatives can actually serve the interests of the poor if they are properly managed and well supported.

The plight of the poor has highlighted the need for "disaggregation", which involves the specific targeting of this section of the community and organising them as a separate entity to avoid their exploitation by the more powerful (Mathur 1979; Oakley & Marsden 1984).⁶ Although disaggregation remains a viable option for safeguarding the interests of the rural poor, Korten (1980) has shown that successful programmes have been carried out without it.⁷ Indeed Peterson (1982a: 136) argues that the interests of the rural elite and those of the rural poor are not always irreconcilable and, therefore, that in cases where there is a congenial elite leadership⁸ their management

6 In this context, Uphoff (1986) distinguishes between "exclusive" organisations meant only for the poor and "inclusive" organisations which are usually dominated by the elite factions of their membership.

7 A strict adherence to the concept of disaggregation would seem to follow from a radical approach to rural development with its marxist underpinnings, since marxism holds that the interests of the rich and those of the poor are irreconcilable.

8 Cohen and Uphoff (1977) identify three types of local leaders (a) informal leaders such as traders, teachers and priests (b) office holders in local organisations (c) local office holders paid by the government such as chiefs and other public servants who have a commitment to the area because they have their roots in the area and would remain there if they left their official posts. Local leaders are acknowledged as such by the local public on the basis of their status, wealth or authority.

skills can help to strengthen local organisations. Chinchankar (1986) makes the same point.

In what he calls the "leadership model" of community organisation Verhagen (1986: 147) suggests an approach based upon the deliberate identification and grooming of sympathetic leaders in the rural setting. Their stature and leadership prowess could then be used by the rural poor as a bulwark against those who view their group action as subversive and undermining the traditional power base. Alternatively, Verhagen suggests what he terms the "discussion model" of group formation which is based more on the exchange of ideas between members as a basis for common action against their adversaries and says that this approach is more appropriate where the villagers are more politically mature. However, "in both models leadership development and group discussion are present. They differ only in terms of degree and emphasis".

But it is important also to consider Galjart's (1981: 93) view about the contradictions of the leadership approach and the hindrance that can be caused by a charismatic leader when he says:

... participation implies something like the routinization of his charisma while he is still very much alive. He is much more likely to continue to be the man who lays down the rules. As a result, such a leader is very successful in bringing people together to deliberate but then does not really allow them to do so.

Constantino-David (1982: 198) feels that in some instances the new elite, once in control, use their power for personal gain, and also create a state of dependence between them and the community. On the other hand some elites, out of enlightened self-interest, may make

concessions to the poor and permit effective participation on their part to enable them to share in some of the benefits of development (Gow & van Sant 1985: 116). The conclusion to which one is led is that the role of local elites in "alternative local organisations" is complex and variable and that no blanket characterisation of this category of people can be applied in all situations. What is clear though is that because of the position they occupy in rural communities it may be difficult to by-pass them altogether (Leonard 1982b: 195; Gow & van Sant 1985: 116). Any programme of rural development is likely to have to deal with them either as facilitators or as obstacles to local organisation.

In section 3.3 below, I look at how decentralised structures of development administration, as well as bureaucratic performance, affect the efficacy of participatory rural development.

3.3 DECENTRALISATION AND BUREAUCRATIC REORIENTATION

3.3.1 Decentralisation

Decentralisation may be defined as the transfer of responsibility for development planning and administration, or aspects thereof, from the central government to sub-national institutions (Conyers 1986a; Rondinelli et al 1984).

3.3.1.1 *Forms of decentralisation*

Decentralisation has four different forms, namely: Deconcentration, Devolution, Delegation and Privatisation.

- (a) Deconcentration: deconcentration entails the relocation of staff from the central to the sub-national units of administration. This process, which is also known as administrative decentralisation, is rarely accompanied by any real transfer of decision making power to the sub-national units of administration (Rondinelli & Nellis 1986; Conyers 1983).
- (b) Devolution: devolution implies the creation of autonomous structures of local government over which the central government exercises only indirect supervisory control (Conyers 1983). Devolution is also referred to as political decentralisation. While deconcentration strengthens the local authority of the central government, devolution weakens it (Leonard 1982a: 28).
- (c) Delegation: delegation happens when managerial responsibility for specifically defined functions is transferred to organisations which are outside the regular bureaucratic structures of government and which are only indirectly controlled by the central government - e.g., regional development agencies, special function authorities, autonomous project implementing units, public corporations - (Rondinelli & Nellis 1986; Cheema 1983).
- (d) Privatisation: privatisation takes place when the responsibility for planning and managing development activities is vested in a nongovernmental organisation - i.e., philanthropic organisations or even private business concerns (Rondinelli & Nellis 1986; Cheema 1983).

3.3.1.2 *Objectives of decentralisation*

Decentralisation is intended to facilitate the overall efficiency and effectiveness of rural development in terms of the ability to satisfy the needs of the disadvantaged groups. Specifically, its most important objectives are :

- (a) to reduce overload and congestion in the channels of communication within the central government machinery; or to avoid bureaucratic red tape thereby improving the responsiveness of the government and other agencies of development to the needs of the people;
- (b) to obtain better and less suspect information about local conditions and to be able to react quicker to unanticipated problems in the implementation of development projects;
- (c) to facilitate the democratic participation of the people in planning and decision-making. This not only leads to the equitable distribution of benefits but also promotes national unity by increasing the stake of different groups or regions in maintaining the stability of the political system (Rondinelli & Cheema 1983; Rondinelli et al 1984; Conyers 1986a).

3.3.1.3 *Decentralisation and participation*

Decentralisation is part and parcel of the process of institution building by which effective linkages are created between the national, regional and local levels of development planning and management, and strengthening them to promote rural development (Leonard 1982b; Cheema 1983). To the extent that both decentralisation and

local level organisation are seen as part of the same process of institution building, and mutually reinforcing, decentralisation can be regarded to be a necessary condition for local level participation. My enquiry into this subject has also revealed that decentralisation reflects the process of institution building for effective rural development as seen from the top downwards, while participation implies the same process of institution building seen from the bottom upwards.

Thus, within the framework of institution building,⁹ the choice is not between central government involvement and local level participation, or between the different forms of decentralisation as such. Instead, the challenge is to determine the optimal combination of responsibilities and relationships between the national unit and the different sub-national units to which authority is transferred (Leonard 1982a). The different units of development planning and administration (central government, local government, nongovernmental organisations, private concerns and local organisations) all have their particular strengths and weaknesses within the framework of institution building for effective rural development (Rondinelli 1993: 169, 171).

Similarly, Rondinelli and Cheema (1983: 17) rightly draw attention to the fact that creating decentralised structures and procedures of decision making does not in itself ensure genuine participation of the

9 Institution building is, of necessity, a learning process (Bryant & White 1984: 17; Rondinelli 1993: 166). It cannot be planned and executed perfectly overnight but requires a protracted period of adaptation and adjustment to achieve the most desirable fit between the component units.

poor. In certain circumstances, as Bhatt (1979: 172) shows, this exercise could in fact become simply a decentralisation of the struggle for power, which then inhibits the promotion of participatory development. On this point Griffin (1981: 225) argues:

... it is conceivable, even likely in many countries, that power at the local level is more concentrated, more elitist and applied more ruthlessly against the poor than at the centre. Thus, greater decentralisation does not necessarily imply greater democracy let alone "power to the people". It all depends on the circumstances under which decentralisation occurs (My underlining).

The next sub-section addresses itself to the bureaucratic circumstances under which decentralisation ought to take place. Later in sub-section 3.4.1, I will discuss the political circumstances.

3.3.2 **Bureaucratic reorientation**

Decentralisation is one side of the coin, bureaucratic reorientation is the other. Korten's (1984a: 301) observation on this issue is that:

... achieving the purposes of people-centred development implies a substantial decentralization of decision-making processes, but a good deal more is involved than the simple delegation of formal authority. Basic styles and methodologies of decision-making must also change. For example, if expert-dominated, non-consultative modes of central decision-making are simply replicated at lower levels, local decisions may be no more responsive to human needs than those made centrally.

Thus, there must be a change of attitudes towards the local people and an adaptation of management strategies, within the bureaucracy. The sort of training given to government functionaries plays a crucial role in facilitating these changes.

3.3.2.1 *A change of attitudes*

To achieve the objectives of people's participation development agencies, especially government agencies but also international development agencies, must change their attitudes towards the work they are doing and towards the rural people among whom they work (Uphoff 1986; Gow & van Sant 1985). One of the first requirements is that they should reorient their priorities. To start with, the focus of their operations should shift away from service delivery to capacity building, thus playing mainly a supportive and facilitating role to self-reliant local development (Korten 1983, 1984a). In other words bureaucrats should not aim to do things for the local communities but rather to help them to do things for themselves (Swanepoel 1992; Ghai 1988). It is in this context that the point made in sub-section 3.2.1.2 that community organisations whose formation is inspired by an outside agency should immediately be guided towards self-reliance, has to be understood.

Reorienting priorities also means that assistance should be redirected away from the more privileged to the less privileged members of rural communities. This can be done, for example, by adapting collateral requirements to the situation of the poor, and simplifying loan application procedures to make them accessible to the disadvantaged (Bryant & White 1984: 54; Esman & Uphoff 1982: 70-71; van Heck 1979: 66). By giving loans on a group rather than an individual basis, setting an upper limit to loans and simplifying loan application forms while still satisfying bank requirements, national resources could be redirected to the people who need them most, to facilitate their participation in development.

These two forms of attitudinal change which help to shift the focus of attention towards developing the capacity of the people to engage in their own self-reliant development, and towards giving assistance to those members of society who need it most - follow from the particular conception of development described in Chapter 2, in which people and not things (the economy) are the centre of development. A further requirement is that bureaucrats must begin to accord cognitive respect to the disadvantaged masses. They should appreciate that the knowledge which the villagers have about local conditions is indispensable for the effective planning and implementation of development programmes and projects (Clarke 1980; Thomas 1985). The fact that they are able to survive under what are often hostile conditions is testimony to their possession of a good deal of useful technical and social knowledge (Nturibi 1982: 112; Korten 1983: 210). On this issue Cernea (1986: 96), however, cautions that:

... the populist fallacy that the rural majority always 'knows better' than the technical personnel and has sufficient skills to bring about development by itself is as erroneous as the paternalistic fallacy that the bureaucracy knows best and can do alone all that is needed for development.

The populist fallacy would appear to be based on a radical approach to rural development which assumes that the rural poor can achieve development without outside help (see, for example, Oakley & Marsden 1984). For its own part the paternalistic fallacy follows from a technocratic approach to rural development (refer to Chapter 1 for a discussion of these approaches). But the people's knowledge is not the only reason for their participation. As indicated in Chapter 2, they have an inalienable (democratic) right to participate,

so that they can imprint their own values on the process of development, and share in the benefits thereof.

3.3.2.2 *Adapting management strategies*

A reorientation of management strategy is necessary as well. It should be understood that there is a relationship between the structure of an organisation and the management strategy it employs (Ickis 1983; de Waal 1992). Bureaucracies are inherently centralised structures, hierarchical and standardised; with the result that they limit individual discretion (Rondinelli 1993; de Waal 1993). Therefore, they need to adopt a structure which easily lends itself to an interactive and communicative approach to problem solving and an infusion of a spirit of learning, experimentation and creativity. De Waal (1992, 1993) sees an adhocratic structure as the most suitable organisational form for achieving participatory development. It is by nature decentralised and adaptive, and unlike the bureaucracy which emphasises organisational lines of authority an adhocracy selectively decentralises power to different task forces of experts¹⁰ formed around specific problems, and uses a communicative approach to problem solving.

An added value of the adhocracy lies in that it can function as an appendage of an existing organisational structure, in this case a bureaucracy (de Waal 1992). Also, the different experts brought together need not be permanent members of the organisation but can from time to time be drawn from different organisations as the need

10 De Waal (1992) and Bryant and White (1984) say that where local issues are involved representatives of the community can be included in the task groups. As noted above, local people are experts in their own right.

arises.¹¹ The main task of management in an adhocratic structure is to identify the right people for dealing with problems at hand and to motivate them, and not to give orders (de Waal 1992). Both Rondinelli (1993) and de Waal (1992) note that an adaptive, responsive and innovative organisation not only facilitates participation in decision making but is ideally suited for the uncertain and unpredictable course of development, as well as the diverse problems and conditions, existing in Third World countries.

Because bureaucrats are not naturally predisposed to the fostering of people's participation in development, incentives need to be used as well to encourage them to do so (Montgomery 1988). Personnel should be given credit for emphasising beneficiary participation in development management and not their own participation (Korten 1983), and the promotional ladder should have a bearing on staff encouragement of community involvement (Gow & van Sant 1981; 1985). This means that bureaucrats should be encouraged to be outward-looking and to serve the interests of the local people instead of being inward-looking and serving their own interests and those of their superiors (i.e., the interests of the bureaucracy itself).

Thus, the adaptation of management strategies is related to the rearrangement of bureaucratic priorities. When bureaucrats shift their attention from fulfilling the requirements of the organisation to serving the needs of the people, they shed the bureaucratic style of management and adopt the adhocratic style.

11 This underlines the need for close cooperation between different government departments and ministries, nongovernmental organisations, research institutes and institutions of higher learning as sources of expertise.

3.3.2.3 *The role of training*

The role of training in reshaping the outlook of public servants and in facilitating the process of participation is invaluable. But the type of training given is also important. In the first place, emphasis ought to shift away from formal certification to village level experience (Oakley and Marsden 1984: 76). Participants in village-based training programmes should have an input in determining the content of the programme of learning, which should be geared towards solving real problems (Honadle & Hannah 1982). At the same time training should help public servants to learn to listen to the local people, to understand their way of doing things and to be open to their views (Nturibi 1982: 112). To encourage the people who are regularly in direct contact with the villagers to follow the same approach in dealing with local communities, training should be interactive and non-directive - trainers and trainees should become partners in a learning and problem solving process (Honadle & Hannah 1982; Ramirez 1990). So, the best way of preparing people to work in the villages is through experience.

Nevertheless, a shift of emphasis to action oriented training does not imply that formal training has no value. There are certain types of knowledge and concepts which field workers cannot acquire through experience. It would be difficult, for example, for a village level worker to appreciate the theoretical principles surrounding participatory development without some formal training. It is this theory which guides the worker in the field.

In this regard, Martwanna and Chamala (1991) distinguish between the "content model" and the "process model" of learning, which lean towards formal training and field experience, respectively. Martwanna and Chamala maintain that because of the difficulty of acquiring certain knowledge through the process model the content model still has a role to play.

In addition, certificates act as an incentive because they enable the community organiser in rural development to earn a better salary. Formal qualifications also give confidence to the rural development field worker and enable him or her to deal with extension workers from other government ministries such as agriculture and health, who are usually certificated, on an equal footing.

Also related to the question of training is the support which field workers, in particular, get in their work (Fiah 1987). Often community workers receive training and no follow up is made to see that they put their training to good use, and that they do not encounter problems in applying the knowledge they acquired. On this issue Bruns (1993: 1840) says:

Facilitators need training, supervision and support. If they do not receive adequate support they will not perform well and participatory methods will fail. Support for organisers is thus a crucial dimension of institutionalising participatory approaches.

Although lack of resources is often blamed for the failure to provide support to field workers, it would appear that the problem is not insurmountable. What is required is a reorientation of priorities as well as an adaptation of management strategies discussed in sub

-sections 3.3.2.1 and 3.3.2.2 above, respectively. Governments must give priority to the needs of local communities, and involve other agencies in the administration of rural development. Bruns has shown that by involving nongovernmental organisations and universities in the performance of some tasks in rural development, governments can lessen their problem of shortage of resources.

The present section examined the bureaucratic impediments to participatory development and suggested ways in which they might be overcome. In section 3.4 below, I turn to the more political aspects of the role of government in facilitating participation. The government's role in this regard will be compared with that of nongovernmental organisations.

3.4 GOVERNMENT AND NONGOVERNMENTAL EFFORTS

3.4.1 Government efforts

Ditcher (1989) contends that if the active role of outsiders in the participatory approach is denied then people's participation becomes an overreaction to the failures of older models of development. Rather, participatory development should be regarded as a joint venture between development agencies and the beneficiaries. Ebong (1983: 15) and Rémion (1986: 37) consider participatory development to be a form of partnership between the local people and assisting organisations (government, international and nongovernment agencies of development). Thus, the call for popular participation in rural development reflects an awareness of the contributions that can be made by the members of the rural communities in developing their

own areas (Bryant & White 1982: 205), which, however, does not necessarily imply the exclusion of the government.

Although Peterson (1982a: 130-131) argues that local participatory organisations need to have autonomy in order to counterbalance the power of the dominant groups he still maintains that this does not mean that they have to be self-contained. Korten (1984a: 307) and Khan (1980: 59) also feel that self-reliant local development should neither be confused with self-sufficiency, isolation nor the closing of local borders. Clearly, the government and other agencies of development have a role to play in inspiring and supporting local participatory development.

3.4.1.1 *Government and participation*

The government (but also, in some cases, international agencies and nongovernmental organisations) can perform the following major functions in participatory development :

- (a) it can supplement local resources, and redistribute resources from richer to poorer regions (Leonard 1982a: 4);
- (b) it can help to coordinate the various community efforts so that a common national goal is achieved (Khan 1980: 59);
- (c) through its supervisory role such as the auditing of financial records of local organisations and its insistence on open management in these organisations, the government can help to curb corruption and to protect group members from domination by the leadership (Korten 1983: 194; 1984b: 305); and

- (d) it can provide training to members of local organisations to equip them with both technical and organisational skills to enhance the effectiveness of their participation in development. It can also be a source of relevant information which is not readily available in local communities (Erasmus 1992: 17; Korten 1984b: 305).

Yet the extent to which the government can play a positive role in participatory development depends upon the manner in which it views participation. Morrow (Chaturvedi 1979: 167) discusses three negative ways in which politicians might use participation, and these are:

... firstly, participation as abdication, ... secondly, participation as cooptation ... with a view to forestall any opposition; ... thirdly, participation as pacification, i.e., client building ...

If the government wants to shirk its responsibility as a partner of the people in development it may use "participation as abdication". This situation can arise if the government fails to create the necessary conditions for authentic forms of participation to take place. For example, if a government's priorities lie elsewhere, it may encourage participation merely because it wants people to contribute labour, money or other resources without, however, making any serious effort to promote viable institutions of popular participation (Esman & Uphoff 1982: 14). Such bogus and ineffective styles of participation as may arise could even be used by unscrupulous governments to find fault with the people themselves for being unable to take responsibility for their own well-being when they had the opportunity to do so - a case of blaming the victim.

On the other hand "participation as cooptation" as well as "participation as pacification" might be used by a government that wants to canvass support for policies which would otherwise be unpopular by starting development projects which are simply intended to give hand-outs to certain people. Looking at events in Africa Bates (1983) has concluded that many projects have in fact been started for this purpose. They have not really been meant to strengthen the capacity of local communities for self-reliant development but to divert people's attention from the malpractices carried on by the government. Related to this form of participation is participation as a mechanism of "social control" (Constantino-David 1982: 190). The government allows political demands only to come through those channels over which it has strict control, in order to suppress people's grievances against it. A government which adopts any of these methods demonstrates its lack of commitment to genuine participation.

3.4.1.2 *The political climate*

The question, though, is whether developing countries can allow anything but ineffectual, token participation to take place in view of the fact that by and large existing state structures in these countries still retain the characteristics of colonial administrations which were designed to be instruments of control, domination and exploitation and not oriented towards facilitating a bottom-up flow of inputs into the decision making process (Myrdal 1970; Schaffer 1978; Luke 1986). Although a hostile climate could actually cause the unleashing of a great deal of participation (Galjart 1981; Nilsson & Wadeskog 1986), it is, nevertheless, difficult to beat a government which is really determined to thwart participation (Nturibi 1982; Long &

Winder 1981).

Participation thrives best where a government is supportive. As a second best, those in power should at least be indifferent to it. Esman and Uphoff (1982: 18) have, however, observed that as a whole, developing countries do not actively oppose participation although many of them just pay lip service to it. Korten (1980: 495) has also shown that in general opportunities do exist for promoting people's participation "within established social frameworks" in the Third World.

But the idea of empowering the people especially if it is implemented through the radical approach to rural development is likely to be perceived as a threat by many governments and their reaction may be hostility towards participatory development. To allay the fears of governments in this matter Garcia-Zamor (1985a: 242) suggests what he terms the "guidance approach" to participation where the radical sting is taken out of the concept, and participation is seen as a coordination of roles by the different players (governments, other development agencies and local communities) to achieve effective guidance of the development process. Jagannadham (1979: 139) similarly emphasises the importance of allaying the fears of governments about the threat they perceive in people's participation. Thus, as pointed out in sub-section 3.4.1, participation should be seen as a means of facilitating cooperation between the government and local communities and not as an attempt to dislodge the government as an actor in development. This view of participation is based upon the reformist approach to rural development. As pointed out in Chapter 1, this approach emphasises collaboration rather than conflict between the different role players in development.

However, getting Third World regimes to actively embrace the idea of participatory development may be dependent upon the actions of an agent outside the administrative system (Galjart 1981: 89; Gould 1985: 36). It is in this context that the next sub-section addresses the role of nongovernmental organisations. But still, the good intentions of governments and other agencies of development would not be enough to ensure the institutionalisation of people's participation. What is also required is an appropriate "methodology" of action (Cernea 1986: 85-86). This issue is taken up for discussion in the next and last section of this chapter.

3.4.2 Nongovernmental efforts

There is, as Erasmus (1992) observes, a tendency among some scholars to refer to every organisation which is voluntary as a nongovernmental organisation. Drawing from Uphoff, Erasmus (1992: 14) views NGOs specifically as voluntary organisations which, unlike community organisations (membership organisations), are designed to help people other than their own members - hence reference to them as "service organisations".

In their description of NGOs, Cernea (1988) and Masoni (1985), for example, include community based or local organisations. It is true that these organisations are nongovernmental, in the sense that they are not official government structures, but belong to private citizens. But they are also organisations which serve their own members (i.e., they are inward-looking). They are organisations through which people's participation in development takes place.

On the other hand, there are those nongovernmental organisations whose formation is inspired by philanthropic motives and which, therefore, mainly seek to serve people other than their members or owners. (i.e., they are outward-looking). People's participation in development does not take place through these organisations.

To distinguish between these two types of organisations the term nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), in this study, is reserved specifically for those organisations which exist to serve people other than their own members. These organisations support people's participation in community based organisations just as government agencies or international donor agencies do.

It is important to clearly identify these latter organisations because it enables one to properly determine their role, strengths, potential as well as weaknesses in development without confusing them with local participatory organisations.

3.4.2.1 *NGOs as catalysts*

NGOs play different roles in development. Their activities can be directed towards charity and the relief of human suffering, such as in times of famine or some other disaster, natural or man-made. NGOs can also attempt to promote local self-reliance by involving members of a community in small-scale development projects (e.g. community based health care systems, agricultural and infrastructural projects).

Sometimes, NGOs also play an advocacy role, influencing other actors in development, such as governments, to abide by the principles of

participatory development. In such cases, NGOs act as catalysts to bring about changes in development policy. It is in their catalytic role that NGOs can most effectively help to promote people-centred development and not so much through their actual implementation of projects¹² (Korten 1987; Pradan 1987; Thérien 1991).

Nevertheless, community projects supported by NGOs are, themselves, usually more successful in achieving people's participation than projects supported by other agencies. However, NGO supported projects generally have a localised impact (Ati 1993: 117,128). In spite of this problem, another way (which is still related to their role as catalysts) in which NGOs can contribute to more effective development is through the demonstration effect of their projects on governments and international donor agencies (Drabek 1987). By learning from the experience of NGOs, these other agencies can improve their performance.

Highlighting the necessity for NGOs to change from being implementers of projects with localised impact to being facilitators of widespread participatory development, Drabek (1987: 9) says :

Small can be beautiful, but considerations of learning, sustainability (or "wider impacts") become more and more significant particularly in the context of scarce resources.

12 In this connection, NGOs can be classified into (i) First Generation; (ii) Second Generation; and (iii) Third and Fourth Generation NGOs, whose respective roles are geared towards relief operations; small-scale community projects; and advocacy (Korten 1987; Thérien 1991).

In very similar terms, Cernea (1988: 50) recognises the catalytic role of NGOs by suggesting:

To achieve wider relevance, and to gain replicability for their initiatives on large scales, NGOs must influence government bodies, local and national.

But the question is why NGOs are deemed to be in a better position to facilitate participatory development. The next sub-section looks at this issue.

3.4.2.2 *Strengths of NGOs*

Many reasons have been given to explain why NGOs are more effective agencies of development. The following appear to be the most important:

- (a) The altruistic motivation behind the efforts of NGOs renders them free of the institutional constraints which in governments are epitomised by an anti-developmental ethic, reflected by widespread corruption, inefficiency and patronage (Korten 1987).
- (b) Their approach is not to induce development financially but to organise people in voluntary groups aimed at achieving self-reliance and self-development (Cernea 1988).
- (c) NGO activities are more focused both in terms of the area covered and the people targeted while governments often act broadly and thus become ineffective in certain areas or among certain groups (Frantz 1987).

- (d) The flexibility of their administrative machineries allows more effective beneficiary participation in the development process (Thérien 1991).

Although NGOs have the advantage in these areas, sub-section 3.4.2.3 below, highlights issues which may prove to be problematic for these organisations.

3.4.2.3 *Apparent contradictions*

Initially NGOs obtained most of their funding from private sources, but lately governments as well as inter-governmental bodies are meeting an increasing proportion of the financial needs of NGOs (Cernea 1988; Thérien 1991). Although this trend reflects a general awareness that NGOs are more effective channels of development assistance (Masoni 1985), it also poses a problem because NGOs could as a result find themselves hard pressed to follow the agendas of those organisations which foot their bills (Drabek 1987: 10; Elliot 1987: 59-60). Thus, the implicit loss of autonomy by NGOs holds the danger of shifting their emphasis away from a normative, participatory form of development.

As a safeguard, NGOs need to increase the level of professionalism¹³ within their ranks (Korten 1987; Cernea 1988). The acquisition of

13 Professionalisation of NGOs is viewed negatively when it creates barriers between professionals and the local people they are supposed to serve (Erasmus 1992). But this issue poses a problem only when NGOs implement projects directly. As catalysts professionalism is an advantage to NGOs in dealing with people of the same calibre in official development agencies. Since one NGO can play both roles simultaneously, professionals and non-professionals can exist side by side performing different tasks in the same NGO, if necessary.

expertise will give NGOs added weight and voice, and strengthen their hand in their interaction, including confrontations, with official agencies (Cernea 1988: 11). This will help them to resist any attempts by these actors to change their agendas. Professionalism also strengthens NGOs technically and enables them to deal more effectively with the added task of playing a consultancy-like role. Chambers (1983: Ch.7) discusses a new form of professionalism which, unlike normal professionalism subscribes to new development values and new forms of organisation and styles of management conducive to participatory development. According to Chambers, old-style professionals "respond to pulls of central location, convenience opportunities for promotion, money and power" (p.171). On the other hand, new-style professionals are not motivated by self-interest but by a genuine desire to serve the poor, and to learn from them.

This means that professionals joining NGOs will be motivated by the values for which these organisations stand and instead of being influenced by other actors in development to change course, their expertise will enable them to deal with their counterparts in these agencies on an equal basis and to resist their domination. Also, the militancy and commitment with which NGO staff pursue their course as opposed to the docility and detachment of civil servants (Frantz 1987: 122) could help NGOs to exert influence over official development agencies.

It is also important to consider whether NGOs ought to act in opposition to governments or to complement government action. Frantz (1987: 121) reports that in practice some NGOs complement government action while others oppose it, with Masoni (1985: 38) and Mathur (1989: 45) suggesting that the work of NGOs is usually

complementary to that of official development agencies. But to resolve this question one needs to put it in the context of particular approaches to rural development. From a radical standpoint the thrust of NGO activities would be to oppose the government while a reformist viewpoint would see NGOs as working mainly to complement government action. This is not to say that the reformist approach does not recognise the existence of differences of opinion and style between governments and NGOs. Rather, this approach holds that such differences should be resolved in a spirit of cooperation, and with the aim of achieving a common goal, and not through radical confrontation.

In section 3.2, I outlined the principles underlying community organisation. I then went on in section 3.3 to review the bureaucratic constraints to participatory development, and suggested how they could be overcome. The present section dealt with political hindrances to participation, as well as the role played by NGOs in facilitating rural participation. In sub-section 3.4.1.2, I hinted that even if all development agencies had a firm commitment to community participation, it would still be difficult to achieve it unless they followed the right method of implementing it. In the next section, I turn my attention to the method of implementing participation.

3.5 THE LEARNING PROCESS APPROACH

This section is divided into five sub-sections. In the first sub-section I outline the characteristics of an organisation which facilitates participation. The second sub-section looks at the steps to be followed in creating participatory structures, while the third sub

-section deals with how participation strengthens the capacity of local people for self-sustaining development. In the fourth sub-section I discuss the role of the group animator in rural participation, before I examine the contribution that can be made by development projects towards institutionalising community participation, in the fifth sub-section.

3.5.1 The learning organisation

In Korten's (1980: 502) view, the learning process approach should be seen as a basis for formulating programme and organisational development strategies which facilitate the removal of blockages inhibiting their effectiveness in terms of satisfying people's felt needs. To this end, the agency involved must undertake a continuous process of "social learning" to equip itself with the "social knowledge" necessary to match programme and organisational outputs with community needs (Bryant & White 1984: 17; Thomas 1985: 16).

The requisite social knowledge is necessarily a product of interaction between agency personnel and beneficiaries in action research.¹⁴ Outsiders contribute knowledge derived from professional training and personal values while the local people contribute the data of personal and communal realities of which they are the sole and expert possessors (Thomas 1985). Action related research also demands

14 Action research is a process of learning through action which results from an actor constantly reflecting upon his/her actions with the aim of improving his/her performance. By sharing the experiences of the local people the action researcher also becomes subjectively involved in their affairs and emotionally attached to them.

that "the roles of researcher, planner and administrator" be closely integrated. Therefore, the people performing the different tasks should function as a closely knit team. Commenting on the success of the programmes he studied Korten (1980: 499) argues:

... the mode of operation stressed their integration [i.e., roles]. Researchers worked hand-in-hand with operating personnel, planning was done by those responsible for implementation, and top management spent substantial time in the field keeping in contact with operating reality. The process of rapid, creative adaptation essential to achieving and sustaining the fit on which effective performance depends nearly demands such integration.

Continuity of leadership and staff is another key feature of the learning organisation (Korten, F. 1983: 188-189; Korten 1983: 214). Frequent personnel transfers are inconsistent with the learning process approach. To be effective the staff of development agencies need to become well acquainted with the situation in which they work and to establish rapport with the people among whom they work, and this takes time.

A protracted period of trial and error,¹⁵ testing and retesting is necessary, too, to create an effective assistance programme as well as an organisational structure to suit a particular social setting (Uphoff 1986). From the onset the twin processes of monitoring and evaluation are integrated into the programme or project activities; and through constant reflection, self-evaluation and self-criticism agency

15 Cernea (1986), Rondinelli (1993) and Korten (1980, 1984b) argue that the most important characteristic of the learning organisation is that it treats error not as a sign of weakness but as a source of information to be used for further improvement. This encourages creativity and experimentation on the part of its members.

personnel together with the beneficiaries jointly monitor performance and evaluate themselves on an ongoing basis; making adjustments to the programme as the need arises (Verhagen 1986: 150-151).

One or a few villages, therefore, need to be selected for use as learning and testing "laboratories", and only as more knowledge is acquired, through action research, about how best the process of social intervention can be carried out is the programme extended to cover larger areas (Cernea 1986; Korten 1984b). According to Korten (1980: 501) all the successful programmes he observed indicated that they were not "designed and implemented" but they and the organisation which sustained them "evolved and grew". Again, a lot of flexibility is required in all aspects of the programme, including the timing of specific activities and the budgetary allocations thereof. This is because local conditions are variable and development agencies cannot have all the information about them in advance.

Although an organisation which develops around a development programme and grows with it in bottom-up incremental stages may be more responsive to the needs of the local communities (Korten 1983: 216), it is often necessary to implement programmes through existing organisational structures (Korten 1983, 1984b). It is, however, necessary that significant changes should take place in the methods of operation of such organisations to strengthen their "capacity for village level action". Cernea's (1986: 98) observation about this process of administrative-bureaucratic reorganisation is that:

[r]eorganisation is required in one degree or another, implying: (a) reallocation of staff resources; (b) redefinition of functions and responsibilities; (c) rearrangement of linkages between different units of the administration ...

The administrative-bureaucratic reorganisation is in its own right a learning process and cannot be achieved overnight.¹⁶ As Korten (1983: 217) observes, such changes are difficult and complex and may take many years to accomplish.

3.5.2 **Learning to stimulate beneficiary participation**

The starting point of the process of social learning referred to above is the recognition that people's needs :

... are a function of the political, economic, and social context in which [they] live and cannot be adequately defined for purposes of determining programme input requirements independently of that context (Korten 1980: 491).

Thus, a thorough understanding of the circumstances in which people live is necessary for any development agency to elicit their participation in programmes intended to address their needs. The aim is to determine which factors are likely to facilitate participation and which are likely to inhibit it. Maximum advantage should be taken of the facilitating factors while attempts should be made to minimise the effects of the negative factors.

16 The institutionalisation of de Waal's (1992, 1993) adhocratic structure, discussed in sub-section 3.3.2.2, forms a crucial element of this process of administrative reorganisation. As indicated, an adhocacy infuses flexibility into the operations of a bureaucratic organisation and helps it to cope with the complex and variable situation on the ground.

This exercise involves seeking answers to questions such as: who wields power or has influence in the community? What informal and formal networks exist at the village level? Are there any peculiar customs, beliefs or practices among the people or among particular sections of the populace? Are there any distinctive cleavages within the community and what is the basis of such cleavages? What resources are available both at the community and family levels - physical, human and financial, for example? (Bryant and White 1984; Cernea 1986; Verhagen 1986; Swanepoel 1992). To collect the information formal as well as informal surveys may be used. But some of the information may already exist in government offices and other places (Swanepoel 1992).

Oakley and Marsden (1984: 70) identify four principal elements of the methodology of stimulating grassroots participation in development, namely:

- *contact with target group;*
- *process of group structuring and formation;*
- *preparation of work with group in terms of their future participation;*
- *action to implement the participation.*

On this issue, Swanepoel (1992) has pointed out that initial contact with target groups is best done informally. The agent lives among the people and observes them going about their daily duties. He meets them informally, pays them informal visits, and has informal conversations with them, individually or in groups. This informal survey does allow the action researcher to gather useful information about the community, but it is probably more important as a mechanism of confidence building and the establishment of friendship

between the action researcher and the target group as a basis for ongoing cooperation (Oakley and Marsden 1984; Ghai 1988).

Potential problems exist, however, for agents making initial contact with village communities. In particular, an agent may find himself or herself having to walk a tight rope between the village leadership, on the one hand, and the village poor on the other. If he or she is identified with the more privileged this could alienate the disadvantaged, and yet these are the people with whom his or her work is mostly concerned. In some cases, perceptions by the village elite that an agent's interest is focused on the plight of the poor could provoke them into using their position to make an agent's work difficult if not impossible.

For this reason, Verhagen (1986: 143) suggests that to do their work properly, action researchers should be accepted by the village leadership while at the same time keeping their distance - "in a subtle manner and to different degrees". The element of selectivity in dealing with the village elites is necessary because, as I argued earlier in sub-section 3.2.2.2, some elites or groups thereof could in fact help to encourage the poor to participate in development. Therefore, the action researcher needs to be able to identify them and to court their support.

Once the agent is accepted as part of the community the formalisation of contact through village assemblies and group meetings (in preparation for group action) can take place. Through group discussions - starting at the informal stage - the change agent is able to identify people with similar concerns. This should lead to a natural evolution of groups as the change agent facilitates the

organisation of people around those problems and needs which are commonly perceived (Swanepoel 1992: 36). Furthermore, it is to be noted that the period of contact making should not be rushed and that there should be a natural progression from this phase to the next phase of planning and implementing group projects. However, undue delay in making the transition could also be counterproductive since the momentum of beneficiary participation can only be sustained through successful group action (Verhagen 1986; Swanepoel 1992).

3.5.3 Grassroots participation as a learning experience

To the beneficiaries themselves participation in development entails, in a variety of ways, a process of learning. Firstly, participation gives the people a chance to learn to appreciate the value of collaborative action. As individuals, I noted in Chapter 1 that the majority of rural dwellers are weak in terms of the ability to counterbalance the social forces which emasculate them and disadvantage them. But the successes they score through group action demonstrate to them that cooperatively they can overcome most if not all of the hurdles they face (Galjart 1981: 93-94). This has the effect of boosting their confidence and spurring them to further action (Ghai 1988: 14).

Secondly, participation helps the rural folk to learn to critically assess the social reality around them and to grapple with it, instead of passively resigning themselves to fatalism (Constantino-David 1982: 191). In other words, group discussions enable the disadvantaged to actively reflect upon their situation and to realise that they have to take responsibility for their own destiny rather than waiting for someone else to solve their problems. Thus, by working together members of local communities learn to become self-reliant

(Constantino-David 1982; Swanepoel 1992).

Participation also schools the people in the art of solving problems. Kemp (1982: 34-35) identifies four stages in the participatory approach to problem solving; namely:

- (a) The "knowing" stage - during this stage, participants in group discussions identify specific areas in which difficulties are encountered in a particular situation, and if possible arrange them in order of importance;
- (b) The "imagining" stage - at this stage the group thinks about different ways of solving or lessening particular problems. This is essentially a brainstorming session.
- (c) The "selecting" stage - here the group chooses one solution after debating the possible solutions suggested for each problem.
- (d) The "implementation" stage - now the group tries out the specific solutions agreed upon. If the first solution does not work the group will go through each solution (or combination of solutions) in turn, until they find one which works for them.

Kemp (1982: 33) feels that if this approach is followed:

... problem-solving might be found to be both more creative and personally developing; rather more, in other words, than if it was an exercise in applying second-hand solutions.

Furthermore, participation gives the local people a chance to develop organisational, administrative and cooperative skills; as well as the technical skills involved in their group activities (Ghai 1988; Swanepoel 1992).

Again, by participating in the development process the rural poor have the opportunity to improve their literacy skills. Swanepoel feels that illiteracy is one of the factors inhibiting popular participation because it "causes an inferiority complex" which makes ordinary people shy away from participating, and hampers their ability to perform such duties as "keeping minutes of meetings, doing surveys and bookkeeping" (1992: 9-10). Similar views are expressed by Ebong (1983: 24). The acquisition of literacy skills can, in this context, be seen in two ways. On the one hand, it is a means towards the end of achieving effective participation. On the other hand, it can be regarded as a benefit (an end in itself) if one considers that improved literacy can be a source of great satisfaction to someone who did not have it before.

The importance of adult literacy in participatory rural development cannot be denied, therefore. Yet it would appear that unless the rural people themselves are convinced of the need for literacy programmes they are unlikely to be successful (FAO 1985: 64). People should discover the limitations of being illiterate in action and see the need for improved literacy. Again, literacy programmes should be functional, that is, they should be geared towards helping people overcome concrete problems (e.g. taking minutes, keeping financial and other records and writing letters) and be integrated in their development activities. Kemp (1982: 32) has pointed out that for knowledge to be appropriate and effective, communities themselves should determine its content instead of outsiders offering pre-determined packages of information to them. In that way, knowledge will become relevant and learning will be geared towards solving local problems. Ramirez (1990) makes the same point.

In the final analysis, it is only by becoming a learning experience for them that popular participation can bring about the long-term goal of building the capacity of the people to develop their communities in a sustainable manner.

3.5.4 **The role of the change agent**

It is clear that to be successful and effective, group formation and participation must involve an agent who facilitates the process (Oakley & Marsden 1984; Swanepoel 1992). In the light of the arguments made in this chapter, three specific roles of the group animator are identifiable: (a) to facilitate access of the group to outside resources, (b) to stimulate awareness (conscientisation) as a means of strengthening the organisational base on which the process of empowerment rests, and (c) to act as a source of information relevant to the issues and tasks facing communities participating in the development process.¹⁷

Of particular significance is the achievement of the empowerment of the disadvantaged without which the concept of participation remains an empty shell. However, it is equally important that the process of empowerment should be properly understood. On the one hand, it might be understood to imply a revolutionary change, and on the other, an evolutionary change to a more equitable society (Constantino-David 1982). This dichotomy basically reflects the distinction between a radical approach and a reformist approach to rural development, respectively.

17 See also Uphoff (1986); Ghai (1988); Ramirez (1990); de Silva et al (1979), on the role of the change agent.

From a radical perspective community organisation implies consciousness raising and mobilisation among the rural poor with the aim of setting the stage for confrontation between this group and the dominant groups in society. From a reformist standpoint the task of the group organiser is more placatory, for he seeks to bridge the gap between the interests of the different groups in the community. Even in cases where the group organiser applies disaggregation and organises the poor as a separate entity he does so not in anticipation of a final show-down with the more privileged but to avoid a situation in which conflict might arise between the two groups over the distribution of the fruits of development.

Commenting on this issue Korten (1984a: 308-309) says:

*... it is important to bear in mind that conflict and confrontation themselves do not **create** the new. Indeed, in their more extreme forms, such as armed revolution, they can be highly destructive of the very values, skills and leaders needed to create the new society they claim to seek ... The objective of building power for people-centred development is best served through action to hasten creation of the new, rather than through political confrontation to hasten the passing of the old (Emphasis in original).*

The radical approach starts from the assumption that social structures in developing countries are so rigid that genuine participation of the poor cannot be achieved without confrontation (Constantino-David 1982; Oakley & Marsden 1984; Gran 1983). In contrast, the reformist approach is based on the understanding that in the majority of Third World countries the participation of the poor can be achieved under the present social systems (refer to sub-section 3.4.1.2).

It should be noted that reformism does concede that in some cases it has been necessary for armed struggles to take place (Korten 1984a: 308). But even in such cases the crucial factor helping to create the new society is pedagogy which empowers the poor by giving them the skills, the knowledge and the confidence necessary for them to take their rightful place as partners with other actors in development. Conflicts of interest within the reformist approach are dealt with in a spirit of reconciliation, first and foremost, and only in exceptional circumstances is recourse to confrontation sought. That is why Cheema (1985: 2) and Wang (1986: 552) refer to this approach as a solidarity-oriented policy. This strategy should be contrasted with the militancy advocated by radical scholars of development such as Kruijer (1987) and Freire (1972b). Kruijer argues, for example that:

Those who ... have led the unarmed struggle know that they have been doing the spadework for a struggle that must be brought to an end with arms (1987:145).

In the same vein, Goulet (1971: XV) rejects development approaches based upon "the dismissal of violence as unconstructive" while they refuse "to condemn the violence attendant upon legal change processes". Clearly, in this case the armed struggle is viewed as the one which inevitably ushers in the new society, and liberates or empowers the disadvantaged. At the very least, this approach can be defined as confrontational.

3.5.4.1 *Women's position*

As a group, women are excluded from the process of development. This discrimination of women is characterised by their lack of access

to resources such as credit and land, as well as educational and employment opportunities (Braimoh 1995). This is so in spite of the fact that women make a substantial contribution to production in the rural areas (Coombs & Ahmed 1974; Todaro 1994).

It is for this reason that Oakley et al (1991: 164) and Kabeer (1995 :114-115) maintain that one of the fundamental principles of participatory development is that women should be treated as equal partners with their menfolk. Empowerment as an instrument of democratising the development process should, in a specific way, be geared towards improving the resources, knowledge and skills of rural women - to enhance their capacity to become effective participants in development (Braimoh 1995: 130; Rowlands 1995: 102-103).¹⁸

3.5.5 Rural development projects

3.5.5.1 *The problem*

The elevation of institutional goals to a position of prominence in rural development in the 1970s rendered project appraisal even more problematic than it had previously been when development was seen primarily in terms of easily quantifiable economic goals. The difficulty lay in capturing goals such as people's participation with tools geared towards dealing with economic and infrastructural change and as such unsuitable for measuring social or institutional changes (Rondinelli 1983b: 319).

18 See also Mayoux (1992,1995); Parpart (1993), Kandiyoti (1990); Bhattacharya & Rani (1994); Wieringa (1994), on women's participation in development.

This problem, as Lele (1975) shows, resulted in a tendency among project designers to set ambitious production targets to compensate for their inability to measure institutional changes. This approach was based on the assumption that improvements in institutional performance should find expression in increased production. But this was not to be as the high production targets consumed so much management attention that institutional goals became displaced (Morgan 1983: 332).

It is this failure of the project mode to facilitate the institutionalisation of community participation which has left it open to criticism. On the one hand, some writers feel that projects are in essence inappropriate as instruments of long-term development. Morgan, for example, suggests that the value of projects has been glorified in spite of the fact that projectised development "is a limiting notion". He goes on to argue:

Beyond the realm of narrow experiment, these [development] activities are better conceived and managed as programmes, meaning they provide assistance to a broad clientele (1983: 336).

On the other hand, other authors correctly recognise that it is not projects as such but the wrong use of this mode of development which causes its ineffectiveness. Honadle and Rosengard (1983: 302), for instance, note:

Projects can have long-term horizons, stress capacity building, use flexible processes, and develop funding sources to cover recurrent costs, while programmes and policies can be short term, by-pass existing structures, and only support capital investment.

There is, therefore, need as Honadle and Rosengard put it to avoid throwing the baby out with the bathwater; by acknowledging the usefulness of projects while at the same time trying to address their shortcomings.

3.5.5.2 *Operational weaknesses*

One of the main weaknesses in the use of projects is that they are designed to ensure their approval by donor agencies and host governments, and not so much to facilitate their smooth implementation. As a result, Morss and Honadle (1985) as well as Rondinelli (1983b) observe that project documents become unnecessarily detailed and comprehensive so as to give the impression of thoroughness and exactitude in their preparation. However, this characteristic only serves to impede the flexibility which project managers need to cope with unpredictable circumstances during implementation (Rondinelli 1993).

Similarly, the high rates of return often forecast for projects are deliberately set to get them approved (Chambers 1978), without considering the problems which these inflated targets may pose for implementers. As pointed out earlier, in an effort to reach the stipulated economic and infrastructural targets, project managers tend to overlook the objectives of institutional development and local capacity building. Morss and Honadle (1985) argue that the incentive structure of donor agencies plays a big part in shaping the behaviour of their employees on the ground. They note that these incentives:

... motivate foreign technicians to worry more about being criticised for slow results than about their potential failure to build capacity (p.203).

Morss and van Sant (1985) as well as Morgan (1983) attribute many of the shortcomings of rural development projects to the inherently bureaucratic character of international donor agencies. These agencies worry more about the standardised rules and procedures to which projects have to conform than about the effectiveness of such projects. At the same time the political objectives of a government also have a bearing on the character of a project (Rondinelli 1993; Honadle 1985; Chambers 1978). These goals include the desire of governments to show their supporters that they have their best interests at heart (Rondinelli 1983b: 310). This is part of the explanation for the high targets set in advance for projects (i.e., blueprints).

3.5.5.3 *Potential value*

The correct use of projects as instruments of development is based upon an appreciation of two interrelated issues; namely:

- (a) that development projects are testing grounds for particular policies; and
- (b) that projects need to be planned incrementally through a learning process, and not be spelled out in detail in advance as blueprints (Korten 1980; Tacconi & Tisdell 1992; Rondinelli 1993; Clements 1986).

Projects have a positive contribution to make if they are used to develop knowledge about how a particular policy, in our case rural development participation, can most effectively be implemented. As Honadle and Rosengard (1983: 303) and Rondinelli (1983b: 310) demonstrate, projects enhance the focus of development efforts by

making it possible for attention to be directed at particular priority problems within a specified time-frame. This specificity forms the basis on which the requisite knowledge about the best method of intervention can be accumulated. Although specified time-frames lend focus to the task of facilitating people's participation, Morss and van Sant (1985: 163) caution that:

The best institutional development efforts seem to be those that provide for incremental changes through trial and adoption; yet few projects allow time for this process to take place. Ten years is probably a minimum time span for a project with a significant institutional development component. Traditional four- to five-year project cycles are simply inadequate.

Korten (1980) expresses similar sentiments. Therefore, this means that specifying the life-span of a project does not mean that it has to be made unrealistically short. Sufficient time needs to be allowed for project personnel to acquire the knowledge which is necessary for them to be effective, and for the local people to gain the skills and knowledge necessary for them to sustain the operation in the long-run. Nevertheless, Korten as well as Morss and van Sant (1985) note that donor agencies and governments show a strong preference for projects with a quick impact. According to Morss and van Sant this tendency is still related to the bureaucratic needs of donor agencies and the political imperatives of governments, alluded to earlier. For the staff of aid agencies, such projects enhance their opportunities for career advancement because they demonstrate their competence, while governments stand to gain politically by showing that they can address the needs of the people in the shortest possible time.

Although a quick result would also boost the confidence of the beneficiaries and encourage them, in practice this approach is counterproductive because the short time-frames and high targets which often go with them are hardly ever met (Morss & van Sant 1985). On the other hand, successful projects are based upon the principles of the learning process approach outlined in sub-sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.2. As indicated, the learning process approach allows more time for project implementation. This facilitates flexibility in dealing with unforeseen problems. Furthermore, in the learning process approach targets are set only when the needs of the people, their resources and their limitations get to be better understood through action research; and therefore the targets are not likely to be unrealistic.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Community based organisations form the basis of empowerment and capacity building for self-sustaining development in the rural areas. This process is primarily pedagogic, and involves the acquisition of resources, skills, knowledge and confidence by the disadvantaged to enable them to participate effectively. Factors at the local level which influence the quality of participation in these organisations include the size of the organisation; the degree of formality of the organisation; the experience of people (negative or positive) with existing or previous forms of organisation; and the willingness of the local leadership to facilitate the process. External factors include the capacity of the bureaucracy to reorient its priorities towards serving the interests of the rural people, and to change from a hierarchical to a more interactive style of management. On the other hand,

decentralised structures of development administration will not be effective in bringing about participation if they are not accompanied by the bureaucratic changes mentioned above.

The political environment also plays a part in facilitating participation. For participatory development to succeed, the government ought to be positively disposed to it. But the willingness of the government to look favourably towards participation may be dependent upon the influence which nongovernmental organisations exert on it. The adoption of a reformist approach in encouraging community participation will allay the government's fear of participation because this approach fosters cooperation rather than confrontation between the different actors in development.

When all is said and done, the learning process approach remains the most effective method of implementing the participatory strategy. Because it is based upon action research, it makes it possible for development agencies to relate their assistance programmes to the needs of the people as they unfold. It also enables the local communities to participate fully in the design and implementation of such programmes. Within the context of the learning process approach, development projects infuse specificity into development efforts. They give development practitioners the opportunity to focus on particular problems within a specific period of time, and this makes it easier for them to learn how to deal with the problems more effectively. Projects become ineffective when they depart from the basic principles of the learning process approach. This deviance is often related to the bureaucratic requirements of donor agencies and the political interests of host governments.

CHAPTER 4

RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

IN LESOTHO

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I analysed the factors affecting participatory rural development. The present chapter seeks to highlight changes which have occurred in Lesotho's rural development policy and to identify the factors responsible for these shifts. The aim is to place participatory development in Lesotho in its proper context. The chapter starts with an overview of Lesotho's rural development policy, which reviews the issues raised in the first four five year development plans. The overview also indicates the main sources of influence on this policy.

Having presented this overview, I go on to take a closer look at the different aspects of the policy of rural development in Lesotho. First, I deal with community development, looking at its strengths and weaknesses. The discussion then shifts to the application of the green revolution strategy in Lesotho and examines its impact. Finally, the discussion shifts to the most recent attempts to promote rural development by encouraging people's participation, through integrated rural development projects and the people's participation programme.

4.2 OVERVIEW

It was pointed out in Chapter 2 that the historical evolution of development theory was characterised by a shift away from pre-occupation with objectives of growth to an increased awareness of the more normative aspects of development. Note was also made of the fact that this trend in the general thinking on development was reflected by similar changes in the area of rural development. It is the opinion of this writer that the same trends can be detected in the case of Lesotho by looking at the major concerns raised in the first four five year development plans, spanning the period 1970 to 1992.

4.2.1 Growth objectives

The First Five Year Development Plan (1970/71 - 1974/75) appears to have been based on two main assumptions about development in general, and rural development in particular. Firstly, increasing agricultural production was seen to be the essence of rural development. Consequently, emphasis was to be placed on technological improvement as a means of boosting agricultural productivity (Lesotho Government 1970: 12). At the same time very little attention was paid to the need for attaining redistributive justice. This view of rural development is reflected mainly by the way in which the traditional form of land ownership was seen as one of the major hindrances to increased agricultural output; prompting the planners to say that one of their targets in this plan would be:

.... to test the compatibility of the land tenure system with a rapid expansion of agricultural productivity (Lesotho Government 1970: 56).

The second major assumption of the first plan was that the overall development of the country could only be achieved by promoting the more dynamic industrial sector of the economy. During the 1950s and 1960s this approach to solving the problems of rural development in developing countries was common (Bryant & White 1982: 5). The following extract (Lesotho Government 1970: 25) clearly expresses this feeling in Lesotho:

The limited agricultural resources of the country can provide gainful employment opportunities for only a decreasing proportion of the rapidly expanding labour force. In the long run non-agricultural productive activities, which are now at their embryonic stage, will become a major path to economic development.

The planners also argued that because of the situation in which nearly half of the labour force was already engaged in wage employment in the Republic of South Africa, Lesotho unlike other African countries, would not face such a difficult task trying to transfer labour from the stagnating subsistence agriculture to the more vibrant industrial sector (p.12).

It is my submission that this plan which, in addition to the above mentioned, recommended mechanised farming and the use of chemical fertilizers, suggests a strong influence of green revolution strategies, discussed in Chapter 2, on Lesotho's rural development efforts in the late 1960s. On a broader scale the document reflects the influence of an approach which saw economic growth and industrial development as the ultimate goals of development (refer to Chapter 2, sub-section 2.3.1).

4.2.2 Moving beyond growth

The Second Five Year Development Plan (1975/76 - 1979/80) shows that planners in Lesotho were in the early 1970s mainly influenced by the "Redistribution with growth" approach in vogue during that period. I pointed out in Chapter 2 that with the failure of economic growth to bring benefits to broad sections of the population growth with equity became the new focus in development thought. The broad aims of this plan were:

- *Economic growth*
- *Social justice*
- *Maximum domestic employment*
- *Economic independence (Lesotho Government 1975: 20)*

On the other hand, the first plan stated that :

The overall objective of the five-year plan is to lay the foundations for economic development and economic independence (Lesotho Government : 1970: 23).

Moody (1975: 7) also observed that the first five year plan in Lesotho aimed at:

... overall economic development with major five year targets including an annual growth rate of GDP of not less than five per cent, a marked increase in productivity in the agricultural sector, and a promotion of non-agricultural productive activities.

Clearly stated concerns for redistribution are a prominent feature of the second plan while they are, without doubt, conspicuous by their absence in the first plan. Specifically in the area of rural (agricultural) development the second plan, in no uncertain terms, dispels the

doubts expressed in the first plan about the usefulness of the traditional land tenure system in the light of what was perceived to be its negative impact on increased agricultural productivity. This plan (Lesotho Government 1975: 20) says:

The present system of land tenure ensures that the use of land is widely and equitably shared and is supportive of social justice. Any modifications which may be necessary to secure the benefits of modern technology must not destroy the desirable distributive characteristics of the system.

The Third Five Year Development Plan (1980 - 1985) indicates a further development in the thinking on development in Lesotho, beyond the tendency of treating redistributive justice as the final goal of development. The plan (Lesotho Government 1980: 45) has as one of its six main objectives the need to:

... ensure deeper involvement and fuller participation of the community in national development.

Since development is basically an ethical question emphasis on participation implies an appreciation of the normative aspects of development. As pointed out in Chapter 2, it is only by facilitating their participation in the process of development that the people are given the opportunity of having this process imbued with their own values and norms.

On Lesotho's rural development policy the third plan said:

The basic tenet of our policy is to design programmes to ensure that social and economic benefits reach the poor and that government action assists the poor to help themselves (Lesotho Government 1980: 128. Emphasis added).

Thus, by the end of the 1970s the thrust of government action in rural development was seen to be the facilitation of community participation and not the delivery of services *per se*. It was pointed out in Chapter 2 that with the shift of emphasis in development theory from economic to human values, rural development strategies also stopped pursuing agricultural growth and stressed community participation. So, trends in Lesotho were in keeping with changes in development thought. It is also in the third plan that Lesotho begins to recognise that rural development is not necessarily the same thing as agricultural development. In this document the subject of rural development is discussed in a separate chapter and given quite a substantial treatment. In the two earlier plans only cursory references are made to rural development under chapters dealing with agriculture.

In the Fourth Five Year Development Plan (1986/87 - 1991/92) the focus of attention shifts to the strengthening of institutional arrangements for supporting people's participation in rural development. In terms of this plan (Lesotho Government 1986: 197) in the area of rural development:

The overall objective for the next Five Year period [would] be to consolidate achievements attained since the establishment of development councils.¹

It is clear, therefore, that changes taking place in development circles both in the general thinking on development as well as in rural development policy and strategy did not go unnoticed by development

1 These attempts at institutional development are discussed in the next chapter.

planners in Lesotho.

4.2.3 Specific sources of influence

4.2.3.1 *Dag Hammarskjöld report*

On the occasion of the Seventh Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (1-12 September 1975) the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation of Sweden prepared a report addressing the most critical issues facing Third World development. This report said that there was a need for "another development" to take place in developing countries with a focus on:

Development of every man and woman - of the whole man and woman - and not just the growth of things, which are merely means. Development geared to the satisfaction of needs beginning with the basic needs of the poor who constitute the world majority; at the same time development to ensure the humanisation of man by the satisfaction of his needs for expression, creativity, conviviality, and for deciding his own destiny (Another Development 1975: 7).

The concept of another development further implied the transformation of socio-economic and political structures (Another Development 1975: 15-16) through among other measures:

... decentralisation with a view to ensuring democratization of the political and economic decision-making power, promoting self-management and curbing the grip of bureaucracies.

In 1985 Lesotho hosted a seminar whose purpose was to map out the course of another development for countries of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). Taking its cue from the report of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation this

conference adopted the "Maseru Declaration" which spelled out an "Agenda for action" for SADCC countries. Its essential elements (SADCC 1987: 160-161) were:

- (a) *that the establishment of participatory, people-centred development projects should receive priority;*
- (b) *that the projects should be geared towards satisfying basic needs; and*
- (c) *that popular mass-based organisations should assume more of the initiative in the development process.*

Drawing its inspiration from this Agenda for action a seminar on "Another Development for Lesotho?" took place in Maseru in 1987. In this seminar King Moshoeshoe II together with government ministers committed Lesotho to the basic principles of another development. The King (Moshoeshoe II 1989), the Minister of Planning, Economic and Manpower Development (Sefali 1989) and the Minister of Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs (Sello 1989) stressed that increased participation of the people was the only way in which effective development could be achieved in Lesotho. They argued that the establishment of village, ward and district development councils in terms of Order No. 9 of 1986 was the most important step taken to facilitate people's participation in development. The promotion of interest groups (e.g. farmers' associations, women's and youth organisations) and cooperative societies was also seen as part of this strategy of encouraging popular participation (Moshoeshoe II 1989: 12; Sello 1989: 66).

It is in this context that the emphasis of the Fourth Five Year Development Plan on development councils as the basis for promoting community participation in rural development should be understood. Indeed in his presentation to the seminar on "Another Development

for Lesotho?" the Minister of Planning, Economic and Manpower Development intimated that the fourth plan was drawn with the goals of another development in mind (Sefali 1989). This study will, however, demonstrate that the establishment of these development councils has tended to be an end in itself as these structures have not been used to facilitate the genuine participation of the rural people in development.

4.2.3.2 WCARRD report

The World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) held in Rome in July 1979 was another important source of inspiration for rural development policy in Lesotho. In its report (FAO 1979: 4) the conference emphasised:

The goal of agrarian reform and rural development is transformation of rural life and activities in all their economic, social, cultural, institutional, environmental and human aspects. National objectives and strategies to achieve this transformation should ... be governed by policies for attaining growth with equity, redistribution of economic and political power, and people's participation.

It should also be noted that because the report considered local self-reliance to be a necessary part of rural development, it emphasised that while governments had a role to play in assisting local organisations in "meeting legal and financial requirements, training of leaders and other initial needs" they, nevertheless, had to be careful not to compromise the independence of local organisations (FAO 1979: 9). It deemed the decentralisation of the planning machinery to be necessary as a way of enabling the people to participate in formulating and implementing rural development

programmes in their areas and that as a corollary of this process the powers of local government structures should be widened.²

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the devolution of power from central government does not in itself imply participatory development. Decentralisation, as pointed out in Chapter 3, only provides an enabling environment for participation to take place. Properly understood, rural development participation takes place in action groups which strengthen the capacity of local people to deal with issues which confront them. I deal with this issue in more detail in the next chapter.

It is significant to note that the WCARRD report advocates integrated rural development since it urges governments that their rural development strategies "must take into account the necessity of integrated application of policies and identified areas of priority, ..." (FAO 1979: 4). On the other hand, the concept of another development discussed in the previous sub-section is rooted in the basic needs approach (Ghai 1977: 5-6).

The fact that rural development policy in Lesotho could draw its inspiration simultaneously from the WCARRD report and the report on another development supports my contention in Chapter 2 that there is no fundamental difference between the basic needs approach and integrated rural development (as well as community development);

2 It will be demonstrated in the next chapter that although Lesotho purported to agree with the general goals of rural development as outlined in the WCARRD report it, however, fell short of fulfilling the requirements of respecting the autonomy of local organisations and upholding the sanctity of local government structures.

and that the bond of unity between these strategies lies in their call for people's participation.

A 1983 inter-ministerial task force of the government of Lesotho reviewing the country's progress towards achieving people-centred rural development and investigating ways in which these efforts could be strengthened reiterated the government's commitment to the resolutions adopted at the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in 1979 (Lesotho Government 1983: i). A WCARRD follow-up mission to Lesotho in December 1982 (FAO 1983: 30) had also noted with appreciation the willingness of the government of Lesotho to pursue the ideals of participatory rural development as contained in the WCARRD report.

This overview provides a backdrop against which the significance of the successes and failures of different attempts to facilitate rural development participation in Lesotho should be measured. I now proceed to explore in more detail the main characteristics of Lesotho's rural development policy as it has evolved over the years.

4.3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN LESOTHO

4.3.1 The rise of community development

The history of community development in Lesotho is lucidly set out by Putsoa (1988) then the Rural Development Coordinator in Lesotho's Ministry of Interior, Chieftainship Affairs and Rural Development in a keynote address delivered at a course on the management of community and rural development schemes. According to him the first community development project was

started in the country in 1962 in the run-up to independence in 1966. The catch-phrase in the programme was self-help, self-reliance and participation of all sections of the population (p.4). This catch-phrase highlights the very first weakness in the character of CD in Lesotho. I pointed out in Chapter 3 that participation is biased towards the poor. But CD in Lesotho was based on "participation from all angles of the population". The result was that it was not specifically directed at building the capacity of the poor to help themselves.

Kotzé (1974: 129) argues that through community development the government of Lesotho hoped to combine the efforts of the people with those of the state to achieve the economic, social and cultural development of their communities. Writing about Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe, respectively, Gboku (1993: 168) and Agere (1982: 211) also indicate that in those countries CD was seen to be based on a combination of government efforts and those of the community.

There is nothing wrong with the government being involved in bringing about community development. As pointed out in Chapter 3, community participation should not imply the exclusion of the government. Rather it should mean the involvement of the local people who have hitherto been excluded (in collaboration with the government). What is important though is that there should be a clear understanding of the nature of government involvement, on the one hand, and that of the local communities, on the other.

The role of government in CD entails the facilitation of the process of participation by the rural people, mainly by training and supporting the cadre of people who are going to mobilise and conscientise the masses. In Lesotho the government did not fulfil this role properly.

Although community development was recognised as a national movement by parliament in April 1966 the Department of Community Development (under the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship Affairs) only had, in addition to three headquarters staff, nine fieldworkers, one in each of the nine districts in the country (Putsoa 1988).

It is difficult to see how one fieldworker was expected to mobilise and conscientise rural communities in an entire district. It was in recognition of the fact that CD is essentially a pedagogic process that in Zimbabwe a lot of attention was given to the training of community development workers whose function was to raise the awareness of the local people. Having adopted community development as a basis for rural development soon after independence in 1980, Zimbabwe had, by 1989, trained 8,000 CD workers who were almost entirely people drawn from the local communities themselves (Higgins & Mazula 1993).

The failure of the Lesotho Government to provide adequately for consciousness raising agents should be seen against the background of what I said earlier that participation through CD in Lesotho was seen as involving all sections of the population. Consequently, the government failed to appreciate the special needs of the poor towards whom participation should rightly be geared. Because of the debilitating conditions under which they live, the poor often lack initiative (Chambers 1983; Swanepoel 1992). As a result, they need the services of consciousness raising agents. Thus, the character of CD in Lesotho showed a lack of clear understanding of what community participation really implies.

4.3.1.1 *CD and development theory*

The lack of clarity surrounding the aims and methods of CD in Lesotho was also related to the nature of development theory which at that time emphasised growth. In Lesotho community development was equated to projects involving water supplies, road construction, communal gardens and anti-erosion measures, for example.

Swanepoel (1985: 360) has, however, indicated that community development should not be defined in terms of projects directed at economic and infrastructural growth. Gboku (1993: 170) supports this view by observing that CD is an educational process which develops the people's knowledge and skills, as well as their ability to think, reason and solve problems. In this sense the meaning of CD is equivalent to that which in this study is attached to community participation itself.

So, while the local people's involvement in CD implies the enhancement of their capacity for self-help and self-reliance, the government's involvement centres around the facilitation of this process of local capacity building. In this connection Swanepoel (1985) has argued that what should really be seen as community development is the part attributable to local communities and that the government's role is just an instrument for bringing CD about. This view is important because it helps to focus attention on the real goal of community development. As pointed out in Chapter 2, in its heyday, as indeed it was also the case in Lesotho, community development tended to be a technocratic exercise which emphasised the role of outside agents; and this led to expert dominated projects

aimed at infrastructural and economic growth. The position taken by Swanepoel helps to overcome this problem.

If, therefore, community development like community participation should rightly be seen as a strategy for achieving human development, was it possible for it to succeed in its objectives in Lesotho at a time when development was not seen in terms of human development? Ghai (1977: 15) suggests that development strategies "proceed on the basis of acceptance, mostly implicit, of one or other existing theories of development".

According to Ghai, a strategy entails the specification of objectives, the formulation of policy measures and instruments for implementing particular policies to achieve the stipulated goals. Mills (1962) also equates strategies with agencies of action containing both ends and means and by which ideals are won and maintained. Hettne (1990: 3) adds that a strategy of development implies an actor, usually the state. Thus, a strategy refers to the specific acts of a government (or some other entity) to bring about development. While a strategy is more focused and geared to action, a theory is broader and much more of an explanatory framework of ideas outlining the process of development and the pattern it takes. Mills (1962: 14) suggests that theories of "a social reality" (in our case development) contain:

... assumptions about how society is made up and how it works; about what are held to be its most important elements and how these elements are typically related; its major points of conflict and how these conflicts are resolved.

It was difficult, therefore, for community development in Lesotho to assume a different character in the 1960s because, as indicated in Chapter 2, the dominant theory of development at that time (the modernisation theory) defined the final goal of development in terms of economic growth. The point I am making is that although CD was recognised as a national movement in Lesotho in the 1960s there was lack of clarity surrounding its objectives and methods. The confusion was related to the fact that whereas community development is a strategy for human development the dominant theory of development during this period was oriented towards economic growth. Holdcroft and Jones (1982: 217) also identify this relationship between the ineffectiveness of CD in the Third World and the dominance of a growth oriented theory in which the poor were expected to benefit from development through a "trickle down effect". Gboku (1993: 173) has equally observed that most of the problems of CD in Sierra Leone arose from "the lack of thorough understanding of the philosophy and objectives of community development". The same sentiments are expressed by Leung (1986: 3) when he says that "similar to experiences in other countries, community development in Hong Kong [was] filled with rhetorical debates and loaded with ambiguous expectations".

4.3.2 The demise of community development

By the end of the 1960s community development had run its course in Lesotho. It should, however, be stressed that although CD was on the ascendancy in Lesotho during the 1960s it was an empty shell because it was not focused on the central issue of capacity building in local communities, but on economic production and infrastructure. It is in this context that Swanepoel (1985) has pointed out that

people wrongly criticise CD for failures in the attempt to achieve self-perpetuating and long-lasting development when in fact what was being practised was not community development at all. Thus, Ntene's (1993: 16) suggestion that CD was ineffective in Lesotho should be seen in this light.

What this means is that there was a lot of sweet talk about CD in Lesotho in the 1960s but very little real CD action. So, the start of the 1970s saw the end of the rhetoric about CD and rural development began to be shown for what it had always been in reality - an attempt to increase production disguised as community development. Policy statements became clearly directed at the growth objective. In particular, criticisms in the first five year plan (1970/71 - 1974/75) of the self-help projects carried out under the cloak of CD in the 1960s were indicative of this changed mood towards this philosophy. This document (Lesotho Government 1970: 73) said, for example:

Soil and water conservation activities are at present inadequately related to agricultural production. The already mentioned case of dam construction is an example of soil conservation activities not properly co-ordinated with irrigation farming.

The first plan made a similar point about the mountain tracks constructed through self-help (Lesotho Government 1970: 149-150). Their significance was to be seen in terms of their contribution towards improving livestock production, facilitating the transportation of livestock products (wool and mohair) to market centres and making it easier for the government to deliver essential services to the mountain areas.

These statements highlight a very important point - much as CD in Lesotho had effectively been geared towards agricultural growth even this objective was not achieved. Therefore, the focus had to be redirected more sharply and unequivocally towards growth. The pronouncements also reflect the frustration felt in official circles about the failure of CD to lead to growth, yet as I have explained CD is not a growth oriented strategy.

Community development is oriented towards developing human potential. The people themselves will decide how they want to use that potential to reach the goals which are desirable to them. Thus, whatever else might be expected to follow in the form of sustainable material benefits can only be based upon this initial process of capacity building. This is why Swanepoel (1985: 366) argues that if one is to "stay true to community development principles [one must] accept the fact that results will be small and slow to materialise ..."

The quick-fix solutions expected from community development in Lesotho were, therefore, reflective of the lack of clarity regarding the aims and methods of this approach referred to in the previous subsection; and which I argued was related to the dominance of the growth oriented theory of development at that time. Nevertheless, this changed mood towards CD in Lesotho in the late 1960s illustrates the point made in Chapter 2 that the perceived failure of CD in the Third World ushered in the era of green revolution strategies specifically biased towards growth.

From the point of view of van der Geer and Wallis (1984b: 6), the second five year plan (1976-1980) makes a positive evaluation of the "community or self-help projects" undertaken during the first plan

period (construction of feeder roads, tracks, foot bridges, water supplies, conservation works, communal gardens, fish ponds, sanitary facilities and community centres). They argue that this, together with the fact that the government was promising further assistance to CD projects, as well as the establishment of a separate Ministry of Rural Development in 1976 underscored the importance which the government attached to community development.

To some extent I agree with this view. But the Lesotho government's recognition of the value of CD projects in the second plan should be seen in its proper perspective. It was more a re-evaluation of its lukewarm (if not negative) attitude towards CD in the first plan (1970-1975) than an affirmation of a continuous pledge of loyalty to this policy. After an initial period of ascendancy in the 1960s, community development in Lesotho took a nose-dive towards the end of the decade. It was replaced by agricultural projects based upon the new seed-fertilizer technology, narrowly focused on agricultural growth.

However, disillusionment with the failures of this new strategy in the 1970s as well as changes taking place in the general thinking on development and in the style of rural development led to a reassessment of the earlier CD strategy. I noted in Chapter 2 that the green revolution strategy which replaced community development in developing countries was itself superseded by the basic needs approach and integrated rural development. This was also the pattern in Lesotho.

But the initial reaction to the failures of the green revolution strategy adopted in Lesotho in the late 1960s/early 1970s was an attempt to

reinstate community development. This is the context in which the stance seen by van der Geer and Wallis as reflecting a positive attitude of the government towards CD in the second five year plan - after relegating it to the background in the first five year plan - should be seen.

This fall-back on CD was, nevertheless, short-lived as a result of the influence of trends taking place in development thought. CD was soon to be overshadowed by efforts rooted more in the tradition of BNA and IRD which were more in keeping with the general pattern in the Third World at that time. But this initial re-adoption of CD in Lesotho in response to the failures of the green revolution strategy further illustrates the point already made that there is no fundamental difference between CD, the BNA and IRD. I pointed out in Chapter 2 that all these three strategies of rural development were a response to the failures of efforts focused on agricultural growth; and that the three of them were united by their common emphasis on community participation.

These latest attempts at rural development in Lesotho were inspired by the two documents mentioned earlier in this chapter - the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report on Development and International Cooperation and the 1979 Report of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. The next section addresses itself to the green revolution strategies which replaced CD in the early 1970s and the section after it will focus on the BNA and IRD strategies which replaced the green revolution strategies in the late 1970s.

4.4 MAJOR AREA BASED PROJECTS

4.4.1 The projects

In the 1970s efforts to achieve rural development in Lesotho centred around five major agricultural projects which were intended to develop and test approaches on which subsequent efforts in rural development would be based. These were:

- (a) The Leribe Agricultural Pilot (later Khomokhoana) Project
- (b) The Thaba-Bosiu Project
- (c) The Senqu Project
- (d) The Thaba-Tseka Project
- (e) The Phuthiatsana Project

The Khomokhoana, Thaba-Bosiu and Senqu projects were started during the first five year plan (1970-1975) although they overlapped into the second plan period (1976-1980). The Thaba-Tseka and the Phuthiatsana projects became operational in the second plan although they were planned during the first plan.

The first three projects were intended to improve dryland farming although the Senqu and Khomokhoana projects also had an irrigation component. According to the government then:

*The major benefits from each are expected to flow from **increases in dryland crop production**, although each is an integrated project with livestock, conservation, and various other components (Lesotho Government 1975: 83. **Emphasis added**).*

Although the Phuthiatsana Project was also aimed at increasing crop production, it differed from the other projects with the same goal in that it was an irrigation project. On the other hand, the Thaba-Tseka Project, located in the mountain areas of Lesotho, was geared towards improving livestock production although it also included elements of crop farming. Nevertheless, in spite of these differences in emphasis on particular aspects of agriculture, the characteristics of these projects will show that they had one common goal - to boost agricultural output.

4.4.2 Project characteristics

The following constitute the main ways in which rural development was to be achieved:

- improving yields from traditional crops (maize, sorghum and wheat) through increased use of chemical fertilizers and hybrid seeds;
- encouraging farmers to produce more cash crops (e.g. potatoes, beans and peas) as well as, in some cases, introducing new cash crops such as asparagus;
- providing credit facilities to farmers to enable them to buy fertilizer and improved seeds as well as to hire agricultural machinery or implements;
- maintaining or improving soil quality by means of conservation measures;
- incorporating a road construction/improvement programme into the projects to facilitate access to markets and input delivery, along with establishing village distribution points from which farmers would buy fertilizer, seed and pesticides;

- expanding agricultural extension services as a means of diffusing innovations to farmers; and
- increasing forage potential through the seeding and fertilisation of pastures, together with the improvement of range management practices to prevent overgrazing (Lesotho Government 1975; Morss et al 1976; Ferguson 1990).

These area based projects were similar in character to the area based projects initiated in Swaziland in 1970 under the Rural Development Areas Programme (RDAP) which Low (1982) saw as a "production response" to the problems of rural development in that country. The main difference is that in Lesotho the programme was launched in response to perceived failures of community development in the 1960s, and therefore represented a change of direction, as I have indicated. In Swaziland, on the other hand, the programme represented an intensification of efforts in the same direction following the perceived failure of the "master farmer scheme" in the 1960s which, as Low noted, was based on similar principles.

The Swazi programme, like its Lesotho counterpart, was aimed at providing increased extension services to farmers, the establishment of service centres, the provision of improved seeds and fertilizer as well as the improvement of range management systems. The principal objective was to boost the production of maize as the major staple food together with cotton and tobacco as the main cash crops, and to orient cattle farming towards the market (Maasdorp 1975; Low 1982).

A study of the Thaba-Bosiu Project led Morss et al (1976: 168) to make the following observation:

... distributional considerations were not mentioned explicitly in the statement of project objectives and have not received much attention. Rather the underlying philosophy has been to identify the most progressive farmers on the grounds that by working through them the project has the greatest chances to maximise increases in output and income.

Morss et al (1976: 182) reached a similar conclusion about the Khomokhoana Project. They noted that the project tended to rely on progressive farmers (mainly through their Tractor Owners' Association) to spread the innovations, and that these are the people who actually reaped most of the benefits. The point was made in Chapter 2 that as a strategy of rural development the green revolution tended to exacerbate inequalities between the rich and poor since the rich were better placed to take advantage of the new innovations; and this is what happened in Lesotho.

Looking at the Rural Development Areas in Swaziland, and citing evidence from different countries in Africa and other places, Magagula (1978) likewise argued that the prescription of technical solutions for rural problems underscores a lack of appreciation of the social and institutional factors at play. Braimoh (1995: 129) has equally argued that problems which affect rural development are not so much of a technical nature but that they are dependent on the prevailing socio-economic and political order. These are the factors discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 which inhibit the participation of the rural poor in development, such as the domination of local development programmes by bureaucrats and resistance by local elites.

Lipton's (1982) treatment of the urban bias in rural development

helps to shed more light on the nature of the problem in Lesotho in the 1970s. According to him not only does the focus on agricultural growth benefit the richer farmers but it is also intended to benefit the urban areas because the richer farmers are in a better position to produce the marketable surplus required in towns. That is why, in part, the provision of resources tends to favour them.

I pointed out in Chapter 2 that emphasising agricultural growth also arises from seeing development in urban-industrial terms. The rural sector is seen as a provider of excess labour to industry as well as marketable surplus. Indeed I noted in sub-section 4.2.1 that in the first development plan (1970-1975) the Lesotho government stated in no uncertain terms that the problems of the rural areas would, in the final analysis, be solved by industrial growth which would absorb the surplus labour. This is the context in which the focus on the richer farmers in Lesotho's area based projects should be viewed.

4.4.3 Project limitations

In addition to being inclined to work through the more progressive farmers, the projects failed to develop viable local organisations. It should be pointed out that attempts were still made to establish local organisations. In the Leribe Pilot (Khomokhoana) Project, for example, Village Pilot Scheme Committees (responsible for planning and carrying out conservation programmes, and assisting in the implementation of agricultural activities) were created and in the Thaba-Tseka Project, Grazing Associations (intended to effect range management) were formed. The point is merely that these attempts were not only subordinate to the main task of diffusing technological

innovations to farmers but were just half-hearted measures not followed meticulously.

Commenting on the participation of people in the Khomokhoana project, for example, Sanders (Oakley et al 1991: 95) says that "the involvement of the people in the actual construction of conservation works [has] made little actual difference to what they knew or understood of the issues involved". What this means is that participation in this project was not viewed in the manner in which it is seen in this study, as a way of strengthening the capacity of the rural people for self-sustaining development. More generally, FAO (1983: 24) makes the following observation about the Lesotho projects:

In almost all area-based projects participatory development was defined in advance by project staff and these pre-planned activities and priorities rarely conformed with the basic needs of the local population. Farmers were expected to participate in institution building largely defined (with good intentions) by outsiders. Invariably this resulted in lack of responsiveness by farmers to adoption of the recommended technical and institutional packages.

The different ways outlined above in which the projects were designed to work clearly reveal the technocratic nature of these ventures. They were based on the assumption that rural development comes from outside (one might even say imposed on people who are considered to be ignorant of what they really want), and on the hope that the technological package offered to the farmers would transform them into more efficient producers who once the extension agents had made them aware of the benefits awaiting them would increase their production with the aim of selling on the market. This means that development thinking in Lesotho was still based on the

assumptions of modernisation theorists about development being growth oriented, and about the peasant farmer being unable to contribute towards growth because of his backward thinking and his lack of innovativeness. It has, however, been noted about "agricultural extension as practised in Lesotho and many developing countries" that the "giver-receiver" relationship between the extension agent and the peasant farmer:

... patronizes development and negates the basic principles of bottom-up planning, participation and creativity in rural development (FAO 1983:28).

A decision was taken towards the end of the 1970s, halfway through the second five year plan (1975/76-1979/80), to terminate these schemes (Lesotho Government 1980: 166). By the government's own admission "breakthroughs in agricultural production [had] not occurred" (Lesotho Government 1983: 3.2). The government fully recognised that the "disappointing results" had been brought about by the projects' over-emphasis on "technical solutions" while neglecting "wider socio-economic aspects" (Lesotho Government 1980: 131).

Other rural development efforts in the 1970s were made through a country-wide project called the Basic Agricultural Services Project (BASP). Apart from the fact that BASP was intended to cover the whole country, it offered basically the same services as the area based projects, such as farm input supply and marketing, machinery repairs, and extension services. Even in the case of BASP the Lesotho Government (1983: 4.24) was to admit that:

To date examples of quantifiable increases in farm output resulting from the BASP programme have been limited.

Like the other projects, the BASP was technocratic. Thus, attempts to achieve rural development in Lesotho through the technocratic approach failed to bear any fruits. They failed to satisfy the needs of the majority of the people - a goal which in any case they never set out to achieve. What is more significant is that they even failed to reach the stated objective of increased agricultural production.

Similarly, Low (1982) has observed that Swaziland's Rural Development Areas had disappointing results in spite of the fact that the country had good agronomic conditions including fertile soils, good rains and relatively good transport network. He suggests that the lack of success is to be explained in terms of wider socio-economic factors; and quoting Lele, he notes that the poor showing of the production response to rural problems has been a general pattern in Africa (p.1). It was argued in Chapter 2 that as a technocratic approach to rural development the green revolution strategy was in fact unsuccessful throughout the Third World.

I wish to stress, though, that the point is not that the question of raising agricultural yields is not a genuine problem for rural people. What is being said is that this problem together with many others in the rural areas (e.g., access to markets and credit facilities) ought to be tackled through an approach which sees the local people as part of the solution because they have, as argued in Chapter 3, useful knowledge not readily accessible to outsiders; and not one which sees them as part of the problem because somebody has decided that they are not receptive to new ideas (Oakley et al 1991: 163; Stevens 1977: 15).

The discussion will now shift to those endeavours which, starting in

the late 1970s, reflected a willingness of some sort³ to work with the people to attain the development of their own communities. As already indicated, these efforts were based on the principles of the basic needs approach and integrated rural development.

4.5

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPATION IN LESOTHO

In line with the spirit of both the WCARRD and Dag Hammarskjöld reports in which rural development is viewed as a means of satisfying the needs of the most disadvantaged people, the Third Five Year Development Plan placed rural development policy within the framework of addressing the needs of the poorest 25% of the rural population, who had few resources of any kind (Lesotho Government 1980). The plan also acknowledged that in the past the rural poor had failed to reap benefits from development efforts, and that this was mainly because of the absence of a rural development policy sufficiently geared towards finding solutions to their problems, as well as a lack of an appropriate institutional framework for rural development (p. 128).

Therefore, popular participation was not only being seen as a means of achieving effective development of the rural areas but also as the main goal of rural development (Lesotho Government 1980; 1983). The new approach to rural development was implemented through a number of integrated rural development projects; together with the People's Participation Programme under the auspices of FAO.

4.5.1 Integrated rural development projects

From the late 1970s projects were initiated in Lesotho under the banner of integrated rural development. Of particular relevance to this study are the Thabana-Morena Integrated Rural Development Project and the Thaba-Tseka Integrated Rural Development Project. Others included the Mafotholeng Project (Berea district), the Siloe Project (Mohale's Hoek district), the Rankakala Project (Qacha's Nek district), the Seapala Project (Quthing district) and the Taung/Phamong Project (Mohale's Hoek district).

The Thabana-Morena IRD Project is important because, as indicated in Chapter 1, it was to be used to develop a model for rural participation in Lesotho. If this was the rationale behind the implementation of this project then its success or failure would have far reaching implications for the promotion of participatory rural development in Lesotho. Chapter 6 examines the approach used in designing and implementing the Thabana-Morena IRD Project, and Chapter 7 analyses the steps taken in this project to promote participation in self-help-groups.

The significance of the Thaba-Tseka Project lies in that it can be seen as an indicator of the changing views on rural development in Lesotho. In section 4.4 the point was made that the Thaba-Tseka Project was started with the aim of improving livestock production, including the improvement of range management systems. It also aimed at building an administrative town and improving road links between the project area and the capital city - Maseru; as well as, within the project area, facilitating the supply of agricultural inputs and the marketing of farm produce.

The project was thus based on the assumption that rural development is not only homologous with increased agricultural production but also equivalent to production for the market; and that development is brought to the rural areas by government and its agencies and that efforts should, therefore, be made to ensure that the agents of development can reach the rural areas with ease. Bryant and White (1982) have shown that views of this nature have been prevalent in the Third World and that they arose from an economic interpretation of development.

The project retained this character for the duration of Phase I which ran from 1974 to 1978. When Phase II (1979 - 1984) began the project was renamed the Thaba-Tseka Integrated Rural Development Project from the Thaba-Tseka Development Project (Ferguson 1990: ch. 3). This change in name as well as in the character of the project was meant to signify the start of a fresh outlook towards the problems of rural development in Lesotho. Roth (1994) reports that in the late 1970s the Pompengan Implementation Project (PIP) in Indonesia similarly changed its name to Pompengan Integrated Area Development Project (PIADP). He notes that although this change was intended to signify a de-emphasis of economic in favour of human issues in rural development, the project remained geared towards the increase of rice production, and the participation of the poor was overlooked.

In the Thaba-Tseka Project the change in name was accompanied by the establishment of a rural development component separate from the project's agricultural activities. A report issued by the Thaba-Tseka Rural Development Programme in 1980, detailing Phase II activities (Ferguson 1990: 95) hinted that:

The role of Rural Development Division in this project is to mobilise villagers, to organise communities and then invite the relevant technical division to implement the activity.

Government officials (Lesotho Government 1983: 4.2) have equally pointed out that in Lesotho generally:

Integrated Rural Development Projects [were] designed to provide rural residents with direct opportunities to participate in goal setting and project planning activities [and that] [i]n contrast to top down planning the primary objective [was] to promote planning and programming initiatives from village levels.

McMurphy (1990: 22-23) has, however, indicated that notwithstanding the rhetoric and purported intentions of facilitating community participation, integrated rural development in Lesotho has actually been a top-down operation. She suggests that this failure to encourage participation has limited the long-term sustainability of project benefits because participants never developed the skills necessary to make local development self-perpetuating.

Similar failures in promoting local participation through IRD have been observed in Botswana. Rural development efforts in that country in the 1970s had been carried out through the Accelerated Rural Development Programme (ARDP) whose focus was on providing infrastructure in the rural areas mainly in the form of primary schools, roads and water supplies; as well as the Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP) which focused on the improvement of livestock production and conservation of land resources (Chambers 1977a; Weimer 1977).

These programmes were production oriented and failed to address the organisational needs of the rural poor (Barclay et al 1979). As a reaction to these failures the Communal First Development Area (CFDA) programme was launched in 1980. Sterkenburg (1987: 166) views this scheme as Botswana's version of integrated rural development. Although the CFDA acknowledged the importance of village level participation, Sterkenburg notes that the delivery of this programme remained bureaucratic, and only lip service was paid to grassroots participation.

From his analysis of integrated rural development in Kenya under the arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) programmes in the late 1970s, Wiggins (1985: 102) equally concluded that the project failed to generate effective local participation because participatory structures such as development committees were dominated by civil servants.

I suggested in Chapter 2 that the concept of integration in rural development underscores reconciliation between the basic needs approach, which emphasises the end result of the process of development, and community development which stresses the process itself - a process in which community participation plays a crucial role, as I said. Otzen et al (1979: 5) add another dimension to the picture by arguing that integrated rural development implies an appreciation of the interrelationship of socio-political, economic and technical factors influencing development. Furthermore, Roth (1994: 390) argues that integratedness underscores a mode of operation which incorporates the views of all role players in rural development.

It is only through people's participation that the search for solutions to the problems of the rural areas can be taken beyond economic and technical factors to address political and social variables, and that the views of all relevant actors can be accommodated in the process. Therefore, the failure of integrated rural development in Lesotho and in other countries to genuinely facilitate community participation means that the concept has been rendered meaningless.

4.5.2 People's participation programme

In the early 1980s FAO introduced the People's Participation Programme (PPP) in numerous African countries (e.g. Ghana, Sierra Leone, Lesotho, Zambia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe). Born out of the 1979 World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, already referred to, the programme aimed at stimulating rural development by focusing on the participation of the poorest members of rural communities in development activities at the sub-village level (i.e., by organising themselves into action groups). In this connection, FAO/DSE⁴ (1984: 119) state that:

A basic premise of the approach is that participation can be most effectively promoted through the formation of small, informal and homogenous groups (between 8 and 15 persons), of the rural poor who share some common bond or interests, organised around a common income-generating activity.

As will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, participation should rightly be perceived as taking place through village based action groups. The

PPP was thus in keeping with this conception. In Lesotho the PPP started in 1984 and ran until 1989. It was financed through the FAO to the tune of \$224,530. Three action areas were identified at Ha-Ramabanta, Ha-Raleqheka and Ha-Tlali, and a group promoter was stationed in each of the action areas. In all, 19 groups with an average size of about 14 people were established - eight in farming, two in gardening, four in poultry, one in piggery and four in sewing and knitting. By 1989 none of these groups were still functioning.

The programme was, therefore, not successful in promoting effective community participation. The involvement of the people in group activities did not enhance their capacity for self-sustaining local development. McMurchy (1990: 21) states that:

... the people's participation programme in Lesotho failed to encourage - indeed left little room for - active participation on the part of group members ... Group members were not involved in project design and implementation, and the PPP group process provided little in the way of new experiences or educational tools to allow participants to develop the skills necessary to assume a greater, more active role in their own development.

The FAO (1991: 11) similarly acknowledges that not only did the PPP group activities in Lesotho fail to demonstrate any economic viability but they were also characterised by inadequate educational experiences for participants. Examining the PPP in Ghana, Bortei-Doku (Oakley et al 1991: 73-74) commented that the programme equally failed to promote effective participation of the people.

Group formation in Ghana's PPP became a top-down exercise in which "emphasis was placed more upon the quantity of groups and their activities than on the quality of the process itself". Furthermore,

group promoters (GPs) failed to develop their role as facilitators or educators in the process of group formation, which led to over-dependence of the groups on the agents. Bortei-Doku (Oakley et al 1991) thus observed that:

... the notion that GPs would change their relationship with the groups over time as a result of greater group confidence and internal organisational abilities has not yet materialised (p.74).

I argued in Chapter 3 that grassroots participation should become a learning experience for participants if their capacity for local development is to grow. The failure of the people's participation programme in Lesotho, as well as in Ghana, to develop the potential of the local people means that the programme missed the primary objective of rural participation.

4.5.3 Integration of women

It was noted in Chapter 3 that notwithstanding the substantial contribution women make towards rural development in developing countries their access to resources and opportunities which enhance their capacity to participate effectively is still limited. Women's contribution in agricultural production and in other areas of rural development in Lesotho has equally been acknowledged (Lesotho Government 1983; FAO 1985). Rural development activities in which women play a pivotal role are especially those which take place through the food for work programme where they constitute the majority of the people engaged in road construction as well as soil and water conservation works.

However, in rural organisations such as cooperatives women are still dominated by men. As a result they have not been able to develop

managerial and administrative skills as a way of developing their human potential. Furthermore because credit is mainly obtainable through male dominated cooperatives women tend to have limited access to loans (FAO 1985: 46).

In the spirit of "another development" which stresses the participation of "every man and woman" the king (Moshoeshoe II 1989: 18) has urged that development efforts in Lesotho "must seek to involve all women in equal development - especially women in the villages on whom much of the productive and extended family burdens fall". Even the WCARRD report, which as pointed out earlier, inspired rural development efforts in Lesotho during the late 1970s saw "the full integration of women" as a priority. It is against this background that the fact that participants in the Thabana-Morena IRD Project were going to be predominantly women was accepted without reservations although, as pointed out in Chapter 1, this project was not designed specifically for women.

4.6

CONCLUSION

Changes which took place in the thinking on development have been reflected in the changes which have taken place in rural development policy in Lesotho. As concern in development theory shifted from economic to normative values, so did rural development policy in Lesotho shift emphasis away from agricultural growth to people's participation.

Nevertheless, this elevation of community participation to a position of prominence in Lesotho's rural development efforts since the late 1970s has been more rhetorical than substantive. Projects intended

to facilitate rural participation under the banner of integrated rural development and the people's participation programme have remained technocratic and production oriented. They have failed to focus on the real issue of building local capacity for self-sustaining development by strengthening the organisational base for rural development.

This failure appears to be related to the persistence of the influence of obsolete development theories. Hettne (1990: 3) argues that there is a tendency for development practitioners to continue to base their actions on outdated development theories which he terms "development ideology". Thus, in spite of the fact that development theory now emphasises people's participation and the development of human potential, rural development practitioners in Lesotho (and in other countries) continue to base their interventions on technocratic and production oriented approaches.

The most significant lesson, therefore, to be drawn from Lesotho's experience with all these participatory strategies (community development, the basic needs approach, integrated rural development and even the people's participation programme) is that the label itself is not important. Unless there is, in the first instance, a clear understanding of what participation entails it will not succeed regardless of the name under which it goes. Changes in the name of the participatory strategy were not accompanied by changes in the methods of implementing it even after development theory had shifted emphasis towards human aspects of development. The methods remained technocratic and effectively directed towards economic and infrastructural growth. At least to some extent, this suggests lack of clarity about the nature of participatory development.

CHAPTER 5

ADMINISTRATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN LESOTHO

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 dealt with the changes which took place in Lesotho's rural development policy since the early 1960s. Chapter 5 examines the administrative machinery through which the policy was implemented. The intention is to identify the political administrative factors which have had a bearing on rural participation in Lesotho. First of all, I discuss the advent of representative local government in Lesotho, and the problems surrounding it before I consider its relationship with community participation. From there, the chapter deals with the change from devolution to deconcentration and the factors which accounted for this change.

Different types of deconcentration are identified and the form of deconcentration in Lesotho is shown to have been the unintegrated prefectorial system. The enquiry reveals that rather than facilitate participatory development, decentralisation exercises carried out in Lesotho led to greater centralisation of administrative authority. In this connection, lack of political commitment is seen as the major cause of the failure of the government to strengthen its administrative capacity for effective rural development. Lastly, I look at the role of NGOs in Lesotho, and I try to determine their capacity to facilitate participatory development.

2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN LESOTHO

2.1 Background

Representative local government in Lesotho existed for a brief period starting in 1959 and ending soon after independence in 1966. During this time the administration of rural development was the responsibility of elected district councils (all members of district councils except Principal Chiefs were elected representatives). Prior to the advent of district councils local government in this country operated within the context of British indirect rule. As Kotzé (1974) demonstrates, under this system, chiefs formed the focal point of local authority in Lesotho.

Lesotho's experience reflects the general pattern in anglophone Africa where for most of the colonial period the British used "native authorities" to decentralise administrative responsibility to local communities (Mawhood 1991a; Jeppe 1982). These structures consisted mainly of traditional leaders in the form of chiefs and their councillors; and operated under the supervision of the district officer appointed by the colonial regime referred to as the District Commissioner.

As the British were preparing their subjects for self-rule and subsequently for independence local authority was transferred to representative district councils. It is these local government bodies which African countries inherited at independence. With the attainment of independence, however, a general move away from representative local government to deconcentrated structures of local

administration took place (Mawhood 1991b; Coleman 1977). A notable exception in this respect is Botswana where district councils were a product of the post-colonial and not the colonial era (Jeppe 1974). Also in Botswana, unlike in other countries such as Lesotho where district councils were completely dismantled, these were simply subordinated to the district representatives of the central government.

2.2 District councils

District councils in Lesotho were responsible for both urban and rural development (Kotzé 1965). Specific areas which they covered included the maintenance of the market place, abattoir, public latrines and village water supply; the building of community halls and bridle paths; range management and soil conservation, for example.

In comparison district councils in Botswana were specifically responsible for rural development (Jeppe 1974). Their main function was the provision of primary education although, as Jeppe shows, councils could undertake to provide other services such as the provision of health and sanitary services, construction and maintenance of roads and provision of water supplies (known as permissive functions) depending on the ability of each council (financial, administrative and otherwise) to do so.

In Zambia these councils were called rural councils to underline their rural orientation, although as in the case of Lesotho their area of jurisdiction generally coincided with the boundaries of the country's administrative districts. The functions of Zambia's rural councils

included the maintenance of roads and waterways, the provision of health services and water supplies and the collection and delivery of mail (Tordoff 1974).

2.2.1 *Problems of district councils*

In their few years of existence (1959 - 1968), Kotzé (1965, 1974) notes that the operation of district councils in Lesotho was marred by shortages of manpower and funds as well as conflict between them, on the one hand, and the traditional leadership together with district offices of central government ministries, on the other. Similar problems have been identified in Botswana's district councils (Jeppe 1974; Picard & Morgan 1985).

Perhaps the conflicts were unavoidable in view of the nature of the administration which preceded the district councils. It has already been noted that chiefs constituted the centre of authority at the local level and that they in turn had district commissioners appointed by the colonial government exercising a loose form of control over them. This conflict, therefore, represented a struggle between an emerging force (representative local government) and forces of a passing order (centralised colonial administration and domineering chieftainship) which, however, were not ready to give up power at the pace or to the extent acceptable to the new force.

As indicated in Chapter 3, decentralisation is part of the process of building effective institutions for rural development. There I argued that institution building does not take place smoothly. A laborious and painful process of adjustment and readjustment over a protracted period of time is required (a learning process) before a stable fit is

achieved between the different elements of the institutional framework. Thus, the conflict which took place between the different elements of the institutional structure for rural development in Lesotho was not necessarily an undesirable occurrence. Given time the different actors in the decentralisation process (representative local government, the chieftainship and the central government) would probably have been able to accommodate one another and, through a learning process, to reach a level of peaceful coexistence in which the nature of the relationships among them was clearly defined.

But the political circumstances surrounding independence stunted any further evolution and consolidation of this tripartite system of government. The Basotho National Party (BNP) came to power after narrowly winning the elections in 1965; worse still, most of the district councils (six out of nine) were controlled by the rival Basutoland Congress Party (BCP).¹ It will be demonstrated in this chapter that the post-independence actions of the Lesotho government with regard to decentralisation make sense only when

1 The full picture is as follows: In the 1965 elections the BNP had failed to win an absolute majority and its government "would have had to resign if two opposition members had not crossed the floor". Furthermore, the combined opposition had gained about 60 per cent of the votes and yet had 29 out of 60 parliamentary seats (BNP 31, BCP 25, MFP 4). As a result this "British principle of majority in one-man-constituencies was severely criticised by the opposition". Irregularities had also been discovered in the voting process and in two instances the court had found the BNP guilty. These are some of the factors which led to a widespread perception that the government was illegitimate. Consequently, between 1965 and 1970 as part of a BCP instigated campaign of civil disobedience to the government, the civil servants, the majority of whom were pro-BCP made it extremely difficult for the BNP government to work, almost paralysing it. But the government had very little power to act against them because the constitution "guaranteed the autonomy of the public administration in relation to the government" (Ström 1978: 99-101). It is against this background that the actions of the BNP government (as discussed in sub-section 5.3.3.2) in relation to the public service after 1970 when it suspended the constitution should be viewed.

they are seen against the backdrop of its fear of the opposition. Immediately after independence the BNP government dismantled district councils and proceeded to establish a centralised system of administration.

As I have already noted, a more subtle approach was used to undermine the authority of district councils in Botswana. After 1970 the Botswana district councils (which started functioning at the time of independence in 1966) were subordinated to the District Commissioner who was the representative of the central government in the district. The district development committees chaired by the District Commissioner and dominated by civil servants supervised larger budgets than the district councils; and employees previously controlled by the district councils were brought under the Unified Local Government Service (ULGS) which was centrally directed (Picard & Morgan 1985; Tordoff 1988).

I will further deal with the negative attitude of the Lesotho government towards devolution in section 5.3. But before I do that I first want to explore the relationship between representative local government and community participation in rural development.

5.2.3 Devolution and community participation

Different forms of decentralisation were discussed in Chapter 3. These were, namely: devolution of power from central government to autonomous local government structures; deconcentration of central government staff to regional offices; delegation of responsibility to special function semi-autonomous agencies; and privatisation, which involves the transfer of development functions to nongovernmental

organisations including private business enterprises. For the purposes of this study the focus of my attention will be on devolution and deconcentration. District councils in Lesotho, as already suggested, exemplified devolution.

Mawhood's (1991a) contention is that in Africa the achievement of authentic participation of the rural people in development depends upon the devolution of power to local government structures. Samoff (1990) makes the same point about developing countries in general. The question, though, is whether devolution is, in fact, a necessary ingredient of the participatory strategy.

Marshall's (1982) discussion of the situation in the USA where the federal government proved to be more committed to the needs of the poor than the local elites (both inside and outside local government structures), and used its control of federal grants to encourage local authorities to institute participatory development suggests that a locally elected government is not a guarantee for people's participation. Judging from the US case it is clear that even in the absence of a local government structure a committed central government can facilitate people's participation if it has the administrative capacity to do so. But as Marshall observes the situation in the Third World is different, central governments in general neither have the commitment nor the administrative capacity to satisfy the requirements of participatory development. Rondinelli (1983a) comments on this lack of commitment and administrative capacity to facilitate local participation within central government structures in Tanzania, Kenya and Sudan, for instance.

It will be remembered that in Chapter 3 participatory development was defined as essentially being about the empowerment of local people. Empowerment was then depicted as a process of capacity building which equips the local people with knowledge, skills and confidence and allows them to have the opportunities necessary for them to take their rightful place among other actors in the process of development. This means that capacity building leads to the democratisation of the development arena because it makes it possible for those who have previously been excluded to join the process too. Thus, together the two concepts of empowerment and democratisation inform the meaning of participatory development.

At the same time, it is necessary to distinguish between participation in the development process and participation in the political process. In the political arena participation centres around the act of electing representatives, or being elected as a representative, to manage public affairs (locally, regionally or nationally) for a given period of time (Orum 1983; Dowse & Hughes 1972; Cohen & Uphoff 1980). The basic difference between political participation and developmental participation is that in the former one can participate indirectly through representatives while in the latter one has to participate directly for participation to be meaningful. This is why participation in development necessarily has to take place through small community based organisations (Ingham & Kalam 1992) which give every individual the opportunity to develop his or her own potential and the chance to share directly in the benefits of development. In this context, Swanepoel (1992: 13) uses the term "action groups" and describes them as organisations in which "the people involved will be concerned about a certain problem or need" and which **do not** "involve more people than can be active in a project".

Nevertheless, there is a relationship between political participation and developmental participation. If a government has a negative attitude towards free political organisation it is likely to feel threatened by all forms of organisation including the formation of local action groups which make demands with which the government is unable to cope.

Another relationship between these two forms of participation, as indicated in Chapter 1, is that participation in action groups (developmental participation) inculcates democratic values among the local people and prepares them for participation in the broader political process of electing representatives to local, regional or national structures (or being elected themselves) with a clear understanding of what they expect from their representatives (or of what is expected of them as elected representatives). I pointed out in Chapter 2 that the call for people's participation derives from the understanding that development takes place at the local level. Only if participation is perceived in local terms can the participation of all people be ensured. This implies the democratisation of the scene of development alluded to earlier.

This idea of democracy in participatory development should be understood in two ways. Firstly, it refers to the aspect of making it possible for all people to become part of the process of development through their action groups, helping to bring it about and sharing in the benefits accruing from it. In this sense democracy is akin to redistributive justice, and this is the economic aspect of democracy in participatory development. Thus, the concept of people's participation in part assumes the growth with equity approach. Indeed I noted in Chapter 2 that as development theory evolves, fresh

outlooks assume and build upon rather than completely replace older ones.

Secondly, the concept of democracy refers to the ability of the local people to take decisions which affect their lives. This is the more political connotation of the concept. But again it is by being directly involved in action groups that the people can take the decisions which affect their mode of existence themselves rather than doing it through elected representatives. So, in addition to forming the basis of the mainly educational process of empowerment, action groups help to democratise the development process by enabling the people to contribute towards bringing it about, and sharing in the benefits thereof (which refers to the economic aspect of development) and by making it possible for them to determine their own fate (which is the political dimension of development).

It can, therefore, be argued that devolution is not a necessary condition for participatory development to take place. What is necessary is that the government whether central or local must be committed to it. It must show this commitment by encouraging and supporting community based action groups. Thus, the dismantling of district councils in Lesotho was not in itself inimical to rural development participation. It is rather the underlying lack of commitment by the government which has militated against community participation. This lack of commitment will be demonstrated in sections 5.3 and 5.4 below.

3 DECENTRALISATION IN LESOTHO

3.1 From devolution to deconcentration

As already indicated, the newly elected government of the Basotho National Party got rid of district councils after independence. On the basis of its electoral victory at the national level it argued that district councils - which were dominated by the rival Basutoland Congress Party - no longer reflected the will of the people. The government maintained that councillors' allowances, therefore, amounted to an unjustified expenditure of public money; and that district councils were incompatible with the efficient use of available financial and manpower resources (Kotzé 1974: 25).

Similar arguments were used throughout Africa to justify the replacement of local government structures by centralised structures of administration, which were regarded to be a precondition for sustained economic development. But experience has shown that this move towards greater centralisation of political-administrative power has not led to widespread development benefiting the majority of people, most of whom live in the rural areas (Conyers 1986b; Mawhood 1991a). Lesotho is no exception in this regard. The mass of the rural population continue to languish in poverty in spite of, and perhaps because of, the centralising tendencies of the government.

Within the general pattern of moving away from the devolution of power to autonomous local government bodies to the installation of deconcentrated structures of local administration, Jeppe (1982: 327) has identified three distinguishable trends in Africa:

- (a) in some cases responsibility has been left with deconcentrated government departments at the regional or district level, with minimal participation by local representatives, if any at all, and mainly in an advisory capacity;
- (b) in other instances regional or special function development authorities are established within the deconcentrated structures of administration, and where local representatives are allowed it is in the form of "token representation in management boards" (this situation epitomises the style of decentralisation defined as "delegation" in Chapter 3); and
- (c) in yet other cases civil servants in the regions or districts are brought together with local representatives in local developmental structures under the leadership of the area representative of the central government. This arrangement represents a marriage between deconcentration and devolution, in which the local representatives often play a subordinate role.

Lesotho's earlier experience with district development committees (which will be discussed later in this chapter) reflects the first pattern of local development administration. But after 1986 these structures came to lean more towards the third pattern. On the other hand, regional or special function authorities have not been a prominent feature of Lesotho's approach to rural development administration. The most important example of this approach is the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) which as part of its mandate to oversee the Highlands Water Project, also caters for the development of those areas affected by the scheme.

Deconcentration in Lesotho

To fully appreciate the situation in Lesotho and the significance of the changes which now and then have taken place in the administrative structure, one needs first of all to have a broad understanding of the strategy of deconcentration as it is applied in different contexts.

In any given situation deconcentration can assume one of two main forms, that is, ministerial deconcentration (the functional system) or prefectorial deconcentration (Jeppe 1982; Leonard 1982a, 1982b). Ministerial deconcentration occurs when the regional heads of functional departments are directly responsible to the central headquarters of their respective ministries without having to go through any local intermediary. Prefectorial deconcentration, on the other hand, establishes a local intermediary (prefect) who as the chief representative of the government in the region, oversees the work of the different departments in the area, coordinates their operations and in one way or another provides a link between them and the national capital.

Prefectorial deconcentration can further be sub-divided into the integrated prefectorial system and the unintegrated prefectorial system (Jeppe 1982). The former depicts a situation in which the prefect forms the main channel of communication between the different departments at the regional level and the centre. The latter refers to a situation in which the prefect is only one of many channels of communication between functional departments and their respective headquarters. It could, thus, be argued that better inter-ministerial coordination is facilitated at the sub-national level through the integrated system.

Lesotho's deconcentration exercise has been of the unintegrated prefectorial type. Cosmetic changes were introduced from time to time but this basic form was never really altered. After the abolition of district councils in 1968, the government appointed Assistant Ministers to serve as the political heads of the districts. These Assistant Ministers were supported by District Administrative Secretaries who became the civil service heads of the districts (after the abolition of district councils, District Commissioners were renamed District Administrative Secretaries).

The move to appoint Assistant Ministers in the districts is comparable to the step taken in Zambia during the 1968 administrative reforms where Ministers of State were appointed at provincial level who were assisted administratively by Resident Secretaries (Tordoff 1974). However, Picard (1984) observes that in Lesotho the distinction between political functions of the Assistant Ministers and the administrative duties of the District Administrative Secretaries was never clearly defined and in August 1970 the former position was abolished. The position of District Administrative Secretary was renamed District Administrator (DA) and between 1970 and 1980 the DA was responsible for district administration.

5.3.2.1 *Decentralisation in the 1980s*

In 1980 a new decentralisation exercise was initiated in Lesotho. The objective of achieving effective coordination between functional departments at the district level was the primary motivation for this initiative (Putsoa 1988). This is why the government representatives subsequently posted in the districts (replacing the former District Administrators) came to be known as District Coordinators. In

Zambia too another round of decentralisation began in 1980 whose main objective, as in the case of Lesotho, was to strengthen coordination at the district level (Mukwena 1991; Conyers 1986b).

I pointed out earlier that the prefectorial system in Lesotho remained unintegrated in spite of changes which were introduced from time to time, as reflected by changes in the title of the prefect. The essence of the decentralisation drive of the early 1980s was to move away from this unintegrated system in which the prefect was only one of many channels of communication with the centre to an integrated one where the prefect is the main, if not the only, channel of communication with the capital.

An attempt was made to strengthen the power of District Coordinators by making their offices directly responsible to the office of the Prime Minister. This arrangement was aimed at giving these officers more political clout and hopefully more authority over departments in the districts. The District Administrators who preceded the District Coordinators were under the Ministry of Interior.

But this intention of strengthening the hands of the District Coordinators failed because in practice they were not given sufficient powers over the departments in the districts. In particular, budgets continued to be controlled from the headquarters of the different ministries in the capital; and the ministries also failed to post senior staff in the districts. So, district offices continued to liaise directly with the centre (Putsoa 1988; Lesotho Government 1989; Mapetla & Rembe 1989). Similarly, in Zambia Mukwena (1991) argues that the inability of the government to decentralise budgetary powers

contributed significantly to the failure of the primary objective of improved inter-ministerial coordination at district level.

5.3.2.2 *Deconcentration and participation*

The office of the District Coordinator was not only considered important in achieving inter-departmental coordination. It also served as a facilitator of participatory development in the district (Putsoa 1988: 14; Mapetla & Rembe 1989: 23). It should further be noted that this decentralisation drive coincided with the period in which, as indicated in Chapter 4, rural development policy in Lesotho became focused on people's participation, following the 1970s when the main goal of rural development was agricultural growth. The question which arises, therefore, is: what is the relationship between coordinated action of government departments in the districts and community participation in rural development? or, to put the same question differently, is an integrated prefectorial system a more effective method of facilitating rural development participation than an unintegrated system within the general pattern of deconcentration?

It has already been demonstrated that elected local government structures are not an absolute necessity for participatory rural development to take place because the latter takes place in local action groups. This means that deconcentrated structures can be just as effective for promoting participation at the village level. It was argued that the crucial factors are the political commitment of a government towards participation and the administrative capacity to facilitate it. The question of whether an integrated system is more

effective than an unintegrated system relates to the issue of administrative capacity, which should itself be understood in terms of the availability as well as the efficient use of qualified staff and other resources.²

In so far as the integrated prefectorial system improves coordination (Jeppe 1982), it also leads to efficiency in the use of resources. Fewer situations will arise where, for example, officers from two or more departments in the district headquarters travel to the same village or area on the same day but in different vehicles, when they could all use one vehicle not only to save costs but also to induce a collaborative (integrated) approach to the problems of the rural communities. In my interviews with officers of the Ministry of Rural Development in the Mafeteng district and in the capital, Maseru, I established that occurrences of this nature were not uncommon.

So, to the extent that an integrated prefectorial system contributes to the efficient use of resources and reduces duplication and conflict while increasing cooperation between departments, it enhances the administrative capacity of the government. Therefore, an integrated prefectorial system is a more effective way of facilitating rural participation than an unintegrated system. It follows then that the failure of the decentralisation exercise of the early 1980s, as noted earlier, to transform Lesotho's prefectorial system from an unintegrated to an integrated one did not augur well for rural

2 In Marshall's (1982) comparison of the situation in the Third World with that in the USA, in Rondinelli's (1983a) discussion of the conditions in Kenya, Sudan and Tanzania as well as in Sekatle's (1993) examination of the role of development committees in Lesotho the emphasis tends to be only on the availability of resources. But efficiency in the use of available resources is equally important for enhancing administrative capacity.

community participation.

After the military coup in January 1986 the position of District Coordinator was abolished. Order No. 9 of 1986 established the post of District Secretary in its place. The head of the new government referred to the District Coordinators as "*Bahokahanyi Ba Lipolotiki*", that is, people whose duty was to coordinate the political activities of the ruling party or, in other words, people whose appointment was motivated by political rather than administrative or developmental considerations. This change in nomenclature was thus intended to underscore the military government's intention to depoliticise district administration (Putsoa 1988).

The issue here is that administrative deconcentration in Lesotho even after the 1980 efforts never served to effectively coordinate the activities of the different ministries at the district level and to facilitate genuine community participation in spite of the government's pronouncements to that effect. On the contrary, increased centralisation of decision making power in the capital and the political control of all sections of the population appear to have been the motive force behind it. Mukwena (1991) has similarly noted that the administrative changes which took place in Zambia since independence never achieved the objective of coordination. Instead, they led to the centralisation and politicisation of the administration. I now want to look at how centralisation and politicisation of the administration affect rural participation.

5.3.3 Centralisation and politicisation

5.3.3.1 *Centralisation*

Several writers have noted the centralised nature of the administrative framework and procedures in Lesotho (Kotzé 1974; Ström 1978; Hirschmann 1981; Picard 1984; Mapetla & Rembe 1989). In so far as the prefecture is concerned the point to underline, as already indicated, is that the prefect (in the posts of Assistant Ministers in the late 1960s, District Administrators in the 1970s, District Coordinators in the early 1980s and District Secretaries after the military coup in 1986) never really had any powers to effectively oversee and coordinate the operations of the functional departments, all departments continuing to deal directly with and to take orders from their respective headquarters. I argued in the previous section that this situation does not facilitate rural development participation.

But the problem has not only lain with the failure of the government to transfer meaningful powers of coordination to the prefects. There equally has not been any move "to investigate alternatives to hierarchical or pyramidal organisational forms" inside the bureaucracy. Research conducted by Hirschmann (1981: 72) has revealed that:

From the Minister at the top, down through the permanent secretary, his or her deputy, the heads of divisions and the numerous levels of their subordinates, the hierarchical ladder remains specifically defined and rigid.

Through the inability to "show flexibility and task-orientation" in its organisational form, the Lesotho civil service fails to measure up to the demands of bureaucratic reorientation discussed in Chapter 3,

where it was argued that for purposes of facilitating people's participation an adhocratic structure, which facilitates adaptability in dealing with local problems, as against a rigid bureaucratic administrative structure, is more appropriate.

This excessive bureaucratization and rigidity has been noted by Chikulo in the case of Zambia where there was "unwillingness of government departments and agencies to allow divergencies from their pre-conceived policies" (1979: 179). In Tanzania too, Cliffe (1977: 43) argues that efforts to promote participatory development through the Ujamaa programme "foundered on the rocks of bureaucratic control and conservatism".

Hirschmann (1981: 73) further states that the Lesotho civil service has not only retained a hierarchical structure but that it also has a career pattern in which:

... the further away the official is from headquarters in Maseru, the more functional rather than administrative is his job; and the closer and more frequent his contact with the people, the lower his status and salary level and the less comfortable his living and working conditions.

The point was made in Chapter 3 that for civil servants, especially those in direct contact with local communities, incentives are a necessary component of any attempt to encourage them to promote people's participation. Needless to say, the career structure in Lesotho which accords a low status to their positions is a demotivating factor to the rural community workers.

Rondinelli (1983: 106-108) also criticised the "paternalistic and authoritarian manner" in which central administrators in East Africa

dealt with lower-level officials, and in which bureaucrats in general dealt with the rural people. He noted that this arrogance on the part of civil servants bred a "deep and pervasive distrust" as well as resentment of government officials by villagers.

If, as argued in Chapter 3, community participation entails cooperation between the local people and government agencies the chances of it taking place are slim in a situation where local people distrust and detest government officials. In Lesotho the relegation of community workers to a low status does not encourage them to treat the rural people with respect, they give the same paternalistic treatment they receive from their superiors to the local people. This situation is not conducive to participatory development.

Therefore, bureaucratic centralisation is inimical to rural participation in three ways: firstly, it undermines flexibility in dealing with local problems; secondly, by contributing to the poor working conditions of community workers, and by not giving them the latitude to think for themselves it demotivates them; and thirdly, by encouraging civil servants to treat local people with disdain it alienates the latter group. All these problems have a negative impact on rural participation because they affect the administrative capacity of the government. Because an adhocratic structure, as discussed in Chapter 3, enhances the flexibility of the administrative machinery in dealing with local issues and allows community workers the latitude to be creative in dealing with problems, it enhances administrative capacity. It is, therefore, necessary for Lesotho's bureaucracy to adopt an adhocratic structure. A change of attitudes among the bureaucrats, as described in Chapter 3, is necessary too. When bureaucrats treat local people with respect this enhances their capacity to interact with this latter

group effectively.

5.3.3.2 *Politicisation*

The politicisation of public administration in Lesotho is traceable from the time of independence when the Basotho National Party (BNP) government feeling threatened by the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) which dominated district councils abolished local government (Picard 1984: 31). When in 1970 the BNP lost the first post-independence elections to the BCP³ it refused to relinquish power and declared a state of emergency which lasted for several years. Simultaneously, the politicisation of the entire public service began in earnest and continued throughout the next 15 years of authoritarian rule by the BNP.

The government methodically proceeded to fill public administration posts with political appointees who neither had the required training nor experience, even in cases where qualified people were available (Hirschmann 1981: 74). This issue is important because it demonstrates that the shortage of resources is not the most important reason why Third World governments are unable to strengthen their administrative capacity to foster participatory development, but rather their lack of commitment to it. Even when the opportunity exists for governments, within their limited means, to shore up their administrative capacity to empower local communities (in other words, creating conditions which will be conducive to the establishment of local action groups) different considerations come

3 The government never released the election results, but according to outside sources the Basutoland Congress Party had won 36 parliamentary seats, the Basotho National Party 23 and the Maramatlou Freedom Party 1.

into play to dissuade them, as the Lesotho case demonstrates.

There is no guarantee that if it had more resources the government would consider the needs of the rural poor first and strengthen its administrative capacity to meet them. Nonetheless, according to Goldman (1986: 54) the BNP government also moved to establish a one-party state although he adds that:

This has not been done directly, as other parties were legally permitted to exist. Rather the bureaucracy and the party itself were employed in an attempt to penetrate every area of life in the country. The idea [was] that a one-party state achieved by acclamation (albeit with considerable arm-twisting) is preferable - especially to the international aid community - to one achieved by fiat.

This approach differs from that followed in Zambia, for example, where a one-party state was declared legally in 1972. But this move towards a *de facto* one-party system in Lesotho in addition to being one of a number of striking parallels between this country and Zambia (which as already shown included the creation of ministerial posts at the sub-national level in 1968, the launching of administrative reforms aimed at increased coordination at the district level in 1980 as well as similar failures in all these steps taken to effect decentralisation since independence) had similar effects to those of the *de jure* one-party state in Zambia.

The ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP) in Zambia came to dominate people's lives completely (Chikulo 1985). This supremacy of UNIP over the lives of the people "degenerated into political interference in the operations of central and local government organs and parastatals" and hindered their efficient and effective performance (Mukwena 1991: 29). In Lesotho Goldman (1986: 131)

has drawn attention to the negative consequences of the politicisation of the public service by observing that:

... the BNP had tried to form a loyal civil service. It appears to have done so, but at the sacrifice of the criteria of merit and efficiency.

The politicisation of the Lesotho public administration should be viewed in the context of what Ingham and Kalam (1992) see as the weakness of governments in developing countries which militates against their willingness to encourage or even just to tolerate participation. Mawhood (1991a: 10) has himself identified this perception of weakness specifically among African states. They feel threatened by opposition parties, traditional leaders, NGOs and other elements of civil society. As a result they try to consolidate their power by whatever institutional means are available.

In this situation a radical approach to rural development, which is confrontational, can only be counterproductive. As Mawhood observes, a government which feels its already weak position being threatened can be expected to harden its stance towards people's participation. Hence the need, as argued in Chapter 3, for a reformist approach, which is conciliatory.

The case of Lesotho also illustrates that there is a relationship between the political commitment of a government to community participation and its administrative capacity to facilitate it. The Lesotho government was not committed to the genuine empowerment of the people because of its perception of weakness. It politicised public administration in an attempt to consolidate its power. The result was a weakening of its administrative capacity to

facilitate participation because merit and efficiency were sacrificed.

In Chapter 3, I hinted that for purposes of facilitating participation, the form of decentralisation is not as important as the bureaucratic and political circumstances (which affect administrative capacity and political commitment, respectively) under which decentralisation takes place. Lesotho's experience clearly illustrates this point.

5.4 KEY STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

In the previous section I examined, in general terms, the political and administrative factors affecting rural participation in Lesotho. In this section I focus specifically on the problems affecting those institutional structures which have played a central role in activating the process. These are the Ministry of Rural Development and Development Committees (Development Councils, after the military coup in 1986).

5.4.1 The ministry of rural development

5.4.1.1 *Formation and mandate of the ministry*

From the early 1960s to 1976 Community Development existed as a department whose home was to oscillate between different ministries. In 1969 it was transferred from its original home, the Ministry of Interior (formerly the Ministry of Local Government) to the Ministry of Agriculture. In 1971 it was moved to the Cabinet Office; and then back to the Ministry of Interior in 1974. In 1976 the department of Community Development was elevated to the status of a ministry and became the Ministry of Rural Development. When

the military took power in 1986 Rural Development once again became a department of the Ministry of Interior, Chieftainship Affairs and Rural Development (this ministry became the Ministry of Home Affairs after the BCP came to power in 1993).

In the context of building institutions for effective rural development, Chambers (1977b) highlights the tendency of African governments to create new departments or even whole ministries for this purpose. Without rejecting this practice out of hand, he posits that it is futile to establish new structures without taking full cognisance of the factors which may inhibit their effectiveness. On this score he notes that those ministries which are already responsible for some aspect of rural development such as the Ministry of Agriculture often resist any form of encroachment on what they perceive as their legitimate and exclusive territory. The result is that the newly established department or ministry is pushed out of what is seen as the mainstream of rural development activity and forced to contend with what are taken to be peripheral issues. Van der Geer and Wallis (1984b: 11) observed the same situation in Lesotho where the newly created Ministry of Rural Development was forced to become "a minor works ministry, with a particular role to play in fostering community participation".

Two questions arise. Firstly, can the task of rural development which has been depicted in this study as focusing on people's participation (or organisational development) be regarded as peripheral? Secondly, do the actions of the government of Lesotho support or disprove the allegation that in Lesotho the achievement of people-centred rural development has effectively been treated as a peripheral issue? The answer to the first question is quite simple and that is, no, there is no

way in which human development in the rural areas can be regarded as unimportant. Numerous arguments have already been made in support of this position and they need not be repeated here. To answer the second question one needs to look at the position of the Ministry of Rural Development in relation to other ministries operating in the rural areas.

5.4.1.2 *Problems of the ministry*

The Ministry of Rural Development has had two interrelated problems which made it difficult for it to facilitate people's participation. The first one is the problem of shortage of staff, especially workers at the village level who are in direct contact with the masses and therefore who are the key players in the act of smoothing the path of community participation. The second predicament has to do with training. Most of the people who are employed as Rural Development Assistants and Senior Rural Development Assistants (as community workers in rural development in Lesotho are called) have no formal qualifications for the job they are doing, some of them are not even high school graduates. This has led to another problem - that of low salaries and poor working conditions (which act as a disincentive). In-service training is inadequate too, and there is insufficient follow up on training because of lack of resources, human and otherwise.⁴

If one compares the situation with that in the Ministry of Agriculture there is a cause for concern. Compared to Rural Development Assistants, Agricultural Extension Officers are better trained and have

4 These problems emerged in my interviews with the Rural Development Coordinator, the Chief Rural Development Officer, the District Rural Development Officer (Mafeteng), and the Senior Rural Development Assistant (Tebang Ward, Mafeteng District).

better salaries and working conditions.⁵ If organisational development in the rural areas is not considered by the government to be unimportant why are extension workers in the more technical ministries trained better and paid better than the change agents in the ministry responsible for rural development whose primary task is organisational development? Why were there 179 extension agents in the Ministry of Agriculture in 1983 with the aim of increasing them to 340 (Lesotho Government 1983: 4.10), and fewer than the intended 90 animators for rural development (24 Senior Rural Development Assistants and 66 Rural Development Assistants) ten years later in 1993?⁶

This shortage of staff in Lesotho's Ministry of Rural Development negatively affects its administrative capacity to facilitate participation. Again, the fact that the more technical ministries working in the rural areas are better staffed, their staff is trained better and paid better, and generally get more resources than the Ministry of Rural Development, whose task is to foster people's participation, further illustrates the point already made in sub-section 5.3.3.2 that there is a connection between the government's commitment to participatory development and the administrative capacity of its agencies to promote it.

That the more technical ministries get a lion's share of the resources is an indication that the government is more committed to finding

5 Interview with the Chief Rural Development Officer.

6 Interview with the Chief Rural Development Officer. It must, however, be pointed out that even the 90 group organisers would still be too few for the whole country.

technical solutions to the problems of the rural people. This is why it bolsters up the administrative capacity of the technical ministries at the expense of those which promote human development. Though it could be argued that in developing countries there is a shortage of qualified staff and other resources in government departments in general (Chambers 1977b), the Lesotho case demonstrates that within the means available for rural development, the more technical ministries receive first preference. This occurrence adds support to the conclusion made in Chapter 4 that despite the fact that development theory now emphasises people's participation, development practitioners continue to base their actions on obsolete principles. At that point, I concluded that this tendency seems to be related to lack of clarity regarding the nature of people's participation. But now it looks like insufficient commitment of the government to participatory development probably plays a greater role than its lack of understanding.

5.4.2 Development committees

5.4.2.1 *District development committees*

When district councils were abolished after independence Sekatle (1993) notes that some of their functions were taken over by district development committees and village development committees. This means that district development committees succeeded district councils in Lesotho. On the other hand, in Zambia and Botswana district development committees existed side by side with Rural councils and district councils, respectively. Nevertheless, in all three countries district development committees were composed of unelected people - civil servants, local politicians, traders, chiefs and

other prominent people.

It was pointed out in sub-section 5.2.2.1 that in Botswana district development committees were used to undermine the authority of district councils by the central government which began to transfer responsibility for rural development from the latter to the former. In Zambia, Tordoff (1974) argues that district development committees reflected inefficient use of resources because the tasks they performed could well have been performed by rural councils, which were underutilised. In theory, then, the situation in Lesotho where district development committees actually replaced district councils instead of coexisting with them represented a more efficient use of resources because competition between the two structures for recognition and for resources was avoided.

However, in practice district development committees in Lesotho lacked the capacity to carry out the functions allocated to them. Although given the mandate to prepare annual district development plans and to coordinate and monitor on-going development programmes in the district, district development committees had neither the technical nor the administrative capacity to do so (van der Geer & Wallis 1984a; 1984b; Picard 1984). This lack of capacity in the district development committees can be traced, at least in part, to the lack of commitment on the part of the government of Lesotho to facilitate rural community participation already alluded to.

The ineffectiveness of these structures in facilitating participatory development should, therefore, not be explained by the fact that they were unrepresentative as Sekatle (1993: 29-30) suggests but rather

by their lack of administrative capacity. As I argued earlier in this chapter, participatory development takes place through action groups at the village level. District level structures can only serve to facilitate village level participation. Their ability to do so will depend on their administrative capacity which in turn will depend, to a large extent, on the commitment of the government (whether central or regional) to this form of development; and not so much on the representativeness of these district level institutions.

5.4.2.2 *Village development committees*

Village development committees were established in 1971 through a circular issued by the office of the Prime Minister. Putsoa (1988) notes that the directive actually assigned the duties of development committees to the already existing ruling party committees in the villages. This act should be seen against the background of the point raised in sub-section 5.3.3.2 that after 1970 the government politicised the institutional framework for rural development to achieve political control of all sections of society.

So, VDCs were not really intended to encourage rural participation but to consolidate the power of the ruling party - which strengthens my earlier contention that the government was not committed to the genuine empowerment of local communities. Sekatle (1993) shows that members of village development committees (as well as district development committees) were drawn exclusively from BNP supporters, and that this tended to alienate other sections of the population who, as I have already shown, were in the majority.

In addition to the lack of administrative and technical capacity referred to in the previous sub-section, therefore, another cause of the ineffectiveness of district development committees was politicisation. Both factors are indicative of the government's lack of commitment to participatory development. Chikulo (1979, 1989) observed the same problem in Zambia where the committee network, from the village productivity committees to district development committees, was dominated by UNIP supporters and tended to exclude non-party members. But the crucial question is whether village development committees, as village level institutions, can become effective instruments of participatory development if they are democratically elected and not politicised, as it was the case in Lesotho.

The VDCs in Lesotho were expected to review the deliberations of local development issues by the villagers held in village assemblies, set priorities, channel village project proposals to district development committees as well as to organise and guide the implementation of development activities in their villages. They were also intended to stimulate interest among villagers to play an active role in the development of their communities (Sekatle 1993; Mapetla & Rembe 1989; Putsoa 1988).

However, the biggest problem with structures such as VDCs is that in their attempt to mobilise villagers there is no room for disaggregation. It was argued in Chapter 3 that disaggregation helps to protect the poor against domination by the rich, which can easily happen if all people are brought together in one organisation without due regard for their different socio-economic backgrounds. This problem is highlighted by Sterkenburg (1987) in the case of Botswana

where he notes that village development committees were not effective in promoting the participation of the poor. They were dominated by the rich and served the interests of this group.

Furthermore, it has been argued in this study that local organisations are intended to develop the potential of the local people (i.e., to achieve human development). One of the ways in which they do this is by developing the administrative and organisational skills of members. But VDCs belong to all villagers and so only a few of the people will ever have the chance to be elected into office where they can then develop their administrative skills. This means that these structures are not geared towards developing the potential of each and every individual. Therefore, VDCs are more effective in developing a local leadership core, that is, those people who because of being regularly elected into office acquire administrative skills and enjoy the trust of the local people. These are the people who are in a position to encourage participation in rural development.

Nevertheless, if participation is defined as a process in which every member of the community has the chance to develop his potential, shares in the benefits of development and directly takes part in making the decisions which affect his or her life then action groups are the only effective means of achieving it. Drawing from Swanepoel (1992), action groups were defined in sub-section 5.2.3 as groups of people concerned about a particular problem and which contain no more people than can be actively involved in an activity. As I argued in Chapter 3, small groups facilitate participatory development better than large organisations. It is in this sense that action groups are more effective vehicles of people's participation than village development committees at the village level. The

effectiveness of small action groups in promoting participatory development will become even clearer in Chapter 7 when I discuss the Thabana-Morena IRD Project.

However, even where action groups are already active and well established VDCs would not necessarily be redundant, because these institutions are not only concerned with encouraging and supporting action groups. I pointed out in Chapter 3 that VDCs and other types of geographically defined community structures are also responsible for the provision and maintenance of public goods and services (e.g., roads and water supply). What is important, though, is that care should be taken to avoid unnecessary duplication of structures at the local level. FAO (1983: 32) has commented on this problem in relation to Lesotho by noting that:

a village or a group of villages in Lesotho have too many committees, associations, etc., when in fact all could be handled within one organisational structure to achieve their objectives efficiently and in a coordinated manner.

In the next section, I discuss the role of NGOs in facilitating participation in Lesotho; in the light of the government's failure to do so, as already demonstrated.

5.5 NGOS IN LESOTHO

5.5.1 Types and purpose

In a study commissioned by the Lesotho Council of Nongovernmental Organisations (LCN) to assess the management and technical needs

of NGOs in Lesotho, a team of consultants (Associates 1992: 8) classified these organisations in the following manner:

We find NGOs providing assistance geared to an emergency, whether natural, or man-made or a situation of special need. We also find NGOs involved in increasing self-reliance through rural development activities. Finally we find NGOs working for appropriate policy changes on regional and national levels in the realisation that long-term change can be effected only through addressing structural problems in the society and economy as a whole.

This classification tallies with the categorisation of NGOs into first, second, third and fourth generations presented in Chapter 3. The first two types in Lesotho correspond with first and second generation NGOs, respectively. The third type of NGOs in Lesotho encompasses third and fourth generation NGOs which work mainly as catalysts to effect structural changes in society to facilitate people's participation in development.

Looking at the profile of Lesotho NGOs (LCN 1993) there are those whose activities are related to rural development. Among them we find some which in their statements of purpose specifically seek to act as catalysts to promote people's participation. The Transformation Resource Centre (TRC), for example, states that it exists:

- *To work for peace, justice and participatory development.*
- *To help people in Southern Africa understand causes of their problems and devise solutions (LCN 1993: 295).*

It was argued in Chapter 3 that NGOs can influence government action by implementing people-centred projects which then have a

demonstration effect. They can also work for policy changes which favour participatory development by playing an advocacy and educational role (the strategy followed by the Transformation Resource Centre). I then went on to show in Chapter 4 and in the present chapter that although in theory rural development policy in Lesotho has embraced people's participation since the late 1970s, in practice this has not been the case. The need exists, therefore, for NGOs to contribute towards ensuring that the government actually practices what it preaches.

However, two interrelated factors threaten the ability of NGOs to act as catalysts in Lesotho. These problems have to do with the capacity of NGOs to deliver their services, on the one hand, and the NGO linkage system, on the other.

5.5.2 NGO capacity

The survival of NGOs in Lesotho as well as their ability to be effective are closely related to the strength of their outside links - the closer the ties the more viable the NGO (Associates 1992: 12-13). This is because these ties facilitate access to managerial skills and financial resources. It was pointed out in Chapter 3 that although access to funding helps to strengthen the capacity of NGOs to be effective it could also have the undesirable effect of shifting their attention away from participatory development as these organisations try to satisfy the requirements of donors.

Bratton (1990) has shown, for instance, that the Voluntary Agencies Development Assistance (VADA) in Kenya was forced to misplace its emphasis because of the huge financial aid it received from the United

States Agency for International Development (USAID). It neglected the objectives of providing management training to, and influencing government policy towards, the voluntary sector and concentrated on being a conduit for donor agency funds to community based organisations. In the end the staff of VADA became increasingly preoccupied with "devising internal management procedures to satisfy the donor's demands for financial control". The organisation had, thus, become an "aid bureaucracy", to the detriment of participatory development.

According to Bratton the solution to this problem is that indigenous NGOs should "build a domestic base of financial support", which he sees as contributing to greater self-reliance and freedom of action. On the other hand Bonbright (1992) and Honey (1992) argue that NGOs in the Third World should seek to diversify their sources of funding to avoid dependence on one major donor. While the Executive Director of the Lesotho Council of Nongovernmental Organisations expressed optimism that there is potential for NGOs in Lesotho to raise domestic resources and reduce dependence on external funding (LCN 1993: vii), this potential is likely to be limited by the poor economic conditions prevailing in the country.

The solution for Lesotho NGOs, therefore, lies in trying to diversify their channels of assistance, which should make it easier for them to avoid being controlled by a single benefactor. That way those NGOs whose main task is to facilitate participatory development stand a better chance of sticking to their course. Also, it seems to me that for NGOs, dependence does not only refer to a foreign source. Over-dependence on a single domestic source which is not committed to participation would still have a negative impact on the role played by

an NGO. Therefore, localisation of sources of funds, as suggested by Bratton (1990), would not be as helpful as diversification in securing freedom of action for NGOs.

5.5.3 NGO linkage system

The level of cooperation between Lesotho NGOs and the government is minimal, so that each sector carries out its activities without significant reference to what the other is doing (LCN 1993). For reasons which will become apparent below, a lot needs to be done to cultivate close working relationships between these two sectors. The majority of NGOs, however, cooperate with other NGOs or donor agencies or both. The links between Lesotho NGOs and those other bodies are of two kinds. The first type of links was discussed in the previous sub-section and has to do with channels of assistance. The second type is based on cooperation in implementing development projects.

The first type of linkage is institutionalised and happens on a more or less permanent basis. The second type is rather *ad hoc*, and this is where the problem lies. It was indicated in Chapter 3 that participatory development can only be achieved through close cooperation between NGOs and other actors in development. This creates an opportunity for the different actors (governmental, intergovernmental and nongovernmental agencies) to learn from, and support the efforts of, one another. As Honey (1992: 40) rightly observes, and as indeed I hinted in Chapter 3, the different actors have different strengths with which they can complement one another (governments have the ability to act broadly inside a country, intergovernmental agencies have the capacity to raise funds while

NGOs have the edge when it comes to focusing attention on the disadvantaged).

However, not only is collaboration required to achieve complementarity. It is also necessary to facilitate the catalytic role of NGOs. Unless they work closely with other actors NGOs cannot have an impact on their willingness and ability to facilitate rural participation because catalysts influence other organisations in the process of interacting with them and not by keeping aloof from them (Bonbright 1992: 5). In this connection the formation of the Lesotho Council of Nongovernmental Organisations in 1990 was an important step towards institutionalising cooperation between NGOs and international organisations and between NGOs and the government. Honey (1992) posits that the ability of NGOs to forge effective links with other actors may be dependent upon the former's willingness to cooperate among themselves because this strengthens their position by making it easier for them to share information and resources and to act in unison.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that the actions of NGOs must be guided by the reformist approach to development. As pointed out in Chapters 1 and 3 this approach underscores unity of purpose between the different role players in the development arena whereas the radical approach fosters divisions. Bratton (1990: 95-96) highlights this point by noting that:

Effective leaders of NGOs in Africa have generally sought to identify openings in the administrative system and to cultivate non-adversarial working relations with the politically powerful. They have been most able to articulate the needs of the poor in the context of a declaration of loyalty to national

development goals. Even if they have not been able to control the policy environment, they have been able to influence it.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Although the government of Lesotho dismantled local government structures soon after independence, this move alone did not foreclose participatory rural development. Participation takes place in action groups at the village level and not at the regional or district levels. It was rather the government's lack of commitment to participatory development which accounted for its failure to promote it.

This lack of commitment emanated from the government's feeling of weakness. In particular the BNP government felt threatened by the power of the rival BCP in local communities. The result was a politicisation of the institutional framework for rural development. While this move helped the BNP to extend its political control over all sections of the population, it weakened the government's capacity to facilitate people's participation because merit and efficiency were overlooked.

On the other hand, the ability of NGOs to influence institutional changes in favour of participatory development is greatly constrained by the lack of interaction between the government sector and the NGO sector. Moves to induce collaboration between the two sectors should be based upon a reformist approach to development because a radical approach would cause the government to harden its attitude towards people's participation.

CHAPTER 6

THE THABANA-MORENA IRD PROJECT AND ITS APPROACH

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I analysed the institutional structure for rural development in Lesotho. Together with Chapter 4, that chapter provides the background against which the Thabana-Morena IRD Project (the Project) is discussed. In the present chapter, I examine the approach through which the Project was implemented. The purpose is to demonstrate that this Project was not based on the principles of the learning process approach, and that its shortcomings were related to its departure from these principles. The chapter starts with a brief account of the genesis of the Project, after which I explain the rationale behind its Preparatory Phase.

The rest of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of Phase I and Phase II of the Project, because all the activities found in the Project were initiated during these phases. I first present the objectives of the Project, before I elucidate its design features. Attention then shifts to the problems which surrounded the stage of implementation. The weaknesses identified in both the design and implementation of the Project are traced to the political intentions of the government of Lesotho and the bureaucratic imperatives of the donor agencies involved. It is these factors which are seen to be responsible for the adoption of the blueprint approach in the Project.

6.2 ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT

The Thabana-Morena Integrated Rural Development Project was born out of "the deep concern of the international community with agrarian and rural questions" which was expressed through the United Nations Organisation and its agencies in the 1970s. This concern culminated in the holding of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development discussed in Chapter 4. This conference adopted and recommended "a programme of action", outlined in the WCARRD report, to be implemented by governments and all concerned organisations and bodies of the UN system (FAO 1979).

As pointed out in Chapter 4 the basic thrust of the WCARRD report was that rural development in the Third World implied the implementation of projects and programmes based on community participation. It is in this context that the involvement of both the United Nations Development Programme and the Food and Agricultural Organisation in the Project should be understood. I noted in Chapter 1 that this Project was implemented in three phases - the Preparatory Phase, Phase I and Phase II. I will start by highlighting the objectives of the Preparatory Phase before focusing on the two main phases (i.e., Phase I and Phase II).

6.2.1 The preparatory phase

As outlined in the preparatory assistance document (UNDP 1979b: 4) the primary objective of this phase was:

To design an integrated rural development project based on a medium-sized natural watershed area to demonstrate the feasibility of a number of methods to be used for the maximum

participation of the rural population as regards rural development and local planning.

The Preparatory Phase thus had a dual purpose. Firstly, to provide lessons on what type of structures would be appropriate (at the sub-district level) to facilitate rural development participation. Secondly, the Preparatory Phase was to serve as the design phase of the Project.

This meant that this phase was to "investigate and test the most effective ways of involving the target population in the rural development process" (UNDP 1979b: 7), and the methodology thereby developed would be incorporated in a follow-up phase¹ for further testing and refinement. Nevertheless, it will be shown in this chapter that no testing or refinement of institutional structures took place in the two subsequent phases because this Project was not based on the learning process approach outlined in Chapter 3. In fact, I will demonstrate in sub-section 6.4.3.2. that the Preparatory Phase did not serve as the foundation it had been intended to be.

6.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

6.3.1 Participatory development

As per project document (UNDP 1983: 3) the promotion of rural community participation was to be achieved through the following

¹ Although the Preparatory Phase was eventually followed by two phases, this was not planned. Only when it became clear that Phase I had not fulfilled the objective of institutionalising community participation was the decision taken to have Phase II. I deal with this issue later in this chapter.

specific objectives:

- (a) the establishment of institutional structures designed to promote the participation of the rural poor in a particularly poor area, Thabana-Morena, in the planning and implementation of village-based development activities. This would be achieved through the establishment of self-help-groups (SHGs) and other village-level institutions;
- (b) the enhancement of the capacities (i) of the villagers to plan and implement their self-help efforts and (ii) of government institutions, aimed at improving their support to the self-development efforts of subsistence farmers; and
- (c) increasing production and income of farmers in the project area while ensuring that the attained income levels could be sustained and further developed after withdrawal of external assistance.

Chapter 2 highlighted the fact that changes in development theory and strategy led to a situation in which from the 1970s rural development came to be seen primarily in terms of facilitating people's participation. This Project, therefore, in seeking to establish an institutional structure for rural participation epitomised this trend in development thinking.

For this reason the Project should be positively evaluated, in terms of the objectives and purpose for which it was conceived. However, it will be demonstrated in this chapter that the Thabana-Morena IRD Project failed to institutionalise rural participation and that this shortcoming can be linked to the fact that the Project was based

upon a blueprint approach, which is the antithesis of the learning process approach.

6.3.2 Experimentation

In its operations the Project was to emphasise the initiation of replicable and self-sustaining development processes and institutional structures (UNDP 1983: 3). This was because the understanding behind this Project was that it was only an experiment and that experience gained from it would be applied throughout the country to make rural development more effective. This underlying principle of experimentation is in line with the view expressed by Honadle and Rosengard (1983) as well as Rondinelli (1993) that the value of projects lies in them being seen as testing grounds for particular policies.

A project used to test the applicability of a particular policy follows the learning process approach. As pointed out in Chapter 3, this approach emphasises action research (which makes it possible for the knowledge of the social conditions to be accumulated) and the evolutionary method (which makes it possible for the project to be fitted to local conditions as they become known). However, it will be demonstrated that the omission of the learning process approach, alluded to earlier, rendered the Project ineffectual as an experiment, and that no lessons were learned from it to be replicated elsewhere in the country.

Furthermore, it will be remembered that in Chapter 2 attention was drawn to the fact that the benefits of integrated rural development projects are often localised because these projects usually rely

too heavily on outside financial outlays directed at particular localities while areas beyond the project site do not gain anything from it. It will be argued in sub-section 6.5.4 that the failure of this Project to provide replicable lessons should be seen in this light too.

6.4 DESIGN FEATURES

6.4.1 Targets

This sub-section is divided into four parts; namely: Institutional targets: Phase I, Production targets: Phase I, Institutional targets: Phase II, Production targets: Phase II. As well as showing the sort of targets aimed for, the presentation will indicate the extent to which the targets were attained. Subsequently, I will attempt to relate these targets to the discussion presented in Chapter 3 on the project orthodoxy and on the learning process approach. The aim will be to highlight two interrelated issues. On the one hand, that the targets were set in advance, which negated the learning process approach. On the other hand, that these targets were overly optimistic and to a large extent unattainable, with the result that concentration on these high targets tended to take attention away from the main goal of facilitating people's participation.

6.4.1.1 *Institutional targets: Phase I*

To promote people's participation, Phase I of the Project (1983-1985) was intended to establish the following institutions:

- (a) 204 self-help-groups involving 5,100 beneficiaries. Following the recommendations of the 1984 mid-term review team it was

agreed that this target was unrealistic and that a more attainable target would be 36 SHGs involving about 720 people. However, by the end of this phase of the Project only 16 groups were functioning.

- (b) Establishing the Thabana-Morena Multi-purpose Cooperative Society(TMMPCS) as an apex organisation for the self-help-groups. Although established poor management rendered it ineffective, and so it was allowed to become redundant.
- (c) Setting up village development committees (VDCs) in each of the 19 villages demarcated for the purposes of the Project. The VDCs were established but the terminal evaluation report of this first phase (Levine & Gebre-Ab 1986: 20) determined that "VDCs have never met, have no functions, and don't exist for all intents and purposes".
- (d) The establishment of village assemblies (VAs), with the intention of seeking a legal standing for them so as to enable them to raise funds for the development of their villages. VAs were formed and used to introduce the Project to the local people and for electing VDCs but they were not given a legal status, and so they have not played the role intended for them in the Project.

6.4.1.2 *Production targets - Phase I*

Along with the said institutions, the main production targets included the following:

- (a) The establishment of at least 10 communal vegetable gardens - 2 were established.

- (b) Putting 200 ha of land under fodder production - 90 ha of land were planted with fodder.
- (c) Establishing 1 ha of nursery for fruit and pine seedlings. At the end of the first phase of the Project no nursery had been established.
- (d) Digging boreholes to provide at least 11 of the 19 villages with adequate water supply - 6 villages were supplied with water by the end of Phase I.

The guiding principle was to raise "the output of staple food, poultry, vegetables, fruit, pine trees and other products depending on the suitability of ecological conditions of the various villages" (UNDP 1983: 6). In (a) and (c) above the extent to which efforts to boost the production of vegetables, fruit and pine trees were taken has been indicated. The inability of the Project to address the need to increase staple food production is highlighted by the observation made in the terminal report that project activities were unrelated to existing farming practices (Levine & Gebre-Ab 1986: ii). Poultry groups have been singled out for closer scrutiny in this study and Chapter 7 will indicate the Project's level of success in this area.

6.4.1.3 *Institutional targets: Phase II*

Notwithstanding the modest achievements of Phase I in terms of the number of self-help-groups established (16), Phase II of the Project (1988-1991) aimed at setting up 75 SHGs with a membership of approximately 1,500 people. By the end of the Project a total of 21 SHGs involving 425 people were in existence, including those established during Phase I. So, only five more groups became operational during the whole of Phase II.

The second phase was also based on the assumption that the institutional structures necessary to facilitate people's participation at the village level had largely been developed in Phase I, save for a few finishing touches. Emphasis in Phase II would, therefore, shift to the nurturing of relationships between the different parts of the institutional framework at the village level (basically SHGs and VDCs) and the integration of these structures and their activities into the operations of existing government ministries in anticipation of the withdrawal of project support. In this regard the project document for Phase II (UNDP 1988: 4) stated that:

The tasks ahead boil down to completing the basic establishment of these various project components, developing the necessary linkages to integrate and guide them, and accelerating the process of institutionalising the activities within on-going programs.

The Project, however, fell short of achieving these institutional goals and when Phase II ended the terminal report (UNDP/FAO 1994: 16) conceded that:

Linkages among SHGs, VDCs and line ministries were not fully established and project management provided excessive direct support to some SHGs ... They therefore lack the confidence to face the future without project support.

I will comment on the issues involved here in greater detail in sub-section 6.4.2 below. But before I do that I should first highlight some of the production targets of the second phase of the Project.

6.4.1.4 *Production targets - Phase II*

Equally high production targets were set during this phase and there is no indication that any of them were met. These targets stipulated the number of people who would be involved, the quantity of output and in some cases even the amount of money that would be made from the sale of the products.

For example, it was envisaged that 23 SHGs would undertake vegetable and orchard activities. According to plan, by the fourth year of operation 125 tons of vegetables would be produced annually together with 200,000 kg of fruit. However, the terminal report (UNDP/FAO 1994: 9) issued six years later only made a rather lukewarm evaluation of efforts in this regard by indicating that three vegetable groups had been formed and that while vegetable production in the Project area was economically viable, at that point demand exceeded supply, with the main problem being shortage of water. About fruit production the report noted that only one group had been established and that "the group, whose main problem [was] shortage of water, [expected] to start harvesting in 1994". It should be borne in mind that one of the goals in Phase I had been to provide the villages with adequate water supply, and so these comments were an acknowledgement of the failure of the Project to reach this goal.

The project document similarly laid down a target of 50 km of feeder roads to be upgraded during the first two years. Six years later the terminal report said that 15.5 km of road network had been constructed and that "an additional 5 km tract was being built when the project ended".

Other activities were never even started. For instance, the Project foresaw the establishment of a sheep feedlot and dairy farming. It was thought that by the fourth year of the Project 1,800 sheep would be sold yearly as well as 120,000 litres of milk. But none of these activities are in sight anywhere in the Project. Another target indicated that a group of 15 people would be trained in making horn products from the second year of the Project "producing a range of products using 2,160 horns approximately and earning an average of Maloti 120 [= R120] per month" (UNDP 1988: 19). Again this activity never materialised.

Many other targets were not met. These included (a) the planting of 700 hectares of community land with forest trees, by the end of the Project; (b) conservation planting of trees and grass in heavily eroded areas covering 100 hectares, by the end of the Project; (c) the establishment of two SHGs involving 50 people making baskets and mats and, by the end of the third year, earning M30-00 to M50-00 per month each; (d) the establishment, by the end of the first year, of a weekly market place with storage facilities as an outlet for locally produced goods; and (e) the construction, by the end of the second year, of three multi-purpose community centres to be used by the local people for meetings, cultural events and educational purposes.

Partial success was registered in (a) and (b) although this was far below the planned targets. The other goals failed completely. In the next sub-section I make some observations on these characteristics of the Project.

6.4.2 Comments

6.4.2.1 *Inflated targets*

The first point to note is that ambitious targets were set for the Project, but not attained. This issue is dealt with in Chapter 3 in my discussion of the project orthodoxy where I suggest that this is one of the problems which contribute to the ineffectiveness of projects as instruments for promoting people's participation. As pointed out, staff tend to concentrate on trying to reach the set targets in the process relegating the intricate process of institution building to the background. Sub-section 6.5.1 will show this to be true about the Project.

The question of high targets should further be seen in the light of the contradictions inherent in projects which seek to promote people's participation. There is a contradiction between the attempt to judge the success of such projects in terms of quantifiable production targets and the fact that people's participation is essentially qualitative in nature (Lele 1975; Chambers 1978). This approach seems to arise from the tendency of defining development in purely economic and infrastructural terms whereas as I have argued in this study concern for people's participation follows from a people-centred, normative view of development.

Honadle et al (1985: 43) suggest that instead of focusing on the quantity of production and numbers of people involved institutional targets stress "organizational processes and human behaviour". They note, for example, that project activities should be geared towards assisting beneficiaries to develop the ability to identify local needs, to

analyse constraints on local development and to maintain records which then "become important indicators of effectiveness" of the project.

As indicated in sub-section 6.3.1, the primary objective of the Project was to promote people's participation with the aim of enhancing the capacity of villagers to engage in self-sustaining local development. This objective notwithstanding, officials of the donor agencies often emphasised economic indicators to determine the effectiveness of the Project.² Their concern was not with changes in human behaviour which, as suggested above, should serve as indicators of the effectiveness of a project.

The ability of villagers to deal with government departments, that is, their knowledge of which government office they should go to for which services and their ability to face government officials without feeling intimidated; their understanding of the policy environment in which they operate, in other words, their understanding of how different actions of the government affect their daily lives together with their ability and willingness to influence government policy - in addition to those previously mentioned, are examples of indicators to look for in a project geared towards local capacity building or human development.

While these behavioural changes are not *quantifiable* they are *observable*. Although, as pointed out in Chapter 3, it may be the

difficulty encountered in trying to measure changes in human behaviour and institutional processes which leads development practitioners to look for measurable economic changes in projects, the point is that the success of participatory development is not determined by quantifiable economic and infrastructural growth, but through observable changes in human behaviour and institutional processes.

So, the problem with these economic and infrastructural targets in the Project is not only that they were too high and therefore consumed much of the energies of the staff, thereby distracting their attention from facilitating community participation. On the contrary, these targets were also totally unsuitable as indicators of capacity building, which suggests lack of clarity about the nature of people's participation on the part of development practitioners.

1.4.2.2 *Targets set beforehand*

In addition to being too high the targets in the Project were determined in advance. I noted in Chapter 3 that this feature is characteristic of the blueprint approach to project design in which, as Clements (1986: 131) suggests, plans are worked out ahead of time or from a distance. In the blueprint approach plans and objectives are not only predetermined but no provision is made too for the plans or objectives to be adjusted to suit conditions on the ground, and to respond to the needs of the people as they unfold.

Basing himself on the experience of projects designed under the aegis of the United States Agency for International Development in the 1970s, Rondinelli (1993) observes that often project designers do not

have adequate information to perform the kind of accurate and detailed planning which they habitually attempt. About these projects Rondinelli writes:

*Specific goals often could not be identified until activities were well underway and the conditions under which they had to be implemented were better known. **The best that could be done at the onset of a project was to state objectives generally and to aim at broad targets** (p.106. *Emphasis added*).*

In the Thabana-Morena IRD Project this would have implied that the institutional goals, which were the main focus of the Project, be stated in general terms. It was not necessary, for instance, to specify that development committees would be established or that the Thabana-Morena Multi-purpose Cooperative Society would be formed as an apex organisation for self-help-groups. It would have been more appropriate, for example, merely to show that suitable institutional structures would be developed to support SHGs in their struggle for participatory local development.³

At the beginning of a project the precise nature of the institutional framework (i.e., the institutional targets) is unknown, and so fixed targets cannot, realistically, be laid down in advance. As an experiment the project is intended to be used precisely for this purpose of determining the form of the relevant institutional structures. Thus, setting fixed institutional targets undermines the principle of experimentation embodied in development projects.

3 It has been argued in this study that self-help-groups or action groups are themselves indispensable in promoting participatory development because they bring the local people into the process of development directly and not indirectly through representatives.

Drawing from Korten (1980), I pointed out in Chapter 3 that beneficiary needs are a function of the social, political and economic conditions in which they live; and that, therefore, these needs can only be determined by interacting with the people and understanding their environment through action related learning. The exact character of the institutions required to serve these needs will, of necessity, also become apparent as this environment gets to be understood.

This is why Korten maintains that successful projects are not designed ahead of implementation but evolve and take shape as they are being implemented. So, designing a project and implementing a project are not separate activities in the learning process approach. Furthermore, action research is the only approach which ensures that the local people are truly involved in all phases of the project. Together with agency personnel beneficiaries are continuously reflecting upon their actions (i.e. monitoring them) as they go along. When evaluation takes place the people are able to make a meaningful contribution because they have been part and parcel of the project throughout.

As pointed out in Chapter 3, the learning process approach ensures not only that the local people are involved at every stage of the project but also that all the phases of a project (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) are completely integrated and involve the same people instead of being divided into separate tasks performed by different groups of people, as it usually happens.

The development of Thailand's community-based family planning services is a good example of how an organisational structure

develops around the needs of local communities. As a part-time consultant and later as the Executive Director of the Planned Parenthood Association of Thailand, Mechai Veravaidya came to the conclusion that a more community-based service was needed to meet the family planning needs of villagers. Although Mechai's Community Based Family Planning Services did not involve the formation of community organisations, the organisational structure which delivered these services evolved in response to the needs of the people on the ground, it was not pre-planned (Korten 1980; 1984b). Korten reports that:

As the programme expanded, Mechai became preoccupied with the design and operation of strong management systems consistent with the needs of the village level operations. Continuous testing and revision resulted in important changes in supervisory, resupply, and reporting systems. New layers of management were added as required (1984b: 180).

So, the Project should first have concentrated on promoting self-help-groups. The needs of the SHGs would then become clear in action and the form of the institutions required to support these action groups would also become apparent. The institutional framework would gradually expand outwards from the village to the district level. In the process, the internal mode of operation of each structure would be worked out and the relationships between the different elements of the framework would be nurtured. Instead of following this approach, the different elements of the institutional structure were prescribed in advance as a single package.

6.4.2.3 *Restructuring existing institutions*

What is worse is that even after these structures were in place in the Project, that is, the apex body for SHGs, village development

committees and village assemblies, no action based learning was initiated to determine their appropriateness for supporting community participation and to see whether they fitted well together to serve the needs of the villagers. However, I indicated in Chapter 3 that even existing institutional structures can be restructured through a learning process to serve the needs of local communities. The Philippines National Irrigation Agency is an example of an organisation which was restructured in this way (Korten 1980, 1984b; Bagadion & Korten 1985).

The concern was that the gravity-fed irrigation systems constructed by the engineers of the national irrigation agency either fell rapidly into disrepair or served substantially fewer farmers than intended. The agency decided that the only solution was to strengthen water user associations to overcome both problems. Unaccustomed to dealing with local organisations the agency had to reorient its management procedures to tackle new problems of supervision relating to irrigators associations and to engage community organisers (previously not employed by the agency) to help the agency cope with the new challenges. Thus, an existing organisation was restructured through action related learning to make it serve the needs of local communities.

This approach would have been suitable for restructuring the pre-planned institutional structure in the Project, if this structure had been tested and found lacking in any way. However, I pointed out in sub-section 6.4.1.1 that an evaluation mission fielded at the end of Phase I reported that for all practical purposes VDCs in the Project were non-existent. In my research I also determined that SHGs did in fact carry out their activities without any significant reference to VDCs.

In other words, these structures were simply left to idle without being tested to see how effectively they served the goal of rural participation so that changes might be made to them, or new structures set up, if necessary. Therefore, because no action-based learning took place, no lessons were developed for wider application in the country.

A similar fate befell the TMMPCS - the apex organisation of the SHGs. It ended up being by-passed by the project management who began to deal directly with individual SHGs, thereby rendering the TMMPCS superfluous. Previously, this body had been the link between SHGs and project management. The problem would appear to be that office bearers in this organisation were inadequately trained, which led to mismanagement of its affairs, especially financial matters.⁴ But the problems surrounding the TMMPCS have to be judged against the background that this organisation had simply been imposed on the SHGs as part of a blueprint without the need for it arising in action, as the learning process approach implies. As a result office bearers did not quite understand what their role was. Village assemblies were equally part of the blueprint, and no attempt was subsequently made to put them to the test and to determine through action whether they had any particular role to play in facilitating community participation in the Project; or to see whether any changes were needed in their structure or role to make them capable of serving the goal of rural participation. Even the change which had been prescribed for them in advance (i.e., providing a legal

basis for them to enable them to raise money for village development) was not implemented.⁵ They were simply left to become redundant in the Project, apart from initially being used to introduce the Project to the villagers and to elect village development committees as pointed out in sub-section 6.4.1.1.

However, it was demonstrated in Chapter 5 that village development committees can play a role in developing a local leadership cadre, and that this cadre could be used to encourage people's participation. It will be shown in Chapter 7 that the Project failed to use local leaders to facilitate participation in action groups. It will further be demonstrated that the action groups failed to forge links between one another and that this led to their failure to learn from one another. Properly utilised, the Thabana-Morena Multi-purpose Cooperative Society could have formed the link between the groups, and a channel for ideas to pass from one group to another.

The conclusion to which one is led is that the institutional structures prescribed in advance for the Project (VDCs, the TMMPCS and VAs) were not necessarily without any use in terms of facilitating participatory development. Nevertheless, their usefulness did not materialise in practice - instead, the structures remained idle. The lesson to be drawn from this experience is that without the use of the learning process approach in developing institutional structures, their potential benefits will be missed. Only if a structure is developed in action can one be able to know what it can do and what

5 Village assemblies (or Pitsos in Sesotho) are part of the traditional participatory structures. They serve as forums for discussing issues affecting the village, but without this legal basis which was intended for them in the Project.

it cannot do, and to take full advantage of its strengths.

Rather than serve the goal of participatory development these structures were geared towards serving the political interests of the government. It was noted in Chapter 3 that this is one of the major weaknesses in the use of development projects. The next sub-section deals with this issue.

6.4.2.4 *The blueprint and government's political objectives*

The type of institutional structures designed for the Project support the observation made by Chambers (1978) that the claim that project design is based upon rationalistic planning is only a veiled attempt to disguise the fact that it is actually the political environment which determines the objectives of a development project. As suggested in Chapter 5, village development committees were, even before the Project was conceived, already seen by the government of Lesotho as a necessary part of the institutional framework for rural development.

The inclusion of the Thabana-Morena Multi-purpose Cooperative Society in the project design was politically motivated as well. As a matter of fact, the SHGs themselves were regarded as pre-cooperatives (UNDP 1983: 14), the intention being that with time they would develop into fully-fledged registered cooperatives, although they did not reach that stage until the Project ended in 1993. The project document for Phase I made it quite clear that the reason for promoting participation through cooperatives was that "[i]n the rural sector, the government strategy for rural development

revolves around the creation of village-based cooperatives" (UNDP 1983: 3).

Cooperatives were intended to form the basis of community participation in the Project in spite of the fact that the government did not provide adequate support to the cooperative movement in Lesotho, a situation which caused many cooperatives to be defrauded by their leaders (*Moeletsi oa Basotho*, 24 July 1994: 10). In fact, I noted in Chapter 3 that, generally, cooperative societies in the Third World are ill-disposed towards the interests of the poor. This is because lack of government support leads to bad management in these organisations and their domination by elites.

There appears, therefore, to be a link between the blueprint approach to project design and implementation and the political goals of a government - a government uses the former to achieve the latter. For its own political objectives the government in Lesotho sought legitimacy for cooperatives and village development committees. It wanted to use the Project to create the impression that through a rationalistic planning process and not on the basis of political considerations these structures were found to be the most appropriate for facilitating rural participation.

The politicisation of the administrative framework for rural development in Lesotho was alluded to in Chapter 5. As part of this occurrence it was demonstrated that the BNP government used VDCs as instruments of political control. This excessive domination of society by the BNP also meant that cooperatives were dominated by party members. What this means is that the cooperative movement

in Lesotho was actually a system through which the BNP government gave patronage to its supporters.

So, effectively the blueprint is used by a government to impose institutional structures on the local people which help to consolidate its political position without necessarily facilitating participatory development. The use of this approach in the establishment of participatory structures can thus serve to indicate that a government does not have a genuine commitment to participation. I pointed out in Chapter 3 that a government which uses participatory structures as a form of political control, as a means of cooptation or as a guise for abrogating its responsibilities shows its lack of commitment to local empowerment.

In section 6.4.3, I examine the manner in which the bureaucratic interests of the donor agencies have affected the Project.

.4.3 Agency needs vs the learning process

.4.3.1 *Time-phasing problems*

The Thabana-Morena IRD Project was planned to run for three years beginning in January 1983 and ending in December 1985. The duration of the Project, however, had to be extended by one year to December 1986 apparently to compensate for the delays which had occurred as a result of deficiencies in staff recruitment. Further extensions, up to June 1987, were effected to allow for an orderly transition from Phase I to Phase II once a decision had been taken to proceed with the second phase. Like the first phase, the second phase had to be extended due to similar delays in staff recruitment.

It was scheduled to last for four years starting in January 1988 but had to be extended to June 1993.

These extensions are indicative of the inappropriateness of the time-span allocated to the different phases of the Project. Morss and van Sant (1985) similarly report that the average time required to complete 250 World Bank projects examined between 1975 and 1979 had to be extended by more than 40 percent of their planned time schedules despite the fact that some of these projects had had a reduction in the scope of their activities. Delays had been experienced in the deployment of staff and equipment.

It should be noted that the designers of the first phase of the Project were noncommittal about the possibility of a second phase, even though they recognised that institution building requires "a time horizon of 10 to 15 years". The main reason for their doubts was uncertainty over the continued availability of foreign assistance (UNDP 1983: 15). Yet it should be realised that because institutional development is a lengthy process, long-term programme financing as against short-term project financing is more appropriate. This fact notwithstanding donors are still keen on short-term project financing (Korten 1980: 484). In a study of the Integrated Programme for Rural Development in Mexico (commonly known as the PIDER programme) Cernea (1986) concluded that long-term funding arrangements are necessary for the successful institutionalisation of rural participation.

Rondinelli (1979:401) considers the tendency towards short-term financial arrangements to be one of the contradictions in the role played by international aid agencies in projects geared towards supporting the rural poor. Although these agencies are usually the

primary source of influence for governments to implement poverty-oriented projects, their approach (the agencies) in these projects does not facilitate the achievement of the stated objectives (Bryant & White 1984: 51). I return to this issue in sub-section 6.5.2. The point, however, is that this contradiction is related to the bureaucratic imperatives which, as noted in Chapter 3, force donor agencies to aim for quick results in order to prove themselves.

6.4.3.2 *Stages of the learning process*

In sub-section 6.2.1, I referred to the Preparatory Phase of the Thabana-Morena Integrated Rural Development Project. From the beginning of this phase in 1979 to the end of Phase II in 1993 about 14 years elapsed. It is true that the Project was dormant for some intermittent periods during these years due to the non-availability of key international staff, as will be seen in the next section.

Taking this fact into consideration it can be estimated that the Project ran for around 10 years which, as pointed out in Chapter 3, is regarded to be the minimum amount of time required for a project with a focus on institutional development to bear fruits. Indeed, as indicated in the previous sub-section, designers of this Project also acknowledged that 10-15 years were necessary for this purpose.

But because the Project was not based upon the learning process approach, the available time was not used effectively. A project which follows a learning process goes through certain stages, namely, the *experimental stage*, the *pilot stage*, the *demonstration stage* and the *replication stage* (Rondinelli 1993) or the stage of *learning to be*

effective, the stage of *learning to be efficient* and the stage of *learning to expand* (Korten 1980; 1984b).

In the initial stage the focus is on gathering information about the local conditions. In the intermediate stage/stages the emphasis is on how the knowledge acquired can be used to address the needs of the local community. The final stage focuses on the institutional adjustments required to turn the project into a national programme.

The three phases of the Project, the Preparatory Phase ⁶ (1979-1982), the first phase (1983-1987) and the second phase (1988-1993) could well have been used to serve the purposes of the different stages of the learning process approach outlined above if any serious thought had been given to this approach; but this did not take place.

The plan of the first phase of the Project made no reference to any work done in the Preparatory Phase yet this phase had been intended to lay the foundation for Phase I. Davidson et al (1992: 7) also observed that Phase I was designed as though the Preparatory Phase never existed. If the learning process approach had been followed Phase I would have been based upon lessons learned in the Preparatory Phase. This means that there would have been an indication in the plan of the first phase regarding the achievements and shortcomings of the preparatory phase, which would then form

6 Although it was planned to run for one year, this phase of the Project took two and half years, presumably due to delays similar to those experienced during Phase I and Phase II.

the basis of efforts in the first phase. This sign was lacking, however.

Self-help-groups, village development committees and other institutional structures were first to be tried out during the Preparatory Phase (UNDP 1979b). One would, therefore, have expected to see an acknowledgement of this fact in the design of the first phase, showing that something had already been done and that something had been learned from it on which further efforts would be based.

I also noted in sub-section 6.4.1.3 that Phase II of the Project was intended to wean village institutions (SHGs and VDCs) from the Project and to link their activities to those of government ministries, the assumption being that this institutional structure had largely been developed during Phase I. But the end of project report recommended that a further phase was necessary to carry out precisely this task of linking the activities of SHGs and VDCs to line ministries. This report nevertheless fails to indicate what steps had already been taken in this direction; because nothing had actually been done to link activities of SHGs and VDCs with those of existing line ministries. In other words the second phase of the Project did not build upon any lessons developed in the first phase. But the report tries to create the impression that something had actually been done by stating that there were linkages which, however, "were not fully developed" (UNDP/FAO 1994: 16), in order to justify the recommendation which it was about to make for a further phase of the Project.

Morgan (1983: 335) has commented on similar behaviour in the United States Agency for International Development where evaluators

of its projects understood that they were expected to submit reports which justified follow-up project proposals. Catlett and Schuftan (1994: 158) make the same point based on their experience with development projects in Kenya. The only logical explanation for this behaviour by international aid agencies appears to be an attempt to justify their existence in the eyes of those governments which fund their activities. This, as suggested in Chapter 3, also goes for the high targets set in advance for projects. They are intended to show the donors that the agency is going to use their money for a worthwhile cause.

So, departure from the learning process approach is not only influenced by the political objectives of the host government but also by the need of the donor agency for self-preservation. This observation supports the argument made in Chapter 3 that donor agencies are bureaucratic organisations and that as such they are inward-looking and concerned more about their survival and growth as well as their internal rules and procedures than about their effectiveness in addressing the needs of the poor. Therefore, the blueprint is nothing more than a mechanism for satisfying the political needs of a government, on the one hand, and the bureaucratic needs of the donor agency, on the other.

The present section addressed the flaws in the design of the Project. In the next section I look at the shortcomings which accompanied the implementation of the Project.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

High targets and staff performance

I pointed out in Chapter 3 that one of the most important aspects of the process of promoting people's participation is continuity of staff in the organisation charged with that task. If people stay with the organisation or project longer they get to know their work better and through a learning process are able to devise more effective ways of dealing with their problems (Morss et al 1985: 68). In this Project the Chief Technical Adviser and the Agricultural Adviser were associated with the Project from its Preparatory Phase to its first phase.

This arrangement should be viewed positively because it contributed to continuity of staff and helped to bridge the gap between project design and project implementation. People who are involved in planning a project are in the best position to deal with problems of implementation. It is for this reason, as pointed out in sub-section 6.4.2.2, that the learning process suggests that design and implementation should happen concurrently.

Nevertheless, the presence of these two persons in the Project actually hindered rather than facilitated community participation. It would appear that the high targets set for the Project caused both people to depart from the learning process approach in forming groups. As a result they failed to find appropriate solutions to the problem of institution building which their relatively long association with the Project should have facilitated. The lesson to be drawn from this is that without recourse to the learning process approach lengthy association with a project does not ensure the effectiveness of staff

in terms of establishing appropriate institutional frameworks, and the basic cause of this problem is the high targets which attract their attention.

The Chief Technical Advisor allowed group formation to take place in a mechanical fashion, apparently to meet the target of 204 SHGs set for the Project (Peaboy et al 1984). People registered their names in groups mainly because of the promise of financial assistance. Some did this without seriously considering the responsibilities which went with group membership - the sacrifices in terms of time, contributions of labour and other materials, for example. Others chose activities such as piggery which were not feasible due to the poor market for their products in the country.⁷ As a result the first year of Phase I saw the registration of 58 SHGs, which exceeded the planned target for that year by ten groups.⁸ Consequently, most of the groups were found not to be viable by the cooperatives specialist when he arrived in August 1983; and less than 20 actually survived.

For his own part, the Agricultural Adviser had an excessive orientation towards the use of high technology as exemplified by his preference for machines in preparing land, harvesting and baling in fodder production; and his refusal to consider alternative ways of performing these tasks which would be less expensive, and limit the farmers' dependence on external agencies (Peaboy et al 1984).

7 Interview with group organiser who joined the Project in its first phase.

8 The planned cumulative targets were 48,112 and 204 groups over the three years of the first phase of the Project.

However, as pointed out in Chapter 3, sophisticated technology makes it difficult for local people to participate fully in decision making because it involves skills and knowledge which they often lack.

Uphoff et al (1979: 268-269) observed that in operations involving the construction of suspension bridges in Nepal and the installation of irrigation tubewells in Bangladesh the use of simple technology not only lowered costs but it also facilitated local participation in both decision making and implementation, thereby reducing outside dependence; in comparison to situations where the governments used more advanced technologies.

It would, therefore, seem that the Agricultural Adviser was not so much interested in promoting local participation as he was in meeting the target of bringing 200 hectares of land under fodder production as prescribed by the project document. Because farmers in the fodder groups did not make the decisions about when machines would come (these decisions being taken by officials of the department of agriculture about 30 km away in Mafeteng) often there were delays. These delays had the most serious effects during harvesting when the crop was often harvested after it had lost most of its value. This was a source of disillusionment to farmers whose interest in fodder production waned.⁹

The performance of these two people demonstrates that the bureaucratic nature of the donor agencies, which has already been

described, has a negative impact on the ability of individual members of staff to facilitate participatory development. The agency need for self-preservation, as highlighted in sub-section 6.4.3.2, is reflected by similar concerns among its field workers. As I indicated in Chapter 3, in the interest of their careers, they seek to demonstrate their competence by trying to reach the high targets set for the project.

So, while the agency has to set high targets for projects to impress donors, agency field staff have to reach these targets to impress their superiors at agency headquarters. Thus, the process of bureaucratic reorientation referred to in Chapter 3 which demands that bureaucrats should put the interests of the local people ahead of their own, and gear their rules and procedures towards this goal, applies not only to government bureaucracies but to donor agencies too.

The problem affecting fodder production as discussed above also demonstrates the lack of coordination between the Ministry of Rural Development responsible for the Project and the Ministry of Agriculture which supplied the machinery. I pointed out in Chapter 5 that in spite of the decentralisation efforts of the early 1980s which purported to address the issue of uncoordinated action between ministries at the district level, the problem still continued. As the Project demonstrates this lack of coordination had a negative impact on local participatory development.

This problem clearly shows that projects are not only affected by the political goals of governments but also by their administrative capacity. I argued in Chapter 5 that poor coordination between ministries at district level in Lesotho underscores the government's lack of administrative capacity to facilitate rural participation. What

this means is that the failed attempts at participatory development in Third World countries should not be blamed on projects themselves but on these disabilities of governments. Weaknesses in project performance are only a reflection of government disabilities.

6.5.2

Delays in staff deployment

As already indicated, the Cooperatives Adviser joined the Project in August 1983, a year after its commencement. It was the late arrival of this specialist which led to the previously mentioned false start in the formation of self-help-groups. Although the reduction of the number of SHGs from 58 to less than 20 after his arrival contributed towards shifting emphasis away from quantitative targets it, however, had the effect of creating a negative impression about the Project in the minds of those affected.

People's expectations were raised and before they were met their dreams were shattered. I noted in Chapter 3 that the agencies as well as agents involved in rural development need to establish trust between themselves and the rural people. Such a relationship did not seem to exist between the local people and the project management. It is possible that acts of this nature contributed towards eroding the confidence of the people in project staff. It will be shown in Chapter 7 that project beneficiaries believed, for example, that a lot of aid money did not reach them but disappeared somewhere in the hands of project officials.

The second phase of the Project also experienced delays in the placement of key personnel. Although Phase II started officially in January 1988 the Chief Technical Adviser did not arrive until January

1989. The former CTA did not have his contract renewed when it expired towards the end of Phase I due to his unsatisfactory performance. The new CTA stayed for only four months apparently because he was dissatisfied with having to live at the project site (Davidson et al 1992: 13). A suitable replacement was only found in March 1990. This CTA had to stop working in October 1992 due to ill-health.

So, although the second phase ran for five and a half years (January 1988 - June 1993) it had a Chief Technical Adviser for less than three years. It should be noted that in the absence of a chief Technical Adviser (who should not be a citizen of the host country) UNDP funds could not be disbursed. This is yet another example of the contradictions which exist in the role played by international agencies in the implementation of projects in the Third World. As noted in sub-section 6.4.3.1, while they encourage governments to follow participatory policies their procedures militate against the smooth implementation of these policies. The Lesotho government was able to initiate a project based on the principles of community participation because of financial support from the UNDP. Yet it was precisely because the bulk of the money used in the Project came from that source that the absence of a CTA led to periods of lull in the Project which contributed to a loss of morale among staff. This point further strengthens the observation made in sub-section 6.4.3.2 that in addition to their need for self-preservation it is the bureaucratic red tape of the donor agencies which inhibits participatory development.

To be sure, delays in the recruitment of international staff are a common problem in the implementation of development projects in

the Third World. Morss and van Sant (1985) refer to two projects with problems similar to the ones experienced in the Project. In the Eastern ORD Integrated Rural Development Project in Upper Volta the arrival of the credit adviser was delayed by eighteen months. As a result government officials became impatient and started giving loans to beneficiaries "with insufficient procedural safeguards". Morss and van Sant report that this led to problems - presumably related to the repayment of loans. This problem is not different from the one noted earlier in the Thabana-Morena IRD Project where the late arrival of the Cooperatives Adviser resulted in group formation being set on a wrong course.

The second project discussed by Morss and van Sant is the Subtropical Lands Development Project in Bolivia. Whereas the agreement to implement this project was signed in September 1974 the project team was not in place until 1977. This not only led to a late start of the project but the cost of the project also increased by \$2.9 million. While the delay in finding a suitable CTA in the second phase of the Thabana-Morena IRD Project, alluded to earlier, did not cause an increase in the cost of the Project, it led to discontinuities. These led to a loss of morale among staff, which in turn led to a loss of momentum in the Project.

As already demonstrated, continuity of staff is a necessary part of the learning process approach. This Project illustrates that discontinuities in facilitation only lead to failure. I am not in any way underestimating the genuine problems which the Project faced in finding suitable people internationally. The point, though, as the two cases cited above indicate, is that this is a well known problem

affecting development projects in the Third World. To deal with this problem a learning process approach is necessary. It allows time not only for problems to be diagnosed but also for suitable solutions to be found.

The only way to explain the continued use of short project cycles even when donor agencies fail to find qualified people on time is that the bureaucratic needs of these organisations take precedence over the need for project success. Similarly, governments, as indicated in Chapter 3, want to have quick results in order to placate their constituencies. However, this approach is counterproductive because, as the Project illustrates, when the project cycle ends there is nothing to show off (except, as noted in sub-section 6.4.3.2, falsified reports).

6.5.3 Deployment of local staff

The Project basically faced two problems with regard to the deployment of key local personnel. Either they did not arrive in good time, or they did not remain in the Project long enough to be effective. When Phase I started, the person working as the local project manager and counterpart to the Chief Technical Adviser was at the same time the District Rural Development Officer for Mafeteng. It had not been easy to find a suitable candidate for that post. The District Rural Development Officer was thus forced to perform the two roles, which was not easy for him. I pointed out in Chapter 5 that the Ministry of Rural Development which was responsible for this Project in Lesotho, had a shortage of field personnel. So, this inability to find a suitable project manager indicates that the problem was not

restricted to lower level field staff but extended to higher level management staff as well.

Morss et al (1985) demonstrate that projects elsewhere in the Third World have experienced similar problems due to qualified people being unavailable in the countries concerned. They note, for example, that in Jamaica the first project director of the Second Integrated Rural Development Project was also the soil conservation officer of the Ministry of Agriculture. His ministry was not ready to release him, and because he had this other responsibility he did not have enough time for his duties in the project. Eventually a full-time project director had to be found (pp.67-68).

A substantive manager for the Thabana-Morena IRD Project was only appointed in November 1986, eight months before the end of the first phase in June 1987. But the Chief Technical Adviser had already left in December 1985. I pointed out earlier that without the CTA funds from the UNDP could not be used. So, the second project manager was there effectively to oversee a dormant project until the start of the second phase when hopefully a new CTA would be appointed.

Earlier on, it was noted that the first CTA in Phase II arrived in January 1989, one year after the official start of the Project, and then stayed only for four months. This means that except for these four months the second project manager was simply keeping an eye on an inactive project. Thus, although his presence might be considered to provide continuity between the first phase and the second phase, the absence of a CTA at the end of Phase I and at the beginning of Phase II limited the extent to which he might have been an effective bridge between the two phases.

With the departure of the CTA in April 1989 the project manager spent the rest of the year without a CTA. In December 1989 a third national project manager was appointed, thereby replacing a man who had been with the Project when very little activity actually took place. This project manager was joined by the third CTA in March 1990. They worked together until September 1991 (18 months) when the project manager went for further training overseas, returning in March 1993, three months before the end of the Project in June of that year.

When the second project manager was appointed towards the end of 1986, the first project manager had been promoted to a senior post within the same Ministry of Rural Development. The second project manager was himself seconded from the Ministry of Agriculture, and when he left he was going back to his own ministry. The third manager (appointed in December 1989) was also from the Ministry of Agriculture. When I visited the Project for the last time in June 1995 this manager had also left to join a nongovernmental organisation.

The foregoing discussion highlights the problem of shortage of qualified manpower for rural development in Lesotho. It further illustrates the point made in Chapter 5 that in relation to other ministries such as agriculture the Ministry of Rural Development is worse off. In that chapter, I demonstrated that this situation is related to the lack of commitment by the government to participatory development. Since I argued in sub-section 6.5.1 above that project weaknesses are just a mirror-image of government failings, it follows that the shortage of manpower in the Project is an indictment on the government's commitment to genuine rural participation.

To deal with the problem of paucity of expertise, training should command priority at the beginning of a project even if it means delaying other activities, which should then be phased in as personnel becomes available (Morss et al 1985; Catlett & Schuftan 1994). This style of operation clearly assumes a learning process approach, which allows more time for project implementation. But as I have said the basic principles of the learning process approach were not followed in this Project and this, as suggested in sub-section 6.4.2.4, is an indication of a government's lack of commitment to participation.

Discontinuities also existed in the manner of fielding group organisers. None of the first three GOs who joined the Project at the start of the first phase saw it through its second phase. This problem is compounded by one other factor - poor record keeping. None of the five GOs I found in the Project had records of what previously happened in the groups they took over from their predecessors. The GOs similarly failed to keep proper records of their own activities. They did not, for example, maintain records of problems which they experienced in their groups nor did they keep records of any specific strategies which were found useful in dealing with particular problems or those which they did not find to be particularly useful. Good records would provide information which would form the basis for future improvement because, as I have pointed out, the learning process approach is based upon knowledge accumulated over time.

In Chapter 7 I discuss in more detail the role of the GOs in promoting participatory development in the Project.

6.5.4 Funding

Phase I of the Project was funded through the UNDP to the tune of US \$1, 625,080. Of this amount \$1,010,920 came from the government of the Netherlands while \$614,160 was contributed by the UNDP itself. The government of Lesotho contributed M450,000. In Phase II the total UNDP budget was US \$1,906,550 which included the Dutch cost-sharing element of \$95,188 carried over from Phase I. The counterpart contribution of the government of Lesotho was M670,700.

I have tried to show in this chapter that the Thabana-Morena Integrated Rural Development Project failed to develop replicable institutional structures for rural development despite the fact that this had been its main purpose. I pointed out in sub-section 6.3.2 that this failure should also be seen against the background of the large sums of money usually spent on integrated rural development projects with only a localised and often short-term impact, highlighted in Chapter 2. Indeed the terminal report of the Phase II of Project (UNDP/FAO 1994: 6) concedes this fact by stating that:

Even operating on the assumption that the resource base of the area is very low and that top-heavy operation is required to reach the necessary take-off level, this support seems too great for the Government to replicate at a similar level of funding in other equally needy and deserving rural areas of Lesotho (Emphasis added).

Therefore, given the fact that sources of development funds in developing countries are not unlimited and that, as a result, rural development cannot take place as a series of projects with a localised impact; the only way in which areas beyond the project area can

benefit from the funds spent on a project is by sharing in the knowledge accumulated through the project. As I have demonstrated in this chapter the learning process approach is the only basis from which to generate knowledge for wider application.

It will be demonstrated in Chapter 7 that rather than provide lessons in establishing self-sustaining and replicable institutional structures the use of these funds only served to create a dependency syndrome among the local people.

6.5.5 Maximum and immediate impact

It has been argued in this chapter that in its methods the Thabana-Morena IRD Project gravitated towards the blueprint as against the learning process approach. This was reflected by its attempt to impose pre-determined institutional structures on the local people. A further sign of the departure of the Project from the learning process approach is that it strove for maximum and immediate impact in its operations. I pointed out in Chapter 3 that the learning process approach is based on an incremental development of assistance programmes. To this end one or a few villages are selected as learning and testing sites for developing the procedures and structures which facilitate people's participation.

But the idea of using a few villages as starting points and learning laboratories was not used in the Project. The intention seems to have been to penetrate the entire 19 villages in the project area all at once, apparently with the aim of making an immediate and maximum impact. Proof of this is that when the Project started village

development committees were established in all villages at the same time.

The intention was clearly that SHGs would be immediately started in all 19 villages so that together with the VDCs they would form the basic institutional structures for community participation in each village. The rapidity with which SHGs were formed where, as indicated earlier in this chapter, the first year alone saw 58 groups being registered also confirms the view that the Project aimed to have an immediate and maximum impact and not so much to develop replicable lessons in institution building. If an incremental approach had been followed this would have created an opportunity for the appropriateness of the institutional structure (which as I have indicated was pre-planned) to be tested first in a few villages so that, if necessary, changes might be effected as the Project grew to encompass more villages.

Although it was a natural experiment (i.e., an unplanned programme) the evolution of India's National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) illustrates how a development programme grows incrementally. Korten (1984b) explains that the dairy board grew from poor farmers' cooperatives operating in a few villages in the 1940s collecting milk, transporting it, processing it and marketing the processed products in major urban centres. By the end of 1976 the organisation was comprised of cooperatives working in 4,530 villages having started in less than 10 villages. According to Korten those involved:

... learned how the problems of milk production and marketing within a village cooperative framework could be overcome. As they learned other cooperatives were formed and brought within the organisational umbrella. Gradually methods were refined and the organisation that was eventually to become the NDDB grew ... (1984b:178).

Nevertheless, the Lesotho Government and the two agencies involved in the Project (the United Nations Development Programme and the Food and Agricultural Organisation) were later to agree that the Project operated on too broad a scale.¹⁰ This approach overstretched available resources, both human and financial, and limited the extent to which the Project could be effective as a learning exercise. All parties agreed that a narrower focus would have yielded better results.

However, even after this realisation had been made nothing could be done to narrow the focus of project activities in terms of the number of villages covered because groups were already hard to work. Time and money had been spent to scatter the activities over the greater part of the project area. What is more important, the local people had already committed themselves in different activities and attempts to stop some of these activities for the sake of narrowing the project focus would surely not have been welcomed by them.

Therefore, there was no choice but to continue with the Project as it was because changing the approach would probably have been more disastrous in terms of alienating the beneficiaries. This means that the learning process approach can only be used to expand the operations of a project as the conditions under which it is implemented get to be understood. It cannot be used to scale down a project to correct earlier mistakes. Thus, it is imperative that a project should start on a small scale, and grow with time.

10 Interview with the Economic Planner, Department of Sectoral Planning, Ministry of Planning.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The discussion presented in this chapter illustrates that the Thabana-Morena IRD Project was based upon a blueprint approach and not a learning process approach. As a result the Project failed to overcome problems which have impeded the smooth implementation of projects in the Third World, such as lack of qualified local staff and the failure to find staff internationally. The departure of the Project from the learning process approach also means that no replicable lessons were learned to be applied in other parts of the country, and, therefore, that the money spent on the Project has had a localised impact.

Furthermore, the high targets set in the blueprint distracted the attention of project officials from tackling the intricate problem of institution building. On the other hand, the blueprint appears to have been useful in fulfilling the political objectives of the government by enabling it to prescribe in advance structures which serve this purpose without necessarily facilitating participation. At the same time the blueprint enabled the donor agency, as a bureaucratic organisation, to justify its existence.

This experience demonstrates that governments together with donor agencies and not projects as such are responsible for the failures of participatory development. Because this Project had a semi-autonomous project implementing unit (i.e., a separate administrative structure not under the direct supervision of the ministry on a day to day basis), it shows that even this relative autonomy does not shield a project from the harmful effects of the political environment.

CHAPTER 7

ACTION GROUPS IN THE THABANA-MORENA IRD PROJECT

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, organisational development was depicted as a *sine qua non* of participatory development. It was then demonstrated in Chapter 5 that self-help-groups or action groups are the most important organisations for promoting community participation in development because they bring the local people directly into the process of development, and not indirectly through representatives.

Although, as pointed out in Chapter 6, the Thabana-Morena IRD Project (the Project) also dealt with other types of organisations (i.e., village development committees and village assemblies), its focus was on the promotion of self-help-groups, which the project document (UNDP 1983: 14) referred to as "the core of the project". This chapter looks specifically at this aspect of the Project, taking poultry groups as the point of reference (reasons for choosing poultry groups are stated in Chapter 1, sub-section 1.5.3). The intention is to determine whether or not participation in the SHGs contributed to human development.

I first look at the characteristics of action groups, their structure and their functions; e.g., their size and their use as bases for self-reliance/conduits of external assistance. The aim is to see whether these attributes facilitated the development of the human potential of group members. I then discuss the types of skills and knowledge which participants actually acquired in the groups, and I try to

determine whether these enhanced their capacity for self-sustaining development. The types of activity in the action groups (in terms of whether, for example, it was complementary, substitute or foreign in relation to what the people were already doing in the area) is scrutinised to see how it affected the quality of participation.

The investigation also tries to determine the role played by indigenous forms of organisation in the area and that of the local elites in facilitating or inhibiting participation in the Project. Similarly, the impact of the wider political environment on the SHGs is assessed. Finally, I consider the role of the group organisers in the Project, and I relate the quality of the participatory process to the performance of these catalysts.

7.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF SHGs IN THE PROJECT

7.2.1 Standard vs participatory organisations

It was noted in Chapter 3 that van Heck (1979) makes a distinction between standard and participatory organisations. Standard organisations are harmful to the interests of the poor while participatory organisations attempt to protect the interests of the poor. As indicated, according to van Heck standard organisations are, in general, established in a top-down fashion and controlled by outside agencies. In contrast, participatory organisations are formed in a bottom-up process and managed by local people.

In the Project the initiative to establish SHGs came from project personnel by presenting a list of activities from which the people were required to choose. I suggested in Chapter 3 that there is nothing

inherently wrong with outsiders taking the initiative for the formation of self-help-groups. Fisher (1994) equally observes that grassroots organisations which are started by outsiders are not necessarily in conflict with the interests of the rural poor. Similarly, Boeren (1992: 270), basing himself on experiences in selected Latin American, African and Asian countries, concludes that "external communication inputs are indispensable" in initiating local participatory development.

As indicated in Chapter 2 and 3, local initiative is often stunted by the technocratic approach to development which creates among the people the impression that development is brought to the rural areas from outside. There is a good indication that outside stimulus was necessary to get people involved in group activities in the Project. Many of the beneficiaries reported that they would have found it difficult to think of viable activities in the absence of the list of alternatives presented to them. This uncertainty was indicative of a low level of confidence which the local people had in themselves, and which explained their lack of initiative.

It is possible that this situation was created by the belief which the beneficiaries seemed to have in the ability of outsiders to bring development to the rural areas. Almost without exception the interviewees bemoaned the inadequacy of the aid they were getting through the Project. Others even pointed out that they often heard radio broadcasts which reported about aid packages going to other parts of the country and not coming to their own area. This suggested that the local people believed that their problems could only be solved through outside help.

Where the initiative for establishing action groups came from outside the crucial step, as indicated in Chapter 3, is that a process should immediately be set in motion to guide these structures towards self-reliance. It will be demonstrated in this chapter that self-help-groups in the Project failed to become bases for long-term development; and that this failure was related not only to the fact that once established the groups were not guided towards self-reliance. On the contrary, it will be shown that, in the first place, the very act of stimulating group formation by presenting a list of activities to the people, alluded to earlier, negated the basic principles of the learning process approach. This means that although there is nothing wrong with outsiders taking the initiative in stimulating group formation, the manner in which they provide the stimulus is important.

7.2.1.1 *Group formation and the learning process*

In terms of the learning process approach, group formation takes place with participants coming together on the basis of common interests, problems and socio-economic background. The group animator (whose role will be discussed further in section 7.7) stimulates awareness among the people so that they become concerned about their situation and together devise means to address their common problems.

As pointed out in Chapter 3, Oakley and Marsden (1984) suggest four steps to be followed in the methodology of group formation, namely: contact with the target group; process of group structuring and group formation; preparation of work with group in terms of their future participation; and, action to implement the participation. It was argued that the initial process of contact making is important not only

for making it possible for the change agent to get to understand the socio-economic conditions of the target population, but also as a period of building confidence between the local people, on the one hand, and the outside agency, on the other. It also provides the opportunity for the development of a mutual understanding of the concerns, strengths and limitations of one party by the other.

In the Project this period of contact making was missing. The change agents in the Project went into the different villages, introduced themselves to the chiefs and asked the chiefs to call village assemblies for them, at the earliest convenient time. It was in these gatherings where villagers were introduced to the Project, as pointed out in Chapter 6, and where, subsequently, the villagers were presented with the list of activities to choose from.

There appears, therefore, to be a relationship between the omission of this period which allows the agency to build bridges between itself and the local people and the lack of trust which the people showed towards the management of the Project. As already indicated in Chapter 6, participants did not believe that the Project disbursed all the aid due to them but rather that project officials used some of it for themselves.

Related to this perception was the notion among the villagers that groups were to serve as conduits of external aid rather than bases for self-reliance. They regarded themselves as helpless beneficiaries of the Project and not its partners in development. I return to this point in sub-sections 7.3.2 and 7.3.3. What is important to note, however, is that the period of contact making helps to clear these

misconceptions about what a project can and cannot do for the local people.

The lesson which emerges from this Project is that there is a distinction between attempts directed at stimulating awareness among the local people and those geared towards stimulating their interest in what a project has to offer; and that the focus should be on *awareness raising* and not *interest arousal*.

Awareness raising involves helping the local people not only to come to grips with their problems but also to realise the contribution which they themselves can make in solving these problems, and to appreciate the limits of outside help. On the other hand, interest arousal effectively marginalises the part to be played by participants while it accentuates the role of the project in solving local problems, and this is what the Project did.

By association, it can thus be argued that the blueprint approach which prescribes high production targets for a project in advance is aimed at arousing the interest of the people in the project. For its own part, the learning process approach which seeks first to understand the socio-economic conditions of the people before setting targets aims at awareness raising.

7.2.2 Structure of organisations

In Chapter 3, I pointed out that organisations which seek to encourage participation are small in size, they are unifunctional, they are informal and they operate on the basis of democratic values and principles.

7.2.2.1 *Size of organisations*

A small organisation has been defined in this study as one having a membership of less than 50 people. The poultry groups in the Project were composed of 25 people each when they started (this number subsequently dropped as will be seen). It was argued in Chapter 3 that a small organisation allows participants to develop close personal ties on the basis of which solidarity and mutual trust can be nurtured for the benefit of all members of the group.

Nevertheless, it will be demonstrated that experience in the Project indicates that the size of an organisation is not a sufficient condition nor is it the most important factor influencing the commitment of individuals to the well-being of all members. In spite of their small size the poultry groups did not have this attribute.

On the positive side, however, the small size of the SHGs facilitated the participation of all members in discussing the affairs of their groups. This was reflected by the fact that meetings to discuss issues affecting each group were attended by all members and not just the committee members. The advantage of this situation is that it makes it difficult for the committee to get detached from the rest of the group and to develop elitism. It also signifies openness in the management of group affairs. Analysing the effects of rank and file participation in meetings of the leadership of peasant organisations in Mexico, Fox (1992) arrived at similar conclusions. Although these qualities could be detected in the SHGs the danger still existed that elitism might develop because key positions in the executive committees tended to be reserved for certain individuals. I return to this point in sub-sections 7.2.2.3 and 7.2.2.4.

7.2.2.2 *Single-function organisations*

I also suggested in Chapter 3 that organisations with a single function make it easier for members to cope with operational tasks than multi-functional organisations. Learning to perform organisational tasks is part of the learning experience which participants undergo to build local development capacity (the role of SHGs in providing a learning experience will be discussed in greater detail in section 7.4). The greater the number of functions an organisation performs the greater the number of tasks and the more complex the relationships between the tasks.

Therefore, instead of giving participants an opportunity to learn to perform the different tasks such organisations may simply baffle and overwhelm members with their complexity, which could even frustrate them (Peterson 1982a). Hence the suggestion that at least in their early stages of development local organisations should be uni-functional.

The poultry groups were uni-functional, they focused only on egg production. If these groups were concerned with another activity such as machine knitting, for example, they would have had to deal with two different sets of administrative, production and marketing problems which would be more difficult than dealing with one set of problems. Notwithstanding their single function, SHGs failed to provide sufficient opportunities for learning to take place especially in relation to the administrative and marketing aspects of the group activity.

This chapter will demonstrate that just as the size of an organisation does not by itself determine the development of solidarity and commitment to the well-being of fellow members, a single function organisation does not on the basis of this attribute alone provide the necessary conditions for members to learn to perform the tasks involved as a basis for empowerment and capacity building.

7.2.2.3 *Informal organisations*

As pointed out in Chapter 3, the difference between formal and informal organisations is one of degree rather than kind, and different organisations may be more formal than others in some respects and less so in other respects.

The SHGs in the Project were not legally registered, and did not have written constitutions outlining their statements of purpose as well as operational rules and procedures. However, the groups had certain elements of formality. They had committee structures with elected office bearers. They also had written by-laws to regulate relations between members and to guide their operations.

The argument presented in Chapter 3 was that the less formal an organisation the easier it is for members to participate in the running of its affairs. Judging from experience with cooperatives Fisher (1994) argues that formal organisations are often dominated by the elite. These are the people with better education who are able to understand and cope with formal rules and procedures without being intimidated or confused by them.

Because the SHGs were not legally registered, with a host of rules and procedures to be followed strictly, they can be regarded as informal organisations in spite of the fact that they had some elements of formality, as indicated above. As a result, their few and simple administrative procedures were easily understood by all members of the groups. Even the illiterate understood the administrative procedures and requirements although they could not express their knowledge of these procedures in writing. For example, all members of SHGs knew that they had to keep records of eggs collected on a daily basis, they knew that the group kept income and expenditure records, and they knew that the secretary kept minutes during meetings.

Nevertheless, this is not to say that these tasks were always performed or that in those instances where they were carried out they were properly done. It will be shown later in this chapter that lack of active involvement made it difficult for group members to perform the required administrative tasks properly and to improve their skills in doing these tasks through regular practice.

There was a tendency for certain positions, especially those of chairperson, secretary and treasurer to be monopolised by people who were considered to be more literate by the group.¹ While, as noted in sub-section 7.2.2.1, the size of the SHGs facilitated broader membership participation through the holding of all-inclusive meetings

1 With the exception of two people all those interviewed (41 out of a sample population of 82) had not gone beyond primary school. Most people had 3-5 years of schooling. The tendency was for those with fewer years of schooling to reserve these positions for people with more years of schooling.

thereby counteracting elitism, the tendency of allowing some individuals to dominate certain positions still posed the danger of creating an elitist faction. On the other hand, leaving the running of the organisations to a select few could lead to a situation in which some people feel overburdened with the responsibility of managing the affairs of the group (Walters 1987). Some office bearers in the SHGs actually expressed this feeling. While elitism could cause the leadership to use the groups for self-aggrandizement, overwork could lead to some people neglecting their duties to the detriment of all members of the group.

The next sub-section highlights the possible source of these problems as well as ways of dealing with them.

7.2.2.4 *Democratic participation*

Equality among members is a fundamental principle guiding organisations which seek to encourage the fullest participation of members in the running of their affairs. In a study of three community organisations in Cape Town, Walters (1987) observed that participatory democratic theory provided the framework within which all three organisations operated, and that the underlying assumption was that given the opportunity all members were capable of developing administrative skills - hence the freedom of each member to participate equally in managing organisational matters. In this connection task rotation among members was seen as a crucial organisational strategy.

From what has been said about the poultry groups in sub-section 7.2.2.3 above it is clear that task rotation was not expressly pursued

as an organisational strategy to encourage participation. On the contrary, the tendency was to treat certain positions as the exclusive preserve of some people, as indicated. Because of the informal structure of the SHGs task rotation could have been achieved relatively easily because rules in informal organisations are less strict. This means that it would have been possible to have the key administrative positions in the committees (chairperson, secretary and treasurer) changing hands every three or four months, for example.

Such an arrangement would help to firmly counter any elitist tendencies, and to ensure that no one felt overburdened with work, which I said were two problems threatening to surface in the SHGs. More importantly it would help to improve the administrative skills of the broad membership of the groups, thus contributing towards the goal of human development through participation.

7.3 FUNCTIONS OF SELF-HELP-GROUPS

The following main functions of local organisations were identified in Chapter 3. They are channels of communication between the local communities and the outside world, especially those bodies which control development policy and resources such as governments and donor agencies; they act as a means of transmitting outside help to the community; they form the basis for self-reliance and the mobilisation of local resources; and they serve as mechanisms for planning local development.

7.3.1 Channels of communication

Community organisations communicate the needs of the local people to the outside world. It was noted in Chapter 3 that as individuals the rural poor do not have enough power to make credible demands, and that to strengthen their voice they need to act together. But people can only make demands if they are able to relate the problems they experience in their group activities with particular actions or policies of the government. It should be realised that through SHGs local communities participate directly in the development process. This means that it is through these organs that local people feel the impact of government policies of development (or lack thereof).

In the study of peasant organisations referred to in sub-section 7.2.2.1, Fox (1992) noted that these bodies were political as well as economic organisations. They carried out the economic activities of the peasants and at the same time communicated the demands of the peasants through the political system, by lobbying the local politicians or throwing their weight behind the political parties which promised to back their demands, or even by engaging in mass action in the form of protests and demonstrations. Similar tactics were used by the Bhoomi Senna movement in its struggle for land in India (de Silva et al 1979: 38-39).

In the Thabana-Morena IRD Project, SHGs did not play this communicative role. This seems to have been a result of the inability of members to link their local issues with broader national issues, to link the problems they faced in their groups with government policy. It will be shown in sub-section 7.5.3.2 that beneficiaries were unable to link problems related to the marketing of their eggs to the

inadequacy of government policy in the area of marketing.

It will also be shown in sub-section 7.7.1 that this inability of the villagers to make a connection between their local issues and national issues was related to the failure of group organisers to play an effective role as consciousness-raising agents. I pointed out in Chapter 3 that change agents in local development are a source of knowledge or information which is not readily available to the local people, so as to raise their awareness of issues affecting their lives.

7.3.2 Receivers of outside help

In a study of local neighbourhood committees based in urban and semi-urban areas in Israel, Katan and Cnaan (1986) observed that there was a tendency for members to see these organisations as structures for negotiating assistance from external authorities. They further noted that this absence of a spirit of self-reliance posed a threat to the development of the areas in which the committees worked because, to be effective, outside resources need to be used to supplement local resources and not to replace them.

In the Project the widespread belief among members of the poultry groups, already referred to, that a lot of aid money meant for them was misappropriated by project officials made them feel that they needed to have their groups legally registered because then they could deal directly with donors. While these allegations about misappropriation of aid money by project officials reflected insufficient communication between project authorities and beneficiaries so that the latter could be properly informed about their financial entitlements, they were also indicative of the perception

among members that self-help-groups were essentially a basis for seeking outside help.

I noted in sub-section 7.2.1.1 that this perception was related to the absence of an initial period of contact making which would help the villagers to develop the right attitude towards the Project. So, the lack of communication between officials and participants about the objectives of the Project was not restricted to the early stages of their association, it continued throughout the life of the Project. This situation really underscores the need for this initial period of building bridges. It shows that once these misconceptions about a project have been formed it is difficult to clear them later on.

In the study referred to above Katan and Cnaan also concluded that:

The special characteristics of the Israeli socio-political structure - political and bureaucratic centralism, dominance of political parties, centrality of national issues, undoubtedly strengthen the committee members' conviction that external linkages are crucial for solving a variety of neighbourhood problems (p.31).

My discussion of Lesotho's framework for rural development administration in Chapter 5 highlighted similar problems. I noted that political and bureaucratic centralisation were prevalent; and this situation partly explains the external orientations of the SHGs in the Project. This political and bureaucratic centralism should be understood within the context of the technocratic approach to rural development which in sub-section 7.2.1 I suggested was responsible for eroding the confidence of the local people in their own ability to bring about development in their communities.

But this perception among the local people that SHGs were conduits of outside funds could also be linked to the failure of the Project to positively encourage self-reliance in the groups. These shortcomings will become apparent in the next sub-section.

7.3.3 Bases for self-reliance

It should be emphasised that outside resources are indispensable for the achievement of effective rural development (Goldsmith & Blustain 1980: 9) because local resources are often inadequate or undeveloped. At the same time local resources need to be contributed because outside resources are themselves not unlimited. Thus, as pointed out in Chapter 3, local self-reliance does not imply autarky. Rather, it relates to what Johnston (1982: 206) refers to as "the sensitive use of outside aid". Outside resources should be used to support self-reliance and not to undermine it, as already suggested.

At the beginning of the Project members of the poultry groups were required to contribute labour, and materials such as sand for making concrete blocks. On its part the Project contributed materials such as cement and corrugated iron to get the chicken houses built. Resource contribution by the beneficiaries was a pre-condition for getting access to outside resources.

It was argued in Chapter 3 that the requirement that beneficiaries should first contribute resources before being assisted helps to instil self-reliance in them. However, experience in the poultry groups suggests otherwise. It appears that once they had made the required contributions of labour and materials the villagers expected an unlimited flow of aid to take place. That is why they were

complaining about the inadequacy of the support they had received through the Project. This shows that rather than help to infuse a spirit of self-reliance among them resource contribution was simply used by beneficiaries as some kind of ploy to get outside resources. I have already indicated that this type of behaviour by participants was related to the fact that the Project departed from the basic principles of the learning process approach in forming groups. As pointed out, one of these principles is that there should be an initial period of contact making in which misconceptions about the project are cleared among the local people.

Other steps which should have been taken to promote self-reliance were not taken. For example, when the Project started a revolving fund of M150,000-00 was established by the government out of which beneficiaries could draw to kick-start their group activities (i.e. all SHGs in the Project and not just poultry groups). This money was to be paid back to enable as many people as possible to benefit from it and to promote self-reliance. However, this fund never revolved as beneficiaries did not make any repayments, due to the absence of proper control mechanism in the operation of this fund.

Citing the Grameen Bank project in Bangladesh, Rondinelli (1993: 125-126) has demonstrated that schemes aimed at providing loans to rural people can successfully encourage self-reliance if properly administered. Rondinelli shows that peer pressure was used to promote self-reliance in this project. After receiving orientation about their obligations, group members selected two of their peers to receive loans. Other members could only get loans if the first borrowers made repayments. As a result the group met regularly to share ideas and to encourage one another. By 1990 the Grameen

Bank was making over 630,000 loans at 99 percent rate of recovery. It should be noted that the use of peer pressure is an indication of acceptance of responsibility by group members, and it is during the period of contact making that this sense of responsibility is mainly instilled among the people.

Nevertheless, officials in the Project failed to use the revolving fund to experiment with innovative ways of providing credit to the rural poor similar to the one outlined above; although this had been the original intention (UNDP 1983: 8). So, what was meant to be repayable loans became handouts. Thus, external resources were used not to encourage self-reliance but to discourage it.

7.3.4 Mechanisms for local level planning

It was noted in Chapter 3 that local organisations carry out the planning of development in local areas. Action groups provide the basic data required for this exercise, in terms of giving information about the needs of the people and their resources. But the poultry groups did not play this role because an institutional structure for local level planning did not exist.

I pointed out in Chapter 6 that although village development committees were meant to be mechanisms for village level planning in the Project, they did not exist for all practical purposes; and that SHGs performed their activities independently of these VDCs. Therefore, SHGs were unable to facilitate local level planning in the Project due to the absence of supporting organisations.

7.4 LEARNING THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN SHGs

The point was made in Chapter 3 that participation should become a learning experience for the local people. Unless this goal is attained the aim of achieving "human development" through people's participation will remain elusive. In the study referred to in sub-section 7.2.2.4 Walters (1987) reached the conclusion that participation in community organisations is primarily a means of developing human potential, and that to this end organisational process becomes "a key educational arena". In the organisations she examined Walters observed that:

... educational practices have included, for example, task rotation whereby as a matter of policy each member has a turn to fill particular functions; strategies for sharing skills and information such as regular meetings, regular evaluation sessions, and specific skills training programmes ... (pp. 24-25).

7.4.1 Administrative and problem solving skills

It has already been pointed out that task rotation was not part of organisational development strategy in the SHGs under review. Regular meetings and evaluation sessions similarly did not take place. As a matter of common practice each poultry group met only once a week. On this day members of the group brought their weekly collection of eggs to a central place. A record of each person's eggs was made as well as a combined record before the eggs were transported to town for marketing.

Any issues pertaining to the group which needed to be discussed were dealt with when this task was completed. The main activity of

the day revolved around collecting eggs and sending them to the market, and any other matters which needed attention were dealt with incidentally.

The impaired ability of group members to develop problem solving skills seems to be related to this dearth of special meetings and evaluation sessions which would have given them the opportunity to grapple with issues facing their groups. In particular, two problems plagued the poultry groups. On the one hand, there was the problem of poor administration as reflected by bad record keeping (records of eggs produced, financial records and minutes of meetings held, for example). On the other hand there was the failure of groups to find timely solutions to the problem of free riding. I will return to these issues in greater detail later in this chapter.

It should, however, be noted that it is only by regularly reviewing their situation that group members can gain a deeper insight into their strengths and weaknesses, and through this regular exchange of ideas find ways of dealing with their problems. Looking at the correlation between the acquisition of skills and knowledge, on the one hand, and people's participation in community affairs, on the other, through "a survey conducted in a small American community" Lackey and Dershem (1992: 232) observed that:

When controlling for gender, age and education, the strongest relationship with the number of things learned was with the participant's level of involvement.

Because of the absence of task rotation, regular meetings and review sessions the level of involvement of members in the affairs of SHGs was superficial, and their failure to deal with their problems

effectively and timeously seems to be related to this weakness. This means that purely being members of a group does not help people to acquire skills and knowledge, they need to be actively and deeply involved.

7.4.2 Technical skills

It was pointed out in Chapter 3 that part of the process of building the capacity of villagers to engage in self-reliant and self-sustaining development lies in the improvement of their technical skills. In the poultry groups the most significant amount of learning took place in the technical area. It was clear that group members were quite conversant with the technical aspects of poultry farming. Apart from the fact that all interviewees spoke confidently about their ability to look after chickens, the level of egg production also indicated that the birds received adequate care.² Also, few chickens died except in isolated cases where disease epidemics occurred.

The study will, however, demonstrate that the technical ability of members to carry out their group activities is not enough to determine the success of projects in building local capacity for self-sustaining development.

2 In my interview with the poultry specialist in the Department of Agriculture in Mafeteng, she indicated that a production rate of 80-90 percent a day would be satisfactory. Anything below 60 percent would mean that either the chickens were not properly looked after or they had caught some kind of sickness. None of the beneficiaries reported levels of production anywhere near 60 percent while the majority reported levels of over 80 percent.

7.4.3 Literacy skills

The discussion in Chapter 3 also showed that the teaching of literacy skills should be tied to and integrated with group projects, so as to improve the functional literacy of the local people. As already indicated in sub-section 7.2.2.3, the interviewees had an average of about 4 years of primary schooling. FAO (1985: 64) has pointed out that it is very easy for people with a few years of schooling to lapse back into illiteracy if they do not use their literacy skills. In the poultry groups the inadequacy of the members' literacy skills was reflected by the poor quality of record keeping in terms of the clarity and neatness of the meagre records available. In my interviews, I established that group members sometimes disagreed over the amount of eggs delivered by different people, and this seemed to arise from the poor quality of their records.

Although the groups had been taught how to keep records the skills had been lost through lack of regular practice. Insufficient follow up was done to ensure that the skills were practised to ensure proper assimilation. Again, this points to shortcomings in the role of group organisers who should have helped beneficiaries to assimilate these skills properly.

Under these circumstances it was clear that the need for a functional literacy programme existed. I also pointed out in sub-sections 7.2.2.3 and 7.2.2.4 that people who were less able to read and write tended to be excluded from holding positions in executive committees. Literacy programmes would, therefore, have facilitated democratic participation, which is also important for inculcating democratic principles and values in the minds of the people to prepare them for

participation in the wider political system, as part of the primary goal of human development.

There seems to be a relationship between the improvement of functional literacy and overall performance of the groups. Improved record keeping (which would result from improved functional literacy) would provide the information on which the group could judge its performance. This information would in turn form the basis of discussions aimed at addressing problems in the groups, such as the problem of declining egg production, caused by the declining number of people in each group, and the declining number of chickens kept by each person. Good records together with regular meetings and evaluation sessions would help to focus the attention of groups on the problems they were facing, and enable them to work out solutions.

7.4.4 Learning to work together

The need for self-reliance has already been alluded to in sub-section 7.3.3. A related issue, as indicated in Chapter 3, is that of collaborative action. Galjart's (1981: 93-94) observation is that through collaboration people learn that "only by cooperation can one promote one's own life chances and those of one's children" - thus the experience of cooperating with others makes one aware of the benefits that one stands to gain through cooperation. In other words, the experience of working together and deriving benefits from it strengthens the determination of people to work together.

Members of the SHGs showed an appreciation of the benefits of cooperating. They indicated, for example, that as a group they

bought chicken feed cheaper because they bought in bulk. They also said that they got assistance and support from other members of the group such as in cases where a person had to go away and needed someone to look after their chickens. Group members had developed a positive attitude towards cooperation by experiencing its value. As a result they said that they would rather work as members of a group than work individually.

Although members of the SHGs learned to cooperate with one another it should be noted that it was not for the common good that they did so but for the good of the individual and her own family. This behaviour highlights the tension which Walters (1987) observed in the organisations she studied between "collectivism and individualism". Yet this contradiction should not be seen in terms of the dichotomy between altruism and selfishness. It is not because of selfishness or lack of concern for the well-being of other people that the group members thought of themselves first and not the group.

This behaviour appears to arise instead from the poverty in which the rural people throughout the Third World live. This situation was highlighted in Chapter 1. In the Project the desperate nature of the situation was demonstrated by the fact that even landowners reported that they found it difficult to meet the survival needs of their families. It would be unrealistic to expect the rural poor to think of the amorphous "common good" when they could not satisfy their own immediate needs - charity begins at home. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with people engaging in collaborative action for personal gain if this does not involve a zero-sum game in which one person's gain is another person's loss.

7.5 TYPE OF ACTIVITY IN SHGs

The type of activity in the poultry groups will be discussed under three sub-headings. The first one will be immediacy of benefits, the second, public vs private goods and the third, complementary, substitute or foreign activity.

7.5.1 Immediacy of benefits

It was suggested in Chapter 3 that participants are unlikely to be enthusiastic about an activity from which they do not derive tangible benefits in the shortest possible time. Basing themselves on a study they did in Jamaica Goldsmith and Blustain (1980: 88) concluded that "participation in local organisations is closely tied to the benefits that members derive therefrom".

Nevertheless, Galjart (1981) has pointed out that there is always a waiting period before beneficiaries can get any benefits from an activity; although, of course, the length of the waiting period differs from one type of activity to another. Therefore, in view of the desperate nature of the conditions of the rural poor referred to in sub-section 7.4.4 above, it stands to reason that some kind of relief operation ought to go along with their activity so that it can sustain them until such a time that their activity can support them on a sustainable basis.

If there is no relief operation the people will either withdraw their participation or they will re-orient their activity towards short-term relief and away from long-term development, because that is their first priority. As a matter of fact, there is a connection between relief

operations and development oriented programmes.

This interconnection between relief and development programmes is illustrated by a project discussed by Cernea (Rondinelli 1993) involving the reforestation of woodlands in West Bengal, India. Previous attempts by the government to replant the forests had failed because local people cut the trees to meet their immediate needs. It was then decided to employ local villagers to replant the trees, in order to make some money available to them. In addition:

... the authorities made sure that adequate fuelwood was available to the villagers at low prices and that they could obtain access to plough - pieces and construction timber from other forest areas ... within five years the forest was completely regenerated (p. 126).

In the Project both the withdrawal of people from the SHGs and the use of group activities for relief purposes took place. These trends seem to be related to the absence of a relief component in the Project. When they were formed each of the 7 poultry groups had 25 members. From the time each group was formed to the time members received their first batch of chickens about one year elapsed. This is because groups first had to undergo training in how to raise chickens.

Furthermore, each group had to make concrete blocks, and then erect their own chicken house under the supervision of an experienced brick-layer paid by the Project. By the time the chickens arrived groups had less than 20 members left. My enquiries revealed that people who left were not convinced that they would ever benefit from their efforts and felt that they were wasting their time and energy for

nothing. At the time of the fieldwork (Dec. 1993/Jan. 1994) the six remaining groups had between 11 and 16 members left. The seventh group was no longer functioning; and during my second visit in July 1994, another group had folded, leaving five.

Once production started the proceeds thereof were used to relieve poverty and not to establish a base for self-sustaining development. My interviews established that those who dropped out since the first intake of chickens were people who either were unable to pay for subsequent intakes or who could not afford to buy feed. The absence of a relief component appears to have contributed to this problem.

One way in which a relief component might have been added is through the use of food aid. Since 1968 food aid has been used to encourage development in Lesotho. People engaged in public works, especially road construction, in the villages are given food rations together with a small amount of money (Trollip 1981; Putsoa 1988). If these food - for - work programmes were initiated in conjunction with the activities of the SHGs then the former would enable members of SHGs to have some food available to them and to earn a bit of money, so that they did not have to use group activities for relief purposes. At the same time group members would be creating infrastructure which could be useful to them.

Such an arrangement would, nevertheless, have to be handled with great care. Objectives would need to be clearly explained, and the scheme would have to be closely monitored. This is because in some cases food - for - work projects have been known to discourage agricultural production in Lesotho (Putsoa 1988; Morss et al 1976).

Steps would, therefore, need to be taken to ensure that group activities were not neglected. The process of awareness raising discussed in sub-section 7.2.1.1 would go a long way in creating the right attitude towards food - for - work programmes, and developing an appreciation of their relationship with activities in SHGs among the local people.

It will be shown in the next sub-section that the problems emanating from the failure of the Project to integrate a relief component in group activities were compounded by another problem - the "free rider problem" and that together these problems made it difficult for the groups to realise any significant benefits from their activities, especially by way of deriving sustainable economic gains.

7.5.2 Public vs private goods

It was pointed out in Chapter 3 that public goods are unlikely to attract much participation unless they can easily be converted into private goods, i.e., goods from which direct personal benefits can be derived (the significance of direct personal benefits has been shown in sub-sections 7.4.4 and 7.5.1 above). It was further pointed out in Chapter 3 that public goods are susceptible to the "tragedy of the commons" or the "free rider problem".

As pointed out, the free rider tries to maximise his or her individual gain from a public good knowing fully well that the consequences of his/her actions will be borne not by himself/herself alone but by the rest of the group as well. In other words, the benefits go to the individual but the cost is shared with the rest of the group and this encourages people to try to maximise their gains, in the process also

increasing the cost to the group. If a significant number of people become free riders the common property will be damaged without anyone taking responsibility for it. The poultry groups under review have been affected by the "free rider problem", which manifested itself through the common storage of eggs and common bank accounts.

7.5.2.1 *Common storage of eggs*

Chicken houses in this Project were built in such a way that they were divided into sections with a wire net.³ Each member of the group was allocated a section to herself.⁴ However, the group appointed one person to keep all the eggs they collected from their different sections of the house, to await the day of delivery to the market.

It was also from this single household that the group sold eggs to the local people. This arrangement of keeping the eggs in one place created conditions for free riding to take place. On the day the eggs were to be transported to town shortages would be discovered. The

3 In my interview with the poultry specialist in the Department of Agriculture in Mafeteng (who had also been the person responsible for training the local people in poultry keeping) I learned that each section of the poultry house was designed to take 100 chickens, although each participant was initially advanced with only 75 chickens. The expectation had been that each person would work towards the target of 100 chickens. This never happened.

4 Of the 82 members of the poultry groups only two were men. I indicated in Chapter 1 that the majority of households in the project area were headed by women, partly because of the migrant labour system which drew men to South African mines. But I established in my interviews that another reason why there was such a high proportion of women in the poultry groups was that men regarded poultry keeping as a woman's job.

groups did demand that people entrusted with the eggs should make up the shortfall, but all they could get were promises which were never fulfilled. When this had gone on long enough the person would be changed and a different person chosen to keep the eggs - but the problem would start all over again.

This problem was, however, complicated by the fact that although the eggs were kept in one household all other members of the group could sell eggs to the public from this house in the presence of the owner of the house as well as in her absence. So, it was really difficult to determine exactly how the shortages occurred.

Asked why they turned a good which had already been privatised into a public good⁵ group members responded by saying that the idea was to promote a group spirit as against individualism.

7.5.2.2 *Common bank accounts*

I noted in chapter 3 that according to Stillman (1983), for example, the answer to the problem of free riding lies in changing the attitudes of people such that individuals feel obliged to work for the common good. This is the route which the poultry groups tried to follow, but without success. When a solution was finally found it was through privatisation, which is advocated by Hardin (1983), for instance.

5 The activity was privatised because the poultry houses were divided into sections allocated to individuals. But the group turned their produce into a public good by keeping all the eggs in one house and allowing all group members free access to this house.

Each person would now keep the eggs from her part of the poultry house and bring them to a central point on the day of the week when they were to be transported to the market.

Nevertheless, this move did not completely overcome the "free rider problem", it simply shifted it to a different level. Although individuals were now completely responsible for their section of the poultry house each group still had a common bank account. The problem was that people did not contribute equal amounts of money into this account because group members did not send equal quantities of eggs to the market, yet at the end of the month one cheque was issued to pay for all the eggs delivered by the group during that month. The cheque was then deposited into the group account to be used equally for the benefit of all members of the group (i.e., to buy feed and other supplies).

The "free rider problem" manifested itself as people marketed some of their eggs individually and instead of taking the proceeds to the common fund (which they were expected to do) decided to use the money for themselves and their families because they knew that regardless of how much they contributed into the common bank account they had equal access to it.

7.5.2.3 *Solutions to free riding*

As in the previous situation described in sub-section 7.5.2.1 persuasion was used to deal with the problem identified in sub-section 7.5.2.2 but still to no avail. At the time of the fieldwork one group was still at this first stage of trying to deal with the problem i.e., where all group members still had equal access to the common

bank account even though they did not contribute equal amounts of money into it. Some groups had passed this stage and had decided that each member would be assisted from the common fund only to the extent of her contribution into the fund.

Two groups had in fact gone beyond this stage. When the monthly cheque came it was cashed and each member got the amount due to her. Then each person was asked to pay an agreed sum of money into the group account so that the money could be used equally for all members of the group. With this solution the group spirit (which members had been concerned about destroying when at the very onset they inadvertently created conditions for free riding to take place by keeping all the eggs in one house) was still maintained, by keeping a common bank account. But the solutions discussed above also show that privatisation is a more effective way of dealing with the "tragedy of the commons". Through privatisation people not only benefit individually but they also suffer individually for their actions.

However, as I indicated in sub-section 7.4.1, these solutions may have come too late, when irreparable damage had already occurred in the groups. In my interview with the sales manager of the Lesotho Farm Feed Mills I established that the poultry groups had an uncleared debt of M25,620-53 and that they had stopped buying feed from his company. I also discovered in my investigations that many beneficiaries kept a lot fewer chickens than 75 because they had not been able to pay for 75 when that batch was ordered. Some people indicated that they might not be able to buy another stock of birds when the time came to replace the ageing lot. In other words, indications were that the groups were struggling for survival.

It would appear that the lack of active involvement of members in group affairs as reflected by the absence of regular meetings and review sessions highlighted in sub-section 7.4.1 contributed to the delay in finding appropriate solutions to the problem of free riding. At the same time the different stages at which the different groups were, in terms of finding solutions to the problem, were indicative of the lack of interaction among the groups. Fisher (1994: 138) has pointed out that such interaction among local organisations leads to cross-fertilisation of ideas and contributes to the solution of internal problems. It will be demonstrated in the final section of this chapter that the superficial involvement of members in group affairs and the delays in finding solutions to free riding seem to be related to weaknesses in the role played by group organisers in the Project.

When I visited the Project for the last time in June 1995, one of the two groups which had 15 members a year earlier now had seven. Membership in the other 4 groups stood as follows: 14 (previously 16), 14 (previously 15), 13 (previously 14) and 11 (no change). So, there was still a downward trend in group membership. The government had, however, decided to establish a loan guarantee fund of M100,000-00 to enable the groups to continue functioning. This money was to be deposited with the Lesotho Agricultural Development Bank, and group members (together with anyone else from the Thabana-Morena area who felt the need) would be able to make loans against it.⁶

This arrangement will probably succeed in safeguarding the continued

6 Interview with the Director of Field Services, Rural Development Section, Ministry of Home Affairs.

survival of the groups, for some time. Nevertheless, I pointed out in sub-section 7.3.3 that the Project failed to experiment with effective ways of giving credit to the local people such as methods which rely on peer pressure to ensure repayment. This latest move by the government amounts to taking a blind leap into the unknown. When it had the opportunity to try out mechanisms for effectively delivering credit to the rural poor the government did not do so. It, therefore, seems to me that it is only a matter of time before this scheme collapses.

The Director of Field Services also indicated that there were other donors who were interested in continuing the work of the Thabana-Morena IRD Project. If any agreement is concluded with any donor over this matter it will also save the SHGs, at least for some time. What is important to note, though, is that by establishing the loan guarantee fund referred to above and by entering into negotiations with donors about continuing the work of the Project, the government was acknowledging that this project failed to achieve the stated objective of building local capacity for self-sustaining development.

7.5.3 Complementary, substitute and foreign activities

It was argued in Chapter 3 that the type of activity selected also has a bearing on the success of the participatory approach to local development. In this connection three types of activities were identified - complementary, substitute and foreign activities. Complementary activities build on existing practices, technologies, skills and interests of the people. Substitute activities are closely related to those practised in the area such as introducing a new crop where people are accustomed to growing a different crop. Foreign

activities are unrelated to existing practices such as, for example, introducing crop farming or poultry farming to pastoralists.

The distinguishing factor between the three types of activities is the degree of knowledge which the local people already have about one as against the other. Complementary activities have less unfamiliar skills to participants than substitute activities. Foreign activities demand the local people to assimilate more unfamiliar skills and knowledge than both complementary and substitute activities.

This means that if people are involved in substitute activities more effort is required to help them cope with new skills than if the activities are complementary. Even greater effort is necessary if the activities are foreign. It is in this context that some of the guiding principles of the Rural Reconstruction Movement in China were: "Start with what the people know" and "Build on what the people have" (Korten 1983: 210).

7.5.3.1 *Poultry farming as a substitute activity*

Poultry farming in the Project could be seen as a substitute activity. Customarily, village women in Lesotho raise backyard poultry, although this practice is gradually disappearing. The level of care required for the chickens raised in the SHGs is significantly higher than that required for backyard poultry, and this turns chicken farming in the Project into a substitute activity. The element of marketing also makes this activity a substitute activity because backyard poultry is normally geared towards household consumption and not marketing.

As I pointed out in sub-section 7.4.2, the level of acquisition of the technical skills required for the care of chickens in the poultry groups was satisfactory. While the skills required for production were developed among the beneficiaries, knowledge about the marketing conditions in which they functioned was not imparted to them.

7.5.3.2 *Problems associated with marketing*

Marketing conditions in Lesotho are heavily influenced by market forces in South Africa, and cheaper goods from the latter country tend to force prices down in the former, to the detriment of producers (Trollip 1981; Goldman 1986). These forces affected the marketing of eggs in Lesotho as cheaper eggs smuggled from South Africa sometimes flooded the market in this country. As a result the prices which the producers got for their eggs were not only low but also fluctuated.⁷ Unaware of the forces at work members of the poultry groups blamed the Mafeteng Poultry Cooperative for lack of stability in their prices.

Furthermore, beneficiaries did not have a clear understanding of their relationship with the Mafeteng Poultry Cooperative, how it operated and how they might work through it to make the government improve the marketing conditions in the country, for example, through price stabilisation arrangements. Beneficiaries were not aware that it was the failure of the government to control the smuggling of eggs into the country, and its inability to at least establish a mechanism for

7 Interview with the chairperson of the Mafeteng Poultry Cooperative. This is the organisation through which the SHGs marketed their eggs.

price stabilisation which contributed to fluctuations in their prices. As pointed out in sub-section 7.3.1 it was this lack of understanding of the wider issues affecting their activities which made it difficult for the SHGs to play the communicative role of expressing the needs of members through the political system.

To members of SHGs the cooperative was just an outside body over which they did not hope to have any influence. This attitude was reinforced by the treatment which the local people got from the cooperative. In my interview with the chairperson of the cooperative I learned that while people normally joined the cooperative by paying an individual membership fee of M10-00 the SHGs joined as groups, still paying M10-00. This meant that each group was entitled to only one vote in this cooperative. The implication was that although the SHGs contributed nearly 40 percent of the eggs marketed through the cooperative they had very little say in how it was run;⁸ in fact none of the members of the SHGs had ever been elected to the executive committee of the cooperative.

While this situation reflects the lack of influence which the rural poor have in cooperatives highlighted in Chapter 3, it is also a sign of the failure of the poultry groups to become instruments of empowerment to the local people. From the point of view of marketing as a feature of a substitute activity in the SHGs, group members should have been assisted to learn more about the structure through which marketing took place, the conditions under which it operated and how they

8 Figures showed that the cooperative normally received between 13,000 and 16,000 dozens of eggs a month, and the SHGs contributed between 5,000 and 6,000 of these (37.93% on average). For the month of December 1993, 14,701 dozens were received with SHGs contributing 3,139 dozens (21.35%), which was indicative of the downward trend in the operations of the SHGs alluded to earlier in sub-section 7.5.2.3.

(local people) might influence both the structure (the cooperative) and the marketing conditions (government policy) to become more favourable to them, as part of the process of empowering local people through SHGs.

Section 7.6 below, deals with the social and political factors affecting participation in the SHGs.

7.6 SOCIO-POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT OF SHGs

7.6.1 Indigenous vs introduced organisations

Sometimes it becomes necessary to decide whether to work through existing organisations or to establish new ones. It was pointed out in Chapter 3 that either way the decision will depend upon the experience which the local people have had with existing organisations. If the experience has been a bitter one local people are unlikely to want to continue with traditional organisations, and new organisations may be the answer. On this issue, Uphoff et al (1979: 43) add that where an existing organisation is expected to play a new role it is important to determine whether members are willing and able to reorient the group towards performing tasks other than those for which it was formed, such as for example, in a situation where a burial society is expected to play a more developmental role.

Apart from the ability of the organisations to protect the interests of the poor, Uphoff et al show that the strength of the bond between the local people and their indigenous organisations depends very much on whether the group is permanent, that is, involving the same

people on a more or less on-going basis or whether it is transitory, both in terms of not existing on an on-going basis and in terms of membership which changes from time to time.

In the Thabana-Morena area three main types of indigenous organisations existed. Firstly there were organisations whose members supported one another to raise income, on a rotational basis. In this activity a member throws a party and other members of the organisation (as well as non-members) come to his/her house to buy food and drinks. In addition an agreed sum of money may be contributed by each member to help the owner of the party to raise the capital to buy the food and drinks in the first place. This type of organisation is commonly known as the "*Stokvel*". The occasion is both a form of entertainment and an income generating activity.

The second type of organisation in the project area was the burial society. Members of the society usually pay a monthly subscription to build a fund from which they draw in the event of a death. On top of this fund, members may contribute a certain sum of money to the bereaved family to help towards paying the funeral costs. Some societies are based only on the contributions which are made when someone has died.

The third type of organisation involves the work parties which take place during certain peak periods in the agricultural calendar, such as harvesting. A group of people pool their labour to help one another to perform a particular agricultural activity. A related form of cooperation is share-cropping, which may be more or less permanent. The snag with this form of organisation in terms of forming the basis for other types of cooperation is that it usually involves very few

people, two or three at the most. Also, the continued survival of this type of cooperation (as well as the work parties referred to above) is severely threatened by the declining level of agricultural activity.

The most important feature of these indigenous organisations in the project area was that they were transitory i.e., they were not permanent and membership was changeable. Thus, although no attempt was made in the Project to analyse existing forms of cooperation and to determine the extent to which they may or may not facilitate participation this has not caused problems. Because existing organisations were transitory, members did not seem to be strongly attached to them. Therefore, although membership of the introduced organisations (SHGs) cut across membership of indigenous organisations, there have not been any problems arising from divided loyalties.

Another factor which seems to have forestalled conflict between indigenous and introduced organisations is that the new did not compete with the old organisations for time and for particular activities. The new organisations were able to perform their activities which were different from those performed by existing organisations at different times. In a certain sense, the new organisations complemented rather than competed with existing ones.

It would appear, therefore, that in a situation where, on the one hand, indigenous organisations are transitory and where, on the other hand, introduced organisations are non-competitive the two can exist side by side without conflict arising. The implication is that one of the key tasks of the learning process should be to determine how permanent or transitory indigenous organisations are and how competitive or

complementary introduced organisations are likely to be.

7.6.2 Leadership vs discussion model of group formation

The issue was raised in Chapter 3, that as part of the learning process the change agents should assess the extent to which the different segments of the local leadership can help to promote participation in local organisations. It was suggested that the group organiser should then try to work through congenial elites to encourage local participation.

In the Thabana-Morena area the following types of local leaders were identifiable : traditional leaders (i.e., chiefs and their advisors), members of village development councils, teachers, priests and other senior church officials, small businessmen and leading farmers. Except for traditional leaders and members of VDCs, the Project did not actively seek to involve local leaders in promoting participation.

However, there was also no indication that any category of the local elites or individual members thereof sought to stifle participation in the SHGs. The reason appears to be that these action groups did not pose any threat to the interests of any of the groups of local elites. The lesson to be drawn from this situation is that if emerging organisations do not threaten the interests of the local elites they will not necessarily interfere with these organisations.

The involvement of chiefs and members of VDCs was also restricted to their official duties. For example, they allocated the land where some group activities took place and they intervened to settle

disputes such as in the few cases where thieves broke into the poultry houses. They were, however, not involved in action groups by providing moral support and encouraging participants in their work. Indeed it was demonstrated in Chapter 6 that the Project failed to capitalise on the contribution which VDCs stood to make towards developing a local leadership core which might be used to stimulate participatory development.

In Chapter 3, I referred to the distinction which Verhagen (1986) makes between the "leadership model" and the "discussion model" of group formation. In the former, change agents specifically try to identify people among the rural poor who can be groomed into a leadership cadre. Their level of consciousness is raised (i.e., their understanding of issues and problems facing them is deepened) so that they can in turn help to raise the awareness of fellow group members, and to defend the group from possible assault by the elite.

No specific attempt was made to build the poultry groups along the "leadership model". It should, however, be pointed out that care is needed in implementing this model. The aim should not be to train expert managers of group affairs as this could lead to a dependency syndrome (Galjart 1981) or the creation of an elite faction bent on serving its own interests (Constantino-David 1982). The role of this cadre should be to help conscientise the group while at the same time allowing all members to take part in managing group affairs. This position is in line with the argument made in sub-section 7.2.2.4 that as part of the goal of developing their human potential all members of an action group should have a fair share in administering its affairs.

The "discussion model", as indicated, emphasises greater membership interaction to build group solidarity and to raise the level of awareness of group members. In comparison to the "leadership model", the "discussion model" poses less danger to promoting elitism in the groups. On the other hand, in the "discussion model" the change agent does not have the benefit of having additional people (assistants, so to say) to help him in the process of conscientising the group.

I pointed out in sub-section 7.4.1 that the level of interaction among the group members as reflected by the paucity of meetings was very low. This means that group organisers did not follow the "discussion model" of group formation either. The conclusion which one draws is that no specific strategy was followed to spur the SHGs into action. Congenial elite leaders were not sought, leadership cadres were not developed within the groups and intense discussions were not stimulated as methods of encouraging deeper membership involvement in groups.

It should be noted, however, that these strategies are not mutually exclusive and that the best approach probably lies in trying to integrate them.

7.6.3 Government and participation in SHGs

The argument presented in Chapter 3 was that for participation to succeed the government must have a genuine commitment to it. It must see participation as a process leading to power-sharing with the local people in matters which affect their lives (Johnston 1982: 204). In a study of a "successful strategy" of involving local communities

in the planning and implementation of food aid programmes in Ghana, Brathwaite and Hodge (1987: 46) observed that in that instance participation was seen as a basis for collaboration and partnership between local participants and the government.

It should be remembered that from a reformist perspective (which this study adopts) I noted that participation is not intended to edge the government out of the process of local development but to accommodate local people (who have previously been excluded) as equal partners in the process. Against this background I went on to show in Chapter 5 that in Lesotho participation has not been seen as a process of empowering local people but as an instrument of social control. I argued that this indicated that no genuine commitment to participation existed in Lesotho. Under the BNP government I pointed out that local organisations such as VDCs were used to achieve political control over the people.

When the military seized power in 1986 the VDCs which, as noted in Chapter 4, were regarded to be the most important structures for village level participation were subjected to the domination of chiefs. Order No. 9 of 1986 and its successor Order No. 18 of 1991 placed chiefs in the chairmanship of village, ward and district development councils regardless of whether or not in a particular situation people would have preferred a different person in that position.

This means that the military government substituted the domination of political functionaries over what was seen to be the most important local participatory organisations (i.e., VDCs) with the domination of the traditional leadership. Stiefel and Wolfe (1994: 28)

argue that this imposition of "traditional" structures over the local people has been used by authoritarian governments as a way of:

... legitimising their rule and allowing for controlled expression of popular sentiments while eliminating autonomous channels of organisation and representation.

Thus, under military rule in Lesotho participation continued to be seen as a form of political control, which shows that there was still no commitment to it. Participation was rather seen from a technocratic standpoint where political and government functionaries dictated the tone and complexion of the participatory process.

This is the climate in which the SHGs of the Project developed - in which there was no genuine commitment to the empowerment of local communities. The influence of this broader political environment cannot be ignored in looking at the failure of the Project to promote effective participation in SHGs. Cohen and Uphoff (1977) have underlined the significance of a conducive political environment for the promotion of local level participation. More recently Fisher (1994) has noted the significance of the democratic political trends taking place in the Third World in facilitating participation. I also demonstrated in Chapter 6 that even the relative autonomy of development projects does not offer protection against the effects of an unfavourable political environment on participation.

The failure of the SHGs to become instruments of empowerment for the local people should therefore be seen also against the background of the lack of a clear commitment to participation on the part of the Lesotho government. In the next section, I discuss the specific role

of the group animators in facilitating local capacity building through the action groups.

7.7 CHANGE AGENTS IN THE PROJECT

7.7.1 Conscientisation of local communities

I argued in Chapter 3 that change agents play a pivotal role in stimulating local community participation. I further suggested that participation is essentially a process of empowerment and that for its own part empowerment, as seen from the reformist perspective, is mainly a pedagogic process through which the local people acquire skills and knowledge which enhance their capacity to deal with local problems.

The starting point of the process of empowerment is the conscientisation of the local communities. In their examination of the Bhoomi Senna Movement referred to earlier in this chapter, de Silva et al (1979: 56-57) observe that conscientisation entails the deepening of the awareness of local people of all the forces which shape their lives (economic, social and otherwise), as well as the development of their capacity to transform these forces. In other words, not only should the local people have a clear understanding of the causes of their problems they must also acquire the capacity to deal with these causes as well as develop the confidence to use that capacity.

It has already been noted in this chapter that members of SHGs had a very limited understanding of the political and economic realities which impacted on their group activities especially in so far as these

factors affected the marketing of their produce. As indicated in Chapter 3, it is the duty of the group organiser to provide relevant information which is not readily available to the local people in order to increase their awareness of the factors affecting their lives. The inability of members of SHGs to grasp issues beyond the local level which affected their activities was indicative of the failure of the group organisers to play the role of providers of information.

In the study referred to above, de Silva et al also note that conscientisation arises out of systematic collective reflection which deepens the group's awareness of pertinent issues, and that change agents ought to facilitate the establishment of forums in which such collective reflection can take place. However, the group organisers in this Project did not perform this task satisfactorily. I pointed out in sub-section 7.4.1 that the groups hardly met to discuss their problems and to review their performance except on the day of the week when they brought eggs together to be sent to the market.

This was also the day on which the group organisers met their groups. Otherwise no systematically planned contact took place between the organisers and their groups. Any other contact was on a very *ad hoc* basis. This situation points to the failure of the group organisers to facilitate collective reflection by members of SHGs as a way of deepening their awareness of issues affecting their activities.

It should be noted that the twin goals of empowerment and capacity building, which emanate from the pedagogic process of conscientisation, are only steps towards the attainment of human development. I indicated in Chapter 1 that the primary motivation for

people's participation is the achievement of people-centred development. Thus the inability of the change agents to promote awareness among members of SHGs underscores their inability to appreciate this broader goal of human development. This means that the group organisers did not have a clear understanding of the nature of people's participation.

In his interpretation of community empowerment as "that process of learning how to fish" Thomas (1985: 19-20) suggests that empowering the poor cannot be achieved if they do not believe in their own capabilities. This view is similar to the one attributed to de Silva et al (1979) earlier in this sub-section in which they say that conscientisation implies not only a deepening of understanding of issues which affect their lives but also an increase in the capacity and the confidence of the local people to deal with their problems. Thomas (1985) refers to this as the psychological aspect of empowerment. The skills and knowledge acquired by the people instil in them the confidence to rely on their own abilities.

In the SHGs there was a lot of uncertainty among members regarding their ability to carry out their activities without the support of the Project. This situation seemed to arise from the fact that instead of assisting the beneficiaries to acquire the skills and knowledge to become self-reliant a relationship of dependence on the organisers and the Project was created and perpetuated. The next sub-section addresses this relationship.

7.7.2 Dependence on group organisers and project

In Chapter 3 and earlier in this chapter I pointed out that organisations formed by outside agencies are not necessarily in conflict with the principles of the participatory approach if appropriate steps are taken to help the organisations stand on their own. It was emphasised that the agency should gradually withdraw its support while at the same time training the local people to take over and manage their own affairs. Furthermore, I demonstrated in Chapter 6 that projects are by nature experimental. Therefore, beneficiaries should be made ready to face life outside the controlled conditions of the project.

In the Project the task of training beneficiaries to do things for themselves was relegated to the background. As pointed out in Chapter 6, at the end of Phase II of the Project it was still felt that a further phase was necessary. In addition to linking activities of VDCs and SHGs to normal government programmes the terminal report indicated that this phase would be used to help the groups to become self-reliant. In three key areas - ordering of chickens, procurement of feed and the delivery of eggs to the market - the poultry groups still depended on the Project, and group organisers acted as the intermediaries between the groups and the Project headquarters about 30 kilometres away in town.

When ordering chickens groups gave money to their group organisers who in turn took the money to the project headquarters from where orders would be made and arrangements made for the chickens to be delivered to the project site. The same procedure was followed when chicken feed was ordered. The Project also supplied the vehicle for the weekly delivery of eggs to the market by the groups. At first this

service was free of charge. Towards the end of the Project groups were required to pay a nominal charge of between M12-00 and M20-00 weekly for this service, depending on the distance from a particular village to town.

In my interviews I established that beneficiaries were unhappy about the fact that they now had to pay for transport. They pointed out that since the Project was there to help them as poor people it ought to continue to provide free transport. This attitude was indicative of the relationship of dependence which had been created between the Project and the local people. In a study based in the U.S.A., Russell-Erich and Rivera (1987: 8) have indicated that in the context of empowering local people "community organisation must always see its role as a temporary one" and that professional organisers must "from the earliest possible time" start preparing local people to take over the responsibility for the long-term development of their area.

Two things appear to be missing in the Project. First of all no bureaucratic reorientation appears to have taken place. I pointed out in Chapter 3 that bureaucrats ought to change their attitudes towards the local people and start accepting that the latter are capable of doing things for themselves. Secondly, project officials seemed to lack an appreciation of the fact that development projects are experiments and, therefore, that they (officials) ought to get beneficiaries ready to live their lives outside the experiment. In my interview with the project manager I asked him how long they intended to maintain a presence in the project area. His reply was that as long as the local people needed their services they would continue to provide them. This response indicated that project officials saw their role in terms of delivering services and not in terms

of helping beneficiaries to stand on their own. This attitude appears to have contributed to the failure of the Project to train beneficiaries to do things for themselves from the beginning. In the next subsection, I look at how the training of the group organisers affected their performance.

7.7.3 Training of group organisers

7.7.3.1 *Formal training*

The point was made in Chapter 3 that although emphasis should be placed on action-oriented training in the field, community workers also need to have some formal training. It was suggested that this form of training provides the theoretical and analytical tools for understanding problems of local people. The lack of formal training among the field workers of the ministry responsible for rural development in Lesotho was alluded to in Chapter 5. The same applied to the group organisers in the Project.

Some of the group organisers were seconded to the Project from the Ministry of Rural Development while others joined the Project directly. But all of them only had high school education, without any specialised training related to community organising. Of the six group organisers in the Project at the time of the study only one had received certificated training, in the running of cooperatives, since joining the Project. This person was subsequently promoted to the position of senior group organiser and transferred to project headquarters leaving five organisers in the field. Staff at headquarters were given first preference in attending certificated courses and non-certificated short courses outside the country in

spite of the fact that they were already better qualified than group organisers.

Gow and van Sant (1985: 111) see the poor training of development field staff as part of the problem of "bureaucratic resistance" to participation initiatives at the local level, because poorly trained field workers will not be effective in facilitating community participation. I pointed out in Chapter 3 that bureaucratic reorientation requires that bureaucracies should give priority to the interests of local communities and stop being self-serving. Giving preference to better educated headquarters staff over poorly educated group organisers in training was a clear reflection a self-serving bureaucracy.

Thomas (1985: 23) equally posits that the enhancement of the capacity of lower level bureaucrats to respond positively to the needs of their clients is influenced by the level of incentives offered to them. The argument made in Chapter 3 was that training is an incentive to junior level bureaucrats such as field workers since it opens up opportunities for them to advance in their careers and enables them to earn more. Lack of training is therefore a disincentive.

Indeed a lack of motivation was evident among the group organisers. They were neither zealous in maintaining records pertaining to their work, as pointed out in Chapter 6, nor were they punctual in attending to their official duties. It has also been pointed out in this chapter that there was no dedication on their part in facilitating regular meetings among members of SHGs. It would appear that at least in part this lack of motivation on the part of the group organisers can be attributed to the absence of training opportunities, because all

of them expressed their frustration at not being able to further their studies.

7.7.3.2 *Village-based training*

Conditions were also not created to encourage group organisers to learn from their experiences in the villages. It was argued in Chapter 3 that learning through experience surpasses formal training in certain respects. It is geared towards solving the problems which the field officer encounters on a daily basis. To this end regular meetings should be arranged in which field workers reflect upon their work. By enabling village level workers to bring up particular issues and problems and to seek solutions to them through discussion, village-based training in fact allows the field workers to determine the content of their own learning or to structure their own learning programmes, so to say. In this situation, the main task of trainers is to facilitate the establishment of these forums, and not to impart knowledge.

In their study of the training of village workers in Thailand, Martwanna and Chamala (1991: 45) relate the significance of the freedom which field officers have in choosing what to learn in village-based learning to the growing fascination with democracy in the Third World. What is perhaps more important is the observation made by Martwanna and Chamala, as well as Aubel et al (1991) in their study of group promoters in Ecuador, that encouraging field workers to learn through self-education in the village has the advantage of teaching them to deal with the local people in the same way, and to help them to learn through their own experiences - thus extending the democratic treatment accorded to them to the local communities.

Earlier in this chapter, I indicated that group organisers failed to create conditions for members of SHGs to learn from their experiences by not facilitating interaction among them. This failure is probably related to the fact that conditions were not created for the group organisers themselves to learn that way and, therefore, they did not appreciate the significance of learning from experience.

On the other hand, associating the ability of the local people to choose the content of their knowledge with the calls for democracy in the Third World directs attention to the basic premise of this thesis that participatory development is essentially about democracy and empowerment and that these goals find expression through local organisations. The acquisition of skills and knowledge, in local organisations relates to the aspect of empowerment and the freedom of members of the group to determine the content of their knowledge through self-education brings in the element of democracy.

Now and then the group organisers attended workshops in different training centres in the country, but these had two main problems. Firstly the workshops tended to emphasise technical as against organisational aspects of their work. Lack of organisational prowess had a direct bearing on the inability of group organisers to act as effective facilitators of participation in the SHGs. Secondly, there tended to be insufficient follow-up on training given in the workshops, to see how well the group organisers used their newly acquired knowledge and what problems they encountered in doing so.

For example one of the group organisers indicated that in January 1994 she attended a two week workshop on "Social forestry" in which the focus was on encouraging local people to grow forest trees

and to teach them how to take care of the trees. At the time of our discussion in July 1994 no one had come to see how far she had gone or what problems she was encountering. In fact she had not started doing anything about it. In his study of the training of rural development personnel in The Gambia, Fiah (1987: 329) noted that the effectiveness of training is closely related to the supervision and support which the field workers receive. This point was also made in Chapter 3.

7.8 CONCLUSION

The inability of the Project to create conditions for effective participation to take place was related to its departure from the basic principles of the learning process approach. In particular, the omission of the initial period of contact making made it difficult for officials to establish rapport with the local people, who did not develop trust in them. Officials also failed to communicate the objectives of the Project properly. The result was that beneficiaries saw the Project as a source of handouts; and instead of learning to become self-reliant, they became perpetually dependent on outside help. This means that a sense of responsibility was never seriously encouraged among the local people.

Another serious shortcoming was that beneficiary participation in SHGs did not become a learning experience. Although the level of acquisition of technical skills among the beneficiaries was satisfactory, their acquisition of organizational and administrative skills was poor; and this contributed to their inability to develop problem solving skills. Consequently, problems such as free riding overwhelmed the groups.

This failure of beneficiary participation to become a learning experience was related to the failure of the group organisers to play an effective role as consciousness raising agents. They failed to create forums in which a regular exchange of ideas among group members could take place, and they failed to provide relevant information which was not readily available to the local people; particularly information relating to the economic and political conditions affecting the marketing of their eggs.

Although the small size of SHGs and their informal character made it difficult for elitist tendencies to emerge (by contributing to openness in the running of group affairs); the groups' departure from the principles of democratic participation (which led to the tendency of the groups to reserve key organisational positions for certain individuals) still posed the danger of encouraging elitism.

The next chapter ties together issues raised in this study, draws conclusions and recommends some lines of action to be taken to facilitate a genuinely participatory type of development.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 SUMMARY

In Chapter 1, the problem which formed the basis of this study was presented. I noted that development is now seen primarily in terms of the enhancement of human potential; and that people's participation, which takes place through community based organisations, is the strategy for achieving this form of development. The challenge, therefore, was seen to be how to create conditions which are conducive to participatory development. In the light of this problem, the following five objectives were formulated for the study:

- (1) to determine the appropriateness of the organisations established through the Project for the promotion of community participation;
- (2) to examine the political-administrative factors which influenced participation in these organisations;
- (3) to identify factors at the village level which affected participation in the Project;
- (4) to determine the effectiveness of the Project in experimenting with participatory techniques; given the fact that development projects are, essentially, testing grounds for particular policies; and
- (5) to develop a set of principles on which participatory rural development should be based in Lesotho.

Pursuant to these objectives, I went on in Chapter 2 to demonstrate how changes taking place in development theory affected rural development strategy, as a way of providing a theoretical and historical background to the study. It was noted that as development theory shifted emphasis from economic growth to normative issues, so did rural development strategies turn their focus towards people's participation and away from agricultural growth. The conclusion to which I arrived was that in spite of these changes, the failure of the three most commonly used participatory strategies (community development, the basic needs approach and integrated rural development) to promote effective rural development is related to their failure to address the problems which impede community participation.

In Chapter 3, factors at the national and local levels which affect rural participation were discussed. Local factors included the structure of the organisation (e.g., size and degree of formality) through which participation takes place; the type of activity in which the members of the organisation are engaged and the role played by the local elites in encouraging or discouraging participation. Supra-local factors related to the political and bureaucratic climate in which participation takes place. I then examined the contribution which can be made by NGOs in facilitating participatory development. The learning process approach was identified as the most effective way of institutionalising community participation; and the part played by development projects in the learning process was alluded to.

Having dealt with the theoretical exposition of the participatory strategy, I looked at the main elements of Lesotho's rural development policy in Chapter 4. It was pointed out that in keeping

with the changes taking place in development thinking, the primary focus of rural development in Lesotho shifted from agricultural growth to people's participation. Nevertheless, I observed that in practice rural development in Lesotho continued to be technocratic and geared towards the growth of the economy and infrastructure.

The discussion in Chapter 5 then turned to the institutional framework through which rural development was implemented in Lesotho. I determined that although the government of Lesotho abandoned political decentralisation in favour of administrative decentralisation soon after independence in 1966, this move did not explain its inability to facilitate participatory rural development. It was demonstrated that rural participation takes place through action groups at the village level and not through representative local government.

In Chapter 6, I reviewed the approach which was followed in the design and implementation of the Project. I discovered that the blueprint approach and not the learning process approach was used. It was found that even though the Project had been intended to be a testing ground for participatory procedures, its failure to yield replicable lessons in the institutionalisation of community participation was attributable to this use of the blueprint approach.

Against the background of the arguments developed in the preceding chapters, an analysis of the efforts made through the Project to encourage and support the formation of action groups was made, in Chapter 7. My observation was that the SHGs failed to become vehicles of genuine participatory development because they did not form a basis for empowerment and local capacity building for self

-sustaining development. Rather, the groups served to create and perpetuate dependence of the local people on outside agencies.

8.2 CONCLUSIONS

8.2.1 Conclusions relating to the first objective

The first objective of the study was to determine the appropriateness of the organisations through which the Project aimed to encourage community participation. My investigation established that the Project considered action groups composed of about 25 people in which members were involved in self-help activities to be the key feature of its participatory strategy.

These structures were appropriate because it has been demonstrated in this study that action groups are the instruments for bringing about people's participation. Action groups enable members to participate directly in the process of development by being party to the decisions which affect their lives and sharing in the benefits of development. Their small size facilitates interaction among members which in turn facilitates the pedagogic process of empowerment and capacity building through which the people acquire the knowledge and skills which enhance their human potential.

The suitability of these organisations for social development also derived from the fact that they were informal. They were not legally registered and they did not have strict rules and procedures for members to abide by. This informal character placed the SHGs in a position where they could have facilitated the democratic participation of all members in the management of group affairs. If any serious

thought had been given to the goal of human development, democratic participation of members would contribute to the acquisition of administrative and organisational skills by members.

But the objective of people-centred development was not seriously pursued in the Project. So, the character of action groups (i.e., their small size and their informality) does not ensure the success of people's participation. It only facilitates participatory development if serious steps are taken to promote it.

8.2.2 Conclusions relating to the second objective

The second objective of the study was to determine the political and administrative factors which impinged upon participatory development in the Project.

8.2.2.1 *Political factors*

Participation in Lesotho was not seen as a means of empowering local communities and building their capacity for development. This was demonstrated by the fact that those in power subjected development committees, which were regarded as the most important structures of participation, to the domination of political functionaries or chiefs. Thus, participation was used as a mechanism of political control, instead.

The significance of this occurrence is that it shows that the Project was implemented in a hostile political environment; and this underscores the government's lack of commitment to participatory development. Properly utilised, development committees should have

been viewed as a basis for grooming a sympathetic local leadership which would then encourage participation in action groups.

8.2.2.2 *Administrative factors*

The government of Lesotho did not have the administrative capacity to facilitate rural participation. It failed to fill district administration posts with properly qualified people even in cases where these were available, as demonstrated in Chapter 5. Rather, the government chose to appoint people to important positions purely on the basis of political considerations. This move illustrates the relationship between a government's lack of administrative capacity and its lack of political commitment to participatory development.

Furthermore, the government proved to be more committed to finding technical solutions to the problems of the rural people by striving to strengthen the administrative capacity of technical ministries at the expense of that of the ministry responsible for rural development. It provided more and better qualified staff to the Ministry of Agriculture, as pointed out, and generally gave it more resources than the ministry whose focus was on people's participation.

In addition to being a reflection of lack of commitment by the government to a people-centred form of development, this situation is also suggestive of lack of clarity on the part of the government regarding the objectives of participatory rural development. A clearer understanding of the issues involved would also help to steer the government away from technical solutions to more participatory approaches.

The failure of the government to strengthen its capacity to promote rural participation was reflected by the Project's failure to enhance its own capacity for village level action. As indicated, staff at project headquarters were given first preference over group organisers when it came to training opportunities despite the fact that the former were already better qualified than the latter. This tendency is a reflection of the bureaucratic nature of project implementing units, which serve their own interests and not those of the local people.

The lack of training affected the performance of group organisers in two main ways. Firstly, it made it difficult for them to appreciate the fact that the primary objective of people's participation is capacity building among group members and so their efforts were not firmly geared towards this goal. Secondly, lack of training opportunities acted as a disincentive among the group organisers who did not perform their duties with dedication and zeal. What is important to note is that the resultant lack of administrative capacity for village level action in the Project was only a reflection of a similar problem in the government. So, projects are only as good (or as bad) as the governments which implement them.

At the project level the lack of clarity about the nature of participatory development was also demonstrated by the failure to integrate a relief component in the group activities. The desperate nature of the conditions under which the poor live was not fully appreciated and that is why the need for a relief component was equally not appreciated. But this shortcoming is also related to the failure of the Project to follow the learning process approach. This approach makes it possible for developers to understand the situation in the rural areas

better, which in turn makes it possible for solutions to be made relevant to the problems.

8.2.3 Conclusions relating to the third objective

As its third objective, the study sought to identify factors at the village level which affected community participation in the Project. Although some forms of cooperation already existed in the area before the Project started (burial societies, "*stokvels*", rotating work groups and share-croppers) they did not interfere with the self-help groups introduced by the Project. This, as noted, was because these indigenous organisations were transitory and as such members were not strongly attached to them. Furthermore, the new organisations complemented rather than competed with the old ones.

What this means is that if existing organisations are permanent, in which case there would be a strong bond between their members, then the best approach would be to use these existing organisations as bases for the new forms of cooperation. But the new activity would still have to be complementary to the existing one and not compete with it, especially with regard to time; as it was the case between activities in the poultry groups and activities in the indigenous organisations.

Similarly, I indicated that the local elite did not oppose participation in the SHGs because this did not threaten any of their interests. Nevertheless, the Project also failed to use these community leaders to encourage participation in the action groups. Therefore, the failure of the SHGs in this Project to become bases for capacity building and

empowerment suggests that even though the local elite are unlikely to oppose participatory efforts which do not threaten their interests, it is still inadvisable to by-pass them in dealing with local communities. Because of the position of influence which they occupy in their communities, their active cooperation would have a positive impact on the participation of the disadvantaged.

8.2.4 Conclusions relating to the fourth objective

The fourth objective of this study was to determine the success or failure of the Project in providing replicable lessons in institutional development for rural participation. The picture which emerged was that although the Project had been expected to serve as an experimental station for participatory techniques this goal was not achieved. The main reason for this failure was found to be that a blueprint as opposed to a learning process approach was followed in designing and implementing this Project. The failure of the Project strengthens the contention that only the learning process approach can provide lessons in developing institutional arrangements for effective rural development (Korten 1980, 1984b; Rondinelli 1993).

This departure of the Project from the learning process approach was found to be attributable to the political interests of the government of Lesotho and the bureaucratic imperatives of the donor agency. The government wanted to have institutional structures such as development committees and cooperatives which served its political objectives without seriously considering how they would facilitate the process of participation. This further illustrates the government's lack of commitment to people's participation.

The donor agency itself wanted project design and implementation to conform to standard rules and procedures without considering how these impeded participatory development. An example is the situation where funds could not be disbursed in the absence of a Chief Technical Adviser who could not be a local person. This shows that the bureaucratic requirements of the donor agencies take precedence over the need for project success.

The setting of high targets for the Project was attributed to the government's political goal of trying to placate its constituencies and the donor agency's desire to please donors. But the mere fact of using economic and infrastructural targets to determine the success of the Project could also be seen as an indication that development practitioners do not fully appreciate the fact that the success of participatory development is measured by changes in human behaviour and institutional performance and not by economic and infrastructural growth. These changes would include, for example, the ability of the local people to understand factors at the national level which affect their group activities and their ability to face bureaucrats without feeling cowed.

8.2.5 Conclusions relating to the fifth objective

The fifth and last objective of this study was to develop a set of principles which can form the basis of participatory development in Lesotho. The failure of the Project to serve as a means of institutionalising rural community participation suggests the need for such a framework. These principles, which will be presented in sub-section 8.3.3, should serve as a guide to those involved in the promotion of rural participation.

8.2.6 Conclusion

There are indications that development practitioners are not fully conversant with the intricacies of community participation. This is a serious defect because unless developers clearly understand what community participation entails and what steps they need to take to make it happen, they cannot succeed in their efforts to bring it about. This means that this problem of lack of understanding needs to be overcome; and a suggestion is made in sub-section 8.3.3 as to how this might be achieved.

However, the failure of projects to facilitate participatory development seems to be mainly related to the lack of political commitment on the part of host governments, and the bureaucratic needs of donor agencies. The lack of political commitment on the part of the government negatively affects its ability to strengthen its administrative capacity. The administrative weaknesses of the government are then reflected by similar weaknesses in the project itself. This indicates that, contrary to Lele's (1975: 128) suggestion, the relative autonomy of development projects does not protect them against the effects of an unfavourable political environment.

This situation also points to the fact that the most significant factors affecting rural participation are external to the rural areas. These external factors influence internal factors. For example, the ability of local leaders to encourage participation is dependent on the ability of the group organisers to make use of them, which in turn depends on the training and support which the government gives to the group animators.

On the other hand, I noted that donor agencies also have their bureaucratic requirements to fulfil. Firstly, there is the need for self-preservation. To fulfil this objective, donor agencies try to impress donors by designing projects which create the impression that they (the agencies) use money wisely and profitably. The second requirement is that projects have to conform to standardised rules and procedures, although the situation on the ground is typically unpredictable and variable.

This behaviour of donor agencies has a negative influence on the field workers of these organisations. They also try to demonstrate their competence by attempting to reach the unrealistic targets prescribed for the project, in the process relegating the basic principles of participatory development to the background.

Therefore, the findings of this study support Rondinelli's (1993) observation that project characteristics merely reflect compromises between the concerns of the host government and those of the donor agency which, nevertheless, have very little relevance to the needs of the intended beneficiaries.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.3.1 Recommendations pertaining to the role of government

The government of Lesotho has to take the following steps to facilitate participatory rural development in the country:

- (a) The government should treat participatory structures as instruments of empowerment, and not as mechanisms of

political control. To this end the government should respect the autonomy of these structures, and not impose either political functionaries or traditional leaders on them.

- (b) The government should provide the necessary support to the ministry responsible for rural development. Within the means available, this ministry should be given a fair share of national resources.
- (c) The government should provide adequate pre-service training to rural development field workers. An appropriate course at the post-secondary school level should be identified (or developed) in the country. Alternatively, a course should be identified in any Southern African (or African) country which community workers must complete before they start their service. But this course should also address the needs of people who are already in the service. If they do not have the basic entrance qualifications, their experience should count in their favour. The significance of having the course in Lesotho or in neighbouring countries is that it is likely to be more relevant, and cheaper, than if it was done elsewhere. In addition to providing community workers with the necessary analytical tools, this training will serve as a motivating factor to them.
- (d) Adequate support and in-service training should be given to field workers. In-service training should be village-based, interactive and geared towards solving real problems.
- (e) The working and living conditions of rural development field staff should be brought up to the level of extension workers in other ministries. This improvement will be an incentive to these workers.

- (f) The government must strengthen coordination between the different ministries at the district level. There are two ways in which this objective can be facilitated. Firstly, the government should post senior and properly qualified people in the districts who can take decisions without always having to refer to the centre. Secondly, the head of the administration in the district should also be given sufficient powers over district departments. This situation will enhance the administrative capacity of the government to promote rural participation because the problems of the district will be handled by people in the district who are more in touch with them.

8.3.2 Recommendations pertaining to donor agency role

To be able to facilitate a more authentic form of participatory development, donor agencies need to heed the following points:

- (a) Donor agencies must have long-term funding arrangements with host governments. This will facilitate the implementation of projects with long-term horizons.
- (b) Donor agencies must be flexible in their approach to the problems of developing countries, and not apply standardised rules and procedures indiscriminately. This will make it easier for them to deal with problems peculiar to specific situations.
- (c) Assistance agencies must focus their attention on what needs to be done to help the poor people in the Third World, and stop trying to impress donors. They must set realistic targets for projects and they must be honest about their achievements. If they cannot achieve their targets they must also be honest about it. They must treat failure as a source of information for

future improvement and not as a sign of incompetence.

- (d) Donor agencies must determine the success of projects aimed at promoting participatory development on the basis of observable changes in human behaviour and not on the basis of measurable economic and infrastructural growth.
- (e) Donor agencies must gear their incentive structures towards encouraging their field staff to emphasise the role played by local communities in an assistance programme, and not their own role. That way their efforts will be directed towards building local capacity for self-sustaining development. For example, field workers should be rewarded for using simple technologies which facilitate the direct participation of the local people in decision making and implementation. Staff must be discouraged from using sophisticated methods because in this case they will be the key players since the local people will often not be competent to deal with such technologies.

8.3.3 Recommendations pertaining to proposed set of guidelines

The following principles should form the basis of a more participatory form of development:

- (a) Participation should be seen as a strategy for human development. Only if participation is understood in this manner can the success of projects intended to facilitate this process be determined on the basis of changes in human behaviour and institutional performance, and not on the basis of economic and infrastructural growth.

- (b) Action groups should form the basis of community participation. This approach is significant because it demonstrates an appreciation of the fact that although the recent trends towards political democracy in Africa create the necessary conditions for people's participation (Chikulo 1993; Wallis 1992), political participation is not synonymous with developmental participation. If this distinction is not clearly understood there is a danger that just as economic growth has failed to bring development to the poor, political democracy will equally fail to bring the benefits of development to this group. The result is that development theory will continue to be littered with a never ending succession of fads.
- (c) The learning process approach should form the basis of efforts aimed at institutionalising community participation. The use of the learning process approach will encourage the government as well as donor agencies to give enough time to projects because this method necessarily implies a long-term perspective. This approach will also facilitate the accumulation of knowledge which is needed to match programme outputs with local needs. Furthermore, the learning process will facilitate people's participation because it calls for interaction between agency personnel and the local people. Action research will also obviate the need for faked reports because the process of action and reflection involved in it enables participants to correct their mistakes and improve their performance as they go along.
- (d) In the context of the learning process approach, development projects should be treated as "policy experiments". Their significance should be seen to lie in making it possible for attention to be directed at certain priority problems with a view

to learning how to deal with them effectively. This approach to projects will help to gear efforts towards preparing project beneficiaries to live their lives outside the experiment. So, emphasis will be placed on fighting dependence while encouraging self-reliance among the local people.

- (e) The values enshrined in the principle of bureaucratic reorientation should be upheld by both the government and donor agencies. This means that, in the first place, the interests of the underprivileged people should be regarded as paramount. This will help to ensure that the administrative procedures of the government bureaucracy as well as donor agencies have the flexibility to respond to problems and needs in different conditions.
- (f) There should be close collaboration between the government, donor agencies, NGOs as well as universities and research institutes in the implementation of development projects and programmes. With their success in implementing participatory projects, NGOs will provide the experience required by governments and donor agencies. Because of their less bureaucratic management NGOs can also be used by governments and donor agencies to channel funds to local communities. This arrangement will help to overcome the delays which are often experienced in projects implemented by official agencies due to red tape. Universities and research institutes should be a source of ideas which will infuse clarity of understanding of the problems of the rural people and of the nature of people's participation. As pointed out, available evidence indicates that this understanding is lacking. Academics and researchers would thus be in a position to impress upon development practitioners, especially in

government, the need to change from basing their interventions on outmoded theories which define development in terms of economic growth, and focus attention on human development. This collaboration between academics and practitioners would therefore help to overcome the problem which Chambers (1983:29) sees as the "divide among rural development outsiders between those who analyse and those who act " or which Spiegel (1979) sees as the separation of theory from practice in community development. Frantz (1987) gives an example of a situation in Brazil where cooperation between a university, an NGO and the government contributed to the success of participatory development. To facilitate joint action, the government will have to coordinate the efforts of the different role players, including local communities. This is where the adhocratic style of management discussed in Chapter 3 comes in. Government officials will need to bring knowledgeable people from different institutions together who will form task groups for dealing with particular problems. The ability of the government to tap expertise from different sources will also alleviate its problem of shortage of qualified people, thereby enhancing its administrative capacity.

- (g) The reformist approach should form the basis of rural development, because it fosters cooperation and not confrontation between the different actors. What is important is that this approach will allay the fears of the government about the possible challenge to its authority from autonomous community based organisations. This will strengthen its

commitment to community participation; so that it views participation as a way of empowering local communities to participate effectively in development, and not as a mechanism for quelling impending dissent.¹

8.3.4 Recommendations for further research

The following areas appear to be still in need of further research as a way of contributing towards a deeper understanding of the requirements of participatory rural development in Lesotho.

- (a) Research is needed to establish the specific ways in which the participation of women in rural development is inhibited, and how these hindrances can be overcome.
- (b) Research is needed to thoroughly determine the limitations of the marketing policy for commodities produced in the rural areas, and to make recommendations for its improvement.
- (c) Research is needed to determine the weaknesses of the existing credit policy for rural areas, and how it affects the rural poor; so that appropriate recommendations can be made to correct its weaknesses.

1 It was pointed out in Chapter 1 that the researcher chose to develop a set of guiding principles rather than a model to facilitate people's participation in Lesotho. A model would entail a specification of structures and an analysis of how these structures would typically relate to one another. Nevertheless, if the institutional structure changed the model would not be useful in facilitating people's participation. The study was based on a situation in which people's participation was fostered through deconcentrated administrative structures. But my interview with the Deputy Principal Secretary (Ministry of Local Government) established that the new government of the BCP was already moving towards representative local government, although its precise nature was yet unknown. Under these circumstances, the researcher decided that, because of its adaptability, a set of principles would be more useful than a detailed model.

- (d) Research is also needed to look into the relevance of the education system for participatory development. Such a study would then suggest ways of making education in Lesotho more relevant to the needs of the majority of the people, who are rural dwellers.

8.4 CONCLUSION

The dreariness of the lives of the poverty-stricken majority of rural dwellers in the Third World is not in doubt; but so is their ability to contribute towards solving their own problems. Yet without the willingness of those who are not so poor to collaborate in facilitating change, the end of the misery in the countryside is not in sight. It can only be hoped that with each additional call for a commitment to be made, the ideal of a truly participatory form of development becomes more and more achievable.

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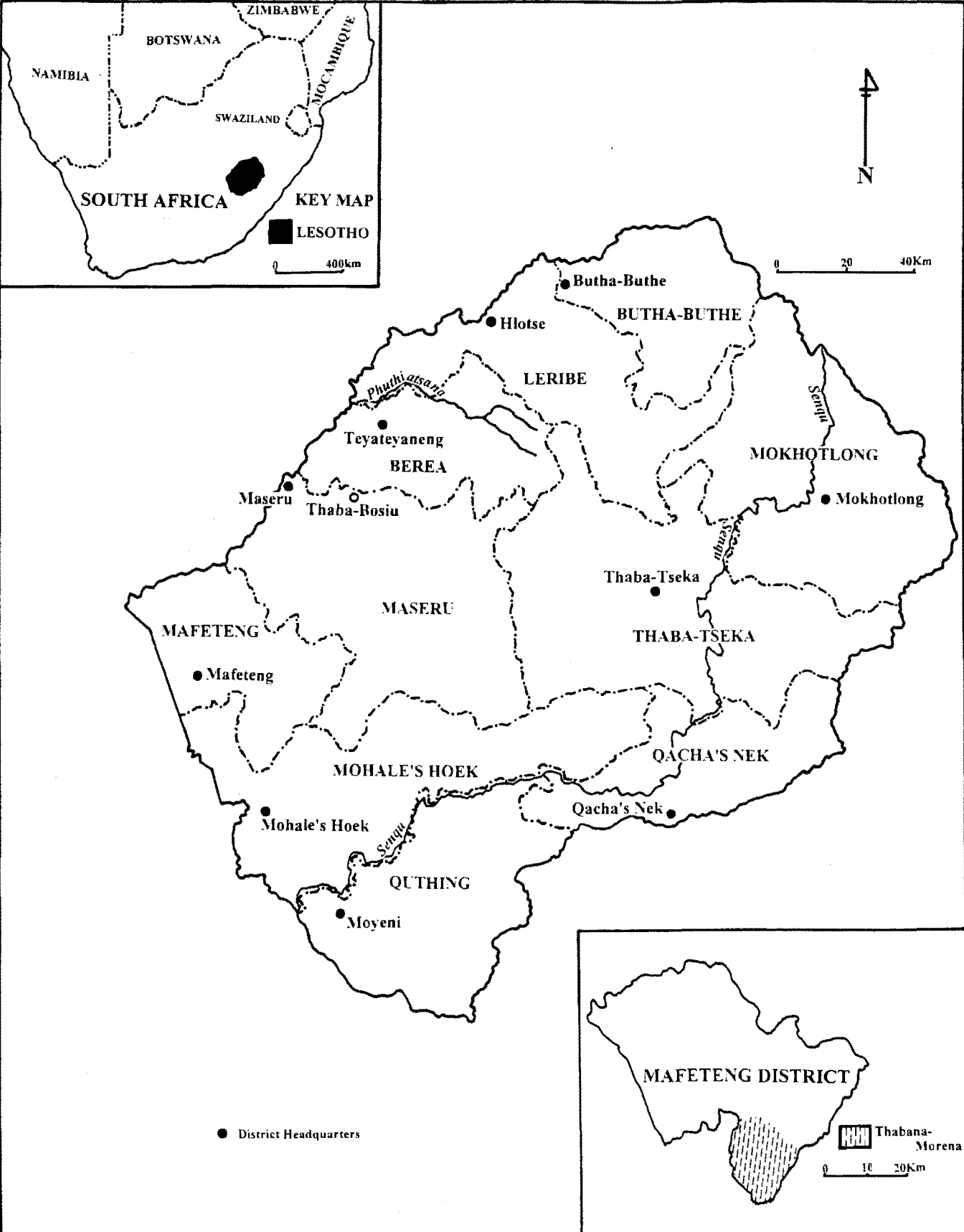
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APPENDIX I

THE STUDY AREA



APPENDIX II-A**PROJECT BENEFICIARIES INTERVIEWED**

NAME	PLACE	DATE
Mrs 'Masechaba Lebete	Konote	22/12/93
Mrs 'Malebohang Letlala	Konote	22/12/93
Mrs 'Mamamello Letlala	Konote	22/12/93
Mrs 'Mapakiso Makoa	Konote	23/12/93
Mrs 'Mataelo Morienyane	Konote	23/12/93
Mrs 'Mamotlatsi Nthaha	Konote	23/12/93
Mrs 'Makhang Ntsinyi	Konote	27/12/93
Mrs 'Mathulo Ntsinyi	Konote	27/12/93
Mrs 'Mankhethe Hlalele	Lekoatsa	27/12/93
Mrs 'Mamorero Kali	Lekoatsa	27/12/93
Mrs 'Masechaba Khomane	Lekoatsa	28/12/93
Mrs 'Mamoteka Moepo	Lekoatsa	28/12/93
Mrs 'Mamotjotji Moepo	Lekoatsa	28/12/93
Mrs 'Mantsane Sechaba	Lekoatsa	29/12/93
Mrs 'Mathabang Tebele	Lekoatsa	29/12/93
Mrs 'Mamookho Makhetha	Makhetheng	29/12/93
Mrs 'Matlali Makhetha	Makhetheng	29/12/93
Mrs 'Mamohano Matsaba	Makhetheng	30/12/93
Mrs 'Mankoateleng Phalo	Makhetheng	30/12/93
Mrs 'Mamolupe Rampasana	Makhetheng	30/12/93
Mrs 'Mamoleboheng Thebe	Makhetheng	30/12/93
Mrs 'Mahlompho Manyatsa	Makoabating	3/1/94
Mrs 'Mampolokeng Manyatsa	Makoabating	3/1/94
Mrs 'Malerato Maphobole	Makoabating	3/1/94
Mrs 'Mathabang Maphobole	Makoabating	3/1/94

Mrs 'Maphuthang Matona	Makoabating	4/1/94
Mrs 'Matebeli Monyatsi	Mokoabating	4/1/94
Mr Masilo Seboea	Makoabating	4/1/94
Mrs 'Masello Sello	Makoabating	4/1/94
Mrs 'Mammuso Kotelo	'Ngoae	11/1/94
Mrs 'Mankonelo Kotelo	'Ngoae	11/1/94
Mrs 'Maseboka Kotelo	'Ngoae	11/1/94
Mrs 'Malefa Maki	'Ngoae	12/1/94
Mrs 'Mamohau Maki	'Ngoae	12/1/94
Mrs 'Mathabiso Mococo	'Ngoae	12/1/94
Mrs 'Manapo Moeketsi	'Ngoae	13/1/94
Mrs 'Mamojabeng Mputsoe	'Ngoae	13/1/94
Mrs 'Makhotso 'Ngoae	'Ngoae	13/1/94
Mrs 'Mamochai 'Ngoae	'Ngoae	14/1/94
Mrs 'Mathabang 'Ngoae	'Ngoae	14/1/94
Mrs 'Mamokoenehi Ramahlele	'Ngoae	14/1/94

APPENDIX II - B**OTHER PERSONS INTERVIEWED**

NAME	POSITION	PLACE	DATE
Mr L.A. Putsoa	Director- Chieftainship and Rural Development	Maseru	15/7/93 8/7/94
Mrs C.M. Mosae	Director-Field Services, home Affairs	Maseru	14/7/94 23/6/95
Mr T. Thulo	Rural Development Co-ordinator	Maseru	16/7/93
Mr L. Lekoatsa	District Rural Development Officer- Mafeteng	Mafeteng	21/7/93
Ms. P. Leboela	Deputy Principal Secretary - Local Government	Maseru	13/7/94
Mrs M. Mokhatla	Chief Rural Development Officer	Maseru	26/7/93
Mrs L. Lefosa	Economic Planner - Ministry of Planning	Maseru	13/7/94
Mr Dictus	Assistant Resident Representative - UNDP	Maseru	14/12/93
Mrs M. Mohapi	Senior Rural Development Assistant - Tebang Ward	Mafeteng	22/7/93

Mr Gilmozzi	Programme Officer - FAO	Maseru	14/12/93
Mr Ramoholi	Project Agricultural Officer	Mafeteng	17/1/94
Mr L. Mabatla	Chairperson - TMMPCS	Thabana-Morena	12/7/94
Mr T. Mahapang	Project Planner	Mafeteng	23/7/93 21/6/95
Ms M. Ralethola	Poultry Specialist - Department of Agriculture, Mafeteng	Mafeteng	20/1/94
Mr A. Ramothamo	Sales Manager- Lesotho Farm Feed Mills	Maseru	7/7/94
Mrs M. Ramakotjo	Chairperson - Mafeteng Poultry Co- operative	Mafeteng	18/1/94
Mr S. Ntene	Project Manager	Mafeteng	20/7/93 12/7/94
Mr T. Mohlomi	Group Organiser	Thabana-Morena	27/7/93 22/6/95
Mrs M. Phatela	Group Organiser	Thabana-Morena	28/7/93
Mrs N. Makhosane	Senior Group Organiser	Mafeteng	21/7/93 14/7/94
Mrs N. Marake	Group Organiser	Thabana-Morena	28/12/93
Mrs M. Jonkomane	Group Organiser	Thabana-Morena	22/6/95
Mrs L. Rafiri	Group Organiser	Thabana-Morena	23/7/93 22/6/95
Chief T.G. Moshoeshoe	Chief	Makoabating (Thabana-Morena)	28/7/93
Chief T. Lekoatsa	Chief	Lekoatsa (Thabana-Morena)	29/7/93

Mrs S. Mahao	Member-Village Development Council	Leuta (Thabana-Morena)	28/7/93
Mr R. Ngoae	Member-Ward Development Council	'Ngoae (Thabana-Morena)	25/7/93
Mr M. Phaphathisa	Member-Village Development Council	Lekoatsa (Thabana-Morena)	28/7/93
Chief G. Sefali	Member- Mafeteng District Development Council	Maboloka	29/7/93
Mrs M. Mhlanga	Deputy Principal Secretary - Home Affairs	Maseru	30/7/93
Mrs M. Lengoasa	Head - Technical Services, Home Affairs	Maseru	26/7/93
Dr J. Gay	Consultant	Maseru	23/6/95