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# **Popular Participation in Rural Development**

**The New Zealand/Solomon Islands  
Customary Land Reforestation Project on Malaita**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Degree of Master of Philosophy**

**by**

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# ABSTRACT

This study explores the concept of popular participation in rural development with particular reference to the forestry sector and its role in poverty alleviation. It starts with the premise that popular participation is necessary to address poverty issues and that popular participation can be promoted through aid projects funded by bilateral aid donors and implemented through government bureaucracies. The case study of an aid-funded social forestry project in Solomon Islands highlights impediments to aid agency promotion of popular participation: different objectives from local people, a blueprint approach to project management, and lack of experience in community development, and identifies some of the difficulties of working with Third World bureaucracies: a top down approach to development, limited resources, inexperience, and a weak infrastructure. Nevertheless, it concludes that a participatory approach to project planning and implementation is possible.

“Forests, land and people in the Solomon Islands are inseparably linked together. The forests are a vital part of the country’s cultural heritage and contribute to the welfare and economic development of the people. The environment and ecological stability of the islands is conditioned by a protective covering of forest on the higher land, along rivers, coasts, and in many other sensitive areas. Our national survival depends on what we do with our forests.”

(SI Ministry of Natural Resources, 1989:5-6).

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

This thesis has two objectives: first to examine the concept of popular participation in rural development, particularly in the forestry sector and its role in poverty alleviation in the Third World<sup>1</sup> and second, to test the hypothesis that this can be promoted by foreign aid given by one government to another (called official or bilateral development assistance). The first objective is undertaken by way of a literature review, the second through analysis of a case study, namely a forestry project in Solomon Islands supported with financial and technical support by the New Zealand Government. Chapters 2 and 3 survey the literature on popular participation in rural development and in forestry respectively, leading to a definition of popular participation in forestry which provides a benchmark for later analysis. Chapter 4 details an analytical framework within which to examine the hypothesis above. Chapter 5 outlines the methodology used for the case study. Chapters 6 and 7 describe the case study context and dimensions of participation in it. Chapter 8 analyses the nature of participation in the project and explores the constraints and possibilities that emerge from such an analysis. Finally, Chapter 9 summarises what the study has covered and provides a short conclusion.

One reason for undertaking such a study is that the concept of popular participation is increasingly seen as an important (some would say necessary) component of development strategies if the alleviation of poverty in the Third World is to make any progress. Poverty alleviation is the *raison d'être* of many foreign development agencies and, for most government aid agencies, it is an important goal. Yet, experience in all parts of the Third World has shown that

popular participation in the context of aid projects is extremely difficult to put into practice. Popular participation is also an elusive concept to grasp because different people and agencies use it to mean different things, depending on their worldview, values or ideology. This study hopes to bring some clarity to the subject, to demonstrate that foreign aid agencies can promote popular participation in development and identify some of the major constraints in increasing popular participation in aid projects.

A number of terms must first be defined and discussed. For example, what is aid? and what is development?

There is much debate about the role aid plays and what development means in relation to socio-economic change in the Third World. This arises from the apparent failure of many policies and programmes to generate economic growth and overcome widespread poverty in many countries of the Third World. The focus of this study is on participation in rural development because the majority of the Third World's poor live in rural areas; much of development practice has sought to increase the well-being of rural dwellers and the potential productivity of the rural sector and its contribution to national income is very great. This is not to deny the significance of the millions of urban poor or development programmes and projects which have seek to address poverty issues in urban areas.

In the late 1970's, the World Bank (1978:7) estimated that nearly 800 million people, or about 40% of the population of developing nations lived in absolute poverty. A recent World Bank estimate (1990:24) puts that figure at over 1000 million, a 25% increase in the last decade. Much discussion about

development revolves around how to improve the standard of living and quality of life of a fifth of the world's population.

To give the term "development" a precise and unequivocal meaning is impossible because the concept embraces values, standards and goals which differ among individuals, groups and societies. However, it is necessary to define it in a way which is consistent with the underlying perspective of this study that people's participation is an important means by which development is achieved. The term is used in relation to Third World societies to mean various things. Interest in socio-economic change and development in the Third World has increased since the end of World War II, in part related to political realignments as countries gained political independence and as countries of the North sought to maintain or strengthen their influence over former colonies. Development was also stimulated by United Nations' organisations many of which emphasise improving the quality of life of the poor in Third World countries.

In the decade after the Second World War, development was seen primarily as an economic phenomenon measured by the rate of growth in per capita GNP. Development would be achieved through economic growth. As the national economies grew and per capita income increased, the benefits of that growth would trickle down to benefit the masses. The structural changes that were associated with this strategy included a growth in manufacturing, urbanisation and waged employment, with a consequent decline in importance of the primary sector. Such strategies gave limited significance to issues of poverty, unemployment or income distribution. Analysis of the results of the first United Nations' development decade (the 1960s) showed clearly that while in many countries per capita income did rise, the benefits of economic growth were

unequally distributed and, in real terms, more people lived in a state of absolute poverty (Chenery, 1974:xiii). That reality called for a broadening of a narrow economic definition of development to one which encompassed the idea of social well-being with a focus on elimination of poverty. This led to strategies within the international community such as “redistribution with growth” and “the basic needs approach”.

Todaro (1989:88) incorporated these ideas in what he called the new economic view of development:

“Development must be conceived of as a multi-dimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of absolute poverty”.

Underlining this understanding was a concept of a better life for people within a given social system. Other writers have explored what constitutes a better life.

Goulet (1971:23) talked of the three core values of life-sustenance, self-esteem and freedom as common goals sought by all individuals and societies.

Development thus becomes more a process of working towards societal and individual goals rather than a stage in history which is reached. The quotations from Todaro and Goulet are quite explicit in the need for ‘development’ to address issues of inequality and poverty; to reach beyond macroeconomic indicators of growth to distribution of wealth and social justice. However, they do not indicate how this would be achieved. The translation of intentions into reality is very important. The extent to which development strategies have addressed issues of poverty is thus an important measure of their credibility. In the sense of the above quotations, Western countries, often described as “rich”, “developed” or “more developed”, need to be seen in a new light. They may be richer or more developed economically than many Third World countries in terms of industrial

development and wealth but are not necessarily more socially, politically, culturally or spiritually developed than other countries.

How then might this be related to rural development? In the literature, rural development is often described in terms of governments' or agencies' objectives, programmes, plans and strategies for developing the rural sector.<sup>2</sup> For example, in redirecting its development strategy in the mid-1970s, the World Bank (1975) defined rural development as its strategy to improve the economic and social life of the rural poor. It classified programmes as rural development activities only if the majority of benefits went to the rural poor. A UNDP study (1979:12) defined rural development as "a process of socio-economic transformation that is semi-autonomous and can take place without any specific measures by the Government or any outside agency". The Programme of Action from the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (1981:6) stated that the goal of agrarian reform and rural development was the "transformation of rural life and activities in all their economic, social, cultural, institutional, environmental and human aspects". Implicit in these definitions is an understanding of rural development as any change which took place in rural areas and which was intended to, or actually did, improve the well-being of rural people, including the rural poor. However, the results of rural development activities by development agencies or governments will depend partly on their priorities. Such activities may have direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional, positive or negative impacts on the poor.

Development strategies must address poverty and unequal distribution of wealth and power if they are to have a sustained impact on the lives of the world's poor. Most development agencies indicate a priority to assist the rural

poor in Third World countries. For example, in the early 1970s, the World Bank determined that the bulk of its assistance should go to assist the poorest 40% of Third World countries. Other donors give priority to assisting countries which are the least developed. The term “rural poor” can hide the diversity of people living in rural areas and the fact that their interests do not always coincide. Aid givers may assume that assistance to any one group of rural dwellers will directly or indirectly promote development for others. In the past, many development projects failed to reach the poorest or most disadvantaged sections of rural populations, the benefits often being captured by larger farmers or rural elites. In part, this resulted from development projects focussing on the village as a unit or a particular group, such as a cooperative, assuming that the geographical “community” would be served. Such projects often ignored the stratification that exists in all communities and the unequal and different ways in which power was exercised.<sup>3</sup>

Rahman (1981:3) has defined the rural poor as follows:

“[They are] that section of the rural population whose basic minimum needs for life and existence with human dignity, are unfulfilled. Such a condition of poverty is characterised by low incomes, widely associated with various forms of oppression under social structures through which dominant social groups are able to dictate the conditions of life of the dominated and to appropriate much of the product of the latter’s labour and often also the material assets the latter may initially possess”.

This definition includes the mass of rural populations in the Third World - small farmers, tenant farmers, share-croppers, the landless, women and children.

Oakley and Marsden (1984:10-13) identified a number of key factors that keep the poor poor: lack of access to resources; lack of viable organisations; dependence and the marginal nature of their lives; the power of local moneylenders and traders and a general air of despondency and despair which characterises the

lives of the poor. Chambers (1983) talked about the biases which inevitably mean that the poor miss out on rural development projects and programmes because poverty is by and large unseen and unperceived, and the poor are isolated geographically, socially and culturally. The invisibility of women in many development activities is a case in point as is the growing group of landless who have only their labour to sell. This reality makes reaching and working with the rural poor difficult, time-consuming and expensive, all factors that do not sit well with the imperatives of development agencies which are driven by the demands of spending money and achieving visible results.

The definition of development and the perspective from which popular participation is perceived becomes important when analysing the impacts of development projects on the poor. Post World War II development strategies in the Third World have been based on different economic and social theories, the two main ones being modernisation and dependency. Proponents of both these schools of thought have argued that participation is a necessary and crucial element in tackling the problem of poverty in the Third World. However, as will be shown in Chapter 2, the bases of their analyses have implications for the strategies they adopt. Modernisation theory had its roots in the social theories of Durkheim and Weber and Western classical, neo-classical and Keynesian economics, while dependency theory was primarily influenced by Marxism. However, each expresses a variety of other influences and ideas from theoretical and empirical work in the social sciences.<sup>4</sup> Post-dependency approaches arising out of critiques of both modernisation and dependency theories have also played a role in analysing popular participation.<sup>5</sup>

Finally it is necessary to define aid and talk briefly about its role in development. Todaro (1989:482) provided a definition of foreign aid which is widely used and accepted today:

“All official grants and concessional loans, in currency or in kind, that are broadly aimed at transferring resources from developed to less developed nations (and, more recently, from OPEC to other Third World countries) on development and/or income distributional grounds.”<sup>6</sup>

Aid has strong adherents and critics from across the political spectrum. In general the criticisms of aid gain credibility from the apparent failure of aid in the past to address and overcome Third World poverty.<sup>7</sup> However, there have been some equally strongly argued cases for aid (Riddell, 1987; Mosley, 1987; World Bank, 1990). For example, Riddell reached two conclusions: that there was nothing automatic about the link between aid and development and that despite the limitations of theory and empirical evidence:

“There is a role for official aid, based on addressing the needs of the poor in the Third World, and that, while aid is by no means the necessary or even crucial ingredient for development, it can assist in the alleviation of poverty, directly and indirectly” (Riddell, 1987:267).

The World Bank's 1990 World Development Report (1990:128) concluded:

“A clear link between aid and the reduction of poverty has been hard to find. The main reason is that aid is only one of many factors influencing poverty and is often far from the most important. Domestic policies, the institutional and managerial capacity of the recipients, and other variables often matter more ..... Although the overall effects of aid may be unclear, detailed studies of individual countries have highlighted its role in specific instances”.

Mosley's analysis of the role of aid concluded that on the one hand, as an instrument of political leverage and export promotion, it has been “conspicuously unsuccessful”. But he argued that while the data was not good, there was enough evidence to conclude that aid has redistributed income between countries, that it has redistributed income to most income groups in the Third World (except the

very poorest) and that it has assisted some countries in which internal policies were genuinely redistributive. He concluded further that aid appeared neutral in terms of promoting growth, with both positive and negative examples, and that aid could increase growth rates in some countries and improve living standards for some people. Mosley rejected the case against aid as overstated but he believed that some have claimed far more for aid than it can deliver (Mosley, 1987:232-234).

The above assessments indicate that aid can promote development in general and an improved standard of living for the poor in particular. This conclusion is conditional on many factors. It is also generally an argument arising from macro-level perceptions. Much aid, however, is planned and delivered at the micro-level through projects. It is at this level that the reality of aid practice is seen and where it must demonstrate its potential to improve the quality of life of the poor. A theory of aid therefore needs to address political, economic, social and cultural factors. It must recognise the importance of the role of the state, internal and external economic forces, social dynamics and the cultural milieu. It must identify the actors involved: foreign governments and economic interests, local political and economic elites, local power structures and the people themselves who, directly or indirectly, are the supposed beneficiaries of aid, directly or indirectly. How aid is given, for what purpose and for whose benefit become critical questions in implementing and assessing any aid activity. There are many studies with examples of aid practice at the micro-level which show that aid can play an important role in promoting development. The lessons learnt from these examples need to be more widely applied.<sup>8</sup>

Essentially, this study hypothesises that aid can play a role in improving the power and resources of the poor, but suggests that if this is to be achieved, a particular approach is necessary. That approach is popular participation. Chapters 2 and 3 look in more detail at this concept.

## CHAPTER 2

# Popular Participation in Rural Development

Participation by rural people in development has been a feature of aid strategies since the Second World War. In the 1950s and 1960s it was a component of, but peripheral to, mainstream thinking on development programmes which concentrated on economic growth. Since the mid-1970s, popular participation has had a more central role in the development literature and in both the rhetoric and practice of governments and development agencies as questions of equity and distributional aspects of development gained prominence. Today, a number of development strategies are evident. At the macro-economic level, structural adjustment related to changes in the international economy and market solutions to overcome inefficiencies are emphasised. At the micro or village level, emphasis is on participation to marshal local resources for development in the face of national financial constraint caused by low levels of growth (in most Third World countries), stagnating real levels of aid and large foreign debts. In the context of foreign aid, the former is primarily concerned with stimulating economic growth; the latter with poverty alleviation. It is in the relation to poverty alleviation that much of the discussion of popular participation takes place. However, this cannot be isolated from macro-economic and social policies, politics and culture, which influence the kinds of popular participation possible.

Since the 1970s, popular participation has been widely acknowledged as an essential component of strategies to improve the standard of living and the quality of life of the millions of the rural poor in the Third World. However, many

perspectives exist on what popular participation means and the role it plays in development strategies, programmes and projects. This chapter examines the concept of popular participation as it has been discussed in the development literature. It identifies a number of key issues concerning the theory and practice of popular participation that this literature highlights. It concludes with what appears to be an emerging consensus on what constitutes popular participation in development activities.

## **The Concept of Participation**

Cohen and Uphoff (1980:215-216) suggest that, in the 1950s and 1960s, consideration of participation in developing countries by the social sciences usually focussed on political participation. The general view was that as “development” increased, political participation would also increase. Various attributes of “traditional” society would be replaced by more participatory ones with modernisation. This fitted well with economic development theories of the time which stressed socio-economic change through technology transfer and capital formation. In the 1970s, questions about political participation and access to power were central to the paradigms of the dependency school. They were also prominent in the sociology literature on critical theory which emphasised the role of human action in history and on social science research which argued for participatory and subjective approaches to analysing the world. The latter has discussed in some detail, the need for local level organisation, alliances and political involvement if participation is to have any significant and long term impact on people’s lives. The role and nature of participation in the wider political process are important issues and provide the background to the focus of this thesis on popular (or people’s) participation in rural development projects.

But who are “the people”? Are they the intended beneficiaries of a development project or a wider government development plan? Are they the rural poor? Are they the rural population as a whole?. Given the focus of development assistance since the early 1970s on poverty alleviation and the focus of this thesis on rural development projects, popular participation refers to participation by the rural poor in projects and programmes which have as their immediate goal the alleviation of living conditions of the rural poor.

Within the context of development strategies in the 1950s and 1960s, development was externally driven by planners and technocrats. The primary focus on economic growth put priority on overcoming resource constraints through technological innovation and capital formation. The human factor, perceived in terms of people’s “backwardness” was seen as a constraint. To the extent that it was considered at all, participation was seen as passive acceptance by the people of centralised plans and programmes which would lead to progress and modernisation. The role of people was to accept and utilise outside technology and participate in national development plans as producers and consumers of goods and services. In terms of industrialisation strategies, rural people were seen as a pool of labour which would move to where industry was established. Agriculture was initially unimportant and the role of the rural sector was to supply raw materials, commodities, labour and limited markets for the growing urban industrial centres. For most people, there was limited political participation and virtually no involvement in planning or decision making. However, a number of local level programmes involving broader participation emerged in rural areas during this period. These were aimed at mobilising people to achieve national planning objectives. They included the cooperative movement, community development and *animation rurale*. Each had

its limitations and were, by and large, ineffective in transforming the lives of rural people. Some of their main characteristics are summarised below.

Analysis of the experience of rural cooperatives shows that they generally proved ineffective in overcoming rural poverty. It was better-off farmers who tended to take advantage of government support supplied through cooperatives (UNRISD, 1975:ix). In community-wide cooperatives, leadership tended to mirror that of the community. The poor and women were often excluded from services by the nature of their position in the society. Leadership was sometimes corrupt and abusive of its power. Efforts by the poor to organise themselves into cooperatives often met with resistance from entrenched interests (Korten, 1980:2). A common reason given for failure was that cooperatives were; “the creation of governments or other external agencies, intended to promote government policies and provide government control over markets” (UNRISD, 1975:4-5). A study of cooperatives in Asia (Inayatullah - quoted in Korten, 1980:2), highlighted a number of characteristics common to those which were successful: the communities were relatively unstratified and had cohesive social structures; internal cooperative structures allowed members to hold leaders accountable and enforce member discipline; a relatively homogeneous membership saw the cooperative as a means for capital formation and technical innovation; and there were strong links to relatively effective government agencies which could provide a range of supports.

Korten credited the initiative of community development to a post-war project in Uttar Pradesh in India which proved successful in using multi-purpose village level workers to encourage self-help approaches to increasing agricultural production and strengthening rural infrastructure. But the wider adoption of

this model by the Indian government, without providing a participatory administrative structure, to respond to bottom-up initiatives, undermined its success. The general approach was widely adopted in Asia and Africa and Latin America during the 1950s, but with limited success. There were a number of weaknesses in the community development approach (Korten, 1980:3): village level workers aligned themselves with local power structures; bureaucratic conflicts existed between different government line agencies; there was a greater emphasis on expansion of social services than on increasing rural incomes; there was too much emphasis on meeting centrally planned targets with limited participation; and there was limited emphasis on building local level organisation and linking villages together. A UNDP study (UNDP, 1979:13) saw community development as:

“A deliberate reaction to the sectoral production approach which paid insufficient attention to local participation and incorporation of the rural poor in development efforts. In practice, over-stretched in its aims, starved of investment resources, oblivious to local conflicts and inequalities, community development came to be seen as a combination of welfare services, agricultural extension and construction of small-scale works on a ‘self-help’ basis.”

A French movement, *animation rurale*, was similar to the community development movement but more structured. It involved government selection of promising areas for self-help development and encouragement of local villages to select one of their number for training. This training emphasised practical and technical skills and project planning. The *animateur* was to return to the village and mobilise the community into self-help activity. One limitation of this approach was the attempt to replace the provision of government services by local efforts, whereas successful mobilisation was likely to increase the demand for government support. Another was the requirement of dynamic local organisation, which itself required support (Gow and Vansant, 1983:428-429).

Essentially these three approaches suffered from a number of basic problems: they became vehicles for the promotion of existing government programmes instead of bottom-up approaches; bureaucratic interest led to an emphasis on social services instead of productive activities; new initiatives were not technically sound; pressures for quick results led to a skewed benefit distribution in favour of local elites; and the focus was inward on the village instead of outward on the reconstruction of rural society (Gow & Vasant, 1983:429).

The impetus for greater attention on, and a more central role for, participation came in the late 1960s and early 1970s from a variety of directions. There was a growing awareness that the post-war growth-oriented strategies had done little to improve the standard of living of the majority of the world's poor. Empirical evidence highlighted the increasingly widespread nature of underdevelopment and the increased number of people living in absolute poverty. While conventional wisdom began to be questioned at a theoretical level by academics, the major challenge came from development practitioners.

The primary focus of new approaches accorded a higher priority to reducing poverty by giving the poor a voice in decision-making, greater access to development resources and a greater share in the rewards of development efforts. Given the complexity and widespread nature of the problem, different agencies sought to address the concern in different ways. Cohen and Uphoff highlighted the role of the US Congress in seeking to address poverty issues and include participation as an important development strategy. For example, in 1966 Congress passed Title IX of the Foreign Assistance Act which recognised the contribution of popular participation in development and called for USAID to

promote it in its development work overseas. They noted however, that; “there was little clarity to the concept and it gained little operational effectiveness within the agency” (Cohen and Uphoff, 1980:21). Korten discussed the 1973 US Congress foreign assistance legislation (known as the New Directions Mandate) which reoriented the priorities of USAID with an even stronger statement on targetting assistance to the poor and their active participation in the process. He also noted difficulties in the implementation of this mandate (Korten, 1980:3).

Other government aid donor agencies have highlighted poverty alleviation and participation in their policies. For example, popular participation is a key component of the Swedish International Development Authority’s strategy for rural development (Gezelius and Millwood, 1988:i). In 1981, New Zealand articulated some guiding principles for its official development assistance programme, including the degree to which a project contributes to increasing the productive capacity of the recipient country; expanding employment opportunities there; improving the living conditions and welfare especially of people on lower income and in rural areas; safeguarding the interest of vulnerable groups such as women and increasing their capacity to contribute to development; and also the extent of popular participation in and support of the project.

In the early 1970s, the World Bank increased the proportion of loans going to countries with a low per capita income and those going to agriculture and rural development projects. Between 1973-80 over half of its projects were designed specifically to benefit the rural poor (defined rather broadly as the lowest 40% of the population). Its rural development sector policy paper (1975:3) called for;

**“Participation by the rural poor in the planning and implementation processes through local government, project advisory committees, cooperatives and other forms of group organisation”.**

A number of World Bank and USAID studies have since indicated that talking about participation is not so easy as doing it and that agencies' approaches must change to achieve sustained benefits from participation (Korten, 1980:3-6).

Cernea (1985:10) has asserted:

“Below the cloud of rhetoric, participation in rural development programs is more myth than reality ..... The rhetoric of intent is still far ahead of the design for social action to promote participation”.

In the early and mid-1970s a number of United Nations agencies working in Third World development began to look, within their mandates, for new strategies to address poverty issues. These included, but were not restricted to, International Labour Organisation (ILO), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), World Health Organisation (WHO), United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). They included the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) which established a popular participation programme as a major aspect of its work and undertook a large number of studies of a theoretical and empirical nature and the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) which recommended that governments “adopt popular participation as a basic policy measure in national development strategy” (United Nations, 1975: para 4).

Other events of United Nations agencies were milestones in the promotion of popular participation. The ILO's World Employment Conference in 1976 launched a basic needs strategy highlighting the role of participation after which the ILO established a programme for Participatory Organisations of the Rural Poor (PORP). UNESCO asserted the importance of participation in its 1976

conference of Ministers which established its first medium-term plan for the period 1977-82 (Tri, 1986:preface). The WHO programme of extending primary health care and health for all by the year 2000 launched in 1978 stressed the importance of participation. FAO was also to the forefront in the promotion of participation. Two of its major emphases, agrarian reform and rural development, were brought together in the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD), held in 1979. The outcome of this conference was a declaration of principles and a programme of action to transform rural life, "through policies for attaining growth with equity, redistribution of economic and political power, and people's participation" (FAO, 1985:84). Following WCARRD, the FAO sponsored a People's Participation Programme to promote rural development based on the principle of effective participation. A UNDP study (1979:ii) concluded that;

"Two basic shifts are needed in rural development strategy: closer involvement of the local population in the full process of rural development planning and implementation; and stronger commitment by governments to redistribution to the rural poor not only of resources, but also the means to permit capital accumulation".

Other major stimuli for participation came from non-governmental organisations (NGO)<sup>1</sup>. Participation began to play an important role in NGO thinking in the late 1960s as a part of new objectives and methodology which sought to shift their emphasis from relief and welfare services (addressing the symptoms) to attacking the causes of underdevelopment. For some NGOs, this meant supporting grassroots development and self-reliance to empower local people and/or focus on meeting basic needs. Others supported broader popular movements which sought to gain independence or overthrow oppressive regimes. However, popular participation, as with governmental and international agencies,

has often been rhetorical. Northern NGOs which took an interest in Third World development included churches, other national organisations, agencies set up to collect funds and support Third World development projects, volunteer-sending agencies and international agencies such as the Red Cross and the World Council of Churches (WCC). Many sought to develop stronger links with grassroots organisations and develop new relationships, i.e. partnerships instead of the old donor/recipient relationship. In the 1970s, the WCC set up a Commission on the Churches Participation in Development to examine its role and practice. While there are many thousands of Northern-based NGOs working for Third World development, the number and variety of Southern NGOs is even greater. They encompass national bodies and people's movements, farmers organisations and village groups<sup>2</sup>.

Since the 1970s, an increase in the search for, and analysis of, new strategies which would incorporate a greater emphasis on participation is evident. While the resources applied to this work seem to be small compared with those applied to other aspects of development (Korten, 1980:2), development research and literature on these subjects have increased substantially. Since the late 1970s, UNRISD has implemented research on participation through its Programme on Popular Participation. In 1981, a UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Rural Development set up a Panel on People's Participation. One of the results of its work was a conceptual study of approaches to participation in rural development (Oakley & Marsden, 1984). In 1977, the Centre for International Studies at Cornell University cooperated with USAID to establish a programme of extensive analysis on rural development strategies and participation. Other universities with particular programmes in development studies have also produced many studies on rural development strategies including participation<sup>3</sup>.

A substantial body of knowledge has also been generated from the evaluation activities of international, bilateral and non-governmental aid donors themselves. Many of these point to the lack of popular participation as a major constraint on the achievement of objectives and they have called for greater effort to encourage participation (Morss, 1975; Cernea, 1985; Baum, 1985; Cassen, 1986).

Methodological issues have also been studied, emerging largely through the work of the Participatory Research Network initiated in 1978 by the International Council for Adult Education. This work contrasts conventional methods of social research with participatory ones and argues that the latter are necessary if people are to gain power from the generation of social knowledge. Many of the underlying principles of the debate on participation in research mirror the issues discussed in the literature on participation in development projects.<sup>4</sup>

The issue of how to introduce participatory methods in the work of development agencies has also arisen. One example is the World Bank's involvement in participant observation (Salmen, 1987). Another is the development of other methodologies, such as Rapid Rural Appraisal, in response to some of the restrictions imposed by agency involvement in development planning and funding (Chambers, 1981; Khon Kaen, 1987; Grandstaff & Grandstaff, 1988).

## Interpretations and perspectives on participation

While popular participation in rural development had been a minor feature in development strategies in the 1950s and 1960s, it took on a central role in the 1970s as efforts to address poverty became more intense. However, arguments in favour of more participatory approaches have arisen from different perspectives representing different schools of thought. Proponents of the modernisation school analysed past failures of development strategies as the result of people being given too limited a role in the development process and a lack of motivation. If development strategies could incorporate the human element, people's knowledge and skills, more directly into development projects, the success rate would increase. They argued that there was nothing fundamentally wrong with the basic growth-oriented approach, but that the key to making it effective lay in the active inclusion of people into development efforts. Thus, people's participation was seen as another input to add to capital and technology. Those who argued from a dependency analysis emphasised exploitation and saw the problem as one of people being excluded from participation in development by centralised top-down planning. The issue was one of control, in which the cause of poverty in the Third World was an exploitative global system, supported by local elites. The aim of popular participation was to empower people to gain more control over their own lives and greater access to resources.

While proponents of these different ideological positions generally agreed that popular participation was a necessary ingredient of development strategies, it is not surprising that there is a significant degree of disagreement on the nature and content of participation and a variety of emphases and approaches to

the implementation of popular participation in development strategies (Ghai, 1988:1).

How then is it possible to define participation? Most writers on the subject would agree that there is no universal definition. For the purposes of this thesis, a number of publications and articles are discussed to cover the diverse perspectives and interpretations of the concept of participation which exist and which guide agencies' practice. The main literature drawn on includes studies sponsored, or undertaken by, Cornell University, USAID, UNRISD, UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Rural Development, ILO, and the development writer, Denis Goulet.<sup>5</sup> These studies have one thing in common. They all link interpretations of participation to particular development paradigms. However, each has focussed on different aspects of participation and looked at the concept in different ways.

Oakley and Marsden (1984:19) listed seven interpretations of participation from the literature which appeared to represent a continuum of viewpoints reflecting the dominant paradigms in development thinking:

- 1 Participation is considered a voluntary contribution by the people to one or another of the public programmes supposed to contribute to national development but the people are not expected to take part in shaping the programme or criticising its content (Economic Commission for Latin America, 1973).
- 2 Participation means ... in its broadest sense, to sensitise people and, thus, to increase the receptivity and ability of rural people to respond to

development programmes, as well as to encourage local initiatives (Lele, 1975).

- 3 With regard to rural development ... participation includes people's involvement in decision-making processes, in implementing programmes ... their sharing in the benefits of development programmes and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes (Lisk, 1981).
- 4 Popular participation in development should be broadly understood as the active involvement of people in the decision-making process in so far as it affects them (Uphoff & Cohen, 1979).
- 5 Community involvement means that people, who have both the right and duty to participate in solving their own health problems, have greater responsibilities in assessing the health needs, mobilising local resources and suggesting new solutions, as well as creating and maintaining local organisations (WHO, 1982).
- 6 Participation is considered to be an active process, meaning that the person or group in question takes initiatives and asserts his/her or its autonomy to do so (Rahman, 1981).
- 7 ... 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 (Pearse & Stiefel, 1979).

Oakley and Marsden concluded that statements 1, 2 and 3 reflected the dominant paradigm and the more commonly expressed understanding of participation, 4 and 5 could be seen in contrast to the previous statements but were dominated by terms that themselves required explanation, i.e. decision-making, greater responsibilities, and 6 and 7 reflected the emerging rural development re-think of the mid-1970s and inextricably equated participation with the achievement of some kind of power (Oakley & Marsden, 1984:19-20).

Ghai identified three interpretations of participation. His first and last were similar to the first and third of Oakley and Marsden. His second identified the key feature as decentralisation. His view was that decentralisation does not imply meaningful participation by the masses, arguing that it may mean fewer benefits to the rural poor because of the role played by local elites.

Stiefel identified six operational definitions of popular participation but notes that one encompasses all the others. Participation is seen as a “significant presence in the power structure of society ... In many instances this implies political mobilization to change social structures” (Stiefel, 1985:5). The focus of UNRISD’s analysis is the concept of participation as empowerment and the seventh interpretation of Oakley and Marsden comes from here (Pearse & Stiefel, 1979:8).

In a recent article, Goulet used the UNRISD statement (Oakley & Marsden’s seventh interpretation) as a working definition for his discussion of participation (Goulet, 1989:165). He described participation as an “indispensable feature of all forms of development” (Goulet, 1989:175). He saw the need for

organisation at the local level, building into wider participation at the macro level of decision-making, and in this way made the connection between popular participation at the project level and political participation. In this conceptualisation, participation in the form of time, interest, energy and resources becomes a “moral incentive” by which hitherto excluded people earn their right to participate more widely in society. Goulet saw this working best when “material incentives” are gained at the same time. He is interested in local participation not just for its own sake but for national development strategies which are truly participatory.

An understanding which has emerged from FAO encapsulates a number of the interpretations given above. For example the FAO Peasant’s Charter stated:

“Participation of the people in the institutions and systems which govern their lives is a basic human right and also essential for realignment of political power in favour of disadvantaged groups and for social and economic development” (FAO, 1981:13).

Another FAO view also emphasises empowerment:

“Empowerment is the hidden objective in people’s participation programmes which increase awareness and group organization as a means to overcome the various forces which oppress the poor. By giving people a voice in project design and management, we are helping them move towards empowerment” (Stephens, 1988:81).

## **Issues in participation**

The meaning given to popular participation by different writers is influenced by ideology, theory and practice. In order to explore the various interpretations of participation, a number of key issues need to be elaborated. This is made more complicated by the different meanings ascribed to key words. The first issue discussed is the question of mobilisation or empowerment.

## **Mobilisation or empowerment**

Oakley and Marsden made a clear distinction between participation as mobilisation and as empowerment. To them, mobilisation of the poor was undertaken by government to implement already determined development proposals. They equated this with the underlying ideology of modernisation theory “to mobilise the rural sector in order to transform it and make it more modern and responsive” (Oakley & Marsden, 1984:21). They saw participation as a passive process:

“The groundrules are previously established, participation is conceived as a manageable input, but the overwhelming majority of rural people remain excluded from any informed or systematic involvement in the events that affect their livelihood” (Oakley & Marsden, 1984:22).

Oakley and Marsden make a distinction between this form of mobilisation of the people, in which they are excluded from any decision-making over events that effect their lives, and the community development approach utilised in health or irrigation projects whereby at the local level, “active” involvement of the rural population exists. However, the latter approach is described as limited in its ability to move beyond the specific focus of the programmes initiated from outside, to more fundamental problems facing the people (Oakley & Marsden, 1984:23-24).

Much of the recent literature on popular participation has focussed on the concept of empowerment, i.e. “the achievement of power in terms of access to, and control of, resources necessary to protect livelihood” (Oakley & Marsden, 1984:25). For example, in one of UNRISD’s documents, Stiefel (1985:3) wrote:

“... the promotion of popular participation implies a redistribution of power (basically a conflictual process) and this calls for a scientific analysis which gives due recognition to political factors, social forces and the role of class in the historical processes of social change”.

Stiefel's analysis centred on society, social actors and political processes. He saw the organisation of the poor as a precondition for increasing popular participation in rural areas, with the peasant movement as the basic unit. However, he did not make the same distinction as Oakley and Marsden between mobilization and empowerment. He interpreted participation as a significant presence in the power structure of society which often implied political mobilization to change social structures (Stiefel, 1985:3). He discussed mobilization in terms of whether the poor gain more power and argued that action to redistribute power can be taken at any level in society, even by the state itself. This analysis blurs the distinction made by Oakley and Marsden between mobilisation and empowerment by allowing the state or local power structures to act in a way which will empower the poor.

In contrast to Stiefel's analysis, Rahman's perspective on participation saw the individual as the smallest entity in participation with the group or movement as the end point (his definition is the sixth one provided by Oakley and Marsden above). His analysis, which arose out of the ILO experience of programmes with the poor, looked at participation in change at the micro level, whereas Stiefel was concerned with the macro-society and its structures.

Fernandes & Tandon (1981:5) explored the concept of social research and emphasised participatory methodology as a critical ingredient in the process.

They clearly saw participation as empowerment:

**"Power is the central theme of participation ... Participatory social action entails widely shared, collective power by those who are considered beneficiaries. The people become agents of social action and the power differentials between those who control and need resources is reduced through participation".**

## Levels of analysis

The concept of participation as empowerment has a number of implications for analysis at both the theoretical and practical level. The definitions above highlight the level of analysis (society, group, individual) and the linkages between these levels. Other writers have investigated participation in relation to the household, in terms of gender equality, a particular sector such as forestry or a region in terms of decentralisation.

Other writers, such as Cohen and Uphoff, have looked at participation within a project framework. Their study of the failure of development projects and programmes led them to consider more participation by rural people as a necessity to improve the outcome of development activities. It could be argued that this approach is mobilisation in the sense of finding a way to increase the efficiency of development projects of governments or outside agencies. However, they recognised that a project is influenced by and influences its environment in different ways and at different levels. They acknowledged that even in relation to development projects, participation is “inescapably political ... as it will change the use and allocation of resources in society” (Cohen & Uphoff, 1980:228). They noted that this necessarily puts groups in conflict with governments.

A number of writers who equate participation with empowerment identify a need for “participation to be linked to political activity in broader arenas, and not confined to small-scale, problem-solving efforts” (Cardoso, quoted in Goulet, 1989:168). However, participation at the micro level is not inimical to most national development strategies, “as long as it poses no threat to the rules of the game operative at macro levels (Goulet, 1989:168). Oakley and Marsden stress

that participation as empowerment means organisation and action on the part of the poor to gain a greater share of power and scarce resources and that this will inevitably bring them into opposition with those holding power at local or national levels. Goulet defined the need for space within which local communities can organise to participate actively in the wider political process.

Whichever way participation has been understood, the political dimension has been acknowledged and the actions of small groups to gain some power is seen to lead them into wider groupings or alliances (Oakley and Marsden, 1984:25-27) or possible conflicts with government or other interest groups. It is thus important to define the levels of analysis at which participation is being considered and recognise the linkages and relationships between them.

### **Participation as means or end**

Some authors have discussed participation as means, others as an end in itself. Some have argued that it cannot be both; others that it needs to be both. Marsden and Oakley identified participation as means or end with different ideological positions. Participation as a means was seen as the achievement of previously determined development strategies. They described it as reformist; as an input linked to dominant development approaches including community development programmes and establishment of formal organisations such as cooperatives. In contrast they argued that participation as an end was a process towards empowerment and linked it to a strategy of structural change. Since each reflects a different ideological position, they argued that participation as means and end cannot be reconciled (Oakley & Marsden, 1984:27-29). Their position is not shared by others. An UNRISD document (1980:11) described participation as a means but made a distinction between who was promoting it:

“Participation is one of the most complex as well as basic areas of choice. It raises the question - very hard for political leaders and planners to face frankly - of who is doing the choosing, how choices are enforced, and whether the style of development treats participation mainly as a means or mainly as an end, an essential component of the style. When participation is willed from above it becomes mobilization, a means of getting things done. When it arises from below it usually focuses on distribution, becoming also a means, from the standpoint of the groups able to participate, of obtaining a larger immediate share of the fruits of development”.

Tilakaratna (1987:9) argued that there must be a unity of ends and means because “participation is at once an instrument for self-reliant action as well as an end in itself, being a fulfillment of a basic human need”. Goulet (1989:166) concluded that whether one views participation primarily as means or goal, its dual character is evident in most instances and the value of each becomes apparent over time. Stephens stated that;

“Participation is not an end in itself. It is a means to achieve long term efficiency and effectiveness, cost-sharing, self-reliance and grassroots initiative, and to build leadership and village level organizational capacities” (Stephens, 1988:81).

In my view, empowerment of the poor is basic to the concept of popular participation in rural development projects. Without this, aid will at best provide short term benefits, at worst increase dependence. The definition provided by Pearse and Stiefel (1979) noted above seems to sum up the idea of empowerment best. The issue of participation as means or end is also important. If it is only a means, it could be used to manipulate the rural poor. If it is only an end, it may be difficult to sustain interest. I think a statement by Cohen and Uphoff (1980:227-228) sums up my own position best; “[participation is] not just an end in itself, but it is more than a means”.

## **Role of local organisations**

The literature on participation has also addressed the role of local organisations. There are assertions that the poor need to be organised to facilitate their participation. However, experience with cooperatives has shown that local organisations do not ensure active participation by the rural poor. What is important is the nature of participation and the extent to which local organisations and access to these are able to encourage and support participation.

The issue of organisation is relevant whether one sees participation as mobilisation or as empowerment. Two different approaches reflect Oakley and Marsden's understanding of these two perspectives. The first is the idea of reforming formal institutions within the existing socio-political framework, while the other stresses the need for organisations to emerge from the people's own discussions and actions. The former can be seen in calls at international meetings such as WCARRD for re-examination of current forms of participation and exhortations to governments to "decentralise decision-making, delegate increased responsibilities to local government institutions and promote people's organisations" (FAO, 1981:8-9, 13-17).<sup>6</sup> The second seeks a more radical approach whereby organisation emerges through a participatory process and is part of it. The idea of praxis (action/reflection) as exemplified in the writings of Paulo Friere and the literature on participatory research articulate this approach (Friere, 1970a, 1970b; ICAE, 1981, 1988).

Much of the work on participation in rural development at Cornell University focussed on the nature and role of local organisations in promoting and supporting rural people to manage and gain greater control over their own

affairs. Esman and Uphoff (1984:16-18) saw local organisations as necessary 'intermediaries' between the government and the people for effective implementation of rural development strategies. They discussed the disinterest in local organisation in development theory and literature through the 1950s and 60s in terms of neo-classical development strategies which focussed on the technology gap and the capital formation gap. They argued that both these and Marxist writers saw the rural peasantry as conservative, to be brought out of their backwardness by state and outside intervention on the one hand and by the urban proletariat and intelligentsia on the other. They looked at perspectives on rural organisation since the 1970s in terms of social theories about organisation, with Marxist perspectives at one extreme and pluralist perspectives at the other (Esman & Uphoff, 1984:52-53). They called their theoretical approach to rural development organisation a structural-reformist position; i.e. one which "emphasises the search for institutional and organisational changes that can cumulatively shift the balance of socio-economic and political power". It is an incrementalist approach which "builds local power that can both limit and influence the actions of the state and the private sector." They viewed the state as neither neutral nor monolithic with rural people having varying degrees of space to influence their socio-political and socio-economic environment (Esman & Uphoff, 1984:56). In a similar vein, Gow and Vansant (1983:436-438) argued that for participation to succeed, redistribution of power had to be accompanied by the simultaneous building of local capabilities. They identified the building of local organisational capacity as one operational step needed to create effective participation.

## Originating agencies

Closely associated with the question of local organisation and institution building is the issue of who initiates the participation process and for what purpose. Goulet (1989:166) identified three ways participation could be initiated or introduced;

“It can be induced from above by some authority or expert, generated from below by the non-expert populace itself, or catalytically promoted by some external third agent”.

The first he saw as government or some other elite group seeking a means of social control in order to gain efficiency in production. This is similar to Oakley and Marsden's view of mobilisation from above. Goulet saw the second as arising in a number of ways such as when people at the grassroots level respond to a crisis or threat to their community's identity, survival or values. Another was a more deliberate effort by members of a community to seek a greater share of national output. The third related to the role of change agents - technicians, missionaries, community organisers or militants of some movement. Change agents of this type were distinguished from the first category by the aims of the intervention; namely to empower the poor to make some material gain.

Goulet's third category has been the focus of much discussion in the literature. From UNRISD studies, Stiefel concluded that “participatory movements do not emerge spontaneously or autochthonously”, but rather from an encounter between groups of rural poor and external catalysts (Stiefel, 1985:21). He identified middle class people playing a leading role in peasant movements as a problem in that they may have “personal ideological interests that are often not (or only partially) shared by the local leaders and members of the group” (Stiefel, 1985:21). He argued that the outsider needed to withdraw from a leadership

position as local leadership developed. The role and methodology of such catalysts or *animateurs* is the focus of the writings of Paulo Friere, on which much of this genre of literature is based. His approach was based initially on his experience in Latin America. Other authors have explored this methodology in Asia and Africa. For example, Tilakaratna (1985, 1987) has documented experience in Sri Lanka. His studies have stressed the methods of the *animateur*; participatory rather than authoritarian. Rahman highlighted the role of the *animateur* as different from that of a conventional leader. It is one of staying with the people, working with them and helping them reflect collectively on their situation and identifying ways to improve it. The outsider is a facilitator, not a leader who makes decisions for the group.

A different issue in relation to the initiation of participation is the role of aid and aid donors.

“To refrain from offering financial or material aid is a fundamental characteristic of the *animateur*’s work that runs contrary to how most aid organisations see their role” (Gezelius, 1989:9).

This question relates to the discussion by Goulet of means and ends, where he argued that some material benefit gains are important in order to develop local organisation and mobilise local people and that aid could play a role in this process. Rahman (1988) acknowledged the potential role of material aid from an assessment of African grassroots movements; its impact was determined by who controlled the aid and how and for what purpose it was used.<sup>7</sup> Uphoff discussed the concept of “assisted self-reliance” as a strategy that transcends both top-down and bottom-up approaches to development which he said, “represents a strategy for using external resources ... to strengthen local capacities”. His concern was not so much whether the impetus for development work among the poor comes from above or from below but the orientation of those who plan and support that

work from above (Uphoff, 1988:1). Such an approach suggests a role not only for the outside amateur, but also for other outside resources. He argued (1988:2-3) that assisted self-reliance can overcome two fallacies in thinking about assisting the poor;

“The first is the paternalistic fallacy, believing that planners, technicians and experts possess all the knowledge, wisdom and virtue needed to achieve development that the poor should be responsive and grateful beneficiaries; the second the populist fallacy, that the poor themselves possess all that is needed for their own advancement, that they can do entirely without bureaucrats and technicians”.

### **Introduction of participation**

In the discussion so far, three of Goulet’s typology of participation (goals or means, scope, originating agent) have been mentioned. His fourth relates to the moment participation is introduced. He saw participation differing according to the reason for its introduction, for example, to diagnose a problem, to select a course of action, to implement a plan. In his view, the quality of participation depended on its initial point of entry. This was also important in terms of whether the aims of participation were manipulative or intended to be empowering. He argued that any form of people-centred development needs to involve the non-elites actively in the diagnosis of their own problems right from the beginning. He contrasted this approach with top-down growth-oriented approaches to development associated with the imposition of participation by the government to implement activities planned for the populace (Goulet, 1989:167-168). Cohen and Uphoff (1980:228) concluded that in projects:

“Ex-ante participation such as in decision-making is related to ex-post participation in benefits. This seems especially true when one is concerned with the poor majority, as reliance on paternalistic approaches, neglecting the organization and mobilization of the poor to work and act on their own behalf, seems to produce limited results”.

Both Goulet and Cohen and Uphoff have analysed participation within national development strategies, particularly at the micro-level. This does not necessarily include empowerment as a goal. Those who see participation as empowerment would tend to see participation from the early stages of diagnosis of the people's own reality, their problems and key issues as essential. The implication of involvement at a later stage in the planning process would thus appear to be significant. It suggests that local control might be prescribed by the outsider, be it a member of the local elite, the national government or a foreign aid donor.

### **Obstacles to popular participation**

Popular participation is difficult to achieve whether perceived as mobilisation or as empowerment. Early development strategies avoided these by not considering participation by the rural poor. However, once the importance of the issue was identified, and agencies attempted to introduce it, the constraints and obstacles could no longer be ignored. Pearce and Steifel (1979:4) have commented that:

“In spite of insistence on popular participation in United Nations development programmes, an examination of the performance is not encouraging; authentic participation seldom occurs”.

The issue of obstacles to participation has been discussed in a number of ways. Oakley and Marsden (1984:29-30) examined it in terms of participation as means and end. If participation is viewed as a means, the obstacles are primarily related to “operational procedures of the task undertaken”. If it is seen as an end, they are related to “structural and institutional relationships both at the national and local level”.<sup>8</sup> At the operational level, they saw major obstacles as over-centralised planning, inadequate delivery mechanisms, lack of local coordination, inappropriateness of project technology, irrelevant project content and lack of local structure. These were viewed as symptomatic of rural

development efforts and while relevant to the issue of popular participation, not specific to it and in many cases issues too large for local people to confront. They saw structural obstacles within systems which perpetuate inequitable access to resources and wealth as pervading formal and informal institutions and relationships, dictating the terms of participation and reacting oppressively if attempts are made to redefine these. Therefore participatory action presented a choice: it accepted the existing structure and sought to influence it, “pushing at the frontiers” or it challenged the structure and was “dealt with” (Oakley and Marsden, 1984:29-31). They saw cultural constraints as an important set of obstacles to participation by the rural poor and referred to writers such as Friere in identifying the importance of these. The history of rural people and their often marginal existence makes them wary of taking risks. Their efforts to survive within often oppressive social and political systems makes them cautious to organise. It is for these reasons that outside catalysts were seen as an important component of participatory strategies.

Cohen and Uphoff (1980:225-226) explored the question of obstacles in terms of the dimensions and contexts of popular participation within rural development projects. They identified various project characteristics and factors in the project or task environment as key areas in which obstacles could exist to inhibit participation. They identified as important ten project characteristics: technological complexity, resource requirements, tangibility, probability, immediacy and divisibility of benefits, programme linkages and flexibility and administrative coverage and accessibility and seven factors within the project environment: physical, biological, economic, political, social, cultural and historical factors.

Gow and Vansant (1983:429-432) discussed constraints on effective popular participation in terms of three categories: national policies, bureaucracies of national agencies and foreign donors, and constraints in the immediate environment. They considered that it was only the latter (similar to Cohen & Uphoff's task environment) that could be readily influenced by a development project or local people. Their second category was also highlighted by Korten (1980) who saw the bureaucratic imperatives of foreign agencies and national structures as a key obstacle to participation by the poor (see also Korten & Uphoff, 1981). Faced with these realities, Korten argued strongly for a different approach to project planning, which he called the learning process approach to replace the conventional blueprint approach. In a similar vein, Lecompte (1986) saw the project framework itself as a factor inhibiting participation.

### **Is popular participation necessary and/or sufficient to achieve rural development?**

Cohen and Uphoff (1980:228) concluded that it is not a panacea and that "in many instances participation appears to be necessary but not sufficient for good results." Many recent evaluation studies have concluded that it is necessary. Of itself however, participation cannot solve many intractable rural development problems. Other inputs and processes must be combined with participation to tackle these. The value and effectiveness of participation will also depend on the kind of participation, how, by whom and for whom it is promoted.

In a study of the World Bank's experience of community participation, Saul (1987:iv) concluded:

“Community participation is appropriate when one of more of the following conditions are present: the objective of the project is empowerment of the people and capacity building, the design of the project services calls for interaction among beneficiaries as a basis for identifying their needs and preferences, the implementation of the project demands frequent dialogue and negotiation among beneficiaries, and users rather than a weak bureaucracy are better able to manage a part of the project operations”.

Rahnema (1990:52) cautioned against “making a new fetish out of participation only because non-participatory development has failed in every way”. To do so, he said, “will be to create yet another illusion”. He viewed participation as a methodology for change and queried whether “any particular methodology alone is able to change the psychological reasons for which people do or do not participate”.

## **Concluding Comments**

Popular participation is a concept with many dimensions, levels and interpretations. The aspects which are highlighted depend on the writer’s ideology, experience and purpose. But while the content and style of popular participation in rural development practice will continue to be debated, there seems to be an emerging consensus on a number of issues related to popular participation in rural development strategies implemented through projects and programmes. This consensus is summarised in the following statements:

- 1 If the objective of a development project or programme is to alleviate poverty, participation by the poor is essential.
- 2 Popular participation is about empowerment of the poor to achieve greater access to the resources necessary for their development and active

involvement in decisions that affect the use of these resources and their lives.

- 3 Participatory development strategies require a substantial change in the way rural development programmes and projects have been conceived and implemented in the past and in the role played by bureaucracies and foreign donors.
- 4 Popular participation is both an end and a means.
- 5 Popular participation is inescapably political, even at the programme and project levels.

The form popular participation takes will depend on many variables.

Oakley and Marsden (1984:85) concluded that the process of development itself will always be a tension between the struggle by people to secure basic needs and opposing forces which seek to dominate and determine people's existence. They see popular participation as occupying an uneasy space in this struggle whereby the form of participation will change depending on the nature of the struggle in the particular place and time. From their literature review they concluded that; "Participation must be viewed as a normative concept whose meaning changes with the changing explanations of social processes".

While this chapter has highlighted some generic issues that need to be considered in any analysis of popular participation, other factors will be important in any specific project or programme context. Since the focus of this thesis is on popular participation in a forestry project, the next chapter will

explore the literature on popular participation in forestry to draw out the rationale for and experience of different efforts to introduce people's participation in development interventions in this sector.

## CHAPTER 3

# Popular Participation in Forestry

Interest in popular participation in forestry over the last fifteen years arises from a recognition of the importance of forests and trees to the well-being of people and an appreciation of the impact of declining forest resources on the planet itself. The following quotations (World Resources Institute, 1985:v) highlight these two issues.

“Tropical forests are one of the earth’s most valuable natural resources. Throughout history, they have been essential sources of food, fuel, shelter, medicines, and many other products. They sustain people and their environments by protecting soil and water resources and providing habitat for an estimated 50% of the world’s plant and animal species.”

Today forests are threatened by both development and poverty.

“The lives of more than one billion people in the developing countries, primarily the rural and urban poor, are disrupted by periodic flooding, fuelwood scarcity, soil and water degradation, and reduced agricultural productivity - all caused in whole or in part by deforestation. Scientists estimate that 40% of the biologically-rich tropical moist forests have been cleared or degraded already. In many developing countries they will all but disappear in two or three decades if present trends continue.”

Industrialisation, promoted by the growth-oriented development strategies of the 1950s and 1960s, contributed to the rapid exploitation of forests to meet consumer demands, primarily in the West. Widespread poverty has added pressure to the forests as the rural poor clear or degrade forest land in their fight for survival. Interest in people’s participation in forestry emerged with the promotion of new rural development strategies in the Third World, such as the basic needs approach or redistribution with growth. These required a reassessment of the way various sectors, such as agriculture and forestry, are organised and how they might contribute to poverty alleviation.

This chapter traces the development from post-World War II methods of forestry exploitation to people-centred approaches. It surveys experience of various approaches to popular participation in forestry development over the last decade and identifies factors which are important if participation in forestry programmes and projects is to contribute to poverty alleviation and empowerment of the poor.

## **From production-oriented to people-centred forestry**

In line with the development economics of the post-World War II era, forests were seen as a resource to be used to meet the growing industrial demands of an expanding global economy. After the war, forest exploitation and the expansion of associated forestry industries were seen as contributing to economic growth and national development through generation of foreign exchange and increasing domestic income through industrial development and employment.<sup>1</sup> The needs of this industry and the demand for forest products by consumers in one country could be met from the resources of another. The forestry industry became international and more structurally integrated within the operations of transnational corporations.

Prior to independence, regulation of the forestry sector in most of the Third World was controlled by colonial administrations. After independence, this role was undertaken by national authorities. Given the extent of the resource, there was little awareness that forest resources were not sustainable or that widespread felling would have serious global ecological and environmental impacts. Forestry policies and plans were designed and implemented by national forestry departments, often assisted by international agencies. Foresters were

interested in the technologies of growing and harvesting trees, and on policing forests to protect them from the people. Forestry “was viewed as a kind of applied natural science with its primary concerns related to technical problems of increasing and improving timber production and to management problems associated with the preservation and administration of forest lands” (Lovelace, 1985:18).

Much forestry activity during this time took place on government controlled land. People participated only as wage labour. In terms of national interest, the role of people as conservators or users of forestry products was not given much consideration, nor was the impact of widespread exploitation of natural forests on rural livelihoods. In many countries, rural people recognised the affect of commercial forest exploitation and that national economic development was not improving their standard of living.<sup>2</sup> As the impact of forest destruction on rural people began to be understood, greater attention focussed on the relationship between rural people and the resource. Agencies which had promoted conventional forestry practices looked for new ways to deal with the encroachment of agricultural land on forest areas, the scarcity of fuelwood, and degradation of agricultural land and soil caused by erosion, flooding, and siltation. If nothing else, the vast expense of addressing these issues, let alone the question of rural poverty, required governments and agencies to look to rural self-reliance and people’s participation as possible answers.

Analysis of rural poverty and increasing concern for the environment highlighted the impact of people on forests. One of the ironies of the present situation is indicated in the following quote:

“It is the rural poor themselves who are the primary agents of destruction as they clear forests for agricultural land, fuelwood, and other necessities. Lacking other means to meet their daily survival needs, rural people are forced to steadily erode the capacity of the natural environment to support them” (World Resources Institute, 1985:1).

However, the rural poor are the agents, not the causes of this destruction (Westoby, 1987:311). It has also been argued that one basic cause of this destruction is population growth. Westoby however, considers such an explanation simplistic. He concluded that current crises arise “because exploitative societies have pushed the misuse of land too far” (Westoby, 1987:315).

How different societies respond to the decline in forestry resources is complex. The global nature of the problem and the impact of not addressing such issues requires national and international responses which address political, economic, social and cultural issues. Technical fixes will not succeed. Westoby (1987:318) further concluded;

“Economic development in most Third World countries will depend on the response of peasants to various forms of incentives, and on their readiness to generate and absorb technological innovation. That is why foresters intent on supporting development in the Third World need to know as much about peasants as they do about trees”.

A key question is how to involve people in forestry or how to modify or protect existing involvements. Thus, participation is arguably the most important element in the resolution of food scarcity through its impact on poor land use, deforestation, erosion and water and is critical to addressing the fuelwood crisis. It can also contribute significantly to employment and income generation in rural areas.<sup>3</sup> While the role of popular participation in forestry is well documented,

exactly what this means in practice is the cause of some debate. The next section explores this concept further.

## **People's participation in forestry**

Just as the meaning of popular participation in rural development has been interpreted in various ways by those involved in its promotion, so too has the idea of people's participation in forestry. Common terms used in forestry to describe the involvement of people include social forestry, forestry for local community development, and community forestry. Other terms often associated with, or encompassed by, these are farm forestry, extension forestry and agro-forestry. Rural people have always utilised forests and trees to meet local needs, in part as gatherers, but also as cultivators; for example, the domestication of fruit trees. A new dimension has been added by the widespread need to cultivate tree species to meet energy and other requirements and the promotion of this by governments and development agencies. Social forestry thus refers to a new forestry strategy, which seeks to involve local people in extensive reforestation activities to respond to local needs.

An early reference to the concept of social forestry as a strategy to meet local needs is found in a 1973 Indian Government report which identified social forestry objectives including: fuelwood supply to rural areas to replace the use of cow dung; small timber supply; supply of grasses and fodder and provision of grazing; protection of agricultural fields against wind and recreational needs (Cernea, 1989:71). The concept received wider prominence in 1978 through the 8th World Forestry Congress in Jakarta, 'Forestry for People', publication of a World Bank Forestry Policy Paper, which recommended that at least 60% of the

Bank's forestry lending be directed towards social forestry and publication of an FAO Report, 'Forestry for Local Community Development'.

The FAO study aimed to initiate action to increase;

"The contribution forestry makes towards alleviating the conditions of the rural poor in developing countries ... and to identify the policies, requisites and measures that are likely to be necessary in order to initiate and implement successful forestry programmes for the benefit of rural communities" (FAO, 1978:1).

It defined community forestry as "any situation which intimately involves local people in a forestry activity" (FAO, 1978:1) but qualified and elaborated what this meant;

"[Community forestry] embraces a spectrum of situations ranging from woodlots in areas which are short of wood and other forest products for local needs, through the growing of trees at the farm level to provide cash crops and the processing of forest products at the household, artisan or small industry level to generate income, to the activities of forest dwelling communities. It excludes large-scale industrial forestry and any other form of forestry which contributes to community development solely through employment and wages, but it does include activities at the community level. The activities so encompassed are potentially compatible with all types of land ownership. While it thus provides only a partial view of the impact of forestry on rural development, it does embrace most of the ways in which forestry and the goods and services of forestry directly affect the lives of rural people" (FAO, 1978:1).

A later FAO document (1985:42) defined social forestry more simply as "any type of industrial, conservation or community forestry project which tries to maximise benefits for residents". Further, it suggested that the community forestry label was a generic term and that such a project might have a number of different objectives (which may be congruent or conflicting), including to:

"provide the means so rural families can supply, or have better access to, certain basic needs in the form of essential forest and tree products;

increase the participation of the rural people in managing forest and tree resources as a means of increasing their self-reliance;

use human resources to better manage degraded and marginal lands thereby counteracting the process of deforestation and environmental degradation;

contribute to the general socio-economic development of rural people through employment generation, institution building and promoting economic growth;

help meet the needs and aspirations of both women and men in specific underprivileged groups within the rural population, such as subsistence farmers, migrant herders and the landless;

increase the overall production of wood or other tree products to counter growing deficits" (FAO, 1985:43).

Cernea analysed the sociological aspects of social forestry identifying the origins and primary focus of such programmes as getting people to grow trees for fuelwood to address the rural energy crisis. He saw the purpose of social forestry projects as;

"to trigger cultural change in the behaviour of large numbers of people with respect to the planting and protection of trees .... [Such projects] were deliberately directed not merely towards the ultimate end of growing more trees, but also towards influencing a crucial intervening variable: people's behaviour towards trees as they move from being gatherers to cultivators" (Cernea, 1985:267).<sup>4</sup>

Noronha & Spears analysed the concept of social forestry in comparison with commercial and industrial forestry. In the latter case, governments or large corporations planted large areas of land, controlling them with hired labour and harvesting the resulting crop for financial gain. Social forestry, on the other hand, was seen in terms of the relationship between the project and the community. It was about serving local needs through the active involvement of beneficiaries in the design and implementation of the reforestation efforts and the sharing of forest produce" (Noronha & Spears, 1985:229). This differed from conventional forestry practice in that it was undertaken mainly in the less monetarised sector, involved the direct participation of the beneficiaries and

implied different attitudes and skills on the part of foresters. The primary focus was on meeting local needs although this could involve harvesting and sale of timber with the benefits returning to the landowners or community. Cernea (1989:3) suggested that a broad consensus has developed about the content of social forestry;

“The current concept of social forestry recognises that such programs must be designed to motivate large numbers of people to plant trees, promote the kind of tree-growing that will best supply fuelwood, small timber, grasses and income to the small producers themselves and provide increased benefits to the poorer strata [identified as farmers and the landless]”.

His final point was that;

“The ‘social’ in social forestry should be understood to signify a broader meaning than individual behavioral change alone: it includes collective action, institutional development, and the establishment of enduring social structures and value systems that activate and organise individual actors” (Cernea, 1989:3).

Noronha & Spears (1985:229) identified some key factors that are important in social forestry projects;

“The design of projects with and for the people implies an understanding of group processes and socio-economic and cultural patterns - the needs and goals of the people, how they can be reached, under what conditions the people would participate, [and] how benefits accruing from the project would be appropriated and distributed”.

Participation of the rural population is implicit in most of these conceptualisations of social forestry, but the nature of participation remains vague. The people are generally perceived as rural dwellers, farmers, the landless, or the poor. Cernea’s recent study of social forestry experience explored why social forestry strategies have not been more successful. He concluded that the lack of specificity and loose conceptualisation of the word community and the

failure to undertake more detailed sociological analysis to understand who the social actors are and how they interact were the main reasons. He saw the missing ingredients as the failure to identify appropriate social units and to match these social groups with the technologies employed as well as the absence of social engineering, such as group formation and maintenance, incentives and penalties, communication, and benefit distribution to ensure objectives are achieved.

Social forestry may involve a variety of social units from large communities to individual farmers. The FAO study, 'Tree Growing for Rural People' identified three broad approaches to community forestry activities: communal forestry, farm forestry for household use and farm forestry for the market, that is, cash crops. It also distinguishes three types of land on which any of the above can operate - private, communal or government land (FAO, 1985:44-48). The definition of communal forestry included rural communities as well as smaller user groups, such as schools, cooperatives, youth or women's groups. Cernea called for a clearer definition of forestry involving the whole community, such as a village which tends to be highly heterogeneous and stratified and other approaches to forestry which involve groups that are either homogeneous or share common interests, such as group farm forestry, forestry cooperatives and associations, age groups, women's groups and watershed forestry (Cernea, 1989:55-70). Farm forestry refers to forestry in which the social unit is the household or individual family. The FAO study was less specific about what this means than Cernea. Cernea saw the farm family unit as culture specific and inclusive of "a nuclear family, an extended family, or even a lineage group living in the same compound" (Cernea, 1989:48). The main distinction made between communal forestry and farm forestry is that the former promotes

joint tenure and ownership while the latter promotes individual ownership. The former invests management authority over tree planting in a large non-homogeneous entity, while the latter vests it in the head of the household or family group.

Debate in the literature over the efficacy of farm forestry versus community forestry concerns who is able to participate and who benefits. A distinction must be made between farm forestry for local needs and farm forestry for the market. From experience in India, in particular, it has been argued that commercial farm forestry approaches will only benefit the wealthier farmers who are able to risk investing in tree planting. Indirectly, such ventures may disadvantage the poor or landless in reducing their access to fuel or fodder, diverting the use of agricultural land from food production to tree growing and displacing rural labourers in the agricultural sector. It is also unlikely that such ventures would address environmental concerns as the motive is tree production for profit (FAO, 1985:83-86). However, the failure of community forestry ventures have led to disillusionment illustrated in the following quotation;

“Communal forestry activities have seldom managed to meet the expectations which have been placed on them .... They have been burdened with rhetoric and over-ambitious objectives ... and communal management, land and benefit distribution have proven to be much more complex in communal forestry activities than proponents had expected” (FAO, 1985:65).

One major obstacle identified is the social, economic and political heterogeneity in rural communities which militates against cooperative actions for the common good (FAO, 1985:61). Sen and Das (1987:4) concluded that lack of participation was an important problem of community forestry programmes. Cernea (1989:37-38) went further stating that;

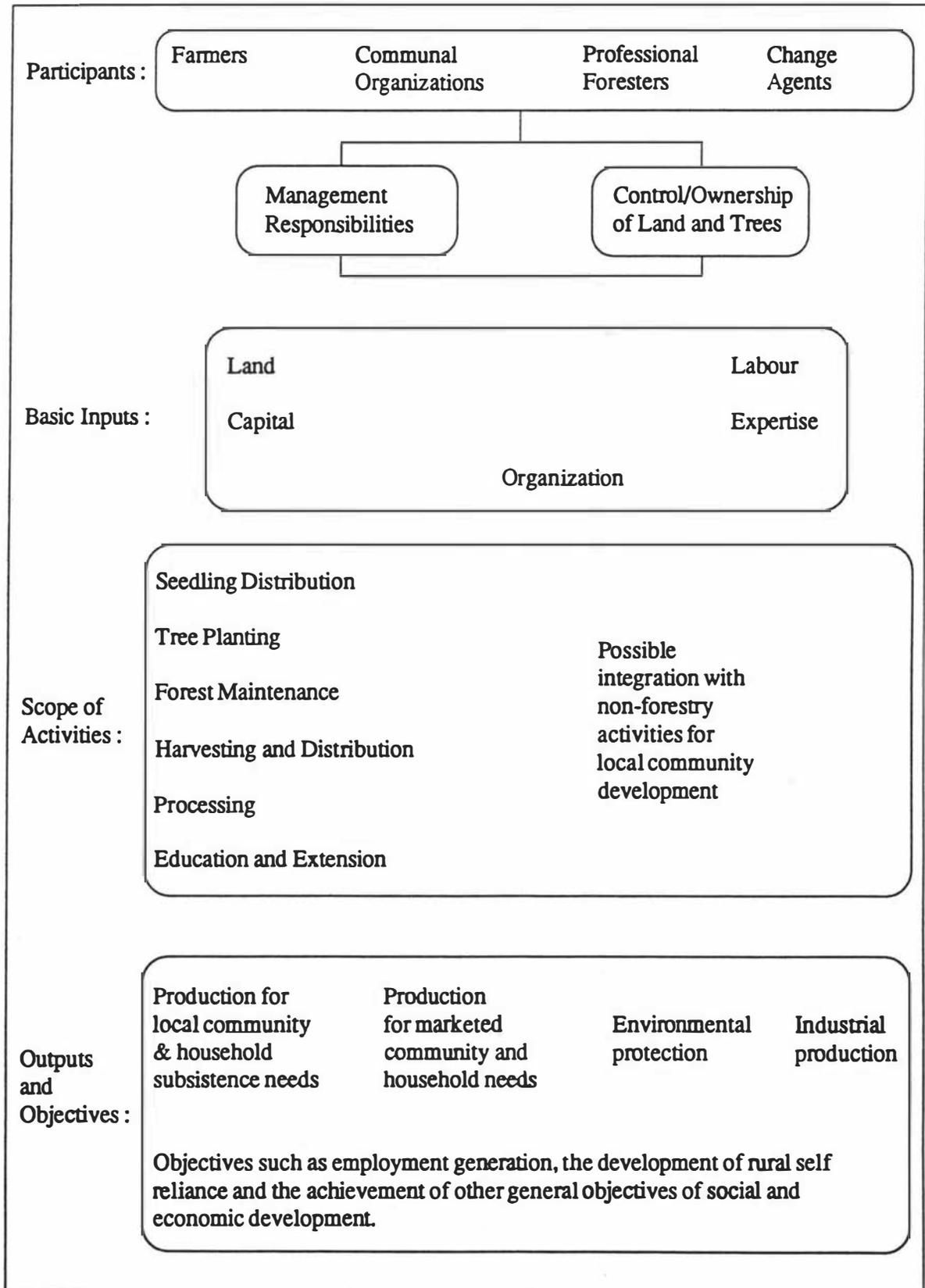
“The many community woodlot projects initiated during the last dozen years amount to an extraordinarily telling case of an international program intended to capture popular participation, which nevertheless was launched and generously financed without having elementary understanding of the kind of social process and system needed to put it in motion. Financial resources were made readily available for the technical act of planting trees within a complex socio-technical process, but before the social part of this process of constructing new norms and institutions was formulated theoretically or tested experimentally”.

While Cernea accepted that it was possible for a community forestry project to work in specific structural, cultural or political conditions, he identified seven basic sociological reasons why “communities as population clusters cannot and should not be treated as ready-to-use corporate actors for afforestation programs” (Cernea, 1989:39). Briefly, these were that communities and villages are not necessarily corporate organisations, the interests of subgroups are too different, community land may be limited, the tenure status of common land is often uncertain, authority systems and powerful subgroups often dominate village life, it is difficult working out distributional arrangements and usually, communities are not organized as joint producers. Cernea argued for more homogeneous groups, whether family or local organisations or particular interest groups, as the better social units for forestry projects.

## **Key factors in the design of social forestry projects**

As the previous section suggests, there are significant obstacles in developing effective social forestry strategies. These require policies which treat people as social actors rather than more conventional industrial forestry strategies which were seen as socially neutral and focussed on trees. Social forestry programmes thus involve a much greater variety of actors, types of activities and objectives. Figure 3.1 shows this diagrammatically.

**Figure 3.1 Components of Community Forestry Strategies**



Source: FAO, 1985:46

Cernea (1989:30) highlighted the need to address political, social, economic, cultural and institutional factors in designing social forestry strategies and projects. He particularly emphasised the need to find the right fit between the technical/biological elements of forestry and the social units which will be involved. From his experience, social forestry still requires technical knowledge, but the best technical approach may not be the most appropriate from a social or cultural point of view. Conventional forestry approaches need to be mediated by social considerations and foresters used to conventional approaches need to be aware of the other dimensions in a social forestry project. Cernea identified three key elements in designing social forestry strategies around specific social actors, namely; "group creation or strengthening, providing economic incentives and tangible benefits, and increasing awareness about the need for afforestation" (Cernea, 1989:30).

Among many possible areas of sociological enquiry, Noronha & Spears (1985:230) identified four key issues for the design of social forestry projects: population, land, labour and social organisation. Population was considered important because the availability and use of land is dependent on settlement patterns, the rate of population growth and the degree of homogeneity in the area concerned. Settlement patterns (whether the people live closely together or are widely dispersed) affect project design, the number of people needed to work on a project and communication systems. Population growth influences demand for land for other uses and how much is available for the project. The homogeneity of the community would affect how people work together to achieve project objectives. Land was seen as a critical factor because of the communal nature of land ownership and use in many Third World societies. Despite modern systems of land registration introduced into many societies, traditional systems of

ownership and use remain widespread. Conflict often exists between statutory title to land (*de jure* ownership) and traditional land use patterns (*de facto* ownership). The land tenure system affects the way land is used, held and transferred. For many peoples, the land has spiritual meaning as well as social status and economic meaning. The long term nature of some reforestation activities will have important implications not only in terms of ownership but also traditional use rights. These will affect the attitude of people to planting trees. A number of issues regarding labour are important. These include the traditional division of labour, whether labour is available, who should provide it, whether it should be paid (and if so, how) or voluntary and other opportunities for its use. The availability of labour is not always obvious. Rural underemployment or unemployment does not necessarily mean labour will be available for a particular social forestry project. Cultural factors, the need for labour for other activities, availability of other opportunities and rates of pay may all influence whether labour requirements can be met. The impact of payment and type of work offered may have implications for the long term sustainability of the project. Whether individuals will contribute free labour will depend on their perceived interest in the project and what benefits, financial or otherwise, they believe will be gained from participation. Finally the form of organisation of labour also needs to be studied. Whether a project is undertaken within a community, either by the community as a whole or a social unit or sub-group within it or among a number of communities, the form of social organisation and how change occurs needs to be understood. The inter-relationships between people, the forms of leadership, the way decisions are made and how disputes are settled will all affect the implementation of a social forestry project.

Gregersen et.al., (1989:93-94) looked in detail at the planning and implementation of social forestry projects. From a study of past experience, both successes and failures, they classified eight factors which could improve the success rate. In brief these were: learning about local communities and their institutions, deciding on the social units of organisation with which to work, developing incentives to motivate local participation, dealing with land constraints and needs, administering and coordinating projects, monitoring and evaluating social forestry activity, education for social forestry and research to develop technologies to support social forestry.

These factors address two areas of concern that are particularly critical for policy makers and planners if they want to make progress in addressing poverty, food security and environmental concerns through social forestry projects. The first is the generation of widespread, local, voluntary involvement in sustainable social forestry activities; the second the effectiveness and efficiency of outside intervention to help local communities plan, organise, finance, manage and implement social forestry projects and programs. Key issues that need to be considered in the first area (Gregersen et. al., 1989:232-237) include the understanding and involvement of local communities early in the planning process, reducing conflicts between land uses and between community factions, starting small and simple and building up participation through the demonstration effect, building on market incentives, using subsidies carefully, finding land or tree products for the landless, dealing with the use and management of natural forests, building on existing practices which are sustainable, ensuring adequate benefits for and participation of women, reducing risk and uncertainty for participants, ensuring short-term benefits and avoiding cash flow problems, and recognising the importance of fodder and grass. The

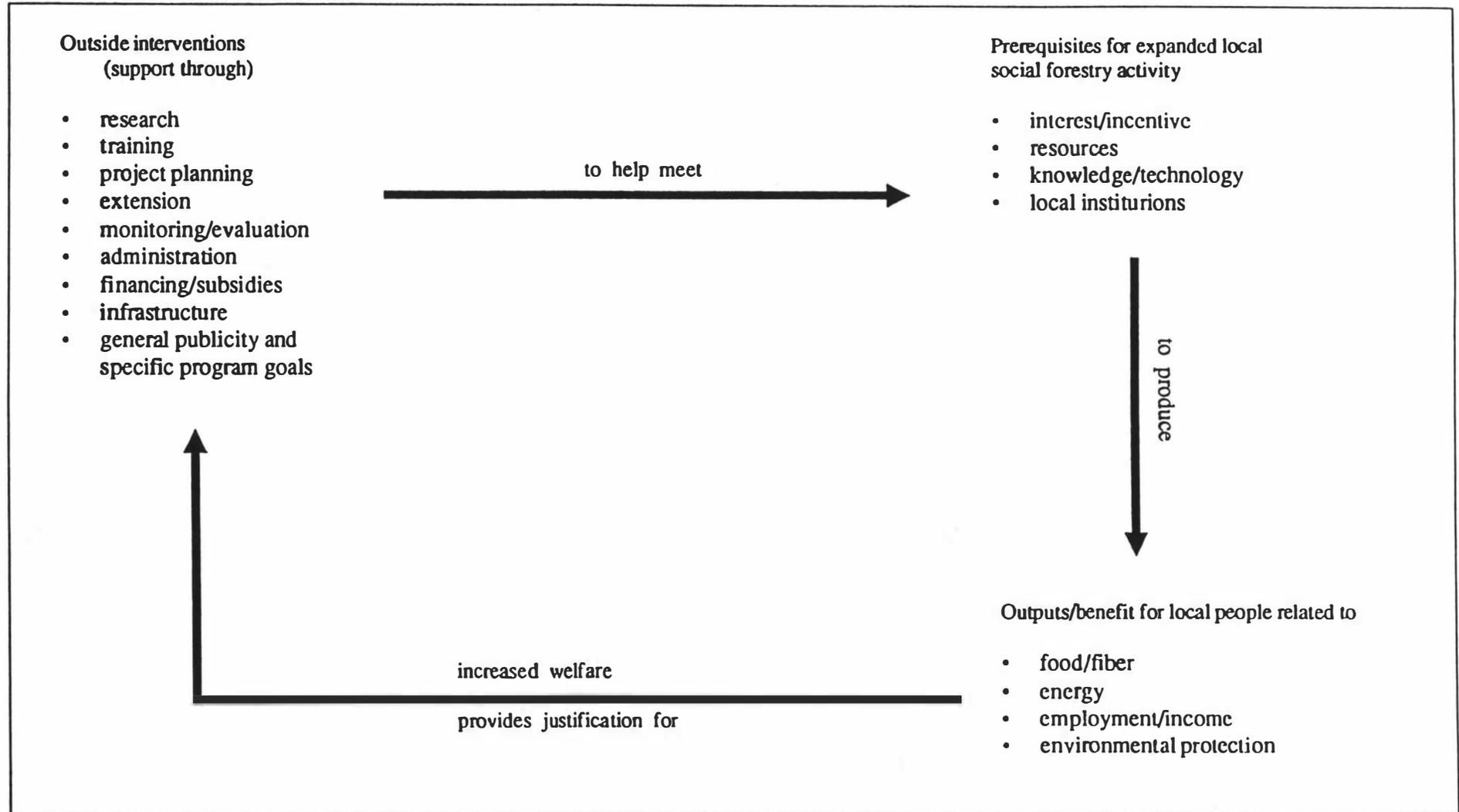
relationship between outside interventions and local involvement in social forestry activities is shown in Figure 3.2. It shows the kind of support that outside agencies (government bodies, international agencies or non-governmental organisations) can provide to meet the prerequisites for social forestry activity which lead to benefits for the local communities involved and downstream benefits which in turn, justify further interventions.

Key issues identified by Gregersen et.al. (1989:237-242) as important in providing effective and successful outside support for social forestry programmes include the generation political support, building flexibility into programmes, choosing the appropriate administrative organisation, retraining foresters or getting new personnel involved and reducing forest service resistance to social forestry, working with the right local leaders and institutions including NGOs, organising extension activities, ensuring that logistical support is adequate, including adequate monitoring and evaluation efforts, sourcing and delivery of finance, focusing research on the right problems and reconciling technical and social welfare objectives.

## **A working definition of popular participation in forestry**

The discussion above and in Chapter 2 reviewed the literature on popular participation in development and more specifically in forestry. It outlined the different ways the concept of popular participation has been understood and interpreted from different theories and from the practice of development. It noted obstacles and constraints to putting participation into practice and identified some successes and failures from past experience. It analysed why and how people's participation has become an important feature of rural development

**Figure 3.2 The Role and Impact of Outside Intervention in Social Forestry Projects**



Source: Gregersen, Draper and Elz, 1989:237

projects in the forestry sector, and what is needed to ensure greater success in such projects.

Before providing a framework for analysis of the case study, it is necessary to provide a working definition of popular participation in forestry, against which the case study can be discussed. The above survey of the literature provides the basis for establishing such a definition. Clearly, no universal definition exists and each writer will impose an element of subjective judgment onto his or her analysis of development theory and practice, reflecting personal values, ideology and experience. Such elements are present in the following definition.

The definition of popular participation considered most useful is that provided by Pearce and Stiefel (1979:8) and referred to in Chapter 2:

“Participation is 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”.

Fundamental to this definition is the idea that participation is a process. Also important is the concept of empowerment of people through their own collective action and organisation in order to gain access to resources and to increase their decision-making ability. Other factors considered important are the focus on the poorer or disadvantaged groups in society, the understanding of participation as both means and end and the involvement of some outside facilitation (not control) to promote, encourage or organise participation. Recent literature on social forestry is consistent with such an understanding of people’s participation. For example, Noronha & Spears (1985:229) identified key elements as the direct participation of, and benefits to, the intended beneficiaries and the focus on involvement to meet local needs. Also Cernea (1989:3) concluded:

“The social in social forestry should be understood to signify a broader meaning than individual behavioural change: it includes collective action, institutional development, establishment of enduring social structures and value systems that activate and organise individual actors”.

This understanding of popular participation in forestry is open ended and while it clearly indicates key elements of the concept, it allows scope for a variety of forms of participation, by different groups of people, to achieve many objectives with input from diverse agencies. It does not exclude a potentially positive role for governments or foreign agencies in promoting people’s participation, although the previous discussion has highlighted some of the constraints on this occurring.

Much of the literature, including that on social forestry, has examined people’s participation in the context of projects or programmes initiated or supported by outside agencies. It is recognised that this is a subset only of the possible mechanisms for promoting effective popular participation but, nevertheless, a dominant one. Some have argued that such an approach, despite its various constraints and limitations, can promote popular participation in terms of the working definition outlined above. Others would claim that real empowerment of the people is unlikely to occur through government or aid sponsored projects because of conflicting objectives and approaches. The case study which will be discussed below, is of a government supported, foreign-assisted forestry project with social forestry objectives. It will seek to explore the hypothesis that popular participation in forestry as defined above can be promoted by government and aid agencies.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **A Framework for Analysis**

The literature discussed in the last two chapters helps specify key factors to be explored in popular participation in the case study. Specifically, Gow and Vansant (1983) listed a number of operational steps which they considered necessary for creating effective participation. Gregersen et. al. (1989) identified lessons from past social forestry practice that might be applied to future projects. Noronha & Spears (1986) and Cernea (1985, 1989) highlighted key sociological variables that need to be taken into account in implementing social forestry projects. These provide important reference points for analysis of the case study and the factors which have contributed to the extent of participation in it.

At the end of Chapter 3, a working definition of popular participation as an important dimension of the development of rural people was provided. It was hypothesised that popular participation in rural development in general, and forestry projects in particular, is possible and moreover, that project aid from outside agencies, specifically governments, may, but does not necessarily, assist this process to occur. The present interest is in testing this hypothesis and exploring the conditions under which official aid might promote popular participation, through an analysis of a particular social forestry project. This chapter outlines an analytical framework with which to examine this hypothesis.

The framework will be based upon the work of Cohen and Uphoff but includes modifications from the work of others, notably Rambo, Lovelace and Kortén. First, the concept of participation is described using Cohen and Uphoff's model (1980) which elaborates the dimensions and contexts of participation in the

project context and highlights the range of issues requiring consideration in an analysis of popular participation. Second, the interaction between the various dimensions of participation and the project environment is emphasised by the systems model of human ecology (Rambo, 1984; Lovelace, 1985) which highlights the relationships between natural systems and human social systems. This is relevant to an analysis of popular participation in forestry which requires an understanding not only of people and trees, but of the interactions among social actors and between them and their environment. The emphasis in this study, however, will be on the interaction between human social systems. Third, Korten's work on organisational models of aid projects and his distinction between a blueprint approach and a learning process approach to project design and implementation (Korten, 1980) provides insights on the role of external agencies and how the project framework impacts on popular participation.

In developing an analytical framework based on the above, the Cohen and Uphoff model is critiqued and expanded to include all issues considered necessary for this study. For example, it does not include important external factors which affect popular participation and which are identified from the systems model of human ecology and the work of Korten and Gow and Vansant (1983).

### **The Cohen and Uphoff model: dimensions and contexts of participation**

Cohen and Uphoff developed a model which sought to clarify the notion of rural development participation in relation to externally initiated and/or implemented development projects. They argued that to understand participation in any given situation, it is necessary to be specific and saw rural development participation not as quantifiable and measurable, but rather as a

framework; “a rubric under which a number of clearly definable elements can be assembled” (Cohen & Uphoff, 1980:218). They considered various dimensions and contexts of the project. The dimensions include what kind of participation, who participates and how participation takes place. Two contexts are discussed: project characteristics and the task environment. The elements in Cohen and Uphoff’s model are shown in Figure 4.1, and are described briefly below.

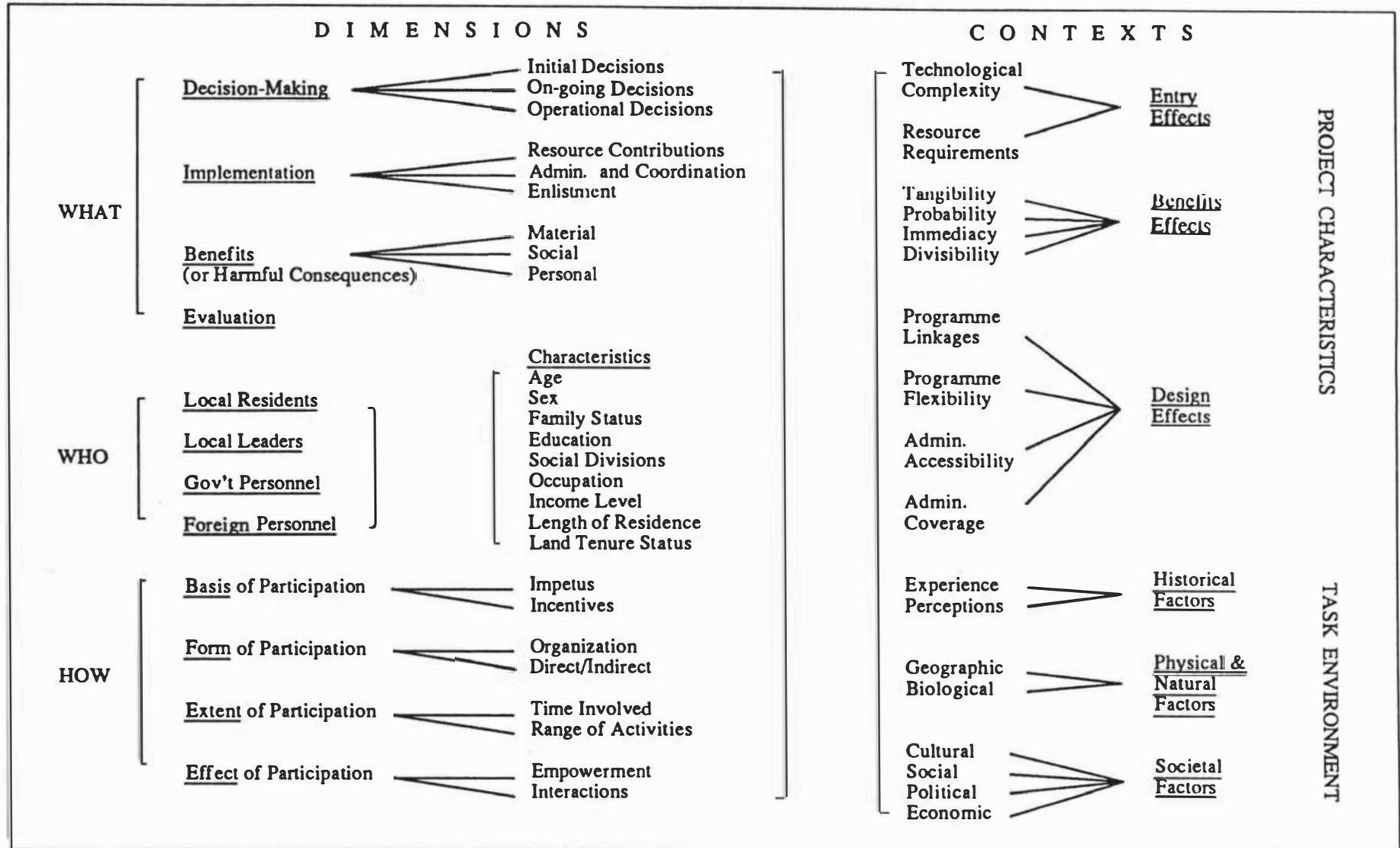
## **Dimensions of participation**

### **What kind of participation**

Four kinds of participation are identified in the framework: participation in decision making; participation in implementation; participation in benefits (or harmful consequences) and participation in evaluation. Who participates in each of these, the extent of participation and its importance will depend on the nature of the project and the environment.

Important aspects of participation are when decision making takes place and the structures within which it occurs. Three decision points are identified: initial decisions; on-going decisions; and operational decisions. Initial decisions include the identification of possible projects to respond to perceived or expressed needs. This is important because it will prescribe all further activity. An appreciation of the local context and needs through the inclusion of local knowledge at this stage can avoid serious mistakes and misunderstandings. Participation here can include basic decisions about whether a project should proceed, where it should be located, who should participate and how as well as what contributions local people should make. Ongoing decisions include the various decisions that must be made once the project has commenced. These

**Figure 4.1 Basic Framework for Describing and Analysing Rural Development Participation**



Source: Cohen and Uphoff, 1980:219

respond to the day to day needs of the project in often changing circumstances. Local participation can assist in ensuring agreed contributions are provided, disputes are resolved and problems addressed. Participation in a review of project progress can identify better ways to meet defined needs. Operational decisions are those that relate to local organisations, which have either been established for the project or linked to it in order to encourage people's participation. The issue is how participation in decisions on issues such as membership, meeting procedures, leadership selection and the influence of such organisations will affect the project.

Participation in implementation relates to participation in actions. There are three ways in which the target population can participate in project implementation: resource contributions; administration and co-ordination and enlistment. Resource contributions include a variety of inputs local people can make to the project, (e.g., labour, cash, material goods and information). Analysis of this aspect of participation must relate to resource contributions to the other dimensions of participation. In other words, it is important to consider who is contributing and how contributions are made (e.g., are they voluntary or coerced, free or paid for, made communal or individual, intermittent or continuous). Resource contributions may be both unequal and exploitative. Participation in administration and co-ordination may occur through local people being employed by the project or involved in project advisory or decision-making bodies or in organisations which have a function in linking the project to the local population. A number of benefits can occur from this. Local people can gain on-the-job training which may contribute to greater self-reliance. Also, the project may gain access to local knowledge which can assist in problem-solving, identifying constraints and links with local people. Enlistment involves the active

involvement of local people in project activities. This is different from participation in benefits because involvement may or may not guarantee benefits, and involvement in project activities may result in harmful or negative consequences. For example, the participation of a landowning group in planting trees does not ensure intended benefits will be realised. A cyclone could destroy the crop before it is harvested.

Analysis of participation in benefits (or harmful consequences) considers what kind of benefits will result and how these may be distributed. The model identifies three kinds of benefits: material, social and personal. Material benefits are described as those accruing to an individual such as an increase in income, assets or consumption.<sup>1</sup> Social benefits are defined as public goods (e.g., amenities such as schools, clinics, roads, water systems) which are intended to improve the quality of life of wider groupings of rural people. Personal benefits are identified as less tangible results such as self-esteem, the improvement of status or political power, or the ability to influence wider decisions.<sup>2</sup> Three points are important: the expectation of benefits by local people; the process by which benefits are obtained and how the benefits are distributed. The benefits may not reach those to whom they are intended or positive benefits to some may result in harmful consequences for others. These issues must be considered in relation to any kind of benefit and highlights the need to describe the various dimensions in the model and, more importantly, to analyse the relationships between them.

In participation in evaluation, two different kinds of evaluation are discussed. The first is project centred evaluation which is a formal process and seeks to draw conclusions on the achievements of a project and may recommend the size and shape of any further donor involvement. Key questions here include:

who among the local people are involved? how are they involved? and what decision-making power do they have over future directions of the project? This links back to who and how local participants are involved in project decisions.<sup>3</sup> The second type of evaluation is called informal evaluation or actions by particular pressure groups to direct projects in a way they want. This may include petitioning Parliament, engaging in public campaigns or even disruption of project activities. In each case the nature of the protest or pressure and the characteristics of those making it need to be identified.<sup>4</sup>

### **Who participates?**

If the objective of a development project is to help the poor or improve the well-being of disadvantaged groups, who participates is important given the assumption that participation will influence the distribution of benefits. Since rural populations can be highly stratified, there may be a need to consider smaller units to gain any meaningful groupings of people for analysis. In the model there are four main categories of participants in rural development projects: local residents, local leaders, government personnel and foreign personnel. Each category will assume a different level of importance depending on the purpose and objectives of the project. One broader distinction is already made by these categories: people who are part of the “target” population (local residents and local leaders) and those who are outsiders (government officials and foreign personnel). This should not be understood only in a narrowly spatial sense as it is possible for a government official to be part of the local population or local residents or leaders to live outside the target population. As well the roles and responsibilities of the four categories may be qualitatively different but not necessarily discrete.

Local residents may be very heterogeneous although some characteristics may be shared (e.g., religion, language, tribe, lineage). Local leaders will play an important role in mediating between residents and project or government personnel. Informal leaders such as religious figures or local professionals, heads of local organisations such as a co-operative society, or structural leaders such as tribal elders or government appointed local leaders may play important roles. In looking at the local residents and to some extent the local leaders category, there will be a need to identify whether there are particular interest groups, which can be defined by common characteristics. Depending on the situation, some will be more important than others. Those that should be considered include: age, gender, family status, education, social divisions, occupation, sources and level of income, length of residence, and land tenure status. Government officials are usually only based in the locality for a short period of time and are subject to direction from their department. They are usually better educated than the rural people with whom they work. Foreign personnel generally have a technical or managerial role in the project. Other foreign personnel may also be in the vicinity of the project such as businessmen, missionaries, volunteers and can influence the project. Both government officials and foreign personnel will play important roles in either promoting (a mobilising or animateur role) or controlling (an oppressive role) the level of participation by local people in the project.

### **How do people participate?**

There are four different aspects of how people participate in the model: the basis, form, extent and effect of participation. With respect to the basis of participation, Cohen and Uphoff ask a number of questions such as where is the initiative coming from for participation in this project, is it from above or below,

does this change during the course of the project and what are the inducements or incentives to encourage participation? There may be various combinations of answers to these questions, for example, the impetus too participate could come from above, involve all parties, or come from below, and motivation could be voluntary, rewarded, or enforced.

The impact of participation in a project may depend on the form that participation takes. For example, are people organised to participate as one or more groups or are they involved as individuals? The structures, channels and decision-making processes need to be considered to determine who can become involved and who might be excluded. The nature of rural development activities may make it difficult for everyone to participate at all levels. For example, participation in decision-making may be direct, or indirect through appointed representatives.

The extent of participation has two aspects; duration and scope raising questions such as how much involvement is required, can this be accommodated with other commitments of an economic or social nature, does participation require an occasional, ongoing or an intermittent commitment and what are the range of activities involved?

The final category, the effect of participation, addresses the question of empowerment. To what extent has the project increased the power of individuals or groups to make decisions and influence future events? Has participation been a means to a wider end as well as an end in itself?

## **Contexts of participation**

The discussion of dimensions of participation provide only part of the picture of rural development participation. The information gained can only be understood and interpreted in the particular contexts within which the project is occurring. In the model, two contexts are distinguished; the project characteristics and the task environment. The framework details these two particular contexts further.

### **Project characteristics**

There are three ways in which project characteristics may affect patterns of participation. These are categorised as entry effects, benefit effects and design effects, each of which is further differentiated into sub-themes.

Entry effects are identified in terms of technological complexity and resource requirements. The first looks at the use of complex technology which can restrict participation in project implementation (in contrast to more labour intensive methods), as well as complicated project design which may require sophisticated accounting and/or marketing practices thus excluding people without the necessary skills or knowledge. The second, looks at what resources are required by the project. The amount of inputs needed may limit the participation of some individuals or groups who do not have the required land, labour, or capital.

There are four factors to be considered in terms of benefit effects: tangibility; probability; immediacy and distribution. Tangibility refers to the need for people to see the benefits. For example, an early crop and subsequent

income increase will encourage participation and enable an appreciation of benefits more than a crop programme planned to ensure the stability of crop yields over time. Probability refers to the need to realise expected benefits. To participate in any project activity is a risk. Villagers with a greater access to factors of production are more likely to adopt new crops with a higher risk factor than smaller cultivators. The greater the risk, the harder it will be to encourage participation from the poor. The immediacy of benefits is important. Local community members are more likely to participate in a project in which benefits are realised early (e.g., building an access road from the village to the main road) than one which will take many years to get the benefits (e.g., a reforestation project). The question of distribution of benefits relates to the issue of whether the project design includes or excludes particular groups. There are three important questions. Do all members of the target population benefit equally? Do certain groups benefit more than others? Do certain groups benefit only at the expense of others?

Four design effects are listed in the model: programme linkages; programme flexibility; administrative accessibility and administrative coverage. In relation to programme linkages, it is easier to generate participation when a project has several complementary components. For example, a reforestation project with major benefits only in the long term may be supported through encouragement of agro-forestry which will return some early benefits. Programme flexibility will encourage participation (e.g., if the project allows local people to contribute to the formulation of project activities, if it is open to innovations based on project experience and if it is able to respond to local needs). Administrative accessibility refers to the ability of a project to make management decisions locally or quickly. If local people can input their ideas easily, their

participation in project activities will be enhanced. Administrative coverage refers to the intensity of the interaction between project personnel and local people and the services provided to local people.

### **The task environment**

The task environment describes the contextual factors which influence decisions of local people. An understanding of these factors will provide some explanation for the 'What?' 'Who?' and 'How?' questions. In the final analysis, it will be the interplay of all three, rather than individual factors which will explain the pattern of participation. The model identifies seven factors: physical, biological, economic, political, social, cultural and historical which will influence the level of participation in a project. There are many examples of these. Physical and biological factors include rainfall, weather patterns and isolation. Soil fertility will affect the time and effort required by farmers to grow their crops. Proximity to fuelwood and water will affect the workload of women. Economic factors include the scarcity of land, labour, capital, skills and transportation. Debts and obligations to landlords may prove major obstacles to participation for tenant farmers or the landless. Political factors include lack of support for or opposition to a rural development project by central or local government agencies. Social factors include social stratification, tribal structures and ethnic differences. The more heterogeneous a target population, the more difficult it will be to organise participation and co-operation at a larger level. Cultural factors include values which can discourage participation of certain groups such as women and young people. They can make it difficult to develop new structures, because of tribal or family obligations and attitudes. Historical factors include previous negative experiences of participatory projects, colonial

experience, missionary experience or limited contact with the cash economy which make it difficult to encourage new ideas or ways of doing things.

### **Limitations of the Cohen and Uphoff model**

The Cohen and Uphoff model provides a matrix of different aspects of participation. It is an abstract conceptualisation of rural development participation which identifies categories of dimensions and contexts. In analysing a particular project, two factors will be important: all aspects described in the model may not be able to be assessed and judgments will have to be made about which are important. It will also be important to consider the relationships between dimensions and contexts in a particular social and biophysical setting.

Other factors must be considered when analysing popular participation in a rural development project involving outside agencies. Cohen and Uphoff's model leaves out the question, 'Participation for whom and for what purpose?'<sup>5</sup> This question is difficult because there are several perspectives from which it can be asked. The model indicates that there are many different individuals and groups which may wish to promote, encourage, control, or even stop the participation of others. Communities are rarely homogeneous and even if this was the case, the impact of a project may well extend beyond its boundaries and increase the power, wealth or influence of the target group compared to others. Given that most rural development projects are initiated from outside, either by government or non-governmental agencies or by overseas donors, Cohen and Uphoff (1980:227) identified a key question as:

**"Is the purpose which the authorities have in mind for getting people to participate the same as, or compatible with, the purpose the people themselves would accept as their own"?**

The fourth dimension can be explored in the case study using the Cohen and Uphoff model as long as the perspectives and objectives of different key groups of participants are identified. The analysis must consider interaction between participants, whether the interests and actions of the different groups are consistent or conflict, the impact of more powerful participants on others and how these affect participation. Participation for whom, and for what purpose, adds a necessary fourth dimension to the Cohen and Uphoff model.

Other studies have indicated that external factors are important in analysing participation. For example, Gow and Vansant (1983) identified three primary categories of external constraints which inhibited effective local participation: national policies, bureaucracies of both national agencies and foreign donors and constraints in the local environment. The first two were considered by and large to be outside the control of project designers or managers and largely intractable. The third was considered manageable if relevant issues were recognised and addressed. The Cohen and Uphoff model addressed constraints in the local environment in terms of its impact on the patterns of rural development participation. National policies and bureaucracies are not explicitly covered by their model but are significant in terms of their potential impact on project outcomes. They are explicitly included in the analytical framework for this study, particularly since the role of the bureaucracies of both the donor agency and the host country in promoting or inhibiting popular participation is a key question in this thesis. These external factors are discussed further by expanding the framework to include a systems model of human ecology and Korton's organisational models for project planning.

## The systems model of human ecology

A diagrammatic representation of the systems model of human ecology is shown in Figure 4.2. This shows the model as an interactive one between two complex and semi-autonomous systems; the ecosystem and the human social system, with changes occurring as a result of flows of energy, material and information between the two systems. As Rambo (1984:39) described it;

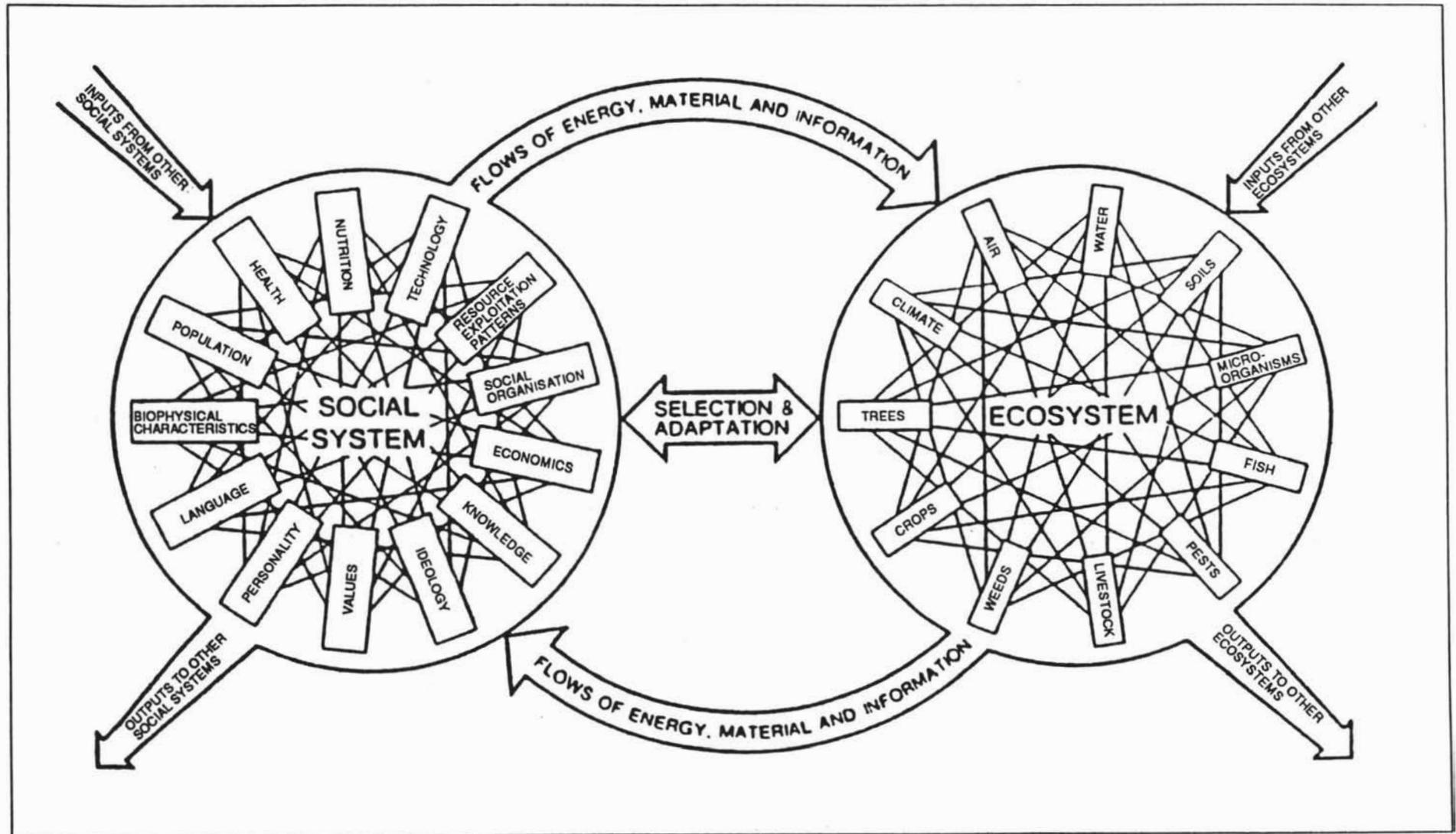
“The human social system and the ecosystem can be seen as engaged in an endless dialectical relationship, a co-evolutionary process in which changes in either system can only be understood by taking its interactions with the other system into account”.

The model also shows that this human ecology system is itself open and liable to be influenced by other systems, social as well as natural. Lovelace (1985a:22) noted that with present day communications and technology;

“Inputs from the outside modern world are constantly bombarding rural social systems [and] these disruptions are having a considerable effect on rural villagers, their lives and aspirations, as well as upon their behavior towards the environment”.<sup>6</sup>

The relevance of this conceptual framework to social forestry is in the reasons for, and the nature of, social forestry activities. Social forestry was a response to the realisation of the dependence and impact of human societies on the forests and vice versa. The systems model of human ecology emphasises the interdependence of various systems. It stresses the need to consider the impact of changes of each system on the others. Therefore a specific project can not be analysed in a vacuum without considering wider issues and systems. While conventional forestry projects have mainly been concerned with the technical aspects of forestry production and management, social forestry projects have focussed on technical and social aspects as well as the interaction between the two. This makes a social forestry project much more complex. The biological and

Figure 4.2 Systems Model of Human Ecology



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Source: Lovelace, 1985:24

physical aspects are still important, but in addition the social system itself and the relationships between people and their environment need to be considered. Lovelace (1985a:40-43) identified four critical social factors which influence such projects: cultural knowledge and values regarding forestry; availability of resources (land, capital, materials, and labour); social constraints on resource management; and social competition and conflict over resources. He also identified five often unintentional and unanticipated effects of social forestry programmes on the social system: an increased gap between the rich and the poor; alteration of the balance of work and rewards between men and women; changing nutritional levels; health effects; and increasing local dependency on national and international markets (Lovelace, 1985a:43-44).

The literature on social forestry highlights the significance of socio-economic factors in project design and implementation if objectives are to be achieved. The human ecology model demonstrates the need to take a holistic approach to social forestry and address both aspects as well as the inter-relationship between the two. The case study will be assessed in terms of whether its proponents and implementers were aware of a human ecology perspective and how this was translated into project design and implementation.

## **Korten's organisational models for project planning**

The project is the basic unit of much bilateral and multilateral development assistance. As such, it is not surprising that much of the analysis of popular participation has focussed on participation within aid projects. Is a project an appropriate framework for the promotion of popular participation? Korten (1980) argued that the approach taken to project planning and

management and the need to move away from the conventional blueprint approach to a new model, the learning process approach were critical if participation is to have meaning. These two approaches are contrasted below.

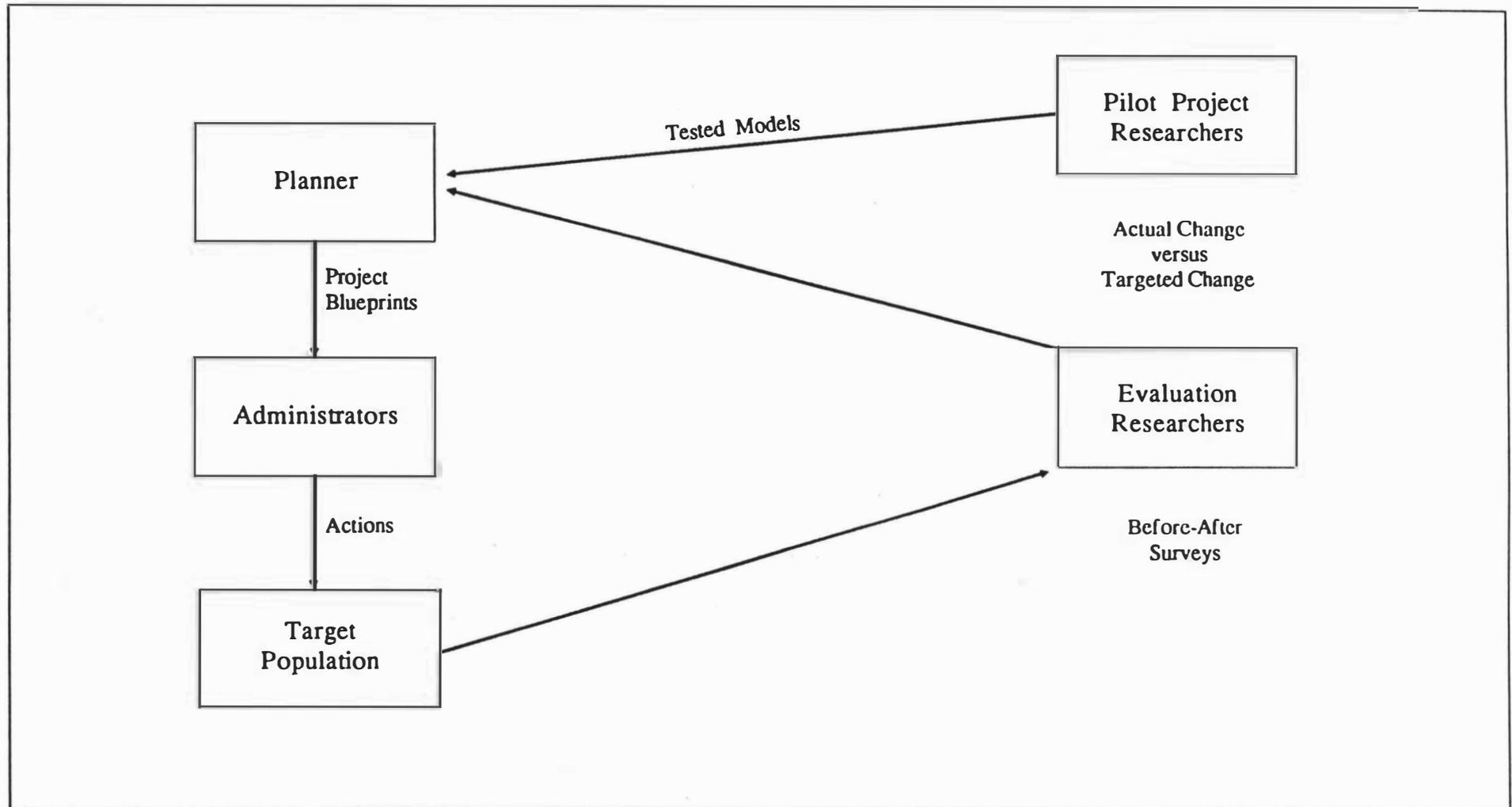
### **The blueprint approach**

Many projects arise from a formal, top down, centralised planning process, whereby national goals and objectives are set and national, regional or sectoral targets are identified. Programmes and project are thus the instruments of national development plans. Aid donors discuss with a partner government or agency what contribution will be made and participate in the identification, design, implementation and evaluation of agreed activities. In this context, the project has a particular meaning. It is an intervention which has definite goals, a specified timeframe, and detailed specification of resource requirements and intended outcomes. Its design is based on the most cost-effective option available. Its implementation is carefully monitored to ensure that resources are spent as intended and evaluation at the end of the project cycle seeks to measure the achievement of the defined goals. This approach to project planning and management is commonly known as the “blueprint approach”. It is portrayed in Figure 4.3.

Korten (1980:18) accepted that such a approach may be appropriate for large projects with discrete and visible outcomes but added that its assumptions and procedures continue to dominate most rural development programming, despite its inadequacy for the job. He argued against the blueprint approach for rural development projects because;

**“The objectives [of such projects] are more often multiple, ill-defined and subject to negotiated change, task requirements are unclear, outcomes unbounded by time, environments unstable and costs unpredictable”.**

Figure 4.3 The Blueprint Approach to Development Programming



## **A learning process approach**

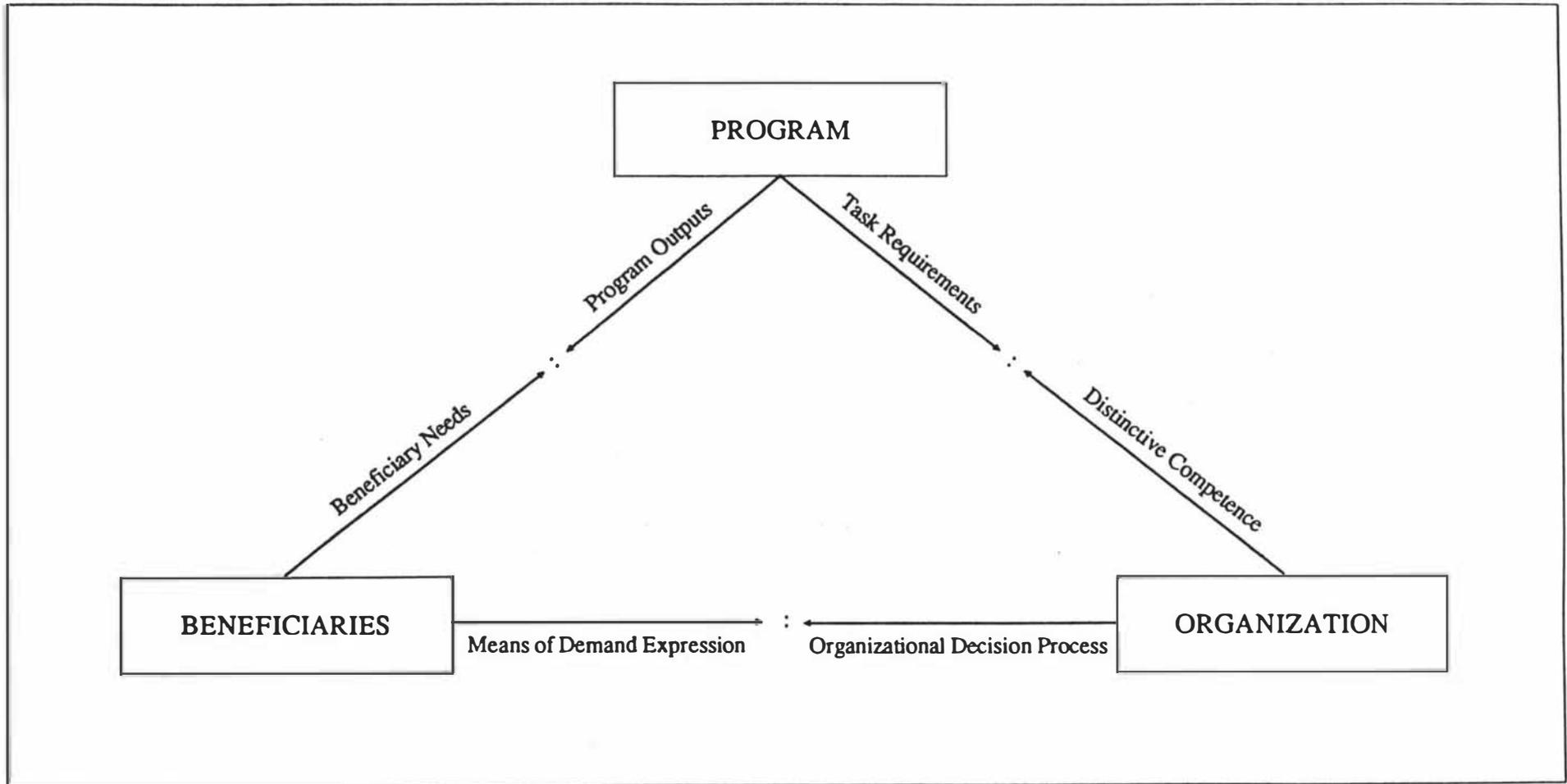
After analysing a number of apparently successful rural development projects of different kinds, Korten (1980:17) concluded:

“Each project was successful because it had worked out a programme model responsive to the beneficiary needs at a particular time and place and each had built a strong organisation capable of making the program work”.

He related this to a model developed in business studies which highlighted the importance of the relationships between task, context and organisational variables. This is represented in Figure 4.4. The common element of the successful projects studied were not the programme “blueprints” but rather the process by which both programme and organisation were developed together. A key element of the learning process approach was identified as organisational responsiveness defined as an ability to embrace error, to plan with people, and to link knowledge building with action. This is contrasted with conventional project planning approaches which seek to deny or externalise error, to treat people as objects rather than subjects of their own development and to plan in isolation from contextual realities. The learning process approach to project planning and implementation is more in keeping with the concept of popular participation. It stresses process as well as product and the need to build organisation and people’s capabilities through the project rather than emphasising only outputs.

Korten is pessimistic about the ability of government or multilateral aid agencies to apply a learning process approach to rural development because of imperatives that drive them, such as the bureaucratic need to disburse large amounts of money within specified time periods, established programming procedures which are better suited to large capital intensive development projects than to people-centred projects, and their preference for visual projects which

**Figure 4.4 The Learning Process Approach to Project Planning  
Schematic Representation of Fit Requirements**



show quick results rather those which focus on institution-building, training, research or social analysis. Korten (1980:5) identified five contradictions in foreign assistance programming which need to be addressed if rural development participation is to be achieved. These include projects which are: small rather than large; administrative and personnel-intensive than capital and import-intensive; difficult to monitor and inspect rather than easy to monitor and inspect; slow to implement rather than quick to implement; and unsuitable for complex techniques of project appraisal rather than suitable for social cost-benefit analysis.

This discussion raises the key question as to whether the bureaucratic systems and procedures utilised by foreign aid agencies and developing country governments are sufficiently flexible to allow a learning process approach to rural development planning. The case study will examine the possibilities and constraints that existed in the situation being studied and how systems and procedures affected people's participation and the outcomes of the project.

## **Lessons from Experience**

Many lessons may be learned from both the popular participation and social forestry literature which has analysed project experience. These are useful for comparative purposes in analysing the case study. For example, Gow and Vansant (1983: 432-440) identified operational steps through which effective people's participation might be achieved. There are eight. First, implementors of rural development projects should be prepared to follow a process approach (a similar point to that made by Korten (1980)). Second, a project should start with small, relatively simple activities which respond to local needs and produce results quickly. Third, potential beneficiaries should make a resource

commitment to the project to be implemented. Fourth, to the extent possible, projects should work with existing organizations - formal or informal. Fifth, where the environment is one of factionalism and conflict, it may be necessary to work with more than one group. Sixth, a two-way information flow (both formal and informal) between project implementers and potential beneficiaries should be established at the time of project start-up. Seventh, emphasis should be placed on building organizational capacity. Eighth, control at the local level is key to any strategy to encourage participation. Gow and Vansant's study is concerned with the practice of rural development participation, particularly in relation to the role of external agencies. Analysing the extent to which these lessons from experience have been incorporated into aid practice in the case study project provides one way of assessing rural development participation in that particular environment and provides one avenue to explore some of the key elements of the Cohen and Uphoff model, particularly in the area of project characteristics and some of the dimensions, particularly the 'What?' questions (participation in implementation), the 'Who?' questions (role of outside agencies) and the 'How?' questions (the basis and form of participation).

The practice of social forestry has not always been successful and often not very participatory. The literature on social forestry helps to highlight key areas within the conceptual framework outlined above on which such an analysis should concentrate. One feature of social forestry is the extent to which government agencies and personnel are involved in its promotion. These are often, but not always, forestry agencies and foresters who have been required to implement a new style of forestry work requiring different skills and approaches for which they have no training. An important feature for analysis is the role of the bureaucracy plays in promoting or inhibiting participation in social forestry

projects and programmes. This suggests a focus on a number of aspects of the Cohen and Uphoff model - the 'Who?' dimension and a number of the aspects discussed under project characteristics. It suggests a concentration on the bureaucratic constraints identified by Gow and Vansant and the relationships (fit) between task, context and organisational variables discussed by Korten.

The writings of Noronha and Spears, and Cernea have concentrated on sociological variables and emphasise the need to look closely at the project environment and how people's social relationships, beliefs and values will influence their behaviour. They identified key issues to be addressed as population, land, labour and social organisation. These can be highlighted in the Cohen and Uphoff model. Finally the survey of the literature and social forestry experience by Gregersen et.al. (1989) identified key areas of concern which need to be given attention if participation in forestry is to be more effective. These again highlight specific variables in the Cohen and Uphoff model.

## **Summary: a specific framework for analysis**

This chapter has developed a framework for analysis of popular participation in rural development projects, based on conceptual models developed by Cohen and Uphoff, Rambo and Lovelace and Korten. Cohen and Uphoff's matrix of dimensions and contexts of participation is the basis of the framework. It emphasises the need to identify the kinds of participation, how participation occurs and the various participants as well as the various characteristics of the project and environmental factors which will influence participation. However, Cohen and Uphoff's model has limitations in terms of the objectives of this study. It is basically descriptive and focusses on identifying variables and relationships within the project context. It does not adequately

address the role of external agencies in project promotion, wider factors which might influence project development, such as national policies or bureaucratic imperatives, or the issue of the purpose of participation. These factors must be considered given the understanding of participation stated in Chapter 3 and the objective of testing the hypothesis that aid and government agencies can promote popular participation. Rambo and Lovelace's systems model of human ecology provides a more global framework for analysis, highlighting the relevance of human social systems and ecosystems as well as the ways in which these interact. In the case study to follow, while not undervaluing the importance of the ecosystem, the focus will be the human social system within which the project took place and linkages to other human social systems through the interventions of government and foreign aid bureaucracies. The role of the aid donor and government bureaucracies is introduced by reference to Gow and Vansant's external factors affecting participation and Korten's organisational models for project planning which suggest the need for a learning process approach to project planning if participation is to be encouraged. The question, 'Participation for whom or for what purpose?' is introduced through analysis of the objectives of the different participants. Key variables in the Cohen and Uphoff model are established from the popular participation and social forestry literature (e.g., population, land, labour and social organisation). Finally, key factors for successful participatory projects (Gow and Vansant) and social forestry projects (Gregersen et.al.) provide a basis for comparing the identification, design, implementation and evaluation of the case study project against other experience.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Case Study Methodology**

In the second part of this thesis a case study chosen to explore issues involved in the promotion of popular participation in projects sponsored by foreign aid donors, is described and analysed. The purpose is to identify the extent, impact and significance of popular participation and to evaluate the possibilities and constraints on the promotion of participatory development by an aid donor (in this case New Zealand) through a government bureaucracy (in this case the Solomon Islands Forestry Division). The project chosen was a pilot reforestation project involving the New Zealand Government, the Solomon Islands Government and two landowning groups. It is situated on customary-owned land on the island of Malaita in Solomon Islands. New Zealand aid supports forestry projects throughout the South Pacific. This particular project was chosen for the following reasons: first, analysis of one case study provides a means of examining participation in more depth; second, most other New Zealand funded forestry projects in the region have followed a conventional forestry approach even when undertaken on customary land; third, there is limited experience of, and published material on, people's participation in forestry projects in the South Pacific region; fourth, most land in Melanesia is under customary tenurial systems and the promotion of rural development is likely to require a greater emphasis on participatory approaches and finally, the author was familiar with the Malaita project.

In the Solomon Islands context, where 87% of all land is customary owned, the approach taken in this project and its outcome are important. Natural forests are a major source of export earnings and means of meeting basic needs. Yet they

are being logged and degraded at a rapid rate. A major objective of the project was to create a wider interest among Solomon Islands customary landowners in using their land for forestry activities. It was the first attempt at forestry on customary land in the country in which landowning groups were actively encouraged to participate.

## **Methodological approach**

The focus of analysis in the case study is on sociological and organisational issues. Technical ones although important, will be addressed only when relevant to the discussion of popular participation. The analytical framework indicates the need for fieldwork to appreciate the project from the perspective of local Solomon Islanders, government officials and aid agency personnel. An anthropological or participant-observer approach could have been used but were rejected because the author did not consider himself qualified to undertake such a study given a limited knowledge of the language and culture. Second, these methods require a lengthy investigation. Third, the author's previous involvement in the project as a representative of the donor agency would have made such approaches impossible.

The author became involved in the project commenced in June 1986 (the project started in June 1985) after being employed in the External Aid Division of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs (now the Development Cooperation Division of the Ministry of External Relations and Trade) as an evaluation officer. In this capacity, he was involved in the project in an advisory capacity as a representative of the aid donor. Between mid-1986 and mid-1990, five visits were made to Solomon Islands. Four of these involved some study of forestry related issues and involved visits to the Malaita project. Two visits were specifically

related to the project and included participation in a mid-project review in October 1987 and the final evaluation in April 1990. Other brief visits to the project were made in June 1988 and February 1989 during different but related assignments. In total these four forestry related visits involved about two months in Solomon Islands and three weeks in Malaita. Thus, the author was involved in much of the project's implementation phase and much of the information needed to undertake this thesis was obtained through this involvement. Participation in the project's final evaluation was particularly important as many of the questions explored during that evaluation were relevant to this thesis. Given that one of the objectives of the project was to encourage local landowner participation, the approach taken by the author throughout the project has been to encourage the involvement of all parties. So it was appropriate that the methodology of the final evaluation involved much consultation.

The literature on social research and evaluation provides a number of approaches which emphasise participation. Over the last decade, a substantial amount of material has been written on alternative methodologies for, and the practice of, development research and project evaluation. This includes the literature on alternative approaches to social science research such as participatory or action research,<sup>1</sup> as well as that on participatory project evaluation such as rapid rural appraisal.<sup>2</sup> In line with the participation objectives of the Malaita project, but also recognising the bureaucratic constraints imposed by time and resources, the rapid rural appraisal methodology was used for the final evaluation. Such an approach was consistent with the author's role as an evaluation officer, while at the same time allowing a high degree of participation and consultation. While not totally participatory, it allows

greater involvement of local people than conventional evaluation methodologies. It assumes local people have knowledge and that effective evaluation needs to draw upon it. It sees evaluation as part of an ongoing process which itself influences future actions within the local environment rather than as an external, independent and objective assessment of a particular situation at one point in time which is the hall mark of conventional evaluation methodologies.

Two of the features of rapid rural appraisal as described by Chambers (1986:403) are “optimal ignorance and appropriate imprecision”. The former refers to concentration on selected socio-cultural indicators with demonstrated operational significance. The latter is the measure of detail which is, or is not, needed about the area. This approach seeks to walk a tightrope between rural development tourism (through which a superficial understanding only is gained) and long term anthropological field studies which are time consuming and often unrelated to implementation issues. Rapid rural appraisal tries to uncover, in a short time period, a sensitive, practically relevant picture of the local population and their concerns. It is a process that requires a multidisciplinary team in an intensive, iterative process within which data is collected, information shared, questions redefined and new information sought. It is a methodology which aims to promote social analysis as a practical and feasible endeavour to development agencies which all too often tack on a couple of socio-economic questions to a technical evaluation as a means of “addressing” social and cultural aspects without investing many resources.<sup>3</sup>

## **Sources of information**

Much of the descriptive information necessary to analyse the case study in terms of the analytical framework elaborated in Chapter 4 was obtained from

files, reports and discussions with relevant people in New Zealand and during the various visits to Solomon Islands. Because of its innovative approach, the project was closely monitored. Consequently, a large amount of written material was available. Detailed files are held by the New Zealand Ministry of External Relations and Trade and by the Solomon Islands Forestry Division. Monthly reports provided by the forest officer in charge of the project, minutes of meetings with landowners, technical reports from New Zealand advisers following each of the seven "liaison" visits to the project, and the pre-project appraisal report, the mid-project review report and the final evaluation report were all available.

The opportunity was taken during the 1990 project evaluation to explore the impacts of the project and the extent of participation by various individuals and groups as well as their attitudes. Using the rapid rural appraisal process, interviews were held with key persons, meetings were held with landowning communities and particular groups within the communities and observations were made of the changes that had occurred during the life of the project. In order to provide a comprehensive evaluation of project impacts and thus gain some appreciation of biophysical impacts, the social dynamics within the landowning groups and the extent of project participation, the evaluation team included six people: three New Zealanders and three Solomon Islanders. They worked in pairs and studied the project from different angles - technical achievement, general socio-economic impact and women in development. This enabled the evaluation not only to focus on the wider landowning groups but also on women who play an important role in production and family maintenance but have less involvement in decision-making. In order to do this, the evaluation team included two women, one from New Zealand and one from Solomon Islands.<sup>4</sup>

During the final evaluation, most of the principle actors involved in the project were interviewed. In Wellington, this included most of the Ministry of External Relations and Trade and Ministry of Forestry officials who had played a part in the project's design and implementation. In Solomon Islands, it included New Zealand High Commission staff, Solomon Islands government officials and non-governmental agency personnel, and landowners. Discussions with the landowning groups included interviews with individual landowners and members, meetings with groups of landowners, meetings with women 4 and meetings involving a variety of people within the landowning groups. Interviews and discussions with the landowning groups sought to identify the level of involvement of different individuals and groups, their past and current attitudes to the project and their hopes for its future, what benefits the project had brought, its impact on the individual and wider group, and their views on role of the aid donor and Solomon Islands officials.

The nature of the investigation meant that much of the information collected was qualitative. Where possible, quantitative data was sought to test observations or information provided in interviews. Some useful information on rural communities in general and some of those involved in the project in particular, was available from published surveys, including the 1982 Rural Household Income and Expenditure Survey, a 1984-85 village resources survey and the 1986 Population Census. Other information was available from a variety of national and provincial statistical bulletins.

## **Indicators and measures of rural development participation**

Having established a framework within which to describe and analyse participation in a rural development project, the next question was how to measure rural development participation? Is the objective, for example, to quantify participation in some way to be able to compare it to participation somewhere else? Or is it to measure the degree of participation and draw conclusions as to whether greater participation by certain groups would have led to a more successful outcome? Or is it less ambitious: to show that the type and amount of participation in a particular project was an effective way of achieving objectives (participation as means) and/or a positive thing in its own right (participation as end).

The general hypothesis outlined at the end of Chapter 3 stated that participation by rural people in their own development is a necessary and an effective way to promote sustainable development and increase the benefits of development to the rural poor. There is, therefore, a need to try and measure whether participation has been effective in achieving something tangible and lasting for the poor both in terms of material benefits and greater control over their own future. In the short term, it may be possible to measure tangible benefits and even some less tangible results and changes resulting from greater participation. However, measurement of how sustainable these gains are or the degree of control gained by people would require a longer term view. There is no interest in trying to quantify the amount of participation in terms of some index, but certainly an interest in knowing which elements led to positive results and might be applied elsewhere to improve outcomes of other projects.

Change over time provides one of the best indicators with which to measure participation. One set of variables includes the different patterns of participation such as the kinds of participation, who has or has not participated and how participation has occurred. If it is possible to correlate changes in these patterns, with quantifiable results or even qualitative differences, it may be possible to assess the effectiveness of participation in achieving results. A second set of variables include people's behaviour and attitudes and concerns why people do or do not participate in decision-making or why they increase or decrease their resource commitment. Changes in the level of participation over time may identify key factors which contribute to the project's success or failure and design elements which have influenced results. For example, poor labour productivity might be related to a perception that wages are too low. If wages were increased and productivity improved, this may say something about peoples behaviour (work related to payment), or about attitudes (people expect to be paid).

## **Limitations of the methodology**

The framework for analysis described in Chapter 4 indicates the complexity of the concept of people's participation. While as much information as possible was collected to enable a full description of dimensions and contexts of participation and analysis of the interrelationships, the nature of the task, the reality of the physical and social environment as well as the methodology chosen, meant that some gaps were unavoidable. Some of the more important limitations are discussed below and an assessment made about their impact on the analysis and conclusions drawn.

The rapid rural appraisal approach is undertaken relatively quickly and is necessarily selective in the information gathered. In relation to the final

evaluation, the methodology used sought to identify general impacts and attitudes towards the project rather than undertake a detailed analysis of how individuals fared. The methodology used did not include any form of sampling or structured surveys and thus did not allow for a detailed analysis of the distribution of involvement in, or income resulting from, the project. Despite this, a substantial amount of information was obtained concerning the impact of the project on one subset of the communities involved (i.e., women). Given that the communities are relatively homogeneous, these methodological constraints are not considered serious.

A more serious weakness in the analysis is the limited knowledge of how socio-economic change is affecting the communities involved in the project and what influence this had on their motivation for participation. Such information could only be gathered from a longer anthropological study of the landowning groups and surrounding communities. Efforts were made to address this weakness by drawing on the general literature and other studies of socio-economic and cultural change in Solomon Islands in general and Malaita in particular.

A further limitation in assessing impact is the fact that the project had not been completed when the fieldwork was undertaken.<sup>5</sup> It was a pilot project to test the willingness of landowners to plant trees on their own land. Sufficient incentives were provided during the pilot phase to maintain interest. However, it is unlikely that the same incentives will be available after completion of the pilot phase. The willingness of landowners to continue the project with fewer immediate benefits may provide significant insights on the impact of the project including the role of outside agencies, project management and the extent of

participation. This limitation cannot be overcome. Thus conclusions must remain tentative and based on experience to date. However, sufficient change occurred during the life of the project to enable a substantive discussion of the issue of participation and the roles played by the various participants, particularly the aid donor and the local bureaucracy.

# CHAPTER 6

## Background and Context of the Case Study

The aim of the case study is to explore the role that participation has played within one forestry project on the island of Malaita in Solomon Islands. The framework detailed in Chapter 4 suggested the importance of looking at the context of the project and the interaction between human social systems and ecosystems as well as the various dimensions of participation. This chapter discusses the context within which the project has been implemented. It looks at important historical, cultural, political, social, economic and technological factors that have influenced how Solomon Islanders see the world and how change has modified traditional beliefs and practices. These issues are discussed generally before considering specific influences which are relevant both to Malaita and the Kwara'ae region of Malaita where the project was located.

Solomon Islands comprise six large and fifty small inhabited islands ranging over 1300 km of ocean from North to South and 900 km from West to east, in the south west Pacific Ocean. While one of the larger Pacific island countries in terms of land area and population, development in Solomon Islands is constrained by factors common to many developing island countries. Particularly relevant to Solomon Islands is its isolation from major markets, wide dispersal of population on many islands, limited and costly transport and communications systems, reliance on a small number of primary products for export income a high population growth rate and the existence of very different economic and social systems (from semi-subsistence traditional village societies to large urban centres dominated by a market economy). While over 80% of the

population live in rural areas within a semi-subsistence economy, the gradual incorporation of the country into the global economy has led to expectations for a higher standard of living even in the more remote islands and villages. Most Solomon Islanders today require some cash income to meet their basic needs. While migration from one island to another has always taken place, the rate of internal migration has increased in recent years with population growth and as people look for new opportunities in Honiara and other employment centres. This has been a feature on Malaita, which has the largest population in the country. For example, between 1981-87, almost 6000 people left densely-populated North Malaita mainly for employment opportunities in Honiara's commercial sector and North Guadalcanal's palm oil plantations (UNDP, 1987:7).

## **Forestry and land in Solomon Islands**

### **The importance of forestry in Solomon Islands today**

In 1987, more than 90% of Solomon Islands' export earnings came from the primary sector, particularly from fishing, logging and agriculture (CBSI, 1987:22). The existing potential for expansion of agriculture and other economic activities is hindered, in part, by the land tenure system which is seen as a major development constraint. In Solomon Islands, 86.7% of the total land area is under customary land tenure systems (UNDP, 1987:7). A major source of foreign exchange earnings is the sale of timber, almost entirely in the form of round logs. Forestry is an important employer, accounting for around 10% of the paid workforce. It is also a major source of income for some tribal groups or families in the form of royalties from logging. However, the extent of the resource is not known, nor is the rate of decrease of the natural rain forests resulting from natural disasters, the slash and burn system of shifting agriculture, land

clearance for agricultural cash crops and commercial logging. A forest inventory (one is currently being planned) is needed to assess the extent of the present resource and the rate at which it is being lost. Some estimates, based on the present rate of extraction of logs and past inventories, suggest that all accessible rain forests will be logged by the turn of the century.

The Solomon Islands' Government has been unable to control logging, most of which is undertaken on customary owned land by foreign companies, often with scant regard to environmental and cultural concerns, though various attempts have been made. For example, at a governmental level, a moratorium on the issuing of new licences was announced in the early 1980s but it lasted only a short time before pressure from landowners and some politicians on Malaita forced the Government to rescind it. At the local level, some landowners have refused to allow companies onto their land. The Forest Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources has insufficient staff or legislative support to control the logging companies.

Government commenced reforestation activities in 1965, but replanting has not kept pace with logging. Groves & Byron (1985:21) suggested that a national forest estate of 65,000 hectares, planted at a rate of over 2,000 hectares a year, would be needed to maintain a significant and sustainable forest industry. Current replanting is less than 1000 hectares a year. Major constraints are technical and institutional, including a lack of skilled people, the structure of the government forestry organisation and the unavailability of land.

Since the early 1980s interest in finding ways to undertake a variety of forestry programmes and activities on customary land has grown. Several factors

have contributed to this, including: an awareness of the need to increase the rate of replanting to generate continuing export earnings and the limited amount of Government-owned land available; a concern about the environmental impacts of logging on customary-owned land; and the importance of the forests in meeting local needs for such things as poles, fences, firewood, game habitat, traditional foods and medicines. However, the complexity of land tenure and social and cultural factors have meant that few attempts have been made by government to initiate forestry development projects or programmes on customary land. The Malaita reforestation project which started in 1985, funded by New Zealand official development assistance and implemented by the Forestry Division of the Solomon Islands' Government, was the first significant attempt to be made.

### **Land policy and forestry development**

Forestry development in Solomon Islands has taken place in a climate of uncertainty over land ownership and land availability. According to Larmour (1979:105); the history of land policy in the Solomons is, "one of almost continuous review, interspersed with brief periods of implementation". For more than half the 85 years between the declaration of a British Protectorate in 1893 and independence in 1978, "land policy was in a state of suspension while commissions of enquiry were being considered, were sitting, their recommendations being enacted in law, or the law amended". Thus forestry development was affected by the "steady and fundamental erosion of the principle of public interest in land". The first phase of land alienation was halted by the British Administration in 1914 and large areas of land were returned to Solomon Islanders by the Phillips Commission in the 1920s. The Allan Commission in the 1950s differentiated three types of land: custom land, land owned by written title

(government and expatriate) and vacant land (owned by neither). In fact no land in the third category was ever identified.

The strong attachment of Solomon Islanders to their land, demonstrated by the large proportion of customary-owned land, means that government has almost no control over it. In a sense, land is privately owned, but by a group (usually a lineage group) rather than an individual. This affects forestry development in that government has had difficulty controlling the exploitation of forestry resources or planning large scale reforestation for conservation or productive purposes. It determines only what happens on the small percentage of land it owns; those lands alienated before 1914 and in the early 1960s. Even this land is not secure, and attempts have been made to have it returned to its original owners or released, to be used by squatters for subsistence or cash crops. One such area is Kolombangara Island on which there is a major government reforestation programme.

The development of forestry policy can be divided into five periods. Larmour (1979) distinguished four main periods. The first period, 1952-60, saw the establishment of the government forestry department and the drawing up of forestry legislation. The proposed legislation included two main concepts: forestry reserves (land allocated for long term forestry use) and forest areas (a short term means to control exploitation). Reserves were intended to be established on public land and land classified as "vacant". The second period, 1961-67, saw the development of logging and the commencement of reforestation activities. As no vacant land was found, the Lands Department bought customary land, usually under an agreement with owners to return some land after logging had taken place and to retain some for further replanting. All logging that was undertaken

in this period was on government-owned land. Only one forest area was declared before 1968.

The third period, 1968-74, saw the establishment of 17 forest areas, which gave government control over the use of customary land in these areas. This was strongly opposed by landowners. A White Paper was consequently amended to substitute licensing of companies as an alternative control to the designation of land. It was intended that this would enable government to control widespread destruction of forests, by refusing to issue logging licences. This was expressed in a new Ordinance in 1969, which retained a limited control over a small number of water catchment areas. The late 1960s and early 1970s also saw a greater concentration on resource exploration and exploitation resulting in an increase in logging and a move away from the goal of sustainable yield management.

The fourth period, 1975-79, commenced with the reporting of a Forest Policy Review Committee against a background of recent disputes over land claims and who had the power to grant timber rights. It recommended that timber rights should preferably be signed between the tribe or clan and the government, naming the timber company if appropriate. The job of deciding timber rights was to be given to the Local Council Area Committees.<sup>1</sup> The Review Committee recommended that planting should proceed rapidly on government land but also that priority should be given to establishing joint ventures between the people and government for large scale planting on customary land. There was another land review in the mid-1970s and forestry legislation finally eventuated in 1978. Larmour's fourth period could be extended to 1983, in which no significant changes occurred.

A fifth period, 1984 to the present, was signalled by a major new policy direction, the National Forest Policy, which called for a far-sighted approach towards the administration of the nation's forest resources and in doing so stressed the importance of sustained yield management, employment and environmental conservation (Kwanairara et.al., 1984:6). However, the machinery of government to implement this policy has not been put in place. Further studies were commissioned including one by FAO, which recommended a significant restructuring of forestry administration and management. As a result the Forestry Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources produced a new Forest Policy in 1989, which was to form the basis for new forestry legislation, establishing two agencies: a Forestry Corporation to manage forestry operations and a smaller policy and regulatory body. Legislation was drafted to implement this new policy, but has been held up in Cabinet by some members who see in it a concentration of power to a central authority. Such an approach goes against the new government's <sup>2</sup> objective of decentralisation. As a result the future not only of the new forest policy, but also the present forestry structure is uncertain.

In the meantime, logging has continued at a rapid rate while reforestation has not. The short term need for foreign exchange by government and a desire for income by landowners, has provided a powerful argument against those who would want to implement a planned, longer term approach to sustainable yield management. Despite disputes about who could to sign timber rights agreements with government or logging companies,<sup>3</sup> a substantial area of accessible land has been logged in recent years. While loggers are "encouraged" to replant the land, most choose to pay a reforestation levy in lieu of replanting.

On much customary-owned land, landowners do not wish to reforest selectively logged areas. There are a number of reasons. First, the forests usually have not been clear felled and landowners see them as a source of forest resources for their semi-subsistence lifestyle. Second, some landowners fear that they will lose control over their land for a long period if they allow it to be reforested. Many are not prepared to accept this, given the complexity of land ownership and use rights that exist. Third, landowners may wish to utilise the land for other purposes, such as agricultural cash crops or livestock. Given the limited availability of government-owned land, an orderly and more rapid development of forestry in Solomon Islands requires the cooperation of customary landowners to utilise some of their land for reforestation activities. Thus the Government must encourage an interest in reforestation among landowners and gain access to or support reforestation activities on customary land. This is the basic objective of the Malaita forestry plantation pilot project.

## **Land and social change in Solomon Islands**

### **The people**

Solomon Islands is part of an ethnographic region called Melanesia. Evidence suggests it was settled over 4000 years ago by Austronesian migrations and the majority of present language groups descended from these. There are also some non-Austronesian languages in Solomon Islands. These people are thought to have descended from earlier hunters and gatherers. While the majority of the population are Melanesian, there are important Polynesian and Micronesian ethnic minorities.<sup>4</sup> In the South West Pacific the physical environment and the sea played an important part in the the development of the island Melanesian cultures. The sea and rugged terrain created barriers to

contact and lead to the development of isolated and small communities and many varied language groups. Melanesia is home for around 20% of the world's 6000 languages, 87 of which are unique to Solomon Islands.

Solomon Islanders distinguish between saltwater people and bush people. The former lived on the coasts of larger islands, on atolls or artificial islands in the lagoons, their lives dominated by the marine environment. They were knowledgeable about the sea and fishing. The latter lived in the interiors of the islands, usually in more isolated forested areas and were skilled agriculturalists. The world of Solomon Islanders was bounded by a range of mountains, rivers and the sea. A variety of influences since contact with Europeans (e.g. traders, labour recruiters, missionaries, plantations, and political movements), have led many bush people to move to the coasts and many saltwater people to seek a livelihood other than by fishing. As a result of these influences, the cultural-ecological distinctions between saltwater and bush people have become blurred and more complex. While they now live side by side, language and kinship ties remain strong.

### **The importance of land - past and present**

The introduction of Western values and institutions has modified what were already complex economic and social systems. Land is a good example. Crocombe (1971:1-24) contrasts the value of land in pre-European times with the monetary value it gained with the arrival of Europeans. In pre-contact times, land was important for economic, social and psychological reasons. It provided for subsistence needs and represented security, status and prestige. In many societies, it was central to people's identity, their culture and traditions. Ownership and rights to use land were closely linked in a system of obligation

within kinship groups and between groups through marriage and other forms of alliance. The arrival of Europeans altered land tenure systems in many ways, in part because exchange systems and commodities in traditional cultures were not sufficient to obtain the European goods which people wanted. According to Crocombe (1971:4);

“To enter the new exchange economy, one had either to sell one’s land to Europeans, work for European plantations, or produce cash crops oneself. Whichever course one took had significant repercussions on land tenure”.

The Europeans brought guns, the acquisition of which changed political relationships and land ownership among groups. The new economy and the introduction of Christianity also altered settlement patterns as people moved from small inland communities to coastal regions. In the longer term, an important factor affecting the relationship between land and culture was the introduction of centralised administrations and codified systems to identify and decide land entitlement. This Western system was based on the written word and the legal principle of precedence and it could hardly have been more different from the oral traditions of pre-contact societies in which land entitlement was based on factors such as descent, residence, group participation, need and military power.

In the Solomon Islands’ context, these issues can be analysed in terms of socio-political relations and in terms of a Solomon Island cosmology.

### **Land and the big-man polity**

Prior to regular contact with Europeans, Solomon Islanders were subsistence farmers and hunters. According to Ipo (1989:122), “land produced

food for daily needs, as well as surpluses to be used in connection with the distribution of wealth that determined leadership in and between communities". It provided for all manner of social, economic and spiritual needs, to be used to sustain life, but also protected for future generations.

Land was vested in the group, typically less than 100 people. Within the group, individuals had different rights to deal in, or use, land but did not own it. Rights depended on the individual's relationship to the first settlers on the land, and could be primary, secondary or tertiary.<sup>5</sup> A distinction also existed between rights to land and rights to trees on the land. In general, domesticated trees belonged to the person who planted them for as long as the trees lived and access to them was guaranteed.

In traditional Melanesian society, various groups of people had power and authority including warriors, priests and big-men.<sup>6</sup> The latter played a key role in relation to land. As in many other parts of Melanesia, the big-man polity was central to the socio-political life. The impact of this on land and social cohesion is explained by Scheffler (1971:274):

"Though generally conceived as one or another kind of descent group, local groups were also elementary political factions. Each local-political unit was led by a big-man who achieved his identity and following through prowess in organising intra and inter-group affairs; he acted to keep peace within the group and to advance its interests vis-a-vis other groups. Relations between groups focused on relations between their big-men and were essentially competitive; thus, although intergroup alliances in pursuit of mutual interests were common, they were seldom enduring for both ecological and political reasons. Competition for the allegiance of individuals and leadership of particular groups was a source of chronic group division and consequent adjustment of land interests".

Another important factor was the variety of systems of inheritance including patrilineal, matrilineal and ambilineal systems. In the latter, entitlements could be handed down through either the male or female line. The norm of succession to leadership within this social system and big-man polity was usually to the eldest son, but this was not automatic and depended on the ability of the individual concerned. A big-man often 'controlled' land even though he was not a member of the descent group holding title to the land. The local political group he led was likely to be larger than lineage groups or clans which owned land in common. The big-man, through his customary rights or political ability commonly acted as the custodian or steward of the group's land (Scheffler, 1971:275). In terms of the political system, ownership of land was important in establishing ties of mutual indebtedness and for building a power base. Equally important in terms of daily existence was use rights to land. These varied according to systems of descent. In some societies, certain groups had access to land as a right, while others were allowed to use it. Use rights to land among lineal and non-lineal descendants of common ancestors was governed by codes of conduct but was not divorced from political influence. The need for a big-man to build the strength of a group might also lead to the granting of use rights to land to non-descendants. Other means of gaining access to land was through marriage, adoption or gift. These systems however, were significantly altered by colonisation. The introduction of new methods of control over land and various interpretations of events over generations have caused many land disputes today and been complicated by the rapid cultural changes that have occurred in the last century.

The declaration of Solomon Islands as a British Protectorate in 1893 was declared to safeguard British economic interests in the wider region, particularly

its provision of plantation labour. Because the British Government did not want to pay for a new dependency, it had to fund itself. The first resident commissioner decided to do so by encouraging plantations for which he needed to secure land and labour. This led to a pacification programme, primarily to enable the alienation of land and security of investments. The nature of this process significantly changed the social, economic and political relationships in traditional Solomon Island societies. Local people could gain wealth and power from the whiteman's world by selling land, whether or not it was rightfully theirs to sell.

### **Land within a Solomon Island cosmology**

Maenu'u (1984) has described land within traditional societies of the Solomon Islands as one part of an integrated whole comprised of gods, land and tribes. This cosmological perspective<sup>7</sup> held the tribe as the main unit of society and the most important for maintaining defence and security. At the apex were the Gods with land and tribe being equally important. These three elements firmly bound the people together. Gods consisted of dead ancestors and as such were specific to a tribe. Land was acquired by pioneer settlers and passed on and inherited from generation to generation. The tribe normally consisted of individuals sharing a common ancestor who first settled a new piece of land. In this way, gods, land, tribe and individuals were united and found meaning in traditional Solomon Island societies. The association between these different elements constituted an interrelated and mutually reinforcing system. Land belonged not just to the tribe but also to the people and to the Gods. People belonged to the Gods, to the land and to the tribe. According to Maenu'u (1989:31);

“Disturbing any one element automatically threatens the security of these societies, so that the lives of individuals and of entire communities are put at risk”.

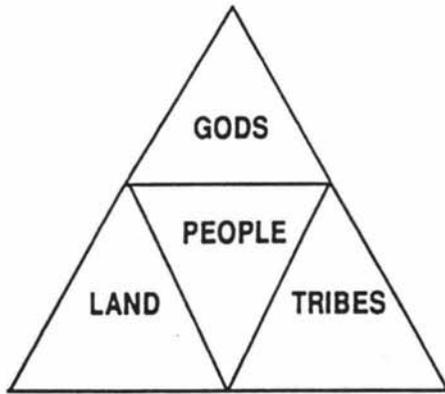
The impact of change is shown in Figure 6.1. Diagram 1, shows the structure of traditional Solomon Islands society and the association between the different elements. Diagram 2 shows how this changed when Christianity replaced tribal Gods with a universal God. Diagram 3 defines the relationship between people and the land through the tribe, that is, ownership by the tribe as custodian. The colonial introduction of an alien system of land registration took land administration away from the tribe and reduced its influence. This is shown in Diagram 4. This removed the tribe from its mediating role between people and land. Today, the legal system enshrined in the constitution of Solomon Islands and statutes does not recognise customary-owned land. Its recognition of individual ownership and the vesting of rights to smaller groups of people, as in land registration, provides a scenario in which some people become landless as land itself becomes a traded commodity. Land becomes alienated and no longer part of the traditional system, leaving people as the only remaining component, shown in Diagram 5. The original structure of gods, land, tribes and people is reduced to people. Maenu’u (1989:35) concluded:

“From the continuous resistance of Solomon Islanders to such changes, especially in land matters, there is sufficient evidence that they do not accept or want this to happen. The gods, the tribes, and the land so basic to indigenous association and community structure have all disappeared, leaving the people exposed and vulnerable”.

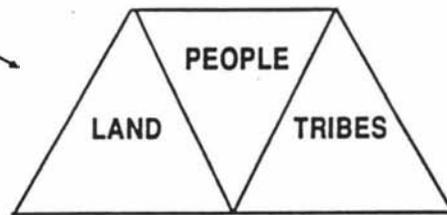
### **Living in two systems**

Land disputes have always been part of life in Solomon Islands. At least since European settlement, they have become a regular feature of relationships

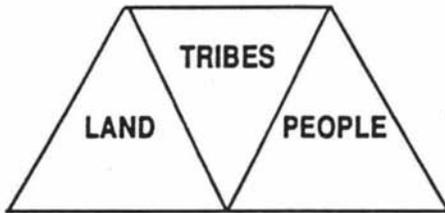
**Figure 6.1 Relationship between Gods, People and Land in Solomon Island Cosmology**



*Diagram 1 above shows the Association of People with the gods, land and tribes.*

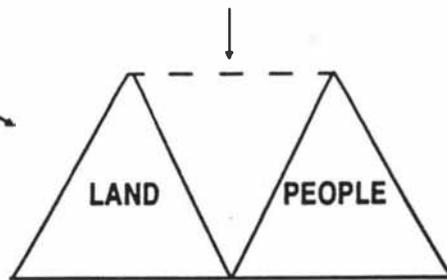


*Diagram 2 above is the remains of the association in Diagram 1 after the arrival of Christianity*

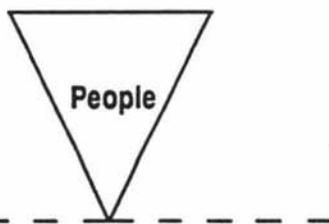


*Diagram 3 above shows the relationship of People with Land is through the tribes.*

*A gap is created in the absence of tribes*



*Diagram 4 is the remains of Diagram 3 after the arrival of Colonial Administrations. Note: the gap created by non-functioning of tribes. This gap is what land Administrations find difficult to grapple with.*



*Diagram 5 above is the remnant Diagram 1 as a result of individual registration of land. Notice the insecurity of the people. The gods have gone and the land alienated!*

*Source: Maenu'u, 1989:30-33*

between Solomon Islanders and Europeans. A Lands Commission, set up in 1919, to resolve land disputes had heard 69 cases by 1924. According to Allan (1957:45), it was significant in placing “native interests” in the forefront in contrast to previous actions which by and large disregarded them. However, both this Commission and the second Lands Commission were unable to interpret customary tenure or usage. This had important implications for attempts to codify land entitlement and to use a Western legal system to resolve disputes. Scheffler (1971:275) has argued that the principles of ownership in Solomon Islands society were matters of politics as well as land tenure and economics and, where necessary, “political adjustments were made to bring any enduring *de facto* arrangement into line with the ideology”. Codification has the effect of fixing a certain understanding of events or rights at a point in time which becomes a reference point for future decisions. The fluid nature of alliances in traditional Solomon Island society, the oral tradition and the way events and relationships could be reinterpreted or redefined to suit the claims of protagonists has led to an uneasy relationship between traditional or custom ways and legal means of resolving disputes.

A fundamental clash of cultures exists. Yet the two systems are expected to work side by side in a socio-political framework which gives greatest formal recognition to the European system while maintaining the value and importance of Solomon Islands custom. In the process, the place of land in the Solomon Island cosmology discussed above has been modified as cultural priorities have been adapted to outside influences. As a result, some Solomon Islanders will readily use one or other of the two systems of resolving land disputes to win their claims. Failure or success in one may do nothing more than lead to a challenge by the losing party in the other, with a different outcome. In such a situation, the

dispute remains unresolved and traditional means of resolving conflict are further weakened.

Security of land tenure is often mentioned as the single most important constraint on development in Solomon Islands. However, no Government has been able to find a resolution. The fundamental nature of the conflict between Solomon Island culture and Western culture and efforts to accommodate both are at the root of the problem. "As long as misunderstandings exist between the two principal philosophies about land, then the problems over land in the Solomons will also remain" (Maenu'u, 1989:30).

The Solomon Islands economy depends on its primary sector for wealth and development. While many people have had long involvement in the cash economy, others have lived a primarily subsistence lifestyle with limited need for, or access to, money. However, population growth and rising expectations have led more people to participate in the cash economy or to look for opportunities to do so. This has not been easy. In the past, most development was based on a relatively small plantation economy. Its expansion is constrained because of limited access to customary land. Smallholders have been neglected, contributing to limited activity and motivation in rural areas. A recent IFAD report (1988:17) argued that, "sustained economic growth in the future will be dependent on transforming the subsistence economy through concentration on smallholder production". Given the limited opportunities for development in the secondary and tertiary sectors (with the exception of processing of primary products such as fish and timber), this is a reasonable conclusion. The question is how to do it. The land tenure system frustrates development in a Western sense which promotes land use by the private sector or individual entrepreneurs. There are

many failed projects, caused by land disputes, the wider community undermining a successful individual or the ineffectiveness of group activities.

A Land Research Project in 1978-79 (Heath, 1979) investigated a number of attempts to promote agricultural development on customary land in different parts of Solomon Islands. Among the attempts to overcome the land tenure problems was the registration of land under a Land Settlement Scheme (LSS). Another method short of registration of land was the Land Use Agreements (LUA) through which landowners agreed to the use of some of their land for agricultural projects. Many of these attempts took place on Malaita.

The following lessons emerged from the Land Research Project. First, such schemes did not necessarily encourage people to develop the land designated under the schemes. While in some cases land disputes were resolved, in many areas, as much if not more development took place around the designated areas. Second, the intention of giving individuals and groups security of tenure was not generally successful. In relation to LSS, there was misunderstanding of the nature of land registration and what this change in tenurial status meant. People continued to treat the land and their property rights (to the land or trees on it) as if it was still under customary tenure. In LUAs, outsiders did not feel they gained any real security and those who benefitted from the scheme and government loans and subsidies that accompanied it, were landowners and their families.<sup>8</sup> Third, land disputes were most common in areas with a high population density and/or where there had been a lot of movement of people over the last hundred years. One such area is North Malaita. While a number of schemes identified ownership, there were often competing claims, which left the person or group with tenure feeling insecure. People who were excluded were

often jealous and attempted to undermine individual efforts that were successful. Fourth, people wanted the benefits of development without doing the necessary work. A major problem was the expectation of early and substantial returns, and often when a group was involved, the benefits appeared too distant or too small, leading to a decline in participation. Many cattle projects failed as a result. A similar issue arose in a forestry development project (Heath, 1979:129-134), where there was little interest in replanting after logging because of the time it would take to reap the benefits.

The issue of land has always been politically sensitive. The British were unable to deal with it and the Solomon Island Government has been reluctant to tackle it. While the results of the Land Research Project led some well received recommendations, neither the provincial governments nor the national government was not prepared to act on them. Larmour (1984:78) quoted Francis Saemala (formerly special secretary to the Prime Minister and now an MP) as saying; "National politicians, rightly or wrongly, are very cautious about legislation on customary land".

The case studies investigated in the Land Research Project, demonstrate the impact of the clash between Solomon Island and Western systems of land tenure on economic development. However, this is but one example of the impact of the modern money economy on a traditional subsistence economy. It highlights starkly, some of the realities of the articulation of different modes of production, yet to be resolved. Some people want to keep their land for small-scale mixed (subsistence-cash) cropping, and oppose large scale exploitation, but others who want quick cash, prefer to collaborate with highly capitalised foreigners to exploit the country's resources. Any development project today must operate in this

environment of rapid change and unresolved conflict between the traditional and the modern. Addressing the issue of land tenure is fundamental to any efforts to promote different land use options.

## **Social change on Malaita**

Malaita has been described as the most socially fragmented island of the Solomons group (Laracy, 1983:6). It is also the most populated. Two important early influences on social change in Malaita were labour recruitment and the introduction of Christianity.

Most of the labour for plantation in the South Pacific was recruited from Malaita, more than 30,000 between 1870 and 1914 (Laracy, 1983:8). Most were young men who were taken to work on the plantations in Queensland, although some went to other parts of the South Pacific.<sup>9</sup> Keesing (undated:2-12) has described some of the impacts of this labour trade:

“Plantation culture, with Melanesian Pidgin as its linguistic medium, created a communications system through which ideas flowed throughout the region ..... We have tended to see Melanesian societies as much more isolated from one another than they have been for well over a century ..... [Pidgin provided] a medium and network for the spread of indigenous cultural elements and of elements of European culture [and] a medium for the spread of ideologies of reaction against or resistance to invasion and colonial domination”.

Thus the technology and ‘cargo’ of the Europeans found its way back to home villages as well as the ideas, rituals and customs of other Pacific cultures. Young men who worked on plantations would have been marginal and subordinate to the big-men in their own societies. Through the introduction of foreign goods and ideas, they could gain status, prestige and power.

An important outcome of the plantation economy in Queensland was the establishment of the Kanaka Mission, founded in 1886 by Florence Young, a sister of two of the largest planters in Queensland. With the introduction of the White Australia policy and the return of many islanders to their home countries, the Kanaka Mission transferred its operation to Solomon Islands. It was renamed the South Seas Evangelical Mission (SSEM) and built its headquarters at Onepusu on Malaita. By 1942, almost half the population of 18,000 had become Christian, 9,000 becoming members of the SSEM (Laracy, 1983:9-10).

From the mid-1800s the Malaitan population was well travelled and had a knowledge of the outside world. It had experienced wage labour and developed expectations for material improvements in their way of life. The failure of the British colonial administration to deliver those improvements caused resentment which gained prominence at the end of the Second World War in the form of the Maasina Rule Movement. Dissatisfaction was heightened by Solomon Islanders' experience of American servicemen, who were seen as friendlier, freer with their money and less racist. Keesing and Laracy saw the roots of the movement in the plantation labour history of Malaitans. The indigenisation of the SSEM and the leadership role of a number of its teachers in the Maasina Rule Movement provided the network of resistance. By 1945, the Movement had established its own system of self-government and built villages on the coast to which thousands of people moved from small and isolated communities. At its peak the movement spread to Guadalcanal, and the central and eastern islands of the Solomons. It was eventually suppressed by the British in the early 1950s but had clearly indicated a will for self-government and the capacity to implement it. One of the forerunners to eventual self-government, "it expressed with unprecedented force

and clarity demands that could only be satisfied by independence” (Laracy, 1983:34).

Thus, the European fundamentally changed social, political and economic relations in Solomon Islands. Pacification changed the political relationship between communities where violence has been endemic. The introduction of money changed trading relationships. The opportunities that existed through contact with the Europeans convinced many people to move from small isolated settlements where the individual was responsible only to a small number of kin, to larger settlements in coastal areas where the benefits of work, money, and European goods were attainable. These movements of people were encouraged by the labour recruitment needs of overseas colonies, the establishment of plantations in Solomon Islands, the need to earn cash to pay head taxes, Christianity, the building of roads and the Maasina Rule Movement. Today, Solomon Islands is a country in transition from a subsistence lifestyle to a Western economy. Malaita is very much part of that change. Despite the many significant changes that have occurred in the last hundred years, many Malaitans retain a strong attachment to their land. Customary attitudes to land ownership, inheritance and use remain strong. However, the growth in population, the movement of people, the loss of traditional knowledge and the introduction of Western systems, have made all land dealings complex. This is nowhere more evident than in economic projects which seek to change traditional land use patterns.

### **The Kwara’ae**

The Kwara’ae describes both a sub-district of Malaita, and the largest language group in Solomon Islands with a population in the order of 20,000. <sup>10</sup>

Burt (1982:374) has suggested that although Malaita has been thoroughly researched ethnographically;

“The Kwara’ae have received little attention from anthropologists, perhaps because they are the least traditionally oriented of all the language groups on the main island”.

The Kwara’ae people are considered to have descended from a common ancestor who arrived in the area around 400 AD (Maenu’u, 1981:39). Over time the descendants of this person moved throughout the district, now called Kwara’ae, forming sub-tribes, clans and sub-clans. The relationship of people to the land and the social organisation of traditional Kwara’ae society is similar to that discussed more generally above.<sup>11</sup>

Maenu’u (1981) described the major impacts of colonialism and Western economic development on the Kwara’ae people. First, Christianity meant people leaving their land and living in Christian communities established on other people’s land, and putting pressure on that land. The important link between the land, the gods (dead ancestors) and the people, maintained through oral traditions and the practice of traditional religion was broken. Many people lost knowledge of their genealogies; the basis of land ownership and land rights. Christian denominations competed for “souls” causing conflict and fragmentation among tribes and clans. Second, the land courts introduced a Western legal approach to resolving land disputes. This was totally different from decision-making practices in Kwara’ae society and led to different ownership decisions. For example, in the court system, economic trees were accepted as evidence of ownership of land, which was contrary to custom. With the loss of genealogical knowledge, true ownership was hard to determine. The land courts also operated in English or Pidjin, which led to misunderstanding. They also did not decide who owned land. Anyone except the person who lost the case could

challenge the court's decision, and thus, disputes continued. The introduction of local council native land courts had little effect as they still operated within the Western legal framework. Third, there was a fundamental contradiction between Western economic development based on a money economy and traditional Kwara'ae societal values. The former is concerned with the accumulation of wealth for individual benefit while the latter depends on the distribution of wealth for the benefit of the whole community. The promotion of development projects which encouraged the former are likely to undermine the latter. The issue here is whether traditional culture is seen as an impediment to or the basis of modern development.

Land disputes remain a major impediment to development in the Kwara'ae. A system to promote economic development needs to address this concern. As discussed above, land registration does not appear to be the answer. Maenu'u argued for registration of tribal boundaries only, with internal disputes settled by traditional leaders through customary institutions (Maenu'u, 1981:35). As most land disputes in Kwara'ae are between different clans and sub-clans, under such a system, these could be resolved by tribal authorities without involvement of the courts.

The Kwara'ae have had lengthy contact with Europeans. Because of good harbours on both the west and the east coast, the ships recruiting labour for plantations were frequent callers. A government station was established at Rarasu (Auke) in 1909 and the SSEM was established in Kwara'ae. For these reasons, "the Kwara'ae were most accessible to administrative control and the economic developments which followed" (Burt, 1982:382). Almost all the Kwara'ae were converted to Christianity. Consequently, they had better access to

trade and employment opportunities, medical services and education from the Christian missions. Colonisation was also responsible for the transfer of political and economic power from small local groups and traditional leaders to provincial and national political institutions based outside Kwara'ae society and linked to the world economy. There has been an increasing involvement in, and dependence on, the Western economic system, trade and money.

However, for many people, the basic values of traditional Solomon Island society, including their relationship with the land and loyalty and responsibility to the clan and tribe remain strong. The history of opposition to British administration on Malaita indicates that people wished to govern themselves and could organise to do so. According to Burt (1981:16), there are those within the Kwara'ae who;

“Aim to unite the Kwara'ae descendants of the original ancestor under their own leaders, successors to the priests of old, who they now call tribal chiefs or paramount chiefs”.

The sense of belonging to a nation (Solomon Islands) is still of secondary importance to many people. The role of custom remains strong, although modified by Western values and institutions. Burt quotes a version of the story of the arrival of the first ancestor of the Kwara'ae, which incorporates Christian elements (Burt, 1982:374). In this way, the people have been able to combine a Christian perspective that most now hold with the custom ideology of the past; to assert the importance of traditional values and systems with the demands of living in a modern society. While the Kwara'ae have had a long involvement in and knowledge of Western economic and social systems and religion, this has not meant wholehearted acceptance of either the institutions or the values inherent in them. It has rather been a pragmatic acceptance of a new way of life which has brought some benefits, and attempts to modify outside influences to enable

the retention of traditional values. The result has at times been confusion and conflict, seen most clearly in the introduction of an alien land tenure system. Some of these issues are yet to be resolved satisfactorily as conflicting forces and their adherents seek to promote various forms of change.

## **Summary comments**

This account of Solomon Islands, Malaitan and Kwara'ae society indicates that contextual issues are likely to play an important part in aid projects. It indicates that there is a close but different relationship between social systems and ecosystems in Solomon Islands today than there was a 100 years ago. These have both been substantially altered by 'development' and external systems continue to influence the shape of local development activities and the bio-physical environment. The local world into which the forestry project has been introduced is a complex one and any intervention into such an environment is likely to be difficult. Important variables already identified in the literature, such as people, land, labour and social organisation are likely to be relevant to the case study project. If the intention is to encourage the involvement and commitment of local people to such a venture, these contextual issues would need to be taken into account. The extent to which they were will be discussed in the analysis of the case study.

# **CHAPTER 7**

## **Participation in the Malaita Reforestation Project**

The first part of this chapter will describe why the Malaita Reforestation Project was undertaken and how it was developed, designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated. A discussion of the various dimensions of participation in the project will follow.

### **Project Description**

#### **Initiation**

In 1984, two groups of landowners in West Kwara'ae, the Solomon Islands Forestry Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the External Aid Division of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed to undertake a pilot project, under which two small production forest plantations would be established on customary land. The Malaita Provincial Council supported the project which was the first in Solomon Islands. The original idea arose from the report of a United Nations Development Advisory Team (UNDAT) study of Malaita's forestry development. Its purpose was:

**"To study the Malaita forest resource and current developments and plans affecting it and make recommendations to the Malaita Provincial Assembly and the Solomon Islands Government for an overall policy to be adopted for the best utilisation and conservation of the Malaita forest resources" (UNDAT, 1982:2).**

The study concluded that with careful husbandry of the remaining wood resources (i.e. no export of logs), there was a maximum of 25 years timber available for sawmilling. The policy statement and recommendations of this report were endorsed by the Provincial Assembly. Proposals included sustainable

yield management of the existing resources and reforestation projects, including a five year pilot project to plant 1,000 hectares of hardwood plantations in areas previously logged or gardened. Given landownership on Malaita, this would take place on customary land.

A visit to Solomon Islands by the New Zealand ODA Regional Forestry Officer in 1983 supported this idea but suggested a smaller pilot project to explore reforestation on customary land. In 1984, the Malaita Provincial Government and Solomon Islands' Forestry Division identified interested landowning groups and, with NZODA support, organised a tour of forestry projects in Fiji, Vanuatu and New Zealand by four representatives of the groups. After this tour, the landowners involved discussed the possibility of a project with other members of their tribes and expressed interest in proceeding with projects on their lands. A joint Solomon Island Government/New Zealand Government mission visited Malaita later in 1984 to appraise the potential for forestry plantations on two sites, which appeared to be free of land disputes and disagreement within the communities.<sup>1</sup>

This appraisal mission reached a number of conclusions (see Kwanairara et. al., 1984) which provided the basis for the eventual project. First, it identified two landowning groups which were interested in participating in the project and which had suitable land free of dispute, and it concluded that small production forest plantations on these lands were feasible and practicable. Second, the mission determined that a pilot project was necessary to confirm the viability of the development and to stimulate wider landowner interest in establishing forestry plantations, given that landowners on Malaita had no prior experience with this form of development project and tended to be suspicious of any outside

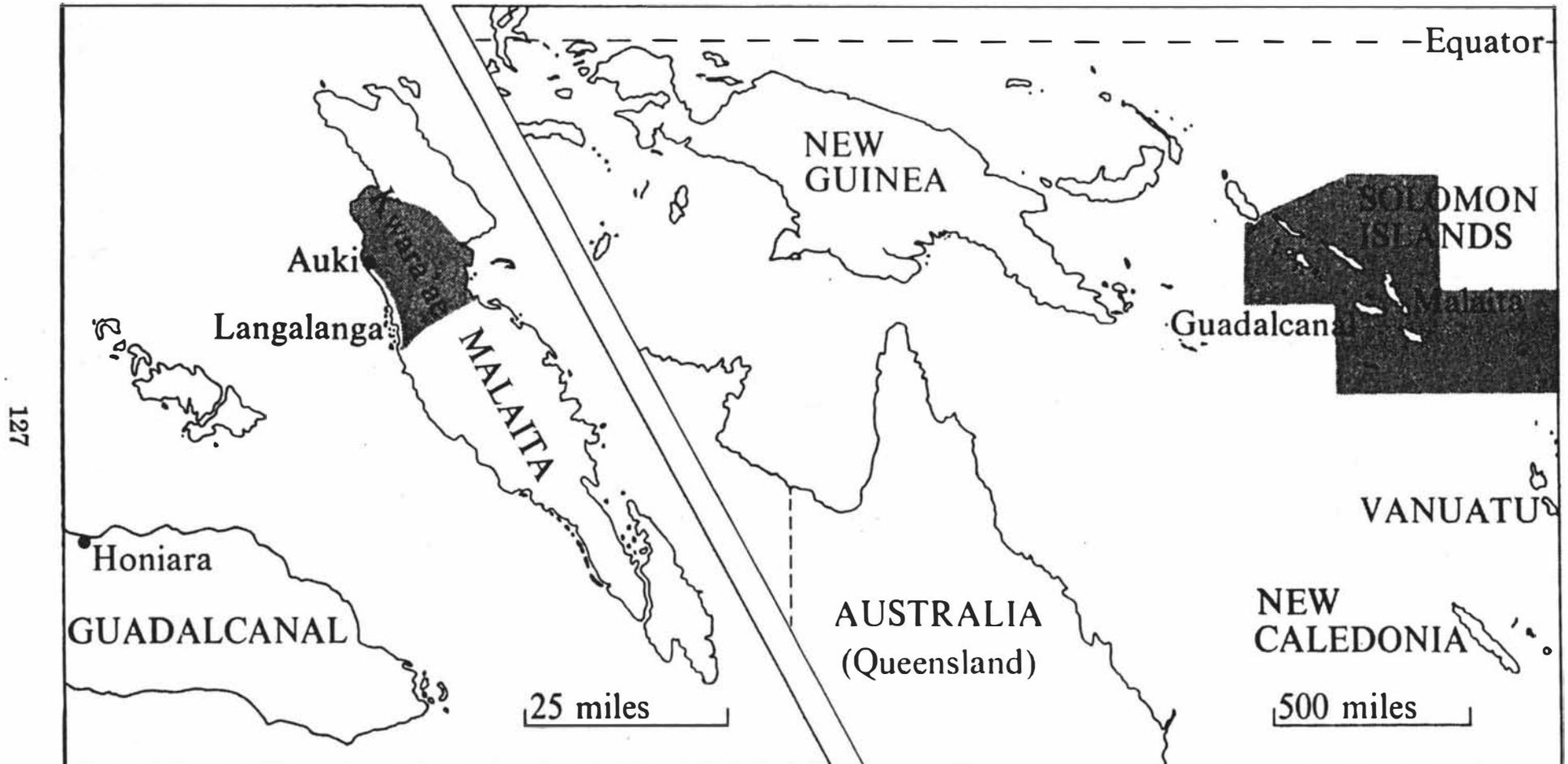
interest in their land. Active involvement by landowners who would also receive major benefits from the harvest would ensure their interest. Third, existing customary social values and structures would form the basis of project implementation. Customary leaders would be workforce supervisors, and sites would be chosen by them, having regard for protection of watersheds, tabu land and the preservation of forest which had other uses. Fourth, the project would not compete for land required for food production or cash crops. Fifth, customary owners would need to confirm legal definition of the land, through land registration, to provide security for the development. Sixth, since gross income from harvesting would accrue to the landowners involved, they should contribute labour from their communities at less than standard wage rates. Seventh, the species to be planted would yield high quality timber with good market potential. Shorter term benefits would be gained from thinnings for house building and firewood

The project differed in two important aspects from that proposed in the UNDAT report. It was smaller (260 hectares over five years instead of 1,000 hectares) and it was not undertaken under an agreement with customary owners whereby landowners would be paid for the use of their land. A smaller project was undertaken to encourage interest before entering into more major commitments. The lease arrangements proposed in the UNDAT report were considered too complex, requiring registration of the land before the project could start and increasing the chances of land disputes and delays, in effect stifling the enthusiasm that existed as a result of the landowners tour.<sup>2</sup> The objectives of the New Zealand supported project were: to stimulate interest within the landowning communities as well as provincial and central government agencies in the establishment of forestry plantations on customary land; to show that production

forestry was a socially useful and economically worthwhile use of customary land; to test the technical, social and financial viability of this type of development and the relevance of the approach taken to future projects; and to demonstrate the benefits, management operations and skills involved.

The project fitted well with both the new forestry policy of Solomon Islands Government which was to encourage sustainable yield forestry development and the land use policies of the Malaita Provincial Government. The project involved two groups of customary landowners in West Kwara'ae; both accessible by road and reasonably close to Auki, the main town on Malaita and centre of the provincial government. The first, the Saenaua Land Group was located just south of Auki (see figure 7.1). It comprised the three landowning groups within the Saenaua tribe. They agreed to a single land use plan for reforestation of part of their land and formed a committee to execute it, chaired by the paramount chief. The land made available consisted mainly of limestone-based soils in old garden sites. It was not particularly fertile and covered in secondary scrub of low to medium height. The second, the Anotafa Land Group, was at Fote, some 20 kilometres north of Auki. According to the appraisal report, this group involved the Fote and Gwetaba'a landowning villages, which formed a single land use plan in which Gwetaba'a land was allocated for food gardens and as the site of the National Agricultural Training Institute and Fote land was allocated for forestry and some food gardens. In fact, the landowners involved in this group were an extended family of three brothers. The land at Fote consisted of clay soils and replanting was to follow logging of the original forest cover. The post-logging cover was relatively tall remnant bush containing a significant number of unloggable trees.

Figure 7.1 Situating the Project in Malaita, Solomon Islands



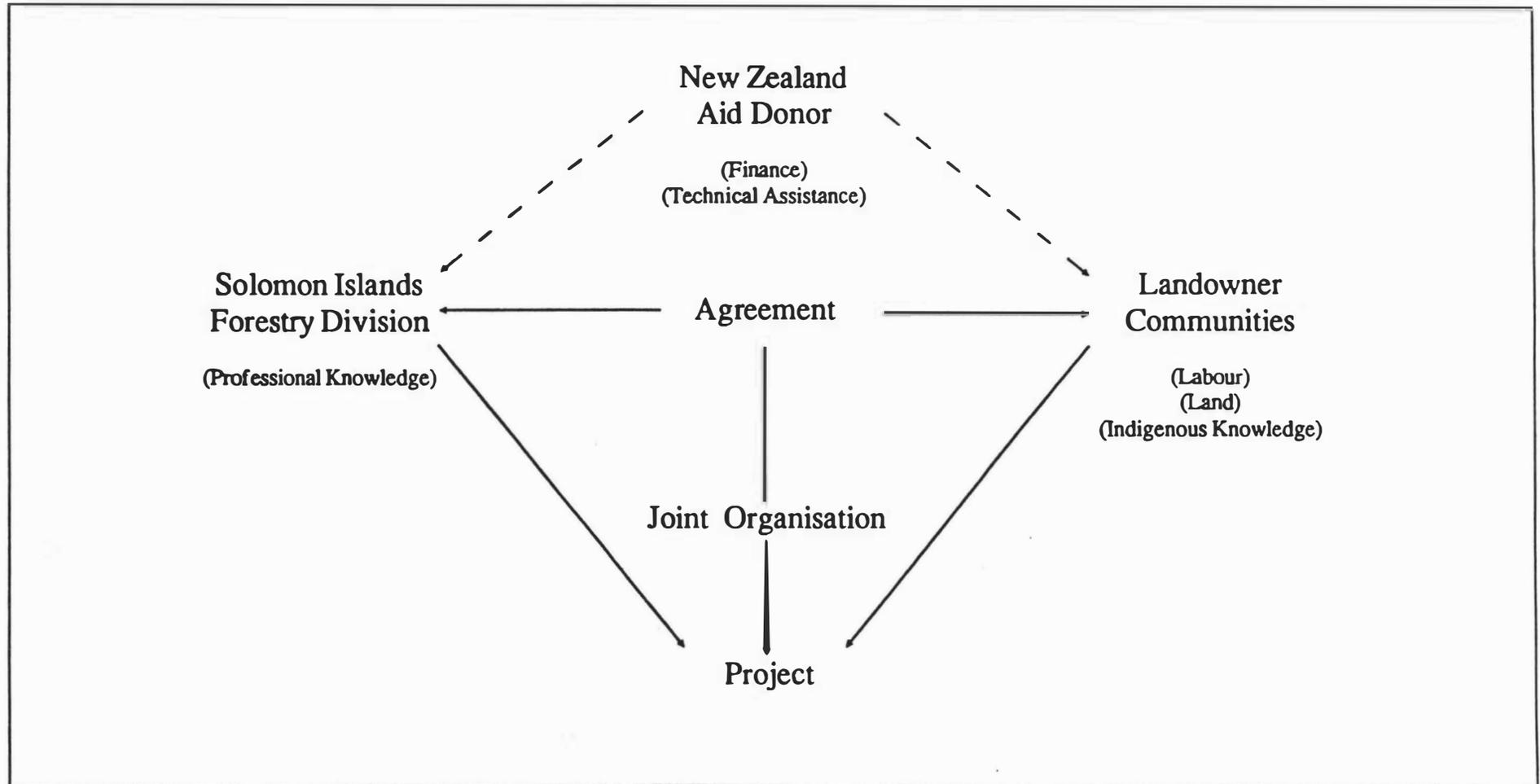
Source: Burt, 1981:1

Contributions to the project came from the New Zealand Government, the Solomon Islands Government and landowners. New Zealand funds provided for infrastructure, including establishment of a Forestry Division base at Auki, upgrading of an old nursery, some roading, vehicles and equipment, recurrent expenditure except local salaries, and payment of labour for plantation establishment and maintenance. In addition, New Zealand Forest Service (NZFS - later New Zealand Ministry of Forestry, MOF) staff visited the project each year. The purpose of these visits while not defined, was to monitor progress and provide technical assistance in the role of 'liaison visits' by NZFS personnel to other forestry projects in the region. The Solomon Islands Government provided salaries for two Forestry Division staff in Auki, a senior forester and a forest ranger. The Forestry Division staff provided day to day management of the project and seedlings from the Auki nursery. The landowners provided the land, work supervisors and labour and were involved in non-technical management decisions. A project document drawn up on this basis was accepted by the Malaita Provincial Assembly. The Solomon Islands and New Zealand Governments then agreed to fund the project from bilateral aid allocations. Provision was also made for the funding of some training for Forestry Division staff and landowners. An organisational model of the project is shown in Figure 7.2.

## **Implementation**

The project commenced in mid-1985. Initial activities included surveying the land, establishing the Forestry Division operation at Auki, purchasing equipment and land preparation. Eight men nominated by the landowners were sent to work on a Government forestry plantation in the Western Province for six months to gain experience and practical skills in plantation operations.

**Figure 7.2 Organisational Model of Malaita Reforestation Project**



*Source: Based on organisational models for social forestry projects by Wiersum in FAO, 1985:49*

Plantation establishment commenced on Saenaua land, as the logging had not been completed at Fote. By the end of the five year period approximately 250 hectares of trees had been planted, half at each site. This is approximately half of the area surveyed and planned to be planted by the end of the five year pilot project.<sup>3</sup>

Project implementation was not without difficulties. One key issue discussed in some detail in the appraisal report, concerned the appropriate form of and remuneration for labour input. The project was undertaken in a semi-subsistence economy where opportunities to earn cash were limited. The primary means of income included the sale of copra, cocoa, food crops and handcraft and casual labour. For a limited number of landowners, royalties from logging were a source of income. A landowners' proposal supported by the appraisal team, was that labour be organised on the same basis as village work unions. Under this system a village group undertook a particular job together to meet village responsibilities or to raise funds, essentially contract work. Payment was considered necessary for the project to ensure the involvement of the landowning groups. However, payment of full wages was considered inappropriate since the landowners would retain all benefits from the eventual harvest. The work union approach was considered appropriate for a number of reasons. The local people were familiar with this way of working and it allowed them to maintain their other commitments. Income generated through the provision of labour to reforest the land would be distributed more widely. It would be a cheaper than paying full wages, and since it would be seen as community work, it would not infringe government pay scale regulations. It would actively involve the communities in the project, develop their skills in this

type of development and encourage their interest in maintaining the resource after the project ended.

The appraisal mission left the decision on labour organisation and payment to the Solomon Islands Government but identified three options: employ labour at normal rates, employ work supervisors only with all other work being carried out by work unions, or employ labour at normal rates and recover costs from the landowners at harvest. In fact none of these options was undertaken. To get the project up and running the Forestry Division decided that a constant workforce was needed. With the help of landowner leaders, it identified an appropriate workforce for each site and decided to pay a lower rate than government forestry workers elsewhere, choosing instead the rate for a basic casual labourer in Malaita Province, with supervisors receiving a slightly higher rate.<sup>4</sup> This decision led to confusion and later resentment; confusion for landowners as it was different from what had been previously discussed and resentment from the workers who saw themselves as full-time employees of the Forestry Division, underpaid in relation to other forestry workers and unable to fulfill other social and economic obligations. As inflation was reasonably high at the time, the workers considered they were not adequately compensated for their work and productivity fell.<sup>5</sup>

Correspondence on project files indicated that the landowners were also concerned about other issues. On the basis of early discussions, they considered themselves the owners of the project who were being helped by New Zealand aid funds. In fact, they saw most of the aid funds controlled and used by the Forestry Division, to build an office and a house for Forestry Division staff, to upgrade the nursery, and to purchase tools, equipment and project vehicles. Some of these

concerns were raised by landowners during New Zealand liaison visits and by a delegation to the New Zealand High Commissioner, which requested that she have the Forest Officer removed, increase wages and address other alleged abuses.<sup>6</sup>

Recognising that the project was in danger of collapsing, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs undertook a mid-project review in August 1987, specifically to resolve the wage rate issue but also to look at other difficulties and potential solutions. The review team included a representative of the Solomon Islands Forestry Division, the New Zealand Forest Service, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the author) and an independent Solomon Islander with experience in community organisation. The review found that despite consultations with landowners prior to the project no common understanding of project operations existed. Landowners had not seen the appraisal report or documents which detailed the project proposal. They had thought that all funds from New Zealand would go to them. They saw themselves as having a limited role in decision-making in the project. The workers considered themselves no different from other forestry wage workers but underpaid. No formal communication channels existed between landowners and the Forestry Division.

Other issues were also highlighted at meetings between the landowners and the review team. First, the two landowning groups were quite different. The Anotafa landowning group was small and most of the workers, though members of the same tribe, came from outside the landowning family. These project workers not only compared their situation and wage levels with forestry workers elsewhere, but also with better paid kinsmen employed as casual workers on a different aid project (the National Agricultural Training Institute) on land

belonging to Anotafa landowners. These workers had no direct interest in the long term benefits from the forest plantation and wanted to maximise their short term returns. The Saenaua group involved a larger number of landowners, who had organised to work together to develop this part of their joint land. All workers belonged to the community and were expected to participate in the long term benefits. The Saenaua landowners were interested in trying the work union approach and were prepared to continue working at the current wage level if a road was built to link the two main villages.<sup>7</sup> As a result of the misunderstandings, both groups of landowners were suspicious of the role of the Solomon Islands' Forestry Division and wanted New Zealand to fund them directly.

The main recommendations of the review were as follows. First, a small increase in labour payments which would remain in force until the end of the pilot project was proposed.<sup>8</sup> Second, work unions should be tried for some tasks, such as maintenance, in an effort to introduce the original concept into the project. Third, regular meetings between landowners and Forestry Division staff should take place to discuss work plans and sort out problems. Information should also be more readily shared with landowners. Fourth, a study should look again at the feasibility and cost of the road at Saenaua. Fifth, Forestry Division would continue to manage the project. Sixth, any further assistance to the project beyond the pilot project would depend on progress to the end of the five year period and fuller discussion of the range of options. By early 1988, the first five of these recommendations had been implemented. Labour payments had been increased and accepted by the workers. Work unions had been tried and found to work well, leading to an increase in productivity. Women had become involved in the project through the work unions and began to attend some

meetings during liaison visits. There was better communication between Forestry Division and landowners. A study of the proposed road line at Saenaua indicated that it would be much more expensive than previously thought and therefore not possible within the project budget.<sup>9</sup>

During 1988, a new Forest Officer replaced the first one who had retired. Planting continued although problems were experienced with lack of seeds. This slowed the rate of planting and did not allow enough seeds for 'beating up'.<sup>10</sup> There were problems with the transport, primarily the tractor and trailer used at Anotafa, both of which broke down. A number of small initiatives were undertaken in response to the generally unfocussed discussion at various points in the project about agro-forestry, and forestry for local needs. At the Forest Officer's initiative a small fuelwood stand of one hectare was planted at Saenaua and a similar area was planned for Anotafa. Also at Saenaua, women had become involved planting food gardens under the trees. The project seemed to be going better despite the technical frustrations. However, the seventh liaison visit, in October 1989, discovered that a mistake had been made in a previous liaison visit report in calculating the work union rate for weeding and maintenance work and the groups were being paid four times what they should have been. This meant project funds were being used much more quickly and the technical adviser felt that this situation could not continue. The landowners would not agree to these rates being reduced. As a result, project labour was provided on a daily rate basis, that is, the situation that existed before work unions were introduced. This meant that with increased requirements for labour to maintain the expanding area planted, a larger number of workers were now being paid a daily rate (equivalent to casual wages) than before the mid-project review. The issue was left to be resolved by the evaluation planned at the end of the pilot project.

## Evaluation

The final evaluation took place over three weeks in April 1990. It was substantially longer than previous liaison visits (usually about a week with two days on site) or the mid-project review which was just over a week with two days on site. The longer visit enabled fuller discussion over a period of time with landowning communities to assess the progress and impacts of the pilot project and to explore whether landowners were interested in any further assistance. It also enabled a series of meetings with each of the landowning groups to discuss progress and landowner attitudes to the project and a list of demands prepared by them.<sup>11</sup> It allowed the evaluation team to feed back some tentative conclusions before the final meeting with all parties present. Many the issues that had been present throughout the project resurfaced. The landowners remained suspicious of the motives of the Forestry Division and were unhappy about the way staff related to them and did their job. The Saenaua people still wanted the road. The joint landowners committee wanted higher wages. There was agreement that the work union approach was preferable to the employment of casual labourers. While landowners liked the idea of a joint committee to discuss progress, plans and problems, they did not think that it was working well. However, despite the difficulties and problems, the landowners were keen not only for the pilot project to continue but for it to be expanded.

Prior to the evaluation, neither landowners nor Forestry Division had taken the initiative to discuss possible options beyond the five year pilot project as had been recommended by the mid-project review. Nor was it possible for the evaluation team to undertake such a detailed discussion. For this reason, the evaluation recommended that the pilot project be extended for a further six

months so that a substantive discussion of options could take place. While both the Forestry Division and landowners were eager to continue the project with New Zealand assistance, New Zealand aid funds were not available at the level required.<sup>12</sup> Either a new donor had to be found or a reorientation of the project allowing greater input from the Solomon Islands Government, possibly requiring some form of revenue sharing at harvest.

It was agreed at the final meeting with landowners that the project would continue for at least six months and that the work would be completed on a work union basis. New contract rates were agreed, based on what should have been paid previously. (Once the basis of the previous mistake had been explained, landowners accepted the need for the rate to change.) The keen interest of landowners to continue the project was acknowledged, and the Forestry Division was urged to maintain some assistance to landowners from funds provided by New Zealand for customary land forestry activities in order, at a minimum, to protect the investment already made. This was primarily related to payments for maintenance of recently planted trees until they were big enough to look after themselves. It was also considered important to build on landowner interests and provide assistance enabling them to continue forestry work on their own behalf, such as support and training to establish small nurseries and technical assistance to use land to meet local needs for forest products (e.g. traditional building materials such as bamboo and sago palm, food trees such as ngali nuts and fruit trees, tree species used in wood-carving and fuelwood). The need to consider more carefully the role and purpose of agro-forestry in the project and the role of women in social and commercial forestry was also recognised.

While the evaluation found that landowners supported the forestry developments on their land, it was concluded that, for many, this was due to the income that was received in return for labour inputs. However, some of the landowner leaders appeared to have a longer term perspective and broader objectives that were met by the project. These included the utilisation of their land for a productive purpose to generate benefits in the future, the strengthening of their community through working together on a common project, and the provision of work opportunities to keep young people in the villages. The project also generated interest from other landowning communities in Solomon Islands, some with large areas of land, which they hoped to develop. Despite limitations in the project's implementation, the primary objective of encouraging landowner interest in reforestation on customary land was achieved. Whether the approach followed can be replicated and the funds found to expand activities to meet landowner interest remains uncertain.

## **Dimensions of Participation in the Project**

The previous section provided a summary of the rationale, design, implementation and evaluation of the Malaita Reforestation Project. This indicated that the local landowning groups were involved to some extent in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project. This section will describe more fully and systematically, the dimensions of participation in the project: the type of participation; the groups involved; the ways in which participation occurred and for what purpose as well as some interrelationships between these dimensions. The primary interest is to identify the extent to which members of the landowning communities were able to participate in the project and the role outside agencies played in promoting or inhibiting popular participation in the project.

## **What kind of participation?**

### **Participation in decision-making**

Most of the discussions with landowners were held with their leaders who were responsible for gaining acceptance of the project by the landowning groups involved. While the extent of discussions within the groups is not known, it is likely that leaders would have consulted with others.<sup>13</sup> Also the mechanisms for consultation at Saenaua and Fote differed. In the Fote site, the number of people required to agree to the proposal was limited to the three brothers who owned the land. It is not known how much the project was discussed with their immediate families and other members of the tribe. At Saenaua, the land identified for the project was tribal land with decision-making rights over different parts of it held by different families. In order to make decisions about the joint management of the proposed forest area, the tribe formed the Saenaua Tribe Association with an elected committee and membership which included the whole tribe. The minutes of some meetings suggest that a large number of members of the tribe participated in these meetings.

The appraisal report called for landowner involvement in non-technical management issues. At the design stage, landowners were involved in identifying the boundaries of the areas that they would make available for the reforestation project. Within these, they identified some areas which were to be protected; namely, tabu sites, garden areas and areas with forest products having customary uses, for example, bamboo stands.<sup>14</sup> Because the land belonged to the local people, consultation had to take place at early stages, and agreement reached, or there would be no project. Efforts were made to convince the landowners of the project's value through the landowners' tour, by offering incentives (i.e., income in

return for work) and suggesting involvement in non-technical decision-making. However, the major responsibility for designing and establishing the project and determining its *modus operandi* was undertaken by the Solomon Islands/New Zealand appraisal team and the Solomon Islands Forestry Division.

The landowning groups, primarily through the principle landowners, supported the project because they saw benefits in it for themselves. However, later events indicated that their perception of the project differed from the other agencies involved. While the landowners' objectives were not necessarily inconsistent with those of the Government and the aid donor, there were clear differences. The Government perceived the primary objective of the project as a test of the potential of plantation establishment on customary land. Putting trees in the ground was a primary motivation and the driving force behind the project. Meeting community income, employment or other needs were secondary. The project needed land to plant trees and the question was how to motivate customary landowners to utilise their land for such a project.

The main decision making by landowners during the project involved the selection of people to work on the project. This included the identification of eight men who were sent to the Western Province for six months on-the-job training prior to the commencement of land clearing and planting. Most planning and operational decisions were made by the forest officer, although these were influenced by the New Zealand technical advisers whose liaison visit reports became the basis for many decisions. Generally the local Forestry Division staff communicated what needed to be done to landowner supervisors who then organised the work with the labour force. The Forestry Division staff saw their role as planning the work programme, providing the tools and equipment and

maintaining quality control. They did not really see training as part of their role. Apart from these regular work related discussions, the main contact with landowners was through meetings held during liaison visits. Initially, this provided an informal opportunity for landowners to raise issues and concerns and as such could be seen as consultation by the decision-makers rather than active participation in the decision-making by the landowners. However, the role of these meeting gradually changed to become an important occasion for negotiating agreement on certain issues, even though the power remained primarily with the government agency and the aid donor. This change commenced with the mid-project review, which sought to resolve, with landowners, issues which were undermining the project.<sup>15</sup> In meetings held by the review mission and liaison visit meetings, the main spokesmen were the principal landowners who were either formal or informal community leaders. However, some other male community members spoke freely and expressed their views at these meetings. Many, particularly the women, tended only to listen. The mid-project review also recommended a formal coordinating committee as a mechanism for regular consultation to overcome the communication problems which occurred during the first half of the project. This was established soon after the review mission and involved landowner representatives and Forestry Division staff. More information was made available to landowners through this committee, including the forest officer's monthly reports and copies of liaison visit reports. It provided an opportunity for landowners to raise concerns and make suggestions on issues such as the use of vehicles and the planting of fuelwood stands. Each landowner group selected three representatives for this committee.

## **Participation in implementation**

Apart from participation in decision-making at different points and levels in the project, the major contributions made by the landowning groups to the project were land and labour. The provision of land for forestry meant that it would not be available for other uses for at least 30-40 years, that is, for one rotation of the tropical hardwoods being planted. Labour was provided but at a lower rate than other forestry workers in recognition that landowners would retain the benefits of the project. The technical nature of the project meant that government needed to provide forestry staff to plan and manage the project as well as other inputs including vehicles, tools, equipment and seeds. The funds to provide these inputs, with the exception of local staff salaries, was provided by the New Zealand Government which also provided technical assistance in the form of regular liaison visits by NZFS forestry personnel.

## **Participation in benefits (or harmful consequences)**

The project has generated two short term benefits; income and employment, and developed a forest asset which may produce benefits in the future. The main material benefit that people have gained from the project to date is income from the supply of labour. The amount of money distributed to the village people who have worked on the project since 1985, either in the form of casual daily wages or payments as members of a work union, is estimated to be about SI\$180,000.<sup>16</sup> This represents average monthly payments of at least SI\$2,000 and by 1989 over SI\$4,000 per month.<sup>17</sup> It is more difficult to quantify exactly how many different people were involved in the labour force because of the two systems: daily labourers and work unions. However, some estimates were obtained from Forestry Division pay sheets.<sup>18</sup> At the start of the project 20 workers were employed (10 at each site) on a full time basis, plus a driver for the

truck and some casual workers for the nursery. The number of people involved increased substantially when work unions were introduced in late 1987. While some people only did one contract job as part of a work union, about 150 different people were involved in these until they ceased in October 1989. When work unions were suspended after the October 1989 liaison visit, the casual daily labour force increased to continue the various tasks that had been done by the work unions. By December there was a regular labour force of 42 (Forestry Division memo from Auki Forest Officer, 13 December 1989). The number of different people involved during the life of the project as daily labourers was over 100 (some of whom had also participated in work unions. By 1989, a labourer working about 20 days a month would earn around SI\$100 per month. People who worked on a contract basis (i.e. in work unions) could earn anything from SI\$50 to SI\$200 a month.

While this suggests a reasonably wide distribution of income, the majority of it was earned by a fairly small and relatively stable core of workers. The impact of this income on the two landowning groups was also different. At Saenaua the whole tribe was involved and efforts were made to ensure all families participated in the work. This was particularly the case once work unions were involved. Towards the end of the project, when only casual workers were employed, most labourers worked for two months, and then were replaced by another group. At Anotafa, a relatively small but stable group of workers were involved from the beginning. The Anotafa landowners had to involve labour from the wider area, with only a few of the group itself working on the project.<sup>19</sup> In 1988, when a change was made from daily work to work unions the main group of workers at Anotafa, formed themselves into a work union and continued much as before, doing some work on a daily rate basis and some as a work union. It was

not possible to find reliable information about how this income was distributed. A household income and expenditure survey would have been necessary to do this. However, when asked what they used the income for, most people at Saenaua said it was mainly spent on food, clothing and school fees. One group of women said that their households tended to benefit more from the income received by the older men than the younger men.

Members of the landowner groups frequently mentioned employment opportunities which had helped to keep young people in the area as an important benefit. This was a main reason why they were keen to continue and expand the project. Their interest in work and money can, in part, be understood in terms of the changing nature of the society and the increasing need for cash to purchase daily needs and education. Three sources of data were available to explore this question, in relation to the Saenaua tribe and its two main villages of Anoasa and Ura. A rural household income and expenditure survey held in 1982 suggested that the monthly cash income per household was \$86 (35% from full-time employment) and monthly cash expenditure was \$74.<sup>20</sup> A village resources survey carried out in 1984-85 indicated a total of 44 households in the two villages. It also showed that both villages had limited facilities, transport, paid employment, and types of cash income.<sup>21</sup> The 1986 Solomon Islands Population Census provided more specific information on employment and income sources. Of the 250 census returns from these two villages, only 13 people earned an income, eight of these from forestry (it is assumed they were employed by the project). In addition, 37 individuals gained income from other activities, including food crops (7), cocoa (6), betelnut (19), cattle (2), pigs (1), handcraft (1), interest (1) and remittances (1). All individuals had access to gardens.<sup>22</sup>

Landowners were also interested in the creation of forestry assets; namely, approximately 100 hectares of tropical hardwood plantation on each site. While this is a long term investment which may or may not lead to a significant resource or income in the future, it was seen by landowner leaders as providing future income from the sale of the trees or timber for community use. It is too soon to know the extent of these benefits or whether they will be realised. Some shorter term benefits will occur from tree thinnings. The timber gained from this can be used for house poles or firewood. Although discussion about agro-forestry, including gardens under the trees, cattle under trees and cocoa under trees has taken place, little of note had been developed by the end of the pilot project. Landowners also expressed interest in acquiring technical assistance in the form of seeds or know how to plant other crops which would meet local needs. Again, little had occurred. This reflects the primary interest and occupation by Forestry Division staff in the main focus of the project; that of testing the plantation forestry model. However, some small fuelwood stands and food gardens under the trees were established towards the end of the project by the local forest officer. Another wider benefit expected by the Saenaua people was a five kilometre road between Anoasa and Ura. That this was not built was a major disappointment to them.

There are potentially other less tangible benefits from participatory development which Cohen and Uphoff described as personal benefits, including such things as self-esteem, political power and sense of achievement. They may be individual or gained by groups of people. While such benefits may be difficult to measure, a number appeared to be present in the project. For example, a number of people received training in forestry work and a significant number have been actively involved in the work and gained some knowledge as a result.

Some people had gained confidence and skills that they did not have prior to the project. The project opened up new possibilities for people to use their land in different ways and a number of landowners discussed these enthusiastically. While the aim of the project from government's point of view was to test the feasibility of forestry plantation on customary land to meet national resource needs, landowners are now thinking in terms of local forest product needs. A major benefit mentioned by leaders of both landowning groups was that the project provided a focus for activity within their groups which has helped draw the people closer together. It provided employment for young people that did not exist locally and kept them in the villages. A further impact was the interest expressed in the project by other landowners, the government and foreign agencies. This gave the landowners a sense of importance and mana. However, they expressed concerns that assistance might cease too soon leading to project failure and proving the skeptics right. They were afraid that they would lose the mana they had gained.

A constant concern of landowners throughout the project was the attitude of Forestry Division staff. Discussion with landowners indicated that they felt that the Forestry Division treated them paternalistically, giving them little credit for any knowledge or skills. By and large, the forestry staff told them what to do, rather than working with the landowners. The public relations aspect of the project had not been well managed by Forestry Division to the extent that landowners had little confidence in the Solomon Island Government and more than once asked whether New Zealand would work directly with them rather than through Forestry Division. Regular tension existed between landowners and some Forestry Division staff. Forestry Division staff had no previous experience or training in managing this kind of project and thus, to varying

degrees, treated it as any other forestry project, and the landowners as forestry workers on a government-run plantation. A number of the Forestry Division staff sent to Auki did not appear to have good interpersonal and communication skills. Direction from the Forestry Division headquarters in Honiara was insufficient and the management responsibilities between the New Zealand technical advisers and the Forestry Division were unclear. These issues also contributed to the failure to make better progress during the project (200 hectares planted instead of the intended 500 hectares). The primary cause of the tensions appeared to be a lack of understanding by all concerned about the roles and responsibilities of the various project participants.

Because the landowners had plenty of land, the project did not appear to disadvantage them in any way. They made sure that sites were retained to provide garden land for the future. However, changing the land use to plantation forestry does mean that it has an impact on the use of the land which might have been allowed to other Solomon Islanders who had secondary or tertiary rights to use the land. For example, people in villages near the Anotafa site were warned to stay out of the plantation (Letter on Forestry Division file from the forest officer to the villages, 30 September, 1986). These people had previously used the forest area to gather bush materials, but this activity damaged the new trees. Widespread reforestation on customary land could have an impact on such customary tenure arrangements and traditional usufruct.

### **Participation in project monitoring and evaluation**

The landowners participated in project monitoring, initially through informal discussions with the New Zealand forestry advisers during liaison visits but by the third such visit, a regular meeting with landowners had become the

norm. This provided a means for the aid donor to hear landowners' concerns and perspectives on project progress. To some extent, efforts were made to address landowner concerns in liaison meeting reports. The 1987 mid-project review was undertaken because of landowners' dissatisfaction with how the project was being managed and the level of payment being received by the workers. Efforts were made in the mid-project review to ensure landowner concerns were fully articulated. First, an independent Solomon Islander was included in the review team. Before the review he visited the landowner groups to discuss their concerns. He also chaired the meetings between the review team and the landowners and ensured that all issues were discussed and conclusions reached. The mid-project review in effect became a negotiation in which the review team sought to reach agreement with the landowners for continuation of the project. Compromises were reached and new processes established which the review team recommended to the Solomon Island and New Zealand governments. These were accepted. This led to greater communication and exchange of information between the Forestry Division and landowners.

The April 1990 evaluation was conducted in a similar but more extensive way. During the seventh liaison visit in October 1989, the forthcoming evaluation was mentioned and landowners were urged to think about what they wished to contribute and their ideas for the future of the project. Also prior to the evaluation team visit, one of the independent Solomon Island members of the team visited the landowners and worked with them to prepare an agenda of issues to be raised. The evaluation visit itself took place over a number of weeks. Many meetings were held in the villages with individual landowner groups to hear their views on what had been achieved and their hopes for the outcome of the evaluation. The evaluation team went back to Honiara to collect further

information and discuss possible recommendations. The team then returned to Malaita and presented their views to both landowner groups separately before a final meeting was held with all parties to seek landowner reaction and to address any outstanding issues raised by the landowners. The result of these meetings was acceptance of a set of recommendations that the evaluation team would propose to the Solomon Islands and New Zealand governments.

### **Who participated?**

While a variety of people had some involvement in the project, it is difficult to establish discrete categories. However, for the purposes of analysis four different categories of participants were identified: members of the landowning groups, leaders of the landowning groups, Solomon Islands' government and non-government personnel, and representatives and technical advisers of the New Zealand government.

#### **Members of the landowning groups**

The project took place on two areas of land belonging to two separate groups. At Saenaua, approximately 200 people, all members of the one tribe descended from a common ancestor through four different lines were involved. The majority came from two villages, Anoasa and Ura on tribal land on the edge of the project area.<sup>23</sup> A few families lived in other villages on Malaita and some had moved to Honiara, including the paramount chief, who was influential in promoting reforestation. The community was relatively homogeneous. All belonged to the same church (SSEM), had few assets apart from their land and houses and most had limited education. Few people had paid employment, some worked for money occasionally and most lived a semi-subsistence lifestyle based on gardening with some cash crops such as copra and cocoa.

The people at Fote were part of Anotafa tribe, but the land belonged to one extended family of three brothers, two were policemen and one worked at the Taisol logging company. Because the number of adults in the family was quite small, and some worked at the local logging company, the landowners recruited relatives from other villages to assist them in the project. Not much is known about these people except that most belonged to the same tribe.

The two communities involved were relatively homogeneous; all the houses in the villages appeared to be of a reasonable standard, although some were made from milled timber as opposed to bush materials and all had similar access to water and sanitation facilities. Furthermore, the village resources survey and census results discussed above indicated that the differences were not likely to be great. This does not mean that there were not differences within them, for example, the extent of wealth as a result of particular rights to land, ownership of livestock (cattle and pigs) and cash crops.

Similarity in social and economic position has not, however, inhibited conflict over land. For example, when the project started at Saenaua, there was dispute over part of the area designated for forestry, but these claims were rejected as the claimants were members of the female line. In the process of registration of the land towards the end of the project, a number of claims had been lodged against the land. The landowners did not consider these valid, but this had not been confirmed by the land court. At Fote, ownership of the project land was contested in the land court by other members of the Anotafa tribe, but the decision was granted in favour of the present landowners.

The large majority of community members involved in the project were men. In Solomon Islands, women generally have little decision-making power. This was evident in that they were not directly involved in the project until after the mid-term review, and then only at the instigation of the aid donor. During the fifth liaison visit, an effort was made to meet with women to discuss their knowledge of, and interest in, the project. With assistance from the local representative of the National Council of Women, and later the Malaita field officer of the Women's Development Section in the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, women's interest and involvement was stimulated. With the help of the latter, the Saenaua women formed a women's group which enabled them to get training and assistance from the Women's Development Section on subjects such as health, nutrition, agriculture and sewing. By the end of the project Anotafa women had also expressed interest in organising themselves into a similar group. While the involvement of women was limited, it increased, both in terms of participation in the work force and in meetings. In particular, the introduction of work unions in the second half of the project enabled some women to be involved in the workforce. At Saenaua, when the work unions stopped operating and everyone returned to daily rates, a number of women continued to be employed. Some women in the Saenaua tribe were also involved in a small agro-forestry project involving food gardens under the trees towards the end of the project. A group of women at Anotafa did one contract as a work union, but because they were not paid immediately on completion of the work (it took two months), they were not interested in continuing. The women from Saenaua were keen to work because of the money, even though it was hard work over and above other work and family commitments and for some, substantial travelling time was required.

The project evaluation identified a number of problems with the way women had been involved in the project, especially through agro-forestry. The introduction of gardens under the trees late in the project had not been carefully planned or discussed with the women. Intended as a means to involve women in the project, it led to confusion. The women were asked to work on the project but were not paid like other workers. Rather they were told they would benefit from the sale of the produce in the market. They working up to four days a week on these “project” gardens and thus had less time available for their own gardens. Their workload was thus increased without clear benefits being established. It was also clear from discussion with the women that if a project was to be developed which sought to ameliorate the hard work and energy demands being placed on them, it would be different from planting gardens under the trees. For Ura women in particular, this involved about 3-4 hours walking per day from the village (more or less at sea level) to the forest site on the hillside some kilometres from the village.

Involvement of women in the communities in the project evaluation was assisted by the inclusion of two women in the evaluation team. They held a number of meetings with the women of both landowning groups. These highlighted the women’s limited involvement and understanding of the project, their concerns about it and their interests in greater participation in it, primarily the opportunity to earn money. The meetings highlighted the isolation of rural women in Solomon Islands, the limited opportunities they have to meet with other women to discuss their lives and the lack of training provided for them. This raised serious questions about the way women had been involved in the project to date through the agro-forestry work and the need for greater planning, care and support to involve women effectively without adding to their already

busy lives. As a result of these meetings, a number of women from the landowning groups attended the evaluation team's final meeting with the groups and expressed their views about the project and how it might respond to their needs.

### **Leaders of the landowning groups**

The leaders of the landowning groups involved were the customary tribal leaders; all were older men. In the case of Saenaua, they included the tribal paramount chief who, though living on Guadalcanal, chaired the Saenaua Tribal Association. Other influential leaders were the principal landowners who, by mutual consent, acted as spokespersons for the tribe, represented the Saenaua people on the project coordinating committee and were workforce supervisors. At Fote, the three brothers who owned the land were the leaders, and up until his death towards the end of the project, one of these was the main spokesperson for the group. The main spokesperson for the Saenaua tribe spent a number of years in the Provincial Assembly before independence. The main spokesperson in the Anotafa group had been a policeman. One of the leaders from each tribal group participated in the landowner tour prior to the project starting. These community leaders have played key roles in negotiating the project and ensuring local interests were protected.

### **Solomon Island government and non-government personnel**

Solomon Islands government and non-government personnel were involved in the project in a number of ways. The major one was management of the project. The main agency was the Forestry Division of the Solomon Islands Ministry of Natural Resources, particularly the Auki-based forest officer and forest ranger who managed the day to day operation of the project. The

incumbents of both these positions have changed since the project started. The Forestry Division headquarters was involved through its deputy conservator of forests, who participated in the appraisal, mid-project review and evaluation and provided overall direction for the project. There was some involvement from the reforestation section and the extension officer (who was also a Saenaua landowner), although this was limited. The latter did accompany the New Zealand technical advisers on some liaison visits. All of the Forestry Division staff involved in the project were men. The involvement by the Women's Development Section of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services was instrumental in assisting women to become more organised and involved in the project. Also helpful in this regard was the Malaita representative of the National Council of Women who made the initial contact with women in the two communities.

Another important role played by Solomon Islanders, particularly some provincial government staff after the mid-project review, was that of mediation. They included the planning officer who chaired some of the coordinating committee meetings and assisted landowners over land registration and the deputy premier who participated in liaison visit meetings and the final meeting during the end of project evaluation.<sup>24</sup> They played a helpful role at different points in the project by providing an independent person who could mediate conflicts between the landowners and the Forestry Division. These officers were also men. A similar role was played by the Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT), a community-based non-governmental organisation. Its director participated in the mid-project review and the evaluation and ensured that the concerns of the landowners were raised and discussed. The SIDT was also

helpful in seeing that some of the recommendations of the mid-project review were implemented.

### **Foreign personnel**

Many foreign personnel from the New Zealand Government were directly and indirectly involved in the project at different times. Those most directly concerned were staff from the New Zealand ministries of Forestry and External Relations and Trade. Four Ministry of Forestry staff (all men) were involved through the appraisal visit, seven liaison visits and the mid-project review. Numerous Ministry of External Relations and Trade staff were involved. New Zealand-based officers participated in the appraisal, mid-project review, and the evaluation. Staff at the New Zealand High Commission and Wellington-based staff in the Development Assistance Division were responsible for managing New Zealand's involvement in the project. During the five year period the number of different officers either directly or indirectly involved was nearly twenty, approximately half men and half women. With staff turnover due to staff rotation or resignations, all positions with some responsibility for the project changed at least twice, some three or four times.

### **How did participation occur?**

This question can be looked at in terms of the basis, form and extent of participation in the project, all of which had some impact on the outcome. In terms of the first, the initiative for the project came from the provincial government and Forestry Division, who wanted access to land to plant trees. It did not arise directly from the felt needs of the village people. Some incentives were needed to convince the landowners to participate. These included assurances that the ownership of the trees planted and any income earned would

be retained by them, thus responding to both landowners' suspicion of government interest in their land and landowners' interest in development opportunities. A landowners' tour was organised to show some leaders successful forestry development on customary land in other countries. However, the promise of money and jobs provided by the work required to prepare the land and plant the trees was probably more significant in getting landowner and community support for the project.

The second issue relates to the form of participation. This issue was considered at the project appraisal stage, but limited thought was given to how it would be structured. For example, landowners were seen as providing land and labour, with their leaders providing the link between the project manager, the Forestry Division and the community. It was assumed that this informal project structure would work and that the communities had appropriate structures and mechanisms for organising their inputs into the project. The need for landowners to form associations was discussed, but the precise purpose and structure of these was never clarified. In fact, the Saenaua tribe, because of the involvement of a number of landowners decided to set up a local structure, the Saenaua Tribe Association, to make decisions on their involvement. The Anotafa group was smaller and did not feel the need for such a structure.

No structures were set up to formalise the relationship between the Forestry Division and the landowners or facilitate communication. Once the initial agreement on the scope and design of the project had been reached between landowners and Forestry Division, the main role seen for community leaders was to identify workers. The Forestry Division perceived the project as similar to other forestry operations. Thus, decisions relating to management and

technical issues were to be made by them. However, the difficulties experienced in the project, led to the establishment of new structures, both formal and informal, to guide the project. For example, meetings were held with landowners during liaison visits and the mid-term review. While not part of the formal project structure, these meetings became a channel for communication. In the case of the mid-term review meeting, landowner participation in decision-making. A coordinating committee was established to provide a formal mechanism for landowners and Forestry Division staff to meet regularly, increasing landowner participation in project management. This structural change was the result of the landowners' own efforts to express dissatisfaction about project management. However, conflict resolution needed some facilitation which was primarily provided by the donor agency. There was no clear structure for participation in monitoring and evaluation established before the project commenced. The level of consultation and involvement by landowners increased during the project and was particularly evident during the final evaluation. This involvement was encouraged by aid donor personnel involved in the liaison visits, the mid-project review team and the evaluation team. While the aid donor and the Solomon Islands government personnel in these teams ultimately had the power to influence decisions made by the Solomon Islands and New Zealand governments they sought to reach consensus with landowners on important issues.

The extent of participation varied at different times during the project and did not affect all community members equally. Prior to the start of the project there was limited involvement for most of the communities, apart from the landowners' tour by two leaders, some discussion about the proposal, and six months employment in the Western Province to gain experience in forestry tasks by eight men. Given the way Forestry Division decided to organise the labour,

the project required a substantial commitment over the first two years by a small number of people (the 20 full-time workers). Their dissatisfaction with their low level of pay led to poor productivity. The workers saw themselves as full-time workers rather than participants in a community project and complained that they were earning less than other forestry workers and that they did not have time to maintain other income and non-income earning activities. The later involvement by a larger number of people through work unions was more in keeping with the semi-subsistence lifestyle of the people and allowed them to meet other social and economic obligations.<sup>25</sup> It also enabled a wider group of people to participate in the money earned from working in the project. The landowners' eagerness for the project to continue and expand is an indication that the level of participation required was not too great, given the incentives involved. Attendance at liaison or review missions or coordinating committee meetings tended to increase over the life of the project, suggesting a greater awareness in and concern about the project. Few members of the landowner groups were actively involved throughout the project. Those most involved were some of the groups' leaders who worked on the project as labour supervisors and participated in coordinating committee meetings and wider discussions. Some members worked on the project during the whole of the five year period. Towards the end of the project, agro-forestry required involvement from some women. For most however, the commitment required by the project was small.

### **Participation for what purpose?**

The various groups who were involved in the project did not share the same objectives. The question is were they consistent? Members of the landowner groups wanted the income gained from working on the project which was the most tangible and immediate benefit. The project initially meant very

little for women, but by its end, it had provided some income, wider opportunities and outside assistance. Leaders of the landowning groups had three main reasons for involvement: the income that would be generated in their groups, the opportunity to participate in a project which would keep the young people involved in village life, and the development of their land for some longer term benefit. Landowners were able to articulate these interests much more clearly by the end of the five year project. The Solomon Island Government's interest in the project was to encourage landowner interest in reforestation of customary land for the national good. Statements indicate they saw benefits both in terms of national income as well as the provision of opportunity for rural landowners. New Zealand's interest as the aid donor is expressed in the funding submission to the Minister (Memorandum from Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Minister, 21 June, 1985):

“We believe such a project would provide an opportunity to demonstrate how Solomon Islands might counter the depletion of its forest resources. It would provide a new source of employment income and eventually, returns from harvesting for customary landowners .... At the same time, it would enable the Solomon Islands Forest Service to demonstrate its own potential for assisting landowners without depending on offshore technical advice.”

It also noted the considerable enthusiasm for the project at both official and political levels as well as among the landowners.

This chapter has described the Malaita Customary Land Reforestation Project and the various dimensions of participation in it. The next chapter will analyse in more detail how the general project environment and project structure influenced participation in the project, particularly from the intended beneficiaries of the project, the local community members.

## **CHAPTER 8**

# **Analysis of Participation in the Project**

Chapter 7 described the project and the various dimensions of participation in it. This chapter analyses how participation in the project was affected by different factors: particular aspects of the project environment, project characteristics including its structure and organisational model, and lessons from other social forestry projects. Finally, the extent to which participation in the project had an empowering effect on the intended beneficiaries is discussed.

### **The effects of the project environment on participation**

The physical and socio-economic context in which the project was introduced was described in general terms in Chapter 6. The impact of this environment on the project can be analysed in terms of eight factors: physical, biological, historical, economic, political, bureaucratic, social and cultural.

Two main physical constraints restricted project implementation and the promotion of participation in it: the general location and topography of the area and the lack of infrastructure. These combined to cause problems for transport and communication, not only within Malaita itself, but also between Malaita and Honiara where the Forestry Division headquarters were based. The Saenaua land was relatively near Auki (about 15 minutes by vehicle, 2 1/2 hours on foot), which was important when transporting seedlings by truck from the nursery. But the land was steep with access from a road which ran along a ridge at the top boundary of the site. For Anoasa villagers who lived near this top road, the

project was fairly accessible but for Ura villagers it was a few hours walk to distance parts of the site. The Forestry Division transported workers to the site when their truck was available. The landowners complained about the difficulty of moving the seedlings, undamaged, from the roadside through the bush to planting areas and argued for a road through the middle of the area. The Anotafa site was some 30-40 minutes drive from Auki and also some distance from the villages where the workers lived. For this reason, a tractor and trailer were purchased to transport workers to the site, even though these were not provided for in the original project design. Generally this worked well when the tractor and trailer were functional. However, they frequently broke down and repairs were often delayed, partly because the Forestry Division failed to make the problems a priority and partly because it was difficult to get spare parts for equipment which had been purchased second hand in New Zealand. None of the local people involved in the project owned vehicles, which could be used for the project. As a result, the principal landowner paid out of his own pocket for the transport of workers employed from the wider community to enable them to reach the project site. The landowners often questioned why the vehicles provided by the project were controlled by the Forestry Division rather than given to the landowning groups. Forestry Division argued that they would be better maintained if they remained under their control and that they were needed for day to day management and support tasks. Limited transport also made participation in decision-making difficult and time consuming. For example, the extensive consultation undertaken during the evaluation of the project was only made possible by the hiring of a truck and driver over a two week period at considerable cost. The logistics of moving 50 people to one place for the final meeting meant a number of trips by two vehicles and the commitment of the best part of a day from members of the landowning groups. Added to this was the

difficulty of communication between villages, which meant a lot of time was used organising meetings. Access to transportation had a major impact on the lifestyle of people in a country with few roads and difficult terrain, and made the logistics of project implementation more complicated than in an environment with a more developed infrastructure.

A biological factor that influenced the degree to which local people could participate was the project's technological complexity. For example, the project aimed to demonstrate a plantation reforestation model. Management of this approach was a specialised task. Also, the decision by the appraisal team on what tree species to grow was based on technical knowledge, such as which species grew best in the soil types, terrain and elevation of the localities, which species might have a good market, what seedlings would be available and Forestry Division policies. The planting and management regimes for various species were different. In one area the species chosen did not grow well and soil samples were taken to check for deficiencies that might be addressed by fertilisers. These technical issues were beyond the knowledge and experience of the landowners. The participation of landowners was therefore dependent on information or orders from the experts. Landowners could readily participate in the non-technical work, but they did not have the knowledge or experience to manage the project themselves. Continued involvement by government experts is required beyond the five years allowed for the pilot project to address technical issues.

Historical factors also proved important in the dynamics of the project. In Chapter 6 the various influences which have promoted change in Solomon Islands over the last 100 years were discussed. Ambivalence on the part of Malaitan

societies to these changes was noted. On the one hand, the fierce resistance to European domination, expressed in the Maasina Rule Movement is represented today in resistance to centralised government and a desire for self-reliance. However, conversion to Christianity and involvement in the cash economy has also generated a desire for education and more goods and services. The Kwara'ae people want to benefit from, but not be dominated by, the modern economy and government. The general suspicion of outsiders is no more evident than on the issue of land. Experience of land alienation in various parts of the Solomon Islands has heightened this factor. Projects and programmes sponsored by government have at times been interpreted as attempts to take land or resources from the people. This was expressed in the project in the wish that New Zealand support the landowners directly, bypassing the Solomon Island bureaucracy. It is not surprising that the project was treated with caution by the landowners. Such a project was acceptable to landowners as long as they retained full control over the land and trees. The pilot project was not designed as a joint venture (the original suggestion of the UNDAT study) because of the complex negotiations that would have been required (including land registration), without any guarantee of a project emerging. The option of a joint venture was again proposed by New Zealand technical advisers and Solomon Islands Forestry Division as one way to overcome the dispute over pay levels that emerged early in the project. The landowners rejected this option. It may need to be canvassed again if the landowners want further government support and if government wishes to expand the reforested areas. However, neither party had taken the initiative to discuss this or other options. How the landowners will react in future is not known but much will depend on government agencies' ability to discuss development options with the landowners as equals, taking into account their

interests and wishes. This would require a different approach than demonstrated so far.

Participation in the Malaita reforestation project was influenced by a number of economic factors, including employment opportunities in the project areas and the increasing desire for cash income. For example, at Anotafa the landowners preferred to recruit outside labour to work on their site because those who were in a position to work from within the small landowning extended family could earn more on another aid project nearby or with the local logging company. At Saenaua, few people had paid work and all people engaged by the project were from within the landowning group. Most villagers lived a semi-subsistence lifestyle and had few income generating opportunities, but increasing resources were needed to support daily living, for example, to buy food, fuel and clothing, and to pay for transport and school fees. Because of this felt need for a higher cash income the women at Saenaua were keen to participate in the project, even if it added to their busy lives. That the project provided people both within and outside the landowning groups the opportunity to earn money, was a key motivation for participation.

Political leaders have emphasised the need for rural development, recognising that the majority of people live in the rural areas and will continue to do so. This has been clearly stated in National and Provincial Development Plans. It has led to a decentralisation of some decision-making power to provincial governments and area councils, but has not been matched with the resources needed to implement wide ranging plans and activities. The complex issue of land tenure has not been tackled at the political level. This meant that there were conditions for entry into the project, for example, areas of land with

stable ownership free from disputes and suitable for reforestation had to be found. Landowner commitment to the project at the beginning was demonstrated by their willingness to register title to the land (unusual unless faced with a dispute over land). It required the surveying of land boundaries, the placing of land in the hands of trustees and going through a public process whereby other people could lay claim to and possibly gain control over it. While landowners agreed to do this, it had not happened by the end of the project although the process was well in train.<sup>1</sup> Unless the land question is tackled by government at some point, it is unlikely that a significantly larger scale of development will occur.

At the bureaucratic level, sufficient resources and the right kind of assistance have not always been forthcoming. In a general sense, extension services have often been poorly staffed and under-resourced. The general approach of governments has been to deliver services rather than actively involve the people in self-reliant development. This is one reason why past efforts to support rural development projects have failed. In Solomon Islands government departments are aware that they must work with the people to promote development and alternative land uses, given the pattern of land ownership. However, their approach has tended to be top down rather than bottom up. In the reforestation project, the approach followed tended towards a top down approach. This caused some of the major problems in the project. The aid donor and local bureaucracies were used to working in a non-participatory way, delivering goods and services, rather than working along side people. Those implementing the project had not been trained to implement social forestry projects, nor were the differences between a conventional forestry project clearly understood by all involved. The project was generally seen as a technical forestry

project although a little unusual. A degree of confusion arose because the project was not under the management of the reforestation section of the Forestry Division, nor was it clearly responsible to the Extension Section. It is on this point that the different objectives and understanding of the agencies involved were important. Without the special nature of the project being acknowledged by all parties involved, it should not be surprising that a traditional top down approach dominated its design and implementation. However, the project became more participatory as it progressed, suggesting some awareness and openness to a different approach by those involved.

Some social factors were important. Given that the groups involved in the project were relatively homogeneous with participants in each group having tribal affiliations, social divisions did not cause major problems in the project. Disputes over land issues will always be potentially divisive, but this was not a major problem. However, there were important differences between the two landowning groups. One was a tribal association, the other an extended family. Each had different employment options and levels of wealth. Bringing the two groups together into the one project meant that they were both treated the same. This precluded designing the reforestation of the land of each group in different ways, perhaps testing two different models of reforestation on customary land. For example, the Anotafa group appeared more interested in a joint venture than the Saenaua group and the Saenaua group appeared to be more open to different kinds incentives such as community facilities. This led to tensions when efforts were made at the mid-project review to change some aspects of the project and highlights the importance of addressing social dimensions of the project at the planning stage.<sup>2</sup>

Project planners needed to be aware of how two different modes of production, Western and subsistence, would influence decision-making, organisation, participation and roles. The time it took for landowners to agree to register their land, a decision which would only be taken because they had seen the project as having significant benefits for them and they did not wish to jeopardise these results from these cultural conflicts. The lack of women's involvement is another example. Because women did not play an active and vocal role in decision-making, the project ran for some years without their participation. Their lack of involvement did not necessarily mean that they were against it or did not benefit from it indirectly through increased income coming into the household. It did mean that the role of women in the community, and how the project might affect them, had not been considered. After such questions were raised part way through the project, some women became more involved, benefitted directly and were eager for greater involvement. Other efforts to involve women were not successful, in part because they were not based on consultation with women about their needs and how the project might respond to these. As family providers engaged in much of the food production work, they are acknowledged as important members of the community. Because aid and government processes involved in economic development tend to be dominated by men, such questions are not to be asked and women are usually not consulted. There were culturally sensitive ways to do this and, the project showed that the male leaders generally supported a greater involvement of women in the project or development of a special part of the project which would benefit women.

## **Analysis of key project characteristics and their impact on participation**

One of the main characteristics of the reforestation project was its design. A plantation forestry approach was considered appropriate to meet government objectives even though it required a high degree of technical knowledge and management. The local people involved in the project had always lived in the forest, knew it well and used its products to meet many basic needs. However, apart from planting a few tree crops like coconuts and cocoa, replanting the forest was generally outside their experience and needs. Members of the landowning groups were taught the skills needed to prepare the land, plant the trees and maintain them. In this sense, they were able to participate actively in the project. They did not receive the technical knowledge to manage a plantation style reforestation project, address some of the problems that arose or plan the operations. For such a project, continued external technical assistance would be required. Initially there was an intention to identify local people who might receive forestry training. Eight were given on-the-job training, which taught them basic forestry workskills. However, further training in forestry science or management was hindered by the limited education of most of the members of the landowning groups. Two were sent to a preliminary course at the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education with a view to completing a certificate in forestry, but neither completed the course. Forestry staff could have done more to enhance the skills and knowledge of project workers and members of the landowning groups. Few efforts were made to work closely with the people. This reflected the emphasis of the Forestry Division in the project on the tasks necessary to get trees in the ground rather than the wider goals of Solomon Island Government to promote self-reliance. Technological complexity and a limited appreciation by Forestry Division staff of their role in training local

villagers were thus constraints on the landowning groups gaining greater control over reforestation activities on their land.

A necessary requirement for participation in the project was land which was suitable for plantation forestry and for which ownership was reasonably secure. This immediately excluded those without land, those with limited land which was needed for food gardens, those in more inaccessible parts of Malaita and those whose title to land was under dispute. Thus the reforestation model being promoted by the project was unlikely to facilitate the participation of the poorest people in the province. Other types of forestry for local needs would be more likely to have wider application. However, in a national context, most people on Malaita might be considered relatively disadvantaged compared with those on the main island or other island groups which are more developed. Chapter 7 indicated that at Saenaua at least, most people involved in the project had few resources other than their land which was mostly undeveloped. The project also had demonstrated a potential to involve women in income-generating activities, and this could be considered assistance to a disadvantaged group.

Reforestation, particularly with hardwoods, is a long term investment for which major financial benefits are postponed for at least 30 years. The government needed to convince local landowners to participate in such a project given the conventional wisdom is that people are more likely to be supportive of projects which have immediate, obvious and highly probable benefits. For people who have been used to trees always being there, a plantation reforestation project is outside their experience and its long term income or environmental benefits not readily understood. However, changes in their surroundings may have made people more receptive to the project. For example, the slash and burn system of

agriculture was generally not seen as having a substantial impact on the forest, whereas impacts of recent logging are becoming increasingly obvious. People have heard about or experienced how logging had altered the forest and affected the environment (e.g. changes in the water table). The project addressed this problem in three ways. First, some landowner leaders were taken to talk to customary landowners in other countries who had benefitted from similar projects. These leaders were influential in gaining local support for the project. Second, incentives were introduced, primarily in the form of income for work. Whether such a financial inducement was necessary or even the best form of incentive was not fully discussed before the project started. This certainly proved its most problematic and controversial aspect. Another immediate and clear incentive for the Saenaua people in particular, was the promise of a road through the plantation site joining their two villages. This was demonstrated by their great disappointment when this was not delivered. Third, the project did not pose many risks for the landowners because they had sufficient land to continue planting their food and cash crops. They could only gain in a material sense, through paid labour and/or the possession of an enhanced asset. If there was a risk, it was in being seen to be different by other Solomon Islanders. If the project was successful, the landowners would gain mana, if a failure they would lose face. The potential benefits overcame this psychological barrier and the landowners were prepared to participate.

One aim of the project was to ensure that income generated by labour payments was distributed widely in the landowning groups, thus work unions were recommended. In fact, the project commenced by employing a limited number of workers, restricting participation and the sharing of benefits. Participation in cash benefits and interest in the project increased with the

change to work unions in the second half of the project. The Saenaua group leaders particularly wanted all families to participate in the work of establishing the forest. They saw this not only as everyone gaining from the income available from working on the project, but also in a traditional sense of everyone having a claim on the trees planted and their eventual use. They feared that if some people did not participate in the project, conflict would result between those who had helped plant and tend the trees and those who had not. For this reason, they ensured that members of the tribe who lived at Arabala (a village away from the project site) also participated in the labour force.

The project design affected participation in other ways as well. A number of design issues have previously been mentioned: the method of employing labour, the technological nature of the project and the failure to consider the role of women at the beginning of the project. Three other design issues are particularly relevant: starting from local needs, flexibility and responsiveness. In terms of project design, much of the literature on social forestry has stressed that projects should start from local needs. The Malaita project did the reverse. It was prompted by a national need and provided incentives to local landowners were given incentives to participate. It could be argued that the incentives responded to local needs (primarily money and employment), otherwise the local people would have seen no reason to participate. An interesting result of the project was the increasing interest by the landowning groups about how the project might respond to local needs for a range of forest products. They wanted to introduce agro-forestry components into the project. In some senses the project was flexible and open to change while in others it was not. While the project was flexible enough to consider agro-forestry possibilities, neither the Solomon Islands bureaucracy nor the aid donor had the skills or knowledge to respond. When an

effort was made late in the project to introduce an agro-forestry component, it was poorly planned in terms of both the technical requirement of the project and the social realities of the communities. The project was less flexible or responsive to participation by the local groups because its focus was on planting trees rather than developing the skills of the landowners to develop their own land. This is related to the objectives of the project as seen by the Forestry Division, and the training of forestry officers, which gave little or no emphasis to participatory or community approaches to forestry. Some officers involved in the project from the Solomon Islands Forestry Division and from the New Zealand Ministry of Forestry were willing to involve the local people but lacked the experience and skills to do so effectively. The resulting narrow view of the project and, at times, paternalistic approach made the landowners angry and frustrated. In a different sense the project proved flexible enough to respond to issues that arose. While not totally successful, new structures such as the coordinating committee, did have a significant impact on participation by the landowning groups in the latter stages of the project. The willingness of technical personnel on liaison visits and the review and evaluation missions to seek a consensus on areas of disagreement, the establishment of the coordinating committee which became a vehicle for landowners introducing their ideas, changes to the method of employing labour and the involvement of women are examples of this point.

The level of participation by the landowning groups was also affected by accessibility to decision-makers. This issue concerns the extent to which decisions on the project could be made locally. The Malaita project did not establish clear decision-making processes and delegation of responsibilities at the outset. New Zealand External Aid Division decided that an expensive technical adviser was not necessary, in part because of the size of the project and, in part

because the Solomon Island Forestry Division had the resources to manage it. A suggestion from the appraisal team to put a volunteer on the project was not taken up by the Solomon Islands Forestry Division. New Zealand did however, agree to assist through six monthly liaison visits by a technical forestry adviser. The precise role of these visits was not stated. They took on a management decision-making role as Forestry Division (and the New Zealand External Aid Division) used these visits for forward planning purposes and to make recommendations on needed changes. Within the Solomon Islands Forestry Division, responsibility for the operational management was given to the Auki-based staff. However, it was never clear to whom they were responsible and what initiatives they could take. Neither the Plantation Management Section or the Extension Section of the Forestry Division had a clearly defined support role for the locally-based staff. Frequently, requests for assistance such as general advice, seed supplies or spare parts for equipment were not answered. Recommendations in liaison visit reports were often not implemented. The regular turnover of forestry and aid personnel involved in the project from New Zealand, their lack of experience in this type of project and the lack of clarity about the role of the aid donor also meant that these deficiencies were either not noticed or addressed. The impact of this confused but centralised decision-making process was to inhibit participation by the landowners in the project. As a result, less progress was achieved in the project than might have been expected.

## **Impact of project structure on participation**

The impact of project structure on participation in the Malaita project and the interaction of some of the key characteristics and dimensions of participation can be analysed in terms of Korten's organisational model discussed in Chapter 4.

This argued for a “learning process approach” to development planning if participation is intended and long term changes are to be achieved in terms of local control (self-reliance) and access to resources and decision-making (empowerment). To recap briefly, Korten’s approach looked at projects in terms of the degree of fit that is achieved between project design, beneficiary needs and the capacities of the assisting organization. Successful community-based projects and programmes all appeared to have achieved a high degree of fit between these variables, despite wide diversity in approach, focus and initiating agency. Korten argued (1980:17) that the important lessons from these projects are not found “in their final program or organizational blueprints but rather in the process by which both program and organization were developed concurrently”. This was seen as a bottom up “learning process approach”. Korten’s schematic representation (see Figure 4.4) of the interrelationships between these variables in project planning and implementation, has three parts: the fit between beneficiary needs and the resources and services made available to the community as programme outputs, the fit between the means by which beneficiaries are able to define and communicate their needs and the processes by which the organization makes decisions, and the fit between the task requirements of the project and the distinctive competence of the organization.

In terms of the fit between the intended beneficiaries and the project, the appraisal team that designed the project did not explore the range of beneficiary needs and then attempt to respond to these. Rather they established what was wanted by national and provincial governments and designed a project to achieve this goal. The particular political, economic, social and cultural environment suggested an approach: to convince landowner leaders that the project was in their long term interests and to encourage them to get support from their groups.

Money was identified as a likely incentive to interest local people, given the high demand for cash income in Malaita. This, together with technical assistance, seeds, transport and equipment, became the inputs to implement the project. Participation was seen primarily as a means rather than an end in itself. It could be argued that because money was wanted by people, there was a good fit between project objectives and beneficiary need. Discussions with members of the landowning groups suggest that income generated by the project was one of the major reasons people supported the project and want it to continue. But who got money and how much they got, became a major preoccupation and the cause of tension throughout the project. While the approach in general was successful in generating landowner interest in reforestation, it is debatable whether the approach is sustainable. In terms of sustainability, long term local commitment, self-reliance and the replicability of the model elsewhere, the fit is not so positive. The narrow focus on technical outputs (trees in the ground), rather than training of local people to take more initiatives themselves, could be seen as a weakness.

In terms of the fit between beneficiaries and the assisting organisations, some attention was given in the project formulation to the question of how the local communities would relate to the Forestry Division. It was envisaged that customary processes would operate and information would be communicated through traditional structures. This meant that landowner leaders played an important role as intermediaries between the community and the Forestry Division. They selected workers, acted as workforce supervisors and represented the communities in discussions with Forestry Division. Less emphasis was placed on understanding how these traditional institutions functioned and what structures needed to be developed in the project to ensure the fit between beneficiaries defining and communicating their needs to the Forestry Division

and the latter's decision-making processes. As a result, problems and tensions between the landowning communities and Forestry Division staff escalated and were only resolved by outside intervention (the mid-project review).

Establishment at this stage of a coordinating committee provided a forum for the landowning groups to express their views. Therefore, the fit which was initially poor, was improved.

The fit between the project and the assisting organisation considers the linkages between what was required in the project and the competence and structure of the implementing agency to complete these tasks. A number of examples show where a lack of linkages, systems and structures (a poor fit) were problematic. The lack of training of Forestry Division staff in social forestry or community development meant they perceived the project as little different from any other plantation forestry project and implemented it in a conventional manner. This resulted in insufficient dialogue with the landowner groups and insufficient emphasis on working with the landowners who were seen as labourers rather than equal partners. The approach taken by Forestry Division to provide the necessary labour inputs caused many problems, including adverse affects on the degree of participation originally envisaged and the distribution of benefits from the project. The failure of the New Zealand donor and the Forestry Division to establish clear accountability for management and identify and quickly address problems that developed highlighted deficiencies not only in how the project was established and implemented but also in its organisational structure. It also highlighted some of the constraints of implementing such a project requiring the support of not one but two bureaucracies.

A number of conclusions can be reached about the project in terms of Korten's model. Neither the New Zealand agencies involved nor the Solomon Islands Forestry Division fully appreciated the innovative nature of the project. There was little awareness of the need to develop local structures and institutions as well as the skills and knowledge of the local groups' members. Bureaucratic blocks (e.g. delays in vehicle repairs, insufficient seeds) frustrated the achievement of project targets and their impact on stimulating community interest was not considered. This analysis suggests that the fit between project design, beneficiary needs and the capacity of the assisting organisations was weak, particularly during the project's early stages. It highlights the bureaucratic impediments to the success of participatory development projects that have been identified and well documented in the literature.<sup>3</sup>

Yet despite these deficiencies, much was achieved. The landowners' interest was maintained despite the problems during implementation. By the end of the project, they were more committed than ever to reforestation on their land, a key objective of Forestry Division and the New Zealand donor. While this was partly because of the income generated, they also appreciated the longer term benefits. A concern however, is the extent to which future development is dependent on a high level of financial and technical support from outside agencies. The potential for future joint ventures in which government invests greater resources but expects some benefits is not known. Wider political and economic issues will impact on the project; issues on which the local communities are likely to have little impact. In part the progress achieved could be related to the flexibility of the assisting agencies which did modify their ways of working. Outside facilitation (the mid-term review) was necessary to initiate this change, supporting the idea that a role for the *animateur* exists in such projects. Changes

made included taking a new approach to consultation and joint decision-making by involving landowning groups in the resolution of disagreements. It also included some organisational changes, such as the coordinating committee, instituted to overcome communication problems. While it has not worked as well as it might, it nevertheless provided an opportunity for greater involvement in decision-making by landowners. Another change that the Forestry Division was able to make was the move towards contract work through the employment of work unions which, by the end of the project, all parties agreed was the best approach. Thus, the Solomon Island bureaucracy was also able to work in different ways. These changes indicate that there were elements of a learning process approach emerging from the failure of a conventional blueprint approach to work. By the end of the project, a greater involvement of members of the landowning groups had been achieved and the degree of participation in the evaluation was greater than had occurred on any previous occasion. However, the bureaucratic constraints have not necessarily gone away, nor has a learning process approach been institutionalised. This will depend on the extent to which a wider acceptance can be gained in the assisting agencies of a different way of working with projects involving rural people, placing greater emphasis on the process as opposed to outputs.

## **Analysis of the project in relation to lessons from experience**

An ever increasing body of literature on participation in rural development and in social forestry projects and programmes exists, some of which was mentioned in chapters 2 and 3. While some of this was concurrent with the Malaita project, much was written before the project commenced. It is therefore of interest to

examine whether some of the lessons learned from other projects were applied to the Malaita project. Two particular studies mentioned earlier have summed up key lessons: Gow and Vansant (1983) and Gregersen et.al. (1989). Other important lessons in relation to forestry projects were identified by Noronha and Spears (1986) and Cernea (1989).

Gow and Vansant listed eight operational steps through which effective popular participation might be achieved. The first was that implementors of rural development projects should be prepared to follow a process approach. In the Malaita project this was only partially done. Some elements of the approach were present in the projects initiation, for example, it started in a consultative mode, and incorporated in the project design, for example, in the role seen for landowner leaders and the work union approach to implementation. However, when implementation began the project reverted to a technocratic mode. Efforts were made during the second half of the project to introduce more consultative mechanisms and solve problems as they arose. The second was that the project should start small with relatively simple activities which respond to local needs and produce results quickly. While a 500 hectare forestry plantation is small in an industrial forestry sense, it hardly fits the description just mentioned. The project's goal was complex, long term and its main emphasis was not on local needs (although the incentive of cash for labour indirectly met a need). The third was that beneficiaries should make a resource commitment to the project. This did occur in the project through allocation of land. While labour was provided relatively cheaply, the fact that people were paid to plant their own forests means that this can not be considered a resource commitment. The fourth point was that a project should try to work with existing organisations. This occurred in the sense that the project was designed to work with landowner leaders and the

structures that existed or were established. The fifth point was that if the environment was one of factionalism and conflict, it may be necessary to work with more than one group. This was not a major issue in the project although the two landowning groups were very different. Also relevant was that it was necessary to work directly with the women as a group to involve them in the project. This is not so much an issue of factionalism, but rather the extent to which the particular interests of women are not necessarily reflected in community organisations. The sixth issue was that two-way information flow between project implementors and intended beneficiaries should be established at the time of project start up. This was not adequately done, and was only built into the project structure after communications and relations between the implementors and the community deteriorated. The seventh point was that emphasis should be placed on building organisational capacity. This was not a feature of the project. Limited attention was given to working with the communities to develop appropriate structures. The communities were urged to set up landowner associations to make it easier for the bureaucracy to work with them, but this was not based on a detailed analysis of what structures were necessary or appropriate. In fact, the Saenaua group formed an association at the beginning to meet its needs. The Anotafa group saw no need to create a new structure and did not establish one despite being urged to do so by the implementing agencies. Finally, the eighth point was that decentralisation, in terms of local control was the key to any strategy to encourage participation. The project generally did not have clear decision-making processes. Some decisions could be made by local forestry staff but more often than not, matters were referred to head office, where decision-making was slow. Decisions were often left to be made by the New Zealand technical advisers on their irregular six to nine monthly visits. One could conclude that in terms of these eight "lessons", the

agencies implementing the Malaita project put a substantial number of obstacles in the way of participation by the local landowning groups.

Gregersen et. al. (1989:93-94) also identified eight substantive issues to consider in designing and implementing a social forestry project. In relation to the first, learning about local communities and their institutions, the Malaita project took too much for granted. It did not consider the social and cultural milieu with the importance that much of the literature has concluded is necessary. Gregersen noted the need to decide on the social units of organisation with which to work, particularly if the intention is to assist disadvantaged groups, the poor or women. The third point noted the need to deal with land constraints and needs. Given the nature of Solomon Island society, this could not be avoided and was addressed in some detail to find landowners who had land available which was not subject to dispute. The fourth point stressed the importance of choosing the right administrative structures and organisational flexibility. The analysis above has shown that there were weaknesses in both these areas in the project. Fifthly, monitoring and evaluation were identified as important. The monitoring process in the Malaita project through liaison visits focussed almost exclusively on technical forestry issues. While these visits could not avoid confronting some broader project issues, and the advisers concerned made efforts to address them, the advisers strengths were on dealing with forestry issues not community development issues. The mid-project review and the evaluation involved people with different skills to complement the forestry expertise and this proved important in bringing a different perspective on the issues and different ways to work through them. The final two points concerned a need for education for social forestry and research to develop technologies to support social forestry. Both of these would have been valuable in the Malaita

project. The forestry officers involved knew forestry and did their best to implement the project well, but had not been exposed to the concepts and approaches relevant to social forestry. Similarly the community itself had little knowledge of such a project. On the research side, there was interest in agro-forestry but no one in forestry in Solomon Islands with the knowledge or experience to develop this within the project. Even in the field of agriculture, there were few people who could assist when the project started. Given the relevance of the issue, the different bureaucracies might have pooled resources, but this did not occur.

A greater awareness of the literature may well have led to consideration of a different approach to the project, although it may not have changed the fundamental design. Basically, this was because participation by the people was seen as a means to an end by the implementors, rather than as an end in itself. The meaning of participation held by the various agencies was a fundamental determinant of what occurred in the project.

## **The issue of empowerment**

Empowerment was a concept in the definition of participation stated in Chapter 3; namely the “organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations”. To determine the extent of empowerment generated in the project according to the four different kinds of participation and the extent to which the intended beneficiaries of the project have had control over the project and the impact of this, it is necessary to assess how the relative situation of different participants changed as the project evolved. This can be analysed at two levels: at the level of the landowning groups and in terms of how power is distributed within the groups, for example, the degree of

involvement of women. It is also necessary to look at the degree of power that the aid donor and the Solomon Islands' bureaucracy held in the project.

Cohen and Uphoff (1977:106) provided a graduated scale to compare "degrees of empowerment". This was used to analyse the extent of power of the community generally in relation to the four kinds of participation: in decision-making, implementation, benefits and evaluation. This scale is used in Table 1 to show the relative amount of power of the community and women in particular in relation to the aid donor and the Solomon Islands bureaucracy.

**Table 1.  
Degree of Empowerment by Kind of Participation  
and Who Participates**

<b>Kind of Participation</b>	<b>Who Participates</b>			
	<b>NZ Donor</b>	<b>Sol. Island Bureaucracy</b>	<b>Landowner Groups</b>	<b>Women</b>
Decision-making	SP	SP	MP	NP
Implementation	MP	EP	MP	PP
Benefits	SP	MP	MP	NP
Evaluation	EP	EP	SOP	SOP

Key: NP = No power  
 PP = Potential power  
 SOP= Some power  
 MP = Moderate power  
 SP = Significant power  
 EP = Extensive power

This assessment is approximate only because it is difficult to categorise and generalise the many different kinds and instances of participation. For example, in some decision-making areas, the landowning groups had extensive

power (e.g. in deciding who will work on the project), but when balanced with other areas (e.g. no say in technical decisions) it is concluded that they had only moderate power. The table highlights the greater power of the donor and the bureaucracy; indicates that the landowning groups did in fact have some say in all aspects of the project and that women had rather limited power relative to the other groups involved.

While this table gives an indication of relative power of different participants in aspects of the project, it says little about how the level of power and control held by the participants changed as a result of the project. From previous discussion, it could be argued that the relative power of the landowning groups changed very little. Their desire to keep the project meant they were willing to negotiate, for example, their demands for higher wages. Their interest in short term income while maintaining full control over the land meant that they were dependent on the aid donor and the Solomon Islands Government's willingness to support the project on this basis. Another option to continue to get these short term benefits was some form of joint venture which would have meant giving up some power and control over their land.

Another important question in terms of the issue of empowerment of people through such a project would seem to be the way in which those who do have power, choose to use it. Clearly the impetus for landowner interest was induced from above: by the offer of a tour overseas to landowner leaders and by the offer of money for reforestation of the land. With these initiatives from above, landowners were willing to make available land and labour for the pilot project. While there was some discussion during the appraisal of the project with

landowner leaders, the project was primarily designed by the donor and Solomon Islands Forestry Division to meet the objectives of the project as they saw them.

The landowners always had significant power in that they owned the land and could choose to withdraw from the project at any time if they were dissatisfied. There was no formal agreement with the Government or the aid donor. This was a very real possibility part way through the project when disagreements about the level of wages arose. From the landowners point of view, they had to weigh up the loss of the project against the income benefits and increase in assets they were obtaining. From the Solomon Islands government point of view the project was seeking to provide a model for working with landowners to reforest customary land. A negotiated settlement resolved the dispute in a way which recognised the interests of both parties in the project and the fact that both had some power to influence events. Such an incident could be seen as one in which the landowners gained some power. Not only were wages increased, but a mechanism for greater consultation and communication was established providing a structure through which landowners could introduce new ideas. However, the aid donor could very well have decided at this point that the project had failed because the intended approach had not eventuated (e.g. using work unions with labour provided at minimal cost by the communities). In fact, one member of the Solomon Islands Forestry Division was strongly of this view and felt that what resources New Zealand had should be put somewhere else. It was only because two members of the mid-project review team had a community development background that this did not occur. In their view the whole effort to encourage reforestation on customary land would have been undermined if problems in this project could not be worked out through discussion between the parties involved.

Another example of the way the donor used its power, was in the involvement of women in the project. This did not occur until the second half of the project. As a result of a deliberate effort to discuss the project with women, they became more involved. While their involvement was still limited, some participated as members of work unions, at Saenaua, a women's association was established and an agro-forestry project started, links with government and non-government agencies which support women's groups were made, and there was some participation in meetings during liaison visits and greater involvement in the final evaluation. While some of these initiatives were relatively new, the involvement of women in the project was established.

A further example of empowerment was the knowledge and skills gained by the landowning groups as a result of participation in the project. They now have people who are competent at the various field operations associated with plantation reforestation. This encouraged them to consider reforestation of larger areas of land and to look at how they might use their land for a variety of other tree crops. While they did not have all the skills necessary to develop the land on their own, they had a greater potential to develop their land than they did before the project started.

This chapter has shown that external agents, namely the Solomon Islands Forestry Division and the New Zealand aid donor played a significant role in the project from its planning and design, through its implementation phase and in its final evaluation. The nature of the project design which introduced a new technology in the form of plantation forestry meant that a high involvement of technical and management expertise was necessary. Some degree of participation by the landowning groups was possible in some activities and their level of

participation increased during the project. The relationships that developed between the project implementors, the Solomon Island Forestry Division and the intended beneficiaries, the local landowners, were not always constructive and harmonious, yet there was sufficient interest in the project on all sides to work through the difficulties that arose. The New Zealand aid donor in one sense held much of the power in that they provided the funds, yet it was seen by the landowners as a more neutral player. Its objectives were to support the Solomon Island's Government plans as well as local landowners and was able to play a mediating role. While many issues were a source of irritation and frustration for the various partners involved, the one that emerged as the most important was the labour question. However, most of the problems appeared to be caused by the way the project was structured, including a lack of clarity in terms of project decision-making and responsibilities. Project characteristics as described by Cohen and Uphoff thus played an important role in the project, as did the external bureaucracies identified as important by Gow and Vansant. The case study showed that process questions as described by Korten need to be addressed. The extent to which the intended beneficiaries were empowered by the process cannot be answered at this stage. In some ways they gained skills and knowledge, yet they were tied into a model which would continue to require technical support and money. Without these, the landowning groups will not be able to expand the project to the extent they desired nor earn money from labour inputs, introduced as an incentive but being a major rationale for involvement.

## CHAPTER 9

### Conclusion

This study had two objectives: first, to examine the concept of popular participation in rural development, particularly in the forestry sector and its role in poverty alleviation, and second, to test the hypothesis that popular participation can be promoted by foreign aid provided by one government to another.

The first of these objectives was addressed through a study of the literature on participation and social forestry. The literature on participation highlighted both the importance of popular participation in development strategies since the 1970s, in which poverty alleviation was a central concern, and the difficulty of making it an integral part of aid programmes and projects. It showed the complexity of the subject and the many interpretations given to the concept. While there was no agreement in the literature about what participation was or should be, there did appear to be an emerging consensus on a number of issues: that popular participation should be both a means and an end; that it is inescapably political; that it is an important factor in empowerment of the poor and that planning and implementation of participatory development strategies will require substantial changes in how rural development programmes and projects have been organised.

The literature on social forestry emerged from recognition of the increased importance of forests and trees for the well-being of people and the planet itself. Efforts to reduce rural poverty, as well as concern for the environment, led to a

new focus on people-centred forestry strategies. Involvement of people in forestry projects was seen as a means to address both poverty and environmental issues.

The second objective was explored through analysis of a foreign government aid project in which local people were actively involved. Two things were necessary to do this: a working definition of popular participation in forestry projects and a framework for analysis. The definition deemed most useful from the literature defined popular participation 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. Some key elements of this definition were specified as collective action, institutional development and the establishment of enduring social structures and value systems to activate and organise individual actors. These elements feature prominently in the lessons from past social forestry projects, while not being exclusive to such projects. The literature also provided the building blocks of a framework within which to analyse the case study; a social forestry project in Malaita, Solomon Islands. This framework included a number of elements. The primary one was Cohen and Uphoff's matrix of different dimensions and contexts of participation, which provided a checklist of possible study variables and a framework within which to analyse them. However, given the focus of this study on whether or not aid donors and bureaucracies can promote popular participation, this model was incomplete. It was extended in a number of ways: first, a fourth dimension, participation "for what purpose" was added to the 'What?', 'Who?' and 'How?' dimensions in Cohen and Uphoff's model, since this was considered important in discussing the role of outside agencies in the promotion of popular participation; second, the interrelationships between ecosystems and human social systems as highlighted in Rambo and Lovelace's

systems model of human ecology was used to acknowledge the linkages between people and their environment and to relate the project context to the wider world and external factors and third, Korten's organizational fit model, that is, the connections between the project, its organization and the beneficiaries, was used to analyse some of the key factors within the project which supported or inhibited popular participation. Other useful insights were gained from the literature. Gow and Vansant highlighted the importance of external political and bureaucratic factors. Other writers analysed experience from past projects and identified key variables which helped specify variables in the Cohen and Uphoff model on which to focus attention, particularly population, land, labour and social organisation.

Analysis of the case study was undertaken in four stages: first, the project was placed within the context of political, economic, social and cultural change in Solomon Islands over the past 100 years; second the various phases of the project from initiation, through implementation to evaluation was described; third, the various dimensions of popular participation in the project were discussed and fourth, participation in the project was analysed in terms of key variables and within the analytical framework outlined above.

So what can be said from this study about popular participation as defined above and its promotion by foreign aid donors and bureaucracies? Can government to government aid projects promote popular participation, or has the case study demonstrated problems so fundamental as to challenge this belief. Given the focus in this study on one project by one aid donor, tentative conclusions only are possible. The general conclusion reached from this study is a qualified yes; that promotion of popular participation by foreign aid and

government bureaucracies is possible. However, there are likely to be many constraints on its achievement. The case study provides some lessons for future projects which attempt to empower local people to gain greater self-reliance.

The Cohen and Uphoff model indicated the importance of context and the analysis in Chapter 8 identified various factors which influenced popular participation in the project. The Malaita project emerged from a situation in which some form of partnership between the government and the people was necessary if government was to maintain a sustainable forestry industry in Solomon Islands. A way had to be found to work with local landowners and encourage them to grow trees on their land. Local landowners were keen to find development opportunities which were consistent with their cultural and social values. While the objectives of each group were not exactly the same, there was enough common interest to pursue a project involving external agencies and local people. It is concluded that unless there is a significant degree of complementarity of objectives, between the sponsoring agencies and the local people, it is unlikely that a participatory project could be undertaken. Even with a large degree of vested interest by all parties, the case study highlighted the complexity of designing and implementing a project involving popular participation and the very real possibility of failure. On paper, the project demonstrated the potential to achieve significant benefits for the intended beneficiaries as well as the national economy. But these were not guaranteed and their realisation depended on how the project was implemented and a significant degree of participation by the local people.

It is concluded that complementary objectives between the project sponsors, implementers and local people are a necessary but not a sufficient

condition for popular participation. In the Malaita project, consultation with, and participation by, the local landowners was seen by the donor agency and the Solomon Islands bureaucracy primarily as a means to achieve objectives of national significance rather than the aspirations of the landowners involved. Participation was not seen as an end in itself. Popular participation was therefore understood differently from the definition chosen for this study. The implementing agencies did not articulate empowerment and self-reliance of the local people as key objectives of the project. This influenced how the project was designed and implemented.

One of the key issues with respect to empowerment noted in the literature was the extent to which those holding power are prepared to share this in ways which enable decisions to be made by intended beneficiaries and learning from experience to take place. This needs to be a conscious process carried out over a long period of time, building up local capability through training and institution building, starting with incentives then moving towards more self-sustaining development activities. A danger of the project approach, and dependence on outside support, is that the donor's interest is short term: once the project is finished they move onto the next one. In the Malaita project the five year period could be seen as only the very beginning of a new form of community involvement in forestry. The landowners had just started thinking of a variety of forestry options for their land, based on the knowledge and skills they had acquired through the project. They had had their interest stimulated and were keen to explore other opportunities when the money ran out. This suggests two important points: the need for a long term commitment by partner agencies if participatory development is to be promoted and a more careful assessment of appropriate incentives, which will lead to sustainability.

An associated issue is whether aid can promote self-reliance as opposed to dependence. In the Malaita project, participation brought the landowners substantial short term benefits and potentially valuable assets but, by the end of the project, they remained dependent on the technical knowledge of the Forestry Division and the availability of finance from outside sources. Without a substantial continuing investment from outside, the project is not sustainable. The donor and the local bureaucracy thus retained much of the power. The focus of the project on national needs, rather than local needs, combined with a lack of emphasis on process questions, awareness raising and building of local institutions maintained a high level of dependence of the communities on outside support. One must therefore question the specific approach followed, perhaps the plantation forestry model itself, but more importantly, the basis on which, and how, the project was implemented. Continuing dependence is the antithesis of empowerment. A goal of participatory projects needs to be the self-reliance of the intended beneficiaries. This was not an objective of the Malaita project.

The different objectives and perceptions of the project by the various parties involved explains why, in analysing the Malaita project in terms of Korten's learned process approach, the fit between project design, beneficiary needs and the capacity of the assisting organisations was not very strong, particularly during the early stages of project implementation. In terms of Korten's model, neither the New Zealand agencies involved nor the Solomon Islands Forestry Division really appreciate how different the project was from others they had been involved in. Used to operating in terms of a blueprint approach, they saw this project as substantially the same. There appeared to be some awareness of the need to develop local structures and institutions as well as the skills and knowledge of the community members, but this was narrowly

defined in relation to technical needs. For them the project was primarily about planting trees. Bureaucratic blocks ended up frustrating the achievement of project targets (e.g., vehicles were not repaired quickly, insufficient seeds were provided, upgrading of the nursery was delayed) and the impact of these on the objective of stimulating community interest was not considered.

Yet despite these deficiencies, much was achieved. The landowners' interest was maintained despite the problems during implementation. By the end of the project, they were more committed than ever to reforestation on their land, one of the key objectives of Forestry Division and the New Zealand donor. The progress achieved is explained by the flexibility of the supporting agencies which demonstrated at various points of the project that they were open to different approaches. At the design stage of the project, the appraisal team incorporated some elements of participation in the project. After the mid-term review they were willing to change their approach further, including a new approach to consultation and joint decision-making by involving landowning communities in the resolution of disagreements, a different basis for employing labour and some organisational changes, such as the coordinating committee, instituted to overcome communication problems. These changes show that there were elements of a learning process approach emerging from the failure of a more conventional blueprint approach to work. By the end of the project a greater involvement of landowners and community members had been achieved, as was evident in the evaluation.

But the bureaucratic constraints have not necessarily gone away, nor has a learning process approach been institutionalised. This will depend on the extent to which the assisting agencies are prepared to accept a different way of working

with projects involving rural people, placing greater emphasis on the process as opposed to outputs. This is the major challenge to aid agencies if they wish to address rural poverty issues and promote popular participation. It involves a willingness to make longer term commitments, to put funds into human resource and institutional development rather than safe and visible projects and to see development as a process building from the bottom up rather than the top down. But the technocratic, top-down, blueprint approach is deeply ingrained in bureaucracies, which tend to have paternalistic attitudes towards the society at large. While varying degrees of consultation with the intended beneficiaries of government programmes and projects is becoming more common, participation by them in the identification and planning of such programmes and projects remains the exception rather than the rule.

Consequently, a change in approach by bureaucracies to a learning process approach, as described by Korten, faces many obstacles. With respect to foreign aid bureaucracies, these include pressures to support large, capital and import intensive projects which can be implemented in a defined time period and which are relatively easy to monitor and evaluate. Other factors that might be added are the conventional wisdoms held by the majority of people who work in them, often limited experience of other ways of doing things and the wider political motivations for their involvement. In Third World bureaucracies, constraints on introducing new approaches include quite rigid approaches to doing things, resistance to change, limited resources and lack of trained personnel. Yet, despite these barriers to change, there was, in the Malaita project, a willingness by officers in the bureaucracies involved to move towards a more participatory approach. This was evident to some extent in the project design phase and evolved through the course of the project at the instigation of some people

involved. From a point of near collapse mid-way through the project, it ended on a high note, with all parties enthusiastic about what could be done. To a large extent, this change resulted from a greater participation by the landowners. Some outside facilitation helped, which suggests that the role of the *animateur* is important.

A further weakness that the case study demonstrated was that aid agencies are not good at learning from experience. To a large extent, the project was designed and implemented in isolation from the many and varied social forestry experiments that had been undertaken elsewhere or were going on at the same time. Thus, the project had to learn from its own mistakes rather than drawing on lessons from other social forestry projects, some of which were discussed in Chapter 3. For example, the project was not built around addressing the needs of the local people and it put limited emphasis on the development of local institutions and local people. The resources made available were too narrowly focussed on the technical aspects of the project and the social and process dimensions not given sufficient attention. The literature emphasises the importance of understanding the wider context and the interrelationships between historical, economic, political, social and cultural and biophysical factors. Participation means taking all these into account. It means putting more resources into understanding the dynamics of any social and cultural milieu in which a project is proposed, and being more knowledgeable about the people as well as their relationships with their environment. The literature further highlights that participation by local people in project planning and implementation is critical to understanding local realities and dealing with problems than emerge.

One of the more basic problem faced by the Malaita project was that participation was understood differently by the three main groups involved. Despite this, there was enough common ground, vested interest, flexibility and willingness to compromise by all parties to complete the pilot project and for some benefits to be gained by everyone. But popular participation as defined in this study has yet to be achieved. It is too early to say whether the local landowners have been empowered by the project and gained a greater degree of self-reliance and self-confidence as a result. Elements of a participatory approach featured in the project but not in a consistent or highly conscious way. Many things could have been done better. Even in terms of a conventional project there was not a good correlation between the objectives of the project as defined by the supporting agencies, how it was designed and how it was implemented. There were shortcomings, particularly in the area of defining responsibilities, and establishing an effective means of making management decisions to achieve project objectives and monitoring of non-technical aspects of the project. These are all issues that could be controlled and project outputs could have been greater if more attention had been given to such aspects of the project.

The case study leaves unanswered the question of whether bilateral aid projects can promote empowerment through popular participation. Clearly the nature of bureaucracy and the need for it to work in different ways are major constraints as are the realities of the local context. Yet the Malaita project shows that these constraints can be overcome by more participatory approaches. The reality is, that for many countries and many groups within them, outside assistance is necessary to provide resources beyond the means of the poor. It is the form this intervention takes and the extent to which it can be used to promote self-reliance rather than dependence that is important. Donor agencies may need

to be less product-oriented and accept that much development work will be unseen as it is the process of local people taking control over their own lives. An important change must take place in donor agency thinking if they are to promote participatory development. Development is not neutral and value free. If it is about assisting the poor, this means taking an option to work with certain groups and in more participatory ways. Uphoff (1988:14) talks of “donor assisted self-reliance”. This seems a paradox but he argues it as a new strategy to overcome the deficiencies of past aid efforts. Uphoff (1988:1) suggests that “neither extreme of top-down or bottom-up development is as promising as a strategy that transcends both approaches”. The challenge is for agencies to take seriously what this means and develop ways to implement new projects in a different way to respond to the demands implied by it. In essence, it means that outsiders and experts do not possess all the knowledge and wisdom to design perfect projects for the poor nor that the poor themselves possess all the essential elements to achieve the kind and level of development to which they aspire.

There is much more to be done to design and implement development projects in ways that involve greater participation of the poor. Part of the process will be to identify ways around some of the bureaucratic constraints which currently hinder progress in participatory development. The basis is there in the objectives of aid donors to contribute to poverty alleviation and promote sustainable development. The next step is for them to understand how these can be achieved and what this means for the way they work. Participation is one of the keys. The Malaita project provides some glimpses of what might be done.

# NOTES

## CHAPTER 1

- 1 The Third World is a term commonly used to represent the countries of Africa, Asia (except Japan) and Latin America. In comparison to Western countries they are seen as less economically developed. Other terms sometimes used are “underdeveloped”, “developing” or countries of the South.
- 2 For the purposes of this study, a precise definition of the rural sector is not necessary. However, it is noted that rural development focusses on rural or agrarian societies, namely those societies or groups which make a primary livelihood from agriculture and animal husbandry. For a brief discussion of the nature of agrarian society and critical issues see UNDP, 1979:63-81.
- 3 For a discussion on different theories of, and different sociological approaches to, community and community power see Bell & Newby, 1971.
- 4 A useful discussion of alternative theories of development is contained in Todaro, 1989:63-85. Influential writers on modernisation theory include Rostow, 1956, 1961; Hoselitz, 1970; Smelser, 1970; McClelland, 1970; and Hagen, 1970. Key writers on dependency theory include Amin, 1977; Baran, 1957, 1975; Cardoso, 1978; Dos Santos, 1969; Frank, 1967, 1971, 1975; Goulet, 1971; Lall, 1975; Leys, 1975; Streeten, 1983.
- 5 See for example, Taylor, 1979; Porter, 1980; Forbes, 1984; Worsley, 1984; Booth, 1985; Giddens, 1986.
- 6 For a fuller discussion of what aid is and what it is not see Todaro, 1989: 481-485.
- 7 The strong criticisms from the left have mainly followed a dependency theory analysis (see writers such as Hayter, 1971, 1981; Payer, 1974; George, 1976; Lappe et. al. 1980; Bello et. al., 1982; and Hayter & Watson, 1985). From this perspective, aid is seen as part of the dominant relationship between the centre (the donor countries) and the periphery (the aid recipients). By promoting capitalist economic development, aid is seen to contribute to underdevelopment through the expropriation of wealth and resources. This can occur because the majority of aid is channelled through Third World governments, who are seen as accomplices, controlled by elites who also benefit from this process. It is concluded that the problems of poverty and underdevelopment can only be solved by changing power relations and in this context, aid is either irrelevant or detrimental to the extent that it maintains oppressive regimes in power. Many of these studies are based on analysis of aid programmes and projects of large agencies such as the World Bank and USAID and their failure to directly address poverty issues.

The other major criticism of aid has come from economists who adhere to a liberal, free market system as the only way to achieve efficient allocation of scarce resources. One of the main proponents of this point of view, in an extreme form, is Bauer (see Bauer, 1965, 1966 and 1981). This perspective argues that underdevelopment in the Third World is the result of failure to provide the conditions within which entrepreneurial investment is encouraged. Failure to develop is seen as the result of too many bureaucratic controls, corruption, inefficiency and lack of motivation. The latter is a feature of modernisation theorists, who argue for the need to change social attitudes and structures. Bauer's view is that "economic achievement depends on people's attributes, attitudes and motivations, mores and political arrangements. In many countries the prevailing personal, social and political determinants are uncongenial to material progress: witness the preference for a contemplative life, opposition to paid work by women and widespread torpor and fatalism in certain countries" (Bauer, 1981:100).

8 See Morss, 1975; Cernea, 1983; Cassen, 1986; Uphoff, 1988.

## CHAPTER 2

- 1 The term NGO includes a wide variety of organisations with different histories, experiences and objectives, not all of which implement participatory approaches to addressing underdevelopment. Korten talks of NGOs as having four distinctive orientations in their programme strategies; i.e. relief and welfare, local self-reliance, sustainable systems development and people's movements. He talks of these in terms of first, second, third and fourth generation NGOs, in the sense of their historical development. However, today they tend to coexist as new approaches do not necessarily replace the old (see Korten, 1987 and 1990).
- 2 For a study of NGOs' involvement in development and participation, see Gezelius and Millwood, 1985 and 1988, and Korten, 1990.
- 3 The work of Robert Chambers at the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex University on poverty is particularly relevant (see Chambers, 1978, 1981a, 1981b, 1983, 1989, and Chamber and Leach, 1989). The Swedish International Development Authority has supported a Popular Participation Programme at the Development Studies Unit of the Department of 'Social Anthropology at Stockholm University - see Gezelius and Millwood, 1988; Topsoe-Jensen, 1989 and Rudquist, 1989.
- 4 The theory, methodology and practice of participatory research is covered in D'Abreo, 1983; Fals-Borda, 1984; Fernandes and Tandon, 1981; International Council for Adult Education, 1981, 1982, 1988; and Kassam and Mustafa, 1982. A critique of it is provided in Rahnama, 1990.
- 5 The main literature drawn on includes: Cohen & Uphoff, 1977, 1980; Uphoff, Cohen & Goldsmith, 1979; Esman & Uphoff, 1984; Gow & Vansant, 1983; Oakley & Marsden, 1984; Fortin & Stiefel, 1985; Pearse & Stiefel, 1979; Stiefel, 1981, 1985; Stiefel & Wolfe, 1984; UNRISD, 1980; Wolfe, 1981, 1983; Ghai, 1988; Rahman, 1981, 1984, 1987; Gezelius, 1989; Goulet, 1989.

- 6 For a fuller discussion on this topic, see Oakley and Marsden, 1984:23-25.
- 7 Outside “experts” are a major component of aid inputs by donor agencies. Therefore the role they play in facilitating or inhibiting participation is important in any analysis of rural development participation. This question will be addressed later in the case study to follow.
- 8 In looking at operational obstacles they identified the work of Cornell University as the Bible; in particular, Cohen et. al., 1977.

### **CHAPTER 3**

- 1 An influential paper which argued this point of view was written under the auspices of FAO in 1962 by Jack Westoby titled ‘The Role of Forest Industries in the Attack on Economic Underdevelopment’. See Westoby, 1987:3-70.
- 2 An early example of people challenging conventional forms of forestry occurred in India where a people’s movement ‘Chipko Andolan’ forced government to stop forest exploitation in some parts of the country (FAO, 1985:51).
- 3 For a more detailed discussion of each of these questions see Gregersen, et.al., 1989:11-92).
- 4 See also Cernea, 1989:3-5.

### **CHAPTER 4**

- 1 While this category of benefits can be separated from the other two, in many societies it may be too fine a distinction to talk of these accruing to an individual. Often such benefits will be gained by the family or even a wider grouping.
- 2 While this category of benefits can be distinguished from material and social benefits, they may also accrue to a group. The term ‘personal’ does not adequately reflect this.
- 3 Cohen and Uphoff talk of this as a relative new field on which little has been written or accomplished. Since 1980, however, there has been a lot of experimentation and writing on participatory methods for monitoring and evaluation.
- 4 This seems to me to be a misuse of the term evaluation. Rather it describes the way in which different groups and individuals in the local situation seek to gain influence over project design, implementation and outcomes. The extent to which they succeed will depend on their power gained through status, organisation or manipulation. It underlie all the dimensions of participation described.

- 5 Cohen and Uphoff recognised the question, 'For what purpose?' as important but do not include it in their model because it is a normative concept and thus difficult to include in a basically descriptive framework. Nevertheless they recognise that it may "prove to be a critical fourth dimension of participation" (Cohen and Uphoff, 1980:227).
- 6 For a more detailed discussion of this system see Rambo, 1984:39-46 and Lovelace, 1985a:18-28.

## CHAPTER 5

- 1 Some of the main work in this area include: D'Abreo, 1983; Fernandes & Tandon, 1981; Friere, 1972a, 1972b; Hall, 1981; International Council for Adult Education, 1981, 1982, 1988; Kassam & Mustafa, 1982; Tandon, 1981.
- 2 Some of the main work in this area include: Chambers, 1986; Grandstaff & Grandstaff, 1988; Khon Kaen University, 1987.
- 3 A number of major studies in recent years have argued from an analysis of aid experience that the failure to address such issues adequately in project appraisal or evaluation has been a major cause of failure in aid funded activities. These include: Baum, 1985; Cassen, 1986; Cernea, 1986.
- 4 The two women in the evaluation team organised and ran the meetings with the village women. I was not present, but obtained information through discussion with the other team members.
- 5 It was a five year pilot project due to end in June 1990. The end of project evaluation recommended that the project be extended for a further six months to the end of 1990, to allow more discussion on possible options for continuation of the project.

## CHAPTER 6

- 1 The implementation of this approach led to a number of disputes among landowners as to who could or should exercise these rights.
- 2 The Government changed following national elections in 1989.
- 3 See for example the North New Georgia dispute in the early 1970s in Rence, 1979 and International Development Action, 1980.
- 4 For a more detailed discussion of the ethnography and pre-contact history of Solomon Islands, see Bellwood, 1987; Bennett, 1987; Codrington, 1891; Stevenson, 1988; Whiteman, 1986.
- 5 In the Kwara'ae area in which the case study is situated, primary rights belonged to the male line, secondary rights to the female line and tertiary rights to the general public. See Maenu'u, 1981:16-18.

- 6 See Maenu'u, 1981; Burt, 1982; Keesing, 1985.
- 7 For a fuller discussion, see Maenu'u, 1984.
- 8 See also Maenu'u, 1989:30-31.
- 9 For further discussion of labour recruitment see Bennett, 1987 and Corris, 1973.
- 10 Burt, 1981, quotes a population of 12,500 while Maenu'u, 1981 quotes around 20,000.
- 11 For a more detailed discussion see Maenu'u, 1981 and Burt, 1981 and 1982.

## **CHAPTER 7**

- 1 A third group which participated in the landowners tour could not meet these criteria and their land was not considered for a project.
- 2 There were already precedents for government investment on customary land without registered title, i.e. Land Use Agreements where subsidies were provided for agricultural projects.
- 3 During the project seven liaison visits were undertaken: see Robinson, 1985; Hunt, 1986, 1987a, 1987b; Thorpe, 1988, 1989a, 1989b. These provide a detailed summary of technical achievements and problems that emerged during the project. Major issues which affected project achievements are also discussed in the mid-project review and end of project evaluation: see Kwanairara et. al., 1987, 1990; and Clark & Thorpe, 1987.
- 4 Provincial wages rates were considerably lower than national wage rates.
- 5 There was an awareness about the pay scale of forestry workers because the eight landowners who had been sent to Western Province for on-the-job training received forestry wages during that time.
- 6 One of these involved the employment of the workforce to build the Forestry Division house at higher wage rates. Another was the "unauthorised" use of the project vehicle by the forest officer on weekends.
- 7 This had been mentioned in the appraisal report and costed into the project. It had not been built because the machinery to build the road was not available. Prior to the mid-project review, Forestry Division staff had questioned the need for the road from a forestry point of view and also the costings provided in the appraisal document.
- 8 The term 'labour payments' was used to try to return to the idea of an incentive payment for community work rather than wages for employment.

- 9 Some alternatives were discussed during later liaison visits such as seeking assistance from the Provincial Government and cutting short roads into the villages off the main roads. Neither of these eventuated and instead the landowners accepted a sum of \$15,000 for a cattle under trees project in lieu of a road.
- 10 This refers to the process of replacing seedlings which did not survive the initial planting.
- 11 The list of demands/requests were prepared prior to the evaluation, during a visit by one of the independent Solomon Island evaluation team members to landowners to make sure they were prepared for the evaluation.
- 12 New Zealand had committed itself to providing another five years of assistance to customary land reforestation activities in Solomon Islands, but the focus of this assistance is on strengthening the Forestry Division's extension capabilities to enable it to respond to requests for reforestation work on customary land in other parts of the country.
- 13 Despite the big-man polity described in Chapter 6, Melanesian society was generally not strictly hierarchical, nor was leadership always hereditary. Leaders gained their position because of various attributes. Decision-making tended to be made by discussion and consensus, rather than decree.
- 14 Tabu sites refers to areas that have cultural significance. It might refer to trees or areas that indicate the boundaries between different tribes or clans. It could also mean sacred sites where, particularly in the olden days, the tribe worshipped their ancestors.
- 15 Agreements reached at the meeting became the recommendations of the review team and were accepted by both the Solomon Islands and New Zealand Governments.
- 16 These figures are taken from financial reconciliations in Liaison Reports Numbers 2-7. See Hunt, 1986, 1987a, 1987b; and Thorpe 1988, 1989a, 1989b. It is an estimate because there was no figure available for work done before October 1985 and the amount for October 1989 to June 1990 was an estimate.
- 17 On the basis of liaison report figures monthly payments for labour as set out below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total (SI\$)</b>	<b>Monthly Average (SI\$)</b>
1985 (3 mths only)	7763	2588
1986	32515	2710
1987	27289	2274
1988	43000	3583
1989	52142	4345
1990 (3 mths est.)	15000	5000

- 18 One of the reasons for uncertainty is that the method of recording names on pay sheets at the Forestry Division was inconsistent. Another is the fact that Solomon Islanders sometimes change their names and so an element of double counting may have entered my calculations. Therefore, the figure given may be an overestimate.
- 19 One reason was that the landowning group itself was small. Another was that some members were already employed elsewhere, either building the National Agricultural Training Institute or at the Taisol logging company, which had logged the land and was continuing to log surrounding land. The main landowner worked for the company.
- 20 A summary of the 1982 rural household income and expenditure survey results is given in Solomon Islands Statistics Office, Bulletin 15/87 'Provincial Statistics'. A summary of the monthly cash and non-cash income and expenditure figures for the sample (800 households) is shown below:

	\$ per h/h		\$ per h/h
	<b>Cash Transactions</b>		
Income	86.06	Expenditure	73.70
	<b>Non-cash Transactions</b>		
Income	61.02	Expenditure	57.57
	<hr/>		<hr/>
Total	147.09		131.27

- 21 See Village Resources Survey 1984-85 Vol.V Malaita Province, Statistics Office, Honiara, Solomon Islands. Some of the main resources (or lack of resources) at Ura and Anoasa indicated by this survey were that neither village had a school or health clinic and it was over 2 hours walk to the nearest health facility (in Auke town). Both had sanitation facilities and water supply. Ura had this installed in the village, while Anoasa people had to walk to get water. Ura had two stores and Anoasa one. Neither village had cooperatives or access to petrol in the village. Both had track access, which could take vehicles. Anoasa had no vehicles, while Ura had one truck and six bicycles. There was one church in each village.
- 22 See Solomon Island Population Census 1986, Statistics Office, Honiara, Solomon Islands. The information included in the text was obtained from the individual census returns for Anoasa and Ura villages.
- 23 Prior to the war, all members of the tribe lived in Anoasa which was near the ridge of the first set of inland hills, some kilometres inland. During the Maasina Rule period, the people moved to a new village at Ura near the coast. Later most returned to Anoasa, some remaining at Ura.

- 24 The deputy premier was also a member of the Anotafa tribe although not a member of the landowning community. In the final meeting of the project evaluation between the landowners and the evaluation team, he acted as spokesperson for the Anotafa landowners. My impression was that the principle landowner, though completely capable of fulfilling this role himself, preferred to give this role to someone else who had some status and education.
- 25 The workers at Anotafa (most of whom were not members of the landowning family), who were the ones that complained the most were able to manipulate this new system to get more money. They did this by continuing to be part of the regular workforce for some tasks (much as before) then forming themselves into a work union to do other tasks such as maintenance.

## CHAPTER 8

- 1 The only reason this was followed through was because the New Zealand technical advisers pushed it and the provincial government people were keen to see it happen and set a useful precedent which might help them develop other areas in the future. Given that the landowners were to retain all benefits to the trees planted under the project, there was no valid reason for making this demand to register the land. However, the argument in favour of this was that at some stage in the future, further assistance from government might require landowners to form a joint venture and this would require registration to 'secure' government's interest.
- 2 This was most evident during the mid-term review when landowners were negotiating for an increased wage rate. Anotafa landowners were primarily interested in the money and were open to consideration of a joint venture if this meant some guarantee of regular income. The Saenaua landowners were not interested in a joint venture. Given a limited amount of money for the project, they would have preferred to stay on a lesser wage rate and gain some community facilities, such as the road that had been mentioned in the project document. These difference between the two groups could not be reconciled with both being part of the same project.
- 3 See in particular Korten, 1980; Korten & Uphoff, 1981 and Uphoff, 1988.

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