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**ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF MARGINALIZED PEOPLE IN  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF  
WORLD VISION MYANMAR**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this thesis is to explore the participation of the marginalized people in community development, and specifically how World Vision Myanmar facilitates that participation. The Area Development Programme implemented by World Vision in Thabaung Township was selected as a case study. Employing theoretical continuums of participation in conjunction with qualitative research methods, the nature and level of participation of marginalized people and the factors influencing their participation, as well as the role of World Vision Myanmar in promoting their active participation, were investigated.

Before the 1990s, the dominant modes of top-down and externally-induced development failed to provide the hoped-for results in reducing poverty. As a result, a more people-oriented approach to development was encouraged and the participation of the previously ignored beneficiaries of development initiatives is now seen as vital in achieving and sustaining development outcomes. However, community participation in development initiatives does not mean that all segments of a community have an equal role in development programmes and share benefits equally.

This study found that nearly all community members participate in community development projects initiated by World Vision Myanmar but that the form of their participation varies. Three socioeconomic categories (the rich, the middle-class and the poor) were present in each research village, and the results showed that the poor were marginalized from active participation in important aspects of community development, especially in leadership and decision-making. The poor were characterized by a cluster of disadvantages. This study noted that the decision-making power remained mostly in the hands of the powerful people in the community. However, leadership styles differed between research villages, demonstrating that the poor can contribute to decision-making processes when the leadership style in the communities is inclusive of the marginalized. In contrast, when the leadership style is authoritative and individualized, the poor remain marginalized from development processes.

World Vision Myanmar has policy documents and guidelines that encourage the participation of every segment of the community, especially the poor. However, there is still room for the organization to make these guidelines more accessible for Community Based

Organizations (CBOs) so that they can apply them more effectively in their communities, and it could work to build capacities of the marginalized to facilitate their empowerment.

*This thesis is dedicated to my parents, my loving sisters, my beloved wife and my lovely daughter. They are the soul and heart of my life as well as the source of my happiness and strength.*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Area Development Programme
CBOs	Community-based Organizations
CD	Community Development
CDF	Community Development Facilitator
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Children
D, M & E	Design, Monitoring and Evaluation
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loans Associations
WVI	World Vision International
WVM	World Vision Myanmar

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# CHAPTER ONE

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## INTRODUCTION

## **1.1 Introduction**

Participation is one of the issues that has intrigued me since I started my career in the development field. When I worked as a World Vision staff member in Thabaung Township, I realized that development organizations such as World Vision are promoting the participation of communities with the goal of sustaining the development results in the target villages. Participation is an important thing to promote in communities where an authoritative and top-down structure has been prevalent throughout history. However, I came to realize that even when World Vision is striving to promote community participation, some segments of communities are reluctant to get involved in some areas of community development such as decision-making and leadership positions. This has remained a puzzle for me since then.

When I started my study at Massey University, my interest in community participation emerged again and I decided to focus my research on the participation of marginalized people in development programmes initiated by World Vision. Thabaung Township was an ideal place for me to conduct my fieldwork as I was familiar with this township and wanted to look into the participation of marginalized people in light of the theories and literatures I had studied. The following section will provide an overview of the literature on participation that has given rise to writing this thesis.

## **1.2 Research Background**

Since the 1990s, community participation has been regarded as a vital ingredient in achieving positive development results and has been incorporated into mainstream development by national governments, major development agencies such as the World Bank, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Following the disillusionment and dissatisfaction with top-down approaches to development, various scholars have argued that people were merely regarded as passive beneficiaries of the development intervention. They have claimed that participation of the local people is an essential ingredient in bringing about meaningful development (Chambers, 1997; Cleaver, 1999). At the same time, the role of grass-roots level community-based organizations has been increasingly recognized by governments and NGOs for its potential in articulating demands and mobilizing resources for communities (Chambers, 1997: 219; Desai, 2008).

Although participation and the involvement of the community have positive and desirable connotations, there was a need for “much information on who are to participate, what participation entails and how it can be promoted” (Desai, 2008: 115). Moreover, the term ‘participation’ can be opaque: it is interpreted in different ways by different stakeholders for different purposes. Many studies have been done on participation of the affected communities in development projects or programmes, and how their participation contributes to the success of the development projects or programmes. In this thesis, I will look into the specific social groups within the community that have been the target of development projects and programmes, but who often are excluded, or do not participate in community development (CD): the marginalized people within the rural community. Using a case study of World Vision’s Rural Development Programme in Thabaung Township, I will first investigate who are regarded as the marginalized people, what their socioeconomic characteristics are, and what aspects are affecting their participation in development processes. Secondly, I will also examine whether World Vision as a major development organization supports the active participation of the marginalized people and whether its initiated community-based organizations (CBOs) are effectively supporting the participation of these people or not; and what their potentials and constraints in promoting the participation of this social group of the community are.

### **1.3 Research Rationale**

Myanmar is a difficult country for many outside researchers to conduct research in due to the limitations that make it hard to reach many parts of the country. As a consequence, data that could be acquired is not reliable (Ware, 2011, 580). As Myanmar has been under a restricted military government for four decades, topics like human rights and citizen participation in development are serious issues to research. However, the political situation in Myanmar has changed since 2011, and as I am a citizen of Myanmar and have worked in the development field there for more than five years, I have become motivated to research community participation, especially of marginalized people, in the development process. It is hoped that the knowledge gained from this research will help the development planners and practitioners gain a deeper understanding of the importance, potential and constraints in promoting participation and the inclusion of the marginalized people of communities in the development process.

#### **1.4 Research Aim and Objectives**

My primary research aim is *to examine the active participation of marginalized people in community development, and the role of World Vision in supporting their active participation*. In order to address this aim, two key objectives with sub-questions will be explored first;

- (1) To explore the factors affecting the active participation of marginalized people in community development.
  - 1.1 - Which social groups or individuals have limited or no access to participation in community development?
  - 1.2 - What forms of marginalization or exclusion are taking place?
  - 1.3 - What are the factors affecting the participation of marginalized social groups in community development?
- (2) To explore the role of World Vision Myanmar in facilitating the participation of marginalized people in community development.
  - 2.1 - In which ways does World Vision facilitate the participation of marginalized people in community development?
  - 2.2 - To what extent does a community-based organizations (CBOs) approach, initiated by World Vision, promote the active participation of marginalized people in community development?
  - 2.3 - What are the constraints and potentials for World Vision in promoting the active participation of marginalized people in community development?

#### **1.5 Introductory Narratives about My Research Fieldwork**

My fieldwork was conducted in Myanmar, situated in Southeast Asia, bordering with Bangladesh, India, China, Thailand and Laos. The new capital city of Myanmar is Nay Pyi Taw and before that it was Yangon, still the largest city of Myanmar. Although Myanmar is rich in natural resources, it has failed to realize its potential due to different authoritative governments that were in charge until a democratic government took office in 2011.

Specifically, my fieldwork is located in Thabaung Township which is 160 kilometres away from Yangon. It is situated in the Ayeyarwady Region, also known as the Delta region of the country. Thabaung Township is regarded as one of the least developed townships in the Ayeyarwady Region, and it is also affected by floods every year. Hence, World Vision committed a long-term development programme in this township which has been present there for more than nine years. Out of many target villages of World Vision, I conducted my fieldwork in two villages which I purposefully chose for my research purpose. My fieldwork lasted for three weeks in total, and I conducted interviews with 23 different respondents such as World Vision staff members, CBO leaders, village authorities and elders, and poor village people in my interviews. Through qualitative methods, mainly in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations, I collected useful data for my research which later informed the findings to my thesis questions and objectives. The following section will briefly explain the structure of this thesis.

## **1.6 Thesis Structure**

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter One describes a brief introduction to the research including the background and rationale of the research, the research aim and objectives, and provides a brief outline of this thesis. The literature review in Chapter Two gives an overview on the nature of community development, concepts and definitions of participation in relation to community development, and issues surrounding the participation of the marginalized people in it. Some important concepts used in this research are defined in this chapter. Chapter Three provides an overview of Myanmar and introduces the research context. Chapter Four discusses the research methodology and research methods that I use in this study, and ethical considerations and limitations of my research. Chapter Five provides the findings of the research on the participation of the marginalized people in community development in the Thabaung Rural Development Programme and how World Vision, as an International NGO, supports the active participation of these people. Chapter Six discusses the results of the study in light of the literatures and theories which are presented in Chapter Two, concludes the thesis, and offers recommendations for future research.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

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## **PARTICIPATION OF MARGINALIZED PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

## **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will review the literature concerning the nature and concept of community development, participation and issues surrounding the participation of the marginalized people in community development. The first section of this chapter will briefly provide a historical overview on community development, followed by discussing the evolution and different conceptions of community participation in relation to community development. A more focused discussion on the participation of marginalized people in community development will then be provided, drawing attention to key issues. These include: who are excluded; what factors influence their participation or exclusion; and how their participation can be promoted. The chapter will be summarised in a brief conclusion.

## **2.2 Overview of Community Development**

In response to the apparent failure of dominant top-down approaches to development, there has been a shift in the development paradigm towards community-based and participatory approaches to development. Community development is a process conducted by community members. It is a process which focuses on collective efforts of the people to improve their living conditions with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative and agency (Mansuri & Rao, 2004: 2).

Since the 1950s, community development has been one of the most significant forces in development and it has been actively promoted by governments and development agencies as part of broader nation-building projects and efforts to raise living standards of the poor and to alleviate poverty (Ruttan, 1984: 393). Historically, community development thinking has evolved. Firstly, in developed countries like Great Britain and the United States of America, where large scale development support exists, the term community development was used similar to the concept local development (Bhattacharyya, 2004). Secondly given the recurring themes of poverty and helplessness in the poor countries, the term community development has been related to making improvement in socioeconomic conditions. Thirdly, before the independence of the Third World countries, colonialists in rural areas also used community development strategies. During this period, colonial powers applied community development to maintain stable rural communities and to

counteract the impending socio-political changes in their colonized territories (Hickey & Kothari, 2009).

As a people-centred development approach, community development is employed not only to bring about improvement in economic wellbeing, but also to build a strong functioning community (Cavaye, n.d). In relation to this point, it is important not to see community development as “development in the community” which has a sole emphasis on raising incomes of the community members and improved social services. Rather, community development should be seen as “development of the community” which aims to foster collective responsibility and agency, and to promote interactive and collaborative actions between people, rather than individual activity (Summers, 1986). In this regard, community development is a process to pursue active engagement and agency of a community with the aim to improve the social, economic and environmental conditions of the community (Bhattacharyya, 2004; Cavaye, n.d).

### **2.3 Participation in Development: Concepts and Definitions**

In the process of community development, one of the major aims is the active participation of the community throughout the process. Participation is regarded as the vital ingredient to achieve the aims of community development. In this section, the emergence of the concept “participation” in community development will be described, and will then be followed by discussions on different definitions and typologies of participation in the development discourse. Later, participation of the marginalized people in community development, issues surrounding their participation such as challenges and motivations for people to participate, will be discussed.

#### **2.3.1 Emergence and Evolution of Participation**

Cleaver (1999) argues that “participation” is at the centre of contemporary development discourse and practice, and it has become an integral component of many development programmes and projects initiated by national governments, bilateral and multilateral development agencies and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The involvement or participation of people in their own development trajectories has been

understood and promoted in different ways, at different times for different purposes (Hickey and Mohan, 2004).

(Hickey and Mohan, 2004) have traced the historical root of participation back to colonial times to emphasize the fact that participation of local populations has been promoted to meet the political agenda of the colonial powers. In the modern development era starting from the end of the Second World War, participation was also promoted by governments and different development organizations and actors to achieve their specific purposes. However, a more comprehensive discussion on participation or the involvement of the local people in development started in the 1970s. Since then, the importance of participation has gained increased recognition from different ideological perspectives (Hickey & Kothari, 2009: 87). However, different actors and agencies interpret participation in different ways to legitimise their own agenda. From the perspective of alternative or radical development, participation was hailed as a move away from a blueprint approach to development, while the proponents from the neoliberal camp also espouse participation as a component of decentralization. Based on each interpretation, the nature as well as the purposes of participation differs greatly. Proponents of alternative development emphasize the popular form of participation which is meant to give empowerment to the local and previously marginalized people to take matters into their own hands and take charge of their development process. It is also meant to challenge unequal power relations between the powerful and the marginalized people within a community.

In contemporary development, participation gained popularity in the 1970s when radicals and proponents of alternative development called for the involvement of local people in development interventions. The dominant development paradigm at that time of modernisation was critiqued for being too Eurocentric, economic-centred and top-down, with the local population having no voice and no role to play in development interventions that would affect the quality of their lives. This development paradigm was argued to have yielded limited benefits, especially for the poor and marginalized. Indeed, some critics pointed out the impoverishing and disempowering effects of it and advocated for an approach that focuses on local context and the involvement of the local population (Mohan, 2008).

The concept of “participation” was influenced by the ideas of Paulo Freire which emphasize a research approach to community development. Freire (1972) argues that development can only be achieved when human beings possess decision-making powers and are free from oppressive and dehumanizing circumstances (p.29). Therefore, it is important to make the previously marginalized people conscious and aware of the unequal power relation in order to challenge this power relation. In this regard, an empowering form of participation or ‘popular participation’ is necessary for the rise of the marginalized people against the unequal power relations and to overcome their oppression or marginalization. Robert Chambers, who is recognized as one of the prominent scholars on participation, placed it firmly in the development discourse. Through the use of participatory methods in research, Chambers’ work (1983, 1997, 2007) attempts to take different and local realities into account and empower the participants whose voices and views were previously ignored in the process.

However, in the late 1980s and 1990s during the rise of neoliberalism, participation has also been encouraged by prominent development organizations such as the World Bank, and governments. The implicit reason behind their attempts to promote participation, as critiqued by many scholars, is overlapped with the aim of reducing the role of the state in providing basic services (Mohan, 2008). In place of the state, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have gained an increasing role in providing basic services and working with grassroots communities. At the same time, these international financial agencies and governments from the North have encouraged developing countries to adopt decentralization. The rationale for this encouragement, as pointed out by Willis (2011), is economic as well as political. It is believed that decentralization would bring greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness in economic terms. Moreover, by transferring decision-making power to the local level, grassroots level communities have a better say in decisions on the provision of services provided to them. In this way, through Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) approaches by major international financial institutions, having replaced the strict structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), participation of local communities has become an integral component in national poverty reduction strategy policies of developing countries. Thus, participation which is also known as “local participation”, “grassroots

participation” and “community participation” has come to the fore of the contemporary development discourse and practice.

However, a negative side to this general acceptance of participation in the development process is pointed out by some academics (Mohan, 2008; Cornwall, 2008; Hickey and Kothari, 2009). When participation has become mainstreamed into development theory and practice, it has been linked to the pursuit of the political agendas of the development actors. Participation is promoted not only for empowerment of the marginalized people but also for planning and execution of development processes to achieve efficiency goals of development organizations. This form of participation, “participation in projects” which is espoused by many development agencies and national governments, has become a dominant type of participation in international development. One risk associated with this form of participation is that it can mask the inequalities or injustices by co-opting the participatory processes, and reducing potential spaces for conflict and dissent which are desired consequences of popular participation (Cornwall, 2008).

Following the discussions mentioned above, participation of the affected population has thus become an essential part of the contemporary development initiatives encouraged by governments and major development agencies and just like sustainable development, the term has gained currency in development discourse and practice. As with other concepts in development, its use has changed over time and its meaning and value continue to be debated. Some claim that participation of all community members can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the investment in development, contribute to the sustainability of development results, and can achieve the empowerment of local people. However, others critique such claims, arguing that participation has little impact on development and policy discourse as well as no real long term impact on the lives of the people. For example, Cleaver (2001) points out that “participation has therefore become an act of faith in development, something we believe in and rarely question” (p.36).

### **2.3.2 Definitions of Participation**

The definition of participation is a hotly contested issue. It is defined in differing ways by different parties with different political, ideological and economic perspectives. It is useful to look into these different definitions of participation to assess how participation is

promoted in different contexts and for different purposes. One of the earlier approaches came from Pearse and Stiefel (1979) who define participation as:

*“The organized effort to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in a given social situation on the part of groups or movements hitherto excluded from such control (p.1).”*

This definition takes participation from the point of local people who had no voice or no role over development interventions in previous development paradigm. This type of participation, also known as “popular participation” was promoted by social scientists, grassroots organizations and non-government organizations for social transformation in earlier decades (Jaitli and Brown, n.d).

Another definition by Oakley and Marsden (1984:22) defines community participation as:

*“The process by which individuals, families or communities assume responsibilities for their own health and welfare and develop the capacity to contribute to their own and the community’s development.”*

This definition focuses on “engagement” and contribution from the part of the community to make a development intervention more efficient and cost-effective without looking into the power dynamics within a community. It looks at “community” in homogenous and generic terms. It does not look into the different social and economic layers or stratification within a community and has no specific focus on the marginalized people within a community.

Another prominent definition is from the World Bank’s publication “Participatory Development and the World Bank” and it defines participation as:

*“A process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them (World Bank, 1992: 177).”*

This definition informs the work of the World Bank and many development projects and programmes which were implemented throughout the developing world. This definition looks at participation from the perspective of the user or development actors which is the

driving seat in promotion of participation in their development programmes. However, this definition uses the broad term “stakeholder” without any explicit focus on the poor or marginalized.

Pearse and Stiefel’s (1979) definition of “popular participation” and that of the World Bank are different in some aspects. While the World Bank’s definition implies participation as a process in which local people share control with other development stakeholders, “popular participation” can be seen as an end in itself or a desired outcome in which the “excluded” are empowered to exert control over the development processes and institutions which affect their lives. The definition by Pearse and Stiefel has a focus on a specific group: those people that have previously been excluded. In the context of community development projects or programmes, the excluded ones are those who have no role or no voice in decision making as well as planning, implementation and evaluation of the development intervention which affect their lives. The excluded people can be landless labourers (Chambers, 2007: 22); or the poorest of the poor or non-poor farmers who have no time to take part in community activities as they have to spend much time on livelihood farm activities (Awortwi, 2012). So, to define “the excluded” depends on the context, and socioeconomic and cultural settings of a specific area. Participation, in this regard, calls for not only merely taking part in community development activities but also exerting control over planning, implementation and decision making processes throughout the programme, and challenging the unequal power dynamics and institutions with regards for the concerns, voices or lives of the marginalized in a community.

For the purpose of this research, the definition of participation used will blend ideas from the World Bank’s definition, and that of Pearse and Stiefel (1979). The definition of participation which will be mainly used for the purpose of this thesis is:

*“Participation is a process through which the groups of people hitherto excluded from development processes influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them.”*

This definition gives a sense of participation as a process which aims to empower the marginalized people within a community so that they can play an active role not only in the implementation and physical activities of projects but also in planning, implementation and

decision making of the development programme in their respective community. I have chosen to use this definition because this research explores the participation of marginalized people in a community development programme initiated and implemented by World Vision Myanmar, an external development organization.

### **2.3.3 Typologies of Participation**

To understand the different aspects of participation and the changing uses of this term, it is helpful to analyse different typologies of participation. It is necessary, however, to be aware of the implicit nature of their normative and emancipatory assumptions as well as the intentionality and associated approach of those who promote different frameworks (Cornwall, 2008: 270). The earliest and perhaps best known typology to analyse the nature and level of participation is Arnstein (1969)'s ladder of participation. Although it was developed decades ago, it is still useful and relevant to assess the level of participation in development. Participation of the citizen is divided into eight rungs or levels in which "citizen control" is placed at the highest rung of the ladder while "manipulation" and "therapy" are placed at the bottom. Along the ladder of participation, Arnstein categorised the rungs into three groups: "non-participation", "tokenism" and "citizen power" (Figure 1). According to Cornwall (2008), in Arnstein's ladder of participation "the point of departure is the citizen on the receiving end of projects or programmes (p. 270)". In the development context, it would therefore be useful to evaluate the level of participation of a local community or local population at the start of a development intervention to monitor and assess whether the level of their participation has improved, or which level has been reached during or the end of the programme lifespan.

**Figure 1: Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation**

8	Citizen Control	Citizen Power
7	Delegated Power	
6	Partnership	
5	Consultation	Tokenism
4	Informing	
3	Placation	
2	Therapy	Non-participation
1	Manipulation	

Another typology of participation which is useful to consider is Pretty (1995)’s typology of participation. According to Cornwall (2008), Pretty’s typology is more concerned with the user of participatory approaches: development organizations. Thus, here it is appropriate to analyse the role of development organizations which initiate development interventions in a certain area and how the organization promotes community participation. Similar to Arnstein’s ladder of participation, Pretty’s typology is normative and provides a continuum of participation from passive forms of participation to active forms of participation (Table 1).

**Table 1: Pretty's Typology of Participation**

	Type	Characteristic of each type
1	Manipulative participation	Participation is simply pretence: people's representatives on official board but they are unelected and have no power.
2	Passive participation	People participated by being told what has been decided or has already happened: involved unilateral announcements by project management without any listening to people's responses; information shared belongs only to external professionals.
3	Participatory by consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions: external agents define problems and information-gathering processes, and so control analysis; process does not concede any share in decision-making; professionals under no obligation to account for people's views.
4	Participation by material incentives	People participate by contributing resources (e.g. labour) in return for food, cash or other material incentives: farmers may provide fields and labour but are not involved in testing the process of learning; this is commonly called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end.
5	Functional participation	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs: people may participate by forming groups to meet project objectives; involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tend to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents; at worst, local people may still only be co-opted to serve external goals.
6	Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and strengthening of local institutions: participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals; the process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and use systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take control of local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures and practices.
7	Self-mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems: they develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over resource use; self-mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power.

Source: Pretty (1995) in Cornwall (2008: 272)

Another important aspect to participation that Cornwall emphasizes is the intentionality of the promoter of participation as it is a crucial factor in determining which type of participation is promoted or will be promoted. If the intention is efficiency of a development project or programme, self-mobilization may be the end point of participation in which local people are able to take initiatives, develop contacts to get resources and technical

assistance, and retain control over these resources independently of the external organizations. This is, according to Cornwall (2008, 274), the type of participation that national governments and development organizations actively promoted in international development as it contributes to meeting their development objectives effectively and efficiently. However, self-mobilization in Pretty's typology may not be sufficient to challenge the existing power relations or distribution of wealth within a community (Cornwall, 2008, 271). Hence, the motivation and intentionality of those who adopt or promote participatory approaches is an important factor in shaping development interventions.

Spaces of participation are also important to consider in relation to typologies of participation (Cornwall, 2002 in Mohan, 2008: 185). Cornwall (2008) distinguishes between the invited and claimed spaces of participation, share a link with the "popular participation" of the earlier decades and mainstreamed participation in the contemporary development. Claimed space is that in which people take control of political processes with their collective action. The process is organic and chaotic without any intentional intervention from external agencies (Cowen and Shenton, 1995), and it was once vital to struggles for social equality and justice. However, this immanent nature of claimed space has waned with the mainstreaming of participation in international development. While participation is more than present in contemporary development, the idea of claimed space has given way to invited space and "popular participation" has become delegitimized (Cornwall, 2008).

In relation to "invited space", it is useful to look at the World Bank's continuum of participation. This continuum informs the provision of funds from the Bank to many developing countries to ensure mainstreaming of participation in their development policies and programming. The World Bank defines four stages of participation: information sharing, consultation, collaboration and finally, empowerment (Aycrigg, 1998:19). Information sharing, the lowest level of participation portrays a one-way flow of information from the development agency to local population or beneficiaries. On this level, local people have no say in the planning and decision making processes. On a consultation level, the communication becomes two-way which invites people's opinions and views on the proposed actions and engages them in a dialogue. However, they have no control over the programme design or initial planning of the proposed actions. "Collaboration" level typifies more active involvement of the local people in the programme but they have limited

capacity to design and plan the programme and activities on their own. The highest level of participation implies highly active participation in which local people assert their voices and actively engage in planning and decision making about the programme. It means the community has more control over the development activities which will affect their lives.

The World Bank’s Participation Sourcebook (1996) provides a further useful continuum that categorises local people into four groups: beneficiaries, who are the mere recipients of services and resources from development intervention; clients, who can influence and negotiate in the provision of services and resources; investors, who have decision making and control over resources; and finally, managers, who make strategic and operational decisions about how services are designed and delivered (World Bank, 1996: 168).

Using such a continuum can provide another way of looking at participation of the marginalized people, and can be a useful yardstick to measure the ways that development organizations facilitate participation over the course of an intervention. Moreover, a continuum may also contribute to a complex analysis of the linkages between intervention, participation and empowerment (Cleaver, 2001: 38). In this way, participation as an interventional process by the development agency can be assessed and analysed.

**Table 2: Different Continuums of Participation**

Theorist								
Cornwall (2008)	Passive					Active		
Arnstein (1969)	Manipulation	Therapy	Informing	Consultation	Placation	Partnership	Delegated power	Citizen Control
Pretty (1995)	Manipulative	Passive	Participation by consultation	Participation for material incentives	Functional participation	Interactive participation	Self-mobilization	
World Bank (1996)	Information Sharing		Consultation		Collaboration		Empowerment	

Source: Author’s interpretation

The typologies discussed above provide a normative account of different levels of participation in development. They look at participation at different angles: some take participation from the place of participants while others take participation from the point of users or instigators (Cornwall, 2008). One resemblance among these typologies is that they

provide two ends on the continuum of participation: active participation at the higher end and passive participation at the lower end of the continuum. This is illustrated in Table 2 which succinctly categorises the levels of participation defined in the typologies discussed above.

One significant limitation of these typologies, as noted by Cornwall (2008), is that they are limited to analysing the “level of participation” of local people. However, there are instances of non-participation or self-exclusion of the people when participation in decision-making and community development affairs is seen as dangerous (Narayan, 2000: 35), or not beneficial for the participant. In these instances, these typologies have limited usefulness in exploring the reasons for non-participation or self-exclusion from the development process.

## **2.4 Participation of the Marginalized People in Community Development**

This section will explore how different authors identify the marginalized people in community development with a special focus on rural settings. It will then look into various discussions by different academics and practitioners on the characteristics of the marginalized people, and the constraints and obstacles for them to participate in community development.

### **2.4.1 Who are the Marginalized People?**

While participation is an elusive and difficult term to define, it is equally difficult to identify succinctly who the marginalized people are. Based on the different socioeconomic and geographical contexts, the marginalized can be anyone: the poor, women, youth, the elderly, widows/widowers, the infirm, the disabled, particular ethnic or religious groups or others. However, there may also be common characteristics to the marginalized people in many places: they are extremely poor; the places they live are isolated and/or vulnerable to natural disasters; they lack good infrastructure; they lack assets; and they lack voices or power in community affairs. There are many factors which contribute to further marginalization such as people’s education, ethnicity and gender (World Bank, 1996). In rural areas which can be poor and disadvantaged in comparison to urban areas, it is not the poor but “the poorest of the poor” (Awortwi, 2012: 11) or “the extremely poor” (Narayan et al, 2000: 35) who are likely to be marginalized or disadvantaged.

In community development, it is usually the better-off and powerful who participate and take a leadership role. They are the ones who are visible and who articulate the community needs and interests on behalf of the community. They are the ones who normally receive and speak to visitors and outsiders. Moreover, they are the ones who deal and work together with development professionals, and they are the main source of information for development professionals (Chambers, 1983: 18). People who are weak, powerless and isolated are not able to speak up or articulate their concerns and needs especially in public meetings. They are invisible, inarticulate and lack confidence to share their opinions and needs.

There are a number of characteristics associated with the marginalized in rural communities. One major characteristic identified by many development professionals and academics is that they are poor economically (Chambers, 1983; Awortwi, 2012; World Bank, 1996). The poor have to work long hours to make ends meet, they do not have time to participate in community activities. Moreover, they often have to depend for their livelihood on rich farmers and traders who may be powerful in their community. This makes them less able to negotiate the terms of their livelihood as well as be involved in community affairs.

Chambers (1983) described a number of characteristics of the marginalized households what he calls “the bottom people” in rural communities, terming these “*clusters of disadvantage*” (p. 108). These five clusters are useful in identifying marginalized households and individuals within a rural community setting, as these are the factors which may keep these households and individuals away from participating in community development activities. They can be social (such as powerlessness), economic (material poverty and physically weak), spatial (isolation) or/and institutional (powerlessness and vulnerability).

First of all, Chambers identifies **material poverty**: this is where people have few assets; their houses are small and very basic with few utensils; they have no land or marginal land which barely provides subsistence; and the main productive asset they possess is the labour of the household members. This is the major characteristic which makes the marginalized households apparent from the others.

A second characteristic is that people’s households are **physically weak** which means that there are a high number of dependents to able-bodied adults. This cluster specifically

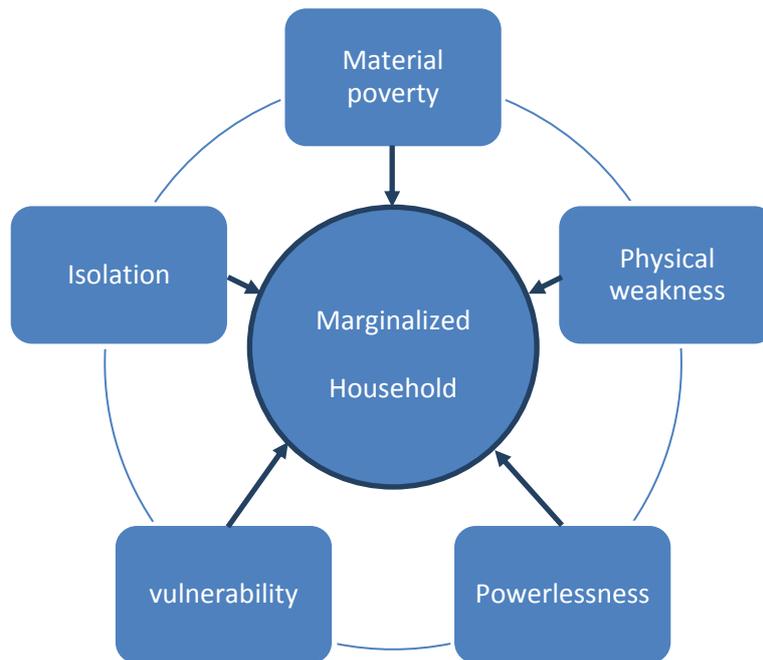
identifies women-led households in which the man has to go and find a work in another place for a long time or the man is physically disabled or dead. This factor, combined with seasonal difficulties, pushes the household further into poverty and marginalization.

Another characteristic is that often the poor have to live in places of **isolation**. In a rural community, the homes of the poor are normally away from the centre of the community, at the end of the village or remote from important infrastructure such as the community centre, health centre and school. As the location is peripheral, it is more difficult than other households to receive information about community affairs and other opportunities. Their isolated location keeps them out of sight of development professionals. Moreover, during wet season, their households may be prone to natural disasters such as flooding and landslides. Often during the difficult seasons such as the wet season, poor people's places are insecure for persons or property (Narayan, et al, 2000: 71).

A fourth characteristic that Chambers (1983: 109) identified is **vulnerability** in which the households are vulnerable to disasters and social disruptions such as crop failure, flood, sickness, wedding expenses and so on. In these situations, the households have to sell their assets (such as pots and pans, marginal land, livestock or future labour) and this may push them further into poverty.

The last characteristic is **powerlessness** which is a critical factor in relation to participation of these marginalized households. Because of their low social and economic status, and the lack of social safety nets, these households are easily manipulated by the powerful of the community. Their poor condition keeps them in a weak position to negotiate with the moneylenders, landlords, government officials and development professionals. Lack of agency and organizing efforts among marginalized households can keep marginalized people powerless in political, social and economic spheres of their lives.

**Figure 2: Characteristics of the Marginalized Households**



Source: Chambers (1983: 108)

These factors are not only in a causal relationship but also interdependent. For example, poverty has a causal effect on the place they live (isolation), powerlessness in decision making and community affairs and vulnerability to disasters and social shocks. On the other hand, poverty and physical weakness have an interdependent effect on each other. Likewise, isolation and vulnerability have interdependent effects on each other. So, the characteristics of the marginalized households and individuals are not separate but multidimensional (Chambers, 1983) as well as contextual (World Bank, 1996).

Although these characteristics can be found in the marginalized households and individuals in rural communities, this is not always the case. Hence, contextualized efforts are to be made in exploring who the marginalized people are in relation to participation in community development.

## **2.5 Issues Surrounding Participation in Community Development**

Although participation is considered to be good and desirable, it does not mean that it is without problems and criticisms. In this section, issues surrounding the debate on participation in community development will be brought to light and discussed.

### 2.5.1 Who Participates in What?

In relation to what kinds of participation are promoted to what extent, it is necessary to ask the specific question: who participates (Cohen & Uphoff, 1980)? This is a contested issue accompanying the debate on participation as indicated in the previous discussion on typologies. It is important, therefore, to explore the literature on terms such as “community” and “the rural poor” within the debate on participation. Some scholars have warned against the simplistic notion of “community” as a harmonious and homogenous entity and also presented cases on elite capture in participation in development projects (Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013).

In many, if not most, development projects and programmes, the well-off and the powerful are the active participants and contributors, and they are the ones who gain substantial benefits. For the poor and marginalized, there are various barriers to their participation, their influence and the benefits that they may accrue. Chambers (1983: 131) cautioned about local elites capture. These elites are the most visible people and they are the first contact point for the outsiders from government agencies and development organizations. Mostly they are landowners, traders and village heads who have time and privilege to take part in development activities and are in better position to take advantage of the participatory initiatives because of their wider social networks, higher level of education, and social and economic status (Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013). Hence, when a development organization’s objective is to help the poor and marginalized groups, it is essential for that organization to make special efforts and apply appropriate approaches in targeting and ensuring the active participation of the marginalized, in the processes of planning, implementation and benefit-sharing of the development programme.

Another relevant issue to the question “who participates” is what kinds of activities or which stages of the process the marginalized people are able to participate in (Cornwall, 2008). This issue is linked with the typologies discussed above because these typologies provide a useful way to measure where or at which stage/level the participation of the marginalized people takes place. Moreover, these typologies also inform the implementing agency (the development organization), as to how to improve their policies and approaches to facilitate and promote the active participation of the marginalized. Cohen and Uphoff

(1980: 220) emphasize the different stages of a project at which participation can take place: decision-making; implementation; benefit sharing; and evaluation. For the marginalized people, it is important not only to participate in implementation and benefit sharing stages, as they are the common stages for participation of these people, but also in decision-making and evaluation of the development process. In this way, they can assert their concerns, needs and influences throughout the development process. The following section provides one way to assess the level of the marginalized people's participation in a development process, and how a development organization facilitates the active participation of this group in their development intervention.

### **2.5.2 Motivating Factors for Participation in Community Development**

People's participation in development initiatives is connected to their motivations and to incentives (Thomas, 1992). Rural communities may be very busy with their routine work, particularly the marginalized. Hence, it is imperative to examine the motivation factors for local people in community development in order to encourage their participation. Cleaver (1999) notes, however, that the literature on motivation and incentives which influences people's participation is rather vague. He argues that there are three main sources of motivation for local people to participate in community development activities (Cleaver, 1999). It is seemingly apparent that "economic rationality" is the major motivating factor for local people to participate in community development activities. People, especially in rural areas which are scarce of resources, expect economic benefits through their participation in community development.

However, motivations will not always be economic. Social factors are also motivation for participation (Cleaver, 1999; Chambers, 2004). For the rich and powerful community members, expectations of economic benefits are not necessarily the source of motivation. They may participate in development activities in order to strengthen their social status within the community. Another inconspicuous motivating factor, pointed out by Cleaver (1999), is psychological which is closely linked to social motivations. As social beings, people take part in community development activities in order to gain recognition, respect and purpose. A study by Thomas (1992) also supports this assertion that individuals who are interested in the wellbeing of their fellow people participate in community activities from

which they can get some sort of purpose or recognition. Martin & Mathema (2010) have also pointed out that giving the poor the opportunity to participate in the solutions of community problems can give them the feeling of self-respect and self-worth (p. 173). Therefore, psychological factors can also play a vital role in motivating the participation of the community as a whole. These three main sources of motivation, alone or in combination, drive people of different economic and social status, to participate in community activities. However, the motivations for the poor and marginalized people need to be examined specifically if the aim is to facilitate their active participation in community development activities.

### **2.5.3 Challenges to Participation in Community Development**

While some factors motivate marginalized people to participate, there are challenges for marginalized people to participate in community development actively. The following are some substantial factors hindering the active participation of marginalized people.

#### **2.5.3.1 Local Elite Capture**

Elite capture, briefly mentioned previously, is one of the major challenges to the participation of the marginalized (Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013; Gow & Vansant, 1983; Mansuri & Rao, 2004). Lund & Saito (2013) find that cultural and social norms hinder the active participation of the marginalized and pre-existing social structures reproduce and reinforce relations of domination and subordination between elites and non-elites (p. 2). Moreover, poor flow of information between a development agency and the community can give local elites an opportunity to shape the participatory process to appropriate benefits for themselves (Mansuri & Rao, 2004: 23).

However, elite capture is not always detrimental. Although it may be a challenge to the active participation of the marginalized people mainly in decision-making process, the participation of hereditary leaders can have positive outcomes for communities (Mansuri & Rao, 2004: 23). Gow & Vansant (1983) highlighted the different nature and background of elites. In this regard, elites are not homogeneous but can be diverse – economic, political, religious and so on. If there are conflicts among the elites, some may seek support for their actions from the larger local population and may tend to distribute the benefits and

resources of the development programme to more people. Hence, this diversity among the elites themselves can be seen as an advantage for the programme and the local population (p. 431). Moreover, such elites have networks and external linkages with government agencies so they can be a crucial player in asserting the community concerns in public spheres and draw resources into their community.

### **2.5.3.2 Timing and Duration of Community Development Activities**

Timing and duration of community development activities is another important but neglected factor affecting participation in community development activities. This is an important reason for the self-exclusion of some villagers from community development activities because they have to work long hours to meet their livelihood needs. According to Chambers (1983), timing and duration of community development activities rules out “people who work, people who have small children to put to bed or fed, people who are unable to justify spending hours outside the households (p. 279)”. This is especially the case for the marginalized households which are engaged most of their time in livelihood activities and cannot spare time for community activities.

In relation to timing and duration of development activities, the type of occupation of the participants is another factor affecting their participation. Many people may have the will and interest to participate in community development activities but their occupation may not provide adequate opportunities to participate (Thomas, 1992). A study by Thomas (1992) in Indian rural communities found that poor and landless labourers who work for daily wages find it difficult to spare sufficient time for community development activities. However, it is not just the poor and landless people who do not have time to participate. In some instances, small farmers have less time to involve themselves in community development activities as their farm work demands a significant portion of their time (Awortwi, 2012). This is typically the case for areas where people are occupied with their farm activities for cultivation in the monsoon season, so it is very difficult for them to participate in community development activities during these times.

## 2.6 Chapter Conclusion

Community development and participation have gained prominence in the development discourse following the failure of top-down and economic-centred approaches to development. Participation of local population has become a critical component in community development process but it has lost its radical edge. With the mainstreaming of participation in international development, emancipating “active” participation has been diluted, and it has become ambiguous in nature encompassing different definitions and different purposes. From the literatures reviewed, it can be seen that active participation of local people in community development is important not only in implementation but also in the planning and decision making of project activities. The literatures also demonstrate that active participation of the marginalized people throughout the development process should be promoted to bring about meaningful, broad-reaching community development. Although various authors have pointed out the importance of the participation of the marginalized people in community development, they have not given specific attention to identifying who the marginalized people are. In this regard, identification of the marginalized people is needed to facilitate their active participation. However, it appears that identifying who the marginalized people are in a community is a complicated issue which needs to be examined based on the social, economic and cultural context of the area. Moreover, there are many factors influencing the participation of the marginalized (Thomas, 1992; Lund & Saito, 2013). While there are certain motivations and incentives for their participation, there also are challenges which can hinder their active participation. However, these factors cannot be the same everywhere because of different social, economic and cultural settings. Hence, it is necessary to look into such enablers and barriers in specific contexts, as well as identifying the characteristics of marginalized people, when examining the participation of the marginalized in community development.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

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**CONTEXT: MYANMAR, THABAUNG TOWNSHIP  
AND THE ROLE OF WORLD VISION**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapters have been concerned with introducing the research topic and exploring its theoretical context. This chapter provides contextual information about the location where the research was conducted and the development programme to be analysed. It highlights the context in which participation is examined, and the impact of the political history of the country on community participation. In particular, it points out that the poor and marginalized people are excluded from the development process in some areas in Myanmar. This calls for “a development strategy which is inclusive and benefits the poor, vulnerable, marginalized people, [.....] to reduce poverty and income disparity, and sustain human development” (Tiwari, Rahman & Tun, 2011).

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part describes the overall country profile of Myanmar and Thabaung Township where the study was conducted, in terms of geographic, demographic and socio-economic characteristics. The second part presents the history of World Vision International, and how the organization started its development intervention and the nature of its development programmes in Myanmar. The final part presents the nature of the development programme and the development approach undertaken by World Vision Myanmar in Thabaung Township.

### **3.2 Myanmar**

#### **3.2.1 Geographical Location and Climate**

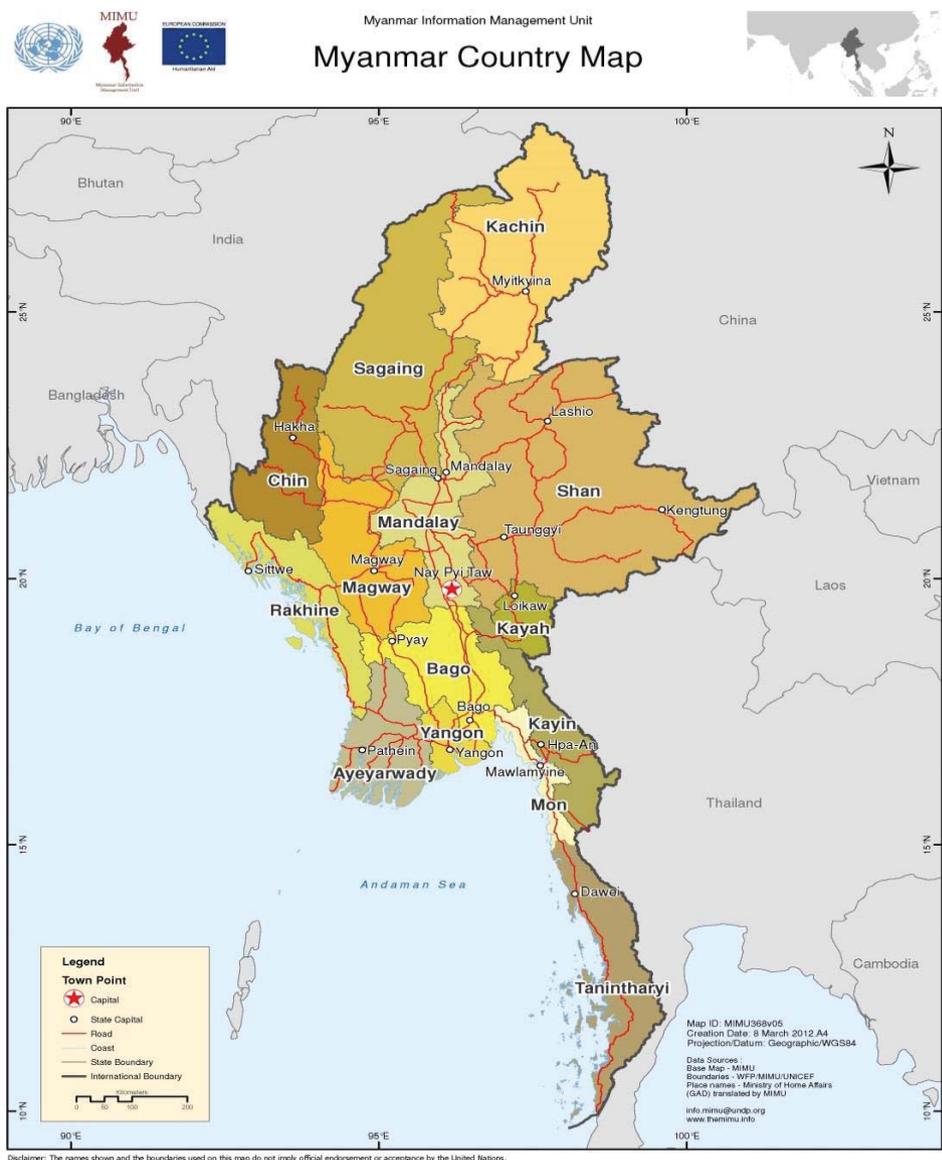
Myanmar, which was formerly known as Burma, is the second largest country in Southeast Asia with a land area of 678,030 kilometres. It shares borders with China in the northeast, Laos in the east, India and Bangladesh in the west and northwest, Thailand in the south and southeast. The country has fourteen states and divisions and most of the states are mainly resided in by several ethnic groups<sup>1</sup>. It is a tropical country with three distinct seasons: the summer from February to May, the rainy season from June to September and the winter from October to January.

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<sup>1</sup> Seven states are Kachin, Kayah, Kayah, Chin, Mon, Rakhine and Shan, and seven divisions are Yangon, Mandalay, Ayeyarwady, Bago, Tanintharyi, Sagaing and Magway.

Myanmar is highly diverse in its topography and ecosystems. Its topography can be broadly classified into five zones, namely, (i) Hilly regions where all states are located; (ii) Central Dry Zone including Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions; (iii) Bago Range having Bago region; (iv) Delta region of Yangon and Ayeyarwady regions and (v) Tanintharyi Coastal region. The topography varies from hilly and mountainous areas in the north and east, semi-arid dry zone in the centre, coastal areas in the west and alluvial plains in the southern delta where the river Ayeyarwady flows into the Andaman Sea. Figure 3 shows the bordering countries of Myanmar, its states and regions, and the major rivers.

**Figure 3: Geographical Location of Myanmar and its Neighbouring Countries**



Source: Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU)

Myanmar has numerous natural resources. The main resources are land, forest, hydropower, natural gas, and various metals and gems. Of the country's total land area, it was estimated that until 2011, 17.5% of the land area was used for domestic cultivation, and uncultivated land is actively being claimed by the government to increase the production of the agricultural sector (Tiwari, Rahman, & Tun, 2011: 2).

The country's economic structure is primarily dependent on agriculture and farm-related activities that currently provide livelihoods to 65 % of the country's population. Agriculture accounts for 44 % of country's gross domestic product (GDP) (Tiwari, Rahman, & Tun, 2011: 2). Crops are the most important component of the agricultural sector, accounting for 80 % of total agricultural production; sharing one-third of country's GDP. The major crop is rice which is followed by beans and pulses, maize, sesame, groundnut, vegetables and fruit, and four industrial crops – cotton, jute, rubber and sugarcane. Rice is the major crop, followed by pulses and beans, which now constitute a major source of export earnings.

Myanmar has four major rivers, the Ayeyarwady, Chindwin, Sittaung and Thanlwin Rivers. Some hydroelectricity is generated from these rivers, and some commentators believe that there is considerably more potential that could be exploited from these rivers. The country has reserves of natural gas and crude oil. In addition, it has deposits of non-oil mineral resources including copper, gold, lead, zinc, and many others. There are also large reserves of precious stones especially ruby, jade and sapphire. Due to its geographical location and resources, Myanmar has great development potential. However, low economic growth, high poverty and income disparity hinders the country's exploitation of these potentials (Tiwari, Rahman, & Tun, 2011).

### **3.2.2 Demographic Characteristics**

The population of Myanmar was estimated to be 57.5 million in 2007, and is made up of various ethnic and religious groups that enrich the society with multicultural and multi-ethnic communities. There are 135 distinct ethnic groups in Myanmar. These are grouped into eight major national ethnic races: Bamar, Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Shan, Rakhine and Mon. Bamar constitute the majority - an estimated 68 % of the population. The society also embraces Chinese, Indian and Middle-eastern descendants. An estimated 89 % of population practices Buddhism, 4 % Christianity, another 4 % Islam, and the remaining 3 %

Hinduism and Chinese religions (Tiwari, Rahman, & Tun, 2011). Generally, Bamar, Mon, Shan and Rakhine embrace Buddhism; and ethnic races such as Kachin, Chin, Kayin and Kayah follow Christianity. Mostly the Christian population lives in the hilly regions and the Muslim population in the capital cities as most of them are traders and businessmen. As the country is agriculture-based, the majority of the population live in rural areas which accounts for 70 % of the total population (James, 2003: 2).

### **3.2.3 Political History**

Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Myanmar was ruled by different dynasties. From 1842 to 1948, Myanmar became a colony of the British Empire. After the Second World War, Myanmar gained its independence from the British in 1948. Independent and democratic government ruled the country for more than a decade. However, internal conflicts between the government and several ethnic groups had been growing since independence. In 1962, there was a turn in the history of Myanmar when the military overthrew the democratic government and took over the country. Since then, Myanmar has been under the different guises of military regimes: the Revolutionary Council from 1962 to 1974, the Burma Socialist Programme Party from 1974 to 1988, State Law and Order Restoration Council from 1988 to 1997, and State Peace and Development Council from 1997 to November 2010. While the Revolutionary Council and Burma Socialist Programme Party followed Socialist principles, the latter government cautiously embraced the market-oriented economy and encouraged export-based growth. In November 2010, Myanmar had a democratic election and a democratic government has taken office since 2011.

Although democratic values have been respected and encouraged in recent years, it will take time for democracy to be practiced at every level of governance: national, regional and local level. Myanmar has been under authoritarian leadership for many decades, and hierarchical structures have prevailed throughout different levels of social relations and governance. This poses a substantial threat to creating spaces for meaningful participation of the people, especially those marginalized in development processes (Leal, 2010).

### 3.2.4 Leadership Style in Myanmar

In relation to the political backdrop of Myanmar, the leadership style in Myanmar has been authoritarian and top-down since the era of the kingdoms in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There is a famous saying, “Bring water to me anyway: don’t give me an excuse that the bottle has cracks.” People with higher authority or social position use this saying when he/she wants his/her subordinates to accomplish the task whatever the cost is and without any delay. Hence, an authoritarian and top-down style of leadership has been dominant in different layers of governance in all administrative and societal areas. A small number of people in the community have power in regard to many aspects of social lives and community affairs.

In rural areas of Myanmar, where this research is located, there are generally three types of leaders: administrative leaders or village authorities assigned by the government administrative office; religious leaders; and community leaders. The village authority is appointed by and works for the government administrative department and he/she has official authority and decision-making power in the community. Religious leaders can be Buddhist monks or pastors as well as the elders who serve as laypersons and who are respected by the community for their generosity, honesty and piety. Another category, the community leaders such as CBO leaders, attain their positions because of their education, capability and respected social status. In some rural villages, community leaders are associated with World Vision’s development programme. In others, religious leaders may also perform as the community leaders but their role is not as active as the CBO leaders in World Vision’s target villages.

The nature and style of leadership varies among these different groups of leaders. The village authorities mostly lead through the authoritative style of leadership to manage the administrative and community affairs. Their tasks include collecting community data (such as total number of cultivated rice acres or total number of under-five children in their villages) and sending it to the administrative office in Thabaung Township and collaborating with township level government offices in many aspects of social, economic and political affairs. Religious and community leaders are generally less authoritative but they are also expected to be strong in the sense of being outspoken, unwavering and not afraid to voice their opinion and criticism.

This dominant leadership style, combined with the political background, creates a space in which a small number of people can assert their authority and power over the rest of the community, and this contributes to difficulties for active participation, particularly of the marginalized sectors of the community in different political and societal affairs.

### **3.3 The Profile of Thabaung Township**

While the previous section provides the overall background information about Myanmar, this section presents an overview of Thabaung Township where this research has been undertaken. The research site was purposefully chosen because World Vision has been implementing a development programme in Thabaung Township for ten years and because I was already familiar with the area.

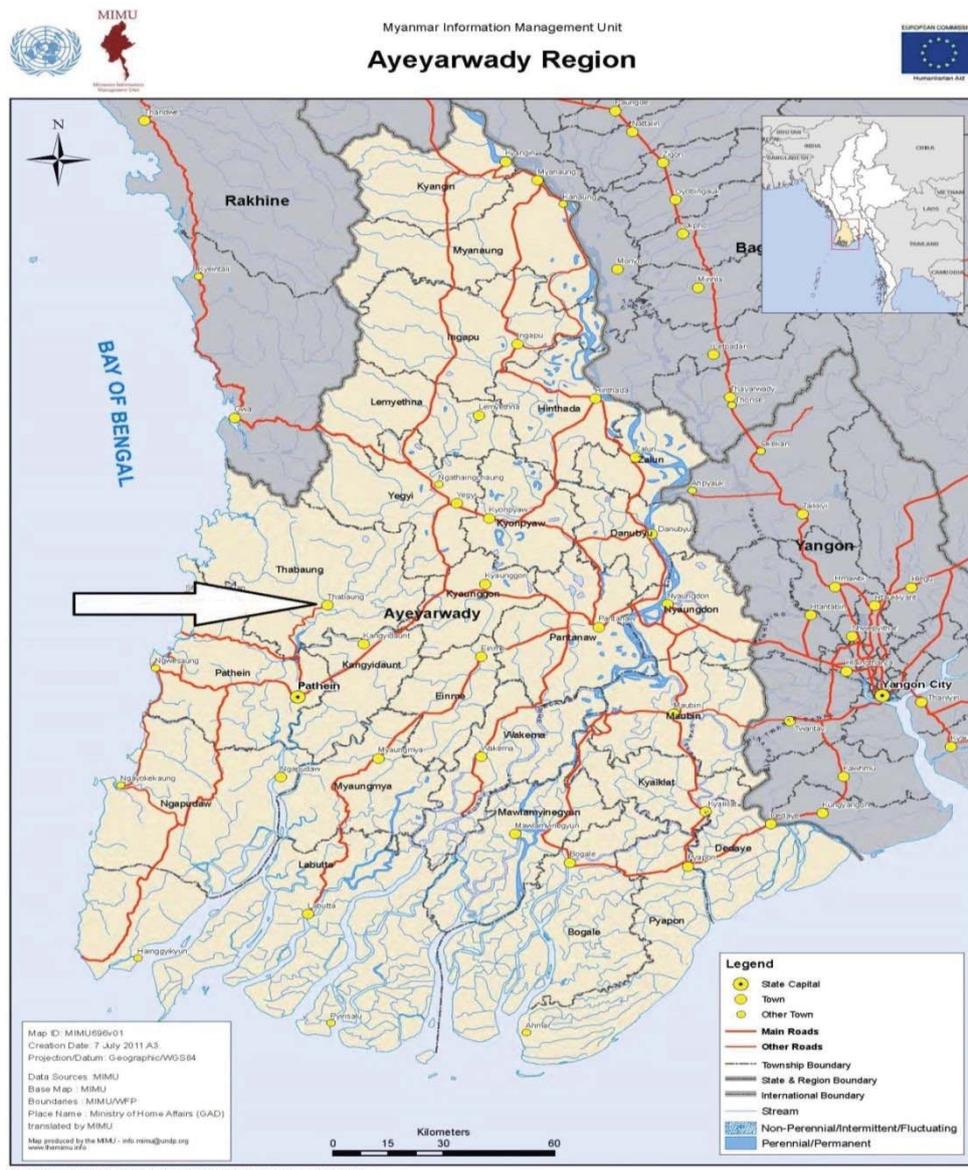
#### **3.3.1 Geographical Location of Thabaung Township**

Thabaung Township is located in the Ayeyarwady Region which is known as “the Rice Bowl of Myanmar” for rice is the major produce of this region. Thabaung Township is situated in the northwest part of the Ayeyarwady Region. It is about 300 kilometres from Yangon, the largest city and former capital of Myanmar, and is about 30 kilometres from Patheingyi, the capital city of Ayeyarwady Region. As Ayeyarwady Region is the delta area of the country, it experiences recurrent cyclones and flooding every year.

Geographically, Thabaung Township can be divided into two zones: low-lying areas and hilly areas. Similar to Ayeyarwady Region, Thabaung Township experiences flooding every year and the low-lying area of the township is typically affected by flooding. Soils in the low-lying area are fertile so agriculture is the major source of income for the population. Although this area is accustomed to regular flooding, the unpredictable duration of the floods affects the livelihoods of the population in this area. On the other hand, the hilly area of the township is not conducive for agriculture. This part of Thabaung Township is close to the Rakhine Mountain Range and a significant part of it is covered by forest. Most of the people in this area rely on forest-related livelihoods. Although cutting down trees is illegal, most of the people earn their living by working as lumberjacks and by making charcoal. They are usually arrested by Forestry Department staff when they are caught. Nevertheless, they have to work illegally to provide for their families due to a lack of other possibilities. Figure 4

shows the location of Thabaung Township of Ayeyarwady Region and its neighbouring townships.

**Figure 4: Geographical Location of Thabaung Township**



**Source: Myanmar Management Information Unit (MIMU)**

### 3.3.2 Demographics and Socio-economic Conditions of Thabaung Township

Thabaung Township is composed of 393 villages and 3 wards. In 2012, the total population of the township was estimated to be around 200,000 with 55 % of the population being adults and 45 % children. The gender ratio of the township is almost equal with 51 % of the population being male and 49 % female (World Vision Myanmar, 2011: 9). According to a

baseline survey conducted by World Vision in 2011, 44 % of the population was found to have primary education, more than 21 % middle school education, nearly 9 % high school, 2.5 % are graduate and the remaining 17 % with informal education. This suggests that the educational level of this township in general is low with only 11 % of the population having achieved high school or university education (World Vision Myanmar, 2011). In regard to ethnicity and religion, 90 % of the population is Bamar (the major ethnic group) and the rest include Karen and Indian descendants. Buddhism is the major religion of the area with 93 % of the population, 6 % Christianity and 0.5 % Islam (World Vision Myanmar, 2011).

**Table 3: Population Distribution by Gender and Age in Thabaung Township in 2012**

Category	Male	Female	Total
Adults	55960	55389	111349
Children	43778	43082	86860
Total	99738	98471	198209

**Source: World Vision Thabaung ADP and Project Profile (Fiscal Year 2012)**

As the township is mainly composed of rural villages, the majority of the population are highly reliant on agriculture as the major source of income. Rice is the major crop produced in the area which is followed by beans and pulses, maize and vegetables. Although Thabaung Township is favourable for rice cultivation, rice production varies from year to year. With the topography of the township, rainfall intensity and lack of proper drainage, flooding affects rice cultivation and production. As a result, the paddy yields are frequently poor and the township is ranked as one of the least developed townships of the region. Apart from agriculture, other economic activities in this township include timber felling, fishing, charcoal-making, small-scale trading and small-scale animal husbandry.

### **3.4 History of World Vision International**

World Vision has been working in Thabaung Township to improve the resilience of livelihoods for the last ten years. World Vision is a global, child-focused, Christian, relief, development and advocacy organization that was established in 1950. It started as a response to the needs of the orphans at the end of the Korean War, and its founder, Reverend Robert Pierce started an organization dedicated to working with the world's

vulnerable children and their families to overcome poverty and injustice, enabling the sustained well-being of children (World Vision International, n.d.).

The organization expanded its work in Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe in the subsequent two decades. In the 1970s, World Vision started a new community development approach and established an emergency relief division. Since then, the organization has attempted to address the causes of poverty through a needs-based approach that focuses on the needs of the community such as water, sanitation, health, education, leadership training and income generation. World Vision is now operating in 90 countries across the spectrum of development issues such as child health, microfinance, agriculture and education.

World Vision's development programmes hinge around three foundational elements: being Christian, child-focused and community-based. Regardless of race, gender, social status and religious belief, the organization works together with different stakeholders within target communities to focus on the sustained wellbeing of the children and their families, especially the most marginalized ones. Their work is motivated by the example of Christ's love of children and of the disadvantaged (World Vision International, n.d.).

World Vision International functions as a federation of interdependent national offices with their own advisory councils as overseers. All national offices share the mission statement and core values, and they are bound by a Covenant of Partnership. By signing this covenant, all national offices agree to follow the common policies and standards established by the International Board though they are autonomous in internal decisions. Most of the funds come from child sponsorship which accounts for nearly half of World Vision's funding while other sources of financial support come from private donors, foundations, businesses, and various corporations. In 2011, the organization received 2.79 billion USD of funding from these different donors (World Vision International, 2011).

### **3.5 World Vision Myanmar**

World Vision Myanmar was established in 1993 with current operations in 11 out of 14 states and regions. World Vision Myanmar has undertaken its development interventions through its Area Development Programme (ADP) approach which is holistic in nature. These

programmes span a range of important socioeconomic sectors such as education, health, agriculture, and child protection. A microfinance program, started in 1998, and has benefited 60,000 households. The organization is now operating 35 Area Development Programmes and aligned projects with 800 in-country staff and 3,500 volunteers working at the community level reaching over three million people in Myanmar (World Vision International, 2013).

Apart from these development programmes, World Vision Myanmar has a significant disaster response capability, with pre-positioned supplies in warehouses in Yangon and Mandalay. The organization has also been involved in various relief works in response to disasters such as cyclones, floods and armed conflicts<sup>2</sup>, and its efforts were highly recognized by the government for its effective response to Cyclone Nargis in 2008.

### **3.6 World Vision in Thabaung Township**

While the previous section looked generally at the history of World Vision International and work in Myanmar, this section specifically discusses the development intervention of World Vision Myanmar in Thabaung Township.

#### **3.6.1 World Vision's Area Development Programme in Thabaung Township**

In 2000, World Vision started its development intervention in Thabaung with the implementation of a Health Project. Out of the 393 villages and three wards in Thabaung Township, World Vision chose 127 villages as target villages. At that time, the presence of NGOs in remote areas was a sensitive issue as district and township level authorities did not welcome the presence of NGOs. This is because authorities held a negative impression of NGOs as their presence might affect their administration. While this project was being implemented, a major flood in the early 2000s caused a severe disruption in livelihoods and affected the safety of the majority of the township population. This occurrence encouraged World Vision to carry out relief efforts in Thabaung which were recognized by different levels of authority, and mutual trust was built which led the organization to increase its development interventions in the township. In 2003, World Vision started community

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<sup>2</sup> World Vision Myanmar provided aid to internally displaced people who fled the armed conflict between Myanmar government and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) which started in June, 2011. This conflict erupted in Kachin State which is situated on the northern part of Myanmar.

development in 127 villages of Thabaung Township through its Area Development Programme Approach.

In Thabaung Township, World Vision works to address critical developmental issues such as health (e.g. collaboration with Township Health Department on immunization of children), water and sanitation (e.g. installation of water pumps and provision of latrines), education (e.g. school construction and collaboration with Township Education Department for school medical check-up), agriculture (e.g. provision of quality seed and trainings), economic development (e.g. microfinance) and child protection (e.g. Convention on the Rights of Children awareness raising). Disaster management became a priority for the organization in this township as it became apparent that the area is prone to disasters such as flooding and cyclones. Although the life span of the Area Development Programme varies depending on the needs of the communities, the organization tends to transition out of target communities after 15 years. As World Vision's presence in Thabaung is restricted to the 15-year programme cycle, the organization forms community-based organizations, and trains and empowers the community members with the expectation that these community stakeholders will then have the capacity to oversee and sustain the development activities over the long term in their communities. Figure 5 is the map of Thabaung which shows the target villages of World Vision.



**Figure 6: Organizational Structure of World Vision Thabaung**

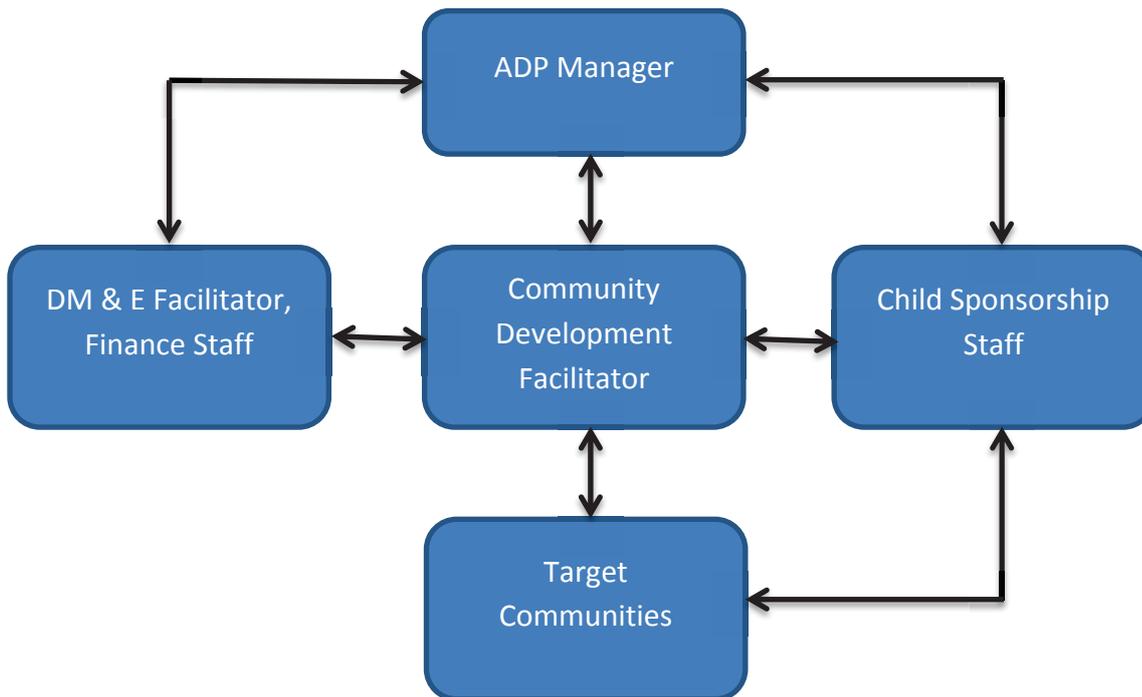


Figure 6 shows the relationship among the different categories of staff members. Community Development Facilitators (CDFs) and Child Sponsorship Staff work together with the target communities but the latter's role is limited to the matters of children.

The ADP Manager is responsible for the overall programme management including recruitment of necessary staff and reporting of progress to officials in the National Office in Yangon. He/she is also responsible for liaising with Support Offices based in other countries (such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand and United States) which provide long-term funding to the World Vision in Thabaung. Therefore, he/she has to remain mostly at World Vision office in Thabaung Township for these purposes, but sometimes he/she accompanies the community development facilitators to the target villages.

Similarly, there are support staff whose jobs also require them to remain most of their time at the township office. Child Sponsorship focal staff work closely with the community development facilitators on matters relating to sponsored children. These staff also have to spend a significant amount of the time in some target villages but their work is limited to working closely with Child Sponsorship Committees (known in the villages as CIP committees) and families with sponsored children. Apart from that, these staff have a

limited opportunity to work closely with wider communities on different developmental issues. On the other hand, the Community Development Facilitators (CDFs) are the focal staff members who work closely with community members, facilitating the development process in their assigned villages. The role of CDFs will be further discussed in Section 5.4.1.

The ADP Manager is responsible for overseeing the programme and managing the staff from other categories, and the latter are accountable to report their activities to the ADP Manager. Apart from that, the relationship among other staff is horizontal and equal.

### **3.7 Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter has provided background material about the country in general and the township where this study was conducted. Particularly, this chapter has highlighted the fact that the historical backdrop of the country and the authoritarian nature of the respective governments represent challenges to creating spaces for meaningful participation of the marginalized people in community affairs. The second part of this chapter has also provided the background information about World Vision Myanmar, its development intervention in Thabaung Township, the administrative structure of the ADP, the desire to include a range of people in the CBOs, the kinds of development projects associated with ADP, the importance of CBO leadership, long-term community development programmes, and some important issues relating to community participation in general. This chapter, therefore, helps to explain the situation in which participation of the marginalized people is facilitated by World Vision as a development organization and points to some of the challenges for participation that are particular to this context.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

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## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

## **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methodology and methods which were used in this research. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of research design, and provides an explanation as to why qualitative design and its associated methods were used for data collection and analysis. It continues by explaining the selection process of the study area and participants for the research. Afterwards, a discussion follows on ethical issues and issues relating to the validity and reliability of the research. At the end of the chapter, some limitations and challenges of the research are discussed. Murray and Overton (2003) explain that “research design is about putting philosophy into practice and operationalizing ways of exploring theoretical ideas” (p.20). Metaphorically, research design can be thought of as a bridge which connects the research questions to their answers. Hence, a good design is very important for any research as it will guide the process of collecting relevant data to the research questions, and promote effective data analysis.

## **4.2 Research Design**

The difference between quantitative and qualitative research has been explained by O’Leary (2010) and Murray and Overton (2003). Quantitative research searches for singular truths, it is structured and large scale but without depth. In contrast, qualitative research accepts multiple realities, values deep and holistic understandings of social complexities, and is open and interactive (Mayoux, 2006; O’Leary, 2010). Both methodologies have their values and advantages so the choice is to be based on the different purpose of each piece of research.

My research is seeking to understand the factors which affect the participation of marginalized people in community development, exploring specifically the role of World Vision in facilitating the participation of these people. For these purposes, qualitative methods, as opposed to quantitative, are considered the best option for the reasons I will discuss below.

As the purpose of my research is to gain a deep understanding of a social phenomenon, I applied the qualitative approach encompassing an array of methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, observation and document analysis (Maxwell, 1996: pp. 15). A

qualitative approach was chosen for it can enable a deep and holistic understanding of the social reality, and the flexibility needed for exploratory research. A two-case study approach was used in this research because, according to Bloor and Wood (2006: 29), case studies “can capture the unique characters of people and groups through their ability to generate detailed holistic data, they have the capacity to make surprising discoveries and they produce novel theories”. This approach proved to be particularly useful in my research as it revealed the contrasting nature of leadership in two different cases which affected the participation of marginalized people in these villages.

### **4.3 Selection of the Study Area and Participants**

While the previous section explained the choice of the qualitative method as my primary research design, this section discusses why Thabaung Township was chosen as the study area and how purposive and snowball samplings were used to recruit research participants.

#### **4.3.1 Selection of Thabaung Township as the Study Area**

I chose one of the community development programmes of World Vision (Myanmar) as my case because seven years ago, I worked in Thabaung Township as a World Vision development worker for three years. From this experience, I was convinced that community participation is a vital ingredient for the success and sustainability of development programmes. However, I also observed some challenges for participation of the community members that I did not fully comprehend. In some villages, people with different socioeconomic status were actively taking part and benefiting from the development process, while in other villages I experienced that people with higher socioeconomic status were taking charge of the development process. When I reviewed the literature on participation for my research, I felt a desire to link theories and concepts of participation to what was happening in the communities targeted by World Vision’s development programme in Thabaung Township. I am aware that my earlier involvement created a bias for me in regard to “being too close” to the study area and population. In order to address this bias, I decided not to choose the villages that I had worked in and visited, and not to work with people that I knew. This will be further discussed in the ethics section below.

Although there are many townships in which World Vision (Myanmar) is implementing community development programmes, I chose Thabaung Township as my study area for the following reasons. Thabaung Township is situated in the north-western part of Myanmar and it is one of the most underdeveloped townships in Ayeyarwady Region. World Vision (Myanmar) has been implementing a community development programme in this township for over nine years. So, this township was an ideal place to study the participation of marginalized people in an ongoing development programme, and how an international development organization such as World vision, has been facilitating that participation. Furthermore, it is relatively easy to gain access to this township. Although this township is occasionally flooded during the monsoon season, it is safe to travel if precautionary measures are taken.

Thabaung Township is composed of 393 villages and three wards<sup>3</sup>, and World Vision has chosen 127 target villages for their community development programme. There are two distinct areas with different geographical characteristics: one area which is called “Eastern Bank” is flat and low-lying and prone to flooding in the rainy season while another area, called “Western Bank”, is hilly and forest-covered, and close to the Rakhine mountain ranges. I decided to choose one village from each area somewhat randomly although I did seek advice from World Vision staff. I discussed potential study villages with them in terms of the availability of respondents, and logistical and safety issues. Although the average size of a village in Thabaung Township is around fifty households, the size of the two research villages is large with more than a hundred households in each village. However, I took sole responsibility for choosing my study villages. In this respect, I need to acknowledge that my previous experiences and knowledge in this township made my fieldwork possible, relatively easy and safe. For a total stranger, the timing of the fieldwork would be difficult in terms of logistics and personal safety. The township is flooded in July, which was also the case during my research time, and sometimes tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal cause heavy rain and wind. Some private motorboats for hire are not in a good and safe condition, and this may cause serious problems for strangers during the unfavourable weather season. Conducting research during such an off-season has in some way addressed one of the biases

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<sup>3</sup> Wards are administrative entities which are assumed to be urban areas while villages are situated in rural areas.

pointed out by Chambers (1983), who argued that many fieldworkers prefer to work during good weather seasons only and therefore miss out on activity observations of the rainy season.

#### **4.3.2 Selection of Participants**

As it is impossible to interview everyone in the study population, selection or recruitment of participants for the research is essential. It is common for quantitative research to select a large number of participants to be able to extrapolate the research findings to a broader population. Hence, random selection of participants is necessary for quantitative research for the purpose of representativeness of findings to a larger population. In qualitative research, however, the aim is not to generalize findings to the broader population but to gain a detailed and deeper understanding of a certain social phenomenon. Therefore, it only requires a small number of participants with specific characteristics or experiences that are relevant to, and can inform, the research topic (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011: 84). So, I purposefully chose the CBO leaders and village authorities as my initial respondents as I believed they had experiences and knowledge about the development programme in their villages. Moreover, they were also able to point out suitable marginalized people for further interviews.

Keeping this in mind, and within the time constraints of six weeks in the field, purposive sampling was mainly used in the selection of suitable participants. I mainly used this sampling technique in selecting the World Vision staff to talk with, CBO members and village leaders because it is important to understand also the view of people who are articulate and knowledgeable about the development process in the communities. In practice, this technique was useful in enabling me to gain an in-depth understanding of the different perspectives on the research topic from the selected participants.

I used snowball sampling to identify people who are marginalized in the community and the community development process. After undertaking initial interviews, I asked the respondents to recommend someone else who they felt might be willing to take part in my upcoming interviews. I advised them of the types of people I wished to interview: people who were not CBO members and who were regarded as poor and vulnerable. As our interactions became more relaxed and friendly, participants became more open and

pointed me to further respondents. This sampling technique significantly helped me in finding the suitable respondents for my interviews.

In relation to the study area, I selected ten respondents from each village from two distinct geographical areas. As the question of participation involves a number of different actors, I made an effort to interview a range of participants involved or excluded from the World Vision development programme. These included World Vision staff, civic leaders, and CBO members, as well as those excluded from participation. I also attempted to gain different viewpoints by interviewing people from different age, gender and socioeconomic backgrounds. As my study also aimed to gain the perspectives of the marginalized people and their concerns, I tried to ensure that half of my respondents were not from a good economic situation and not members of CBOs. Table 4 gives a breakdown of the people who took part in my interviews.

**Table 4: Breakdown of Respondents by Gender and Social Ranking in Semi-structured Interviews**

	Village X	Village Y	World Vision	Total	Remark
Total number of respondents	10	10	3	23	
Male	8	8	3	19	
Female	2	2 + 3*	0	7	* These three women participated in interviews alongside their husbands.
Village leaders and elders	2	2		4	
CBO members	3	3		6	
Marginalized people	5	5		10	

#### **4.4 Data Collection Methods**

Different types of data collection methods are used in qualitative research. Bearing the advantages and disadvantages of diverse methods in mind (Hennink et al., 2011: 53), I chose four qualitative methods which could enable me to gain rich and deep data relevant to my research questions. The following discusses the reasons for, and the advantages and disadvantages that I encountered when I employed these data collection methods.

##### **4.4.1 In-depth Interviews**

In-depth interviews involve an interviewer and an interviewee discussing specific topics in depth (Hennink et al, 2010: 109). This was my principal data collection method for my research and proved to be useful in developing relationships and trust, and has provided rich, in-depth data. This data collection method was compatible with my desire to gain understanding about personal viewpoints and experiences of the marginalized people. Moreover, it was also congruent with the culture of Myanmar. Most of the people prefer to give their personal feelings, viewpoints or critiques on issues in one-on-one conversations. People are not generally open to expressing their feelings or critiques in group discussions or public meetings. The reluctance to speak publicly was especially the case with people that were marginalized from development processes. They were more comfortable with the individual interviews as they felt it was better for them to express their concerns and share their viewpoints without anyone being around.

Participation showed an imbalance in the gender ratio of respondents in both villages. This was because it was mainly men from marginalized households that were identified by their peers through the snowballing technique. However, in “Village Y”, three women took part in the interviews alongside their husbands. As their houses are small and the time of my fieldwork was rainy and wet, it was difficult to go to private places and it was not appropriate to ask the wives to go outside to conduct the interviews without their husbands. So, I decided to conduct my interviews with both husbands and wives at their houses. From these interviews, I observed that although the husbands tended to answer my questions, their wives also answered my questions freely. Wives also corrected or reinforced some statements made by their husbands. This technique therefore was a useful way for validating my understanding of the responses from the female participants.

There was also an unequal gender ratio of respondents from World Vision as the choice of respondents was based on the suitability for my research questions. Most of the female staff members were “office-based” such as finance staff or report writing staff. That meant, unlike development facilitators, they do not have as much experience and knowledge about the community development process in the villages. Although there are some female staff members who work as development facilitators, they were relatively new compared with the facilitators who were interviewed, and these female facilitators were assigned to other villages. I chose to interview the male development facilitators who had years of field experiences and who had significant knowledge about my research villages.

#### **4.4.2 Focus Group Discussions**

Conducting focus group discussions was another method which I employed to collect data. This method can gain “data on group beliefs and group norms in respect of a particular topic or set of issues” (Bloor & Wood, 2006; pp. 88). Focus group discussions normally include around six to eight participants who discuss interactively on a specific set of issues. For proper usage of a focus group discussion, as warned by Flick (2007: 2), the researcher should ensure that participants talk interactively among themselves rather than interacting predominantly with the researcher. So, the role of the researcher will be different from that in conducting in-depth interviews.

Although I planned to conduct three focus groups discussions, the situation was not conducive for me to carry out those discussions. In reality, I managed to conduct one focus group discussion with the CBO members as I found that it was difficult to organize a discussion with many people at that time of the season. There was also the possibility that some participants might influence the discussion and others might not openly discuss their perspectives on serious issues such as who is dominating the CBO. Moreover, I noticed that individual interviews would be less time consuming and more convenient for the participants as well as for the researcher. So, I committed my time to conduct individual interviews.

#### **4.4.3 Observation**

Observation is another method I used in my research as it “enables researchers to access what their subjects actually do, rather than what they say they do” (Bloor and Wood, 2006:

71). I spent a week in each village observing the physical structures, social differences, behaviour and action. In Village X, I had a chance to observe a community meeting among World Vision's staff, CBO members and the villagers. This gave me an opportunity to see how these actors interact and discuss in this kind of occasion. I also took time and looked around the village with the aim of observing the physical structures such as seed banks, schools and ECCD centres constructed in cooperation between World Vision and the community. I also spent time observing the physical situations of where the marginalized people live and some part of their daily activities. This gave me some insights into people's lives in their context. This method was particularly important because it enabled me to triangulate findings or data from other methods of data collection. However, I was also aware of my own bias, interests and experiences and how they would affect the ways I observe things and interactions, and as a result, could affect the generation of credible data (O'Leary, 2004: 171). So, I used this method carefully as a complement to other methods to ensure the data collected are valid and reliable. I kept a field notebook and noted down what I observed in the community such as behaviours and interactions. In this way, I reflected on the differences and similarities of what I found out in the interviews and what I learnt from my observation.

#### **4.4.4 Document Analysis**

Another method which was used in conjunction with the above-described methods was conducting a document analysis with the aim of supplementing the data collected from the interviews (Bloor and Wood, 2006: 58). The documents that I consulted were mainly project documents such as reports, assessments and the webpage of World Vision. I also took records and photos of documents from the CBOs such as lists of beneficiaries, the lists of CBO members and the selection criteria of CBOs. Different types of documents were relevant to my research.

Moreover, document analysis can be used for data collection as well as a mode for data analysis (O'Leary, 2004: 176). I used the data collected through document analysis to help create themes and categories and to triangulate other data. Before I went to Thabaung, I made a list of documents that I thought would be relevant for my research. When I arrived at the World Vision office in Thabaung, I requested access to these documents from the

Programme Manager and gathered these documents with his permission. Moreover, when I was in the research villages, I photographed the documents of CBOs with their permission. After the fieldwork, I reviewed these documents, assessed their credibility, explored the contents and categorized them into themes and issues relevant to the research.

#### **4.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Qualitative data analysis needs to be structured as well as flexible (Hennink et al, 2011: 205). The process of analysing the collected data was, therefore, an iterative one. Moreover, I also believe that there is a strong link between the quality of the data collected and good analysis. So, I considered how best to extract quality data from my fieldwork and analyse the data effectively before I went to the field. As this was my first experience of independent research, I consulted many academic journals and books on data analysis<sup>4</sup>. During my fieldwork, I frequently evaluated the interview process and reviewed my handwritten interview transcripts to examine whether the interview questions I asked were relevant to my research questions or whether the respondents understood and answered my questions adequately. Also in this self-evaluation process, I also looked for better ways to question future respondents to get more relevant data for my research questions. I became more aware of the limitations of my questioning, and I thought of how to minimize them in my future interviews.

All the interviews were in the Burmese and after the fieldwork I initially transcribed 23 semi-structured interviews, one focus group discussion and field notes in Burmese. Then, I translated and typed these documents into English. As English is my second language, translation from Burmese into English was a challenging task for me with regards to grasping the precise meanings of what the respondents said. I was mindful of this factor so I took some time to translate these transcripts. I re-listened to the audio recordings to find and correct misunderstandings and ambiguities.

The next step I undertook was to examine these documents and explore and highlight the statements that were significant for my research questions and conceptual framework. I looked for major themes and patterns in these documents relevant to my research

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<sup>4</sup> These include O'Leary (2004), Scheyvens (2003)

questions. Subsequently, I placed the highlighted statements under corresponding themes and issues.

#### **4.6 Ethical Considerations**

For every researcher, ethical issues are of utmost concern. They are the vital and essential components of any research process (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 67). Being aware of the importance of ethical issues, I have carefully taken these issues into consideration from the start of my research process to the writing-up of its results.

As a student of Massey University, it is necessary for my research to go through a formal ethical procedure of the university. Prior to the inception of my research, meetings with my supervisors were held to discuss relevant ethical issues. Before applying for approval for my research from Human Ethics Committee of the University, I carefully studied the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants of Massey University. From the formal screening questionnaires, I assessed that the likelihood of harm from my research on me and my participants was to be minimal, so I submitted a “low risk notification” which was approved by Human Ethics Committee of the university.

In addition to the formal procedures of the University, I tried to adhere to the major ethical principles, as described by Davidson and Tolich (2003): do-no-harm; voluntary participation; anonymity and confidentiality; avoidance of deception; and the faithful analysis and reporting of data. Apart from doing no harm to participants, my research also seeks to improve the situation of participants and their communities in regards to community development. In order to “do good” (Scheyvens, Nowak and Scheyvens, 2003: 139), if the project assumes that my research findings may be useful for the organization to learn lessons for further improvement in their programming, I will share my thesis to the organization without affecting the confidentiality of the participants who took part in my research.

Informed consent is a significant ethical issue in research and it is important to explain about the purpose and intended outcomes of the research before obtaining consent. Therefore, I introduced myself to every participant and explained about the aim and intended outcomes of my research before every interview. In addition, I handed over an

information sheet which was prepared and written in Burmese language and explained the information on the sheet to them so that they could better understand the nature and expectations of the interview. Moreover, I clearly stated their rights to: decline participation; withdraw from the study at any time; be ensured privacy and confidentiality; ask questions about the study at any time; and receive information about the research results and conclusions (Scheyvens et al, 2003: 143). When the participants agreed, written consents were obtained from them. In a small number of cases, verbal consents were given instead. As my research intended not to deceive or pressure the participants at any stage, I asked for their prior consent for audio recording and photo taking every time.

Power is an implicit issue which needs to be acknowledged and addressed in any research (Desai and Potter, 2006). This is particularly the case in my research as a significant portion of my respondents were poor without power or social standings in the community. I needed to consider how to minimize the power imbalance between me as researcher and the poor that I wanted to talk with. In this regard, I took special care to avoid reinforcing “feelings of powerlessness” (Scheyvens et al, 2003: 143) throughout my interviews with them, and addressed them with respect and politeness.

As appearance is an important aspect in power relationships (Scheyvens et al (2003), and is a significant issue in Myanmar culture, I attempted to behave in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner and tried to build friendly relationships with my research participants. Dress code is also important in development research (Desai and Potter, 2006: 29) especially in the culture of Myanmar. Myanmar has a specific dress code (such as wearing “longyi”, a traditional men’s wear, being more acceptable than wearing jeans or trousers especially in rural areas), so I dressed in an appropriate and casual way throughout my fieldwork. When interviewing the poor people, I took special care not to overdress.

As some participants of my research were poor, I wanted to give something back to them for their contribution to my research. Therefore, I gave a small packet of biscuits and a sachet of coffee to every participant as a token of gratitude. In the first village, during my stay in the village, I noticed that there was no dustbin in the school. So I donated three dustbins for the school which had no significant financial value but were useful for the school children.

## **4.7 Reflections on the Field Research**

Reflection has proved to be an important component of this research process as it has enabled me to explore the advantages and disadvantages of different methods and processes as well as the challenges in doing research in an area where I have prior knowledge. It also provides insights valuable for my future involvement as a development professional on how research should be conducted and how to cope with and overcome challenges and take advantage of any opportunities encountered along the process.

### **4.7.1 Advantages of Being “Close” to the Study Area**

It was a privilege to do research in my home country, especially in an area where I had worked before. First of all, I was able to communicate easily with my research participants as I speak the same language as they do. Moreover, we shared similar cultural values despite our differences in ethnicities: most of my participants are Bamar and Buddhist while I am Karen and Christian, but we have a similar appearance and I am familiar with their culture and way of life. It was particularly valuable in interviewing the elder persons as it was a privilege to listen to their knowledge and I understood the special words that should be used in talking with elders.

There was also an advantage for me in terms of the research process. As I worked as a development worker in World Vision seven years ago, it was not difficult to get permission from the organization to do my fieldwork in one of its development programmes. Besides, when I reached the target township, I was able to find appropriate accommodation and could arrange logistics for my trips to the villages without any major difficulties. This is because World Vision staff helped me to find accommodation and motorboats for my travel. My previous knowledge of the area also gave me an advantage in preparation for my fieldwork: I could calculate the duration of the travel to and from the villages, and could take precautionary measures against serious seasonal diseases such as malaria and diarrhoea.

### **4.7.2 Challenges, Limitations and Constraints Encountered in the Fieldwork**

As I had been involved in some studies and evaluations while I worked for World Vision and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), I thought that I was fairly experienced.

Although this gave me confidence to carry out the research, I found this independent research to be quite different from what I have undertaken before. As a result, I encountered some challenges in my fieldwork. It is easier for an NGO staff member to conduct a study, an assessment or an evaluation in an area which he is accustomed to. However, in my case, it took time to build rapport with the community and people as we did not know each other before. Although Myanmar people are known for their courtesy and friendliness, they are reserved when dealing with strangers and constrained to talk about some serious issues let alone share their personal concerns. This is an issue that I took for granted before my fieldwork. However, when I met and talked with the marginalized people, it took some time to make them feel at ease. Addressing them with politeness and respect as well as occasional smiles paved the way for better relationships and friendly discussion.

As I was a development worker in World Vision in Thabaung Township, my closeness to some of the staff members was an issue in choosing participants for the interviews. As some of staff members, such as the ones that I did not know, were busy at that time (attending meetings and capacity-building trainings), I had to choose two respondents who were my previous co-workers.

According to my fieldwork plan, I intended to do interviews with religious leaders such as Buddhist monks, as I had observed some of them are interested in community development from my previous work experience. However, there was a challenge for me in interviewing the Buddhist monks in the target villages as I had no prior acquaintance with them. Culturally, in talking with them, we need to address them in a special way, and I do not know whether they are interested in community development work. As I was afraid that I might offend them by my behaviour and the way of my speaking, I decided not to interview them as I was afraid that it might affect my fieldwork, because of the power status they had in the village.

Another unexpected event which affected my fieldwork was my participation in the World Justice Forum which was convened in the Hague, the Netherlands. Although I planned to do my fieldwork continuously, the last-minute confirmation of my participation in this forum meant that I had to postpone the second part of my fieldwork. Although postponement had its advantages in giving me more time to reflect on the first part of my fieldwork, it dragged

me closer to the middle of the rainy season. The continuous rains throughout most of my second section of fieldwork, and untimely flooding, affected my fieldwork in some ways. Because of the continuous rains, I was not able to conduct as many observations as I had planned in Village Y.

#### **4.8 Validity and Reliability**

Reliability and validity are important indicators to assess consistency and quality of a research process. Rigorous efforts are needed in order to make research reliable and valid, and they need to be considered from the start of a research process (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2010: 77). In this way, a researcher can show that he or she takes responsibility for representation of the institution and participant communities.

In my research, I applied checking procedures at every stage of the process to ensure rigour. One method I used to ensure the validity of my research process was that I tried to include different types of respondents in my interviews as explained in the previous section of this chapter. I made a special effort to ensure the diversity of respondents with different perspectives, so as to get as unbiased understandings on the same issues and topics as possible.

Moreover, I applied different data collection methods such as document analysis, interviews, focus group discussion and observation in order to strengthen the validity of my conclusions. After I finished my fieldwork, I also studied the documents and records I collected from the project and the communities to compare with the data collected from other methods. In this way, I tried to minimize the irregularities and oversights associated with data collected in qualitative research.

Respondent validation was another way to strengthen the validity of my findings as it helped me rule out the possibility of misinterpretation (Merriam, 2009: 217). During the interviews, when I did not clearly understand the responses of the participants, I asked them again to check whether my understanding and interpretation of what they said were correct and accurate. Through these ways, I tried to maximize the validity of my study.

#### **4.9 Chapter Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have discussed the reasons for the choice of qualitative research design. I also argued the appropriateness of the use of specific data collection methods in answering my research questions which were discussed in the first section of this chapter. Then, I explained how I analysed the collected data. I explicitly acknowledged the ethical issues which I encountered during the fieldwork and explained how I tried to tackle them. Subsequently, I reflected on the advantages and challenges that I encountered throughout my research process. Finally, I explained the approaches I took to minimize biases and ensure validity and reliability of my research, and acknowledged the limitations of my thesis. In a nutshell, this chapter is the discussion of the process I undertook to generate my research, which leads into Chapter 5 where I will present the results of my fieldwork and analyse them.

# CHAPTER FIVE

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## FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

## **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results from this research project into factors affecting participation in community development. This chapter is focused around the two central research questions: “What are the factors affecting the participation of marginalized people in community development in Thabaung, Myanmar?” and “What is the role of World Vision Myanmar in facilitating the participation of marginalized people in community development?” The first section of this chapter presents an overview of the socioeconomic characteristics of the marginalized people that I identified and talked to, and the factors that affect their participation in community development processes. In the following section, I discuss the forms that such marginalization appeared to take in the two research villages.

In the context of the World Vision development programme in Thabaung Township, marginalized people were not totally excluded from community development processes: they participated in some aspects of community development but they were marginalized in other important respects.

The final section looks into the practices of World Vision’s development programme in Thabaung Township. This section presents findings about the initiatives and the approaches the organization applied for promoting community participation in target villages. After that, I explore the range of problems and challenges which hindered the marginalized people from actively involving in community development process.

## **5.2 Socio-economic Characteristics of the People Marginalized from Participation in Community Development**

In the two target villages of World Vision where I conducted my fieldwork, I observed that almost all villagers were involved in some aspects of the community development process. People who had a low socio-economic status in these villages did participate in development processes but the extent and quality of their participation had some limits. Respondents who were “at the bottom of the community” shared that they participated in community development processes by attending community meetings, and contributing their labour in the construction of development infrastructures such as schools, small bridges, or Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Centres. However, there were

factors which hindered them from participating in some important aspects such as taking up membership of CBOs, and taking up any leadership positions in CBOs, the main body which decides and manages development activities in their villages. The following sections discuss the characteristics of the people who are marginalized from taking up CBO membership and participating in and benefiting from other important aspects of community development process in the research areas. Interestingly, they map quite closely on to Chambers' notion of "cluster of disadvantages" (1983: 108).

### 5.2.1 Economic Status

The development literature suggests that poverty inhibits one's capacity to take advantage of development opportunities (Chambers, 1983; Awortwi, 2012). In rural communities, there is less socioeconomic disparity: the majority of people are in poverty and they do lack access to social services which are normally present in urban areas. Awortwi (2012: 11) precisely stated that, it is the poorest of the poor who do not take part in development processes and Chambers suggested the need to focus on the poorest of the poor. However, my research has suggested a different perspective. In the context of my research areas, it was evident that people, even "the bottom people"<sup>5</sup> participated in community development activities. The responses from interviewees stated that people were not aware of a family who were totally excluded or self-excluded from community development process. Respondent Fourteen commented,

*"I cannot think of someone (a family) who totally stays out of the development process or who refuses to contribute their labour for community affairs or participate in community meetings all the time. However, there are instances in which some people did not show up or were absent once or twice because they were in another village or really busy. Normally, people come to the meetings, and contribute their labour whenever they are asked."*

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<sup>5</sup> Respondents used "the bottom people (of the community)" to refer to the people who are poor, marginalized and disadvantaged. This term was also used by Chambers (1983) when he argued for the people who are marginalized from development processes.

Participation, in this sense, meant attending community meetings<sup>6</sup> and contributing their labour for construction of physical development infrastructures in their villages. This suggests that economic status had no effect on participation in these relatively minor aspects of the community development process.

However, in more important aspects of development processes such as becoming the key leaders in CBOs and receiving the distribution from the community development fund (revolving fund), people with a particularly low economic status appeared either less willing to participate or unable to benefit from these aspects.

However, even in these two aspects, the extent and quality of the participation of these people varied. Some of these people could be found as members of CBOs in their communities. This is because World Vision sought to include various people from different socioeconomic backgrounds and there was a diversity of people in CBOs. In reality, however, this inclusion did not always mean that people with lower economic status had influence or decision-making power. Their own awareness of their economic condition contributed to their reluctance to take on influential positions and they seemed to be content with passive participation such as attending community meetings and contribution of their labour. The interviews with “the people at the bottom” stressed that they faced more obstacles than other people in the same community to participate in CBOs which are the important and influential organizations in development. One respondent shared that even though she was a CBO member, her role was a minor and supportive one. When the CBO leader asked her to do some tasks, she did them. Similarly, during an informal talk with one community member, he shared his perspectives that if a very poor person were the leader in a CBO, when he bought and cooked chicken for his family (chicken is seen as a delicacy for the poor), people would become suspicious that he was misusing community funds. Although his perspective may not be true, it suggests some of the reasons for the reluctance of economically disadvantaged people to take up important positions in CBOs.

Distribution of the community development fund was another major aspect in which the economically disadvantaged people were marginalized. The fund was initiated by World Vision and the CBOs were responsible for managing the fund. It was to be sustained through

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<sup>6</sup> Community meetings are organized by CBOs and, sometimes, WV staff members also come and facilitate these meetings. In other meetings, CBO leaders lead the meetings.

a revolving process in which the receivers have to repay with reasonable interest at a later time for further distribution to community members, or to be used in community matters. So, it placed stress on the CBOs not to diminish the fund.

The interviews with the community members showed that sustaining or increasing the revolving fund was seen as a measurement of the performance of the CBOs. The interviews with World Vision staff members also voiced the importance of sustaining the revolving fund. Many respondents, especially CBO members, were proud to share the amount of the revolving funds of their villages. Therefore, CBOs had to decide who should be beneficiaries from the distribution of the funds so that they were easily able to recollect the distribution from them at an agreed time without any delay. Hence, some CBOs, including one located in one of my research villages, mainly targeted its distribution of the funds to people whom they trusted and they could recollect without delay at an agreed time. As a result, some people, especially the marginalized ones, expressed that they were left out from the distribution of the revolving fund because they were not able to show collateral to be entitled for the distribution of the funds.

### **5.2.2 Types of Occupations**

The types of occupations that villagers engaged in also affected their capacity to participate in community development. The two rural villages where I conducted my fieldwork are composed of people with different socio-economic backgrounds. Agriculture is the main source of income for most of the people and, in agriculture, three types of people can be categorized: “large” (wealthy) farmers who have significant acres of land; small or subsistence farmers with a few acres of land; and landless people who work as daily wage labourers for the farmers. Other income generation activities are related to forest and fishery such as charcoal makers, subsistence lumberjacks<sup>7</sup> and subsistence fishermen who fish in common waters. A very small number of people are hawkers or small grocery store owners. Some people had to do more than one job in order to survive. Along with the economic status presented in the previous section, type of occupation was a distinct characteristic of the social group which was marginalized in some aspects of the development process. This will be discussed further in the following section.

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<sup>7</sup> These activities are illegal but people, especially the landless, do these activities for their livelihoods as mentioned in Chapter 3.

Given the time constraints of the research, it was not possible to analyse the socioeconomic composition of the villages in detail. However, I asked some broad questions about the socioeconomic composition. Not every respondent had knowledge about it and only some respondents were able to answer these questions. In both villages, households can be categorized into three broad groups: well-to-do, middle income and “the bottom people” (the poor). As some of the respondents, especially the CBO members, had been involved in Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises such as wealth ranking, they shared their knowledge gained from these PRA exercises and categorized the socioeconomic composition of their village. Based on their responses to my questions, I would estimate that about 10 % - 15 % of the community are well-to-do, 35 % are middle class and the other 50 % - 55 % are the poor.

The interviews showed that “large” farmers are ranked in the well-to-do category while small grocery store owners and some small farmers are included in the middle class category. The rest of the occupations such as daily wage labourers, charcoal makers and subsistence lumberjacks are ranked as poor. While everyone had to work hard to fulfil their daily needs, it was not surprising to perceive that people without land or assets had to work even harder to provide for the daily needs of their families. When compared with other people such as farmers, these people spent a larger proportion of their days working for their livelihoods and normally they could not afford holidays or weekends to refresh and entertain themselves. Taking a break from their daily livelihood activities would result in a lack of food for their families. So, normally they had less time available than others for community affairs and development processes.

In my fieldwork, respondents who have to do odd jobs such as charcoal making, daily wage labourers and subsistence lumberjacks, expressed that it was difficult for them to participate in CBOs as they were struggling for their livelihoods on a daily basis and they did not have much time to participate in CBOs. Even though some of them had an interest and willingness to become active CBO members, they felt that their occupations hindered them from active participation.

*“I do not participate in [CBO] because I do not have time for that. I am busy with my charcoal making business.” (Respondent Sixteen)*

*“I am interested in participating in CBOs but I cannot give much time as I am occupied with my work most of the time.” (Respondent Three)*

Active participation in CBOs demanded considerable time: to attend meetings with World Vision staff, to recollect loans from borrowers and to participate in frequent meetings among the CBOs or with the assigned World Vision staff member. This point was reiterated by the respondents who were active CBO members. CBO members, especially the leaders, had to travel to Thabaung Township frequently to meet and discuss various issues happening in their community with the assigned World Vision staff.

### **5.2.3 Low Level of Education**

In both research villages, the marginalized people who were interviewed described their low level of education as a factor affecting their willingness to take up leadership roles in CBOs. As mentioned in Chapter 3, in my rural research villages, education levels were not very high (WVM, 2011). The respondents said that most people in their 40s or 50s, regardless of their socioeconomic levels, had primary school education while some had middle school education but very few had any high school education. Awortwi (2012) looks at the factors which affect community participation and management of community development. He argues that there is no correlation between the levels of education and community participation. The results from my fieldwork, to some degree, were consistent with his findings in community participation in some aspects of community development (such as contribution of their labour or attending the community meetings). However, my fieldwork showed that participation as leaders in community-based organizations increased with the level of education. Some respondents in my interviews pointed out that a low level of education was a factor which prevented them from participating in CBO leadership. Respondent Five, when I asked why he did not participate in CBO, answered,

*“I do not have good education to be a leader (in CBO). But I try to contribute to community development works with my labour.”*

Although these were the findings from my fieldwork in two villages, World Vision staff pointed out that this was not the case in every village in which they worked. In some other villages, people with a low level of education were involved as CBO members and some of

them were actively participating. In some assigned villages, according to one World Vision staff member, marginalized people with a low level of education were actively participating in community development activities and CBOs. Some of them were the active leaders of smaller functional groups such as animal husbandry, income generation and health committees. This will be discussed further in section 5.4.2 under the main CBOs. World Vision Respondent Two shared,

*“It is not about education. Some leaders are not well educated. They are mainly selected based on their ability to manage effectively and their willingness to take accountability and responsibility. They (the marginalized people) participate in sub-committees (functional groups). For example, you can find the daily wage labourer as a leader in a Health Committee.”*

My previous work experience in this area supported this reality. During my three years as a development worker, I also found that some marginalized people with little education were active CBO members in their communities. Despite their socioeconomic status, other community members accepted them as CBO leaders because of their willingness to take responsibility and to act accountably.

However, some World Vision staff members pointed out that the level of education of the CBO members had some effects on the community development processes. While World Vision aimed to improve the capacity of the CBO members to effectively manage and sustain the development processes, the educational level of the CBO members played an important part in reaching this objective. World Vision Respondent Two shared his experience:

*“As the [CBO] leaders are not well educated, they focus on physical things, not on the mental and spiritual improvement of the community. Mostly, they think that development is mainly about economic wellbeing and improvement in village infrastructures .... There is a large room for improvement in their behaviour change.”*

Moreover, even though low levels of education could not be claimed as the major impediment for the marginalized people for their participation in CBOs, it did have an influence on their self-confidence. Some CBO members were required to do financial

recording and writing meeting minutes so the leaders urged the villagers with good education to be in their CBOs. Respondent Ten who was in the CBO told me the following about her involvement in CBOs: *“She (the CBO leader) put my name in the CBO list. I have been on the list for two years now.”* This CBO member was a university student. As she was literate and good at keeping records and her writing was neat and tidy, she was selected by the leader for a specific purpose. However, she commented, *“I only have a minor role. I have to write clauses in the loan contracts; count the cash; and give it to the borrowers.”*

Hence, although not in every case, low level of education affects the willingness and confidence of the marginalized people to take up the important roles in CD and CBOs.

#### **5.2.4 Physical Dwellings**

Poor physical infrastructure was another factor which characterized the marginalized people in the community. My research villages are rural and relatively poor and lacked social services compared to the urban areas. As a whole, the villages do not have access to power (there are no gridlines) and tap water. However, there were significant differences between the marginalized people and the rest of the community in terms of their housing and infrastructure. Through observation, it was evident that the houses of the marginalized people were in poor condition. Their houses were made of bamboo (bamboo floor and walls) with a thatched roof as they could not afford to build houses from wood with a zinc roof. Houses with bamboo and thatch deteriorate quicker than those with wood and brick so the disadvantaged people needed to renovate their houses every year to prevent their collapse. However, most of them were not able to renovate their houses so they became shabby. Their houses seemed smaller than others and crowded with family members, and they were more vulnerable to natural disasters, especially to floods which strike the villages in Thabaung Township occasionally.

Due to the poor condition of their houses and lack of assets, the poor faced restrictions in gaining benefit from the distribution of the revolving fund, and this issue will be discussed in detail in the following section 5.3. The CBOs were more likely to distribute their revolving funds to the people who had solid assets, such as cows and good houses, as collateral.

Another important aspect of the houses of the marginalized people was their location. In the villages, the wealthy people were able to choose the places to buy and build their houses. They chose safe and central locations in the community. In contrast, the marginalized people had no choice but to live in places where nobody else wanted to, mostly far from the centre of the community. Their houses were situated in places which were relatively more vulnerable to floods. During my interview with a marginalized respondent, he answered,

*“Most of the CBO leaders live in the middle part (central) of the community. There are very few CBO members from the other parts of the village.”*

This village was divided into three parts; the east side, the middle part and the west side. When I looked around the village, I noticed that most of the people with good economic condition lived in the middle part of the village which was situated on a higher ground than other parts of the villages.

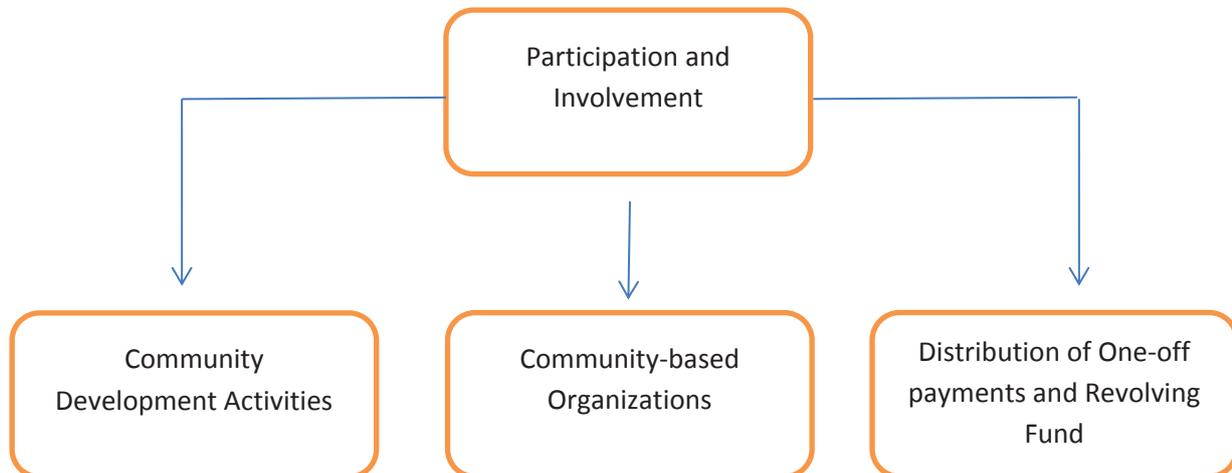
These characteristics are associated with the social group that was marginalized in community development. In relation to this social group, the following section will discuss the aspects of community development in which this social group cannot actively participate.

### **5.3 Forms of Marginalization, and Factors Affecting Participation of the Marginalized People in Community Development**

The previous section discussed the characteristics that are similar to the “cluster of disadvantages” of Chambers (1983) and associated with those marginalized people in community development processes. Subsequently, this section outlines the areas in community development from which these people were marginalized from participation and/or gaining benefits, and factors that affect their active participation. Based on the findings from my fieldwork, three different aspects were identified which are shown in Figure 7. The fieldwork found that the marginalized people were not left out in all aspects of community development processes: they participated in a passive way in community development by contributing their labour, attending some community meetings and participating in supporting roles. However, they faced obstacles to active participation in

important aspects of the process such as leadership positions in CBOs; decision making; and the distribution of the revolving funds.

**Figure 7: Three Aspects of Community Development Process**



### **5.3.1 Membership of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)**

As described in Chapter 3, World Vision is an organization, founded upon Christian values, which aims to reach the most vulnerable people of the communities. While its primary focus is “children” which were assumed to be the most vulnerable group, World Vision strives to provide a “fullness of life” for these children through a participatory and holistic community development approach. In order to sustain the development process after World Vision leaves the area after 15 years of its programme lifespan, the organization seeks to nurture and develop community-based organizations (CBOs) in target areas that manage and sustain a range of development activities.

Being a member of a CBO also means a lot for most community members as it offers opportunities for personal development through various trainings provided by World Vision, as well as responsibility and accountability. CBO members were invited to take part in various short training courses such as bookkeeping and management. While CBO involvement provides opportunities for skill development for members, it also demands a lot of time to attend these courses. This is a challenge for most rural people who have to do several seasonal jobs in different seasons and especially for the marginalized people as they were occupied with their livelihoods activities. Therefore, CBO membership, an important

aspect of community development, is less accessible to marginalized people who cannot always take full advantage of becoming active or influential members. Although World Vision has specific guidelines for formation of CBOs in target villages and encourages the participation of people from different socioeconomic backgrounds, membership remains limited due to the time demands of taking up active membership or leadership in the CBOs.

This varied in World Vision target villages. Despite the fact that there was some participation of the marginalized people in CBOs, the number of them was fewer than people from a higher socioeconomic status, and the quality of their participation was limited. Traditionally in Myanmar, people with a good level of education and social status are respected and encouraged to become leaders in community affairs, and the decisions and leadership of these people are mostly respected by the wider community. This tradition makes the marginalized people more unlikely to get key leadership positions in their communities.

### **5.3.2 Decision-Making processes**

Decision-making processes are a principal component in community-based organization (CBOs). Issues<sup>8</sup> relating to community development were raised by CBO leaders in community meetings and then discussed with the rest of the community. There would be debates and discussions, and participants had the chance to share their different points of view. However, in reality, major decision-making power was confined to the leadership of the CBOs. This issue was raised by Respondent One,

*“Villagers do not discuss although they come to the meetings. Mostly, it is the leaders who discuss (issues) among themselves.”*

This is partly due to the prevailing culture, especially in rural areas, that people were reluctant to express their perspectives, criticize another person or ask for an explanation from a leader or authority in public places. This was because they feared that the relationship between them would be damaged by this open criticism as mostly they have to depend on the wealthy farmers and some of them are the CBO leaders. This concern was voiced by Respondent Seven:

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<sup>8</sup> Issues such as decisions about taking action on the late repayment of the revolving fund, the time to recollect the distribution and who is to receive the distribution.

*“People do not want to discuss these issues openly in meetings (although they are not clear about the selection criteria of beneficiaries of the revolving fund). So, people are reluctant (to do so) because they are afraid of ruining their relationship.”*

However, the nature of leadership within the CBOs varied and this was an influential factor on inclusion of the wider community in the decision-making process. In my fieldwork, I observed two different styles of leadership in my research villages. In Village X<sup>9</sup>, the key CBO leader was charismatic and generous. Apart from involvement in the community development process, this leader was well-known for his kindness and caring nature towards the poor people of the community, and this was reflected in his work in community development activities. This was observed in the meeting with the community members. In this meeting, a decision about the amount of community development fund to be distributed was made not among the CBO leaders but through discussion with and agreement of other meeting participants which include the marginalized people and village authority<sup>10</sup>. The inclusion of the village authority was an important issue; especially in the case of deciding the distribution of revolving funds to the villagers. This is because the village authority has greater authority to recollect the distribution from the lenders if they cannot pay it back in time due to various reasons such as financial difficulty at the time of recollection, or no desire to pay back.

In contrast, in Village Y<sup>11</sup>, respondents stated that nearly every aspect of community development activities was mainly decided and managed by a single CBO leader. This is because of the authoritative nature of this CBO leader. From the interviews, it was learned that even the village authority was not consulted on major aspects of the development process such as selection of CBO members, selection criteria of beneficiaries and distribution of revolving fund. Respondent Seven remarked about this issue as,

*“In the CBO, one person mainly leads and decides. Other members who are involved in the CBOs are on good terms with (this leader). (About the distribution of revolving*

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<sup>9</sup> Actual village name is omitted to preserve the confidentiality of the research village and participants.

<sup>10</sup> Village authority was appointed by the government through village level election in which the villagers elected one person to take up this position.

<sup>11</sup> Actual village name is omitted to preserve the confidentiality of the research village and participants.

*fund) Not everyone benefits. Criteria (for selection of beneficiaries) are decided alone. Village authorities are not invited to share their advice.”*

Although it negated processes of participation having one person to decide every matter, the previous background of the CBO leaders was a major factor in placing him or her in this position. In each of the research villages, the key leader of the CBO had been a teacher before, and most of the community were previously the students. This gave him/her power as well as the ability to lead the development process somewhat authoritatively. In village Y, people were reluctant to criticize the CBO leader openly. Respondent Two explained:

*“The leader was previously a teacher in our village. That is one reason which put this leader in an influential position ahead of other villagers. Many villagers had been her students before.”*

In Myanmar culture and in the religious teachings of Buddhism, teachers and mentors are included in “the Five Treasures (*Ratana*)”<sup>12</sup>. They are to be obeyed and respected. So, this factor combined with other previously discussed factors gave both of the key leaders an influential position in CBOs and the community development process. However, the different ways in which they undertook their leadership role also had a lot to do with personal style or nature.

### **5.3.3 Distribution of Community Development Fund (Revolving Fund)**

One of the core features of the ADP as managed by the CBOs is the community development fund, known as “the revolving fund” in the villages. As World Vision aims to promote the sustainability of the development process in target communities, most of its provisions for development activities to the communities are not one-off payments or donations, apart from relief efforts during the floods in the area<sup>13</sup>. The organization seeks instead to nurture and promote the practice of repayment from the people who received the distribution of tangible livelihoods related items such as seeds, animals or agricultural tools. These repayments from the beneficiaries are not to be paid back to World Vision but to be paid back in cash to the CBOs of the respective community which then manages the

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<sup>12</sup> “Five Treasures” include the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha (monks), Teachers and Parents.

<sup>13</sup> During the relief efforts, affected people especially the marginalized families received the distribution of relief materials such as rice and bamboo for house repair.

fund and decides on further distribution to the villagers. In relation to the revolving fund, there were two major issues, affecting the marginalized from gaining the benefit from development processes and the revolving nature of the fund and transparency in distribution of the fund.

Firstly, CBOs are responsible for retaining the fund and preventing it from dwindling or disappearing and this put pressure on the CBOs. As a result, the CBO from one of my research villages, sought to sustain the fund by distributing it only to people with tangible and significant assets such as cows, cultivable lands or good houses. This is because CBO assumed that they would have less difficulty in recollecting the loans from these people.

Respondent Eight who was a CBO member explained,

*“We don’t want to distribute to the marginalized people as we feared that we might put them deeper into poverty as the distribution needs to be repaid in a certain time. This is a revolving process.”*

Similarly, Respondent Two shared,

*“People who have collateral receive loans or benefit from revolving fund. It is because revolving fund of the village is not to be diminished but to be increased. The very poor do not receive any distribution from the revolving fund as it is feared that they might not pay back and the fund will disappear.”*

In this process, some people were left out and some people received the benefit more than once as they were the ones who could repay in time. So, the coverage of the fund became narrower which was not what World Vision had envisaged: the fund was supposed to reach more and more people. This revealed that the distribution of the revolving funds in this village was less transparent and that the marginalized people felt they are left out from this important aspect of community development.

However, a significant amount of community development funds have been accumulated in target villages due to the revolving nature of the funds. These funds have been used for many development activities such as Family Day and ECCD closing ceremonies in the villages. In every infrastructure development, World Vision asked the involved villages for a

contribution as part of community participation. In these cases, the villages used some portion of the funds as their contribution. So, this nature of the funds could not be regarded as totally negative. However, its benefits did not reach the marginalized people. Respondent Five expressed his experience as,

*“The marginalized ones are not prioritized. Once, I went to the CBO and asked for a loan with my pig as collateral. The CBO leader told me that it was not enough as collateral. They give loans to the villagers who have cows, acres of paddy field (land) or a good house.”*

Thus, marginalized people were relatively disadvantaged in benefiting from revolving funds as they were not seen as reliable as people from the middle or upper classes. However, this disadvantage is only related to distribution of the revolving funds.

Another issue regarding the revolving fund is transparency in management and distribution of the fund by the CBOs. This could be viewed as a challenge or an opportunity for the CBOs. My fieldwork highlighted the different leadership styles in the CBOs in the two research villages. Despite the different leadership styles, transparency about the revolving fund was a determinant in forging a cohesive relationship between the CBO leaders and the rest of the community in both cases. Choosing my research villages randomly led me to an interesting revelation on the importance of transparency in building good and collaborative relationship between the CBOs and the wider community.

In Village X, the leader of the CBO had been in charge of development processes in this village for seven years. Since the beginning of the revolving process, he understood that transparency was very important in forging a good relationship with the community. The roles and responsibilities of each CBO member were discussed and agreed. One CBO member was assigned to keep the cash box while another was assigned to keep the key of the box. Another member was also assigned to keep the financial record. In community meetings, CBO leaders shared the amount of the fund that they had and discussed about how this fund would be used and distributed again. The voices of the community were taken into account. The marginalized people received a certain amount of loan from the revolving fund proportionately even though they did not receive the same amount that the middle-class households received. However, as the decision about the amount is decided by

the whole community in a community meeting, there is no tension or argument about this distribution at a later time. In this way, transparency about the fund and its distribution process build the trust of the community on the CBO leadership as they were informed of every activity about it. Participants seemed to have a feeling that the CBO is representing the wider community.

Although this practice in Village X was a good example in trying to promote transparency about the revolving fund and receiving the trust of the community, there were differences in my other research village. There, the CBO was not transparent about the management and distribution of the fund. This created tension between the community and the CBO leadership. As the community had no clear idea about the amount of the revolving fund, and the process and criteria about its distribution, the community became suspicious and wary of the work of the CBO. Respondent Five commented,

*“In other villages, when the recollection of the fund is complete, a meeting is called and the fund is distributed again to all households. For example, if you have a cow, you will receive 50,000 kyats (65 NZD). If you do not have cows and you are poor, you will receive 30,000 kyats (40 NZD). Depending on the financial condition of the borrowers, the amount is decided and given. So, everyone benefits from the revolving fund. .... People do not want to ask and discuss about this kind of issue (with the CBO in my village) in meetings.”*

Another respondent (Village elder) remarked,

*“Criteria are decided alone. We are not invited to give our viewpoints and suggestions. I think the distribution of the revolving fund is only for the people with good assets. For me, I want the marginalized people to receive the distribution of the fund as much as they deserve.”*

Hence, it appeared that the way the CBOs were trying to promote transparency about the revolving fund attributed to building the good and collaborative relationship between the CBOs and the wider communities. The two different cases from my fieldwork highlighted the importance of ensuring the revolving fund reach the marginalized people. Similarly,

transparency was also very important in mobilizing their active participation and collaboration in community development.

#### **5.3.4 Distribution of One-off Benefits**

In contrast to the revolving fund, marginalized people received a greater share of one-off benefits. Thabaung Township is prone to flooding during the rainy season and most of the villages are flooded nearly every year. The target communities of World Vision normally receive rice and bamboo (to reconstruct the houses) when the villages are flooded. The marginalized families usually benefited from such a one-off distribution. The respondents shared that most of the people, excluding the wealthy families, received this kind of distribution and that the marginalized families are prioritized. This could be assumed as a reason for their willingness to participate in community development in a passive way. World Vision Respondent Two also shared his experience,

*“When we distributed the relief items (such as rice) to the flood affected villages, we prioritized the marginalized people of the villages and then the rest of the community but the rich households were not included. There were some people who thought they were also entitled to the distribution and told us so. In this case, we tried to explain to them, and we did this distribution process according to the wealth ranking exercise the organization had conducted before. If the marginalized people did not receive the distribution, we reconsidered and asked the CBOs to distribute to them.”*

Another important benefit the target communities received was an emergency medical benefit. Although hospitalization in township hospital is free of charge in Myanmar, there are still other associated costs for the families of the hospitalized. Admission into the township hospital or an appointment with the medical doctors at a private clinic placed a financial burden on the families of the sick. The marginalized people had to take loans from relatives or loan sharks to pay for these expenses.

However, in World Vision target villages, people enjoyed the provision of medical expenses (except people from wealthy families). I learned that with the recommendation from the CBO leaders, the villagers went to the township hospital where they did not need to pay for the medical expenses. This is because World Vision has agreed with the township hospital to

settle the expenses for the hospitalized people from target villagers who came with a recommendation letter from the CBO leaders. During my fieldwork, I met a child and her mother who had to go to the doctor in a nearby township to have a minor operation on the left eye of the child as there is no ophthalmologist. As her family was poor, the CBO provided 80,000 kyats (100 NZD) for transportation and medical expenses. When they returned home after the operation, the family did not need to pay this back as this kind of benefit was not a revolving process for the poor families.

The poor, therefore, face difficulties in participating as key CBO leaders as well as in decision-making process and benefiting from the distribution of the revolving funds. However, they received a one-off distribution which targeted the vulnerable families. The marginalized people face these difficulties because of factors, which will be further explained in the following section, that contribute to their marginalization in active participation in the important aspects of community development.

### **5.3.5 Age**

Age was another interesting factor affecting the people's capacity to take up leading roles in community development. Many of the CBO members, especially the leaders, were in their 40s or 50s. Although there were some CBO members in their 30s and 20s, they were few and their roles were not as important as the elder CBO members.

*"The leaders are mostly the middle aged or the elders. There are very few youth leading the community development. Mostly the elders and the middle-aged people are the leaders in their villages. The middle-aged means people 40 to 55 years of age, and the elders are older than 55." (World Vision Respondent Two)*

*"The leaders are the middle-aged people. They are in their 40s or early 50s. There are youths who are taking part in CBOs. We need to nurture them to take the place of the current leaders." (Respondent Eleven)*

This factor was again related to the custom of Myanmar. In Myanmar custom, people are taught, since their childhood, to respect or obey the elder people. The elder people are normally regarded as people with wisdom and experience, and their judgment is considered far better and sounder than that of the youth. So people, especially the younger ones,

consult them and seek their advice for their personal development or for community affairs. This influence could be seen in every aspect of community life, and it also had influence on community development processes.

*“This is because of education and traditional norms of the country. The elder people are given priority and respect, and their decisions are to be followed. In a few cases, youth with good education and good leadership ability are respected and followed.”*  
(World Vision Respondent Three)

The cultural norms of Myanmar, in combination with the educational level and social status of retired teachers, meant that the current CBO leaders of the research villages were regarded as the most appropriate people to lead community development. These factors do mean, however, that the voices of the youth are seldom heard. This leads me to a discussion of power relations, which is one of the subjects of the following section.

### **5.3.6. “Gatekeepers” and Power Relations**

In participatory development, authors such as Chambers (1983) and Mansuri & Rao (2004) have warned against the gatekeeper issue. In community development, the local elites are most visible for development organizations such as World Vision and they are the ones who effectively collaborate and work together with them. This issue of the local elites capturing the decisive and influential role in community development has been voiced as one of the major challenges for the active participation of the marginalized people. This is especially relevant to the context of Myanmar where existing social structures and traditions place the rural elites at the forefront of community development. Unless a development organization has a particular plan or strategy to address this issue, this is likely to have a negative effect on the active participation of marginalized people especially in the important aspects of community development processes discussed previously.

My fieldwork confirmed that this “gatekeepers” issue was salient in the area where I conducted my research. Local elites, in both villages, meant people who were well-off even though not regarded as the wealthiest. The CBO leaders from both research villages were previously the influential persons in the community affairs even before the development intervention. At the beginning of World Vision’s development intervention in their

communities, both CBO leaders had been selected by the village authorities and the community to lead and mobilize the community. Respondent Eight recounted the experience ten years ago:

*“After the school (in their village) was constructed, World Vision showed its interest to work with us (the community) for the long term. I became involved as (a leader) as the previous village authority urged me.”*

World Vision Respondent Three also shared his experience,

*“When we enter the villages (during the regular monitoring visits), it is difficult to see the marginalized people as they have to go to the jungle (to cut bamboo or wood) for their livelihoods. If we want to meet them, we need to ask the CBOs to arrange with the wider community.”*

These accounts demonstrated that the role of the “gatekeepers” is an important one. Gatekeepers can contribute voluntarily most of the (spare) time for their community unlike much of the community. At the beginning of the development programme, many people (typically the marginalized) were reluctant to work with the newly arrived organization and people whom they regarded as strangers. It was the elites of the communities who first showed the interest and willingness to work with World Vision. The problem, then, is how to ensure broader and more active forms of community participation as the development programme becomes established.

Village authorities have greater authority and power in the community. When the CBOs receive the collaboration of the village authority, there are less problems in collecting the loans and implementation of development activities. However, in one of the research villages, the CBO leader was not able to build a good rapport with the village authority, and it was felt that there was tension between the village authority and the CBO leader.

In relation to the “gatekeepers” issue, power relations are another major issue in community development. In rural communities in Myanmar, there is clearly a power imbalance between the elites or gatekeepers and the marginalized. This issue is considered a main obstacle in creating spaces for the marginalized to take up decisive and influential roles in CBOs and development, as opposed to more passive forms of participation. Most of

the rural poor (who are landless) depend on the wealthy farmers for their livelihoods. During the end of the rainy season when there are very few job opportunities for the poor, people tend to go to the wealthy farmers and request “advance money”<sup>14</sup>. They consequently repay their debts by working as labourers on the lands of the wealthy farmers during the cultivation season. As already discussed, these wealthy farmers often have leadership roles in the CBOs. Respondent Fifteen commented,

*“Whenever I am in need of money, I go to him (CBO leader who is rich) and lend some money. He never turns down my request. He is well-known for his kindness.”*

*“He is good and kind. Whenever we are in need of money, we go to him and request him to lend some cash. He gives us (the poor) as we request. We repay our debts by working on his land during the cultivation season. Also in development process, he makes sure that everyone receives the loans from the revolving fund.”* (Respondent Fifteen)

However in another research village, although the CBO leader was biased and excluding, all community members, especially the marginalized, were reluctant to question this leader because of their power and influence. Also it was felt that there was no one to replace this kind of influential leader and they were worried that without a suitable leader, World Vision would not be “active”<sup>15</sup> in their villages. In villages without leadership, World Vision slowly withdrew its momentum of development interventions. This is the reason the communities put up with their biased leaders.

*“Even though the communities know that their leaders are not fair and transparent, they tried to put up with them. They come to the meetings and contribute their labour even though they do not like them. It is because there is no one who has similar ability or influence to lead. They know that if there is no leader, it is their community which will suffer. From World Vision’s side, without complaints from the community and their willingness to replace him, we do not want to create further*

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<sup>14</sup> Farmers pay wages to the people in advance who are obliged to work on their lands later.

<sup>15</sup> World Vision would only implement activities deemed essential such provision of medical expenses or medical check-ups for school children. There would be no provision for livelihoods activities, infrastructure construction or provision of grants.

*tension so we do not directly intervene in this matter or replace these kinds of leaders.” (World Vision Respondent Two)*

Thus, unequal power relationships are present in the daily lives of the rural people and can be seen in many aspects of community affairs, and are also embedded in the community development in Thabaung Township. As discussed previously, if the leadership style is generous and transparent, then the negative effect of that power imbalance is lessened.

These accounts demonstrated that the issues of the gatekeepers and power relations should not be neglected as it can affect the willingness of the marginalized to participate actively.

### **5.3.7 Gender**

When talking about “participation”, the participation of the women in development processes is a major concern. This is because the voices and rights of the women can often be left out in development. Inclusion of women is important in creating equal opportunities and benefits for them. Although gender disparity is not a major issue in the Myanmar context compared with some other countries, my research also looked into this issue to some degree though not comprehensively. During my fieldwork, I interviewed a number of women to gain understandings on their perspectives and concerns about participation in the development process. The ratio of participants was not equal but I tried to include women whenever there were opportunities. The reason for this was discussed in detail in Chapter 4: Research Methodology.

I found that there were no specific barriers for the women to take up the leadership role in community development process because of their gender. I witnessed some women who were holding important positions in CBOs such as leader and treasurer. In Village Y, the key CBO leader was a woman who was influential and powerful in many aspects of community and development affairs. Moreover, there were some other women taking up important positions in the CBO. Likewise, there were women in the CBO in Village X and they held important positions such as the child-sponsorship volunteer and treasurer. They took up the important places in the community because of their education, social status and willingness. For some women who were marginalized in community development process, it was observed that they were marginalized not specifically because of gender but because of

other socioeconomic factors which were also faced by the marginalized men in the communities.

If it is to gain a deeper understanding on gender issues in World Vision development intervention in rural villages, a further targeted research should be conducted.

#### **5.4 The Role of World Vision in Facilitating Community Participation**

World Vision recognizes the role of the community in attaining intended results and sustaining the development process in target villages. Hence, the organization sees participation of target communities as a vital ingredient for the success and sustainability of development processes. As the World Vision development approach is holistic, with different components such as health, education, livelihood, child sponsorship, disaster management, and more, and long-term, the formation and strengthening of community based organizations is considered essential for successful implementation and sustaining development activities in target villages. World Vision establishes CBOs in the hope that those community organizations will continue to operate after the organization has departed. This section presents some important and related initiatives and mechanisms in facilitating the participation of target communities.

##### **5.4.1 The Role of Community Development Facilitators (CDFs)**

Community development facilitators work closely with their assigned communities. At the beginning of the World Vision fiscal year (in October), target communities hold meetings to discuss the development activities which they regard as important for the coming year and they submit their plans to the assigned CDFs. Then, CDFs combine the planning proposals from the villages and discuss them in their annual planning meeting among the ADP team. These facilitators, therefore, play a vital role in creating more spaces for the marginalized people to be involved in the community development process.

The marginalized people in my research villages stated that they did not know every assigned CDF for their village. They only knew the assigned staff who spent time with them and asked for their input. They had a special feeling for these kinds of facilitators and they shared that every assigned staff member should spend more time in the village, visiting the houses to learn the issues, concerns and problems of the people, not just talking with the

CBO members. Many problems and issues (such as misuse of the revolving fund by the CBO leaders) were difficult to discuss in the community meetings.

My fieldwork experience showed that most of the target villages were far from the township office and it took time for the staff to reach their assigned villages. My trip to “Village X” took two hours one way so it took four hours to go there and back. Moreover, it was difficult to go to the villages without the help of a person who knew the route. So, it would take some time for newly assigned staff to be familiar with the route to the villages as well as with the communities.

The turnover of assigned staff to the target villages is another issue affecting participation. Staff shared that it took time to build relationships and mutual trust between the assigned staff and the community. Villagers also shared that shortly after they came to know the assigned staff, that staff member resigned from their job at Thabaung Township because of new job opportunities elsewhere or for other reasons.

#### **5.4.2 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)**

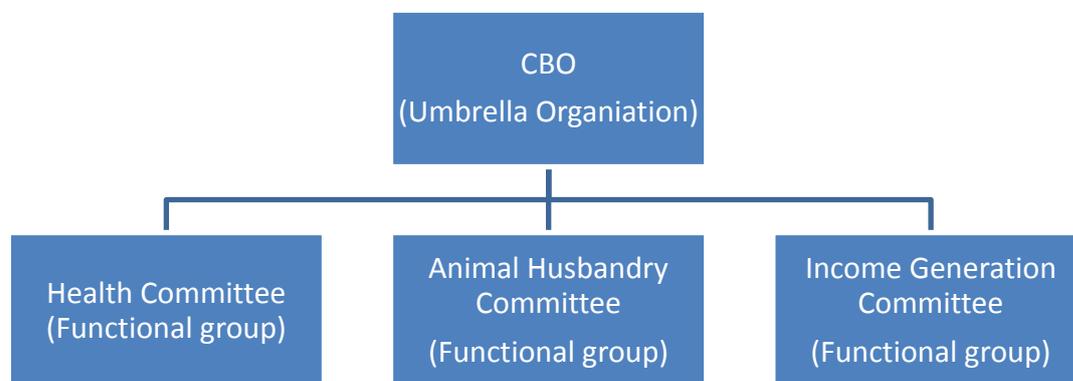
Community based organizations (CBOs) are the major engine for community development in World Vision’s target villages. In Thabaung Township, World Vision started its development intervention through relief efforts and it used volunteers for activities. Later the organization decided to implement long-term ADPs with a 15 year lifespan. At the early stage of these programmes, the organization still implemented its activities through volunteers in the villages. However, as the organization gained momentum in the villages, it realized the need to change its approach to using community-based organizations which would implement and manage development activities. Through this approach, more people became aware of the World Vision’s development programme and began to participate in some aspects of it.

As previously mentioned in this CBO approach, the participation of the community members is important and World Vision encourages people from different social backgrounds to participate. Ideally, CBO leaders and members are to be selected by the communities, themselves. In some villages, the CBO leaders are selected in community meetings with the consent of the majority of the community members. In some villages, CBO leaders are

selected by the village authorities whose nature of leadership tends to be authoritative and top-down.

In the context of Thabaung, CBOs have a particular leadership role. Generally in every World Vision target village, there are also many functional groups with specific purposes, such as a Health Committee, an Education Committee, an Animal Husbandry Committee, a Disaster Management Committee and so on. These committees have their own leaders and members and they have specific tasks to carry out. The CBO acts as an umbrella organization above these groups and committees and it oversees and provides overall management to these groups; this relationship is shown in Figure 8.

**Figure 8: Structure of Community-Based Organizations in World Vision Target Villages**



In many aspects, therefore, CBOs have superior decision-making power and management authority than functional groups in the community development process. Normally, most of the key CBO members and leaders have a good level of education and social status and financial well-being (if not wealthy), whether they are selected by the wider community or appointed by village authorities and the elder.

There are opportunities, however, for some marginalized people to participate in relevant functional groups: people who were interested in animal husbandry participated in Animal Husbandry Committee with the hope of gaining knowledge from World Vision and receiving distribution of benefits such as fowls and piglets. For those who were interested in the educational development of their children, they took part in the Health or Education Committee. The formation of functional groups in villages allowed the marginalized people

to participate to an extent but it did not strengthen their roles and voices very much if the CBO remained under an authoritarian leadership.

### **5.4.3 Targeting**

World Vision has specific guidelines for the formation of CBOs that mention the equal ratio of men and women in CBOs, the participation of community members from all walks of life (World Vision Myanmar, n.d.), and the roles and responsibilities of all CBO members. These guidelines are in English and Burmese. However, in both villages, respondents stated that they did not know about CBO structure and selection criteria.

The “bottom people” in the community were targeted in many aspects of World Vision’s development intervention, such as in the distribution of relief items (e.g. bamboo for house repair and rice) and in the provision of medical support for the sick. My fieldwork in both villages and the interviews with World Vision respondents highlighted the fact that marginalized families should enjoy the benefits of the development programme in their communities. However, it appears that there is a need to build the capacity of the marginalized people apart from this provision so that they are able to express their perspectives and concerns in the formal community meetings or take up leadership positions in the CBOs, and not remain dependent on charitable hand-outs.

### **5.4.4 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)**

World Vision recognizes that a new approach is needed to nurture active participation of the marginalized people in the present context of power dynamics in the rural villages. To this end, it has started a new approach which is called “Village Savings and Loan Association”. This approach is different in many ways from the CBOs and the revolving fund. In this new approach, many groups, each with twelve to fifteen people with the same socioeconomic characteristics and mutual trust, are formed. Then, the leader, the treasurer and the bookkeeper are chosen with the consent of every group member. This approach is to nurture savings practices especially of the marginalized people. While nurturing savings practices, World Vision plans to provide trainings to these group members so that they can manage their groups effectively. This approach is believed to benefit the whole community including the marginalized people as it also builds capacity by creating spaces for leadership

among these small groups (Interviews with World Vision respondents). However, as this initiative is in the early stage, target communities have no clear idea about it and some people have different perspectives on the potential success of this initiative.

In this new approach, the CBOs will have the role of monitoring the progress of the groups and mediating in cases of conflicts. Otherwise, the groups are responsible for the overall management of the process. World Vision respondents mentioned that they had plans to build the capacity of the groups through various trainings such as trainings in financial management, bookkeeping and leadership development. The timing of these trainings is to be discussed with and decided by the group members as these people are mostly busy with their livelihoods. Although the intention of this new approach seems to have a clear aim to improve the active participation and capacity of the marginalized while nurturing their savings habits, it is still early to see the results of this new initiative.

## **5.5 Chapter Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have presented my findings which are salient to my research objectives. The discussion of my findings, particularly in relation to the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two, will be made in the following chapter which will link my findings to theories and to my research objectives.

My findings show that there are distinct characteristics of the people who are marginalized from community development processes in Thabaung Township. Because of these characteristics, they are reluctant or unable to take part in some important aspects of development processes. However, in most cases, this does not mean that they were totally excluded, or self-excluded from development processes. They are willing to contribute to their community in ways that they can afford, such as contribution of their labour or attending community meetings. But they face obstacles in taking up more significant roles in community development, including CBO leadership, decision-making process and benefiting from the distribution of the revolving funds. While poor people receive the benefits such as the distribution of relief items and medical expenses which, in turn, has an encouraging effect on the marginalized people to participate, their participation is more passive than active.

The respondents expressed their desire for an organization with much inclusiveness, and reforming the current CBO so that it is selected by, and represents, the wider community. What they wanted to see was the inclusion of more responsive and transparent leaders in CBOs; it was not to overthrow the current leadership. They believe this would provide checks and balances within the CBOs and promote transparency and fairness in the distribution of benefits and revolving funds. In this regard, they wanted the intervention of World Vision in the restructuring of CBOs and ensuring the participation of people from different sectors of community.

World Vision has a new initiative which aims to promote the capacity and savings habits of the marginalized people. It aims to improve the role of “the bottom people” from being mere receivers of development provision, to active involvement in development processes by becoming members in savings groups with a small number of people of a similar socioeconomic status. World Vision respondents explained that every member would have a chance to lead the group as the group leader would rotate. Capacity building trainings such as trainings on financial management and bookkeeping would be provided by the organization with the aim of improving the capacity of the marginalized people.

This chapter has also discussed a number of barriers to active participation in the community development programme, including the time-demanding nature of their occupations, social status, education, power relations and age. Leadership styles present in the villages are a decisive factor for creating spaces for inclusion of the marginalized people or further marginalization of them, especially decision-making and attaining key positions in CBOs.

# CHAPTER SIX

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## DISCUSSION

## 6.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter One, the primary aim of my study was *“to examine the active participation of marginalized people in community development, and the role of World Vision Myanmar in supporting their active participation.”* This discussion chapter will be based on my research findings in Thabaung Township where World Vision Myanmar has been implementing a community development programme. Drawing on the literature and theories of participation presented in Chapter Two, I will now discuss the research findings in light of my primary research aim and these two key objectives:

1. To explore the factors affecting the participation of marginalized people in community development.
2. To explore the role of World Vision Myanmar in facilitating the participation of marginalized people in community development.

The World Bank (1996) has argued that in order to sustain development results, participation of the target communities is necessary, and that their active participation can be promoted through proper development interventions and/or by injecting necessary inputs and capacity building initiatives. Before identifying the level of community participation, it is necessary to deconstruct “community” as it is heterogeneous and consists of different social groups (Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013). In the community development literature, it was argued that local elites capture the development process in their communities and that the poor and marginalized are mostly unable to participate or take advantage of development processes (Chambers, 1983 & Awortwi, 2012). This study, therefore, had specifically examined the participation of the marginalized people in community development.

Thus, this research required defining who the marginalized were in the context of participation in community development in Thabaung Township. The poor people are often conflated with the marginalized in the community development process (World Bank, 1996; Awortwi, 2012). However, it is always important to consider contextual factors in defining the marginalized (World Bank, 1996). Hence, poverty was not assumed to be the only characteristic in identifying the marginalized people in community development in Thabaung Township. The middle-class families of this rural area are also relatively poor and

experience a lack of basic services, such as clean water, transport infrastructure and electricity, which are taken for granted by urban households. In this regard, “the clusters of disadvantages” described by Chambers (1983) was useful to identify the different characteristics associated with marginalization from community development processes in Thabaung Township.

The second part of Objective One is concerned with the aspects of community development these people are marginalized from. Exploring this is necessary because these marginalized people are not totally excluded from every aspect of community development. A model, “Stages of participation” (Cohen & Uphoff, 1980) presented in Chapter Two is particularly relevant in examining the forms of marginalization these people are facing in community development. This model will be used to present results in light of “the continuums of participation” presented in Chapter Two.

The final part of Objective One looks at the socioeconomic and cultural factors which affect the participation of the marginalized. While some factors affect participation negatively, the findings suggest that some factors actually motivate the marginalized to be involved in community development. However, the implementing organization should utilize these motivating factors to enhance participation so that people are not merely passive participants but can become active ones in important aspects of community development.

The second section of this Chapter addresses Research Objective Two by examining how World Vision is facilitating the participation of the marginalized people and what are the constraints and potentials for the organization to further their participation. The questions under this objective are interlinked with each other. Hence, unlike Objective One, the discussions for Objective Two will not be presented separately.

## **6.2 Discussion of Objective One and Recommendations for Further Research**

### **To explore the factors affecting the active participation of marginalized people in community development**

To address this objective, it is useful to answer three relevant questions separately which are as follows:

- Which social groups or individuals have limited or no access to participation in community development?
- What forms of marginalization or exclusion are taking place?
- What are the factors affecting the participation of marginalized social groups in community development?

**Question 1: Which social groups or individuals have limited or no access to participation to community development?**

It is increasingly recognized that community is diverse and consists of different social groups (Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013), and that the poor and disadvantaged people are often left out in development interventions. There are calls for development organizations to include the poor and disadvantaged in development processes (Chambers, 1983; World Bank, 1996).

As “marginalization” is specifically defined here in relation to participation, or rather as a lack of participation, it is important to differentiate between different forms of participation. In Thabaung Township, my research showed that nearly all people participate in community development in one way or another, but the form of participation differs. In the research villages, there are three broad socioeconomic groups: the rich, the middle class and the poor or the “bottom people”<sup>16</sup>. Although people from all categories were participating in community development, the nature and extent of their participation differed. In this regard, the different continuums of participation presented in Chapter Two, are useful to identify and to analyse the level of participation of people from different categories, especially that of the marginalized (Arnstein, 1969; Pretty, 1995; World Bank, 1996; Cornwall, 2008).

As documented in Chapter Two, Cornwall (2008) analyses the continuums of participation by Arnstein (1969) and Pretty (1995), and succinctly differentiates participation into two forms: active and passive. When people are able to develop their own action plans on their own, take control of decision-making and participate in analysis and evaluation of the development process, their participation is seen as active. However, when people are manipulated or action plans and decision-making are controlled by a group (in my research context, by the local elites), their participation is passive. Her continuum of participation is a

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<sup>16</sup> I am using this term as described in Chapter Two based on Chambers (1983) identification of the poorest of the poor. Throughout this chapter, the bottom people and the marginalized will be used interchangeably.

simple and useful yardstick to measure the level of participation of the marginalized group in my research context. The results of my study show that the marginalized people were participating in community development by attending meetings, contributing their labour for construction of development infrastructures such as schools, seed banks and so on. However, the findings also show that poor people were not included in developing village action plans and decision-making processes. Moreover, most of them were reluctant to become active and influential leaders in CBOs due, in part, to their time-demanding occupations and their educational level. It is difficult for marginalized people with low education to express their concerns and contribute their perspectives on important aspects of community development, for example, decision-making about the distribution of revolving funds or benefiting from the funds, as the following quote shows:

*“I do not possess good education to be a leader (in CBO). But I try to contribute to community development works with my labour.” (Respondent Five)*

This shows that although people are participating in the development process, their participation is passive and major aspects of development processes are controlled by the CBO leaders who are the local elites.

As explored in Chapter Two, there are distinct socioeconomic characteristics associated with the so-called “bottom people” whose participation in community development is limited (Chambers, 1983). Chambers (1983), World Bank (1996) and Awortwi (2012) pointed out that people with poor economic conditions had limitations on their active participation in community development. In rural areas in Myanmar, most of the people living there are relatively poor and more disadvantaged than the urban people. Among them, the “bottom people” face more difficulties in actively participating. The findings show that poor and marginalized people make up more than half of the population, and that they shared other similar characteristics apart from being economically poor. Chambers (1983) suggested “five clusters of disadvantages” associated with people at the bottom of society: material poverty; physical weakness; the place of isolation; vulnerability to disasters and social disruptions; and powerlessness, contribute interdependently to marginalization of this group within a community. My research fieldwork showed that it was not difficult to identify “the bottom people” marginalized from community development because of the poor physical condition

of their dwellings. Their dwellings were situated in more isolated locations that were vulnerable to disasters, in particular to flooding.

Besides these characteristics, this research project also showed that the marginalized people are mostly informal labourers. The categorization of the wealth tiers from the focus group discussion complements the findings from the interviews. The rich families possess large areas of land with a number of cows and agricultural machines. Middle-class families normally have a few acres of land and cows, and include families with formal jobs such as teachers or government staff (though very few). Poor people do not have land and they have to do different odd jobs such as cutting trees or making charcoal in the summer or fishing or working for the farmers in the rainy season and the winter. So, they do not have stable jobs or assets and their incomes vary from season to season.

These characteristics cause their dependency on the rich families of the village and this connects to Chambers' (1983: 108) characteristic of powerlessness. When poor people are in need of money for various reasons such as for food or house repair, they have to go to the wealthy families and ask for loans that are to be repaid in labour in the coming cultivation season. When a family member needs hospitalization at the township hospital, they have to go to the CBO leaders for their recommendation letter which they have to present at the hospital. This recommendation process is necessary for World Vision to identify whether the hospitalized person is from the target village or not for the organization mainly provided medical benefits to patients from target villages. In another sense, however, this "benefit" maintains the status quo of a power imbalance within the community that affects participation.

These characteristics, as mentioned in Section 5.2, frame the social group at the bottom of society who are marginalized from active participation in community development. The following section will discuss the aspects of community development from which these people are marginalized.

***Question 2: What forms of marginalization or exclusion are taking place?***

The previous section discussed the characteristics associated with the people who faced marginalization in community development. The study noticed that poor people are not

totally excluded from development processes, but they have barriers to participating actively in community development and receiving particular benefits. In this regard, it is useful to ask the relevant question: “what activities are the marginalized people participating in” (Cornwall, 2008). In this way, it is possible to see where the marginalized people are left out of community development.

In community development, the well-off and the powerful are mostly visible as the active participants in and contributors to development processes. Because of their economic and social status, higher level of education and wider social networks, they are in a better position to take up leading and influential roles (Chambers, 1997). My research findings suggest that this is also the case in Thabaung Township. The findings reveal that the key CBO leaders of the research villages are from well-off families with good education. Moreover, both of them were previously school teachers and this social status gave an advantage in leading the community development processes in their villages. They are influential in every aspect of development process. Their role was thus very different to that of the marginalized (Chambers, 1983; Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013).

Total exclusion of the marginalized people was not evident in my study area. However, the study suggests that there is marginalization of these people in important aspects of development process. Cohen and Uphoff (1980: 220) differentiated the stages of participation as participation in: implementation, decision-making, benefit sharing and evaluation, and they claimed that the marginalized people’s participation is mostly confined to implementation and benefit sharing stages. Similarly, the results of this thesis reveal that the marginalized people’s participation is mostly confined to these stages, and these people face difficulties to participate in other important stages that are controlled by the CBO leaders from more powerful social groups. According to the continuum of participation by Cornwall (2008), their participation can be categorised as passive. Figure 9 shows the linkage between the research findings and Cohen & Uphoff’s (1980) “stages of participation”. According to the “stages of participation”, participation at “implementation” level is seen as passive as the marginalized people cannot express their concerns and needs, so their role is limited to following a decision made by someone else. Participation in decision-making and evaluation is regarded as more active as the marginalized can express

their concerns and viewpoints, and when they are sound and suitable for the situations, their points of view may be taken into serious consideration by the CBO leaders.

**Figure 9: Participation of the Marginalized People According to the “Stages of Participation” by Cohen & Uphoff (1980)**

Implementation	Benefit sharing	Decision-making	Evaluation
Passive forms of participation		Active forms of participation	
Attending meetings, contribution of labour	Receiving the distribution of one-off payment (in some cases, from the revolving funds)	Contribution in making decisions on selection criteria of CBO membership and beneficiaries	Participation in discussions on the results of development activities and performance of the CBOs in the villages
The marginalized participate	The marginalized participate (but mostly in one-off payments)	The marginalized do not participate	The marginalized do not participate

Source: Adapted from Cohen & Uphoff (1980)

In “Section 5.3”, the aspects of community development which are similar to the stages suggested by Cohen and Uphoff (1980) were identified. They are participation in development activities (implementation stage); the distribution of revolving funds (benefit sharing stage) and CBO leadership (decision-making and evaluation stages). From Figure 9, it can be seen that the marginalized people were able to participate in community development activities but their participation was largely passive. Decision-making was mainly undertaken by the CBO leaders. In this case, decision-making power is in the domain of the CBO leadership. One respondent commented,

*“Criteria are decided alone. We are not invited to give our viewpoints and suggestions. I think the distribution of the revolving is only for the people with good assets. For me, I want the marginalized people to receive the distribution of the fund as much as they deserve.”*

So, the marginalized people felt their concerns and perspectives are not heard, and they became reluctant to participate actively or give their advice on community affairs. However, the findings also suggest that this is not the case in every target village. In one of my research villages, the CBO leaders sought the perspectives of the wider community including the marginalized people.

However, even if there are spaces for their active participation, most of the marginalized people remain reluctant to take up a leading role and make important decisions. This is mostly related to their lack of self-confidence related to self-awareness of their socioeconomic condition and low education level which seriously hinders them from playing active and influential roles in community development. Moreover, the findings reveal that the culture of Myanmar has an effect on their unwillingness to contribute to decision making processes. Most people, particularly the marginalized, are reluctant to discuss openly or give their perspectives or criticisms in public meetings, and they prefer to remain silent and listen to the discussion and decisions made by the leaders or elders. As a result, the leaders mostly discuss development matters among themselves even if there are other community members present.

The time needed to be an active participant in CD is also a major limiting factor. As World Vision's development intervention in Thabaung Township is holistic in approach, it covers multiple and complex developmental issues such as health, education, economic development, disaster management and capacity building. Moreover, as the organization's development programme is community-based, the role of CBOs is regarded as crucial in achieving intended development results and sustaining the development process in target communities. Therefore, becoming an active and influential member of a CBO is important for the community members but becoming a CBO member is also very time-demanding. For this reason, most of the marginalized people do not want to become CBO leaders as they are too busy simply sustaining their livelihoods. Moreover, the marginalized people think that they are not capable of leading the development process effectively. So, they prefer to participate in development process passively.

Another form of marginalization these people encountered is receiving little benefit from the revolving funds, although this form of marginalization can vary from one village to

another and depends on the nature of CBO leadership. When the leadership style leans towards authoritative and exclusionary, most of the marginalized people cannot enjoy any benefit from the distribution of the revolving funds. On the other hand, when the leadership is fair and inclusive, nearly all community members, including the marginalized people can receive a suitable share from the revolving funds. The marginalized people, in particular, receive other benefits from development organizations such as emergency medical support and distribution of relief items when affected by the flood.

According to Awortwi (2012: 11) and Narayan et al (2000: 35), marginalized people face obstacles for their active participation or fully benefiting from the development process and it is evident from this research that the marginalized face a significant challenge to actively participating in community development.

***Question 3: What are the factors affecting the participation of marginalized social groups in community development?***

This section will discuss the factors which affect the participation of the marginalized people. These factors can be positive and motivate them to be involved in community development (Cleaver, 1999) while other factors hinder their active participation (Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013; Gow & Vansant, 1983; Mansuri & Rao, 2004). The research findings reveal that there are motivating factors which keep the marginalized people participating in community development, but that other hindering factors maintain that participation at a passive level.

Thomas (1992) and Cleaver (1999) have highlighted the important role of incentives and motivations for participation in development. They identify three primary motivating factors: economic; social; and psychological (Cleaver, 1999). The research findings show that the marginalized group are participating in community development mainly for economic and psychological reasons. They expect tangible benefits by participating in community development activities (such as distribution of relief items and medical support). They also realize that non-participation or total self-exclusion may jeopardize their chances of receiving these benefits. So, they participate passively in community development by contributing their labour for infrastructure development or attending the meetings.

However, this is not the only reason for their participation. Psychological factors also play an important role in motivating marginalized people to participate. Poor people are eager to contribute their labour for construction of schools, ECCD centres (kindergartens) or seed banks as they understand this to a good deed. They also realize that these infrastructure projects are beneficial for their children and the wider community even if they do not directly benefit from them. Another interesting observation from the study is that religious beliefs also encourage them to do something good for the community and for other people. Nearly all of the research participants are Buddhists. According to their religious belief, people believe that they are poor in this life because they did not do enough good deeds in their previous lives. So, participating in activities which benefit the wider community is seen as meritorious, and they believe, therefore, their fate will become better in this life or in their next life.

Fear of exclusion from the community is another motivating psychological factor. That is why even though marginalized people are busy with their livelihoods, either husband or wife comes to the meeting or contributes their labour. These are the motivation factors for their passive participation but the findings suggest that these factors are not adequate enough to promote more active participation.

While there are motivation factors for the marginalized people to get involved in community development, there are challenges that hinder them from becoming more active in participation. Lund & Saito-Jensen (2013), Gow & Vansant (1983) and Mansuri & Rao (2004) voiced their concern about local elite capture in the development process as one major challenge for the marginalized to actively participate. As mentioned above, local elites are more visible and active than other groups for the development organization. From the initial stage of the development programme, they are the first ones working collaboratively with the development organization. Key CBO leaders from both of the study villages are well-off and well-educated and already had a good social standing in the villages. Although there are other members in the CBOs, they are not as influential and powerful as these key leaders. Their social status, in combination with their willingness and capability, serve as supporting elements in becoming influential and active figures in community development.

Lund & Saito-Jensen (2013) pointed out that when the local elites become the influential figures and main contact persons with the development organization in the development process, it can reinforce the already present power relationship between these elites and other non-elites especially the marginalized. This manifested in the case of the study villages. Outside the community development activities, the marginalized people are dependent, in one way or another, upon the wealthy families and these key leaders are from these families. When poor people are in need of food or money, they have to take loans from these families. So, this dependency creates a power relationship which makes the marginalized people reluctant to openly question their CBO leaders and ask for transparency in their financial management and selection criteria of beneficiaries and CBO membership.

In some cases, this imbalanced power relationship can become a significant challenge for the marginalized people to become active participants in development processes. Their ability to actively participate is then dependent on the nature of leadership as discussed in Section 3.2.4. One of the study villages demonstrated that when the nature of the leader was authoritative and commanding, it affected the willingness of other people, especially the marginalized, to give their comments and concerns in community meetings or to get involved in decision-making processes. However, a different type of leadership can have a positive effect on the inclusion of the marginalized people, even in decision-making processes as demonstrated in this research. This type of leader, with the qualities of fairness generosity and transparency, creates a space for others, including the marginalized, to express their concerns and points of views. This leader takes their concerns and suggestions into consideration and puts them into action when appropriate, and shares some responsibilities with people who are seen as appropriate by the community. In this way, the marginalized people become aware that their voices are heard by the leadership and they have to shoulder their responsibilities. This makes them feel included and active, and promotes a desire to become more responsible in community development.

The occupations of the marginalized people discussed in Question One affect the marginalized people's participation in development activities. The findings suggest that the marginalized people were very busy with their livelihoods and had little time to participate in many development activities, unlike others from the rich and middle-class categories. This

finding supports the claim made by Thomas (1992) and Chambers (1983) that the time-demanding nature of the occupations of the marginalized does not give them adequate opportunities to participate in community development.

One interesting finding from this study is that age is a factor which also affects participation of the marginalized. The culture of Myanmar favours middle-aged people (40s to 50s) and the elders (60s and above) taking up a leading role and making decisions in community affairs. Social hierarchies favour those with a higher social status but also older people. It is generally accepted that youth are to respect the decisions of the elder people and they are to follow their leadership. The findings from this study suggest that youth do have a role in development processes but their role is mostly restricted to supporting their leaders who are mostly in their 40s, 50s and 60s. It is uncommon to see youths taking charge in the CBOs or in development processes. In a rare case, one World Vision staff member described a young person who actively plays a leading role, with other older CBO members, in community development. This youth did not have a good level of education (he just finished primary school) but he was from the middle class of the community. Although it is difficult to know the reason behind this exceptional situation, it may be that his capability and mobilization skills gave him the confidence of other community members.

The findings from this study are not conclusive enough to suggest that gender is a major limiting factor in participation. The interview results show that the marginalized women also participate passively, like their husbands do, in community development by attending the meetings or contributing their labour. In some cases, women from the rich and middle-class categories are the active and influential CBO members because of their social status and educational level. In order to address these issues, a targeted study is needed to examine the effect of gender in the participation of the women in community development.

### **Summary of the Discussion on Objective One and Recommendations for Further Research**

The research findings show that the bottom people are marginalized from some aspects of community development such as decision-making, becoming key CBO leaders, and in some cases, benefiting from the distribution of the revolving funds. Apart from being poor, they share other similar characteristics: poor physical condition of their dwellings; they are

situated in locations vulnerable to disasters; they do not have formal jobs or land; and low level of education.

However, the bottom people are not totally excluded or self-excluded from community participation as the findings reveal that they are participating in community development by attending meetings and contributing their labour. This suggests that their participation is passive and they face difficulties in raising their participation to the active form: becoming active and influential CBO members, becoming involved in decision-making process and in some cases, benefiting from the revolving funds.

There are economic and psychological factors behind the passive participation of the marginalized people in community development. They participate in community development because they have received, or hope to receive, relief items such as bamboo and rice, during floods or emergency medical support. Besides, by contributing their labour for the village infrastructure development, their children<sup>17</sup> will benefit from it, and they believe it is a form of doing meritorious deed which will benefit them later in this life or the next life.

There are, however, factors which hinder these people from participating more actively. The findings support the claim made by Lund & Saito-Jensen (2013) that the local elites are the key CBO leaders in community development. The marginalized people are dependent on them for their livelihoods. Hence, the power relationship between them is imbalanced and the marginalized people are inclined to follow the leadership of the former. However, in some cases, when the key leader is fair and inclusive, the marginalized people have their voices heard and benefit from the revolving funds equally. In this case, the nature and different styles of leadership are important to encourage their active participation. Apart from that, types of their occupations discourage them from participating as active CBO members as CBO membership requires them to spend considerable time on community development. Age is, generally, also seen as a factor hindering the young people to become key CBO leaders. According to the culture of Myanmar, people pay respect to and follow the decisions made by the middle-aged people and the elders. Apart from an exceptional case, most young people have challenges to become key leaders in their community development.

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<sup>17</sup> This includes children of the marginalized as well as those from wider community.

As pointed out in Section 5.3, this study looked at the socioeconomic aspects of the marginalized people as a whole, distinguishing a “cluster of disadvantages”. Due to the limit of my fieldwork duration, I did not specifically look at the effect of gender disparity within marginalized households on their participation. Hence, a future research project would be helpful in exploring whether women from the poor families are more marginalized than men from the same families in community development, or in which aspects of community development they are particularly marginalized from.

### **6.3 Discussion of Objective Two and Recommendations for Further Research**

#### **To explore the role of World Vision Myanmar in facilitating the participation of marginalized people in community development**

- In which ways does World Vision facilitate the participation of marginalized people in community development?
- To what extent does the community-based organization (CBO) approach, initiated by World Vision, promote the active participation of marginalized people in community development?
- What are the constraints and potentials for World Vision in promoting the participation of marginalized people in community development?

This section seeks to examine the approach and strategy of World Vision in facilitating the participation of marginalized people by discussing the research findings in regards to the literature and theories presented in Chapter Two. As the questions under Objective Two are interrelated, it is appropriate to present the discussions of these questions all together.

As explored in Chapter Two, participation was initially promoted for the empowerment of the previously marginalized people in development processes. However, when participation became mainstreamed into contemporary development theory and practice, some scholars pointed out that it has been used by national governments and development agencies such as international financial institutions and INGOs, to pursue their different agendas through processes of co-optation rather than grassroots empowerment (Mohan, 2008; Cornwall, 2008; Hickey & Kothari, 2009). Mohan (2008), Hickey and Mohan (2009) argued that this “participation in projects” aims to achieve the efficiency goal of the development

organizations by including the people and acquiring their contribution in development processes.

As World Vision aims to improve the lives of the most marginalized people of the community, particularly marginalized children and their families, it has a specific focus on distributing some benefits such as relief items (e.g. bamboo for house repair and rice) and medical support to these people. However, these benefits are only able to satisfy the immediate and basic needs of these people. In regard to empowering these people and improving their capabilities to become active and influential actors in community development, World Vision does not seem to have any specific mechanisms to promote their active participation.

The results presented in Chapter Five showed that the core elements of World Vision's development programming, child-focused and community-based, reflect its target beneficiaries and the important role of the target community's participation for the sustainability of its development objectives. World Vision intends that the development activities in the target villages are sustained by CBOs after the programme's 15-year lifespan. The shift from short-term project to longer-term Area Development Programme approach shows that it has a long-term commitment to building the capacity of the target communities who will champion the development process after World Vision phases out. With the formation of CBOs and functional groups in every target village, it is assumed that World Vision secures the participation of the community members for efficient implementation of the development activities in target villages over the long term.

Research findings suggest that CBOs have been given much room to lead and plan development activities. World Vision staff members who I talked with explained that CBOs are the overall decision-making body that decides on which activities should be implemented in their villages. Then, they consult with the assigned staff members about their plans. CBO leaders also have a significant role in the community: they make decisions on the distribution of the revolving funds; selection criteria of CBO membership and beneficiaries; and the types of development activities they want to implement. This view was reinforced by the marginalized respondents in that most of the decisions are made by

the CBO leaders. So, it can be seen that considerable power is concentrated in the CBO leaders.

The role of assigned World Vision staff members is to provide tangible inputs (such as finance and materials for development activities, such as infrastructure development, and capacity-building inputs such as trainings, as well as monitoring the activities and the results. But power is also present in the relationship between the CBOs and the World Vision staff members for the staff members can decide whether to support their planned activities, and whether they are within the programme budget. When the facilitation of the staff members is strict and top-down, it can affect the capability of the CBOs and make them more dependent on the staff members. So, it is important for all World Vision staff members to give space for the CBOs to make plans and decisions but they also need to ensure the inclusion of wider community, particularly the marginalized people in planning and decision-making processes.

The research findings also reveal an interesting feature of the Area Development Programme in Thabaung Township. As World Vision intends to sustain the development process in the target villages, it set up the revolving funds to be managed by the CBOs. While the intention for setting up the funds is seen as good, it has unintended side-effects in marginalizing the lowest social group of the communities. Because of its revolving nature, the CBOs are selective in choosing the beneficiaries of the funds. Mostly the marginalized people are left out from the distribution of the revolving funds apart from some unusual cases. In this regard, it is likely that these revolving funds will play their part in further marginalizing the already disadvantaged people of the communities.

Although World Vision has specific guidelines for the formation of CBOs and roles and responsibilities of the CBO members, this study revealed that the World Vision staff members as well as the community members, including the CBO leaders, are often not aware of these guidelines. This suggests that CBOs are often formed in an ad-hoc manner in which the interested persons were selected as CBO leaders by the village authorities and some community elders. In other cases, they were selected with the agreement of the wider communities. The findings suggest that most of the CBO members, especially the key leaders, are not from the marginalized category. Although the results show that in some

cases, some marginalized people became CBO members, they are in no position to take up the key CBO leadership. So, it can be argued that although many CBOs allow the marginalized to be involved, they cannot always be seen as an effective platform to empower the marginalized people to become active and influential in community development. It is also possible that the CBO fails to address the needs of this group, as their concerns are not able to be voiced and heard.

The findings reveal the potential of the formation of functional groups as a platform for improving the capacity of the marginalized people. As these functional groups are composed of people from different wealth tiers with the same interest (e.g. the animal husbandry group consists of various people who are interested in raising animals), it is useful to provide trainings related to this group's activities by World Vision as well as other trainings such as leadership and financial management trainings. However, the authoritative leadership of the CBOs can pose a barrier to empowering the functional group members to become more active in planning and decision-making processes.

Although World Vision's efforts can be seen as effective in capturing the participation of the wider community in general for the efficient implementation of the development activities, existing power relations among different social layers in the villages are challenges for the organization in empowering the marginalized people. Hence, the organization needs a strategy, beyond the current CBO approach, which can give the marginalized people more spaces to practice active participation; not only in implementation but also in other important aspects such as planning, decision-making and evaluation of the development activities. The findings from this study suggest that World Vision is aware of some of the advantages and disadvantages of its CBO approach. The organization has started its new approach, Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) in target villages to complement the current CBO approach. Group members are accountable to each other, decisions are to be made together, and roles are rotated, giving each member an opportunity for active participation and capacity-building. It is intended that these groups are empowered to effectively run themselves. This VSLA approach may be a suitable mechanism to improve the capacity of the marginalized people and the level of their participation as it targets inclusion of the marginalized in planning, management and decision-making stages within the groups. However, as this approach is a new initiative, it is difficult to measure its

effectiveness at this stage. So, continuous assessment and monitoring of this approach will be needed to help ensure the effectiveness of this approach. Whether or not this new approach will be able to contest existing power relations, or reduce the dependency and vulnerability of the marginalized, remains to be seen.

### **Summary of the Discussion on Objective Two and Recommendations for Further Research**

Cooke and Kothari (2001) have warned about the intent behind the promotion of participation by national governments and development organizations. They have argued that participation can become a tool to meet the efficiency goal of the implementing agency, and the essence of participation to empower the people previously marginalized in development can be lost.

With that assertion in sight, this section looks at how World Vision is facilitating the participation of the marginalized people in community development. The findings suggest that World Vision is committed to promoting the wellbeing of children and their families, and especially the marginalized ones. It also recognizes the important role of the target community's participation in successful implementation and sustainability of development activities. This is reflected in the organization's shift from short-term projects to a longer-term Area Development Programme approach and its effort to form and build capacity of the CBOs in the target villages. The CBOs are influential organizations and have become the main decision-making body in target communities but it is seen that key CBO leaders are mostly from the wealthy category and there are challenges for the marginalized people to take up active roles. Hence, the existing power relationship between the different social groups of the community is still present in the CBOs. The organization has useful guidelines for formation of CBOs, but there is a gap in dissemination of this information to the target villages.

As World Vision plans to sustain the development activities after it phases out, it set up the revolving funds in the target villages. While the revolving funds have benefited the people, including the marginalized people in some cases, they have had negative side-effects as well. In some villages, when the beneficiary selection is biased, it will have a negative impact on the willingness of the marginalized people to become active in community development. World Vision has a new initiative called VSLA to complement the CBO approach. In this new

initiative, the marginalized people will have more space to take up active roles within their own groups and receive capacity building through World Vision. Although this new approach seems promising and more inclusive for the marginalized people, continuous learning and evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of this initiative is needed to assess whether it can address the cluster of disadvantages and various motivations that hinder the active participation of the marginalized. A case study research on this new initiative would be useful in understanding its success or otherwise to include and empower the marginalized people.

The scope of my study is also limited to one development programme initiated by World Vision Myanmar, and discussions were based on the findings from my fieldwork in two villages. Hence, a comparative study with different development programmes initiated by the same INGO or different INGOs would give further insights into the different nature of participation and different obstacles to the participation.

#### **6.4 Thesis Summary and Conclusion**

The aim of this thesis was to look into the active participation of marginalized people in community development initiated by World Vision Myanmar. For this purpose, I conducted my fieldwork in Thabaung Township where World Vision has been undertaking a long-term community development programme. Out of the 127 World Vision's target villages, I chose two villages which were different in geographical location. In these two villages, I tried to include different stakeholders in the community development programme such as village authorities, village elders, CBO leaders and the poor people. Purposive sampling was intentionally used at the early stage of the fieldwork in identifying particularly resourceful respondents. Through these participants, a snowballing technique was used to recruit the less visible: the marginalized people. Qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and observation were used to gain the rich and deep data for my research purpose. From this thesis, four key research findings were explored.

Firstly, the results showed that people from different socioeconomic categories (the rich, the middle-class and the poor) participate in community development. However, the results suggested that poor people are relatively marginalized from participation in important aspects of community development such as becoming leaders and decision-making. Using

the theories and continuums of participation (Arnstein, 1969, Pretty, 1996 and Cornwall, 2008), it can be discerned that participation of the poor ranked at the lower, more passive end of the continuums. It also found that the poor people are motivated to participate because they fear further alienation from the community or the withdrawal of benefits (such as one-off benefits discussed in Section 5.3.4). Moreover, the poor also assumed their contribution in labour to community development activities would benefit other people and children which they feel as a good deed. For these reasons, the marginalized people participate in community development even though their participation can be perceived as passive form of participation.

Secondly, when looking into the marginalization of the poor in community development, the results showed that this marginalization is partially caused by the poor people's self-awareness of their inferior socioeconomic conditions. Being occupied with their livelihood and having a low level of education are also the main contributing factors for their reluctance to become key players in the CBOs. They feel too inferior to accept important positions in CBOs and community development process even if there is an opportunity for them. Moreover, the occupations they engage in also affect their active participation. Most of the marginalized people are informal workers and this requires them to spend more time working for their livelihoods. The time-demanding nature of their occupations does not give them enough opportunities to be actively engaged in development activities. In a sense, they want to continue their passive role in community development to show that they are participating in community development processes at the same time as feeling frustrated that their concerns are not heard.

Moreover, as discussed in the earlier section of this chapter, the cultural and societal factors also affect the marginalized people's participation in key aspects of community development. The culture of Myanmar favours people with a good education and social status to take up key leadership positions, not only in religious and community affairs, but also in community development programmes. So, the local elites retain, generally, important and active roles in community development. Outside development processes, the marginalized people depend on the wealthy families in times of scarce job opportunities and shocks such as the sickness of a family member. There is, therefore, a power relationship present between the CBO leaders (the local elites) and the bottom people. This already-

present power relationship, in some ways, makes the marginalized people reluctant to challenge aspects of unfair leadership or raise their concerns about any issues relating to community development.

Finally, the leadership style of the key CBO leaders is a determining factor in inclusion of other people, particularly the marginalized, in important aspects of community development. As the results of the study showed while authoritative leadership can result in more reluctance of the marginalized people to actively participate, fair and transparent leadership can mobilize the active participation of the marginalized people and make the latter feel more included in decision-making processes.

There are major challenges to empowering the marginalized to take up more active roles in community development, connected to a range of contextual and motivational factors. These challenges exist even when an INGO is focused on inclusion. However, there are openings and places of possibility for their more active participation. Development organizations could promote more generous and transparent forms of CBO leadership and make explicit the need to build the capacity of the poor to contribute at the leadership level. They could make more efforts to inform target communities about selection criteria for CBO leadership and decision-making. They could also work to build the capacity of the marginalized in parallel structures, such as the VSLAs. It will be equally important, however, to support the livelihoods of the marginalized so that they can take the time needed to build their capacity. Although empowering the marginalized to be active participants in community development is a tough challenge, it is certainly one worth pursuing.

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# APPENDICES

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## Appendix I: Research Information Sheet

[Print on Massey University departmental letterhead]

[Logo, name and address of Department/School/Institute/Section]

### **Active Participation of Marginalized People in Community Development and the Role of World Vision Myanmar**

#### **Researcher's Introduction**

Hi, I am Zeyar Chit and I am studying for a Masters of International Development at Massey University, New Zealand. As part of my study, I am conducting research on World Vision Myanmar's development programme in Thabaung Township.

#### **Project Description and Invitation**

My research aims to explore the barriers to people's participation in community development, and how NGOs – in this case World Vision Myanmar in Thabaung – are supporting their active participation. Your participation in my research would be very valuable and I hope you may be able to spare some time to talk with me and answer my questions.

#### **Participant Identification and Recruitment**

For the purpose of my research, I will conduct a range of interviews and also run a handful of focus groups. I hope to speak with a range of participants including World Vision project staff, CBO and village leaders, and ordinary villagers.

#### **Project Procedures and Participant's Rights**

I anticipate that interviews will last between 30 minutes and 1 hour. While I will ask some questions about my research subject (described above), your suggestions and perspectives on other subjects are also welcomed. If you do not want to answer any questions or you wish to stop the interview, you can choose to do so at any time. As this research is conducted by an independent student, there will be no financial compensation for your participation.

It is your choice to participate or not participate in this research. There will be no consequence for declining to participate. If you decide to participate, I would like to make clear that you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

I plan to use a voice recorder to recheck our discussion and to clarify my understanding but if you would prefer that I do not use it, then please let me know. You can ask me anytime to turn off the recorder.

### Data Management

The information that you share in the interview will be solely used for my academic purposes. I will keep all participants' names confidential and store them securely. I will not include any names in my research paper, and if it is necessary to quote some information, I will use pseudonyms. If you would like to hear about the initial findings of my fieldwork, you are welcome to take part in a meeting that I will organize at the end of my fieldwork. No names will be mentioned in this presentation.

### Project Contacts

If you would like any further information or have any further questions after the interview, please feel free to contact the following persons at any time:

<u>Researcher</u>		<u>Researcher's Supervisor</u>	
Name:	Zeyar Chit	Name:	Dr. Polly Stupples
Address:	No, 123 (4/B), Kyun Daw Street, Sanchang Township, Yangon, Myanmar	Address:	C/O Institute of Development Studies, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand
Phone:	+95 1 504957 or + 64 22 191 2268	Phone:	+64 6 3569 099, ext: 7927
Email:	<a href="mailto:zeyar86@gmail.com">zeyar86@gmail.com</a>	Email:	<a href="mailto:p.t.stupples@massey.ac.nz">p.t.stupples@massey.ac.nz</a>

### LOW RISK NOTIFICATIONS

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 350 5249, email [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz)".

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### သုတေသနလေ့လာမှုခေါင်းစဉ်

ဒေသဖွံ့ဖြိုးမှုအစီအစဉ်တွင် ဒေသခံပြည်သူများပါဝင်လုပ်ဆောင်မှုနှင့် အစိုးရမဟုတ်သောအဖွဲ့အစည်းများမှ ပြည်သူများပါဝင်လာစေရန် အားပေးလုပ်ဆောင်ချက်အား လေ့လာစမ်းစစ်မှုစာတမ်း (ဝေါ်စီရှင်အဖွဲ့၏ သာပေါင်းမြို့နယ်တွင် ဆောင်ရွက်လျက်ရှိသော ဒေသဖွံ့ဖြိုးမှုအစီအစဉ်အား လေ့လာခြင်း)

**သုတေသနစာတမ်းနှင့်ပတ်သက်သည့် အချက်အလက်များ**

**မိတ်ဆက်ခြင်း**

ကျွန်တော်ရဲ့နာမည်ကတော့ ဇေယျာချစ်ဖြစ်ပါတယ်။ ကျွန်တော်က နယူးဇီလန်နိုင်ငံရှိ မတ်ဆေးတက္ကသိုလ် (Massey University)တွင် ဖွံ့ဖြိုးမှုဆိုင်ရာဘာသာရပ်ကို တက်ရောက်နေတဲ့ကျောင်းသားတစ်ယောက် ဖြစ်ပါတယ်။ ကျွန်တော်ရဲ့ သင်တန်း၏ တစ်စိတ်တစ်ပိုင်းအနေနဲ့ ဝေါဗီရှင်အဖွဲ့ကြီးမှ သာပေါင်းဒေသတွင် ဆောင်ရွက်လျက်ရှိတဲ့ ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေး စီမံချက်ကို သုတေသနစာတမ်းပြုစုရန်အတွက် လာရောက်ရခြင်းဖြစ်ပါတယ်။

**သုတေသနအကြောင်းအရာ**

ကျွန်တော်လာရောက်ရခြင်းကတော့ ဝေါဗီရှင်မှလုပ်ဆောင်လျက်ရှိသည့် ဒေသဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးအစီအစဉ်တွင် ဒေသခံ ပြည်သူများ မည်သို့ပါဝင်လုပ်ဆောင်သည်ကို လေ့လာလိုချင်ဖြစ်ပါတယ်။ ကျွန်တော်ဟာ ဝေါဗီရှင်အဖွဲ့မှဝန်ထမ်း တစ်ချို့၊ ကျေးရွာများရှိ CBO ခေါင်းဆောင်/အဖွဲ့ဝင်များ၊ ကျေးရွာသူ/ကျေးရွာသားများနှင့် တွေ့ဆုံဆွေးနွေးသွားဖို့ ရှိပါတယ်။ ကျွန်တော်နှင့်အတူ လာရောက်၍ အချိန်အနည်းငယ်မျှ ဆွေးနွေးပြောဆိုပေးပါရန် လေးစားစွာတောင်းခံ အပ်ပါတယ်။ ကျွန်တော်ရဲ့လာရောက်ရခြင်းသည် ဝေါဗီရှင်အဖွဲ့နှင့်မည်သို့မျှမသက်ဆိုင်ကြောင်း မိတ်ဆွေအား အလေးထား၍ ဦးစွာရှင်းပြလိုပါသည်။

ဆွေးနွေးခြင်းအစီအစဉ်တစ်ခုသည် ယေဘုယျအားဖြင့် နာရီဝက်မှ တစ်နာရီခန့်ကြာမြင့်မှာဖြစ်ပါတယ်။ မိတ်ဆွေအနေ ဖြင့် ဒီဆွေးနွေးမှုတွင် အစကတည်းကမပါဝင်လိုကြောင်း ပွင့်လင်းစွာငြင်းဆိုနိုင်ပါသည်။ မိတ်ဆွေမှပါဝင်ဆွေးနွေး ရန်သဘောတူပါကလည်း မေးမြန်းဆွေးနွေးချိန်အတွင်း မိတ်ဆွေအနေဖြင့် လွတ်လပ်စွာ ပြောဆိုနိုင်ပြီး၊ သိရှိ လိုသည်များရှိပါကလည်း လွတ်လပ်စွာ မေးမြန်းနိုင်သလို ဆွေးနွေးစဉ်ကာလအတွင်း ကျွန်တော်၏မေးခွန်းတစ်ချို့ကို မဖြေလိုပါကလည်း မဖြေနိုင်ကြောင်း ပွင့်လင်းစွာပြောဆိုနိုင်ပါသည်။ မိတ်ဆွေရဲ့နာမည်နှင့် ပါဝင်ဆွေးနွေး ချက်များကို မည်သူမျှမသိရှိနိုင်စေရန် ကျွန်တော်အနေနဲ့ အထူးဂရုစိုက်၍ ထိန်းသိမ်းသွားမှာဖြစ်ပါတယ်။ ကျွန်တော် တောင်းဆိုလိုတာတစ်ခုကတော့ ကျွန်တော်တို့ရဲ့ဆွေးနွေးမှုများကို ဤစက်လေးဖြင့် သွင်းထားချင်ပါတယ်။ ကျွန်တော် အနေနဲ့ နောက်ပိုင်းမှာ ပြန်လည်လေ့လာနိုင်ဖို့အတွက်တစ်ခုတည်းသာဖြစ်ပါတယ်။ အကယ်၍ မိတ်ဆွေမှ သဘော မတူပါက အသုံးပြုမည်မဟုတ်ပါ။

ဤလေ့လာမှုအစီအစဉ်ဟာ ကျွန်တော်၏ ဘွဲ့သင်တန်းပြီးဆုံးရန်အတွက် လုပ်ဆောင်ရခြင်းသာဖြစ်ပြီး၊ အခြားသော လူ၊ အဖွဲ့အစည်းတစ်ခုကိုမျှ မိတ်ဆွေ၏ဆွေးနွေးချက်များကို မိတ်ဆွေရဲ့ခွင့်ပြုချက်မရဘဲ ပြောပြမည်မဟုတ်ပါ။ ကျွန်တော် ထပ်ဆင့်ပြောလိုတာကတော့ မိတ်ဆွေ၏အကြောင်းအရာနှင့် ဆွေးနွေးချက်များအား မည်သူ့ကိုမျှ မပေါက် ကြားစေရပါ။

**ဆက်သွယ်ရမည့်သူနှင့် လိပ်စာအချက်အလက်များ**

အကယ်၍ ကျွန်တော်၏လာရောက်ရခြင်းနှင့်ပတ်သက်၍ ကျွန်တော်ပြန်သွားပြီးနောက်ပိုင်း သိရှိလိုပါက အောက်ပါ ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်များအား ဆက်သွယ်မေးမြန်းနိုင်ပါသည်။

- အမည် - ဇေယျာချစ်
- ရန်ကုန်လိပ်စာ - အမှတ်၊ ၁၂၃ (၄/ဘီ)၊ ကျွန်းတောလမ်း၊ စမ်းချောင်းမြို့နယ်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့
- ဖုံး - ၀၁ ၅၀၄၉၅၇ (ရန်ကုန်)
  - + ၆၄ ၂၂ ၁၉၁ ၂၂၆၈ (နယူးဇီလန်)
- Email - [zeyar86@gmail.com](mailto:zeyar86@gmail.com)
- အမည် - ဒေါက်တာ ပေါ်လီ ဆတူပယ်၊ Dr. Polly Stupples
- လိပ်စာ - (တဆင့်) ဖွံ့ဖြိုးမှုဆိုင်ရာဘာသာရပ်ဌာန၊ မတ်ဆေးတက္ကသိုလ်၊ နယူးဇီလန်နိုင်ငံ
  - (C/O - Institute of Development Studies, Massey University, New Zealand)
- ဖုံး - + ၆၄ ၆ ၃၅၆ ၉၀၉၉၊ လိုင်းခွဲ ၇၉၂၇
- Massey - [p.t.stupples@massey.ac.nz](mailto:p.t.stupples@massey.ac.nz)

**မှတ်ချက်**

ဤသုတေသနစာတမ်းအား တက္ကသိုလ်ဆရာ/ဆရာမများမှ အကဲဖြတ်ထားပြီး မတ်ဆေးတက္ကသိုလ်၏ သုတေသနဆိုင်ရာကျင့်ဝတ်စည်းကမ်းများအရ အခြားသူများနှင့် လေ့လာသူအပေါ် ဆိုးကျိုးသက်ရောက်မှုမရှိနိုင်ကြောင်း ခွင့်ပြုချက် ရရှိထားပါသည်။ အဆိုပါကျောင်းသားနှင့် သူ၏ဆရာမသည် စည်းမျဉ်းစည်းကမ်းများနှင့်အညီ လေ့လာမှုအားလုပ်ဆောင်ရမည် ဖြစ်ပါသည်။

အကယ်၍ မိတ်ဆွေအနေဖြင့် ဤကျောင်းသား၏သုတေသနလုပ်ဆောင်မှုအား တက္ကသိုလ်မှ အခြားသောသူများနှင့် ဆွေးနွေးပြောဆိုလိုပါက အောက်ဖော်ပြပါ တက္ကသိုလ်မှ အဓိကတာဝန်ရှိသူအား ဆက်သွယ်မေးမြန်းနိုင်ပါသည်။

- အမည် - ဒေါက်တာ ဂျန် အိုနေးလ်၊ Dr. John O’Neill
- တာဝန် - ညွှန်ကြားရေးမှူး၊ သုတေသနဆိုင်ရာကျင့်ဝတ်စည်းကမ်းလိုက်နာရေးကြီးကြပ်မှုဌာန
- ဖုံး - + ၆၄ ၆ ၃၅၀ ၅၂၄၉
- Massey - [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz)

## **Appendix II: Interview Guide for Ordinary People and Marginalized People**

### ***Brief Introduction and explanation about my research***

- (1) Can you tell me about your daily activities?
- (2) Do you participate in development activities?
- (3) Can you tell me about the people who are actively participating?
- (4) Are you aware of community organizations that are working in your village?
- (5) Have you received any benefit from the development activities?
- (6) What kinds of things make you not to participate in the CBO?
- (7) What kinds of change do you want to see in the CBO?
- (8) What things will make you to participate in CBO and development activities?
- (9) Do you know of any development organizations working in your village?  
  
(If participants answer it, I will ask them who the assigned staff member is in their village. If the answer is no, I will skip this question.)
- (10) Tell me about your opinion on how that organization works for development in your village?
- (11) Can you tell me how World Vision persuade and motivate people to participate?
- (12) Please tell me how World Vision should encourage participation of the people? What should they do?
- (13) How do you think of participation of the people in development activity and CBO in your village?
- (14) What else would you like to share related to the development organizations and development activities in your village?

## **Appendix III: Interview Guide for CBO Leaders/Members, Village Authorities and Village Elders**

### ***Brief Introduction and explanation about my research***

- (1) Are you involved in your community's development activities? How do you see yourself involved in this process?
- (2) Why do you want to participate?
- (3) How do you implement the development activities in your village?
- (4) Do you think everyone can participate? So, who cannot participate and who do not benefit from these activities?
- (5) Have you ever tried to talk to them to participate?
- (6) If so, can you tell me how you try to encourage everyone to participate in CBO and development activities?
- (7) Are there any international development organizations working in your village?  
If so, how does this organization promote participation of everyone including the marginalized?
- (8) Do you know the staff of that organization working in your village?
- (9) What else would you like to tell me on how everyone, including the excluded people, can get involved in the community development activities?

## **Appendix IV: Interview Guide for World Vision Staff Members**

### ***Brief Introduction and explanation about my research***

- (1) How long have you been assigned to this area?
- (2) How many times do you go to the villages in a week?
- (3) Tell me about the activities that you do when you enter one of your assigned villages?
- (4) Who do you think are actively participating in development activities and working with you?
- (5) What do you think of participation of the community you are assigned to in development process?
- (6) Are there any people who do not participate and do not come to community meetings? Who do not benefit from the development activities in your assigned villages?
- (7) Can you tell me your opinion on why they don't take part or why they do not benefit from the development activities?
- (8) Have you tried to include these people in development process? How?
- (9) Can you tell me about the participatory approach that your organization practices in the target areas?
- (10) Can you tell me about how to include the marginalized people to involve in your assigned villages? Is there anything else you feel to share me on how your activities reach the marginalized people?