A CASE STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN IN
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

BY

MARTHA SENZANGANI MBATHA
M.A.S.W.(SS.) UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA, PRETORIA
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Signature of Author

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Certified by

Thesis Supervisor

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Chairman, Department Committee
ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses factors determining success and failure of development projects undertaken in developing countries. The focus is on the role of two factors viz. community participation and indigenous culture.

The case study method is used for purposes of determining the role of these concepts. Cases of some projects undertaken in certain developing countries are analyzed so as to confirm or disconfirm some theories about the role of such concepts in development projects.

Findings from cases indicate that both factors play a significant role in determining success and failure of projects. Community involvement in planning and implementation of projects is necessary for project success and its continuity in future since members become physically and emotionally involved in project work. The absence of such involvement often results in failure of projects. Cases further indicate that projects that are compatible with local beliefs and traditions are more successful than those that are not. Those projects that overlook indigenous culture encounter resistance but can be gradually adapted so as to achieve positive results. Both factors interact in determining the results of projects.
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine conclusions as reached by different authors on what makes for successful and unsuccessful projects. I will focus on two factors viz. participation of local communities, and the role of traditional culture. This will be done in order to find out if there can be any universal principles that can be adopted in developing countries during the planning and implementation of projects. I shall use available data on case studies of some projects implemented in order to discover more about the role of such variables. The significance of such a study should enable me to:

* understand what problems are involved in the implementation of projects in developing countries;
and
* recommend what could be done to overcome such problems

The information uncovered by this study should help me distinguish between myths and useful theories about successes or failures of projects.

I have chosen to write about projects because they are increasingly being used for the alleviation of poverty and the enhancement of development. These will be mainly small-scale projects undertaken at local level which are usually implemented
or at least maintained by community members. Members of communities often have little technical expertise for such projects. Development in this context means "...a general improvement in the levels of living together with decreasing inequality in income distribution and the capacity to sustain continuous improvements over time." (Kocher in Dixon, 1975:2). A number of projects which are implemented have been explicitly described as aiming at:

- creating self-reliant and self-determining communities;
- avoiding of exploitation of the poor and excessive differentiation through promoting equitable distribution of resources;
- reducing the gulf between urban and rural life;
- encouraging co-operation among members of communities; and
- increasing openness to technical innovations

(Ellman in Cliffe et al, 1975:316-317)

Therefore I shall use the term "development when referring to the overall improvements in living conditions of all inhabitants of each country I shall be referring to. This involves the issue of the distribution of resources. I will not conform to the notion of the per capita income as a measure of the level of development. Such a notion does not seem to fit
into my understanding of what constitutes development in
developing countries. For example a country like South Africa
which has been having a reasonably developed economy is
characterized by extremely high inequities as reflected by its
high standard deviation in the per capita income, literacy and
longevity. This is better illustrated in the government's
Central Statistical Service Report which reported that the
average earnings for the upper class in March 1984 were R1,300
($975) while those for the lowest class were R330 ($247.50).
(Omond, 1985:87). I shall therefore consider a successful project
as the one, amongst other things, which promotes the equitable
distribution of resources. A project which benefits the elite to
the disadvantage of the poor will not be considered as
successful.

The main goal for projects in developing countries is to
enhance development which is designed to improve standards of
living. Results of successful projects are usually manifested in
improved health services and hence longevity, high educational
attainments and more employment opportunities. Therefore every
development undertaking leads to the expectation of success in
the long run. This is because proponents of development projects
have often pointed to their advantages and more particularly to
their inestimable role in overcoming underdevelopment.

In reality the outcome of development projects has not
been always positive. Programs that have been implemented have
had a wide spectrum of results ranging from outstanding success
to a dismal failure. People who have had to play direct roles
in the implementation of projects have often experienced failures contrary to anticipated successes. For such practitioners, more has to be uncovered regarding what constitutes a successful project. As a result the information based on the outcome of programs has induced some people to formulate approaches that should be adopted or avoided to ensure successful implementation of projects for development. I refer to the learning process approach (learning by doing) and the top-down approach (e.g. where communities play minor roles in determining the nature of projects they want).

I have also manifested situations where projects have had a mixture of results. Sometimes in the same vicinity I would come across a successful and an unsuccessful project. This confirms a proposition that some projects are more successful in overcoming their troubles than others. For example, one characteristic of a project as given by Rondinelli (1983:29) is that it frequently entails a certain degree of uncertainty since in the course of its implementation it may be found that the initially conceived technical, economic and administrative dimensions are not valid or adequate and have to be revised to assure optimization of project results. Rondinelli's view is supported by Hirschman (1967:1-3) when he refers to all projects as problem-ridden and thus concluding that the only valid distinction is between those that are more or less successful in overcoming their troubles and those that are not.

I therefore consider it necessary to discuss some characteristics which contribute to the success or failure of
projects. I will focus mainly on two variables, namely: participation and indigenous culture. These two factors often receive serious attention when analysts consider what constitutes successful projects. By participation I shall refer to situations where local community members are engaged in the process of self-determination during the planning and implementation of projects. Self-determination is the right of all people to determine their destiny. In this context I will be using the term "self-determination" when referring to a process through community members engage in efforts of identifying their problems and choosing strategies for dealing with them. I shall also use the term "indigenous culture" to denote the traditional way of life of the people.

According to Mbithi (1974:124) participation or local involvement in planning and implementation of projects is an important constituent of successful projects because it maximizes the possibility of the plan to deal with any local constraints since a wide majority of persons accept it. Project officials may also have to take into consideration the cultural beliefs and practices of communities they may be working with so as to refrain from arousing suspicions or uprooting people from their traditions. For example Mbithi (1974:175) remarks that development has to proceed in such a way as to avoid a sharp cognitive and operational break between the present, the past and the future. Social reality has to have a consistent and coherent definition in relation to the people's own experience if project officials are to avoid popular frustration, apathy and outright
A case study method will be used for evaluating the relevance of literature on successful and unsuccessful projects undertaken in developing countries. Bogdan and Biklen (1982:58) describe a case study as "a detailed examination of one setting, or one single subject, or one single depository of documents, or one particular event." I have selected to use the case study method for the following reasons:

* It will give me an opportunity for an indepth investigation of the procedures followed when projects are designed and implemented. The case study method will enable me to identify relevant written material on what accounts for successful and unsuccessful projects. Using the case study method I shall also be able to analyse the following two main factors in project designing and implementation in developing countries:
  - participation of local communities and
  - the role of traditional culture

* Through the case study method I will focus on specific countries and identify particular cases. The case study method is especially useful when used to study
patterns and processes of an organization. I will concentrate on the projects that the organizations I have earmarked will have designed and implemented. Most of these will be small-scale rural development projects taken from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

These will be mainly the Indian co-operatives - more particularly the Deedar Society, the Harambee in Kenya and the Lusaka Workshops (Southern African Pilot Program). Projects undertaken by both governments and private welfare to voluntary organizations respectively will be considered.

I am aware that using a case study method sometimes tempts researchers to compare a number of contrasting situations. I will guard against this by considering the context in which projects were put to use. Although general patterns will be extrapolated and compared, no undue generalization will be made regarding the behavior or misbehavior of one project without considering the special circumstances of each case.

Scholars who have also used the case study method to evaluate projects in developing countries are: Mbithi (1974) - Harambee and Special Rural Development; Korten (1980) - Bangladesh (BRAC) Projects; Seidman (1985) - Southern African Projects; Pollnac (1981) - Small Scale Fisheries in Thailand. These authors analyse mainly the role of participation in the success or failure of projects. They point out that the more the involvement of people at a grass root level, the higher the incidence of success of projects.
My study is different from the investigations carried out by these researchers since, in addition to participation, I will examine the part played by indigenous culture. Indigenous culture is intertwined with participation because the involvement of community members can also result in the consideration of the culture of such members. Lack of enthusiasm to involve villagers spells doom for projects. When villagers are involved in the projects and the indigenous culture of the people is sacredly allowed to modify from within and not invaded from without then the prospects of success for the projects are enhanced. My purpose of examining conclusions reached by different authors on what is responsible for successful and unsuccessful projects will center around two factors I have enumerated above. In this way I think the study will provide a more complete picture of the dynamics involved in designing and implementing projects in developing countries.

Important ideas about successful and unsuccessful projects will be clarified through asking the following questions:

* What are obstacles in the process of goal achievement?
* What is the role of local participation and indigenous culture in facilitating goal achievement?
* Is there any generalization that can be made concerning the role of the above-mentioned two factors in development projects?
In the following section I shall discuss the outcome of development projects undertaken in developing countries.
II

THE PERFORMANCE OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

As has been mentioned in the previous section several factors are being pointed out as responsible for failure of projects. Such factors may be different depending on issues like the choices and biases of each author, the circumstances in which the project was undertaken and the main characteristics of each project. Many experts, however, point to issues like failure to incorporate local interests and local participation and overemphasis on traditional norms as having a positive causal relationship with project failure.

Results from projects implemented in developing countries help in confirming and disconfirming a number of reasons that are considered by some authors as inhibiting success of development projects. Although such projects were undertaken in different countries that may have different characteristics thus causing different reactions to development approaches, it is important to note that the unifying characteristic of such countries is that they are all developing countries.

INCORPORATION OF LOCAL INTERESTS AND LOCAL PARTICIPATION

According to Rondinelli (1977:102) rural people have proven to be an essential source of information for project
ideas. Logically therefore, local people are in the best position of identifying their needs and suggesting solutions to their problems. Consequently it is necessary that project officials together with local leaders should facilitate the expression of local people's needs and objectives. No agency or authority should supplant people's aspirations with their own, or attempt to immediately satisfy needs which may not be the priority of the villagers at that particular time.

In cases where local interests have been taken into consideration during the planning stage the problem of getting the project to be implemented is usually eliminated. This is particularly the case where peoples' participation is vital to the success of a project e.g. in the implementation of self-help projects. This has been confirmed by several cases of projects undertaken in some countries e.g. the Harambee self-help groups in Kenya and the Deedar co-operative in India. We are now going to review these cases.

The Harambee Projects

"Harambee" is the Kiswahili term that urges people to pull together. (Reynolds in Weber and Cohen, 1982:79). It was first proposed by the Kenyan president, Jomo Kenyatta, as a slogan underscoring the kind of commitment to unity and effort that would be required of all in undertaking the development task facing the new state and its diverse economic communities. The term has become synonymous with self-help. In general these
projects have become renown for their success in achieving their objectives. It has been estimated that fully 11.4 percent of the overall national development expenditure in Kenya was derived from the Harambee between 1963 and 1973.

One of the characteristics of the Harambee projects was that members had a peculiar regard for and even rejection of government programs e.g. their disregard for the Five Year Development Plan. They would build schools and clinics even if the government refused to guarantee them teachers and nurses. During the meetings, speakers received ovations only when their words were relevant to people's immediate needs and join in an effort to meet these needs. The activities of the Harambee groups included, amongst others, the construction of Harambee high school, the building of a maternity home and the construction of dams and local roads.

The following table is a good summary of the relationship between local initiative and success of the above-mentioned projects.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision area</th>
<th>Group Origin of Participants</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Clan leaders in Harambee, consultation with community development</td>
<td>Successful in all four communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building maternity home</td>
<td>Women leaders, clan leaders, officials</td>
<td>Successful mainly women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composting</td>
<td>Extension officers</td>
<td>Failed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destocking</td>
<td>Government officials</td>
<td>Failed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to destocking and terracing</td>
<td>Local cattle owners and home cattle family heads</td>
<td>Successful in all four communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption of cotton</td>
<td>Government farmers, and communal plantations</td>
<td>Failing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 1**

AN EVALUATIVE APPROACH TO COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN FOUR COMMUNITIES IN EASTERN KENYA
The interesting point about these projects is that out of the ten projects undertaken the four that were unsuccessful had not involved community members during the planning stage.

For example in one of the instances the government officials decided that farmers should reduce their stock (destocking). Officials took such a decision without consulting with farmers. They applied the same method in cases of the following projects:

- adoption of communal cotton plantations,
- compost-making and
- the maintenance of irrigation channels.

Adapted from: Mbithi (1974:172-173)
Community members only came in during the process of implementation of such external decisions (made by government officials and village committees). However, those projects whose group origin of decision and plan implementation was from village committees were reported as tottering as compared to those that failed dismally. Village committees represented community members during the planning process. Community members had to choose such committees. The difference between the decisions taken by the government officials and those taken by village committees is that the latter were in touch with the communities and thus knew their communities's needs and interests. The unifying characteristic among all six projects that were successful is participation by community members in the decision-making process. Successful projects were those that were implemented and even maintained by community members e.g. the building of the Harambee high school and the maternity home. In cases of those projects that failed, community members simply resisted when they were expected to implement projects e.g. they refused to destock and to engage in cotton communal plantations.

The Deedar Society

The Deedar society was a society of rickshawpullers who organized themselves into a cooperative. The society was formed in Bangladesh in 1960 and it is currently serving Balarampur and Kashinathpur. Members formed a set of rules concerning the amount of money that can be borrowed from the society and the purposes for which
such loans can be used, e.g. renovating houses. Such rules automatically made the society to be unattractive to the elite, i.e. the small amounts of loans. The society offers employment to its members in the brickfield and some members have set up shops in the society's market.

Members regularly elect the Managing Committee from amongst themselves. No decision by the managing committee is valid without the endorsement of other members who meet regularly during the Weekly General Meetings. During the Weekly General Meetings members can even decide to exercise discipline on the Managing Committee.

Ray (1983:5) remarks that leadership within an organization of the rural poor may have to collaborate with leadership supplied by an external agency. Mbithi (1974:188) confirms this idea when he asserts that the need for central planning cannot be overlooked. He, however, goes beyond that and argues that the assumption that human action results from one single principle oversimplifies social reality. In the case of the Deedar society, the leadership has been working closely with the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development. Such an academy has played an important role in the success of this society through providing members with literacy, nutrition, bee-keeping, poultry-raising, improved paddy cultivation and accountancy
skills. Members of the Deedar society elect a few members among themselves who go for training and thereafter teach the skills acquired to all members of the Deedar society.

Failure To Incorporate Local Interests

Korten also maintains that one of the numerous weaknesses of centrally designed programs is that planners proceed as if they were writing on a clean slate and as if they possess all the knowledge relevant to improving the villagers' life. The same author remarks that such centrally designed programs are interventions into well established socio-technical systems within which the poor have, over so many years, worked out appropriate methods to meet their basic survival needs. In many respects the villagers have become masters in their situation and any intervention without consultation may not only fail, but exacerbate their already difficult life.

The fact that members of the Deedar society could accept guidance from external experts and government officials shows that communities are not just negatively disposed to foreign experts or government officials. In actual fact members of communities fail to identify themselves with externally designed plans which they often consider not to be addressing their problems. These plans are perceived by community members as having some hidden motives that may further endanger the welfare of the people.

In reality, however, there is a common tendency among
project officials of equating poverty with the inability to engage in decision-making processes. Such a tendency is manifested in situations where such officials take a responsibility of designing programs without the involvement of people for whom such programs are designed. This may be due to their good intentions of helping such disadvantaged communities in the belief that the programs designed are best suitable for meeting community needs. Mbithi (1974: 187) describes such an attitude as characterized by the blind faith which planners have in their programmes when everyone knows that these plans are subject to wide margins of error and irrelevance to any local situation. For example the four Harambee projects that failed in Kenya involved destocking, compost-making, adoption of communal plantations, and the maintenance of irrigation channels. To an outsider it would seem obvious that the implementation of such projects would benefit community members. However, the facts of the situation are that those community members would have better understood and suitably adapted such projects if they had been involved in the planning process.

For instance destocking would result in the availability of more grazing land for the remaining stock, compost-making would supplement cattle manure, adoption of cotton communal plantations would be more efficient as a joint effort and maintaining irrigation channels would be beneficial to farmers. Another reason for such lack of community involvement is the desire by project officials to achieve immediate results as against the long process of consulting with community members. This is
particularly the case where there is administrative pressure on project officials or local leaders to get something done for purposes of utilizing grants that have time constraints.

Unfortunately the result of such endeavors is passivity and little emotional involvement in the implementation of what the villagers perceive as ready-made projects. Such projects lack continuity since they are a sole responsibility of outside organizers. Gran (1983:175) describes the situation as characterized by a high rate of drop outs and vertical hierarchy dependency. There is no community identification with the project since there is no sense of ownership. This may be reflected, for example, in the lack of maintenance of the project by local people and its eventual failure.

Such a situation tells us that there is an important distinction between needs and wants. While it may be true that a particular community needs a particular type of service, it does not follow that such a community may be considering itself as in need of the same type of service, or even intending to satisfy that need at a time conceived by an outside agency. People are capable of adjusting to their environments as I have pointed out above, and in the course of time they become resilient to prolonged deprivations. It may be the case, for example, that the Kenyan communities did not perceive their need for more grazing land. Instead they might have considered themselves as in need of some loans for purchasing foliage for their stock. Then once this need would be satisfied they might have been successfully talked into reducing their stock through
concentrating on meat or milk cows. In other words families that chose to rear meat cattle would be encouraged to stick to that decision mainly and those that elected to rear milk cows would be persuaded to concentrate on that type mainly. There would therefore be a gradual but effective selection of type and quality of stock that villagers would gladly own. Having established such a working relationship with stockowners and proved concern for their interests and values, further modifications with their full support would be possible.

This indicates that people have the need to be respected and be recognized as capable of achieving some goals. They therefore have a right to self-determination whatever their socio-economic statuses may be. Even poverty and the state of deprivation do not guarantee that an externally imposed project will be enthusiastically welcomed and supported by the community. People's values and preferences often persist amidst poverty. The imposition of external plans and ideas arouses suspicions and lack of cooperation. The mistakes that accrue from lack of community involvement are obviously costly to communities. In actual fact lack of community involvement is not only costly to local communities but also to local governments and funding agencies. This may not be evident to planners or government officials at the time of planning because it may be time-saving to go ahead with planning and implementation of projects without community involvement. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, people are less likely to maintain services or facilities like public houses and irrigation channels if they had not been
involved from the start so that they know for example, which structures are weak and why such services should be maintained at all. On the other hand the involvement of local leaders ensures utilization of local resources and is thus more economical. It is therefore clear why people resent being excluded in the decision making and planning processes.

According to Mbithi (1974:145) the Harambee projects failed when they were imposed on local people during the colonial administrative period. This indicates that there is a relationship between the authoritarian nature of project officials and failure of projects. During those times, Korten (1980) argues, more attention was given to the training of external leadership as against training local leadership and members. Administrators of colonial times did not allow people to make their own decisions on issues affecting their lives. For instance local people were not given an opportunity to choose their own development projects. Therefore the administrators had conflicting interests. Conflict arose from the desire on the part of administrators to enhance development while at the same time ensuring that local communities remained subservient to colonial powers. To make certain that that local people remained dependent on external leadership everything possible was done to thwart their own efforts towards development. This militated against the achievement of successful projects.

The conclusion we reach is that development projects that disregard the local capabilities and efforts are unlikely to succeed in enhancing development. This is particularly the case
where communities are expected to participate during the implementation of such projects. Failure of projects is therefore attributed to a situation where there is little incentive for participation due to control and dictation by the elite. The differences between organizers and members arising from differing interests, lead the latter not to question the former and the eventual absence of learning. Lack of community involvement in project planning and implementation retards the learning process. Such projects may even encourage dependency and there is no guarantee on future continuity of a project.

Consequences of Community Involvement

The importance of helping the community identify its needs cannot be underestimated. Where there is member participation there is a sense of power since members can confront authority and express their views. There are no feelings of inferiority since the environment is conducive to learning. Participation in the above-mentioned successful cases worked as it provided community members with an opportunity to get orientated to details of those projects. A case of the Deedar society (Ray, 1983) indicates that community involvement in planning and implementation of the society's projects had a positive impact on the outcome of projects. In that case development was locally managed and there was a strong sense of member identification with the project. Members could manipulate the project so that it could address their top priorities as
evident in their weekly meetings. It may be important to note that in this case members of the Deedar society used external experts in the process of acquiring some skills which members needed in order to be self-reliant. Experts and local government officials were not the key decision-makers but could provide guidance and support for projects chosen by community members. Such officers could not be perceived as interfering or as imposing their views on such communities.

Participants could question and voice their fears about each project during the planning phase. For example during the process of decision-making about the building of the Harambee high school and the maternity home community members had an opportunity of convincing themselves about their felt needs, their priorities and how such needs would be met. Such projects had to fit into their schedules. The whole process of involvement in the decision-making results in the psychological and physical preparation for what the project will entail. Communities were empowered since they could control decisions affecting their lives. This empowerment improves people's levels of confidence and further prepares them for future action. The process as distinct from the top-down approach, provides members with an opportunity to learn how to do things on their own. The top-down approach, in contrast, can be considered as preserving poverty when we consider that the predicament of poverty-stricken communities is due to their powerlessness.

Gran (1983:174) refers to participation as shifting local power structure to a more egalitarian one through making
the poor get a new vision of society in which they can command greater access to power and resources. The involvement in the decision-making process leads to a greater motivation to implement the decision and therefore better implementation. Therefore members have a personal stake in the successful outcome because they have been involved in the conceptualization, action, implementation and evaluation. Participation of communities in the decision-making process is therefore an important element in the success of projects.

Participatory Control Over Funds

Dixon (1978) when discussing the role of community involvement in the acquisition of financial and material resources for project support, refers to the case of women's cooperatives in Bangladesh that were involved in income-generating projects like the sale of dairy products and making and selling handicrafts. These cooperatives used to receive free sewing machines and cloth. When the free supplies were discontinued, most groups were unable to survive. Their dependence on free materials prevented them from becoming competitive in the open market.

The above case confirms the importance of community involvement at the planning stage. In situations where outsiders operate under their own assumptions of what they think communities need, the outcome may be premature financial or material aid which may have a disastrous impact on the community.
Community members receiving such aid are deprived of the opportunity of learning about the procedure of seeking financial aid. They also get an impression that more aid will be available in future and thus fail to move towards establishing self-sustaining projects. Such a situation may be worse in cases where community members might not have participated in project selection. This is usually the case where aid comes along with prescriptions of the types of projects to be implemented.

Recipients of finance may be in a position of undertaking projects even without outside assistance. The Deedar society which was composed of poor members is a good example in this instance. Members of this society succeeded in organizing their own loans and even exercised strict control over whether such loans were used for the purpose for which they had been obtained. For example, the amount of loans granted to members was small so as to prevent defaults and also to discourage the affluent from joining the society as mentioned earlier in this thesis. The experience of the Deedar society shows that successful projects are those that, amongst other things, have financial resources secured through member participation.

THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL NORMS

Most experienced workers involved with development projects realize that socio-cultural variables are among the
important determinants of success and failure of projects, (Zaltman, as cited by Pollnack 1977:21). In the past there has been more emphasis on the positive role played by traditional norms in promoting success of development projects. Some communities were considered as more conducive to development than others due to their cultural practices. For example some authors like Nyerere, the President of Tanzania, predicted that development efforts in African communities are likely to succeed because of such communities' traditional culture of communalism. Such culture, it was argued, would facilitate success of development projects since community members would find it easy to join together in the performance of their tasks and also in the sharing of benefits.

Some authors criticize these assumptions, arguing that cultural practices sometimes retard development. Cliffe (1975:366) warns that although the traditional Ujamaa actually emphasizes communal distribution of resources in Tanzania, generosity may encourage laziness. This is because the practice of communal sharing of resources is not accompanied by a desire of ensuring that everyone makes a contribution during the work process.

Furthermore, traditional stereotypes held by community members reduce flexibility during the process of planning and implementation of projects. Such stereotypes may take the form of taboos e.g. those preventing people from eating particular types of food and beliefs about the roles of women. Poor people in particular, as Matthews suggests, may tend to be more
traditional and less willing to try innovations because they cannot afford the risk of losing the little they have (Jones and Rolls (editors), 1982:139). This may be the case for example where people are expected to stop using indigenous technological methods in favor of modern technology. Fear of the unknown consequences will induce people to resist new methods e.g. farming methods. In general people tend to reject different views since perception is basically selective.

The case of the Harambee Programmes in Kenya illustrate the advantages of traditional norms in planning and implementation of projects. For example Reynolds (1982:23) points to the promotion of Harambee as a quite conscious attempt to extend and adapt traditional patterns to suit the modern imperative of nation-building. In this case the projects fitted very well in local tradition since the Kenyan women could organize themselves and engage in project activities without disrupting their beliefs e.g. beliefs about their roles as housewives and as mothers. They also used traditional patterns of interaction although they were in a pro-modern setting. Members of one clan normally worked together and gradually absorbed smaller clans. During their meetings they would play traditional music drums and dance, just as traditional parties used to assemble. Thereafter they would discuss issues pertaining to their projects. In situations where activities were interfering with culture, adjustments were gradually made e.g. the preparation of the Harambee presidents' spouses who had to be left alone while their wives (presidents) were away on activities
of the Harambee. The process of the preparation of the Harambee presidents' spouses took place in the following way:

In each of the Harambee groups there is a president who is elected by members. Her duties are so intensive that she has to spend most of her time away from her family organizing the activities of the group. Whenever a woman has been chosen as a president, her husband has got to be gradually convinced and prepared for his wife's new role. This takes the form of singing ceremonies at her husband's place and even some gifts of blankets that will "serve to keep the husband's bed warm" while the wife is away on presidential trips. In that way the group manages to avoid possible conflict between the president and her husband.

Lack of Consideration of Indigenous Culture

Amongst the cases that illustrate the negative consequences of differences in traditional norms are the Special Rural Development Programmes in Kenya.

The Special Rural Development Programme sought to achieve development through activities of applied research and prototype testing, which is systematic development and small scale testing of programs and projects prior to their wider application. The main thrust of the program was to develop innovations in the
administration of area-based programs, in the types of development projects and methods of implementing them. The types of projects undertaken under this program included farming, and the construction of water pumps, schools and local roads (S.R.D.P. Report).

Mbithi (1974) argues that some of these projects failed because of cultural differences between local communities and foreign consultants. In such cases the nature of the change agent, that is his or her ethnic affiliation, socio-economic status, etc., were so different from his clients' that local people were not really open to his "advice." For example, in both the Special Rural Development Programme and the Harambee projects, project officials could not understand the Kenyan people's sentiments about their stock and as a result they could not foresee the possible failure of the destocking project.

The above evidence shows us that it is not necessary to overemphasize the positive role that will be played by indigenous culture when organizing projects for development. For example the African practice of communalism may not be so effective in promoting project success when it is not accompanied by disciplinary measures ensuring that everyone participates during the work process. Instead it can result in problems of free riders.

There may also be problems if a project is expected to solely depend on pre-existing cultural beliefs. Project officials may be having their own cultural beliefs different from
those of community members. Dissimilar cultural beliefs may prevent the development of an effective relationship and understanding. A foreign official may, for example, find it difficult to tolerate rituals performed by traditional people which result in the absence of large numbers of people from work. Initiation rituals in places like Kenya and Lesotho could be perceived by project officials as retarding productivity at work.

Communities may not always be positively disposed to development of certain projects. Women may be constrained by major cultural and structural obstacles that prevent them from taking advantages of development projects and opportunities. This may, for example, take several forms like lack of participation during the decision-making process, inability to engage in some contracts like credit contracts and unavailability for the performance of tasks other than those traditionally considered as suitable for women. It is therefore not surprising that in some developing countries women do better in projects that exclude men since such projects do not clash with their cultural stereotypes. Another good example in this regard is the traditional belief among Indians that women should not secure employment outside the household setting. Such a belief would obviously set a limit on the types of income-generating projects that can be organized for women. On the other hand women's projects that can be organized within household setting will receive some enthusiasm.

Gittinger in Bhooshan (1979:7) remarks that although some changes can be introduced by skillful planning and national
effort, such changes will occur slowly. This is particularly the case where cultural values are deeply embedded. The deeper the cultural values, the less likely they are to respond to efforts to change them. For example people may be reluctant to change their diets even if it can be demonstrated that they would have more calories or better nutrition than other foods have. Such obstacles can be overcome through formulating and adjusting programs appropriately so as to take into consideration those cultural factors that may retard acceptance of the project. It may be necessary, for instance, to first work with a few community leaders when introducing ideas like in family planning projects. In some cases it may be much easier to help promote the use of existing traditional methods with a few modifications where necessary e.g. nutritional practices. The importance of socio-cultural considerations in development projects is better described by Matthews in Jones et al in the following words:

Their situation is not so much of ignorance or lack of any knowledge, as a different set of beliefs and concepts. It is not like writing on a blank piece of paper, but making changes in something that which is already there. Some of their customs will be harmful, some harmless, and some beneficial, and only the harmful ones need be changed. Some can be changed relatively quickly, and others will take much longer.
It is important to help people develop at their own pace through beginning where they are. A case study of one of the pilot projects undertaken by OXFAM America shows the important role played by culture and traditions in project success (Seidman, 1985:1-13).

The Lusaka Workshops, one of the projects falling under the broader Southern African Pilot program, was held in Zambia in 1984 with project holder representatives, researchers and consultants from the Universities of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe respectively. The basic concern was to help improve the impact of aid through providing communities with skills that promote self-reliance. They held workshops and undertook projects which included small scale industries designed to produce hoes, repair of farm equipment and make furniture; and three women's income generating projects. The evaluators discovered the problem of selection of projects by donor organizations without an adequate understanding of people's culture, traditions and problems to be one of the threatening problems. For example one donor organization provided a small scale industry with a cooperant whose level of skills exceeded those required by the project. He did not speak the
local language and he communicated with the majority of workers through one manager who spoke English. The result was that it took him over a year to discover how the managerial committee was misusing the funds, while it took a participant student observer less than three weeks to discover the same issue.

Seidman (1985:1) attributes this problem to organizations' tendencies to rely on outside consultants thereby by-passing qualified personnel that is available locally. She argues that local personnel are more familiar with cultures, traditions, and problems of project holders. In this case lack of careful analysis of particular needs or difficulties confronted by the poor in rural areas was identified as causing failure of projects.

Although the existing institutional base may not always be conducive to development it still stands out as more advantageous to recognize the existing structures and even community efforts as manifested in what they might have achieved at the stage of the organizer's intervention. There are, however, some records of project successes even after some encounters of resistance arising from indigenous beliefs. Paul (1982:152) refers to the case of the Indonesian population program which was faced with resistance arising from Muslim and Islam beliefs against fertility control. The population was using indigenous methods of birth control which were used in the country and were therefore unfamiliar with the modern methods. In order to get
the communities to adjust to modern methods, project organisers disseminated information through the use of village community groups, and they tested ideas against the local environment. This case indicates that flexibility in program design and implementation can help in the adaptation of a program so as to overcome some obstacles arising from the differences in traditional and religious beliefs. We can now conclude that successful projects were those that matched traditional beliefs and those that were flexible thereby adapting to traditional beliefs of communities.
It is now clear that many developing countries are embarking on development projects in an effort to alleviate poverty. As stated at the beginning of this thesis the main purpose of projects for development in developing countries is to reduce the level of poverty. A lot of human devastation results from poverty e.g. according to the Hunger Project (1985:2) thirteen to eighteen million people die each year because of hunger related illnesses which are in fact one of the indicators of poverty. Though poverty is still a phenomenon of developing countries, it would be wrong to underestimate the value of development projects in their attempts to alleviate poverty. The fact that some attempts have been and are being made of planning and implementing projects is a step which cannot be overlooked. Some positive results have definitely been achieved through such attempts. This, in fact, takes us back to the argument about whether there can be any project that can be considered as totally unsuccessful. Obviously some positive outcomes accrue even from those projects that we consider as having failed.

In this section of the thesis I shall evaluate, on the basis of information uncovered in part II, the value of community participation and the role played by indigenous culture, in the implementation of development projects.
The two factors I have categorized in the foregoing paragraph interact in the process of determining success of development projects. The involvement of community members in the planning and implementation of projects automatically results in the incorporation or the modification of some traditional beliefs and practices that may support the project in question. Members may for example choose the types of vegetables they would like to grow on the basis of their preferences. They can even suggest the way in which they can gradually adjust to the modern technological methods.

Participation by community members can even take the form of fund-raising. It can also mean financial contributions by those who can afford it and the decision-making on whether or not outside financial resources are actually needed. Some donors would rather contribute to a project where the prospective beneficiary is personally appealing, or is a member of the executive body appealing for aid. Community members may even decide to contribute in kind. Where for instance there is a building of the dam, some members may volunteer to bring some brick, wood or water, on horseback, the back of donkeys, or even on their heads. People who might have promised to contribute on a $ for $ match may then do so on the basis of the 50 percent already contributed in kind by the members of the community.

Community participation can therefore not be relegated to insignificance in most development efforts. This seems to be particularly the case in small projects as against large projects where centralized planning is likely to take place. Even in
large projects participation cannot be entirely ruled out especially where foreign consultants are involved.

* The whole process provides participants with a learning experience thus reducing future dependency, e.g. in the case of the Deedar society members gained an understanding of the need to contribute and sacrifice in order for projects to be successful. This is learnt through realization of the fact that positive results are not automatically achieved, but are an outcome of hard work and sacrifices. They learn to sacrifice and donate their time and energy, to be thrifty and to be available for educational sessions.

* The community takes responsibility for any consequence of the project whether it be positive or negative. There can be no projection of blame to designers in case the project fails. Where there is lack of participation, project organizers are held responsible for negative consequences and they may find it difficult to convince the community of the need to support future attempts of project planning and implementation. Like in the case of the Special Rural Development Programme in Kenya, lack of community involvement in planning raised people's expectations unrealistically. This is because officials who
planned the project fell into a trap of exaggerating future benefits from what they expected the community to endorse. Mbithi (1974:140) says that people were informed through long impressive speeches in each Special Rural Development Project area of the development which was to come through the program, such as infrastructure plans for increasing incomes, and employment. In the process such organizers neglected to explain the experimental nature of the program. As a result expectations were raised unrealistically through misguided publicity. In this case officials emphasized the expected positive outcomes of the project to a point of disregarding possible negative consequences. Such circumstances exist where planning officials are convinced about their perception of the needs of the community and are therefore trying to get the community to cooperate through accepting the ready-made project. Often this has to do with the conditions imposed by the donors.

For example at my workplace we would receive funds for implementing development projects from several donor organizations and individuals. Immediately after receiving such funds they would inform us that they would be coming in order to see our projects so as to determine whether we still needed some additional
funds. Such visits would often be within one to three months of the receipt of their funds. Under such circumstances a person organizing a project may be tempted to exclude the community from the planning process so as to save time and proceed to the implementation stage. Mbithi (1974:142) again confirms this idea when he remarks that in the case of the Special Rural Development Program participation was thwarted through directives from the center requiring plans to be formulated within an unrealistic short period of time.

* Project continuity and sustainance is ensured since the community learns to depend on its own initiative e.g. the Harambee in Kenya where participation involves commitment and increased local maintenance of the project. I wish to illustrate the danger of a lack of continuity of a project by relating a story about a particular community where a local government built a water dam without the involvement of community members. The dam became very useful to the community as it was a source of water supply, but the problem came when members found a dog's carcass inside the dam. Members stopped using the dam but did not care to even remove the carcass. Instead they conveyed the following message to the local magistrate: "Tell that magistrate that there is a dog's carcass in his dam,
he must come and remove it" (Dubazana, 1980).

Although that community found the dam to be useful, they could not take the responsibility for its maintenance, as a result it remained a foreign property. If that community had been involved in the planning and building of such a dam they would have learnt to identify themselves with it and would be proud of such an achievement. Furthermore, during the planning process some conditions for future maintenance of the dam would have been laid out. The example of community participation in the maintenance of the Harambee projects e.g. the building and the maintenance of the high school and the maternity home, is a good illustration of the advantage of member participation in decision-making.

While the above exposition gives the impression that community participation always ensures success of projects for development in developing countries, it is important to note that there are some disadvantages inherent in such a process. The low level of development in communities is usually accompanied by lack of motivation manifested in unwillingness to take risks towards self-reliance. People in developing countries sometimes accept their state of deprivation as a given. They tend to think that their problems are insurmountable. Any attempt to introduce something new may be resisted. This can result in project delay.
Some members of the community have a difficult time participating in a project which is being introduced by a foreigner who is trying to get the co-operation of the community.

* The project may meet with opposition from community members. Members of the community may have personal differences or they may be unable to differentiate between their needs and their wants.

* The reluctance to participate in the project may be caused by previous involvement of members in projects that failed.

* Since participation by local communities may necessitate that they be subjected to some training so that they can acquire some skills even before they engage in an intended project activity e.g. the case of the Southern African Pilot Project where members were provided with training for empowerment and for provision of information necessary for strengthening their capacities to become self-reliant. Such a process lengthens the project and requires extra finance. The whole process may be too slow and costly. Funding agencies might have set some time limits for the project and there may not be enough money to invest in the training process.
The case studies reviewed indicate that indigenous culture can both facilitate and inhibit development projects. While there is no culture that can be totally condemned as retarding development there is also no culture that can be wholly considered as conducive to development. Instead certain cultural traits may either be positively or negatively predisposed to particular types of projects. For example:

* the beliefs among the Brahmin and Chetric (in Dixon's case of rural co-operation among Indian Women) that women should not take up employment outside households
* the Indonesian case of resistance to population control program
* the Special Rural Development Projects in Kenya that failed because of cultural clashes between organizers and community members, and
* the Tanzanian cases of Ujamaa where the results of programs implemented could not confirm the theoretical postulations by president Nyerere, that the African culture of communalism would provide a fertile ground for development projects. Such projects failed because communalism was not accompanied by the incentive among all people to join during the work process.

While these findings indicate that cultural beliefs may be an obstacle to development the following cases as discussed in
the previous chapter, highlight cultural receptivity to development projects:

* the Harambee projects that adapted and extended traditional patterns to suit the modern projects e.g. traditional women moving away from traditional midwives toward building modern traditional homes and the adjustment of members' husbands to women's changed role (cf. the case of the preparation of the president's husband).

* the Indonesian population program which finally made a breakthrough after the encounters of resistance, such success was only enhanced after the involvement of community members in community education.

It is important to note that even in the cases of projects that are considered as having encountered traditional resistance, some of these projects might have eventually managed to achieve a breakthrough. This, Pollnac (1981:9) argues, is achieved through skillful planning efforts. The impression one obtains from the theoretical perspectives on the role of indigenous beliefs in development is that there is a tendency to overemphasize both the positive and negative aspects of culture in development projects.

May be the most important fact to note is that development projects are not culturally free but they also represent a particular culture. Gran (1983:177) talking about
international experts makes an important observation: "...no international actor at present comes devoid of self-interests and cultural norms, and general strategies must be devised for each." Oftentimes that is the Western culture. Since there is this tendency of associating "development" with a particular culture, even if that means adopting views contrary to accepted definitions of "development", there will always be some cultural clashes or resistancies to such "development" efforts. This is because of the common notion of cultural superiority which is a result of uneven development manifested in the high rate of technological advancements in the Western world. Such a problem is aggravated by lack of involvement of local communities in self-determination as discussed earlier on in this thesis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusion we reach is that local participation, and tradition are important considerations in project planning and implementation. In the face of the above expositions it is therefore recommended that the organizers of development projects in developing countries adopt the following strategies in order to enhance success in development projects:

* focus development efforts at revitalizing people's esteem since their tendencies are those of lack of motivation manifested in their unwillingness to take risks toward self-reliance, this can take the form of
community education

* engage community members in the process of project evaluation whereby they (community members) can identify causes of failures of their previous development efforts, this may help in devising new ways of overcoming such errors in their new venture

* avoid an exaggeration of benefits members will obtain from the project; any recruitment should be realistic, covering both strengths and weaknesses of projects

* determine, together with local government leaders, the degree and nature of participation required in specific cases

* allocate some time and funds for educating communities on leadership and other skills necessary for effective program planning and implementation

* avoid coercing people against their traditional and religious beliefs, but introduce change gradually so as to give people enough time to convince themselves against possible risks of adopting alien methods

* adapt projects to those local customs that are beneficial and also avoid the uprooting of people from their traditions as much as possible.

By meeting these recommendations, I believe that projects will gain more effectiveness in enhancing their goal of development.
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