

Participants in EM: Existing users, Groups seeking change, Groups with little control

The complex and dynamic nature of environmental problems requires flexible and transparent decision-making that embraces a diversity of knowledges and values. For this reason, stakeholder participation in environmental decision-making has been increasingly sought and embedded into national and international policy. Although many benefits have been claimed for participation, disillusionment has grown amongst practitioners and stakeholders who have felt let down when these claims are not realised. This review first traces the development of participatory approaches in different disciplinary and geographical contexts, and reviews typologies that can be used to categorise and select participatory methods. It then reviews evidence for normative and pragmatic benefits of participation, and evaluates limitations and drawbacks. Although few of the claims that are made have been tested, there is evidence that stakeholder participation can enhance the quality of environmental decisions by considering more comprehensive information inputs. However, the quality of decisions made through stakeholder participation is strongly dependant on the nature of the process leading to them. Eight features of best practice participation are then identified from a Grounded Theory Analysis of the literature.

These features emphasise the need to replace a “tool-kit” approach, which emphasises selecting the relevant tools for the job, with an approach that emphasises participation as a process. It is argued that stakeholder participation needs to be underpinned by a philosophy that emphasises empowerment, equity, trust and learning. Where relevant, participation should be considered as early as possible and throughout the process, representing relevant stakeholders systematically. The process needs to have clear objectives from the out-set, and should not overlook the need for highly skilled facilitation. Local and scientific knowledge can be integrated to provide a more comprehensive understanding of complex and dynamic socio-ecological systems and processes. Such knowledge can also be used to evaluate the appropriateness of potential technical and local solutions to environmental problems.

It is argued that to overcome many of its limitations, stakeholder participation must be institutionalised, creating organisational cultures that can facilitate processes where goals are negotiated and outcomes are necessarily uncertain. In this light, participatory processes may seem very risky, but there is growing evidence that if well designed, these perceived risks may be well worth taking. Environmental problems are typically complex, uncertain, multi-scale and affect multiple actors and agencies. This demands transparent decision-making that

is flexible to changing circumstances, and embraces a diversity of knowledges and values. To achieve this, stakeholder participation is increasingly being sought and embedded into environmental decision-making processes, from local to international scales. Widespread acceptance and promotion of participation has partly been driven by increasing public scepticism about science, increasing knowledge and interest in environmental decisions and ongoing policy trends that emphasise sustain-able development and partnership working. Participation in environ-mental decision-making is increasingly becoming regarded as a democratic right, and this right is increasingly being used by proliferating environmental interest and pressure groups. In addition to normative arguments such as this, many pragmatic benefits have been claimed for participation; by involving stakeholders, it is argued that the quality and durability of decisions is likely to be greater

Histories and typologies of participation

Approaches to stakeholder participation have progressed through a series of recognisable phases: from awareness raising in the late 1960s; incorporating local perspectives in data collection and planning in the 1970s, the development of techniques that recognised local knowledge and “put the last first” such as farming systems research and rapid and participatory rural appraisal in the 1980s; increasing use of participation as a norm in the sustainable development agenda of the 1990s; the subsequent critique of participation and disillusionment over its limitations and failings; and finally to a growing “post-participation” consensus over best practice, learning from the mistakes and successes of this long history. These developments have taken place in parallel geographical and disciplinary contexts. For example, lessons have emerged from:

- social activism;
- adult education;
- applied anthropology;
- complex systems;
- natural resource management; and
- ecology.

While public consultation over environmental decision-making was growing in the industrialised world, a more action-orientated, site-specific approach was emerging in developing world contexts.

Other typologies focus on the theoretical basis, essentially distinguishing between participation that is normative and/or pragmatic. Normative participation focuses on process, suggesting that people have a democratic right to participate in environmental decision-making. Pragmatic arguments focus on participation as a means to an end, which can deliver higher quality decisions. The contrast between these two types of participation has been conceptualized in many different ways. For example, “communicative action” theory

suggests participation should be “fair”, representing the full range of relevant stakeholders and equalising power between participants, in addition to being “competent” (resulting in settled claims. This distinction has also been conceptualised as the need for “public acceptance” versus “decision quality”, or “political” versus “technical” participation. Alternatively, there have been a number attempts to develop typologies on the basis of the objectives for which participation is used. For example, distinguished between “research-driven” versus “development-driven” participation. Similarly, a contrasted view of “planner-centred” participation that is focused on outcomes with “people-centred” participation, which builds capacity and empowers stakeholders to define and meet their own needs.

Each of these typologies offer an alternative basis for distinguishing between the numerous available methods and approaches for stakeholder participation, and provide a basis for selecting the methods that are likely to be most appropriate to the purpose of the work in a given context. Before considering how such methods can be embedded into an appropriate process, some of the potential benefits, draw-backs and limitations of stakeholder participation will be re-viewed next.

Benefits of participation.

The many claimed benefits of stakeholder participation have to an extent driven its widespread incorporation into national and international policy. At the same time, disillusionment has been growing amongst practitioners, stakeholders and the wider public, who feel let down when these claims are not realised. These claims can be broadly categorised under normative and pragmatic arguments for stakeholder engagement in environmental decision-making. Normative claims focus on benefits for democratic society, citizenship and equity. For example, it is argued that stakeholder participation reduces the likelihood that those on the periphery of the decision-making context or society are marginalised. In this way, more relevant stakeholders can be included in decisions that affect them and active citizenship can be promoted, with benefits for wider society. Stakeholder participation may increase public trust in decisions and civil society, if participatory processes are perceived to be transparent and consider conflicting claims and views. Stakeholder participation can empower stakeholders through the co-generation of knowledge with researchers and increasing participants’ capacity to use this knowledge. It is claimed that stakeholder participation may increase the likelihood that environmental decisions are perceived to be holistic and fair, accounting for adversity of values and needs and recognising the complexity of human-environmental interactions. It may also promote social learning. This is where stakeholders and the wider society in which they live, learn from each other through the development of new relationships, building on existing relationships and transforming adversarial relationships as individuals learn about each others’ trustworthiness and learn to appreciate the legitimacy of each other’s views. Social learning may be one of a number of mechanisms that can deliver more pragmatic benefits from participation, with groups of people developing more creative solutions through reflective deliberation. Pragmatic claims focus on the quality and durability of environmental decisions that are made through engagement with stakeholders. It is argued that participation enables interventions and technologies to be better adapted to local socio-cultural and environmental

conditions. This may enhance their rate of adoption and diffusion among target groups, and their capacity to meet local needs and priorities. Participation may make research more robust by providing higher quality information inputs. By taking local interests and concerns into account at an early stage, it may be possible to inform project design with a variety of ideas and perspectives, and in this way increase the likelihood that local needs and priorities are successfully met. It is argued that participatory processes should lead to higher quality decisions, as they can be based on more complete information, anticipating and ameliorating unexpected negative outcomes before they occur. By establishing common ground and trust between participants and learning to appreciate the legitimacy of each others' viewpoints, participatory processes have the capacity to transform adversarial relationships and find new ways for participants to work together. This may lead to a sense of ownership over the process and outcomes. If this is shared by a broad coalition of stakeholders, long-term support and active implementation of decisions may be enhanced. Depending on the nature of the initiative, this may significantly reduce implementation costs. However, there is growing concern that stakeholder participation is not living up to many of the claims that are being made. Stakeholder participation does not take place in a power vacuum: the empowerment of previously marginalised groups may have unexpected and potentially negative interactions with existing power structures. There are ways in which participation can reinforce existing privileges and group dynamics may discourage minority perspectives from being expressed, creating "dysfunctional consensus". Consultation fatigue may develop as stakeholders are increasingly asked to take part in participatory processes that are not always well run, and as they perceive that their involvement gains them little reward or capacity to influence decisions that affect them. In this context, it has been claimed that participatory processes can become "talking shops" that create ambiguities and delay decisive action.

Best practice stakeholder participation

When individual practitioners and stakeholders are asked, much disagreement still exists over what constitutes best practice. Generally, there are those practices that most agree with which in context can be viewed as strong. Here are a few of them;

1. Stakeholder participation needs to be underpinned by a philosophy that emphasises empowerment, equity, trust and learning
2. Where relevant, stakeholder participation should be considered as early as possible and throughout the process
3. Relevant stakeholders need to be analysed and represented systematically
4. Clear objectives for the participatory process need to be agreed among stakeholders at the outset
5. Methods should be selected and tailored to the decision-making context, considering the objectives, type of participants and appropriate level of engagement
6. Highly skilled facilitation is essential
7. Local and scientific knowledges should be integrated
8. Participation needs to be institutionalised

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: ROLE OF WOMEN

Management of any programme requires the participation of various stakeholders for its success. Issues related to concept of environment and its management requires a careful understanding of resources, its management and steps for its sustainable development. Participation of community role in environmental management requires a local understanding of resources, problems and suitable mechanism to find the management of the problems. The paper looks into how community participation is an important agenda for environmental management programmes and by involving community the success can be achieved. Within the community the role of women has been very crucial in the success of the programme. The part of the lecture also looks into how grass root level development programmes have been successful in achieving target and for attaining long term and sustainable development through community participation in environmental management the policy makers must also train more grass root level women workers with the suitable remuneration

Environmental management involves the management of all components of the bio-physical environment, both living (biotic) and non-living (abiotic). This is due to the interconnectedness and network of relationships amongst all living species and their habitats. It also involves the relationships of various human facets, such as the social, cultural and economic environment with the bio-physical environment.

Over the last decade, management on usage of natural resources in a sustainable manner has become one of the priorities of government, policy makers and environmentalists etc. Due to unbridled industrial growth in last century huge impacts both positive as well negative has been realized, of which one major negative one is on the environment. The increasing focus placed on the environment globally, through multilateral norms, agreements and conventions, has shifted the responsibility from the governments (particularly the national governments) as a 'provider' to a more consensus-based approach, where all stakeholders have a role to play, bringing to the table different resources during the different processes of environmental management.

How Participation Helps

Of particular significance has been the participation and role of the 'community' the primary stakeholder in these processes has become an important component of all environmental programmes and projects, both in terms of decision-making processes, and of creating an enabling environment for the community to have a say over aspects that affect their lives. In general in all development programmes of government local level participation has occupied an important position in project implementation. Otherwise also participation or decentralized governance is one of the cornerstones of Indian democracy and has equal benefits for policy makers, public servants and civil society. To highlight few:

- Participation helps government to make more appropriate decisions based on the local needs of people
- The more informed people are, or the more participation, the better they understand about government's strategy, budget and resource limitations .

The local needs are varying in various communities and thus creating a partnership between community and government helps in addressing the development needs and service delivery.

Key Issues in Community Participation which helps in Environmental Management

Community Participation (CP) is a process which involves people to participate in planning, implementing and managing their local environment. It is actually a readiness on the part of both local governments and the community to accept equal responsibilities and activities in managing their surroundings. It also means a commitment to bring to the table resources, skills and knowledge for this purpose, and a respect for the capabilities and capacities of all partners. It means that the value of each group's contribution is seen,

appreciated and used. It is an inclusive form of development in which the community's representatives as "partners" in decision-making, makes for successful community participation.

Community in general may be defined as a group of people coming together on the basis of a geographical area, a work place, even an idea or a theme/issue, or on the basis of gender/age. The shape and size of a community varies, and hence definitions of communities have also varied. Women forms and important of all communities and with the implementation of various women empowerment programs they have been the key beneficiaries as well as the targets for achieving development

There are **five key issues** which illustrate the importance of community participation and involvement for environmental management:

(1) **To understand the perception of community:** Any activity directly involving community requires one to understand the issues and perspectives from community perception. This helps in identifying the choices and preferences regarding the lifestyle at the local level which are made at the community, household and individual levels. In other words we also refer this as local needs of community which could have short-term and long-term impacts i.e. it gives a detail picture of utilization of local resources, its consumption and steps required for intervention of proper management. By understanding the quality of life and lifestyle issues in environmental management ensures that problems are tackled at its source, and long term benefits accrued .This also helps in ensuring the visualization and planning for smooth environmental managements both at locally as well as globally.

(2) **Involvement in decision making:** It is important to maintain subsidiarity of decision-making, since local, daily decisions need to be taken at the local and community levels, Community participation involves creation of forums where issues are discussed and implemented. These help in maintaining the scale of decisions and commitment is ensured and built at appropriate level. Local forums are the outcome of

effective community participation where issues are discussed and suitably planned as well as implemented. The localized decisions making process is a reflection of community dynamics on awareness building, which need to be built into the core of an environmental management plan.

(3) **Commitment from localites:** Community participation is also one of the right way to have the clear commitment and complete involvement of local members in order to reach the desired goals and success in joint activities of environmental management programme. By bringing the community at a common platform in relation to environment is one of the launching steps in continuous process of awareness building and attitudinal change. By bridging the community to a platform it provides a rallying point that can build commitment and involvement from the community. Linking environmental problems, both local and global, to everyday lifestyles is critical in motivating communities and planning for action.

(4) **Optimum utilization of Resources:** Community participation pools resources and diverse skills and working strategies from within the community, creating pride and ownership of a programme or project. Within the homogeneity of a 'community' lies a broad diversity of resources that are prerequisites for the implementation of any plan or programme. Inherently, these have to be taken into account. By pooling resources and diverse skills enables a complex issue such as managing the local environment. It also enables creative brainstorming that identifies 'problems-behind-problems' and ensures 'solutions-for-solutions' – maximizing the benefits derived by a small resource base.

(5) **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Community participation will ensure that checking and corrective action through monitoring/evaluation can be done by and for the community itself. The local community can ensure close vigilance through community involvement by controlling its own actions, outputs i.e. mechanism of garbage disposal and its effects in terms of pollution and health hazards. By having the community's view on environmental management and its commitment, it would enable and facilitate the overall environmental management by close monitoring the environmental issues.

In conclusion, involving the community in local environmental management has been prescribed as a panacea for a whole lot of environmental ills – in some cases, to also avoid responsibilities and accountabilities of the concerned entities. Real positive impacts can be ensured through partnerships that respect the stakeholders involved, and the resources that they bring to the table, and to enable actions that each stakeholder is best suited to perform. Consensus-driven visions and goals are also important, to coordinate activities and to monitor and evaluate actions

REFERENCES

1. National environmental management authority (NEMA) - <https://www.nema.go.ke/>
2. Introduction to Environmental Management 1st by Mary K. Theodore, Louis Theodore
3. Uehara, Thiago Hector Kanashiro; Otero, Gabriela Gomes Prol; Martins, Euder Glendes Andrade; Philippi Jr, Arlindo; Mantovani, Waldir (June 2010).
4. World Commission on Environment and Development (2 August 1987). "Our Common Future, Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development". Development and International Co-operation: Environment. United Nations.
5. Levy, David L (1997). "Environmental management as political sustainability". *Organ. Environ.* 10 (2): 126–147.
6. Prasad, Pushkala; Elmes, Michael (2005). "In the name of the practical: unearthing the hegemony of pragmatics in the discourse of environmental management".
7. Colby, M.E. (September 1991). "Environmental management in development: the evolution of paradigms". *Ecological Economics*.
8. Berman, Morris (1981). *The Reenchantment of the World*. Cornell University Press. ISBN 978-0-8014-9225-9.
9. Pepper, David; Perkins, John W.; Youngs, Martyn J. (1984). *The Roots of Modern Environmentalism*. Croom Helm. p. 145. ISBN 978-0-7099-2064-9.
10. Purser, Ronald E.; Montuori, Alfonso (1996). "Ecocentrism is in the Eye of the Beholder".
11. Thampapillai, Dodo J. (2002). *Environmental economics: concepts, methods, and policies*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-553577-8.
12. Kneese, Allen V.; Ayres, Robert U.; D'Arge, Ralph C. (1970). *Economics and the environment: a materials balance approach*. Resources for the Future; distributed by the Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore. ISBN 978-0-8018-1215-6.
13. Daly, Herman E.; Cobb, John B. Jr (1994). *For The Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*. Beacon Press. ISBN 978-0-8070-4705-7.
14. Walters, Carl J. (1986). *Adaptive management of renewable resources*. Macmillan. ISBN 978-0-02-947970-4.
15. United Nations Environment Programme (1978). Holling, C.S. (ed.). *Adaptive environmental assessment and management*.