

**PARTICIPATION TOWARDS EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL IN SRI
LANKA: THE SARVODAYA WAY.**

by

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degree of

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PARTICIPATION TOWARDS EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL IN SRI LANKA: THE SARVODAYA WAY.

Abstract

The progression of development discourse from purely economic thinking to a more inclusive and people friendly approach has brought the concept of participation to the forefront. Much of the world's population live in rural communities and this has resulted in an evolving debate as to how participation can be used as an effective vehicle for change in rural development. Parallel lines of thinking have come to recognize that a holistic approach, addressing social, political, cultural and psychological factors is necessary to achieve effective development.

This report addresses the importance of adopting a holistic approach to rural development in Sri Lanka. It recognises that religion and culture are inextricably linked and form a strong foundation for participatory processes to occur. For this reason it is understood that effective development cannot take place without considering religion and culture as important factors in participatory development. The Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya (Sarvodaya) is presently the largest Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Sri Lanka. Sarvodaya has been at the forefront of community development since its inception in 1958. This report will show that there is a profound link between religion, culture and participatory development through the work conducted by the Sarvodaya Movement of Sri Lanka. The concept of Shramadana (sharing of labour) and Sarvodaya's model of village development provides the framework for the research.

Kushali M. Amaratunga

October 2003

TABLE OF CONTENT

Abstract.....	i
Table of contents.....	i
Acknowledgments.....	iii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION RESEARCH PROJECT	
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Host Organization.....	6
1.3 Rationale.....	7
1.4 Discussion of Terms.....	9
1.5 Methodology.....	10
Chapter Two - Literature Review	
2.1 From Economic Growth to Alternative Development.....	16
2.2 Interpreting participation.....	20
2.3 Gender and participation.....	22
2.4 The Link between Participation and Rural Development.....	24
2.5 Sustainable livelihoods.....	26
2.6 Interpreting Empowerment.....	28
2.7 Religion and development.....	33
2.8 The Sri Lankan context.....	37
2.9 Remarks.....	39
CHAPTER THREE - BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY AND THE SARVODAYA WAY	
3.1 Sarvodaya -an Overview.....	40
3.2 Buddhist Inspirations and the Sarvodaya Way.....	41
3.3 Sarvodaya and Basic Human Needs.....	52
3.4 Organizational structure and management.....	54
3.5 Empowerment: Social, Technological and Economic.....	58
3.6 Remarks.....	70
CHAPTER FOUR - SHRAMADANA AND VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT	
4.1 Concept of Shramadana.....	73
4.2 A Shramadana camp.....	75
4.3 The Five-Stage Model of Village Development.....	82
4.4 The Sarvodaya Shramadana Society.....	94

4.5 Organizational linkages at the village level.....	99
4.6 Remarks.....	102

CHAPTER FIVE - FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings & Conclusion.....	103
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Bibliography

Appendices

Appendix A - Map detailing the expansion of Sarvodaya Services.....	122
Appendix B - Interview questions.....	123
Appendix C - A List of interviewees.....	126
Appendix D - Development assistance according to geographical location	128
Appendix E - Sarvodaya resource partners for the year.....	129
Appendix F - Conversation with Dr. Ariyaratne on Basic Needs.....	131
Appendix G - Photos of my Shramadana experience.....	136

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Sri Lanka, with its population of 19 million people boasts of a rich cultural heritage dating back over 2,500 years. This heritage, which is predominantly Sinhala Buddhist, arises from the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka in the 3rd century B.C. The early settlers known as Sinhalese developed a civilization around elaborate irrigation systems. Pockets of communities thereafter formed settlements around tanks and waterways and practiced agriculture. These settlements consist the villages of modern Sri Lanka. The Buddhist culture too prospered during the time and was preserved even when it lost its popularity in India, the country of its origin. However with the colonial rule of the Portuguese, Dutch and the British, Sinhala Buddhist civilization faced an increased threat. A feature of colonization was Christianity, resulting in the Sinhala Christian population. Another feature arose from economic exploitation resulting in a bureaucratic system of administration,

which facilitated easy revenue collection and kept the people under subjugation (Ariyaratne, 1999:44).

Most of South Asia was facing similar consequences at the time. Not only did colonialism exploit resources and divide the people into new classes but also it also deeply impoverished the rural poor. Wignaraja and Sirivardana (1999) explain:

Agrarian changes initiated under colonial rule impoverished the rural classes who were actually engaged in tilling the land. This new phenomena was to reduce large sections of an erstwhile comparatively prosperous self-reliant population to pervasive poverty (Wignaraja & Sirivardana 1999: 10).

A revival of Buddhist nationalism resulted in Sri Lankan independence in 1948, and with it various national movements sought to revive the indigenous culture of the people. Interestingly, colonialism seemed to have fostered a sense of community spirit for at the time of independence approximately 56 percent of government revenues was said to have been allocated for social services (Bruton, 1992).

Another form of revivalism took place in paddy cultivation in the post independence period. This was due to the familiarity of the masses with the concept of growing rice and was fuelled by political motives to create self-sufficiency in rice production. As a result the construction of irrigation facilities and resettlement of the rural poor occurred during the 1950s. The land development programs initiated during the

time created more problems than benefits due to poor organizing and understanding (Bruton, 1992: 26). This factor coupled with the adoption of market-oriented policies and export-oriented trade in 1977 resulted in a gradual decline in the contribution of agriculture (CIA World Fact book, 2002). Although, the contribution of agriculture has declined dramatically over the past two decades, 78 percent of the population still live in the 33,000 rural villages of the island (Ariyaratne, 1999).

Distressingly, a direct link can be established between poverty and the rural community. This is a result of under development of the rural sector, a fact made all the more obvious by the high incidence of poverty which remains about twenty five percent higher in rural areas than that in urban areas (Central Bank: 2001). Various causes at the individual, group and community level are said to have prevented the people from exhibiting their initiative, leadership and participation; thereby, leading to the deterioration of the rural sector. Colonial domination resulting in dependence and subjugation; physical and psychological disintegration of the rural infrastructure due to exploitation; and loss of leadership and social coherence due to control exercised by urban central bureaucracy are some factors which affected the rural poor (Ariyaratne, 1999). Modernization and urbanization being equated to development during the post World War Two era marginalized the rural population through bad development policies. Although post independent Sri Lanka has witnessed a flood of development efforts, most have not been successful in

alleviating the socio economic problems of the rural poor. Some government programs have addressed the need for participation of the people. The Change Agent Program (CAP), Integrated Rural Development Projects (IRDP), Janasaviya Programme, National Development Trust Fund, Samurdhi Programme and ISURU Programme of the Central Bank have focused on improving rural livelihoods by developing skills, credit and marketing support. Although the programs have provided some relief to segments of the rural communities, the incidence of poverty in rural areas still remains high. In most programs, “communities were seen as contributing to and supporting the national development agenda and not necessarily as being instrumental in determining its content or direction” (UNDP, 1997). As a result, “ the community development worker was often a government official working as the interface between the outside forces of modernization and the natural conservatism and suspicion of rural communities” (UNDP, 1997).

Another impeding factor on rural development in the present context is the limitations placed on non-governmental organizations’ and grass roots organizations’ to include working within a donor budget. As a result they usually have to compartmentalize their agendas to meet the priorities of the donor organizations.

The civil war, which raged in the country for the past two decades, has further exacerbated the problem. It has taken its toll on the country and her people by claiming more than 60,000 lives, displacing an estimated 800,000 people, causing loss of land and livelihoods, creating environmental havoc and extensive damage to the

economy and industries. However, with the initiation of peace negotiations in December 2001, there is renewed hope for peace and rehabilitation. Thus a holistic approach to rural development addressing social, economic, political, and spirituo-cultural needs of the people becomes all the more timely and imperative.

The under-development of the rural sector gives rise to a number of questions such as:

- What comprises effective rural development in Sri Lanka?
- How and to what extent do people participate in their own development?
- To what extent does the target group benefit?
- What motivates people to participate?
- How does religion and culture impact on the development of the rural populations, and;
- How can religion and culture be harnessed for the betterment of the communities?

These questions formed the context for my fieldwork with my host organization, the Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement (LJSSM) of Sri Lanka, hereinafter referred to as Sarvodaya. The questions, also provided me the framework to address the following:

Is the approach adopted by the Sarvodaya an effective model for rural development in Sri Lanka?

Before I proceed further, it is necessary to introduce my host organization.

1.2 Host Organization

Considered to be the largest Sri Lankan non-governmental organization, Sarvodaya is a people's development organisation, founded in 1958. Its involvement in 11,400 villages of the country alone bears testimony to the fact that its development work has gained immense recognition and acceptance in the village communities of Sri Lanka.

Based on Buddhist teachings and Gandhian philosophy, Sarvodaya seeks to meet ten basic needs of the village community through its five-stage development model while preserving traditional Sri Lankan values and culture. Sarvodaya conducts its development work through its Social Empowerment, Economic Empowerment and Technological Empowerment programs as well as through its Resource Development and Independent Units. Some programs which illustrate the tremendous work carried through by Sarvodaya in community development include, leadership training, community conflict resolution, human rights protection, AIDS/HIV and STD preventative education and awareness programs, drug abuse rehabilitation and education, and the implementation of integrated community water supply and sanitation schemes to name but a few. Sarvodaya

also initiated the largest pre-school programme in Sri Lanka. The Sarvodaya Women's Unit was created in 1990 to concentrate on gender issues and has now gained status as a legally independent unit. Sarvodaya's development efforts are not limited to meeting basic needs. It also strives to achieve social and political participation for the beneficiaries. This goal is seen in the comprehensive educational and training measures aimed at developing capacities and abilities that allow for self-determined and responsible development. Dr. Ariyaratne, the founder president of Sarvodaya and winner of international honors for his peace and village development work. For a map detailing the expansion of Sarvodaya services nationally see Appendix A.

1.3 Rationale

This report is the result of working with my host organization for five months from January to May 2003, in Sri Lanka. The research concentrates primarily on the impact of the Sarvodaya model of rural development on the people. It pays particular attention to the role religion and culture play in motivating people to participate effectively in their development. My rationale in choosing this topic arises from the evolving development debate on what constitutes effective rural development. In this regard, I wanted to determine how people's participation could be used as an effective vehicle for change in rural development in Sri Lanka and if my host organization was successful in its endeavours. I was also keen to explore,

within a familiar setting, the contribution of my Host Organization to the growing international discourse on the relationship between religion, culture and development. Sarvodaya's development approach enabled me to explore and make the linkages between Participation, Religion and Development. Furthermore, having a personal interest in Sri Lanka my homeland, and witnessing the urban-rural disparity I had always been interested in determining how the gap could be narrowed.

In conducting research in my homeland, I did not have the barriers an outside researcher might face in relation to language and communication or knowledge of access to research material. Being a Buddhist, I was able to relate to the Buddhist principles in Sarvodaya's philosophy of development. Therefore, speaking from the perspective of being a Sinhala Sri Lankan Buddhist, I could be considered an "insider." However, I was also acutely aware that being born and raised in Colombo could label me to be a "rich, urban dweller" and in this regard I could be considered an "outsider" in rural communities of Sri Lanka. Mc Cutcheon (1999) explains the questions that arise with the insider/outsider dichotomy:

In a nutshell the problem is whether, and to what extent, someone can study, understand, or explain the beliefs, words, or actions of another. In other words, to what degree, if any, are the motives and meanings of human behaviors and beliefs accessible to the researcher who may not necessarily

share these beliefs and who does not necessarily participate in these practices? (Mc Cutcheon 1999: 2)

1.4 Discussion of Terms

It is necessary at this point to familiarize the reader with some facts of Sri Lanka in relation to its ethnicity and religious beliefs. I have also provided brief explanations of various terms that reoccur in the report and which are important to understand work carried out by Sarvodaya.

The ethnic composition of Sri Lanka consists of the Sinhalese, who speak the language of Sinhala and practice Theravada Buddhism, and represents 74% of the population. The Tamil populations who speak Tamil (also a national language) practice Hinduism and/or Christianity and consist of 18% of the population. The Muslim population, many of whom speak Tamil as their main language, make up 7% of the populace. The remaining 1% composes of descendents of Portuguese and Dutch (CIA World Fact book, 2002). These main ethnic groups can be subdivided further depending on variables of religion or geography. People in the central highland region of the country are considered more closely affiliated to their traditional 'Sinhala, Buddhist' customs than lowland dwellers (Johnson and Scrivenor, 1981)

The concept of districts and divisional secretariats in Sarvodaya's terminology needs to be further elaborated. Sri Lanka comprises 25 administrative districts, which are further divided into 256 Divisional Secretariats. Sarvodaya has set up district centres in each of the districts of the country. This centre provides a mode of monitoring and evaluating the progress of the villages as well as maintaining close links with headquarters. A district coordinator carries out the operations of the district centre and is responsible for overseeing the operations of the district centre. Presently Sarvodaya has 33 district coordinators overseeing its work in 34 centres at the district level. The reason for the district centres and coordinators exceeding the number of districts in the country is due to the necessity of two district centres in an area, which might be demographically large. Sarvodaya also has approximately 175 divisional coordinators working at the village level. The divisional coordinators are responsible for appraising village plans, monitoring and reporting and liaison between district and divisional centres to name a few. Each divisional coordinator monitors the progress of about 20 Villages.

1.5 Methodology

The principal goal of this research was to determine how effective Sarvodaya's model of development is in rural development in Sri Lanka. I based "effectiveness" on the extent of participation of the people, effectiveness defined by the participants' perceptions, their motivation to participate, and the benefits, which have been

derived from participation. Also because of the unique nature of the NGO being a homegrown religious movement, the role of religion and culture will be a key question.

Secondary library research conducted in Canada provided the context and framework for examining the topic. Information obtained in Sri Lanka through books, journal articles, websites and formal and informal discussions further strengthened the basis for my research. Some of the preliminary questions based on library research in Canada had to be amended to suit the circumstances. Questionnaires also needed to be translated to Sinhala. For a list of interview questions see Appendix B

Interviews at village level were confined to 28 villages in 5 districts. The villages were chosen according to my preferences based on different stages of development under the Sarvodaya five-stage development model. This model will be elaborated in Chapter Five of this report. I also sought guidance from the Sarvodaya Senior Executive Assistant of the International Services Division in choosing the villages. Factors such as time, distance, transportation, accessibility, cost, convenience to community resident and the availability of the Senior Executive, International Services as well as the Divisional Coordinators of the area further affected my field research in terms of choosing the villages. Furthermore, I was unable to conduct research independently since accessibility was difficult to some of the rural villages

and coordinating my activities would have been difficult without a Sarvodaya mediator. While it was necessary to travel with Sarvodaya personnel, especially where access was difficult, I felt that it hampered the interview process. In some instances the response of the interviewees may have been particularly positive, or in some cases, particularly short due to this. In a few instances, the divisional coordinators would interject during question time so that the village folk would “better understand” the question. I felt that this influenced my interviews negatively. However, these instances were few and I was able to speak to most of the communities without too much outside bias. Structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 98 community residents. The interviewees consisted of men, women, youth and elders of varying ages, religions and ethnic backgrounds.

The research also involved ongoing participant observation. By participating in Shramadana camps (work camps), it became easier to interact with and observe as a participant. This allowed me to also work with the people and gain first hand knowledge of the effort involved in organizing and participating in a Shramadana camp. It also enabled me to observe hundreds of people working collectively towards a common cause. Further information on Shramadana Camps is detailed in Chapter Four.

Oral histories from elders provided an inside perspective of what they perceived to be their role in development as well as information on how the village had developed

over time. This also provided me the opportunity to note the continuity of Sarvodaya's work and therefore its sustainability.

Home stays provided excellent opportunities to further converse and gain insight into the daily lives of the community residents. I conducted informal interviews in surrounding which provided a more conducive environment for the participants to talk freely and openly. It was also a means for effective participant observation.

Some of the villages were located in remote areas of the country and did not have easy access for vehicles. Therefore, I had to walk to, and through many villages. This proved to be time consuming. However, the experience in itself proved to be personally fulfilling since it gave me the opportunity to interact with the community residents as I walked by. It also helped me to get a sense of the infrastructure of the villages.

Structured and semi-structured interviews were also conducted on numerous staff of Sarvodaya Units. A List of interviewees is available in Appendix C.

By attending meetings, of district coordinators and divisional coordinators, held at the Sarvodaya headquarters in Colombo I was able to gain knowledge of how work was conducted at the district and village level. It also exposed me to the difficulties

faced by some in carrying on the developmental work. Further discussion of the problems takes place in Chapter Five: findings and conclusion.

A constraint I faced in conducting research was incorporating all aspects of developmental work carried out by Sarvodaya. It was practically impossible given the time constraints and the main purpose of my study. Thus I had to limit my work to concentrating on the Social, Economic and Technological aspects of development work carried out by the relevant Units, description of the Sarvodaya Five-Stage Village development model and the importance of Shramadana Camps in promoting rural development. Buddhist thought and culture is intricately woven into all aspects of Sarvodayas development work and is therefore a central theme of this report.

I felt qualitative research methodology was more conducive to my study since it dealt with ‘interpreting’ social realities”, which I did through ‘soft’ research methods such as interpretation, interviews and texts as opposed to the ‘hard’ quantitative methodology of numbers, statistics and opinion polling (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000). However, I believe that further research in this area will be strengthened by quantitative methods, such as surveys using a larger population base.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

For two thirds of the people on earth, this positive meaning of the word “development” is a reminder of what they are not. It is a reminder of an undesirable, undignified condition. To escape from it, they need to be enslaved to others’ experiences and dreams.” - Gustavo Esteva (1992)

What is development? For whom is development? And who does the “developing”? These questions remain ambiguous and spark much debate. One conclusion that can be reached is that past development practice has largely proven unsuccessful in providing positive results. The progression of development discourse has taken many paths in its continuous search for successful models. This chapter outlines the evolution of the development debate from purely economic thinking towards the search for Alternative Forms of Development. The participatory nature of Alternative Development in development literature is elaborated by drawing on various *forms* of participation of the people in the development process. Since the focus of my study is on participation of the rural sector, the concept of Sustainable Livelihoods provides a useful framework for discussion. The concept of empowerment which is central to the notion of participation and the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach is also discussed, with attention given to the elements of empowerment and in particular, the importance of spiritual and cultural

empowerment. The literature on the relatively new field of religion and development is also discussed, strengthening the view that religion and cultural values are important considerations in participatory approaches. A brief historical overview of South Asian development practice leading to a summary of the dynamics of participation, religion and culture in rural development in Sri Lanka provides the context for further discussion of work carried out by my host organization in Chapter Three.

2.1 From Economic Growth To Alternative Development

The term ‘development’ has been used in academia to more often than not encompass a western notion of thinking measured by an economic yardstick. This ‘thinking’, born in the era immediately preceding the Second World War, equated economic growth to development and was preoccupied with alleviating poverty through purely economic means.

The general economic progress made by the now “ more developed countries of the North” initiated the assumption that they constituted ideal models for development to the less developed countries. Thus development was seen as a process of modernization where the developing countries of the south necessarily sought to emulate the “developed” countries of the north. As a result, a developing country’s

economic, political, social and cultural realities were not recognized as inherent factors affecting their development (Martinussen, 1997:35-36)

A gradual transformation in the form of the dialectical modernization theory in the early 1960's, gave recognition to the heterogeneous circumstances of developing countries thereby displacing the notion that the "West was the Best". (Martinussen,1997:40-41) This line of thinking was also coined the "new orthodoxy" (Cooke and Kothari, 2001:170-172), and is described as follows:

the dialectical modernization theory conveyed to all notions and theories more respect for the developing countries' unique circumstances and, moreover, tied the conception of development to these (Martinussen 1997:41)

General dissatisfaction continued to grow with top-down, technocratic development approaches and in the 1960's and the 1970's cumulated in the emergence of diverse schools of thought characterized as "Alternative Development".

As Henry Veltmeyer (2001) states:

What defines the diverse conceptions of alternative development is the recognition and valorization of radical difference: the notion that development in its diverse dimensions is heterogeneous and that it can and should take multiple forms; that people should construct their own development on the basis of autonomous action of community-based local grassroots organizations; that development be participatory in form, human in scale and people centered. (Veltmeyer,2001:4)

Some of the more popularly known models which emerged as a result of Alternative development include People-Centered Development (Korten 1984); Human Scale Development (Max Neef 1982); Sustainable Development (UNEP 1997, Barkin 2000); Eco and Ethno development (Hettne 1990); Gender and Development (DAWN); Participation and Social Empowerment (Anisur Rahman, Fals Borda and UNRISD 1970); and the recent approach of Sustainable Livelihoods (DFID, UNDP AND SID) (Veltmeyer, 2001).

Some organizational proponents of alternative development include the Dag Hammerskold Foundation, The International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA), The Society for Alternative Development, ECLAC and United Nations Agencies, in particular, UNDP and UNRISD (Veltmeyer, 2001:4-5).

The notion of People-Centred Development is particularly important to my study as it signifies the importance placed on people's participation. Some common features of people-managed development include emphasis on the human dimension and disassociation from centralised control. The more popularly know proponents of people-managed development include Guy Gran (Gran 1983); John Friedmann (Friedmann 1992); David Korten (Korten, 1980,1990); Robert Chambers (Chambers,1983). UNDP's Human Development Report (UNDP 1993) also provides core features of people managed development (Martinussen 1997:331-341).

Guy Gran's strategy opposes conventional macro-economic theories and is based on what he believed to be three major problems faced by the developing nations. The first is the unreasonable concentration of power within bureaucratic governments and private cooperation. The second was disapproval of the narrow economic considerations the bureaucratic organisations used as a basis for their decision-making. The third problem is the exclusion of the majority of people from the economic and political community. Friedmann's theory was based on inclusive democracy. He was primarily concerned with identifying the conditions that excluded poor people from decision-making and prevented them from getting a fair share of society's resources. He was also a strong advocate for empowerment of the poor and believed in the devolution of power to local authorities. Korten assessed how NGOs could provide opportunities for securing better living conditions for resource-weak groups. He emphasised the need for a transition from a growth-oriented approach to one, which was people-centered, where the rich in the world would have to reduce their consumption patterns. Chambers believed that power should be shifted downwards and outwards. He was an advocate for learning processes where development workers were encouraged to learn from the poor and try to understand their knowledge systems. The *UNDP Human Development Report, 1999*, also adopted a line of thinking advocating access to the decision-making power of the people (Martinussen, 1997:331-341). All these models of alternate forms of development embraced the notion of people's participation in the developmental process.

2.2 Interpreting participation

Although initiatives to involve local people in community development started in the late 1940s, it was only in the 1950s and particularly in the 1960s that concrete action was taken to build the infrastructure of rural and urban communities through local participation. There was also a proliferation of community-based organizations (CBOs) during this time, serving as vehicles of change by which local people could get actively involved in their own development (UNDP, 1997).

Participation is a concept, which varies from country to country. The concept also varies in relation to existing political and socio-economic structures as well as cultural practices. The role of popular participation in the development process seeks to involve the masses in the decision making process in favor of their needs and goals. The underlying assumption here is that participation in decision-making would lead to the more equitable distribution of benefits of development. Participation necessarily involves a bottom up approach. Therefore it involves the decentralization of executive decision-making powers and resources to local level planning authorities. However decentralization alone is not adequate. It needs to be complemented by the existence of committed leadership of grass-roots organizations to ensure the efficient use of local resources for development problems (Choosri, 1995), Martinussen, 1997) and (Veltmeyer, 2001).

A distinction can be made between two conceptions of participation: one that sees participation as a means and another that views people's participation as an end in itself (UNDP, 1997:4).

Participation as a means – here people collaborates or co-operate with externally introduced projects. Thereby people become the means for the effectiveness of the projects. Therefore the projects success lies in the peoples' participation. The term 'participatory development' is often used to describe this approach (UNDP, 1997:4).

Participation as an end - Here participation is seen as a goal in itself and one that can be achieved through acquiring skill and knowledge and through collective effort. providing the people a basis for more direct involvement in development initiatives (UNDP, 1997:4).

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) distinguishes degrees of participation. These range from participation as essentially an act of manipulation, to a process where stakeholders take on responsibility for their management. In between these poles are varying degrees of participation in the form of Consultation, Consensus-building and Decision-making and Risk-sharing (UNDP, 1997:5-6).

2.3 Gender and participation

Often, participatory processes have sidelined women. Gender sensitive approaches to inclusion are required if community actions are to be genuinely inclusive. The purpose of gender analysis in the context of participatory development is imperative to understand gender differences on access to resources. (UNDP,1997:29) It is also important in determining appropriate measures against exclusion. International agreements and declarations, such as the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the World Population Plan of Action, the Rio Declaration and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) have identified the need for participation of women.

In order for participation to be carried out successfully in the project cycle, the key stages at which participation occurs namely: decision-making, implementation, sharing of benefits and evaluation, need to be evaluated. For detailed literature on participatory methods, the project cycle, monitoring and evaluation and institutional support, UNDPs *Empowering People: A guide to participation* is a useful reference. Further descriptions of participation and project sustainability can be obtained through Choosris, Master of Arts dissertation on *“Participatory Planning for Sustainability”*.

The methodologies used for participatory research is vast and evolving. The most popular methods used for dialogue and interactions with the community are Participatory Action Research (PAR), Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal and Planning (PRAP). These methodologies differ according to the circumstances of the community (UNDP, 1997:31-32). UNDPs *Empowering People: A guide to participation* provides literature on methodological tools. For a description of a number of problems associated with using these tools see Mohan and Stokkes (2000), "Participatory development and empowerment: the dangers of localism". Also, a well researched and extensive analysis of the history of participation, salient aspects of participatory development paradigm and its implementation is found in the Manoukians' Masters Dissertation on "*Participatory development: paradigm shift in theory and practice.*"

In summarizing the literature on participation, The United Nations Research Institute for Social Developments (UNRISD) studies on participation conclude that there is no clear definition or implementation strategy proposed for participation. (UNRISD online) Participation therefore is said to differ in opinion to different people and is used as such - much like the definition of sustainable development. In recent times the inclusion of participation, in all its ambiguity, has become a trend and it is now difficult to come across a development project, which does not claim to adopt a participatory approach to development (Cooke and Kothari, 2001:1-15). Critiques of participation have emphasised the need to re-evaluate the concept of

participation along two lines. Namely, those that focus on the technical limitations and stress the need for a re-evaluation of methodological tools and the other which looks at theoretical, political and conceptual limitations of participation (Cooke and Kothari, 2001:1-15)

While acknowledging that constraints to participatory approaches undoubtedly do exist, I believe that higher levels of success are more likely to be achieved with participation than without it. For the purposes of this study the voluminous literature on participation will be condensed to participation at the micro or local level, which is more relevant to my study.

2.4 The Link between Participation and Rural Development

Most of the world's population live in rural communities and consist the majority of the world's population. They are also usually the most marginalized communities. This study agrees with the literature that marginalized communities are best served by the participation of the communities themselves.

As A. T. Ariyaratne states:

Rural development can no more be a 'partial' sporadic and half-hearted gesture. It has to be total, all embracing, continuous and vigorous national activity, commensurate with the magnitude of the problem itself. Rural development can no more remain as an isolated effort carried out in 'backward' rural communities for humanitarian reasons and as a supplementary programme to massive national development efforts. (Ariyaratne,1982:99)

The concept of “community” has carried with it negative connotations in the development discourse. More often than not negative language is used to portray rural communities consisting of ignorant, helpless and uneducated people waiting for outside aid to raise them out of their misery. Most definitions fail to realize the dynamics within a given community and its immense potential.

As Nelson and Wright 2000 point out:

Community is a concept often used by state and other organizations, rather than the people themselves, and it carries connotations of consensus and “needs” determined within parameters set by outsiders. (Mohan and Stokke, 2000:251)

Furthermore recognizing the heterogeneous nature of communities, it is argued that the *harmony model* of community development, where everyone is enthusiastic and works towards the common good, is but a myth (Burkey,1993:40). Ponna Wignaraja states that rural communities in the third world are not homogeneous entities and calls for a “demystification of the harmony model of rural community life” (Burkey,1993:40). Others go as far as to conclude that the harmony model of community development ironically enhances and sharpens the potential for conflict at the village level (Burkey, 1993:41). Despite these criticisms, the commonly accepted approach to rural development acknowledges that the village unit is treated

as one harmonious unit (Burkey 1993:42). Sarvodaya too adopts the harmony model in its development work.

2.5 Sustainable livelihoods

The concept of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) (Amalric, 1998; Chambers 1999; Singh and Gilman 2001) has its roots in the conception of an Alternative Development based on popular participation. First introduced in the Bruntland Commission Report and popularized in the 1990s the holistic nature of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach has gained it much recognition. Sustainable Livelihoods is defined by the UNDP (1999) as “the capability of people to make a living and improve their quality of life without jeopardising the livelihood options of others, now or in the future. Here Livelihoods are said to include social, economic, natural, cultural, political, human and physical attributes” (Redmond,2001:38)

According to Veltmeyer, the characteristics of SLA include:

- 1) Grassroots Organizations (GROs) are the most appropriate agency for change and development in addressing issue of rural poverty and promoting collective actions.

- 2) The problem of poverty, which stems from the lack of representation of the poor, can be overcome through empowerment by capacitating the poor with the resources and decision-making powers.
- 3) Empowerment can be achieved through better access to society's social, political, natural, physical and financial resources by which proper redistribution will occur and it will be possible to influence the governments to allow for better representation and participation.
- 4) Development oriented NGO's should be supportive of GROs, and promote maximum use of their indigenous knowledge to come to terms with external negative influences; and,
- 5) The approach adopted to help GROs to work within the institutional structure of the existing system should be non confrontational (Veltmeyer, 2001:ch.4).

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach does raise some critical questions in relation to what constitutes the most effective agency for bringing about genuine land reform, to what extent decentralization should take place without creating a confrontation of the existing structure of economic and political power, and if it is

possible to come to a consensus on power sharing in creating a redistributive change in the existent structure of productive resources (Veltmeyer, 2001:Ch.4).¹

For the purpose of my study I hold that the concept of Sustainable Livelihoods, due to its multifaceted nature, is a key concept in the development discourse and could be efficiently, as well as endogenously used to bring about effective development at the village level.

2.6 Interpreting Empowerment

Central to the concept of participation is the notion of empowerment. However, there has been difficulty in coming up with a definition of empowerment. Numerous lines of thinking can be discerned in relation to empowerment. Some group sees empowerment as the development of skills and abilities to enable rural people to have a say in or negotiate within existing development systems. Others see it as a process by which rural people can be enabled to make decisions and take action, which they believe are essential to their development (Choosri, 1995:41). I believe in the convergence of these two lines of thinking and argue that it is necessary to develop abilities, skills and knowledge to be able to function effectively within the existing systems but that it should not be the extent of their empowerment. For this reason then, people need to be enabled to reach their

¹ For a further analysis of strengths and weaknesses of Sustainable Livelihoods Approach refer Colin Murray's Article *Changing Livelihoods: The Free state, 1990's*. African Studies, 59(1)pp.115-142

potentialities and take action for their own development. Likewise, Singh and Titi in their article “Empowerment for Sustainable development: An Overview” states:

The concept goes beyond the notions of democracy, of human rights, and of participation to include enabling people to understand the reality of their environment (social, political, economic, ecological and cultural), to reflect on the factors that shape their environment and to take steps to effect changes to improve their situation. (Ekins, 1995:13)

Common elements of empowerment mentioned below help us to better understand this concept and by placing it within a rural development framework we can identify the “missing” elements in development work.

Elements of Empowerment as perceived by Singh and Titi include:

- Local self-reliance, autonomy in the decision-making processes of communities at village level, and direct participatory democracy in the larger process of representative governance;
- Provision of space for cultural assertion and spiritual welfare, and experiential social learning, including the articulation and application of indigenous knowledge, in addition to theoretical/scientific knowledge;
- Access to land and other resources, education for change, and housing and health facilities;
- Ability to achieve food and sustain self-sufficiency;

- Access to income, assets and credit facilities, and the ability to create credit facilities;
- Access to knowledge and skills (both endogenous and external) for the maintenance of constant natural capital stock and the environmental sink capacity;
- Access to skills training, problem-solving techniques, and best available appropriate technologies and information, and;
- Participation in decision-making processes by all people, in particular women and youth (Ekins, 1995:14).

The notion of *self-reliance*, which is mentioned above as an element of empowerment, is inter-related to participation in the empowerment process. To become empowered is to become self-reliant. Self-reliance in this sense does not mean alienating oneself or the community from the rest of civilization but entails growth in awareness, self-worth, pride and confidence, and it does not necessarily imply self-sufficiency but a process of conscientization (Sacouman, 1998: 30)

Conscientization as referred to by Gran and Paolo Freire is understood to be a process of the expansion of consciousness whereby people realize their social position and possibilities. Thus it is:

A process through which people – not as passive recipients but as knowing and active citizens – achieve a deeper understanding of the social reality which shapes their lives and their capacity to transform that reality. (Martinussen 1997:336)

Conscientization is therefore a key factor in creating self-reliance leading to the empowerment of the community. Sarvodayas concept of conscientization is likened to psycho-social infrastructure building; where it is a process of understanding the realities that one is surrounded by and seeking to transform that reality effectively by working together and building capacity.(Sarvodaya Midterm Review, 1988)

A notable element of empowerment is *provision of space for cultural assertion and spiritual welfare*. This element is especially important to my report as Sarvodayas philosophy of development is based on Buddhist principles, which seek to preserve the traditional Sri Lankan values and culture in the development process. An interesting analogy of the impact of social relationships and cultural traditions on western societies/urban centers and rural communities is provided in Burkeys (1993) *People First: A guide to self-reliant participatory development*. Burkey notes that we are defined by our social relationships and our cultural traditions. Whilst western societies and some urban centers of the developing world functions in an individualistic manner allowing for greater freedom to choose his or her social relationships and cultural traditions, “in isolated rural communities, social relationships are generally rigidly defined and cultural traditions strong and relatively static” (Burkey,1993:45). In such situations the individual is an integral part of the society, so much so that he/she may not even perceive himself or herself as

an individual in the Western sense. Hence, individual freedom is subordinate to the interests of the family and community. Social relationships are established and cultural traditions maintained through ceremonies and social events. Thus

The behaviour of individuals and groups and their response to external impulses cannot be understood completely without an intimate understanding of their social relationships and their cultural traditions (Burkey1993:45-46).

The importance of cultural traditions in social relationships is evident in community interactions. A common feature in rural communities is the concept of collective action. While rural communities have to depend on each other's labour to survive, often times the concept of collective action is linked closely to cultural norms. This is predominantly prevalent in the agricultural communities of the South. Collective action adopts many forms in modern society. It could be a duty, just as well as a cultural norm or an act of philanthropy.

Ariyaratne speaks on how philanthropy could be included in day-to-day living.

when philanthropy is defined as a practice common to all human beings, and depending on the culture within which we work we should be able to relate to this concept the traditions, customs, beliefs, religion, song, dances and ceremonies of that culture and also to design concrete programmes of social, political, and economic action working towards the common goals we have placed before us. (Ariyaratne, 1982:101)

Therefore, is obvious from the above discussion that the notion of empowerment embodies salient aspects of self-reliance, conscientization, cultural and spiritual awareness and collective action which strengthens peoples participation in the development process.

2.7 Religion and development

The role of religion and its influence in participatory processes is particularly relevant to my report. Although exploring spiritual dimensions of development theory and practice is a relatively new concept in development, it is definitely belated. It is questionable as to how something so fundamental as culture and belief systems have played an almost non-existent role in the development discourses. Perhaps it could be attributed to the secular line of thinking where religion is considered to be “wholly extrinsic to the constitution of society” (more so western industrial culture), and, “survives only as the purely personal conviction of certain groups of people, as a sentiment and commitment to an imaginary universe” (Harper, 2000). Furthermore, religions of people in the south were considered to be an obstacle to economic development and progress. Seen from this perspective, development had to be accompanied by a secularization of culture, that is to say, by an exclusion of religious values from public policies and the organization of production and distribution (Harper, 2002). The dominant economic development paradigm also sought to destroy culture, especially religious culture (Srinivas, 2001:201). As a result

most of the world's poor rural communities of the South lost much of their strong cultural flavour and religious belief systems. Wang and Dissanayake are of the opinion that religion and culture are essential not only for providing a context to development and change but also to maintain a certain degree of continuity: As stated:

Denying the role of religion and culture would deny the continuity that it has provided during all periods of change and thus deny history and meaning to the people or nations involved (Srinivas, 2001:201).

It is with this background that the International Development Research Councils (IDRC) study on science and religion and development was based on “the need to give the spiritual dimension of human existence its due place in development thinking...” (Harper, 2002:2). With this positive evolution towards looking at development through a holistic lens by recognizing the heterogeneous nature and circumstances of each country and its people, it is hoped that more success in respect to alleviating the poverty of the majority of the world's people will be achieved in the future.

Although a discussion on South Asian development would be befitting to make this report more holistic in its approach, there is space for only a brief overview of some factors that have shaped development in the rural areas in this region. I feel that it is necessary to discuss some of the literature in regard to what has shaped the regions

development path in order to focus more specifically on Sri Lanka's culture and history.

Pre-colonial South Asian countries were “predominantly rural, peasant societies with traditional knowledge systems and non-predatory relations with nature” (Wignaraja and Siriwardena, 1998:105). However, after independence from colonial rule, development models continued to be indifferent to and to marginalize the majority of the regions population, which was rural. Existing international economic relationships continued to be promoted from the industrialised countries of the West as well as the eastern countries of the Eastern Bloc. This framework catered to the distinction between “developed” and “developing” countries, reinforcing the view that it was only through transfer of capital and technology that the countries could narrow the ever widening development gap. Therefore rapid economic growth was equated with central planning and control of the economy (by the state and the private sector) with an emphasis on industrialisation, modernization and urbanisation. The widening gap was further exacerbated by the influx of transnational corporations. Sadly though, “the basic assumption continues to be that the modernization/industrialisation process, with some consultation with the people and the goodwill and assistance of “developed” countries and the international community will bring about positive change” (Wignaraja and Siriwardana, 1998:105). An alternative development pathway to South Asia is emphasised by Wignaraj and Sirwardana who stress the need for a country specific model seeking a balanced form

of development with regard to growth, technological advance and local knowledge and resources; moreover one, which sees the poor as subjects and not objects.

They state:

a sustainable development strategy for the present, needs to search for alternative driving forces for a self-sustaining accumulation. It also seems to necessary for South Asian countries to adopt a more complex development strategy that combines human development, growth, equity and technological change with a wiser and more creative use of local resources and knowledge. In such a strategy, the people, locally available resources and, local knowledge systems become critical instruments. Imported capital and technology, the factors in short supply, can be supplementary. The new strategy, moreover, does not have to be reflected in a single replicable model; each country has its own socio-cultural specificity and will have to chart its own social transition. In this transition all countries, however, will have to pursue internally a basically two-pronged strategy that will permit them to maintain the gains from past attempts at modernization and industrialisation-with appropriate damage limitation-and to make a direct attack on poverty in all its manifestations, an attack in which the poor themselves are the subjects and not the objects of the process. (Wignaraja and Sirivardana, 1998:107)

It must be acknowledged that thousands of people and organizations representing “varying degrees of mobilization, conscientization and organisation for development and democracy” in their programs have and are in the process of finding out what works for South Asia’s rural poor. (Wignaraj and Siriwardena, 2002) Some of the more recognized organizations in Asia include the Grameen Bank and Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in Bangladesh, Chipko Movement, Self Employed Women’s (SEWA), and the Kerala science Movement in India, Participatory Institute for Development Alternatives (PIDA) and Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka (Wignaraj and Siriwardena, 2002:116).

Furthermore, it is necessary to keep in mind that it is only by understanding the heterogeneous circumstances and dynamics within one's society that we come to realize that development frameworks are indeed subject to socio-political, economic and religious circumstances of each country. It becomes timely then to highlight the dynamics of participation in a spirito-cultural context in Sri Lanka.

2.8 The Sri Lankan context

It should be acknowledged that Christian and Hindu influences have become part of the modern culture leading to new studies on "Protestant Buddhism" and "spirit religion". A detailed analysis of these digressions from traditional Buddhism practice is available in Gombrich and Obeyesekere, 1988. However, most of the rural communities still conduct their lifestyles based on traditional Buddhist principles of social conduct. The non-sectarian nature of Buddhism has provided for people of other faiths to practice the principles of its teachings and this is most evident in cultural norms. Many of the Tamil/Hindu cultural norms are traditionally similar to those practiced by Sinhala Buddhists. I stress this importance of culture and religion in the development process due to its significant impact on the day-to-day lives of the people. Successful development activity in the rural communities of Sri Lanka is impossible without acknowledging the religious affiliations and cultural norms of the

people. It is with this in mind that Sarvodaya has drawn up its village development model, which will be elaborated on in the next chapter.

2.9 Remarks

In this chapter I have shown that existing literature provides a comprehensive framework for my study. It could be said that the progression from economic growth to a more inclusive approach to development continues and that participation has been recognized to be a key component in the process. Participation also continues to evolve into various forms and frameworks, some more inclusive than others. The concept of empowerment is essential for participation but the evaluation of the actual practice is subjective to social, political, economic and cultural circumstances of the country. Furthermore, the recent studies on religion and development provides useful literature, bringing to light its importance especially on rural communities in the South, and emphasising the inextricable connection between religion and culture and its impact on development.

Chapter Three

Buddhist Philosophy and the Sarvodaya Way

“The world has enough for everyone’s needs, but not for everyone’s greed”

~Mahatma Gandhi

This chapter provides an *overview* of Sarvodaya’s work. I refer to it as an overview because the magnitude of the work undertaken by Sarvodaya in the field of development, does not allow me, in this report, to elaborate on all the various programs implemented by the Movement. However, I feel it necessary to provide a background of the work conducted through Sarvodaya to better understand the village development model, discussed in Chapter Four, which is the focus of my study .

Sarvodaya’s development policy is based on Buddhist principles. I attempt to clarify Buddhist principles as far as it is necessary for the purposes of this study. I pay careful attention to preserving the significance of the teachings. Figures are incorporated as an easier means to understand some of the terminology. Bearing in mind the magnitude of Sarvodaya’s work, I divide this chapter into five sections. The first section provides a brief overview of Sarvodaya. The second section discusses the influence of Buddhism on Sarvodaya’s development work and its

impact on the individual, village, nation and world. The third section explains the concept of basic needs as adopted by Sarvodaya providing the context for Section Four, which will introduce the organizational structure and the numerous programs of Sarvodaya through which basic needs are sought to be satisfied. Particular attention will be given to the three main Units of Sarvodaya, The Social Empowerment, Technological Empowerment and Economic Empowerment units and to describing their roles in satisfying basic needs at the village level in Section Five.

3.1 Sarvodaya -an Overview

Sarvodaya is the result of inspiration gained through an experimental work camp in a remote village of Sri Lanka in 1958. Dr. A.T Ariyaratne, the founder of Sarvodaya, then a school teacher in Colombo integrated the experiences of successful collective action at the work camp, the teachings of the Buddha and inspiration from Gandhian philosophy to promote the message of an integrated holistic approach to development, peace and spiritual awakening. Legally enacted by a Parliamentary Act of Incorporation in 1972, Sarvodaya is now considered to be the largest NGO in Sri Lanka with the widest reach, encompassing over one third of the villages in the island (Sarvodaya Annual Report, 2002).

The word Sarvodaya was coined by Mahatma Gandhi, meaning “welfare of all” but the *interpretation* of the word Sarvodaya adopted a deeper meaning as relevant to Sri Lanka’s Sinhala Buddhist Culture and came to mean ‘Awakening of all’ which was inline with Buddhist thought. It needs mention the word “awakening” in Sarvodaya discourse refers to a moral development of the individual.

Dr. Ariyaratne (1989) emphasises the importance of ‘awakening’ thus:

Awakening is the pre-requisite to the development of a person, a community and a country. Awakening takes place when people join together for the benefit of all. In order to achieve both personal and social awakening, Sarvodaya works for a balanced integration of spiritual, moral, cultural, social economic and political dimensions. Whatever we do in one of these sectors influences all other sectors.

Therefore, Sarvodaya’s mission is to promote personal and social awakening of all beginning with individual “awakening” which would in turn spread to the family, the village community and national and global societies.

3.2 Buddhist Inspiration and the Sarvodaya Way

Although the central concept of development implemented by Sarvodaya is based on Buddhist philosophy of life, its non-sectarian nature allows for the respect of all religions. Therefore, it has within its follower’s people of numerous religious faiths. Every human being is fundamentally recognized as an equal with any other human being under the Buddhist principle of ‘Samanathmatha’ or equality ((Liyanage in Srinivas, 2001: 308)

Dr Ariyaratne (2002) provides an explanation for basing Sarvodaya's concept of development on the teachings of the Buddha²

Quite early in life, in the kind of development work I was doing, I realized, that teachings of the Buddha should not be reduced to an ideology, a set of sectarian beliefs or principles on which I should base my community services. I felt that ideologies always bring about divisions in the minds of people. On the other hand I experienced that if I develop a vision based on the Teachings of the Buddha as a whole, that kind of mind-set would help me in what I was trying to do for the benefit of my own spiritual life and the progress of my country. As a follower of the Buddha and His Teachings, I identified my work as a service motivated by a Buddhist Vision. Very often I referred to the Sarvodaya Movement as an attempt to translate Buddha's Teachings into development action.

By this vision Dr. Ariyaratne means "a state of dynamic consciousness directed towards achieving peace and happiness for one and all." He stresses that a Buddhist vision is not confined to the Buddhists alone but also extends to non-Buddhists and is based on compassion and loving-kindness. Therefore this vision implies:

- That every human being be considered a brother /sister.
- See no distinction in cast, creed, colour race etc.,and
- Extend respect and sympathy to all living beings including animals and the environment.

This Buddhist Vision can be realized by the recognition that we are inextricably linked to each other in the web of life, and by developing a comprehensive framework of thought, in conformity with the essence of Buddhist ethics, morality, concentration and wisdom that can be practically demonstrated in the society and extended to other societies. This in turn can be used not only for the spiritual enlightenment of society but can be expanded to promote moral, cultural, social, economic, and political processes in the world.

The Buddhist teachings upon which the Sarvodaya stand is built, is based on the notion that life involves suffering, that the cause of this suffering is human ego and desire and that suffering can be ended only by achieving freedom from human desire (Ariyaratne,1999). Understanding these principles enable individuals to find a 'Middle Path'. To relieve one self from suffering, it is necessary to follow the Noble Eight Steps or the Middle Path. The Eight Steps comprises of right views, right thoughts, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Furthermore, to follow these steps it was necessary to have certain virtues namely: *metta* (loving kindness), *Karuna* (compassion), *muditha* (altruistic joy), and *upekkha* (equanimity) (Mahathera, in Srinivas, 2001:308)

² The discussion pertaining to a "Buddhist Vision" in the corresponding pages is from Ariyaratne.A.T. 2002. A Buddhist Vision for the Future. Sir baron Jayatilaka Memorial Lecture. Y.M.B.A.-Colombo.

This leads us to the discussion on how Sarvodaya harnesses the goodness of humankind for its development. First, Sarvodaya stresses the importance of an awakening of the Human Personality (Purna Paurushodaya), followed by the awakening of the Human Families (Kutumbodaya), Village Communities (Gramodaya), Urban Communities (Nagarodaya), National Communities (Deshodaya) and finally the World Community (Vishodaya).

Human Personality Awakening - Sarvodaya believes that mind is the supreme factor in the personality awakening process. If the motivating force in the mind is Metta or respect for all lives, then a human being who accepts this principle has to necessarily translate this thought into concrete compassionate action called 'Karuna'. When loving kindness and compassionate action are practised, we get an emotional and intellectual reaction in the form of joy of service. This altruistic joy is called 'Mudita'. Practising these lead to a more permanent development of a characteristic in one's personality called 'Upekkha' or equanimity. There is a thought, there is an action, there is an immediate reaction and finally there is a positive and more permanent character formation in the individual in such a process of thought and action. This is considered to be the path to personality awakening. (Ariyaratne, 1999). Individual personality development then is considered a starting point from which family, village and national Awakening can take place. As Ariyaratne states:

The process of education or enlightenment or development of the personality of an individual to the fullest is called “paurushodaya’. Only those who have as their supreme goal the development of their personality to the fullest can in the long run show others the way to the path to liberation from the spiritual and moral lapses and socio economic ills that humanity is faced with today (Ariyaratne, 1999)

Family Awakening - Sarvodaya seeks to foster a family environment conducive to personality awakening through its Family Awakening Programme initiated in 2002.

Some of the objectives are:

- To foster inter-personal relations, co-operation, and participatory co-existence among the families of Sarvodaya full-time employees.
- To instil confidence in them regarding the security and survival of their families and to harness their creative talents and capabilities for the welfare of their families,
- To establish an environment in which they can contribute to the accomplishments of Sarvodaya goals, and;
- To raise better families through personality development

Some activities carried out by this program: alcohol and drug awareness, the distribution of school gifts and educational material, a scheme to provide financial assistance to university students and training on leadership (Sarvodaya Annual Report, 2002:104). By emphasising the importance of the family unit and providing assistance when necessary to create a stable environment, Sarvodaya provides a

strong foundation to expand its concept of personality and family awakening to village awakening

Village Awakening - Village Awakening occurs by operationalizing the combination of spiritual practice and voluntary shared labour (Shramadana): an old custom practiced in Sri Lankan communities. Sarvodaya has revived this old “value system” to be practically applicable in the modern context to motivate the people. The concept of voluntary shared labor acts as a powerful tool in uniting people towards a common cause. As well, it acts as a means of removing egoism, possession, competition and releases positive energies (Ariyaratne, 1991, and 1999:30-33). The concept of voluntary shared labor and the village development model through which activities are carried out will be discussed in Chapter 4. For an illustration of Village Awakening see figure 3.1

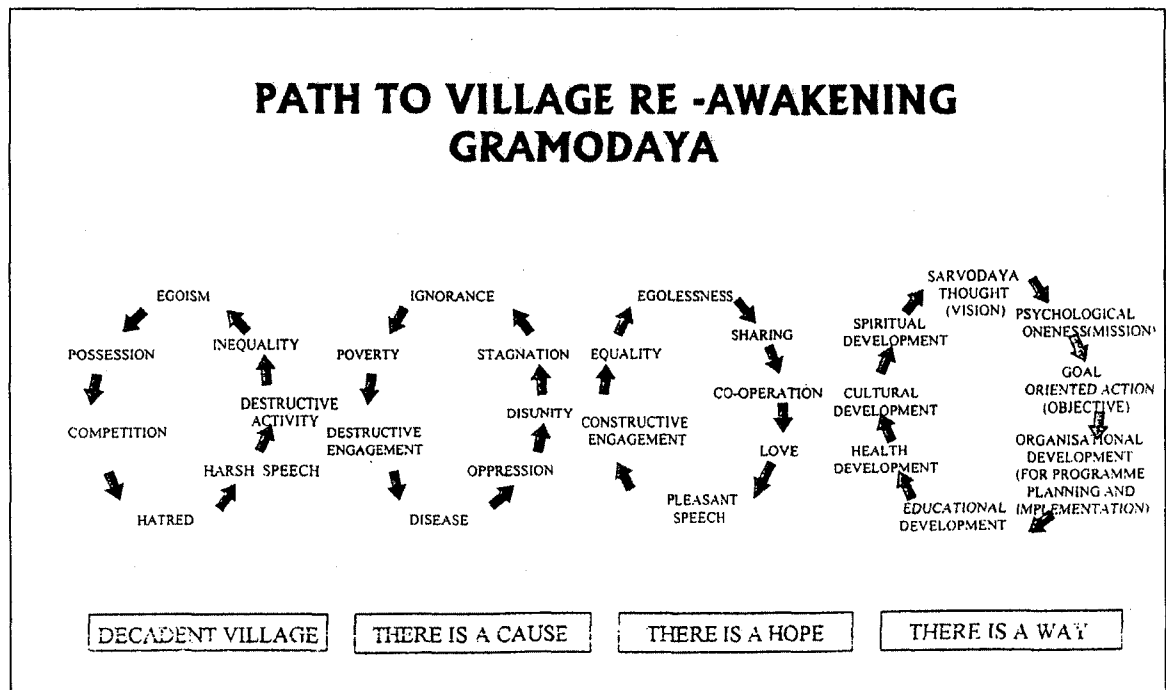


Figure 3.1 – Gramodaya Village Re-awakening: Circles of Dependent Origination (Ariyaratne, 1991:152)

Urban Awakening – Sarvodaya’s work is not confined solely to rural areas. In spreading the message of awakening, Sarvodaya has initiated urban development services to alleviate the problems faced at the urban levels. Operations are carried out in the Colombo Metropolitan areas and the suburbs. Some of the programs include conducting voluntary labor camps, health programs and other educational programmes directed at youth. Furthermore, the Sarvodaya Rehabilitation and Development Centre is a new initiative to rehabilitate the living conditions of those who live on the streets. Under this program numerous forms of assistance are available in the form of employment, education, health clinics and counselling to name a few (Sarvodaya Annual Report, 2002:65-67).

National Awakening - Sarvodaya, in introducing strategies for fulfilling its development objectives through the concepts of personality, village, and urban areas has logically expanded its approach to the next stage of development - National Awakening. For this purpose, and recognizing the need for change of the existing political, social and economic infrastructure, Sarvodaya has introduced a new political system called the "Consensual Political System." Activities have been carried out since 2001, to spread the Sarvodaya political message. Some of the activities include: establishing the Deshodaya National Congress, creating community awareness and education on the new political system and conducting a field survey to determine the feasibility of establishing a community-based Consensual Governance Body. This would enable devolution of power and the formation of necessary village to national linkages. Sarvodaya was also active in monitoring parliamentary elections and thereby providing a neutral force (Sarvodaya Annual Report 2002:68-70. For the guiding objectives for National Awakening see Figure 3.2

PATH TO NATIONAL AWAKENING - Deshodaya

- I. Establishment of spiritual, moral and cultural values at individual, family, group, village and urban community and national levels.
2. Satisfaction of Ten Basic Human Needs of people beginning with the most deprived in society laying the foundation for a Right Livelihood society
3. Bringing about social development in village and urban communities by intensifying functional development educational program for:
 - (1) Awareness creation and leadership building
 - (2) Community participation in decision - making
 - (3) Community organization for self - reliance and self - government
 - (4) Community education for a global non-violent social order
 - (3) Protection of cultural identity and promoting unity with diversity
 - (6) Health development
 - (7) Conflict resolution, National integration and peace
 - (8) Full realization of fundamental human rights for women and children, rule of law
4. Re-organisation of the political power structure in the country on the principles of:
 - (1) Participatory democratic institutions and
 - (2) Complete decentralization of power to village and urban community level democratic institutions.
5. Re - structuring the national economy on the principles of:
 - (1) National self- sufficiency with regard to basic human needs.
 - (2) Adoption of small scale decentralized, labour intensive appropriate technologies for production purposes/ without destruction of nature or culture
 - (3) Replacement of existing production relationships with non-exploitative trusteeship enforced by law with a Right Livelihood Society in view
 - (4) Complete non-dependence on exploitative international economic relationships while promoting healthy interdependence international economic relationships to create a just global society
 - (5) Protection of the environment and bio - diversity

Figure 3.2: Path to National Awakening – Deshodaya (Ariyaratne, 1991:60)

World Awakening - The global awakening program seeks to provide a means to promote the Sarvodaya vision globally. With the growing dissatisfaction with the failures of development discourse, and the constant search for an alternative form of development, Sarvodaya's development strategies form a new framework for discussion. In an effort to create linkages with the rest of the world in promoting its model, Sarvodaya has laid out some objectives for countries to follow. (Annual Report, 2002, pp.74-87) These objectives are enumerated in Figure 3.3 below.

Furthermore, guidance and knowledge is provided to those interested in studying the Sarvodaya development strategies. This is done through the International Unit at the headquarters, which coordinates all activities in relation to international visitors. Some of these activities include organizing field visits, conducting international Shramadana Camps, providing facilities for international students, researchers and visitors who come to study the Sarvodaya model, organizing conferences and workshops and disseminating information to partner organisations abroad. Sarvodaya has many resource partners who have been providing assistance in numerous forms through the years. (Annual Report, 2002:74-87) For development assistance according to geographical location see Appendix. D and for Resource Partners for the year 2001-2002 see Appendix:E.

Ariyaratne (1991) emphasises the importance of communicating the Sarvodaya vision globally:

“ ..it is our belief that people’s movements should have clear global perspectives before them if their contribution to human development, justice and peace is not to be wasteful.”
(Ariyaratne, 1991:159)

PATH TO WORLD AWAKENING - Vishvodaya

- I. In all countries of the world, concerned individuals and groups initiate, promote and intensify Paurushodaya, Kutumbodaya, Gramodaya, Nagarodaya, Deshodaya and Vishvodaya movements according to their historical and cultural realities.
2. These individuals and groups should build up a close communication relationship based on both affinity and vicinity and mutually support one another to build a no - poverty and peaceful society.
3. They should build up alternative but universal value - based
 - Living patterns/Right Livelihood/Full-Engagement communities
 - Production, Distribution and consumption techniques and structures, and
 - Assist one another to break through existing ideological barriers and political boundaries to create interdependent just societies.
 - They should show by example, how to build up non-violent defense mechanisms and oppose all forms of piling up of mass destruction armaments in their countries.
 - They should oppose all forms of production that result in destruction of nature and bio-diversity, enslavement of women and children, increase poverty and bring about economic imbalances, pollution of the environment and psychological and economic impoverishment of communities anywhere in the world.

Figure 3.3 Path to World Awakening – Vishvodaya (Ariyaratne,1991:61)

Awakening at each therefore supplements the awakening at all other levels. For example, if a family can live its life with each member striving for total enlightenment, and follow a code of conduct, mutually sharing their consciousness, such a family enhances the process of awakening human groups at other levels. Similarly, if a national community consists of a sufficient number of individuals and families who have reached a critical level of shared consciousness, it will influence

other individuals and groups in a similar direction of awakening. The totality of all such processes of awakening is expressed by the word *Sarvodaya* (Ariyaratne, 1999).

Forming effective linkages from local to the global level is important in promoting the Sarvodaya model.

David Radcliffe suggests that:

Sarvodaya's role in a western society would be to promote community development within an urban-industrial situation, by asserting that community is defined by conscious will, not by organisation or sanction. For this purpose it could work through small clusters of associates working together to influence the large and impersonal institutions of society towards social, environmental and cultural sensitivity (Kantowsky, 1980;166)

3.3 Sarvodaya and Basic Human Needs

Sarvodaya promotes self-reliance so that people are empowered to take responsibility for planning their own futures. By working directly with the people at the village level, it has been able to gain the trust of the village community. Sarvodaya's objective is to create a no poverty/no affluence society. Sarvodaya believes that all cannot achieve affluence and that it cannot be reached easily without using wrong means. Furthermore, the social, environmental, moral and cultural cost of trying to build an affluent society is high and increases the already existing gap between the rich and poor (Ariyaratne, 1999:30). How then does Sarvodaya define no-poverty society for the purpose of designing and implementing their programs in village communities? Sarvodaya has a defined set of basic needs to figure out at

what level the poorest people in a community live and bringing that level up to reach a state of no poverty is considered the starting point for development. The satisfaction of the Ten Basic Needs as enumerated by Sarvodaya, is for a life without poverty: a satisfactory life and not necessarily an affluent one. During an interview, Dr. Ariyaratne mentioned how he was inspired to investigate the concept of basic human needs after visiting a remote village in Sri Lanka in the 1960s. This led him to conduct a survey on what the villagers perceived to be their “needs” and prioritise them accordingly. Surprisingly, and contrary to the ILO’s approach to Basic Needs, the first “need” listed by the people was a clean and beautiful environment. It is necessary to note that *environment* connotes the physical and psychological environment. For excerpts of an interview conducted with Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne on this topic see Appendix F.

Basic Human Needs as accepted by Sarvodaya are:

- 1) A clean and Beautiful Environment (Both physical and psychological)
- 2) A clean and Adequate supply of water
- 3) *Minimum requirements of clothing*
- 4) Balanced Food requirements
- 5) A simple house to live in
- 6) Basic Health Care
- 7) Simple communication Facilities
- 8) Minimum Energy requirements
- 9) Total Education

10) Cultural and Spiritual Needs (ariyaratne,1999: 30)

These basic needs can also be further divided in to sub needs. It should be kept in mind that the rationale of Basic Needs of Sarvodaya is to improve the level of living of the weakest population group in a community. It is prudent to mention here that Sarvodaya does not consider Employment to be a basic human need. Employment brings income for a person, which is used to buy what is required to satisfy the needs. Therefore, employment is considered to be a *means* of satisfying needs and is not a need in itself (Ariyaratne, 1999:30-31).

3.4 Organizational structure and management

Sarvodaya's national headquarters or "Damsak Mandira" is located 15 km from the capital city, Colombo and serves as the financial and administrative center for all of Sarvodaya's activities. Sarvodaya's vision of familial relationship was evident during my first visit to the headquarters where Dr. Ariyaratne brought to my notice that I will be working with the "Sarvodaya family" and that everyone addressed each other as brother or sister within the organization. This practice was extended even when work was conducted in the villages

The headquarters and adjoining land covering a span of 7 acres houses 14 of the 40 Sarvodaya Service Units. The services rendered by Sarvodaya could be broadly categorized as those affected through Social Empowerment Programs, Technological Empowerment Programs, Economic Empowerment Programs,

Resource Development and services rendered by the Independent units. It is necessary to mention that the Independent Units, while still a major element of the Sarvodaya strategy, are no longer directed by Sarvodaya. However they remain in consultation with the main organization. For the purpose of this report, I will concentrate on the services rendered by the Social, Technological and Economic empowerment units in relation to village development. All the programs conducted by the units, independent or otherwise are inextricably linked to the Sarvodaya development process and therefore impact on and compliments each other. To explain this point I provide, in the box below, a brief overview of the work carried out by each independent unit. (Annual Report , 2002) For a detailed synopsis of work carried out by the independent Units and other programs see Sarvodaya Annual Report, 2001-2002.

Services rendered by the Independent Units of Sarvodaya³

- **Sarvodaya Women's Movement** was founded in 1987 and legally registered as an independent unit in 1990. The movement seeks "to provide women with opportunity and direction so they can assume their rightful place in society and realise their aspirations, hope and strengths." It provides skill training for self-employment, shelters, rehabilitates and provides education for street children and their mothers, provides bank loans for income generating projects, promotes organic farming in disadvantaged districts, trains trainer's to create awareness regarding violence against women, provides gender sensitization training and rehabilitation and transitional care for women released from prisons. The Organization is based on Mother's Groups (see chapter 4), that operate at the village level. They also form into groups of divisional representatives, district coordinators and provincial representatives.

³ Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Sangamaya (Inc.). 2002. Sarvodaya. Annual report:2001-2002. Vishva Lekha Printers

Continued.

- **Suwasetha Sewa** - This programme provides health, nutrition, general care and rehabilitation for disadvantaged groups including orphans, pregnant teenagers, senior citizens, the homeless and the physically and mentally challenged. The overriding objective of Suwa Setha is to improve the general condition, standard of living and quality of life of the most disadvantages and neglected human beings in Sri Lanka.
- **The Sarvodaya Legal Services Movement (SLSM)** became a legally independent organization in 1995. The broad objective of SLSM is to empower people with the legal knowledge to safe guard their personal liberty and rights within the existing legal framework. It operates through coordinating the services of volunteer lawyers who offer free legal mediation and advice to clients at the Movement's headquarters and at the District Centres. The following programs are carried out: providing free legal advice, increasing knowledge of the country's legal systems, and protecting and increasing awareness of Human Rights, Women's Rights and Children's Rights. To make legal aid more easily accessible to the public, SLSM conducts clinics using the volunteered services of lawyers, policemen, labour officers, and Grama Niladharis (government representatives in the villages
- **The Sarvodaya Trust Fund** was established in 1984 to "recognize individuals and organizations instrumental in helping humanity, building peace and assisting Sarvodaya to achieve its aims and objectives. Dr. Ariyaratne initiated the Trust using funds he himself had received from international awards. Each year the Trust fund presents Awards to outstanding Sri Lankan leaders.
- **Sarvodaya Samodaya Services** - This program was started in 1984 for restraining individuals including those in their adolescent age from indulging in various types of addiction. This Community Service program gradually developed into a legally registered independent organization. Being a special centre dedicated for the development of human values, it conducts national and international programs related to the following aspects very successfully: Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts, Implementation of programs for Economic, Social, Cultural and Health Development, and Community Awakening in 60 Grama Niladhari Divisions, Rehabilitation of Street Children, Technical Training programs in association with Public Sector Institutions, Implementation of special projects (Nutrition, Prevention of Aids/Venereal diseases, Environmental Health and Sanitation)

Continued.

- **A.T. Ariyaratne Charitable Trust Fund (Vishva Niketan Institute)** was established with the moneys, presented to Dr. Ariyaratne. It is an independent organization administered by a Board of Trustees. It's objectives are primarily to provide guidance and facilities to awaken the latent spiritual energy in individuals, to provide necessary counseling, training and guidance to resolve religious, communal and interpersonal conflicts, to create a peaceful environment in the society by investing internal harmony in individuals, Psycho-healing of victims of anti-social practices and Drug Addicts and to prepare an environment for the protection of Human Rights and Personal Liberty. Services rendered could be classified as follows: Religious Programs (Training in Meditation), Field Programs, Rehabilitation Programs (for Prison Inmates) and Special Programs
- **The Sarvodaya Shanti Sena (Peace Brigades)** formed in 1978 was a response to communal violence. It aims to bring about national harmony and cooperation. The objective of Shanthi Sena is to promote the spiritual, physical and mental development in youth and to bring about harmonious integration of all communities and religious faiths. It provides training in Community leadership and skills, non-violent conflict resolution, disaster relief and emergency care. Organizing mass campaigns of peace meditation, promoting environmental protection and developing community leadership among youth are some of its main programs.

This report will not cover aspects of organizational management, financial management, assets and resource development and various donor assisted projects for reasons of time and space and due to the magnitude of work covered by Sarvodaya. There is information regarding these aspects in numerous Sarvodaya publications, Sarvodaya's referenced websites and most appropriately in the Sarvodaya Annual Report, 2002.

3.5 Empowerment: Social, Technological and Economic

This section provides a structural background of the three main divisions promoting village awakening. I start with the Social Empowerment Division, considered to be the lifeline of the village development process. I then proceed to discuss the roles of the Technological Empowerment Unit and the Economic Empowerment Unit in the village development model. The actual model will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

3.5.1 Social Empowerment Division

The various units, which make up the Social Empowerment program and their interconnectedness to development at the village level, are discussed in this section.

The Social Empowerment Division is considered to be the foundation of Sarvodaya development. It is responsible for social awakening and mobilization of a community, leading it through a five-stage graduation process (see Chapter Four). For the year 2001-2002, 6109 funded programs of work have been executed with the participation of more than 100,000 people. This is said to represent 88% of the total activities planned. It has been reported that work estimated at Rs. 75 million has been completed utilizing local resources available in the villages. (Annual Report, 2002:2)

The Social Empowerment Program, under the Social Empowerment Division is the foundation for the village development process and a network of specialized units coordinates this program.

Units under the Social Empowerment Division are:

- a) Community Capacity Building Unit
- b) Community Health Unit
- c) Early Childhood Development Program
- d) Disaster Management Unit
- e) Sarvodaya Institute of Bio-diversity Conservation
- f) Development Communication Unit
- g) Information Technology Unit

a) *Community Capacity Building Unit (CCBU)*

This Unit is perhaps the most active at the village level. It is responsible for the effective and smooth operation of activities which range from strengthening group formations, establishing and legalizing Shramadana Societies, meeting the physical needs of the village through Shramadana camps, creating community awareness to visitors and promoting self strength and participation among the people. Since I was able to personally participate in a Shramadana camp, I had observed the tremendous amount of planning and networking undertaken by this unit prior to and during the Camp. I was also able to visit the Unit at Headquarters and interview the head of the unit, Mr. Abeynaike. Excerpts of the interview can be viewed in the text box below. Furthermore, I was also able to research some of the files available in relation to Shramadana Camps, and gain insight into the planning necessary to conduct such camps. This will be discussed later in Chapter Four. Furthermore,

parallel to the above-mentioned tasks, the Unit was also carrying out an equally important function of dissemination of information through field visits for visitors, leaflets, handbooks, modules, workshops, and training programs for Shramadana Society Officials. The programs for this Unit was funded by NORAD and Japan/Asia Friendship Organization.(Annual Report, 2002:14-19)

What do we mean by participation? It does not mean purely building roads and bridges and structures. It means development of the people as well. It means self reliance. When the capacity within individuals is realized. Man is destroying each other because this individual development is not taking place. Politicians create problems too. They work for their own benefit. Nobody will help you. You have to help yourself. It is up to the village folk to be conscious, be united and self-reliant and not rely on outside forces. This is the message we spread. This is what development means. We tell the people "you must all get together and work. Use your labour, your resources, and be united then you will realize your potential, your strengths and how to work together". It is not an easy process but you must try to recognize the needs of the people and speak to their hearts. There is no need to use big language. People don't understand that. That's why you need to speak to their hearts. This way I believe we can get anyone to participate. That is when you acknowledge the peoples problems and genuinely want to find out their needs people become more responsive. Some villages that we have been to, people don't give their participation. But as the work continues stage by stage, people observe and realize that the work is genuine. Then they are willing to participate

~Mr. Abeynaike, Senior Assistant, CCBU

b) *Early Childhood Development Program*

This unit aims "To promote optimal physical, intellectual and psycho-social development at early childhood through intervention programs for the holistic development of the total community especially within the rural poor." (Annual Report, 2002) This aim is achieved through various programs that focus on childcare, health and nutrition and food security. The programs are carried out through direct education and training of parents and children, at all levels of the community and works in conjunction with national level programs which deal with community needs. Early Childhood Development programs have been implemented in almost 15,000 villages of Sri Lanka in the year 2001-2002.

Some of the programs implemented in the year 2001-2002 were:

- Two-week Pre-school Teacher training
- Home-based Early Childhood Programme and Home Economics Management
- Children's Group Programs - Children's Camps and Awareness Programs
- Seminars for Pre-school teachers
- Workshops for creative activities
- Higher training for Pre-school teachers
- Participation in national level programs (Annual Report, 2002:23)

c) Community Health Programme

This programme renders its services through the Community Health Services Unit and Reproductive Health Unit and co-ordinates primary health activities, public awareness campaigns and training of health care workers. Some of the work undertaken involves identifying reproductive health problems of youth, developing knowledge, skills and attitude and providing guidance. Other programs include, training of staff on reproductive health and immunization programs, and distribution of printed matter on reproductive health and youth health. A health resource centre was newly established in Colombo for better management and provision of resources. Funding for these programs have been provided mainly from UNFPA and Nippon Foundation of Japan. (Annual Report,2002:23-29)

d) 5R Unit (Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Re-awakening)

This program is in charge of all Sarvodaya programs in the conflict-affected area in the northern and eastern provinces of the country. It has as its goal “to meet essential human needs and restore life with dignity in areas affected by calamity and conflict.” Some of the work carried out by this programme includes providing facilities or services to raise the standard of living for displaced communities in the form of improved physical infrastructure, water supply, sanitation, health care, agriculture, animal husbandry and household income. Whilst there have been numerous constraints in carrying on rehabilitation work in the war torn areas, I was

told that there is now renewed interest in reconstruction after the cease fire in 2002, and there was hope for more donor assistance to carry on the programs. Speaking to personnel of the unit, I was able to learn that one of the problems faced by the Unit was with regard to donor-funded projects where there was a stipulated time limit on the project line. (Annual Report, 2002:29-34)

e) Bio-diversity and Environment Conservation:

This program promotes environmental and bio-diversity conservation and bio-resource development in Sri Lanka. Some of the main tasks of this program include recycling wastes, promoting agro-forestry, the use of organic agricultural methods and traditional techniques to raise good crops (i.e. through the promotion of effective micro-organism technology-MT), promoting plant nurseries, and environmental clean ups and protecting Sri Lanka's rich natural heritage. It also provides education and training to youth on conservation issues. Annual Report,2002:34)

f) Development Communication Unit:

The Development Communication unit supports the activities of all the units, providing media services such as video and audio recording of events, and press relations. They have an extensive video library of Sarvodaya's activities, some of

which I was fortunate to view during my internship. The International Shramadana camp in which I participated was video recorded by this unit and I was actually interviewed for a documentary! The library and the Sooryodaya (Cultural Awakening) Program fall under this Unit together with the photography section. (annual Report,2002:35)

g) Information Technology Unit:

This Unit aims to introduce and disseminate information on technology by integrating it with the development process. It aims to educate rural youth about the Sarvodaya technological programs. Some of the latest developments taking place include setting up Telecentre programs where District level telecasters will be established to coordinate the network of rural telecentres to be opened in the villages. These rural telecenters are set up in the hopes of providing rural youth with basic training on information technology, to establish village information circles, and to establish village and district information centres. It will also provide a useful means of networking with the Sarvodaya headquarters. Special training is underway for selected youth from chosen villages. 163 rural information centres have been established to date (Annual Report, 2002)

In addition to the units mentioned above, the Social Empowerment Division collaborates closely with the administration and human resource sections that support the entire movement, which are also located at Sarvodaya headquarters.

The Social empowerment division works collectively with the Technological and Economic Empowerment Divisions to find sustainable solutions to satisfying basic needs of the rural communities.

Technological Empowerment⁴

The Sarvodaya Rural Technical Services (SRTS) Division implements the Sarvodaya Technological Empowerment Programs. Founded in 1978, the Division has been funded for more than two decades by the Swiss Organisation HELVETAS and also by Novartis Foundation since 2002. This division comprises of the Rural Technical Services Unit, the computer maintenance unit and the building and infrastructure facilities maintenance unit.

The SRTS mission is:

To satisfy the basic needs of the poorer sections of rural communities through strengthening the infrastructure of the village via community projects, and in that process strengthening the institutional skills of the villagers enabling them to act cohesively and progressively in the fulfillment of their own basic needs.⁵

The objectives of the Unit are the introduction of appropriate technology, improvement of health and hygiene systems, increasing social motivation, provision

⁴ Information for this section was obtained from the Sarvodaya Annual Report, 2001-2002; Interview with Director -Ms. Udani Mendis and internal publications of Sarvodaya

of technological empowerment and meeting the needs for development management training. Its activities include providing water schemes and sanitation facilities, housing, access facilities (foot paths, bridges, culverts), vocational training and skills development programs, research to identify low cost construction methods and appropriate technology options, alternative energy options like micro hydro, headquarters and district building maintenance and construction work and computer maintenance. For the year April 2001- 2002, 1,427 projects have been completed as follows: gravity-fed water supply schemes, Wells for drinking water, latrines, culverts, low-cost houses, and roadways. The completed projects have been instrumental in meeting the needs of about 26,297 rural people. Furthermore vocational training has been provided to 100 young men and women in masonry, construction of gravity-fed water schemes, maintenance etc. Maintenance and construction work at district centres as well as headquarters is conducted through this Unit. SRTS implements projects on request from the village community that are received via the District Offices.

Dr. Ariyaratte states the importance of recognizing the potential of the rural people:

It is becoming more and more important to create spaces where people can win confidence in their own entrepreneurial skills and ability to innovate both at the technical and organizational level. Positive achievements and concrete results foster imitation and 'chain reactions', especially if they satisfy community needs and combine new ideas with traditional practices. In addition, successful experiences are usually very easily accepted by communities

⁵ This quote was obtained from a hard copy of a slide presentation made available to me by Mrs Udani Mendis during my interview with her in January 2003.

The third main empowerment program we need to discuss is in relation to Economic Empowerment.

Economic Empowerment

The Sarvodaya Economic Enterprise Development Services (SEEDS) Gte Ltd. was established in 1986 to manage economic and income generating projects at village level. While it plays a major role in Sarvodaya's economic strategy in the villages, it plans and funds its activities separately from the corporate body of the Movement. It comprises of the Banking Division (Rural Enterprises Programme), The Management Training Institute, and Enterprises Development Services Division.⁶

SEEDS takes over the economic development of the village at the fourth stage of the five stage development model and also after the Shramadana Society therein has been registered as a legally recognized institution. The target group of this programme is the rural poor who are members of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Societies. Although the services were at first limited to institutional strengthening, entrepreneurship training and credit services, since 1990 they have been expanded to include business development, agricultural extension services and business information. SEEDS also promotes the concept of Right Livelihood and encourages environment friendly economic development activities. Currently, it

⁶ Information of the activities undertaken by each of the 3 Divisions is available at www.eureka.lk/seeds

conducts development services through 2,600 village Sarvodaya Shramadana Societies in 18 districts in the island. Furthermore, it has 494 village banking units, with a Society membership of over 420,000 and Cumulative savings deposits amounting to Rs. 680 million (SEEDS Annual Report 2000-2001)

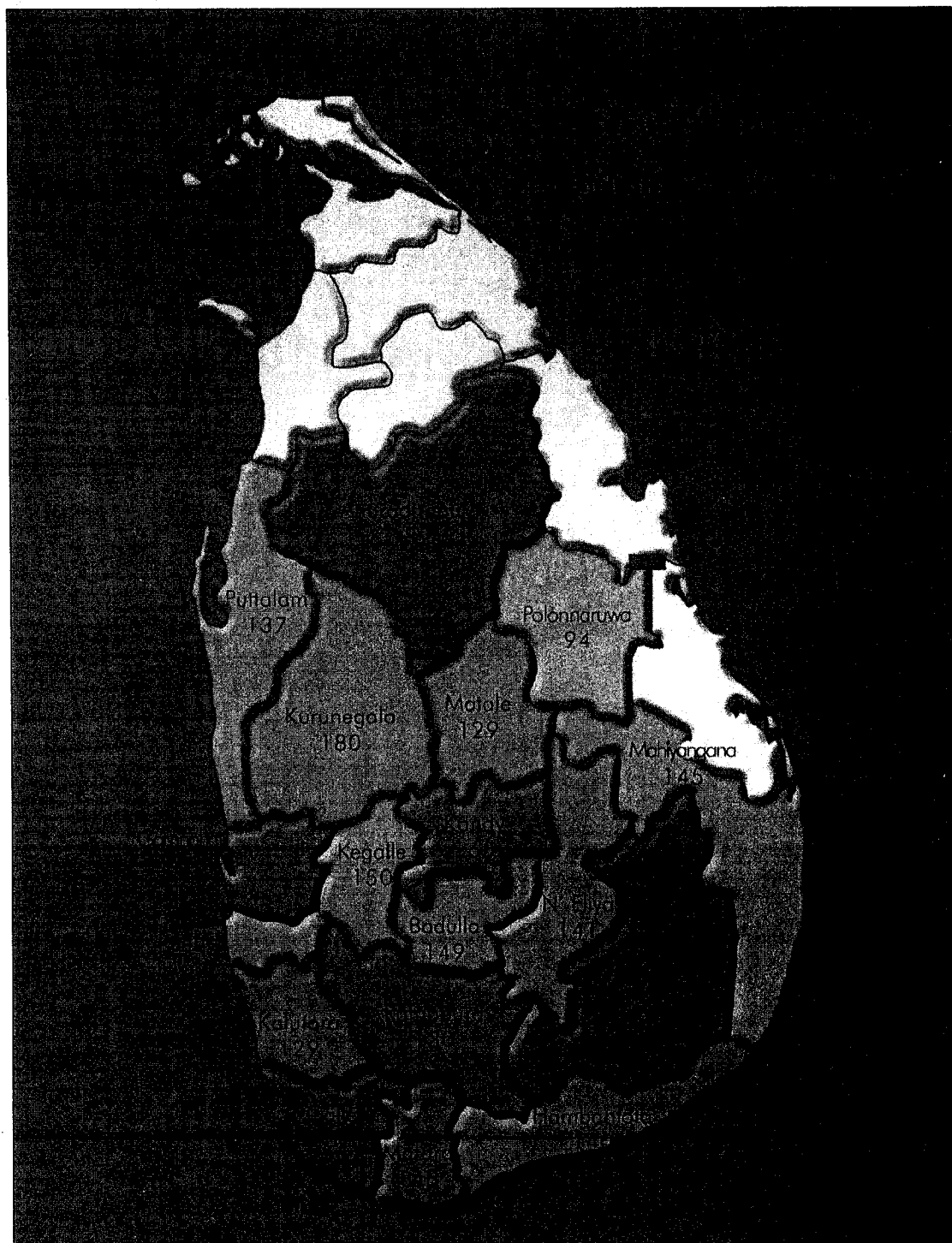


Figure 5: SEEDS Outreach societies per district (SEEDS Annual Report, 2000-2001)

Remarks

Sarvodaya's development journey is said to be devoid of readymade theories of development. Instead it seeks to learn along the way and uses as its compass the voices of the people and the cultural values and practices most of which have their roots in the Buddhist teachings. This notion of combining spirituo-cultural elements in the development programs has proven to be successful. It has been able to mobilize a wide segment of the society. Also, Sarvodayas programs have tremendous reach and are flexible and creative in keeping with the times. One significant drawback in carrying on its work effectively has been lack of funds. Most of the programs are dependent on international aid. Sarvodaya has tried to dilute this by applying for program funds as opposed to project funds. This ensures a lump sum for a prolonged period of time and curtails the donor agencies from dictating the agendas for development. However, some Units still receive funds on a project basis.

The significance of Sarvodaya's ability to mobilize people is perhaps most evident through its Peace Campaigns. The Peace meditation organized in Colombo (the Capital City) in August 1999 witnessed nearly 200,000 people, spending over two hours in silent meditation.

D.J. Mitchell in an article titled “Assembling for peace” (internal publication) reflects on this event:

The next morning, I sat in the tropical predawn, reflecting on what I’d witnessed the preceding day. What moved me most is that they came. Tens of thousands of Sri Lankans, Sinhalese, Tamils, and Moors. Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Ba’hais. For two hours, at least, this fractured nation was united – united in the desire for peace, something so basic and yet so elusive, and something many Westerners take for granted.

CHAPTER FOUR

SHRAMADANA AND VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

**“THE POOR ARE NOT THE PROBLEM, BUT ARE
PART OF THE SOLUTION”**

~PONNA WIGNARAJA

This chapter is organized into two sections. The first section elaborates on the concept of Shramadana and its importance in development work carried out through Sarvodaya. The second section discusses Sarvodaya's five-stage development model. Understanding the five-stage development model requires the explanation of numerous group formations and organizational patterns, which helps conjure a holistic picture of village development. For this reason I have introduced charts as a means of visual representation. The interviews to which I refer were those

conducted at the Community Capacity Building Unit of the Sarvodaya Social Empowerment Division as part of my project.

4.1 Concept of Shramadana

Sarvodaya's concept of sharing through Shramadana is nothing new to the rural sector and dates back to the time when agriculture was the foundation of the country's economy. Kantowsky's book, *Sarvodaya: the other development*(1980) provides us with a glimpse of pre-colonial agrarian conditions through the documentary evidence of Robert Knox, who was a ship wrecked merchant who spent twenty years in Sri Lanka (1659-1679). He wrote: "When they fill their Grounds, or Reap their Corn, they do it by whole Towns generally, all helping each other for Attoms, as they call it; that is, that they may help them as much, or as many days again in their Fields, which accordingly they will do" (Kantowsky, 1980:148). This description can be related to the ancient 'kaiya' system of mutual help and joint cooperation. This was said to be a social response, to emergency situations, where a shareholder requested assistance. A reciprocal response was expected for the labour that was provided and penalties were imposed on those who shirked their duty (Kantowsky, 1980:148-149).

Translated from Sanskrit, Shramadana means "the selfless gift of labour." In the Sinhala Buddhist context 'Shrama' literally means energy or labour and the Buddhist

idea of 'dana' means sharing. Sarvodaya has given a broader meaning to Shramadana as an "act of sharing one's time, thought, effort and other resources with the community' Ariyaratne, 1999:25)

In its first two decades, Sarvodaya concentrated primarily on improving the physical infrastructure of the villages through Shramadan camps. Between 1958 and 1966 the concept became popular within the country and smaller groups adopted it. The government also started its own national Shramadana Service in the Department of Land Development. Due to positive results, the Movement was able to come to a working arrangement with the Government to undertake some specific projects in relation to rehabilitation. The Government in turn aided by providing the necessary equipment. In 1965 the Movement was declared an approved charity consisting of a group of volunteers with elected office bearers. However, in 1966 Government assistance was stopped, as it was believed that a voluntary organization could not be provided with such assistance. However, with recognition of its work internationally, financial assistance from numerous international development organizations allowed for expansion of Sarvodaya village development activities (Kantowsky, 1980:45)

By adopting the Shramadana methodology, Sarvodaya seeks to build an environment conducive to the psychological as well as social infrastructure development of a community by promoting self-reliance and community participation whilst adhering

to the prevailing cultural patterns and value systems. Therefore, this psychosocial infrastructure-building stage continues through the systematic satisfaction of basic needs. This is accomplished, first by acquiring the necessary technical, organisational and management skills to interrelate with the broader social structures. Second by establishing legally valid institutional infrastructures. This in turn leads to social, economic and participatory political processes. Today there are over 11,400 out of a total of over 28,000 villages in Sri Lanka where this kind of experience is shared by thousands of people attending Shramadana camps (Sarvodaya Annual Report, 2002).

4.2 A Shramadana camp

Preparing for a Shramadana camp involves tremendous organization. The members of the village community, to satisfy specific human needs identified by them, initiate a request for Shramadana. The Community Capacity Building Unit (CCBU) of the Sarvodaya Social Empowerment Division then proceeds to take the necessary steps to mobilize the people and resources to organize a workable program to satisfy those needs. The first step involves a village survey in relation to location, population, facts of current employment, levels of education, distance from headquarters and vicinity of local institutions such as the temple, hospital, school, post office, police. Once these figures have been determined, it becomes necessary to determine the work site, places of accommodation, camp costs and necessary material for cooking, to name a few. Needless to say, activities for the preparation of camps start weeks

before the actual event. This in itself becomes a social event, which requires much cooperation and planning. It also provides an opportunity to meet and interact with people from other villagers who come to help (Ariyaratne,1999:26-29)

Before the actual manual work begins, camp leaders explain *Codes of Conduct* in the camp pertaining to self-security, self- discipline and self- denial. Self-security is primarily concerned with physical care and protection when engaged in manual work. Self-discipline is mostly with regard to inter-personal relationships. Self-denial is mostly the cultivation of mental discipline to overcome egocentricity, idleness, and discrimination of any form(Ariyaratne,1999:27).

As well, the four individual Buddhist *qualities* of loving kindness (Metta), Compassion (*Karuna*) altruistic joy (*muditha*) and Equanimity (*upekkha*) are promoted not only as mental exercises but also as a foundation of an ethic of social work The four Buddhist *principles of social conduct* are also practiced. People are therefore encouraged to share (dâna), to speak in a friendly way with one another (priyavacana) and to perform constructive activities together (arthacariya). Eating and living together without considering caste and class differences fosters the principle of equality (samanatmatâ) (Ariyaratne, 1999:27).

In addition to labour, everyone is free to donate whatever possessions or skills for the common benefit in the true spirit of practicing dana. This can be in the form of

money, material or land. Thus sharing becomes a commonly accepted social practice (Ariyaratne, 1999:28).

The camp in itself involves six to eight hours of manual work per day. A special feature of the Shramadana work camp is the family gathering based on the ancient thought that “whole of humanity is one family for the wise”. The village community, volunteers from neighbouring villages, and other participants of the camp congregate to share their knowledge and information, surface grievances, find solutions to problems, plan various community actions, and create spiritual cultural awareness. Two to four hours are devoted to family gatherings, and some time is always devoted to meditation (Ariyaratne, 1999:28).

It is obvious that a Shramadana camp affects every segment of the population. Traditional roles may be adopted where women not participating in the camp may prepare food for the participants engaged in heavy manual work. Sharing food is believed to build a sense of community. Therefore food is collectively prepared and distributed. The youth, children and elders too have important roles to play. The youth apart from organizing activities for cultural programs actively participate in the manual work. Children engage in numerous activities such as carrying water and food to the workers acting as messengers and participating in traditional cultural activities. Furthermore, they also learn to work for the common good by observing

their elders at work. The elders provide advice and consent for community activities.

The economic worth of Shramadana cannot go unnoticed. The construction of roads, latrines, houses, wells, pre-schools, community halls, etc by communities in an organized manner although not reflected in any formal economic gauge, such as GDP, contribute immensely to improving the quality of life in rural communities (Ariyaratne, 1999)

My experience of a Shramdana Camp

***International Shramadana Camp, Dambara Village
March 20-23, 2003***

Activity: To provide water for rice growth by digging a canal through a rice paddy

A total of 465 participated in this Shramadana camp. The international visitors totalled 25 and were from Japan, U.K, America, and Pakistan. I joined the camp on its second day, as the first day was a day of arrivals and getting people organized in relation to accommodation and food.

6:30 – 7:30 am – Breakfast was served at the Buddhist temple premises. This has historically been a common gathering place for the villagers and continues to be so to this date.

7:30 - 8:30 am – A family gathering was organized. Key players in the village and in organization of the camp were introduced. The priests, village chiefs, representatives of societies, representative from headquarters, gave speeches, international coordinators etc. the Shramadana song was sung and people were divided into groups. There were about 20 people to a group and a group leader was assigned from the village. Each group member received a tool.

8:30 – 10:30a.m - The groups were taken to various locations where we worked side-by-side digging the earth. The ground was wet and muddy, which made for easier digging but dirtier people! There was singing and the atmosphere was one of peaceful cooperation. Everyone addressed each other as brother or sister regardless of age.

10:30 – 10:45am – A welcome tea break! Hot tea and traditional sweets were brought out to the fields by youth.

10:45 – 12:30 pm – Our work continued in the field

12:20 – 1:30 pm – lunch was held at the temple premises. Hot food of rice and curry was served.

1:30 - 2:30 pm – Everyone participated in a Family gathering. We meditated for two minutes then people discussed their feeling on Shramadana and international visitors were provided an opportunity to express their views. Various community residents spoke.

2:30 - 3:30pm -Back to the rice paddys for more work!

3:30 – 3:45pm – Another welcomed tea break

3:45 - 5:00 pm – More work

5:00 – 7:00pm –We went to the homes of our respective host families to freshen up and prepare for the evening family gathering. Some people camped out at the temple premises. There was a river where many had a bath. I opted to have a “well bath”(bathe using water from the well) with some newfound friends. There were about 15 people staying in the house. The host family was most obliging and provided us with tea and snacks whilst we were there. I was given a bed while the daughter of my host slept with her grandmother.

7:00 - 8:00 pm – the final family gathering for the day took place. Numerous people, including the Dr. Ariyaratne who made a special visit, made speeches. This was followed by entertainment in the form of song and dance. Some international participants as well as some community residents participated.

8:00-9:00pm – Hot food was served to the hungry masses.

9:00 - 10:00 pm – Brief discussion took place with the group leaders on the days work and preparations for the cultural event the next day took place. Everyone was encouraged to participate in any way they liked. Needless to say there was a lot of practicing!

10:00 pm – we returned to our host family’s homes for the night

The next day was spent in much the same way except for the cultural show in the evening which went on for at least three hours. There were various items of song and dance performed by the village folk as well as international visitors. The highlight was a fireworks display. The camp was altogether a memorable experience with a positive work result of a canal 3 kilometers in length.

In the interviews I conducted with 98 members of the village community everyone had either participated or helped in some way to organize the camps. The response to Shramadana was unanimously positive. When I visited the villages I was able to observe first hand some of the benefits achieved through Shramadana. I observed canals, bunds and waterways, wells and houses, footpaths and roads, which stretched for miles all of which was achieved through Shramadana activities. According to the community residents, the personal benefits of Shramadana was said to be the joy of seeing a project completed and knowing that one contributed to it. Discussions on the impact of Shramadana on the community will be provided in Chapter Five.

Shramadana has been incorporated in numerous programs throughout Sri Lanka to reach a large number of communities. After the ceasefire in 2001, there have been numerous efforts to reconstruct villages in the North and East, which were affected by the civil war. Sarvodaya has initiated programs to bridge the gap between the Tamil and Sinhala population. Mr. Abeynaike, the Senior Executive Assistant of the Community Capacity Building Unit of the Social Empowerment Division briefed me on a work program being presently carried out with 300 villages in the Northeast and South of the country. The program involves introducing people from Northern villages to Southern villages where a Shramadana camp is organized in which there is inter-cultural exchange of labour for a period of a few days. This exchange allows for introduction and exposure to the cultural norms and practices of their respective villages. Gifts are also exchanged as tokens. Three hundred volunteers from the

villages have been chosen and trained thus far by the Community Capacity Building Unit to participate in the program. They were being introduced to Sarvodaya techniques of initiating a Sarvodaya Shramadana Society, and information gathering techniques. The villages chosen from areas where previous work by Sarvodaya had been conducted. NORAD provides the funding for this program for a five-year period. The objective of the program is said to be to create awareness of each other's culture and to foster brotherhood between Tamil and Sinhala communities whilst developing the infrastructure of the village. Such thinking and practices are vital if Sri Lanka wants to maintain peace and move beyond the suspicions and hostility created by the war.

The Community Capacity Building Unit is also independently conducting a program of reconstruction at places of worship at this time in some of the poorest of villages in the country. The volunteers have been chosen from the aforementioned program. This program involves the reconstruction of places of worship in 40 villages of 8 Districts in Sri Lanka. The volunteers choose the villages and Sarvodaya provides initial funding for activities. The community residents are responsible for using their initiative, resources and labour to conduct the necessary Shramadana. Sarvodaya seeks to uphold the importance of culture and religion through such programs.

While Shramadana is the tool used to mobilize the people in its village activities, there is an intricate five-stage model of development, which Sarvodaya has initiated an effort to ensure the continuity of village spirit and activities in a participatory manner. The model is described below.

4.3 The Five-Stage Model of Village Development

Information for the following discussion on the Five stage Development Model and Sarvodaya Shramadana Society has been acquired from the Sarvodaya Annual Report, 2002, Sarvodaya publications, internal documents available at the various units, and through interviews with community members and officials from the Community Capacity Building unit.

This model for village development is built on three principles: self-reliance, community participation and planned action. The ultimate goal of the five-stage development model is for each village to be self-reliant and help other village communities. Description of these stages will be provided in the following sections and Figure 4.1 above indicates the organizational structure of the Model.

Five-Stage Model of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka

Stage of Development

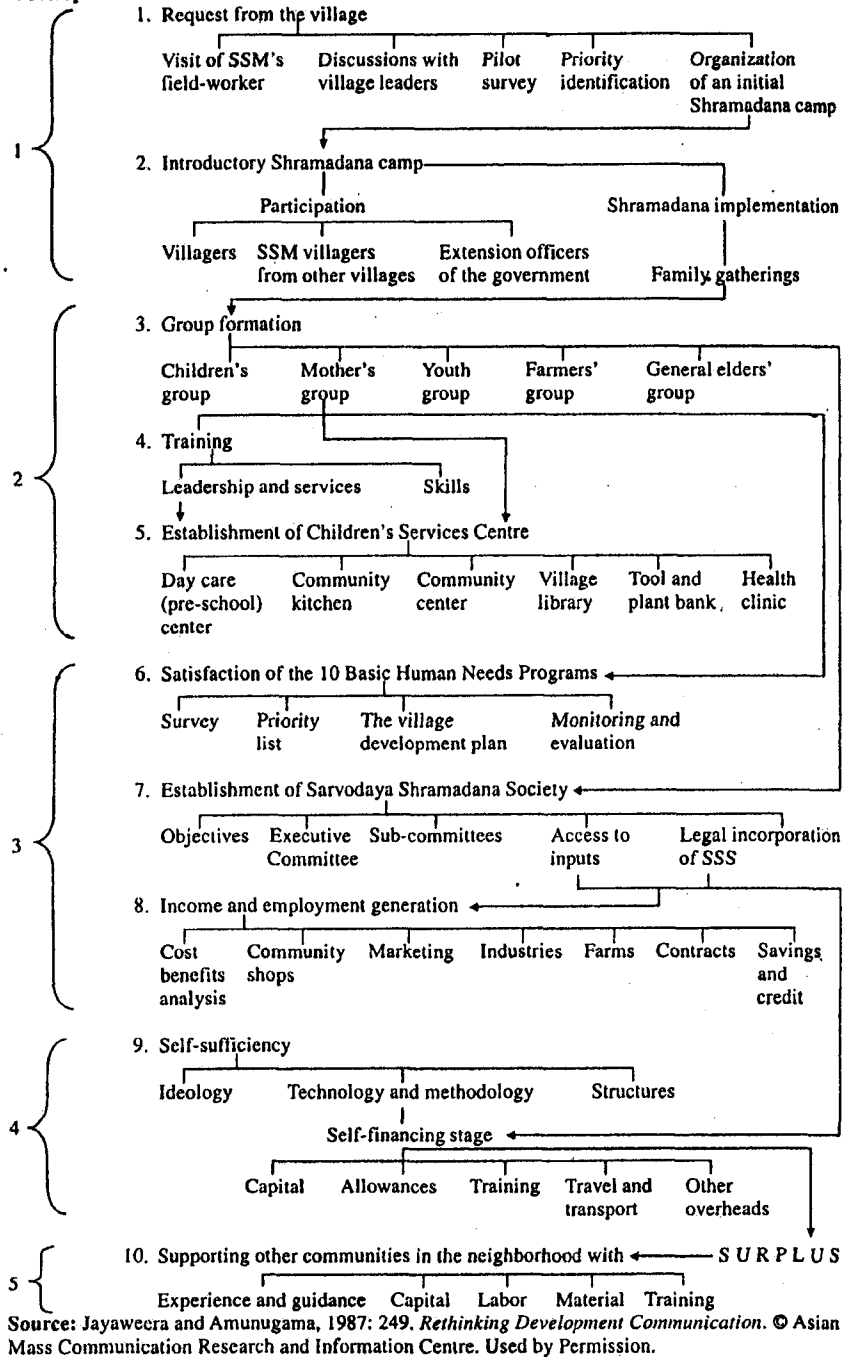


Figure 4.1 –The Five Stage development Model (Ariyaratne, 1989, sarvodaya.org)

Stage I - This is considered the introductory stage where the village requests assistance and Sarvodaya volunteers arrive to introduce the philosophy and goals of the Movement and the concept of Shramadana. Basic data collection of the village socio-economic situation occurs at this stage. After these requirements have been met the implementation of a Shramadana Camp takes place to meet a basic need or needs of the community.

Stage II - Functional groups are formed according to shared needs at this stage. This is to ensure that the community residents can continue their development efforts. Typical groups are mothers, children, youth, elders, and farmers groups. Training programs are developed consistent with the needs of the groups. Such activities are chosen by the communities and are not imposed on them. Only the structure is provided. The groups provide community residents a means to engage in a constructive activity depending on age ability and inclination. I learned that the Community shops, which were a popular method of selling the village produce was not functioning in the same manner and to the same extent. However, some Shramadana Societies were said to still operate community shops. It could be said that community leadership potential is discovered and developed, training in vocational skills provided and problems are identified and solutions sought at this stage of the development process.

A brief description of the functions and activities of the groups, namely pre-school Childrens, Youth, Mothers, Farmers and Elders groups is provided below.

- ***Pre-school Children's Group (children under 5 years)***

This group is considered important by Sarvodaya to ensure the nutrition, health, and educational and psychosocial needs of the children. Several thousand communities now have “child-care centers” constructed and maintained by the community itself. The mother's group is responsible in nominating a suitable person to be trained on child development and all related issues. The training period usually lasts three months. Some areas of training are: nutrition, health, love and protection, educational psychology and pre-school methods. Thousands of young women, trained by Sarvodaya, volunteer while others are paid a small allowance by their respective communities. Trained Sarvodaya staff also conducts classes for mothers on child and maternal nutrition in selected villages. A restriction for further expansion in this regard has been unavailability of funds. Once training is completed the pre-school programme is initiated in the village. Sarvodayas Early Childhood Development Program, under the Social Empowerment Division is particularly active in providing assistance to this Group.

- **Childrens Group (5 - 16 years)**

This group plays an integral role in Shramadana activities and in cultural and religious activities, which are an important part of community life. Training for children include services such as primary health care for the community, hospital visits to provide solace to the sick, provision of first aid at community/national festivals, maintaining herbal gardens, protecting bio diversity, engaging in social forestry and environmental protection. (Ariyaratne, 1999). Children's Fairs are encouraged where the children sell local produce in a mini market. The minor savings accounts are opened at stage three to encourage children to save. Awareness creation also takes place in conflict resolution and establishment of peace and harmony through the well-trained Peace Brigades of the Shanthi Sena mentioned in Chapter Three.

- **Youth Group (16 - 26 years)**

This group provides the main source of labour in Shramadana camps and thus contributes in great measure to the physical infrastructure development of a community. They also involve themselves in cultural activities and Peace promotion. Training is provided to motivate creative energies in numerous fields. Some include: programs on solar panel installations, use of computers, prevention of environmental degradation and conservation of bio diversity, non –violent conflict resolution and human rights (Annual Report, 2002). In my discussions with Mr. Ravindra Kandage, Director of

Shanthi Sena, an Independent Unit, I was told the youth were particularly active in the Shanthi Sena Peace Brigades, which was operative in almost every part of the country. I was able to collect data and see photographs of youth participation in various amity camps. For an outline of ShanthiSena Unit refer Chapter Three.

- **Mothers' Group**

This is the most prevalent and active of the village groups. The Mothers groups main concern is attending on the needs of children, pregnant and nursing mothers of the villages. The Child Care Centre, which is also a community centre is managed by this Group and provides meals, healthcare, education and nutritional know-how to pregnant and nursing mothers and the elderly in the community. The Sarvodaya Women's Movement in particular provides training and support to this Group (Ariyaratne, 1999; Annual Report, 2002)

- **Occupational/ Farmers Group**

This group consists principally of farmers. The economic activities they are engaged in are supported through training programmes and credit facilities. Groups also make collective purchases to reduce cost inputs. Technical advice is provided regarding storage of agricultural produce so that post-

harvest losses can be reduced and better prices may be obtained. Market information is also provided to them.

Dr. Ariyaratne speaks on the importance of the group formations in creating a conducive psychosocial infrastructure to further development.

When we talk of rural transformation what is completely ignored by westernized planners, economists and technocrats is the psycho-social infrastructure within which rural society is based. In our work with the Sarvodaya Movement we always give priority to the creation of a critical mass of spiritual and psychological consciousness in the village community. This critical mass of consciousness may not be seen but its external manifestation can be observed and measured by the social mobilization of people and practical programs they implement on their own initiative. Formations of children's' groups, mother's groups, farmer's groups, youth groups and artisan's groups and so on build a social infrastructure which would first discover and then practice and upgrade the technologies already existing in the community.

Figure 4.2 below provides a description of activities conducted through each of the Group leading to the establishment of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Society .

THE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN A SARVODAYA VILLAGE

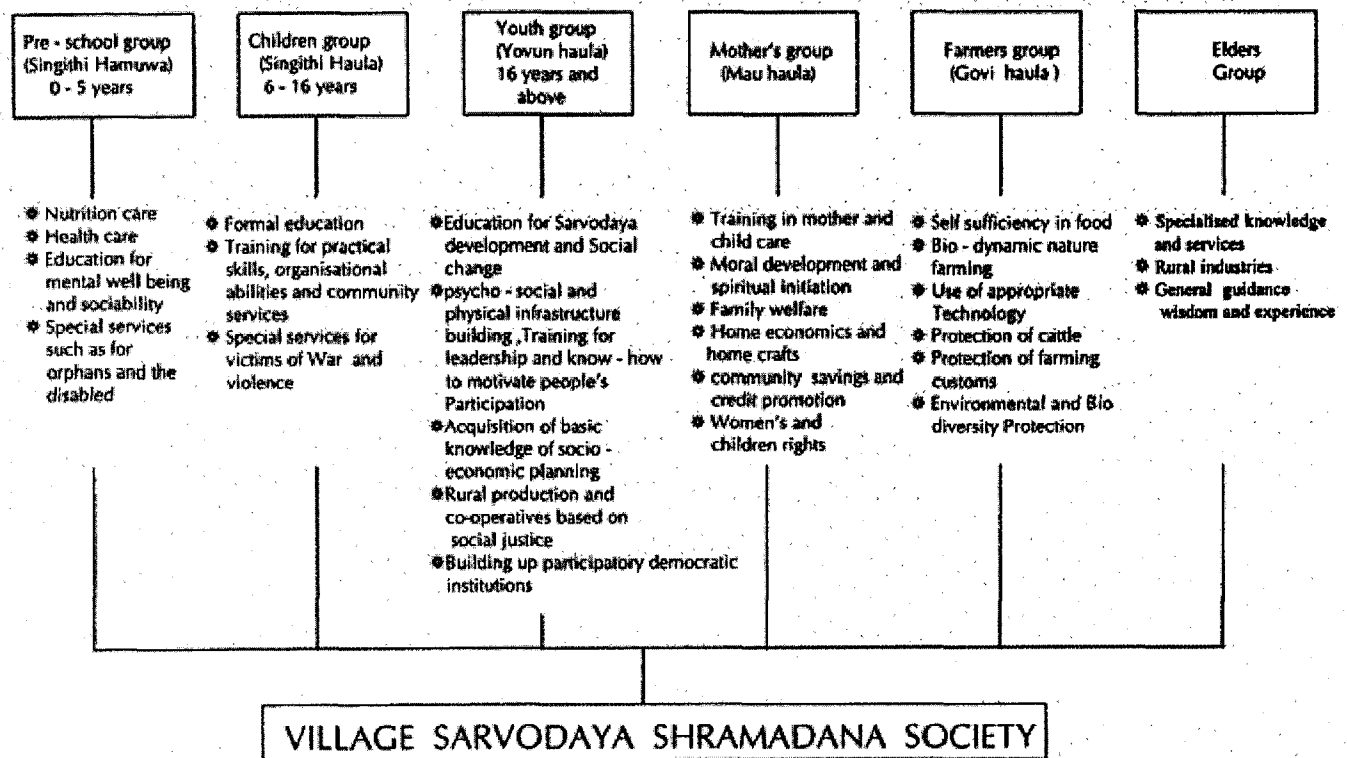


Figure: 4.2 The Social Infrastructure in a Sarvodaya Village-Group Activities (Ariyaratne, 1999)

Stage III - The Groups form themselves into a Sarvodaya Shramadana Society (SSS), for better coordination and planning.. More details of the SSS are provided in section 4.5 below. Some of the other work carried out at this stage involves conducting a basic survey to assess village needs, formulating a priority list based on the surveys, drawing up a one year work plan on how to develop the village and monitoring and evaluation on the progress of the villages at the different stage of

development. Youth are given a two-week training course on how to identify needs of the community and how to conduct surveys. This enables for effective monitoring in the village. A village development plan is drawn up according to a summary of the needs of the families in the village. Apart from better organization of community need and priorities, this plan also provides a vision of development to the community residents.

Stage IV - The community becomes increasingly self-sufficient due to the creation of income-generating activities, in combination with social development programs to meet basic needs. Economic Development is introduced through the Sarvodaya Economic Enterprise Development Services (SEEDS) Gte. Ltd once the SSS becomes a registered legally recognized institution. Support is provided through the three Division of SEEDS, namely: Banking (rural enterprise program), the Management Training Institute and the Enterprises Development Services. Some areas of support include, small project development, finance and market management, awareness creation and training for SSS members, advice and dissemination of information on enterprise development to name a few. The villages is considered self reliant in terms of development ideology, decision-making and organizational structures at this stage (SEEDS Annual Report, 2001).

Stage V- It is at this stage, the community is considered economically self-sufficient . once financial management ability has been proven the SSS can carry on the duties of a village banking institution. Thus, Village development banks are established in collaboration with commercial banks and a loan scheme with a leading state sector bank [SEEDS annual Report 2.001]. All key SSS official are provided with training which includes a diploma course in Rural Savings and Credit management to take over management at this stage. (SEEDS Annual Report , 2001) Loans are obtained through small group formations within each SSS. Mr. Emil Anthony, Director Banking, explained that the loans are given to groups consisting of 5 to 7 members who provide social collateral and security. Loans can be repaid during a 2 to 5 year period, depending on the type of loan and may range from a start off sum of Rs. 10,000 to a maximum sum of Rs. 500,000. The repayment rate is supposed to be 93%. The Sarvodaya Annual Report states that 834 villages have reached the 5th stage of development and 698 Development Banks have been set up as a result. An extensive profile of SEEDS is also available in the SEEDS Annual Report 2001-2002 and on the SEEDS website mentioned in Chapter Three.

The Three Social, Economic and Technical Empowerment units work with the villages through the above-mentioned stages of development providing knowledge, skills and financial security. The core programs under the Social Empowerment Unit is very active in providing advice, financial support and necessary services during the first three stages of village development. Other Independent Units also

collaborate to provide a more holistic village development. The Sarvodaya Rural Technical Empowerment Program of the Sarvodaya Technical Services Division provides support in the form of numerous projects and training programs at the third stage. Farmers can learn more productive method of cultivation to make profits through the Rural Technical Service this continues into the 4th and 5th stages. with Economic development through SEEDS. (Annual Report, 2002)

Figure 4.4 below illustrates the involvement of the Units of Social, Technical and Economic Empowerment at the different stages of village development.

SECTION - 1 SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT PROCESS AND VILLAGE AWAKENING

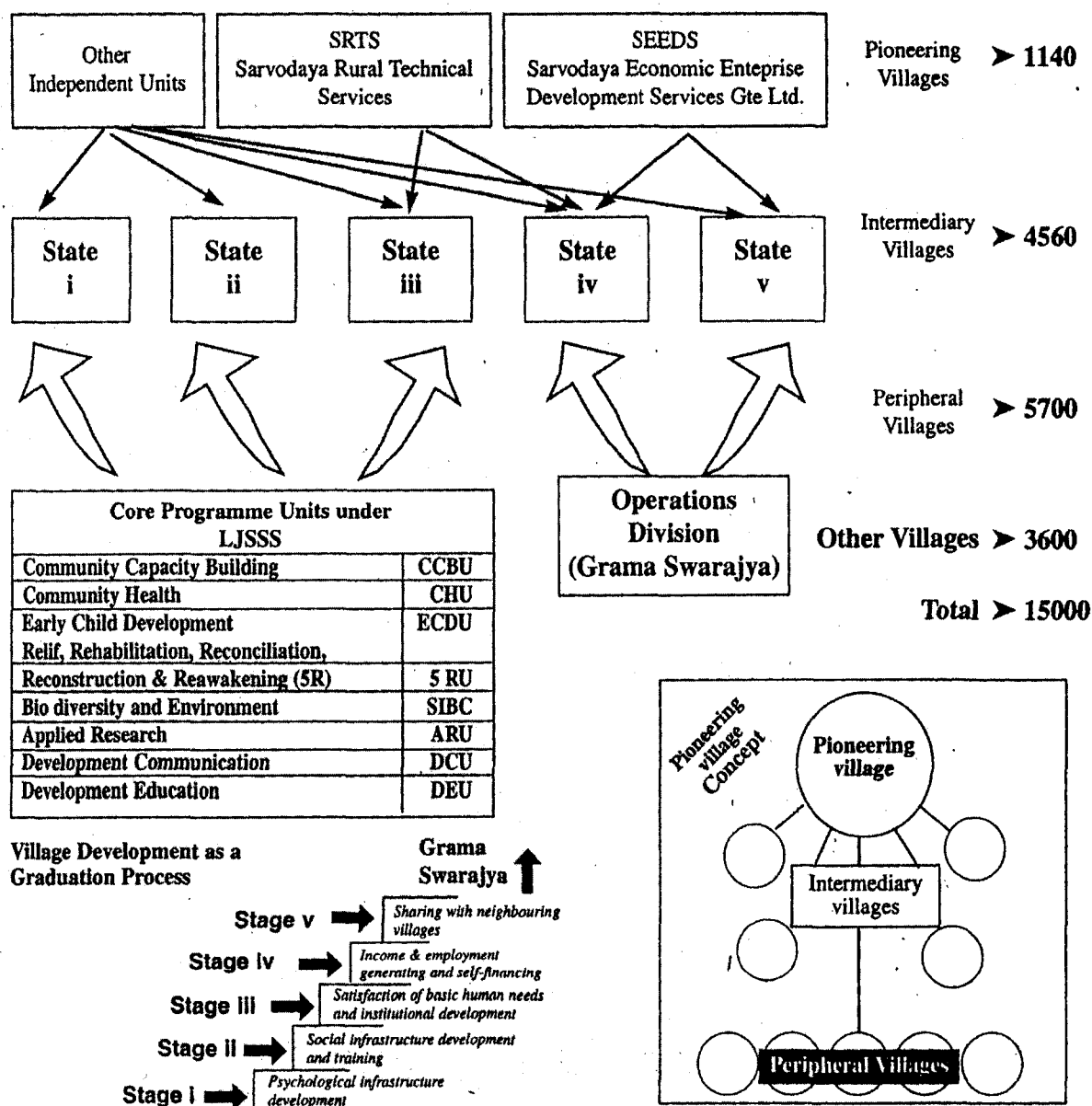


Figure 4.3 – “Village awakening” (Sarvodaya Annual Report 2002:1)

4.4 The Sarvodaya Shramadana Society (SSS)

As mentioned above, the Groups get together to form the Sarvodaya Shramadana Society (SSS). At Stage three of the village development model. SSS registration with the government makes it independent in decision-making and accessibility to resources. This enables them to hold property, employ people, start economic enterprises, and develop a savings and credit programs. The total number of registered societies at the beginning of 2002 was 4123. (Annual Report, 2002) The SSS plays a leading role of awakening the village in all aspects, namely, social, economic and political, as well as spiritual, moral and cultural. The Society Leaders compose of 25-member council chosen by the villager community themselves. The positions within the societies are determined amongst themselves. General society membership is available to villagers for a nominal fee. Monthly meetings are held for the 25 Council Members. All the programs carried out by the groups and the problems therein are discussed at these meetings. My discussions with Mr. Abeynaike shed light on concerns faced by Sarvodaya with regard to the neglect of other activities due to the introduction of income generating and loan activities.

Mr. Abeynaike states:

the people have to be made aware of the SSS becoming a “loan” societies”, which should not be allowed to happen

He also emphasized the importance of the SSS in providing the necessary leadership to the Groups to conduct their activities.

The groups are very important and the Society (Sarvodaya Shramadana Society) must give leadership to every group. Even the Children's group is an example of leadership because they learn to acquire confidence and to participate actively in the society at an early age. Cultural norms and traditions are very important too. Songs, dance should be encouraged and taught. It is only when the children do not have a strong foundation that they take to other vile activities such as stealing, drug use.

Mr. Abeynaike, Senior Assistant – Community Capacity Building Unit

See Figure 4.4 for the Organizational Structure of the Village Sarvodaya Shramdana Society.

VILLAGE SARVODAYA SHRAMADANA SOCIETY: ORGANIZATION CHART

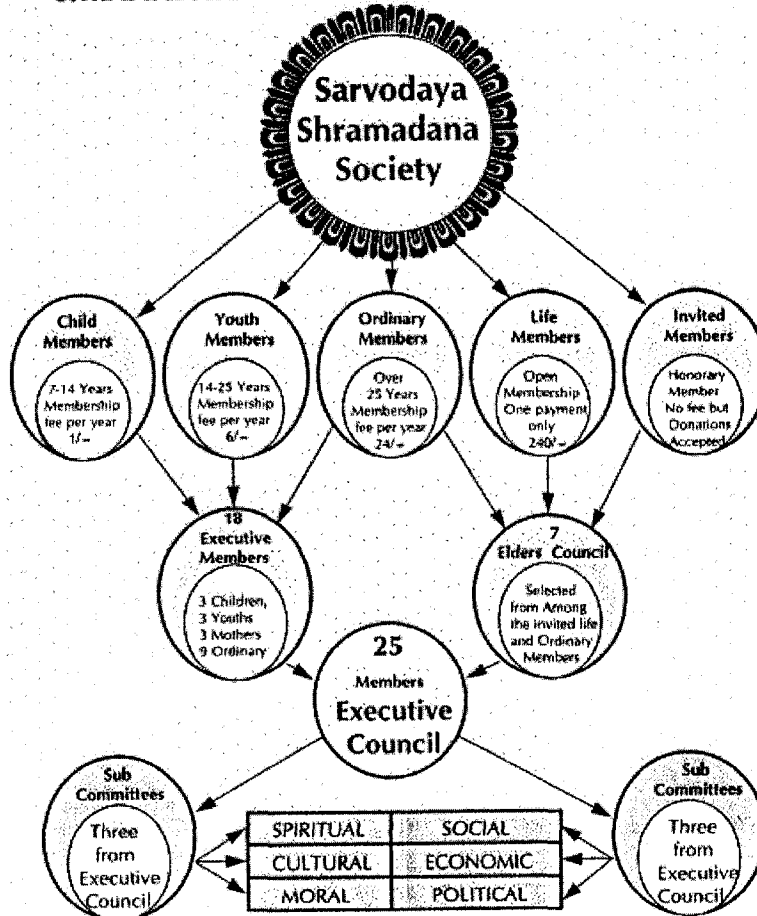


Figure 4.4 Sarvodaya Shramadana Society (Ariyaratne, 1999)

Well-developed societies have their own credit funds and are able to obtain loans from banks on commercial rates, manage their own loan fund, grant loans to its members and help neighbouring communities. The interest from the loans has in some instances been able to maintain a pre-school teacher for the community as well

as maintain credit fund manager from the community (Ariyaratne, 1999) The Management Training Institute mentioned above is especially active in training Managers of the SSS. (Annual Report, 2002).

Monitoring the progress of each village at each of the abovementioned stages takes place with a simple yet comprehensive set of indicators. Quantifiable indicators according to minimum and maximum time frames measure the social advancement of each village. The following table best exemplifies this.

Stage	Minimum	Maximum
Stage I	3 Months	5 Months
Stage II	6 Months	9 Months
Stage III	12 Months	18 Months

Table 4.2: Indicators Gunasena personal correspondence, 2003 -Project proposal for Novarties Foundation- 2000

At the end of the minimum target periods, indicator assisted monitoring is conducted as described above. Based on these results, villages slow in progress will be provided with 'stimulation programs' to push them to the next phase (Gunasena, personal correspondence, 2003). The Social Empowerment Division maintains close relationships with the villages.

A Sarvodaya divisional coordinator assesses the progress of the community residents using the indicators mentioned above and functions as a liaison officer between the

main headquarters and village community. One problem that Sarvodaya faces is the lack of resources and funds to increase the number of village workers. Furthermore, after receiving training, workers often opt out of Sarvodaya activities because of other economic incentives.

Also, while the Sarvodaya headquarters funds the initial cost for projects in the village, the responsibility lies in the hands of the SSS to mobilize the funds and other necessary resources. Sarvodaya started an Endowment Fund in 1994, to maintain its national, district and divisional centers so that service may continue to be rendered by them to the selected village societies. The Fund depends on its accumulated interest and the contributions of donor organizations, philanthropists, employees and proceeds from the sale of assets (Sarvodaya Annual Report, 2002).

The concept of Gramswaraj or village self governance

Sarvodaya is in the process of working towards suitable means of community republics, where the end result is financial self-sustainability and independent political decision-making. This concept is called Gramaswaraj or village self-governance. This is considered the graduation of the Five Stage Village Development Model. To ensure graduation, all the mechanisms of social infrastructure building, organizational and legal infrastructure as well as economic support mentioned above needs to be in place and function effectively. In this

manner the village community is said to become a self-sufficient basic unit in the larger democratic set-up. This basic unit is further strengthened through communication technology to enable effective linkages. The tele-centers mentioned in Chapter Three are of particular relevance here. Therefore all these mechanism would interact to bring about a positive change. In my discussions with Mr. Abeinayake, I questioned if the Sarvodaya's motive was to create a revolutionary change. I was answered as follows:

we in Sarvodaya are willing to create change but not take power. Change it to create a positive development of the people. Gramswaraj means solving your own problems and finding the motivation within you to do it. Once the mechanisms are in place, the people will continue from thereon. Once the motivation has been given the village will get developed on their own strengths. (Abeynaike, 2003)

4.5 Organizational linkages at the village level

The village development process is expanded to other villages through a cluster process. The pioneering village is the core village of the cluster. This is the village where Sarvodaya has conducted their initial activities. Sarvodaya has identified around 1400 such villages. Each pioneering village will provide certain services to 4 other villages in this vicinity. These are called the intermediary villages. There are currently 4560 such villages. The total group of 5 villages thus working together will in turn influence 5 other villages in their vicinity, which are called Peripheral villages of which there are 5700. Thus leading to a total of 10 villages around a Pioneering

village. These pioneering, intermediary and peripheral Villages form one cluster (Sarvodaya Annual report, 2002)

Organizational linkages at the divisional level occur with 4 pioneering villages forming the same linkages to four other villages to form a cluster. This cluster replicates in the same manner. Cluster are linked to a Sarvodaya divisional centre. Under one divisional center there are 40 villages. Presently there are 175 divisional coordinators overseeing operations at the divisional centres in the country. These coordinators work in close contact with villages in their area. Furthermore, 12 to 15 divisional centres are linked to a district center. Sarvodaya has 34 district centers located throughout the country the operations of which are coordinated by 33 district coordinators. Each district centre acts as a clearinghouse for information and resources, a coordinating center for district-wide planning and a facility for housing specialized services such as information technology and instructional media (Annual Report, 2002). This kind of lateral integration of psychosocial and institutional processes is the basis for development (Ariyaratne, 1991). Figure 4.4 provides a description of the Organizational linkages of these villages.

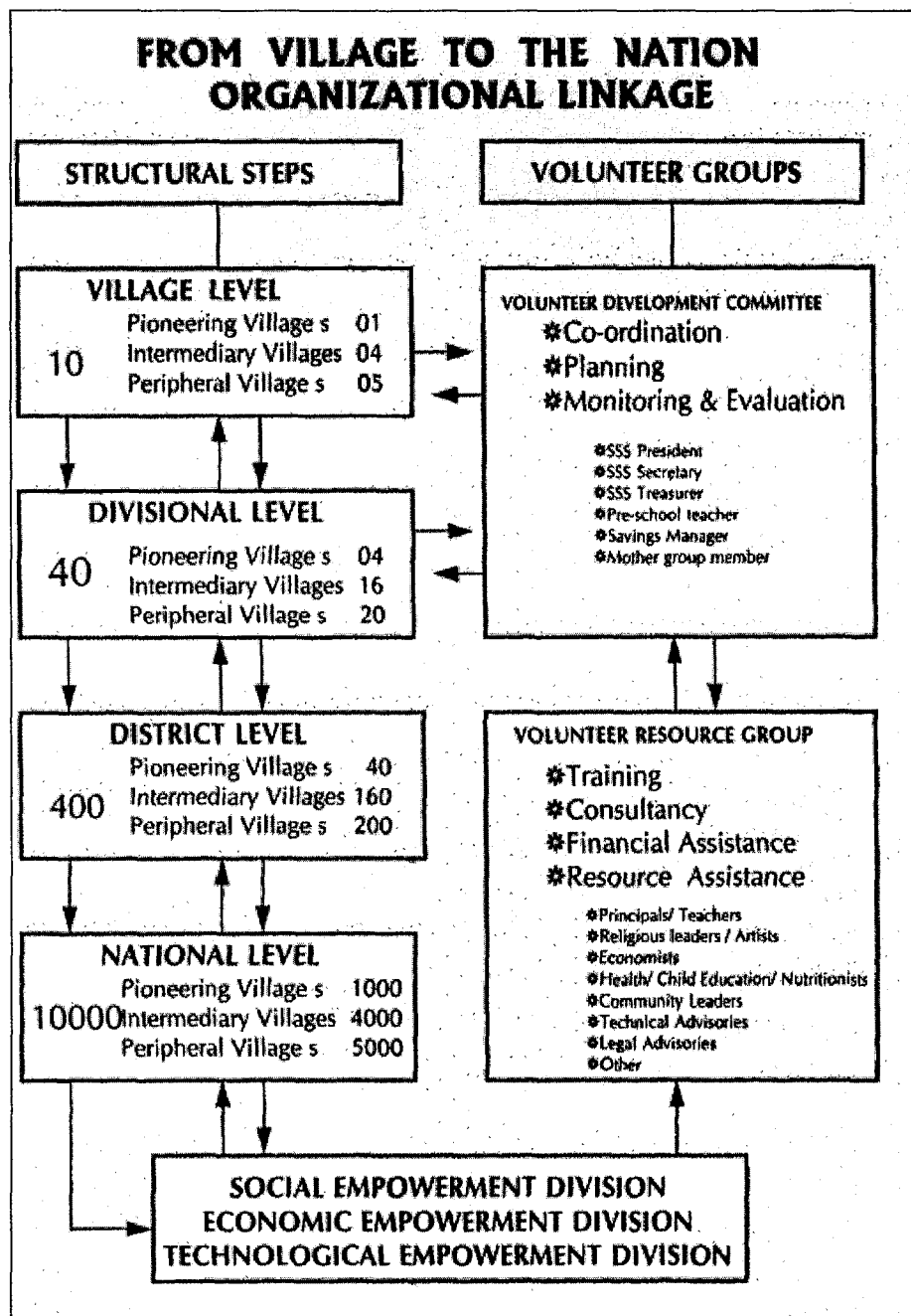


Figure 4.4: From Village to the Nation-organizational Linkages (Sarvodaya 2002).

4.6 Remarks

The work conducted by Sarvodaya through Shramadana seems to yield positive results. Although full participation is not always achieved, it has still been successful in gathering together an enviable number of people in its development activities.

As Mr. Abenayake emphasised in an interview:

If we believe that everyone will participate initially then no work will get done. We must be equanimous in our approach and how we speak to the people. When we speak with compassion and without bias an amazing change takes place. This also happens when people are given confidence and responsibility. Now it has come to a stage when the politicians say we know you don't know and therefore you listen to us. We at Sarvodaya don't say that. We say we don't know. We have come to learn from you. You have the resources, you have the plan, and you have the initiative

Furthermore, the Five Stage Development model provides an effective infrastructure for village development. The group formations provide a suitable environment for discussion of village concerns and development within a small framework and the SSS creates for legally recognized expansion of those activities. The success of Sarvodaya's progress could be said to lie in the fact that the people themselves deliberate the needs of their communities. This fosters progress on their own initiative. Furthermore, Sarvodaya's utilization of cultural norms and religion create a familiar foundation for the community residents to build on.. Further discussion of research findings and evaluation will be take place in Chapter 5: Findings and Conclusions.

CHAPTER FIVE

Findings and Conclusion

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world”

- Mahatma Gandhi

The majority of the world's population live in poor rural communities who find it difficult to escape their situations of poverty. While past and present development practice continues to cater to the ever-widening gap of inequality, there has been recognition that the needs of the people have to be addressed by the people. This recognition has formed the foundation for a more participatory form of development in recent times. I have based my study along these two lines of rural development and participation to determine effective forms of participatory rural development in Sri Lanka. Sarvodaya's, Five Stage Village Development Model and the use of Shramadana provided the frame work for my research.

My study seeks to answer the questions: To what extent target groups benefit from participation? To what extent people participate, what motivates people to participate? How does religion and culture impact on the development of the rural

populations, and; How can they be harnessed for the betterment of the communities? The answers to this question within a Sri Lankan context in turn provide me with the conclusion for my report by answering the question “Is the approach adopted by the Sarvodaya an effective model for rural development in Sri Lanka?”

Being a native of the country in which I was conducting the study provided a familiar background for my research. Working with the leading NGO in Sri Lanka; Sarvodaya, provided me with access to a long history of experience in the development field and direct access to the communities. My field research consisted of interviews with 98 community members, 3 district coordinators and 2 divisional coordinators from 28 villages in 5 districts. Due to Sarvodaya’s reach and the structure of its village development model, I felt that it would best suit my purposes to conduct interviews of a cross section of villages that had reached different stages of Village development as opposed to two or three case studies of particular villages. This enabled me to get a broader opinion. Therefore the villages I interviewed ranged from stage two to stage five of Sarvodaya’s village development. The findings of my field research are limited to my observations of these communities and their experiences conveyed to me through the interviews.

It was apparent from my research that the communities I visited were influenced by traditional principles of social conduct centring on Buddhist thought. It needs

mention that most of the villages I visited were predominantly Buddhist and for this reason, I restrict my statement above to the Buddhist communities I visited. However, the non-sectarian nature of Buddhist philosophy allows for people of different faiths to practice the principles of its teachings without conflict as was evident from the massive crowd which gathered for a Sarvodaya Peace meditation in 1999.

Through my field research and by participating in a Shramadana camp I was able to personally experience the effects of Shramadana. Here again Sarvodaya has utilised an ancient concept in modern times to mobilize the people. The response to Shramadana is positive in the village communities and the effects of Shramadana were obvious in my visits to the villages. The interviews conducted confirmed that this was a popular means for infrastructure building. Participation was synonymous with Shramadana and the means to achieving a common objective. All the community residents I interviewed were familiar with the concept and had either directly participated in camps or been involved in the organizational work related to a camp. The main needs of the people were access to roads, water supply and electricity. These needs had been satisfied to a certain extent through Shramadana by the construction of roads, waterways, canals and wells. One village I visited had utilised the efforts of a 1000 community residents to dig a small canal through an entire village. Other activities included, building community centres, pre-schools, banks, toilets, cleaning temple premises and organizing cultural events to name a

few. Most people were motivated to participate in Shramadana activities, as they were able to see immediate results. Furthermore, it created enthusiasm especially among the youth, as it became a social event. The cultural shows at the end of the camp also provide an incentive to show off the creativity of the village communities through song and dance. My research therefore showed Shramadana to be an effective vehicle of social mobilization in village communities. It also confirmed that people were motivated to participate when they were familiar with a concept through cultural conditioning.

The group formations at Stage Two of the village development model seemed to be successful in providing opportunities to groups in terms of awareness creation and training. Many of the community members had received training of some form in leadership, skills or entrepreneurship. The most active Groups were the Mothers and Pre-school groups. Women's participation in communal activities far surpassed those of the males. In some areas the rate of participation of men in villages was said to be as low as 10%. (This was according to the perspective of community members) The reason for low participation of males was due to engagement in menial labour outside of the villagers. Gender bias was said not to occur in Shramadana activities and from my observations at Shramadana camps this was confirmed true. All the participants I questioned said that everyone worked together when it came to Shramadana. However outside of Shramadana there were defined roles for women in the village and the set up is still very patriarchal. I learned that

children's fairs were still operating but that the Community shops, which was a popular method of selling the village produce, was not functioning on the same scale as it had earlier.

Participation in the SSS at the Third Stage was positive. All except 4 of the interviewees were members of the SSS. They held positions ranging from president, treasurer, secretary, life member, bank manager, and president of mothers groups to general members. However, I felt that the major contributory factor to being a member of the SSS was to be eligible for loans provided by SEEDS at the Fourth Stage. The community members I interviewed had been involved in Sarvodaya work from 3 years to 18 years, either as members of the SSS or through Group activities. Some youth were disinterested in agricultural activities due to modernism and development strategies focusing on industrialization and wanted to look for so called greener pastures outside of the village. Sarvodayas programs are building the infrastructure of the village through economic, technological and other empowerment programs, which I believe will be effective in providing incentives for communities to stay intact in the future. The new programs of providing tele-centres to villages is one such program I feel will prove to be beneficial to youth as well as provide an effective means of linkages between villages and urban centers. Also, the effects of technological development were evident through my visits to the villages. Some of the work created by this Unit I saw were wells, gravity fed water schemes, preschools and community centres.

The Fourth Stage of village development witnessed programs introduced through SEEDS and its Banking (rural enterprise program), the Management Training Institute and the Enterprises Development Services. Income generating activities seem to be popularly received by the community members and of most of the interviewees had received training in relation to loans and banking, leadership training, agriculture, small enterprise training etc. According to my interviews, the loan system had helped the community residents tremendously. Some used it for small income generating projects, while others had used it for educational, or construction purposes. Women played a prominent role in managing money. Most of the Bank Managers appointed by the community residents were female. The interest on loans was said to be manageable. I travelled with Dr. Ariyaratne on one of his visits to the community to open a Bank. A big reception awaited us culminating in a cultural show.

Villages, which have reached the Fifth stage of development, still required a fair amount of development in relation to infrastructure building. However, it had to be mostly through their own initiative. It is at this point that divisional coordinators need to show leadership and keep the people motivated. I found that when Sarvodaya had completed some of the training the necessary follow up activities were not initiated. Continued leadership training is therefore crucial to the divisional coordinators as well as Group leaders to ensure sustainability of activities.

In comparing the villages, I found that there definitely is an improved progression of activities taking place at each of the stages. It needs to be acknowledged that these findings are based on limited observation through interviews and participant observation. It could be better substantiated through quantitative analysis and through longer periods of observations at the village level. Also, the levels at which these activities continue and the progression of participation is ever changing and will need continuous research. Also Sarvodaya's approach to treating communities as a homogenous group following the harmony model has provoked criticism. This requires further study, especially in addressing the dynamics that occur within a community and the conflicts, which may occur. However, the practicality of such is questionable. Is it possible to observe the dynamics within a community and report such without bias if you are part of that community? In contrast can an outsider researcher's opinions be valid?

I had to limit my interviews to 2 divisional coordinators and 3 district coordinators from the villages I visited. . However, since I was unable to visit the villages in the rest of the country, I gave out about 20 questionnaires to a district coordinator to be distributed at a meeting. Unfortunately, at the time of my departure none of the questionnaires had been returned and it was not possible to contact him. The age of the coordinators ranged from 22 to 54. One Coordinator had been involved in Sarvodaya work as early as 1974. Some programs in which they had participated in were leadership awareness programs, Shramadana, cultural activities, Shanthi Sena

Peace brigades, children and youth camps. District and divisional level meetings are held at headquarters once a month so that problems can be addressed. The divisional coordinators were very active at the village level. Some of their main problems were in relation to transport and funds. There was also a dearth of women representation at the District level. Currently only 3 out of 25 District Coordinators are women. This impacts on decision-making at the managerial level and is an area where Sarvodaya will have to be more inclusive. Also some divisional coordinators opt out of Sarvodaya activities after receiving training. This remains an unsolved problem.

Some of my roles and responsibilities include planning and launching Sarvodaya programs, organizing training and seminars for awareness creation, supervising programs, evaluating progress and presenting reports to headquarters. I am happy with the cooperation and enthusiasm I receive for village development programs. And it brings me personal satisfaction to be able to conduct several activities at the village level for its betterment. Sometimes people who have already received training through Sarvodaya programs leave their positions in the Societies once they find jobs. Another problem is that access to some villages is difficult since there are no proper roads or public transportation- *Divisional coordinator age 37 years.*

I attended a divisional coordinators meeting of the Women's Movement where I was able to hear the participants voice their opinions on the progress and problems faced by them. One concern was that the coordinators were mostly Sinhala and it was felt that a more multiethnic group would be beneficial. The need for better communication between divisional and district level was discussed with a resolution

to increase the number of meetings. The need for improvement of home gardening was also discussed. A coordinator brought freshly ground pepper and coffee beans, which I purchased for a nominal fee. It was stated that sales of vegetables was being successfully conducted in some areas at the village as well as district level.

In general, a notable feature is the commitment shown by the paid and non-paid staff of Sarvodaya. This could be said to be its greatest asset. Currently there are approximately 520 full time workers and 50000 volunteers

The rest of my findings concentrate on general observations and knowledge gained of programs, funding and village self governance.

In speaking to representatives of different Units, it was brought to my notice that there was a lack of resource persons to conduct the numerous programs. Furthermore, the expansion and continuation of programs have been hampered due to lack of funds. Most programs of various Units are dependent on donor funding, which is in the form of “project” funding for a fixed period of time. Sarvodaya has attempted to circumvent this problem by applying for “program” funding, which ensures a longer time frame and curtails the donor agencies from dictating the agendas for development. However, some Units still receive funds on a project basis. They are also looking into the feasibility of donor Organizations “adopting” one or more districts and providing development-funding assistance to the selected

district in line with the needs of the community based on the 5-stage development process. (Personal correspondence, 2003)

Sarvodaya is currently in the process of re-structuring its long-term financial goals and is adopting a five-pronged strategy⁷ towards achieving organisational financial sustainability through:

- 1) The Resource Development Programme - by generating an income using the existing social sector infrastructure facilities
- 2) Income Generating Projects (IGPs) – by operating selected commercially viable business enterprises
- 3) The Sarvodaya Economic Enterprise Development Services (SEEDS)
- 4) The Sarvodaya Endowment Fund – by creating a capital fund whose investment income will meet part of the operating costs and;
- 5) Percentage contribution from External Donor Assistance for direct programme and project implementation.

Community and local contributions too are an important sources of resources for Sarvodaya activities.

⁷ The information on financial goals was obtained through personal correspondence with Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne, Executive Director 14/10/03.

The concept of Gram Swaraj or village self-governance mentioned in Chapter Four, needs discussion. The concept of decentralization according to Sarvodaya means to re-surface the concepts of people's self government and people's consensus in order to build their own identity. Perhaps placing this concept within the framework of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach would best exemplify its effectiveness? Therefore by placing local and community-based development within the context of "external" structures (levels of government, private sector, etc.) and its processes (policies, institutions, etc.) and analysing the impact of these external factors and processes on the community's capacity to generate, financial, social, human, natural and physical capital would provide to be an indicator of feasibility (Veltmeyer, 2001). So far there is a slow but gradual progression in the village development model from stage One to Five. It remains to be seen if it can withstand the effects of "external" forces and continue on its developmental course.

My interviews with NGO and Government officials mostly consisted of questions relating to their opinions of participation, what they would define to be NGOs, why past programs had not been successful in bringing about effective rural development and their opinion of Sarvodaya's rural development. They all conceded that development in the rural sector was a necessity and that participation was imperative for this development to be effective. They also stressed the importance of taking into account the heterogeneous nature of Sri Lanka's people when developing approaches to rural development. The common opinion was that top down

approaches still existed in the guise of participatory development and that a move away from such thinking was needed. Furthermore, the power struggles of partisan politics was said to provide an unstable foundation for development policy since government changes brought with it changes in development policy. A government official informed me that this was a pressing problem in that it affected the programs continuity. Whilst the general consensus was that Sarvodaya was conducting a lot of development work in the rural sector some sceptical of its approach and felt that reports of success were “inflated”.

Conclusion

When considering rural development, the most effective agency is considered to be community-based organisations because they have “the greatest potential for achieving collective or social empowerment...” (Veltmeyer, 2001). Sarvodaya has acted in this capacity to empower the communities, socially, technologically and economically, by providing community residents opportunities to participate in programs that meet their expectations through the use of their own resources.

The observance of numerous customs and religious beliefs is a common occurrence throughout the country and one, which changes according to geographic location. Most of these cultural norms are practiced in the rural communities. The daily lives of the people are inextricably linked to their beliefs and customs. In such a setting it

is not possible to conduct rural development without recognizing this interrelatedness. Sarvodaya's utilisation of spirituo-cultural elements in its development programs is therefore an effective move and has been successful in mobilizing a wide segment of the society.

Participation through Shramadana has been a key factor in mobilizing people in the past and continues to be a household name in Sri Lanka. It is especially effective in a rural setting where large masses of people can be mobilized to conduct development work.

The Sarvodaya model attempts to create micro macro linkages for purposes of sustainability. Therefore, horizontal networks are important not only at the local community level but from also to include the national and international levels.

I believe Sarvodaya's concept of Shramadana and its Five Stage Model is relatively effective means of village development. I found that its affiliations to religion and culture strengthened its efforts at effective rural development. This study confirms that it is only by addressing social, political, cultural and psychological factors endogenously that effective development can be achieved. An interesting field of research for the future would be to examine what contributions religion and culture make to participation in development.

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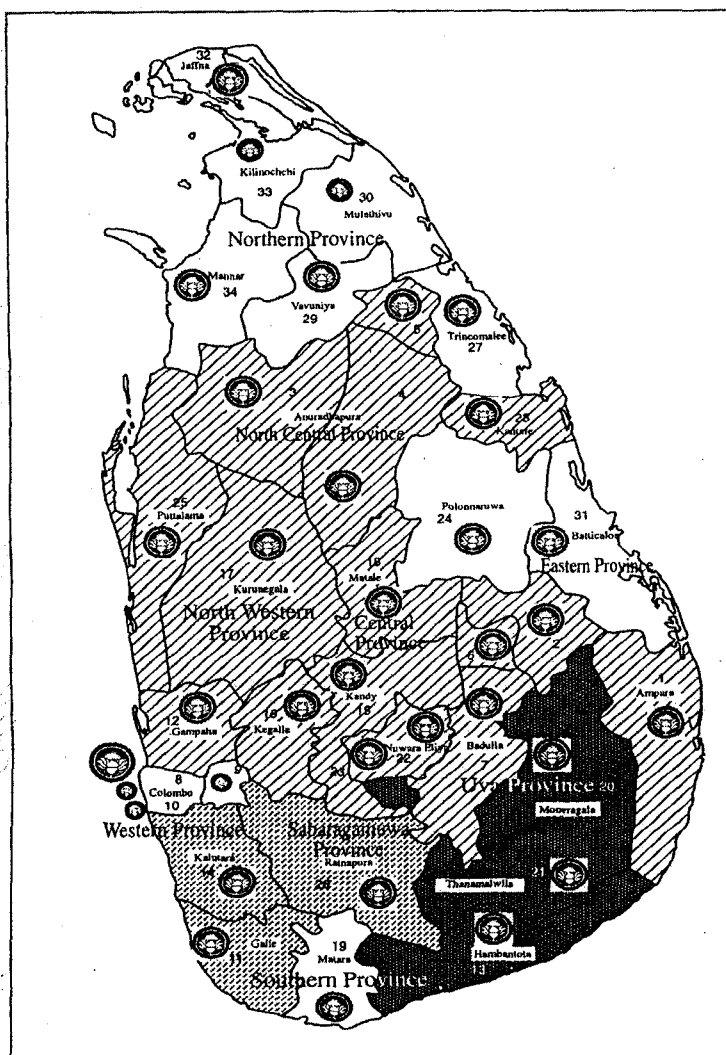
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Expansion of Sarvodaya Services



Administrative Districts	Sarvodaya Districts
1. Digamadulla (Ampara)	1 Ampara
2. Anuradhapura	2 Kalmunai
	3 A/pura West
	4 A/pura East
	5 Padaviya
3. Badulla	6 Padiyathalawa
	7 Badulla
4. Colombo	8 Colombo West
	9 Colombo East
	10 Nagarodaya
5. Galle	11 Galle
6. Gampaha	12 Gampha
7. Hambantota	13 Hambantota
8. Kalutara	14 Kalutara
9. Kandy	15 Kandy
10. Kegalle	16 Kegalle
11. Kurunegala	17 Kurunegala
12. Matale	18 Matale
13. Matara	19 Matara
14. Moneragala	20 Moneragala
	21 Thanamalwila
15. Nuwara Eliya	22 Nuwara Eliya
	23 Hatton (Kudaoya)
16. Polonnaruwa	24 Polonnaruwa
17. Puttalam	25 Puttalam
18. Ratnapura	26 Ratnapura
19. Trincomalee	27 Trincomalee
	28 Kantalai
20. Vavuniya	29 Vavuniya
21. Mulathivu	30 Mulathivu
22. Batticaloa	31 Batticaloa
23. Jaffna	32 Jaffna
24. Kilinochchi	33 Kilinochchi
25. Mannar	34 Mannar

The operation and the co-ordination of the entire Sarvodaya development process are implemented through 34 District Centres. All District Centres, except Mulathivu and Kilinochchi have been in active operation during the relevant year.

APPENDIX B

Probable questions to be asked at Interviews. These questions are in no particular order.

Participants of villages

1. What are the needs of your community right now?
2. How are these needs met and dealt with?
3. What is the primary means of employment/livelihood?
4. Do you participate in any community development activities and do you like participating in these activities?
5. Do you think participating in community activities is helpful to you and your community?
6. What changes have you noticed in your community over the past ten years?
7. What types of community support groups are available?
8. Are there any training programs available to train the community to participate effectively in villages?
9. What type of development projects has been conducted so far? Have they been successful in your opinion? If not why? If yes how?
10. What motivates you to get involved in developing your community?
11. What results would you like to see/Have you seen take place in your community?
12. How are community decisions made?
13. What are the benefits you see from being involved in community development projects?
14. Is there an allotment of roles in relation to sex, social status and power distribution in your villages?

Non Governmental Organizations, Grassroots Organizations and Government Officials

1. Do you think integrating local participation into project planning and implementation is feasible?
2. Does your Organization promote this? Why? Why not?
3. Are Local needs assessed and recognized in your projects? How?
4. What factors are taken into consideration when planning development projects at the local level?
5. Who participates?
6. What kind of participation takes place?
7. Who acts as an intermediary?
8. How do you maintain long-term project success?
9. How are men, women, youth, elders and children integrated into the development planning process?
10. What are the organizational and management mechanisms used at the village level?
11. How are projects funded? How do you access funds?
12. Are there any obstacles to participation?
13. Are there any negative impacts resulting from the participation of villagers? If yes, what are they?
14. Are there effective evaluation processes to determine the success of the project?
15. What collaboration does you have/need with government authorities? Is there any negative/ positive feedback in relation to government collaboration?

16. Do men and women participate equally? If not why?

Minors(ages ranging from 8-17)

1. Do you participate in community activities/ how?
2. Do you like to participate? Why?
3. What improvements would you like to see in your village?
4. What do you want to be when you grow up?
5. How do you think you can make a difference in the village?

APPENDIX C: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Dr. Ariyaratne, President and founder of Sarvodaya -8th and 14th May, 2003

Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne – Executive Director, 10th-16th May, 2003 (Email Correspondence)

Mrs. Amara Peiris - President Women's Movement and Ms, Dayani 14th January, 2003

Mr. M.D Abeynaïke- Senior Executive - Community Capacity Building Unit

Ms. Bianka Abeygonawardene –Coordinator, Early Childhood Development

Mr. J.D Gunasena – Senior Executive Assistant, International Unit- (continuous discussions throughout my research period)

Ms. Nagalatha The Five R Programme 14th May 2003

Mr. S.C.C Ilankowan, Programme Officer, 5R programme

Mr. Shiva – Personal Secretary for Dr. Ariyaratne 10th May 2003-10-17

Dr. Harsha Liyanage _ Deputy Executive Director, Social Empowerment Division

Mr. Ariyawickrama - Social Empowerment Unit – presentation 13th January 2003

Ms. Udani Mendis - Mr. Emil Anthony - SEEDS

Mr. Ravindra Kandage –Director Shanthi Sena

Mr. W.B Kannangara

The below mentioned who were interviewed over the course of five months wished to remain anonymous

103 community residents from 28 villages and 5 districts

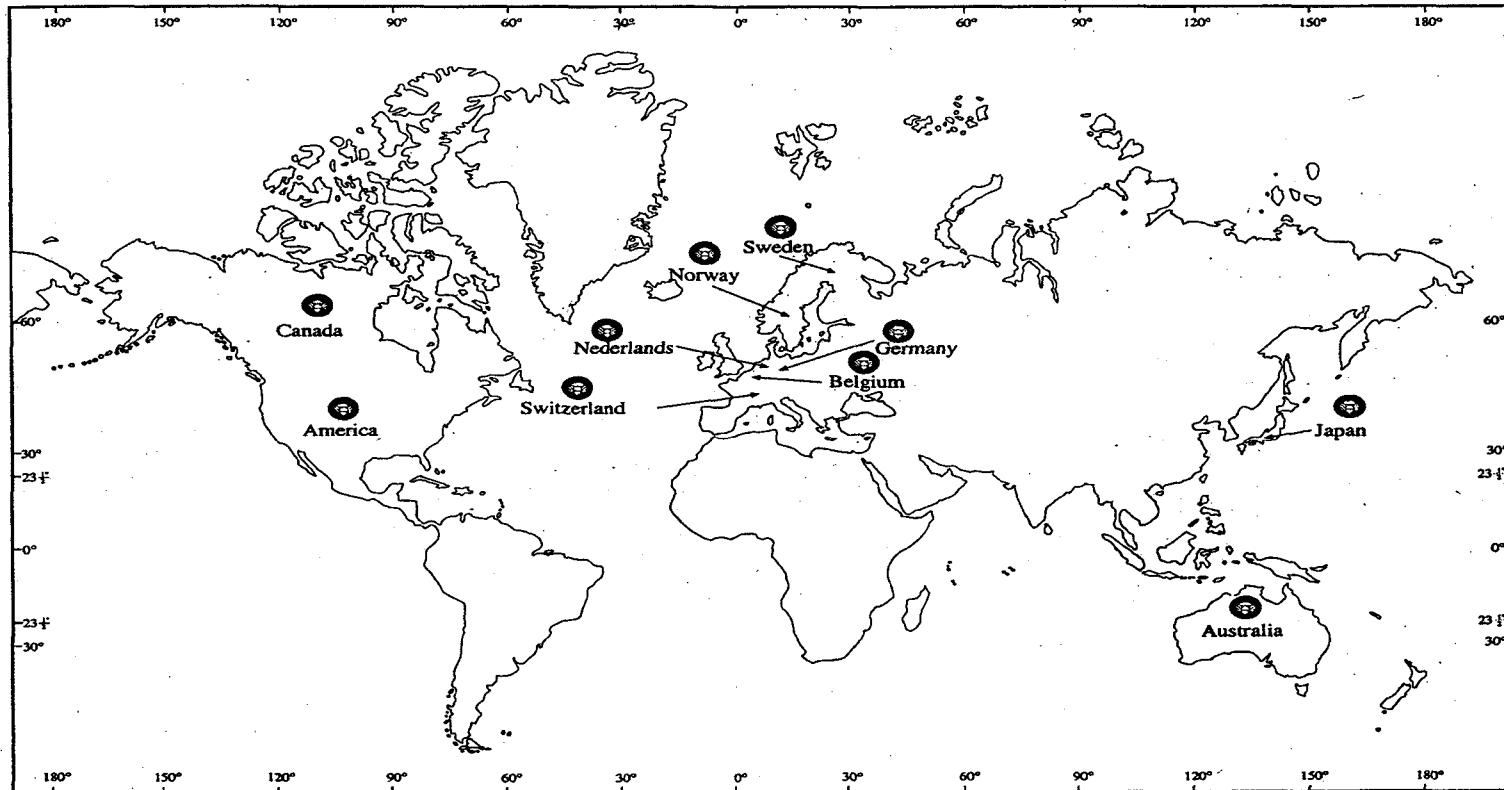
3 District Coordinators

2 Divisional Coordinators

Government and NGO officials

APPENDIX D

Development Assistance according to geographical location



APPENDIX E

Annexure 01

Resource Partners

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance received by us from various individuals and the under-mentioned institutions/organizations during the period under review.

<u>Resource Partner Organization</u>	<u>Country</u>
01. Nippon Foundation	Japan
02. Zensen	Japan
03. Rissho Kosei-Kai	Japan
04. One World One People Association	Japan
05. Japan Asia Friendship Society	Japan
06. Fukuoka Organization	Japan
07. Himawari Nokayai Organization	Japan
08. KIND Organization	Japan
09. Arigatou Foundation	Japan
10. NORAD,	Norway
11. NOVARTIS Foundation	Switzerland
12. HELVETAS	Switzerland
13. UNICEF	
14. Sarvodaya USA	USA
15. Nature Sprit	USA
16. Women's Organization	North Amei
17. NOVEB	Netherlands
18. Flash Foundation	Netherlands
19. Virginia Sarvodaya Twente	Netherlands
20. Dr. Reintjes Deaf School	Netherlands

21. Menson Inood Caritas Netherlands	Netherlands
22. Danish Refugee Council	Netherlands
23. Cot Aid Institute	Netherlands
24. Liliana Foundation	Netherlands
25. St. Voalage International	Netherlands
26. Steewan Biboritaning Vingbo Institute	Netherlands
27. Wild Geese Foundation	Netherlands
28. Flavoring Foundation	Netherlands
29. CIDA	Canada
30. World University Services (WUSC)	Canada
31. Australian Development Cooperation Association	Australia
32. Swedish International Development Agency	Sweden
33. Embassy of Sweden	Sweden
34. Christopher Blindenshon Mission	Germany
35. Global Eco Village	Germany
36. Social Services Department	Sri Lanka
37. Probation and Child Care Department	Sri Lanka
38. Ministry of Wild Life and Environment	Sri Lanka
39. Ministry of Health	Sri Lanka
40. United Nations High Commission for Refugees	Sri Lanka
41. United Nations Population Fund	Sri Lanka.
42. CARE Organization	Sri Lanka
43. Embassy of Netherlands	Sri Lanka
44. Hope for Children	Sri Lanka
45. PAFFREL	Sri Lanka
46. ADDIC Organization	Sri Lanka.
47. Family Planning Organization	Sri Lanka
48. Birlid Vincle Asnode Organization	Belgium
49. Local and Foreign Philanthropists	

APPENDIX F

Excerpts of an Interview with Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne

Interviewer: Kushali M. Amaratunga

Interviewee: Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne

Date: May 8th, 2003

Time: 1600

Location: Sarvodaya Headquarters, Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

Q: To what extent has Sarvodaya influenced national policies in favour of basic human needs?

Dr.AT: At the time Sarvodaya started this kind of micro development no one spoke about. It was only Sarvodaya who spoke about Basic Human Needs. The normal development policy was to improve the GNP so that there will be a trickle down effect. So that is why people world over said that Sarvodaya was a bottom up process

Now of course it is an accepted fact that Basic Needs have to be attended to so that way like most authors in the world have written.. Sarvodaya pioneered this whole thing. Even before the World Bank. From the very inception we divided needs into three categories. One was basic human needs which was categorised into ten, then there were secondary needs which have to be satisfied above the village level. That is through a cluster of villages and the third was going above that also. So we were working on basic needs at that time and also now.

Q: Were the Needs identification a gradual process? How did it come about?

Dr.AT: Actually the motivation came to me from a native physician in a village in the Puttalam districtthis physician was a farmer but traditionally he had this prescription....he was in a loin cloth, digging the paddy fields, so he was not a professional physician as such but for this particular disease their family had a treatment. So I asked him “are you happy”? and he said “why not, I am very happy. My basic needs are satisfied”. I asked him so what are your basic needs. He said first the environment, the psychological environment; we are not in fear. Physical environment; see we have a clean forest and clean air and all that. The environment was his priority. Then he talked about water, clothing, food, health, housing, energy, education etc.. This was working in my mind. I came home and wrote down those ten basic needs. Then I called ...who was a researcher at our development education Institute. Both of us talked about it and wrote them down and I said, convene 60 people who have not been in school over the 6th standard. So we got 60 people who have not studied beyond, all village members. Then asked them their priorities and the first priority was the environment. So imagine this was 38 years ago..

Q. What are the key elements that need to be in place to practice the Sarvodaya ideology and do you think it is only conducive to countries, which have a rich cultural/spiritual heritage?

Dr AT: Countries that have a spiritual and cultural kind of heritage it is easier. But that does not mean that it cannot be practised in other places. The only need is first a human being who has immense courage and determination and trust in the goodness of human deeds. Trust in the power of non-violence, trust in the power of persuasion, and trust in the ability of the people to sacrifice for a common good. The main thing is the initiative taken by an individual or group of individuals to bring about change in their society for the better. There is no society that has accomplished everything. There may be *something (emphasis added)* that can be improved in any society. Therefore they have to look for it, identify that need and then start working on it.

Q: Considering the present social composition where the bureaucracy or small handful of people hold control, is it possible to empower the people and is there not a ceiling to this empowerment? Is it through a social revolution that such a change can be brought?

Dr.A.T: There is an ongoing revolution. A revolution that happens suddenly and vanishes suddenly is not a revolution. Blowing up from the existing status quo –

that is not a revolution. A revolution is an integrated, total transformation of the consciousness of people; the technologies people use and their structures. So bureaucrats and others are there because of the prevailing top down structures. If we can replace those structures with bottom up structures then there won't be bureaucrats. That is why we believe in Gramswaraj. – Village self-governance. So when village self governance catches on there will come a point where a “critical mass” of consciousness will be created in communities and then the transformation that we want will come about.

Q: With all the greed and materialism in the world do you think the time is right for that critical consciousness to occur? Do you think people have evolved to that stage where they want a spiritual awakening; that they are looking for it and that they are ready to embrace this type of consciousness?

Dr.AT: What is necessary here is trust in yourself. Don't wait till they are ready. We don't know if they are ready or not but we strongly believe that they should give up violence and go in the direction of non violence, give up greed and go with the process of no-greed they should give up this violence and go in the process of cultivating non hatred. We strongly believe that when we act on these principles, we influence other people and we always have to work with the belief that others will change. At the time we were shouting for non-violence saying that there is no way we can solve the problems with war, people attacked us., people ridiculed us but today nobody says that war is the answer...people as a whole say lets find an alternative to war, so those very people who have been ridiculing us – now they are talking of peace. That means they have got transformed.... For this transformation to take place, some people have to work very hard and suffer.

Q: Sarvodaya wants to be a self-sufficient unit to the extent that external funding is stopped. Is this possible?

Dr. AT: Yes, because there were times when all our external funds were stopped and we survived. Basically for more that 20 years or so we worked on our own labour and then between 1991 and also 1998, we were almost hardly without any external support. So we know we can survive but we are trying our very best generate enough income internally so that our own administrators and centres could be maintained... right now we have to have help. As long as they do not influence our principles and policies we will accept. Lots of organizations offering us money, which made us, compromise our principles. We have refused such money.

Q: What advantages does Sarvodaya have over other NGOs?

Dr.AT: One, we have a value system, two we are very much attuned to our culture. Three we are non-sectarian. Four we do not totally depend on outside aid for our existence. And five we are totally independent of external influence on our policies. We decide our own policies. Also being the oldest development agency in the country has its advantages.

Q: What advice would you give me?

Dr. A.T: You are young, you are intelligent, and you have not embraced the baser values of the materialistic West or East. Keep it that way but after long years of studies and...connected with that studies you will be tempted to accept a job considering the salary and the perks rather than the service it can render to humanity. So in the selection of that job, find out whether that type of job could be called Right Livelihood. In the end at whose service are you placing your knowledge and your youth. Is it for the benefit of the people who deserve it most or is it for the benefit of the people who want to exploit young intellectuals and their abilities to make more money and make others who are already poor, poorer. So that is an important choice you have to make at a particular stage. So don't make salary and the benefits your only criteria. You should think in terms of loving-kindness to the people who suffer most and to what extent by living a decent life or having a decent standard of living, still you can do a job. So that is the advice I would give to any educated young person.

Appendix I: Photos of my Shramadan Experience



Photo 1: Conducting interviews as a village



Photo 2: Sharmadana Camp - on our way to the rice paddies



Photo 3: Shramadana camp – Digging a canal



Photo 4: Shramadana Camp – More work



Photo 5: Friends from Shramadana



Photo 6: Family Gathering



Photo 7: Dr. Ariyaratne making a speech at a Bank Opening



Photo 8: A preschool constructed by Sarvodaya through Shramadana



Photo 9: A village church



Photo 10: Myself with Mr.N.K Sumanaratne, Divisional Coordinator



Photo 11: My host and my friend



Photo 12: Dr. Ariyartane and Myself at Sarvodaya headquarters



DR A.T. ARIYARATNE
Founder~ President
SARVODAYA SHRAMADANA MOVEMENT

Ms. Kushali Amaratunga

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My dear Kushali,

I hereby grant you, permission to use already
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Wishing you all the very best in your work.

Sincerely yours

A T Ariyaratne
5th October 2003



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Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Human Subjects

This is to certify that the Research Ethics Board has examined the research proposal or other type of study submitted by:

Principal Investigator: Kushali M. Amaratunga

Name of Research Project: Participation Towards Effective Community Development at the Village Level in Sri Lanka

REB File Number: 2002-081

and concludes that in all respects the proposed project meets appropriate standards of ethical acceptability and is in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Conduct of Research Involving Humans. Please note that approval is only effective for one year from the date approved. (If your research project takes longer than one year to complete, submit form #3 to the REB at the end of the year and request an extension.)

Date:

Nov. 15, 2002

Signature of REB Chair:

U
Dr. John E. MacKinnon