

UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

STRUCTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF PARTICIPATORY STRATEGIES IN RURAL  
WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION IN THE MATALE DISTRICT - A CASE  
STUDY OF OWALA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
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ABSTRACT

The concept of community participation has been permeating development ideology since the 1970s. The concept was first articulated in the community development strategies which had been practised during the 1950s. The main focus of this study is on the sectoral approach to participation in the rural water supply and sanitation sector in Sri Lanka. The concept of participation involves a re-allocation of power, decision making authority and resources in development programmes. The study explores the implications of the concept for the agencies involved in development through a case study of a village in the Matale District.

The main research problem in this study is, what happens when development strategies which espouse community participation are confronted with the socio-economic, political and bureaucratic structures which operate in the implementation environment.

In order to analyze the main research question the writer reviews the theoretical approach to community development. Of these theories Kaufman's analysis of community development as an interactive process of change relates to the analysis of change in the study village. Based on Kaufman's analysis the writer assumes an interactive analytical model of the key agencies which

interact in development processes in Sri Lanka in order to analyze the main research question.

The socio-economic structure of the village, the social stratification, and the political and administrative structures were studied in order to identify the crucial configurations which have an impact on participatory strategies in the rural water supply and sanitation sector in the study location. The study shows that external agencies depend on the institutional support of the politico-bureaucratic structures operating in the environment and that the objectives of participatory development have not been achieved. Suggestions are made regarding changes in the politico-bureaucratic structures.