

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

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Roots

Participatory research has now been in existence as a label for about 15 years. It started from the practice of adult educators in the countries of the south -- Africa, Asia, Latin America. These adult educators began to confront the contradictions between their philosophy of adult education and their practice of research methodology. Their philosophy of adult education placed learners in the centre and focused on learners' control over their learning process. The major element of this philosophy is that adults are capable. They are capable of learning, of changing, of action, and of transforming the world. It is this essential faith in people as an integral part of the philosophy of adult education which was being contradicted through their training as professional researchers. When these adult educators began to examine and study the problems related to the reality society in which to situate their practice of adult education, when they began to evaluate the impact of their adult education efforts, when they began to study the learning process of adults they took recourse to a research methodology which was alien to the adults, which was disconnected from the adults and which was unilaterally controlled by these adult educators as researchers treating their learners as objects of manipulation in the research process.

The social science research methodology had become an elitist and dominant methodology after the second World War. The growing importance of development, and debate on various models of the same, in the newly independent countries of the South had witnessed a growing use of this research methodology in identifying and determining the agenda of development by the ruling elites of these new nation-states. Professionally trained researchers were being produced by the emerging 'factories' of knowledge-production to carry out research on problems of poverty, development and growth. The research methodology they learnt, imbibed and practiced had borrowed heavily from the natural sciences and was based on myths of neutrality, objectivity and scientificism. Under the guise of these tenets of natural science research methodology, the social science research methodology became heavily dependent on behaviorism and empiricism as the basic defining paradigm of research. Professionally trained adult educators were no exception to this historical trend.

Recovery

It is this critique of the classical research methodology which led to the coining of the phrase "participatory research" as an alternative research methodology. The further pursuit of those involved in the practice of participatory research and its theoretical elaborations led to several discoveries world-wide. These discoveries can be seen as common patterns which are reflected in the practice of participatory research and its theoretical elaboration in different

regions of the world. Firstly, we discovered that the theoretical underpinnings of participatory research are much deeper. We discovered that participatory research is a methodology of alternative system of knowledge production . It is a system of knowledge production of ordinary people, those who are deprived, oppressed, under-privileged. It is a system of knowledge production which has been in existence since the very beginning of human race. It is been a system of knowledge production that has historically been derecognised, neglected, de-legitimized. We began to discover that elite control over knowledge and the production of knowledge was the dominant system in much of the human history. We discovered that this dominant system of knowledge production tended to serve the interests of the elites in perpetuating of the status quo, their continued domination and hegemony at a given historical point in time.

It was this recognition which began a further search in different regions and continents to examine the historical contexts of the origins of participatory research. We began to discover its links with the struggles of people over long periods of history in our cultures, countries, and continents. We began to see that control over knowledge and over the system of production of knowledge has been historically used as one of the ways to control the poor and the oppressed. We discovered that control over systems of production of knowledge, dissemination and use of knowledge, and access to knowledge have been historically used in different societies to continue the systems of domination of the few against the many, to preserve the status quo and to undermine the forces of social transformation. In its contemporary sense, we began to discover that control over knowledge, means of production of knowledge and the system of production of the knowledge its dissemination and use have become a major source of control over ordinary people, their lives and their minds .

We further discovered that throughout history parallel to the existence of dominant system of knowledge production has existed popular system of knowledge and an alternative system of knowledge production which has been the system of producing knowledge for the purposes of the daily survival by the poor and the deprived. We began to recognize that this system has also existed in history almost simultaneous to the dominant system of knowledge production. And in its contemporary sense participatory research is the methodology of this alternative, popular system of knowledge production.

In its contemporary sense, therefore, participatory research is the methodology representation of this alternative popular system of production and use of knowledge. Participatory research, therefore, in the contemporary context, emphasises the use of knowledge as one of the major bases for power and control in our societies; and access to and control over knowledge and means of production of knowledge as a major contribution to the struggles of the poor and the deprived to transform their reality.

Alternative System of Knowledge

In trying to understand these two simultaneous systems of knowledge production we began to understand how they differ from each other. When we began to examine the question of the purposes of knowledge production, those involved in its production, the ways of producing knowledge and the resources needed for the same, we began to see some major differences between the dominant systems of knowledge production and participatory research. We began to see that the dominant system of knowledge production describes its purposes (answer to the question 'for what') as pursuit of truth. This seems to appear as an objective truth; though in practice it is a subjective representation and interpretation of reality. In contrast, alternative system of knowledge production is involved in answering questions of daily survival and providing insights into the daily struggle for life and living of the poor and the oppressed. The methodology of dominant system of knowledge production is the classical social science research methodology (based on empiricist and behaviorist traditions) which emphasises concepts of neutrality, objectivity, distance from the subjects and methods of data collection which exercise unilateral control over the process of inquiry.

In contrast, participatory research methodology as a representation of alternative system of an knowledge production explodes the myth of neutrality and objectivity and emphasises the principles of subjectivity, involvement, insertion and consensual validation in order to evolve its methods of data collection and analysis.

The dominant system of knowledge production historically as well as in its current incarnation recommends the use of trained and an exclusive personnel as the sole pursuers of knowledge production. Under the contemporary scenario these are the trained professionals and researchers, like their historical- counter parts of the Brahminical origin. In contrast, participatory research attempts to present people as researchers themselves in pursuit of answers to the questions of their daily struggle and survival. It recognises the need for an occasional special input of expertise and contribution of certain skills, but it rejects the myth of professionally trained experts as the only legitimate pursuers of knowledge-production.

And, ofcourse, the resources for production of knowledge, in the dominant system of knowledge production have historically come from the elites themselves, be they if the kings, the rulers or the ruling classes. In their contemporary manifestation these resources come from the State and its agencies, and from national multi-national corporations, foundations and other such elite institutions. In contrasts the resources for alternative system of knowledge production been historically mean generated by the people themselves and those supporting this process of knowledge production of ordinary people have been also supported by such ordinary people themselves. However, in its contemporary practice, some participatory research efforts have received support from the institutions of apparent elite control, though much of the grass-roots practice of participatory research continues to be supported by the people themselves .

It is this fundamental difference in the two systems of knowledge production which becomes the context for further elaboration of the theory and practice of participatory research.

Knowledge Enterprise

In trying to uncover the roots of the origins of participatory research, it becomes important to analyse the knowledge enterprises in contemporary societies. Production, use and dissemination of knowledge in its various forms and manifestations has become a major enterprise in contemporary societies. In some so-called developed countries of the world like United States of America, knowledge industry is contributing close to half the gross national product of the country. In some of the so-called developing countries of the South, they are increasingly becoming a major enterprise. The twentieth century has seen the emergence of the dominant system of knowledge production as a modern enterprise. The knowledge industry now has specialists, experts, projects, grants, research assistants, statisticians -- a whole range of people specially trained for a narrow part of the knowledge industry.

With the growth of literacy in the early part of twentieth century in the countries of the North, knowledge systems began to utilise written and printed word as a dominant form of representing knowledges. Hence, over these decades, the printed word began to be equated with knowledge. With the increasing specialization of the knowledge industry, special discipline, journals, guilds of editors and experts, began to emerge who subtly yet powerfully regulated the knowledge industry. Financed by the State, corporations and other elite interests in society, the knowledge industry ensured what society began to call as "legitimate" knowledge and what it began to label as "subjective" opinion.

With the rise of specialization on the one hand and the cult of expertise on the other, two important social processes began to happen in different societies at different points of time during the last few decades. The first major process was the de-recognition of popular knowledge and alternative system of knowledge production. With the growth of specialization and increasing centralization of the knowledge industry, only a particular mode of production of knowledge as recommended and pursued by the dominant,, systems of knowledge production began to be seen and accepted as the only legitimate mode of knowledge production. Thus, alternative systems of knowledge production based on people's daily practice of life and living and struggle began to be de-recognised as legitimate and valid.

The second and related process which occurred over this period of time was to undermine the capacities of ordinary people to engage in serious inquiry about problems and issues of daily concern to them. On the one hand the increasing organisation of the knowledge industry began to produce its own agents - the professionally trained researchers- who alone were seen as legitimate producers of knowledge, and on the other it began to create a widespread notion that ordinary people lacked the capacities and the tools for production of knowledge

and that it took 'extra ordinary' training in elite academic institutions to be able to acquire the competencies needed to produce the knowledge.

The second half of twentieth century has seen a very powerful at times subtle, at times very explicit use of various media of mass communication to change and influence the opinions, attitudes and values of people in a given society. The growing investment in communication technology in recent decades has further strengthened these trends. Cutting-edge R&D efforts in the North, and growing fascination with and deployment of in the South, of the new communication (satellites, optics, etc.) and information (chip) technology has led to enormous power in the hands of ruling elites due to the essentially centralizing and controlling nature of this technology. One of its major uses has been to control the minds of people, not merely the minds of the middle classes but also the minds of the poor and the oppressed. In fact, this control has been so successfully exercised in some societies that the poor and the oppressed have been made to believe in the inevitability of socio-economic inequalities in their societies and thereby made to feel that they are likely to continue in that lowest socio-economic strata of society as a given. These forces encompassed the minds of ordinary people also in comprised of those which began to "de-capacitate" people from producing their knowledge. Even ordinary people the poor and the oppressed themselves- began to believe that they lacked the capacities, the intellect and the competence to produce their own knowledge for solving their own problems and for their daily struggles and survival.

In epistemological sense also the rise of the knowledge industry in the twentieth century has seen narrowing and limiting epistemological options. Historically, it was seen and practiced that knowing was a comprehensive integrated human process. It was earlier believed; based on the realities of practice, that human beings are capable of knowing about themselves, their realities and their contexts as human beings. Thus, earlier epistemological positions described three broad modes of knowing-thinking, feeling and acting. It was seen that humans knew about social phenomena by the use of their rational self, through the processes of thinking, analysing. It was also seen that inquiry and the process of knowing was pursued through feeling the emotional self of human beings. In fact, the phenomenological writings seemed to support feeling as an important mode of knowing. It was also believed that acting in the world, acting on the reality, was also a legitimate and important mode of knowing about a given situation. Early writings on action research seemed to support this epistemological position.

However, the rise of the knowledge industry with increasing specialization and the cult of expertise led to the de-recognition of feeling and acting as legitimate modes of knowing and, narrow definition of epistemology became a rational pursuit and not an emotional and action pursuit. Infact, the academic, the professional producers of knowledge began to be even given labels as those who are the thinkers, think-tanks', etc.

Thus the continuing narrowing and limitations of the epistemology and de-recognition of feeling and acting as important and legitimate modes of knowing a given reality found support in the increasing forces of division of labour between the mental and the manual. The new class of intellectuals, knowledge-producers began to be the thinkers and the rest of the poor and oppressed as mere doors of what the thinkers thought is good for them. Infact, the gulf between the theory and the practice were seen to be widening. All human pursuit in general, and development actions in particular, began to be seen as application of theoretical principles, derived through abstract manipulation of symbols and constructs by these professionally trained, certified and legitimate agents of the dominant system of knowledge production. The generation of knowledge and understanding from the daily practice of the people was de-recognized, parallel to the de-recognition of feeling and acting as epistemological modes.

The close linkage established between thinking and writing in this century led also to be de-recognition and traditional and popular form of dissemination of knowledge. The oral tradition, the informal modes, the use of art and culture in its various forms and manifestations as the major ways of sharing understanding and knowledge produced through the alternate system of knowledge production began to be under-valued, undermined and de-recognised. Instead, the dominant system of knowledge production emphasised the written and the printed words-both for the certification of those who wanted to be legitimate knowledge producers and for the rest of the society. Thus papers, books, journals, seminars, and conferences became the only legitimate modes of dissemination of knowledge. In fact, they became so dominant in certain societies that these modes of dissemination of knowledge began to get confused with knowledge per se.

Contemporary Contributions of Participatory Research

It is in this historical context within the framework of the political economy of knowledge and knowledge production that we have to examine and explore the contributions of participatory research. In its current manifestation, participatory research. In its current manifestation, participatory research seems to have made the following contributions and also contains the potential for deepening these contributions:

1. Valuing People's Knowledge

In the face of continuing de-recognition and de-legitimation of people's knowledge and alternate systems of knowledge production, a major contribution of participatory research is to strengthen the forces of re-recognition and re-legitimation of people's knowledge. Counter-forces have to be generated and strengthened which begin to demonstrate that popular knowledge and alternative system of knowledge production continue to be practiced and used by the poor and the oppressed in support of their daily struggle and survival. One of its major contributions, for example, seems to be the re-discovery of traditional health practices as important ways of sustaining the

health in a community. Other areas include traditional agricultural practices, systems of irrigation and water management, protection of forest and other natural resources. However, it has to be recognised that these alternative forces continue to face the growing onslaught unleashed from the dominant system of knowledge production.

2. Sharpening Capacities

The second major contribution of participatory research has been, and can be, in re-capturing and further sharpening ordinary people's capacities in conducting their own inquiries. It means enhancing their self confidence that they have the capacities to understand their reality to analyse their situation and to evolve solutions to the problems. It is re-capturing the analytical and critical facilities of ordinary people which have been negated undermined, under valued and destroyed.

3. Appropriating Knowledge

A third major contribution of participatory research seems to be in assisting ordinary people in appropriating to themselves the knowledge produced by the dominant system of knowledge production. In contemporary societies with an exceptional organisation of the knowledge industry, the dominant system of knowledge production continues to produce knowledge about various socio-economic phenomena and processes, in particular about the conditions, situations and the reality of the poor and the oppressed. Thus, access to this knowledge produced by the dominant system of knowledge production and appropriating the knowledge to the understanding and context of the poor and the oppressed becomes an important mechanism for challenging the dominant knowledge and the system of knowledge production. Hence, participatory research has contributed to assist the poor and the oppressed, through their associations, groups and organisations, to acquire, incorporate, appropriate and re-interpret the knowledge produced by the dominant system of knowledge production.

4. People's Perspective

The fourth contribution of participatory research seems to have been in generating knowledge relevant to and from the perspective and experiences of the poor. Infact, participatory research has contributed to the discovery of questions for inquiry which are relevant to the daily struggle of the poor and the oppressed, questions which the dominant system of knowledge production never addressed itself to. These are the questions of alienation from land and other natural resources, the questions of continued struggle to resist the forces of domination. Questions which do not become the focus of inquiry in the dominant system of knowledge production. Participatory Research has also contributed to explore questions of importance to the poor and oppressed from their own perspective and experiences and not from those of the elite researchers.

5. Liberating The Minds

And finally, participatory research seems to have contributed to the forces of liberating the minds of the poor and the oppressed -- by helping them reflect on their situation, regain their capacities to analyse and critically examine their reality and to reject the continued domination and hegemony of the elite and the ruling classes. By encouraging critical reflection, questioning and continuous pursuit of inquiry, participatory research strengthens the forces of liberating the minds of the poor and the oppressed and challenge⁴challenges the forces of domination and hegemony. Unless ordinary people continue to think about their own situation themselves and to critique their reality themselves, without rendering their own faculties of analysis and critical examination to the elites, the forces of hegemony and controlling the minds of the people will continue to win. It is here that participatory research faces the greatest challenge and it is here that it can perhaps have the most important contribution.

Continuities and Ambiguities

The early writings on Participatory Research began to emerge in late seventies of this century. Many of these writings - case studies, critiques, theoretical reflections, etc. were an attempt to document the beginning formulations and theorizing on participatory research to the world at large, albeit in the same form of printed word. These initial writings served the twin purposes of invited other like-minded practioners of Participatory Research to join the them nascent movement on the one hand, and to pose tentative challenge to the promoters of dominant system of knowledge production, on the other.

The early documents thus became a focus of great attention, both by the protagonists and the antagonists. The conceptual, practical, epistemological and methodological critiques of Participatory Research pointed out several ambiguities in the stand points of Participatory Research, and some inconsistencies, in the practice as represented in these documents. A decade later, with the deepening of practice and sharpening of the conceptualization of Participatory Research (as described earlier), we should respond to these ambiguities and inconsistencies.

We should examine the four categories of ambiguities which were highlighted in the writings of participatory research about a decade ago. These ambiguities related to the objectives of participatory research, the roles of the researchers and the participants, the methods of research, and the outcome of research. It seems to me that these ambiguities are not longer such and that clarity through practice and conceptualization has emerged on that. It does not necessarily mean that all ambiguities in the practice and theorization of participatory research have disappeared. Many new ambiguities have emerged, many new dilemmas in practice are being experienced and many contradictions have been highlighted even in this paper. But let us go back to the ambiguities referred to above.

The primary objective of participatory research is production of knowledge and encouraging the poor and the oppressed, and those who work with them, to generate their own knowledge, control their knowledge, and control the means of production of knowledge. Awareness as an educational process is a by-product of this process of participatory research. In pursuit of knowledge and in controlling knowledge and means of production of knowledge, the poor and the oppressed do experience it as an educational process and thereby become aware of forces that control them, control their minds, that de-legitimize and de-recognise their experiences and competencies. But awareness as an educational experience is not the primary objective. Social change has never been a direct outcome of Participatory research and, therefore, it can not be construed as one of its objectives. The social transformation processes require several types of interventions organising, mobilizing, struggle etc, etc. knowledge, control over knowledge, control over means of production of knowledge, appropriating knowledge produced by the dominant system of knowledge production can be a small and yet important contribution to the over-all forces of social transformation. Thus participatory research can be such a small and important contribution to the social change process but it can not directly lead to social transformation. Thus social change does not become a major objective of participatory research.

The second ambiguity seems to be related to the question of the roles of researchers and participants. This ambiguity arises out of those of us who have been products of the elite system of knowledge production, who have rejected that system and who are trying to find relevance for ourselves in the context of the alternative system of knowledge production. It is us who are called researchers. For ordinary people, the distinction between the researcher and the participant is irrelevant -- they are both. For us, it becomes difficult to behave as participants in the ongoing social realities of the poor and the oppressed because we are not part of it. We must therefore, try to focus on the processes of participatory research and the alternative system of knowledge production as opposed to the separation of roles. Participatory Research is a collective process of inquiry, as opposed to individualist nature of classical research methodology. As a collective process, therefore, it rejects the separation of roles and continued emphasis on the researcher as an individual. In fact, there is a danger in this type of separation of roles because it may re-inforce the division of labour between mental and the manual, the researchers and the participant. Thus, we should perhaps talk about participatory research efforts, examples, experiences, as opposed to participatory research. The main dilemma faced by people like us is whether we have a role to play in the alternate system of knowledge production. Therefore, we should examine it separately.

It seems to me that formally trained researchers like us can contribute our skills and expertise to strengthen the forces of alternative system of knowledge production in ways described above. We also have the possibility to bring additional information and constructs produced from the dominant system of knowledge production to the service of the alternate system of knowledge production, and

the processes of appropriating such constructs. Therefore, those of us who have a philosophical faith in the underlying principles of participatory research have a definite role in contemporary context and must play that deliberately and actively.

And, this is manifestation of one of the inconsistencies in the actual practice of Participatory Research. Many of the contemporary experiences and illustrations of Participant Research seem to involve professionally trained researchers, like us. But then this is the very nature of dialectics -- the contradictions being the basis for further movement and change. In fact, the use of the label 'Participatory Research' came from those of us who were themselves trained in the classical methodology. Yet, as many of us began to question the empiricist, behaviorist and controlling tenets of the dominant paradigm, we began to sow the seeds of an alternative view of knowledge and its production. It is this dialectic which promoted several of us to recognize the alternative paradigm of knowledge and system of production of knowledge, and to promote Participatory Research as its methodology.

The next ambiguity seems to be in relation to methods. Historically, various types of references have been made to certain methods which are appropriate to participatory research and certain which are inappropriate. Methods of data collection which are qualitative in character have been seen as more appropriate to participatory research while survey and other quantitative methods of data collection seen as irrelevant. It appears to me that the question of methods is a non-issue in the current conceptualization and practice of participatory research. We must distinguish between methods and methodology. Participatory research methodology can utilise several types of methods of data collection. The question is their appropriateness to the context of the given inquiry at hand. If concrete information has to be collected from a large number of people in a given situation for strengthening people's action, use of survey and questionnaires is appropriate. The question is why we do that research, who sets the agenda for research, who benefits from it, and who maintains the control over the entire process of inquiry,

Participatory Research is the methodology of alternate system of knowledge production. It is not a set of tools, techniques and methods. It, therefore, embodies the values and philosophy of alternative, popular system of knowledge production. It is based on the belief that ordinary people are capable of understanding and transforming their reality. Its articles of faith include the centrality of collective participation, and hence empowerment, of the ordinary people in having and knowing, their world, in dreaming and visoring a new society, and in playing their collective roles in that process of transformation. It is this faith in the participation of ordinary people that also acts as the philosophical basis for Participatory Research Methodology. The determinants of this participation in Participatory Research are three-fold:

- (i) Peoples' role in setting the agenda of inquiry
- (ii) People's participation in data-collection and analysis and,
- (iii) People's control over the use of outcome, and the whole process.

It is in this sense that an ideal Participatory Research process can be visualized. However, in a given actual practice, different combinations of these three may be possible or utilized. But that is only the beginning. This distinction between the methodology (and not methods) of Participatory Research needs to be understood, and not confused.

It has been demonstrated, however, that additional methods of data collection which are not relying on paper and pencil ways have been utilised in several examples of participatory research. These methods derive from the oral traditions of communication and dissemination of knowledge referred to earlier. These are the songs and the dramas and the music and other ways of expressing ideas which have been practiced as an integral part of the life of ordinary people in our societies.

The fourth issue relates to the outcomes of the participatory research and there need not be any ambiguity in the same. Outcomes relate to the objectives. The primary outcome of of participatory research efforts is knowledge - a new knowledge, fresh synthesis of old knowledge, related to its specific objectives. Other outcomes are incidental, and by-products as referred to in our discussion of the objectives. Learning by the people can be an outcome but it is a response to the process of pursuing the production of knowledge becoming an educational experience for them. Becoming organised as a consequence of collective pursuit of knowledge is a by-product. The primary outcome is knowledge. The important question is not merely outcomes but the use of those outcomes of inquiry. Who uses the outcomes ? Do people control the use of outcomes ?

There is one other confusion that has been referred to in several debates related to participatory research. This has to do with its relevance in certain context. It has been argued that participatory research is relevant only in the third world countries . This argument seems to negate the existence of third world situations even in the first and the second world countries. If we continue the exploration of participatory research and contemporary representation of the alternate system of knowledge production by the poor and the oppressed, then wherever such people exist, and they do exist in the North as they do in the South today, such systems of knowledge production exist and therefore, participatory research as a contribution to strengthen alternate systems of knowledge production can be practiced wherever, irrespective of the North and the South divide and irrespective of the socio-political and geographical context of a given country. If we also look at the contributions of participatory research as referred to earlier, this confusion should go away. Those contributions can be made in any society, in a given social system in any country.

Links to Social Movements

Finally, we also need to explore what have been the links of participatory research with contemporary social movements. Historically, alternate systems of knowledge production has been related to, and based on the ordinary people's need to survive; and,

hence, historically, alternate systems of knowledge production have had close links with the struggles of people. In its contemporary manifestation, Participatory Research must discover, as well as build, such links to the people struggles and social movements.

It seems to me that the links of participatory research with contemporary social movements have varied in different parts of the world depending on the strength and location of those movements in different societies. It also seems that voluntary organisations, grass-root practitioners, development workers, other catalysts of social change have been providing the major momentum to the practice and conceptualisation of participatory research in different parts of the world. As an overview, the following four social movements mainly seem to have links with participatory research.

The first one is the movement related to natural resources. In different parts of the world, access to, and control over, natural resources (like land, water, forest) by the poor and ordinary people has become a major issue. Several movements have emerged in different parts of the world around such concerns. The centralized, elite-controlled, development strategy is leading to dis-possession of the poor and displacement from their traditional access to and ownership of, natural resource. Degradation of natural resources has been another major consequence of the current development strategy being followed through-out the world. It is here that investigations of problems related to access to and control over natural resources by the poor and the oppressed and the degradation and destruction of natural resources, its appropriation in the interests of the few, and dis-possession and displacement of the poor and oppressed, negation and rejection of the traditional rights of the people over natural resources have become the major concerns and rallying points for such social movements. And it is in generating new knowledge and appropriating the knowledge produced by the dominant systems of knowledge production that Participatory Research has made some contributions. The re-capturing of capacities of the people to analyse their own reality seems to be another contribution participatory research has made in this context.

The second major social movement to which participatory research seems to have developed some links with is that of workers, particularly the workers in the unorganized and the informal sectors of economy. The struggles of the rural labour, workers of the informal sector, women workers, on issues to wages, rights of workers, their concerns for workplace health and safety, the concerns for living conditions in slums and housing colonies have been the areas where participatory research practice has made some links. Another area of contribution of participatory research in this social movement of workers has been in relation to highlighting their own experiences as workers and making them as legitimate basis for representation of their rights in society. In some contexts, workers' take-over of economic enterprises in order to collectively manage and control them have been also the focus of participatory research effort. Workers' cooperatives in different parts of the world have also provided links with participatory research in several countries. Workers inquiry as an ongoing theme of the struggles of the working

class, as an integral component of that struggle seems to be the basis for the links to this social movement.

The third major social movement contemporary times which has found some links with participatory research is that of women's movement. The special experiences of women as women, the recognition of emotionality and other unique modes of inquiry and knowing by women seem to have been the basis for establishing these, links with participatory research. In many parts of the world women's struggle to over-throw their double oppression and to be treated as persons in their own rights, women's organisations, attempts to expose domestic violence, women's movement to regain their equal and just status in society have been the points of interaction with participatory research in recent years in some parts of the world.

And finally, the human rights and peace movement has been also an arena for links with participatory research. In many societies with military dictatorships daily violation of human rights becomes a major cause for concern, and in some once contexts. Participatory research has established its links with such movements. In some other contexts, in liberal democracies in certain countries of the South, violations of human rights have also been the basis for organising social movements and in some of those participatory research links have been established. Yet they are fairly weak links at the moment.

It seems to me that the links of participatory research with contemporary social movements are theoretically inevitable and practically very difficult. Our earlier elaboration of the concepts and the origins in the meaning of Participatory Research seems to make it evident that it must establish close links with contemporary social movements in different micro and macro contexts throughout the world. Yet it becomes very difficult to establish these links, particularly where professionally trained researchers like me are involved in trying to support the alternative systems of knowledge production. This has to do with difficulties we experience and the contradictions we face in the process of this transformation. yet both of strengthening of social movements and for invigorating the contributions of Participatory Research to strengthen the alternate systems of knowledge production, these links between the two are historically necessary. And it is here that the future practice of Participatory Research needs to focus in order to realize its historical potential as a contribution to contemporary efforts at social transformation.

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