

1.13.2. Public Trust

Public participation is regarded as one of the potential solutions to the crisis in public trust and governance. The idea is that the public should be involved in the policy process, and to have state officials seek public views and participation, rather than treating the public as simply passive recipients of policy decisions.

Public participation increases public trust in authorities, improving citizen political efficacy, enhancing democratic ideals, and even improving the quality of policy decisions.

1.13.3. Transparency and Accountability

These are two important pillars of democratic governance. Transparency ensures that information is made available that can be used to measure the authority's performance and to guard against the misuse of power. Transparency enables democracies to achieve accountability.

1.13.4. Participatory Development

The World Development Report (1994) on infrastructure reported that in a study of 121 completed rural water supply projects, financed by various agencies, projects with a high degree of local participation in project selection and design were more likely to enjoy good maintenance, subsequently, than those with more centralized decision-making.

1.13.5. Environment and Sustainable Development

In recent years, public participation has come to be seen as a vital part of addressing environmental problems and bringing about environment and sustainable development. It is argued that public participation allows governments to adopt policies and enact laws that are relevant to communities

and take into account their real needs. Sustainable development is more effective with participation in governance.

1.14. Participatory Governance In India

India has had a long history of local governance. The concept of village as a self-sufficient unit and existence of Panchayats at village level have existed since ancient times. Panchayats were institutions of local people for governance and resolutions of disputes at local level.

In the modern India, the concept of participatory development had been experimented much before it took shape in the development discourse. The first such attempt of structural participation of people in development was through Community Development Programme in 1952 as a Programme of aided self-help. This Programme intended to be planned and implemented by the villagers themselves, government offering technical and financial assistance. The community development Programme failed miserably because of lack of political patronage as well as bureaucratic lethargy.

This happened despite the fact that the Constitution of India had recognized Panchayat bodies as units of Self Government drawing its inspiration from the historical legacy of Panchayat Systems of Indian villages.

Since independence, India has experimented with its policies partially on the lines of its own history and partially going by the global trends of the times. The periods of 1950s-1980s were periods of Centralized governance systems even internationally with growth centered top down approach to development.