

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS  
IN SRI LANKA:  
A STUDY OF  
CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES OF NGO-MANAGED  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

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**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS  
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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

**Deepashika Shiromini Kumari Gunasekara**



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Department of Building Economics  
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November 2007

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## **Dedication**

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To my parents with gratitude.....



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## List of Abbreviations

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CD	: Community Development
NGO	: Non-governmental Organization
FO	: Field Officer
UK	: United Kingdom
GO	: Government Organization
ST	: System Theory
RRA	: Rapid Rural Appraisal
PRA	: Participatory Rural Appraisal
O&M	: Operations and Maintenance
CDW	: Community Development Worker



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Community Development (CD) aspects were given due recognition in the development activities from mid 70s in Sri Lanka. Most of these projects were implemented by the Government Organizations (GOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or as a collaborative effort by two or more agencies. Many constraints and challenges emerged; some were imbedded issues in the traditional approach in development and other were structure related issues in development.

The effectiveness and impacts of these projects were evaluated by many times by many evaluators. Many people concern on organizational, project or external factors but little thought is given to the knowledge and attitude of individuals who work with communities implementing these CD projects.

This study aimed on level of knowledge and practice of CD principles by field officers. Study was more towards sociological aspects as the attitudes of the field officers needed to be measured. A case study approach, which incorporated a questionnaire-led data collection, was used as the methodology. Ethnography using participant observation was done for triangulation. An ideal framework for CD model was developed as a result of literature survey. The hypothesis considered was: Field officers are not applying CD model, though they are knowledgeable enough on the principles, as it empowers the community and thereby challenges their existence and power.

Six middle level NGOs having experience in implementing CD projects in the country were considered for the study. Six separate case studies were developed including the profiles of them and nature of practice levels of CD principles by FOs. It was seen clearly that the practice levels of CD principles are less than the knowledge levels. But, many reasons were seen as interrupting factors of application of CD approach. Negative attitude of field officers towards CD model was one among them. Individuals with negative attitudes on CD principles, mostly, seem more concerning on their job risk and loosing their existing power

**Keywords:** Community Development Principles, Community Development Projects in Sri Lanka, Non-governmental Organizations, Case Study, Participant Observation.