

**Liang Jun, China**



## **Community Participation in Land Consolidation in Rural China:**

### **Research on Participatory Land Consolidation**

World wide land consolidation has been defined as an important measure to promote rural development. Community participation can effectively strengthen land consolidation and lead the community to a sustainable development in rural areas. However, community participation encounters many problems in China which have to be addressed seriously.

Based on a comparative qualitative approach two land consolidation projects in China are analysed: a standard one and an internationally influenced pilot project. The focus was laid on the different ways of people's participation and its effects.

The existing formal process of land consolidation in China is a 'top down' approach in which governments control most of the activities of land consolidation projects. Local communities and their members can not actually become involved in the land consolidation process even if they are the final beneficiaries of that land consolidation project. They are not placed in positions to develop themselves; they are largely excluded from the land consolidation activities. As a consequence, effects of land consolidation cannot be effectively achieved. Therefore these problems should be overcome.

Participatory development is a new approach to carry out land consolidation which is based on community-driven and farmers' initiatives. In these land consolidation processes, most of the activities from the beginning to the end include all groups and individuals within the community. Its final results are very positive and effective. Experiences from international development projects (pilot land consolidation project) in China prove that participatory land consolidation is a very effective approach to improve community participation and enhance land consolidation and should therefore be adopted extensively in China.

In order to fulfill the goal of participatory land consolidation, it is very necessary to set up a strategy framework to guide future land consolidation actions in China. The thesis concludes with recommendations.

***Key words:*** Land consolidation, rural development, community participation, Shandong, China.