

The  
Management  
University  
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**UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS**  
**SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP**  
**DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT**  
**STUDIES**

**BDS 215/BDS 302: NGOS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEVELOPMENT/  
CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT**

**DATE: 30<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026**

**DURATION: 2 HOURS**

**MAXIMUM MARKS: 70**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Write your registration number on the answer booklet.
2. **DO NOT** write on this question paper.
3. This paper contains **SIX (6)** questions.
4. Question **ONE** is compulsory.
5. Answer any other **THREE** questions.
6. Question **ONE** carries **25 MARKS** and the rest carry **15 MARKS** each.
7. **Write all your answers in the Examination answer booklet provided.**

## QUESTION ONE

**Read the Case Study below carefully and answer the questions that follow:**

### **CASE STUDY: CIVIL SOCIETY AND PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT**

In the context of modern governance and development, the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) has become increasingly significant, particularly in fostering participatory approaches to development. Civil society, broadly defined as the collection of non-governmental and non-profit organizations, community groups, and associations, functions as a bridge between citizens and the state, advocating for transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making. One illustrative case is the experience of the Rural Empowerment and Development Initiative (REDI), a local non-governmental organization operating in the agricultural heartland of Sub-Saharan Africa, where traditional governance structures have often left rural communities marginalized in policy formulation and resource allocation.

REDI's mission centers on empowering rural communities through participatory development, a process that actively involves local people in the identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation of development projects. Unlike top-down approaches that often fail to address local needs, participatory development encourages community members to take ownership of initiatives, ensuring that interventions are culturally appropriate and sustainable. REDI's flagship project, the Community-Led Agricultural Transformation (CLAT), exemplifies this approach. CLAT brought together farmers, local leaders, and representatives from relevant government agencies in a series of participatory workshops. Through these workshops, community members collectively identified key challenges—such as soil degradation, limited access to quality seeds, and inadequate market access—and co-designed solutions tailored to their unique circumstances.

The participatory process not only enhanced the relevance and effectiveness of development interventions but also strengthened social cohesion and trust among stakeholders. Community members, who previously felt excluded from decision-making, reported a greater sense of agency and empowerment. Local leaders, in turn, became more responsive to the needs of their constituents, recognizing the value of inclusive dialogue. Moreover, the project fostered partnerships between civil society, government, and private sector actors, creating a multi-stakeholder platform for ongoing collaboration.

REDI's experience demonstrates that participatory development, facilitated by civil society, can lead to more equitable and sustainable outcomes. By prioritizing the voices of marginalized groups, such approaches challenge traditional power dynamics and promote social justice. However, the success of such initiatives depends on several factors, including the willingness of government actors to engage in genuine dialogue, the capacity of civil society organizations to facilitate inclusive processes, and the availability of resources to support community-driven projects. In contexts where these conditions are met, participatory development can serve as a powerful tool for social transformation, ensuring that development is not only for the people but also by the people.

Expanding on REDI's example, it is clear that civil society plays a crucial role in mediating between citizens and the state, advocating for policies that reflect the needs and aspirations of the broader population. In many developing countries, CSOs have been instrumental in mobilizing communities, raising awareness about rights, and holding authorities accountable. For instance, REDI organized regular town hall meetings where residents could voice their concerns directly to local officials, leading to more responsive governance. The organization also provided training on advocacy and leadership, equipping community members with the skills needed to participate effectively in public affairs.

Furthermore, civil society's involvement in participatory development often leads to the creation of robust feedback mechanisms, enabling continuous learning and adaptation. In the case of REDI, the organization established a community monitoring system where project beneficiaries could report on progress and challenges, ensuring that interventions remained relevant and effective. This iterative process not only improved project outcomes but also built the capacity of local institutions, fostering a culture of accountability and transparency. Ultimately, the synergy between civil society and participatory development creates an enabling environment for inclusive growth, where all stakeholders have a stake in shaping the future of their communities.

**Required:**

- a) Determine how participatory development, as illustrated by REDI's CLAT project, differs from traditional top-down approaches to development. **(10**

**Marks)**

- b) Discuss three roles civil society plays in facilitating participatory development, according to the case study.

**(9 Marks)**

- c) Explain some of the benefits and challenges associated with participatory development, as highlighted in the case study.

**(6 Marks)**

**QUESTION TWO**

- a) In the context of the UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework, CSOs do not include business or for-profit associations. Give an understanding of civil society organizations as per the United Nations. **(9 Marks)**

- b) Examine three key components of effective management in Civil Society Organizations. **(6**

**Marks)**

### QUESTION THREE

- a) Describe two main actors within civil society organisations, and what motivates their participation.

**(10 marks)**

- b) Explain the main theoretical approaches to understanding civil society.

**(5  
Marks)**

### QUESTION FOUR

- a) Expound on how contemporary theorists differentiate between civil society, the state, and the market.

**(9 Marks)**

- b) Discuss any three roles civil society plays in democratization according to theoretical perspectives.

**(6 Marks)**

### QUESTION FIVE

- a) Enumerate with examples the role of civil society in promoting human rights and describe how a human rights-based approach to development differs from traditional development models.

**(10 Marks)**

- b) Describe how the concepts of "premodern-modern" and "public-private" shaped our understanding of civil society.

**(5 Marks)**

### QUESTION SIX

- a) Summarise the important values in shaping your organization's culture.

**(9  
Marks)**

**b)** Discuss in what ways does organization's culture influences decision-making and problem-solving.

**(6 Marks)**