

EXTERNAL FACTORS THAT INHIBIT COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Can public participation and public assets management can be enhanced with decentralization initiatives in country. World Bank and other donor agencies appreciating as well as promoting Community based development for sustainable development. New good governance practices have taken initiatives to involve citizen in decision making process for public asset management, aim to wider the citizen representation in society because consumer need base development is more preferred than politically imposed development. This paper addresses the external factors which segregate the citizen involvement in development. To test the claim that decentralization and good governance may be widening the horizon of citizen participation, this paper uses the case study of Citizen Community Boards (CCB's) in Pakistan. Results shows that the segregating factors resist the community empowerment. The current system fails to address the basic needs of local community. Involvement of minorities may improve the situation, if these groups are provided an opportunity to participate in decision making. Recommendation provided to policy makers to lessen the political intervention and elite community members for true participation of local citizens

Key words: Community participation, Economic Development, Local Development, Good Governance

Introduction

There are several ways through which citizen can influence the decisions made by Politian's and bureaucrats on their behalf. These decisions include governmental traditions acts like voting mechanism, petitioning, lobbying power distribution. Citizen groups can influence these decisions by providing their input through volunteer as well as individual basis (Fung, 2006). But its country tragedy is that these acts reach to only few citizens and not every citizen has

access to participate in these available acts. But those who are blessed had advantage to use these available acts in better way. Disadvantaged people have less time to contribute in developmental activities. These advantaged peoples have better access to education facilities; high income considered as elite personal of their areas and has more time available for these developmental activities.

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But there is need to discover such avenues which wider the citizen representation from whole population and more attention should be paid to unattended problems of deprived communities. In particular, decentralized governance which claim citizen participation as good governance practice should provide opportunity to diverse groups which leads towards citizen oriented participatory development. Advantage of facilities should be provided to those groups which deserve more attention so a balanced participatory approach is preferred. Moreover it is responsibility of governmental agencies to choose and access such groups, who have more unattended social problems. Bureaucratic setup which established in past should be addressed properly as it considered as remedy by current decentralization experts (Verba et. al, 1972).

There are several reasons which advocate citizen participation importance in developmental activities. 'Community participation' as a concept is used and interpreted in different ways in different situations. It is most over used concept in developing countries but very slightly captured by under developed countries and there is no critical evidence available which evaluate the miss leading meaning of community participation concept in developing countries. Only people participation in voting considered as community participation (Nientied et al., 1990; Oakley, 1991). But we have to verify this concept as it now considered as belief in

developing countries. Developed societies used this concept for development of their citizens and achieved unbelievable results (Gaigher, 1992).

There are wide ranges of tribulations which encumber and undeniably restrain the endorsement of participatory development and this often leads to surfacing of non participatory approaches. These hindered factors which segregate or bound the citizen participation are social cultural, technological, institutional infrastructure, poor management, not as much of citizen participation, poor public asset administration and have never-ending spectrum. These hindrance factors are external as well as internal and sometime they have mingled impact. External factors which act as an obstacle for community participation are outside the range of end-beneficiary community and influence community participation to be taken place to avoid true representation. External factors including the vague role played by donor authorities and outside developmental experts, role of governmental authorities in promoting these developmental activities, inclination of donor agencies in selection of selective population of their interest and biasness in presenting their reports. After Devolution initiatives in Pakistan in 2001, the role of donor agencies in promotion of community based development in very appreciating but this paper only addresses those agencies which promote the CCB's¹ in different area of Pakistan.

1 A Citizen Community Board (CCB) is a voluntary organization based on the community in which people live. According to LGO, local people form a CCB with a chairman, a secretary, and general members. A registered CCB makes a proposal for development projects and contribute up to 20% of total project cost. The local government funds 80% of the total project cost (See Appendix 1 for more information)

Internal obstacles involve lack of skills in members, contradictory interests of group members, gate-keeping by community local elites, lack of community interest in participation and low capacity to implement said projects. The next part of the paper will discuss all the external as well as internal factors discussed above which impede the community participation and leads to non-participation behavior.

1.1 The authoritarian role of developmental professionals

Almost all major developmental projects in Pakistan initiated with the fund provided by donor agencies. The majority of these contributor agencies are outsider and not native. These developmental agencies are seldom founded impulsively by the home society itself. The authoritarian role played by these developmental experts impeded many community based developmental approaches during the past few development decades. Government initiate community based developmental and conditions imposed by these funding agencies experts impede their participation. Cheema (1983) and Takashi (2005) pointed in their studies that reason for most of project failures Pakistan is externally imposed developmental projects locally managed projects. They call Pakistan as necropolis of developmental projects due to consistently failure of developmental projects. Similarly Ca dribo (1994) also given such statement about under developed country like Africa. In Africa as graveyard of developmental activities as all developmental projects leads to failures. There are few comments which defend the above mentioned arguments.

“Developmental agencies only see what they have and decide projects for what they don’t have. They never assess the personal needs of community”. *Pakistani Villager*

“Developmental agencies always show that they know every aspect of current situation and they are here to save our people. They

never access needs, just predict and implement”. *Government District office source*

According to Constantino (1982), experts from donor agencies always dominate as they are providing funds so they make decisions about developmental projects. Professional experts forget their role of facilitation and development. She examined that the professional experts always assume that they know about situation very well and their main duty is to transfer knowledge to deprived communities and they implement project with counting the developmental needs of local communities. The reason behind is that developmental practitioners trained in such a way that they always think that they are the only people who can empower the deprived communities and they always think well than others. This unexpected role of developmental experts impedes the skills the local people. As these professional experts believe him as sole owner of developmental knowledge results this monopoly leads to consistently under rate the skills and capabilities of local societies and groups to decide for themselves. As in case of Pakistan, a study conducted by JICA (2005) on CCB’s elaborated the results as

“Pakistan Community is not capable to implement Project them selves. The history of community development shows that Pakistani community has very little exposure to implement self-initiated projects”.

Many authors raise the point that it is very difficult for professional experts to see the actual needs of community with out being interaction with them. They have to shift the paradigms and have to see from the eyes of beneficiaries (Dudley, 1993; Heymans, 1994; Rowland’s, 1995).

In case of Citizen Community Boards (CCB’s) in Pakistan, fund was provided by World Bank and JICA. In some instance it

feels that process of empowering communities through devolution initiative in Pakistan is not genuine as they are not allowed to access resource reserved for project freely but it feels that it is rather an attempt to implements those projects which already been conceived by professional experts. In some case people are allowed to participate after the preparation of project design and tendering. The communities have to accept already accessed and assembled projects rather than of desired projects. Such sort of efforts can only sway communities to accept what professional experts suggest best for them.

1.2 The authoritarian role of Country Government

According to Gilbert (1987), people participation is a key for successful implementation of developmental projects. He agrees about the benefits which he perceives a community should get if involved properly in local development. He think that community participation initiatives are always overstated by planners and the upshot of these community projects constantly injure the allied for weak social groups in society. It's only because of the government only enforcing the political dimensions of community participations. There are many examples in history of community development in Pakistan in which state government Politian's impedes the participation of community.

According to Morgan (1993), participation of community at state level is always constrained by lack of resources, funds unavailability, local Politian's, institutional infrastructure and elite interference in local development. State fails to solve the unattended social problems of community. Rehman (1993) explored the lope holes in intuitional infrastructures which inhibit the community participation in development and impede the chances for community to improve their capabilities for self help development.

In country like Pakistan, community participation is often considered as a mean to gain more control over community resources. The main aim of current participatory development initiative is to legitimize the political system to access more control over reserved funds for communities. Many researchers doubt the role of state in provision of services towards poor peoples. They claimed that community based projects initiated by government is to support Politian's to improve their vote banks while spending the community reserved funds on community (Constantino, 1982; Gilbert et al., 1984; Morgan, 1993, Rahman,1993).

In Pakistan, many NGO's and governmental authorizes like Developmental authority in every District are working for service delivery to deprived communities. After announcement of Devolution Plan in 2001 by Military Government, creation of CCB does brighten the hope of Community based development. In order to improve the awareness and registration of these boards, two separate entities were established namely Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment (DTCE) and National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB). No Doubt DTCE played a great role in improving CCB's registration with the help of Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA). To secure funding from governmental agencies, a CCB has to submit a project proposal while funding was provided in installment during implementation phase. Several times CCB's member especially leaders expressed dissatisfaction for provided facilities, controlling mechanism and lack of support by operating agencies. The major issue is about payment of delay in installments during project implementation. Some time the delay leads toward project failure. There is no formal training sessions for community regarding proposal development and complication involved in designing project infrastructure. According to Authorities training was provided to village leaders while village leader education was not kept in mind while discussing technical issues. These issues hindered the community participation for being a part for self initiated, proactive .participatory development.

1.3 Donor agencies biasness while presenting data

The major problems which may be failure of community participation are quantification of presented data to agencies, the way they communicate the data and biased documentation. These reports lack lesson learned during different phase of project. According to Dudley (1993), lesson learned are important part of reports as it provide theoretically basis to research practitioners and these failures become lesson for future.

But it's the fact that professional experts while their reports always writes their success stories but a true pictures can only be gained from failures. No doubt that success always rewards while one learn more from failures. The professional experts lost the important information while compiling the reports results according to their own assessment (Friedman, 1993; Rahman, 1993).

There is need for studies which shows why things went wrong in each phase of project so that rectification steps would be taken to avoid those mistakes.

1.4 Selective Sample choice

It was observed by many researchers that mostly elite, educated, rich and influential peoples were chosen as sample. These peoples were provided with chance to decide for developmental need of areas without asking actual audience of projects (Friedman, 1993; Young, 1993). Gaigher et al. (1981) rejected the statement that community groups improve community participation. He concluded from his studies that NGO and community based groups partnership in local development impede the development.

“In Pakistan, CCB’s formation is not any formal process. Local peoples are free to choose their members. That’s why most of the elites are community heads” National Reconstruction Bureau, Pakistan

The involvement of local leaders in development impedes the actual community to participate and always favor the self-appointed leaders as leaders of these groups. “Marginal participants of the community” a term used by Salolae (1992), for such community groups. According to him the marginal people don't have capacity, have no mean to fulfill their daily needs, how they can contribute in development of country. Selective participation mainly results when donor or world well known agencies choose the well known community leaders for their help in development of local area (Morgan, 1992).

In case of CCB's Japanese International Corporation Authority (JICA) collected data from Pakistan from only one district and generalized the results on entire country. According to JICA statement

““Pakistan Community is not capable to implement Project them selves. The history of community development shows that Pakistani community has very little exposure to implement self-initiated projects”

Conclusion

Current trends are very much supportive for community based development and most of the donor agencies prefer to fund those funds which involve local communities. The obstacles as described above create problems for all the stakeholders to deliver better services to community. There must be mechanisms to improve the relationship between all the stockholders. Interruption of elite members in community also impeding factor and require an urgent attention as almost all the developmental projects suffering because of local elite community members. Community participation in development is difficult process. There is requirement of synchronization between the

government and local community. This article presented some of the impeding factors of community participation. There is need to explore internal factors which also impede the community participation. Community development can be enhanced by only lowering criticism and appreciation for successful stories of community implanted projects which improves the morale of other communities.

Future Recommendations

There is need of study which explores the internal inhibiting factors of community empowerment and study the relationship between both internal and external factors.

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Appendix-1 Flow Diagram for processing CCB's proposal

