

Decentralization initiatives, Economic and Community Development in Pakistan

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Abstract— The aim of this research is to give brief overview and introduction of community participation and Decentralization initiatives in Pakistan. Decentralized governmental system provides more room for community to participate and decides in collective manner for self improvement. History of Community development projects, structure of government before and after Decentralization, importance of collective action and government seven point agenda is part of this paper. Data was collected from 7 union councils of District Abbottabad of Khyber Paktunkhawa through questionnaire using stratified random sampling technique. Results reveals that Community based projects are more sustainable than that of projects implemented by local government.

Index term—Decentralization, Economic Development, Community participation, Devolution Plan, Community based Organization, Pakistan

I. INTRODUCTION

According to background of current global economic changes, most of the states in the world are losing its capacity to promote the development and well being of its peoples (Cook 1995). As development is considered as local phenomenon, countries are making major changes towards responsive governance and shifting from centralized governmental system to decentralized system in order to shift the responsibilities for development from top level to gross root level (Ettliger, 1994). Sengenberger (1993) noticed that now a days, policy makers and analyst paying more intention on local level intervention in community development. By giving importance to local level, the locality feel its self empowered as emerges as economic space and contribute meaningfully through their coordinated efforts in wealth creating economic development.

Scholar's and policy research paying much emphasis since 1980 on the participatory development for sustainable growth of communities. This shift focus on the development with refined developmental strategies and objectives towards promoting more socially balanced growth which respect equity and community participation and meet the basic need of millions of populations in the developing world. Community participation evidence supports involvement of community in decision making for better development. Decentralization also favors the community pro-active development and recommends community participation as an important component of development (Rondinelli, 1981). Perhaps Rondinelli stressed to transfer the power, responsibility and management of resources from top level to local community for sustainable development.

Decentralization gives community a power, voice and choice so they better participate and influence government

to work according to community demands (Hoshino, 1994). Decentralization allows local government to response to the community voice and needs with dynamism. It improves the resource allocation and distribution is made according after matching the preference with community needs (Stren, 1994). Response from government improves due to accountability and this deals towards corruption free development (Kliksberg, 1994).

Rondinelli et al. (1983) Stressed that decentralization is a source to increase the quality of service delivered to community, resulting improve political response towards public needs and requirement. Many developing countries considered community as key indicator in both policy and devolution initiate planning. Currently devolution promoters give importance to community in development. Through devolution results, it is realized that community involvement improves government responsiveness, efficiency and accountability. By using local information, knowledge and resources, such policies can be devised which improve sense of ownership in community resulting sustainable regional development. Similarly, community involvement and participation is also helpful in devising poverty reduction strategies (Bardhan, 2002).

II. MOTIVES FOR DECENTRALIZATION

The motives for decentralization vary from country to country. Some times in order to get control over local government, central government force them to share their financial and administrative controls. Sometimes such central control leads towards political and economic instability resulting demand for decentralized programs. In past two decades, developing countries for example, Russia, Indonesia and Philippines had faced major economics crisis and had made major administrative changes resulting decided for Decentralization (Balisacan, 2007).

According to Crooks and Sverrisson (2001), in case of democratic decentralization, primary consideration is an assertion that if the state supports decentralization, it means that both community and stakeholder support each other in decision making and government is more exposed show their concern for local development and therefore it is more responsive to local need and aspiration. Many authors argued that this setup will improve the quality of poor peoples; effectiveness of governance and authorities becomes more accountable towards people needs (Blair 2000; Crook and Manor 1998; Manor 1999; Rondinelli et al. 1989).

Conceptually, there is major difference between deconcentration and decentralization.

1) In deconcentration, it was instructed to local bodies to undertake those responsibilities which were previously in

control of central authorizes. Community gain more confidence towards self development.

2) While in devolution, a set up is established to support local bodies. In this setup, political and financial authorities are delegated to local bodies and considered responsible for them (Cheema, 1983).

Thus decentralization play major role in the community development. According to many practitioners and analysts, decentralization is a source to satisfy the major developmental objectives. Decentralization and participatory development gain popularity in under developed countries in the 1980s, that why most of the researcher and funding agencies paying attention towards sustainable economic development through pro-active community involvement. Over the last twenty years, lot of initiatives had been taken on decentralization. Moreover, the major international donor of the world including most of the international organization like World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) have provoked many countries toward participatory development efforts and showed their great interest towards Decentralization.

There is agreement among development practitioner of the world, Government officials and international donor agencies that local authorities working under government in different countries can play an important role in proactive, resource based participatory rural development. According to World Development Report (2004), it was strongly recommended to devolute the power, resources for improved services delivery and local governance to lower tiers of the government. Earth Summit (2002) embarked the point that Governance, participatory development and sustainable growth are important components to each other. Similarly number of scholarly literature, books and panel at conferences realize the fact that transfers of resource, power to lower authorities is only way for participatory development and local governments are the best mean of service delivery to rural communities. (Manor: 1995; Zehra: 1995; Hoshino: 1994; Yahaya: 1979; Chapel: 1977; Humes: 1973; Sady: 1962, Shakil et al., 2009). Today the importance of local governance is being realized on many forums of the world.

III. STRUCTURE OF DISTRICT GOVERNMENT

There exists regional disparity among province which leads towards differences in fund distribution resulting variation in level of development in all provinces. Track record of country shows that democracy in Pakistan suffered a lot right from its independence. Mostly country was ruled by Military rulers and they mostly created the governmental systems. There are two well known systems (1959 and 1973), both were designed and implemented by Military government. Military government was always against political government. One of the major reason for poor record of local development is amendments in system of governance which always changed by new government.

When new government control setup, they overthrew the previous projects and come up with new developmental schemes, so country has to bear the serious financial loss. Devolution plan is also implemented by previous military government in 2001. Devolution seems supportive towards

local growth. Local governments in Pakistan remain unsuccessful because of two main reasons.

1) In the presence of democratic government, local government cannot function properly. They must have to look at central government for funds and have to share their independency.

2) Every new government come up with new local system which has no link with the previous system resulting new planning, new developmental schemes and no fund for previously initiated projects.

Fig. 1 shows the district government structure exists before devolution plan. District was centrally controlled by Municipal Government. Municipal Govt. has four tiers i.e. town committee, municipal committee, municipal corporation and metropolitan corporation. According to Devolution plan, previous structure was devolved and District is now divided into three tiers i.e. Union council, Tehsil and District council.

Fig. 2 shows the three tiers of Local government. Union council is at village level. Few union types of council combine to form a Tehsil council. Similarly council. Similarly few Tehsil's combined and form a District council. While number of Unions, Tehsil varies in formation of Tehsil's and District councils respectively. Head of each tier is called Nazim and Naib Nazim. According to survey conducted by DFID (Development Fund for International Development) in August 2002, the situation in whole country is as under (See TABLE 1).

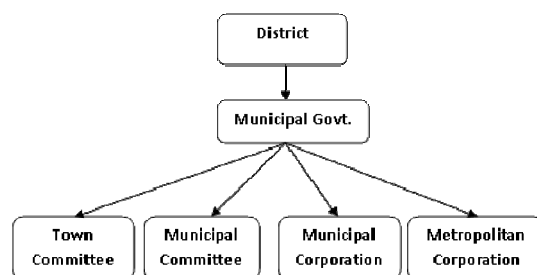


Fig. 1: District Government Structure before Devolution Plan

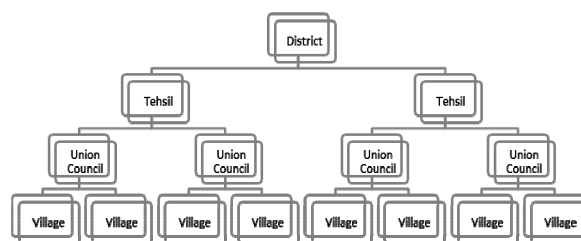


Fig. 2: District Government Structure after Devolution Plan

Source: NRB (National Reconstruction Bureau)

IV. LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN DEVELOPMENT

The involvement of local government in the development process is very important to handle the local social-economic problems and to manage and provoke participative rural development. However, Pakistan along with other many developing nation of the world could not add effectiveness in tribulations related to rural development and resulting lot many weakness in the local

government and not in position to answer many problem related to participatory rural development. Pakistan is developing country with 68 % population reside in rural area with agriculture land so rural development is most vital component of development strategy (Government of Pakistan: 2003). It is also necessary as poverty rate at rural level is very high with low living standards.

According to Hayarni and Rutlan (1985), there is less institutional structure at local level to support and initiate participatory rural development and the growing literature on decentralization emphasized many times that Local Government is only mean for good governance and participatory rural development. Local Government is considered only effective source to accelerate and motive rural communities to initiate, plan and implement the decisions of their own choice and may considered a way of accountable and responsive government which serve local need efficiently.

Involvement of community in development process is considered important for economic development. Economic Development Theory also supports community as key actor for responsiveness of governance. According to Bardhan (2000), collective action from community leads towards better management of common property resources.

Collectively community can better look after the common property and resources. Many authors reported that collective action for irrigation system is an example for common resource management (Bardhan 2000, Shakil et al. 2010).

The development record of the social service in Pakistan is so poor that it is very difficult that reforms in government lead towards any change. Reports from international development organizations support that Pakistan is lag behind in basic services provision to community like other developing countries. Devolution plan initiated by previous government in 2000 was only the way to provide solution to underlying problems and challenges being faced by social services sector from last two decades. In the present government system, districts and Tehsils are directly governed by province and for rural areas; there exists town and city government. Provincial bureaucratic setup act as controlling authorities for local governments, so centralized control for all the budgets and destabilize local governance which is same like colonial setup. The separate local government structure creates divide between rural and urban societies while administrative setup promote such aggression to create instability (National Reconstruction Bureau, 2000).

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF DISTRICT AND TEHSIL'S IN PAKISTAN

Provinces	Districts	City Districts	Total	Tehsil's/Talukas	City Towns	Total
Punjab	33	1	34	116	6	122
Sindh	15	1	16	86	18	104
Baluchistan	21	1	22	71	2	73
Khyber Paktunkhawa	23	1	24	34	4	38
Total	92	4	96	307	30	337

In order to rectify previous mistakes military took over the control of government in October, 1999. Military government launched the program of national reconstruction and presented seven point agenda to strengthen the governmental institutions. According to seven point agenda necessary actions should be taken which make institutions autonomous entity and improve their performance and morale. Following are the points of seven point agenda

- 1) Rebuilt the confidence level of nation.
- 2) Remove disharmony between provinces by providing strength to federations.
- 3) Raise the confidence level of foreign investors by ensuring law and order situation in country.
- 4) Devolution of power up to gross root level to increase local community participation in development of poor people.
- 5) Remove influence of Politian's from local government.
- 6) Improve process of accountability for performance enhancement.
- 7) Attract foreign investment to boost economy.

To ensure the above mentioned seven point agenda National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB), was established under the supervision of retired military officer to ensure the empowerment of local community by devolving power to gross root, making institutions autonomous entity,

reconstruction of government structure and smooth fund distribution.

V. NEW DEVOLUTION PALN AND CITIZEN COMMUNITY BOARDS

Pakistan is one of the low income country located in South Asia. Pakistan is characterized by a moderate success in economic growth with a substantial failure in human development such as basic health, education and gender equality (Kurosaki, 2006). There is an unequal distribution of income and assets where the core network is based on familial, clan, and tribal relations, with limited historical experience in CBO based cooperation in development efforts (JICA, 2003). The ability of the state to effectively deliver quality services to the citizens is very limited and performance of government at the local level is very poor. About 90% of the union councils in Pakistan have a health facility but they seldom work efficiently. Medicines are not available, lack of staff and facilities; do not have effective systems of supervision and staff are poorly motivated and badly managed. The facilities failed to meet users needs, because communities are too little involved in the design or delivery of these services. The situation in education sector is not better.

A report of the World Bank indicated that some 2000

rural schools stand idle, because their teachers have arranged transfers to urban areas. While better schools are overcrowded, a large number are under-used; 3000 rural schools have fewer than 10 students. This is mainly because primary education system does not ensure involvement of the parents or local communities. Everyone who can afford it avoids governmental services and looks for private schools, private hospitals and even private security firms. This not only weakens the role of the State but, even more importantly, leaves the government with the weakest and most needy part of the population which increased the burdens on governmental services and often affects quality adversely. This trend shows that the top-down approach of government failed to provide local services on a regular basis or with the required quality. This is not so much due to insufficient resources; rather, it is a consequence of inefficient use of available resources (Kaelin, 1998; Planning Commission, 2001 and Qureishi, undated). According to an estimate 70-80 million people do not have required level of access to education and health services. Similarly, 30-50 million people are malnourished (Mirza and Nowshad, 2006). The World Bank in 1987 (quoted in Qureishi, undated) identified the causes for failure including inter alia lack of beneficiaries' participation.

To overcome the institutional crises, ensure people's participation and empowerment, and to control non-use, misuse, and abuse of political and administrative system as well as to provide timely and qualitative basic services to the people, the government of Pakistan developed a Devolution Plan¹ (also called New Local Government Plan) which was implemented since August 14, 2001.

Local governments are formed at three levels: District, Tehsil, and Union. Each comprises its Nazim (elected Administrator/Chief Executive) and Naib Nazim (elected Deputy Administrator/Executive), its elected body, and its administrative structures.

Devolution Plan is designed in three spheres. First, the district government is responsible for the service delivery in Tehsil (sub-districts) and union councils (smallest administrative units at village level) level. Second, in the decision making sphere, three-tier local bodies of elected representatives has been established. Third, in the financing sphere, direct budget allocations to districts and lower bodies have begun (Cheema et al. (2005).

The purpose of the devolution plan was to provide a network of broad-based grass roots institutions that would undertake developmental activities. One of the main aims of the plan would be to facilitate capacity building of institutions at the grass roots level for the provision of social services such as health, education, family planning, sanitation, and clean drinking water. Moreover, such institutions would also undertake their operation, maintenance, and income generation activities.

CCB which is an important component at grass root have

been introduced in Devolution Plan. This institution has been created to organize and enable proactive elements of the society to participate in community work and undertake development related activities in both rural and urban areas following a bottom-up and participation based approaches. In a local area, a group of non elected citizens may set up a voluntary organization with the name of CCB. The creation of CCBs is formalized through registration. Unlike NGOs, which are registered under various laws; the CCBs are registered with the Community Development Office of the respective district under the Local Government Ordinance. The CCB has a general body, comprising all its members, which elects a Chairman, Executive Committee and a Secretary of the Board for carrying out its functions. A CCB may raise funds through voluntary contributions, gifts, donations, grants and endowments for its declared objectives, i.e. establishing a needed welfare or development project for the community. It may also receive project based cost sharing support from any local government in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Ordinance. The CCBs are responsible for undertaking the following:

- 1) Improvement of delivery of service by a public facility
- 2) Development and management of a new public facility
- 3) Welfare of the handicapped, destitute, widows and families in extreme poverty;
- 4) Establishment of farming, marketing and consumers cooperatives;
- 5) Identification of development and municipal needs and mobilization of resources;
- 6) Formation of stakeholder associations for community involvement in the improvement and maintenance of specific facilities;
- 7) Reinforcing the capacity of a specific Monitoring Committee at the behest of the concerned council (Alam and Ehsan, 2002).

A major problem has been the non establishment/registration of CCBs. It is taking a lot of time for people to grasp the idea of the concept. This is also affecting the utilization of allocated funds for development projects to be implemented through the CCBs. In situations where CCBs have been established and registered, capacity of these entities and those of its members has found to be very weak. They have not been able to formulate projects to benefit from funding allocated by the local governments. Some CCBs are finding it difficult to arrange for 20% contribution to initiate projects. Non cooperation of the bureaucracy and elected councilors are also cited as some of the operational constraints. (Paracha, 2003)

The data collected by the Japan International Cooperation Authority (JICA) from the most populated province of Pakistan (Punjab) shows that only 37% of CCB's have submitted project proposals and only half of these proposals have been approved. Similarly, the number of CCBs and their approved projects are below the expected level. This raises a concern that the Pakistani society with limited historical experience in CBO based development is too handicapped for the CCB scheme to be successful. (Kurosaki, 2005)

¹ This is third devolution plan of Pakistan. Pakistan has experimented with two systems of local government (in 1959 and 1979) before this devolution plan. History of local governments in Pakistan is characterized by two factors; firstly, the local governments have never been autonomously functional in the presence of democratic governments. Secondly, every time a new system of local government was created, it was totally from a scratch with no linkages to the previous system.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data were collected from 07 union councils (namely Dhamtor, Kakul, Mirpur, Jhangi, Nathiagali, Namli Maria and Central Abbottabad) of Abbottabad district of the NWFP through questionnaire using stratified random sampling technique. Observation technique was also used to check to quality and sustainability of both CCBs and local government projects from comparison point of view. Total 21 villages were visited to observe their projects and collect data (03 villages per union council). The development projects were divided into two groups i.e. Control Group and Treatment Groups. Control groups consists of those projects which was implemented by local government without the intervention of CCBs while Treatment Group consists of those projects which was implemented by CCBs themselves with the financial support of 80% by the local government. The projects of both the groups were included clean drinking water supply, sanitation, education, public health, sanitation, social welfare, and women development.

Multiple regression models were developed for both the groups to see the extent of factors contributing in sustainability. These models were also used for comparison to find out which group has more sustainable projects.

VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Multiple Regression Model

After the identification of above factors, data from treatment group and control group were collected and a multiple regression model for both the groups were developed where sustainability is used as dependent variable and the 04 factors (need based assessment, access to information, capacity building and people's participation) are used as independent / explanatory variables. This model will show the extent to which the 04 factors contribute in sustainability. In other words, the model will show the relationship of sustainability and above 04 factors. In the group where the relationship is found strong, will be more sustainable and vice versa. The Multiple Regression Model is given as under:

$$Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + u_i \quad \dots (1)$$

Where Y is the sustainability of project, X₁ is the need assessment, X₂ is the capacity building, X₃ is the access to information, X₄ is the people's participation, α , β_1 , β_2 , β_3 and β_4 are the parameters to be estimated, and u_i is the error term, which is assumed to be normally distributed with mean zero and variance σ^2 . Equation (1) will be estimated for control group and treatment group as mentioned in TABLE 2.

1) Control Group (Local Government Projects)

It is observed that estimated equation is significant at the 1% level (F-ratio) and the values of the adjusted R² (Coefficient of Determination) suggest that 48% of the variation in sustainability is explained by variation in the variables used in the equation. The T- values predict whether predictor variables are significant and to what extent. Accordingly the coefficient of Capacity Building is significant at 5% level, while the Participation is significant at the 1% level. The coefficients of Need Assessment and Access to Information are significant at the 10% level.

TABLE 2: ANALYSIS OF SUSTAINABILITY OF CONTROL AND TREATMENT GROUPS' PROJECTS

Variables	Coefficient	
	Control Group	Treatment Group
Constant	1.56 (7.70)	6.232 (8.80)
Need Assessment	-0.214 (1.36)***	0.0420 (2.12)**
Capacity Building	-0.101 (-2.21)**	- 0.1209 (-3.21)*
Access to Information	0.266 (1.28)***	- 49.60 (-1.66)***
Participation	0.126 (3.21)*	16.413 (2.22)**
Adjusted R ²	0.48	0.52
F- Ratio	30.65	25.36

Dependent variable: Sustainability of Projects. *p< 0.01, **p< 0.05, ***p< 0.10

Source: Own calculation based on field data.

2) Treatment Group (CCBs Projects)

The estimated equation is significant at the 1% level (F-ratio) and the values of the adjusted R² (Coefficient of Determination) suggest that 52% of the variation in sustainability is explained by variation in the variables used in the equation. Accordingly to T- values, the coefficient of Capacity Building is significant at 1% level, while the Participation and Need Assessment coefficients are significant at the 5% level. The coefficient of the Access to Information is significant at the 10% level. It may be noted that the significant of the variables are increased in treatment group.

B. Project Status of CCB's and Local Govt.

Figure-3 shows the project status of local government and CCB's in District Abbottabad. There are nine development sectors in which CCB's are working parallel with local government. These sector includes water supply; electricity; education; sanitation; health sector; construction and paved of roads; social welfare including community welfare centre and library; work and services and women development (vocational training centers). According to Fig. 1, in water supply sector CCB completed 24 projects while local govt. completed 52 projects. Similarly, in electricity provision sector CCB completed no project while local govt. completed one project. For sanitation, education, health, construction, social welfare, work and services and women CCB completed 2, 1, 2, 18, 9, 10, 1 and local govt. completed 6, 0, 24, 2, 46 and 0 respectively.

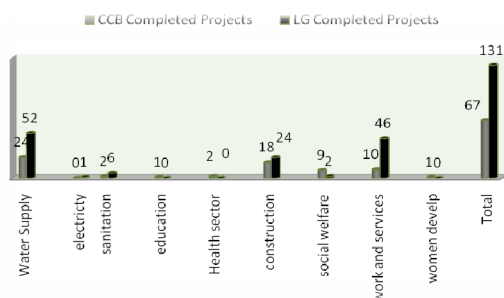


Fig. 3: Project completed by local govt. and CCB's

C. Factors Contributing Sustainability:

In field visits various developmental projects implemented by CCBs and local government were comparatively observed to check their quality and sustainability. It was noted that CCB's projects were comparatively of good quality and more sustainable than local government projects. It was also noted that local people feel ownership in these projects. The main question asked from all groups was "what are the factors responsible for the sustainability of CCBs projects." The beneficiaries inter alia, proposed the following 4 majors factors based on their experience:

- 1) The project should be on need basis: They suggested that need based assessment should be carried out before the start of the project. CCBs projects implemented so far, were proposed by local people themselves according to their need, are therefore more sustainable.
- 2) Capacity building of local people: If the technical and managerial capacity of CCBs or beneficiaries is build, the quality and sustainability of the projects will be more. Even they informed that the implemented CCBs projects are not sustainable to the desired level because the capacity of local people was not built.
- 3) Access to information: If people are provided all types of information about the project being implemented in their area, this will also increase sustainability because in this way the ownership among people is ensured.
- 4) People's Participation: The most important factor to involve local people in all phase of development projects. In the local government projects local resident's participation is low.

VIII. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion it is concluded that the local people identified four factors i.e. need based assessment, access to information, capacity building and people's participation, which contribute in the sustainability of development projects.

It was observed during field survey that CCB's projects are more sustainable. However, statistical analysis also confirmed that CCB's projects have comparative advantage over local government projects. Comparison of the coefficient of determination (R^2) calculated for both groups indicates that sustainability and need assessment, capacity building, access to information and participation is comparatively highly correlated in the case of CCB's projects (52%) than local government projects (48%). In

simple words, the sustainability of CCB's projects is explained by 52% variation of independent variables compare to 48% for local government projects. This means that the projects implemented by CCBs are comparatively more sustainable as they were based on need assessment; capacity building, easy access to information and people's participation.

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