

**PERFORMANCE OF PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT
APPROACH IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION
OF RURAL BALOCHISTAN**



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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the performance of participatory process of development especially in terms of poverty reduction. The study is based on empirical evidence gleaned from the impact studies and observations of participatory development projects implemented under government and private partnership. The method of analysis is descriptive and comparative in nature. The major findings include: new version of participatory method is comparatively better than the old one adopted by government during 1970s and 1980s. The factors responsible for success stories are high literacy rate, strong ownership by the community and effective monitoring and evolution system. While failure cases are the outcome of poor involvement, poor coordination between project administration and community. Finally, recommendations with strong policy implications are suggested.

INTRODUCTION:

There is a growing consensus that participative approach is more effective strategy for poverty reduction than any other top down strategy. Under this process the poor are organized at gross root level through social mobilization which is process of forming communities, grooming them with both vocational and skill trainings as per the requirements of sectors like agriculture, livestock and irrigation

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The literature review, to a greater extent, confirms the results of effective participation in the form of empowerment of communities, social capital and sustainability of the projects (World Bank, 2000). Moreover data based on impact studies reflect that irrigation projects in Balochistan benefited the formation of farmer organizations in the in terms of greater efficiency, mobilization of social and cash resources. There is enough evidence to show that the performance of the government-managed system is less effective than that of farmer-managed system .By contrast, there is some empirical cross country evidence denying the effectiveness of community organization at targeting the poor due to feudal and elite dominance. The same approach is also criticized for being slow and complex process (Mansuri and Rao.2004).

In view of the above, the need arises to assess the gaps regarding the claims of participatory approach in the context of Balochistan. Before discussing the problems, we need to understand some of the basic socio- cultural and economic features of the province. First, it is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of area and smallest by population. As Such population is scattered and its density is low resulting in high cost of development. Secondly the province being a tribal society has contrasting social organizations having implications for practicing Community participation approach.

For example, community groups in Pashtoon communities decide matters with the consensus of all shareholders; While COs in Baloch communities decides matters with consensus but require approval of the lineage leaders. And COs in Brahui communities decide all matters with the approval of their lineage heads. Thirdly, being tribal society organizing women in groups is very challenging task due to socio-cultural constraints and also due to limited mobility and time availability. They cannot participate at village and union council level especially in the conservative areas that is why their organizations often remain fragile and unsustainable. Finally, a new phenomenon- prevailing security situation in the province has restricted the overall mobility of project staff to monitor the activities related to community development.

DATA AND METHODS:

Secondary data is used to assess the performance of participatory development programs .In this regard, some empirical evidence based on studies of participatory development approach are used for analysis. were implemented in different regions of the province and able knowledge and information for understanding the of community based development projects. Simple

descriptive method of analysis is used to compare the positive and negative experiences and suggest policy measures

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT AND COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

The review of rural development programs reveals that the province witnessed two types of Participatory development for poverty reduction. The first one is Government based initiatives, the other one is collaborative approach (Government Private Partnership). The programmes implemented by the government in the province during 70s and 80s show that some degree of community involvement was always recognized at the policy level. The flavor of which could be felt and observed in the integrated rural development program, peoples program, Tamer-e- watan program, Khushal Pakistan. These programs were implemented for poverty reduction through employment generation in the public sector.

However, the study conducted by PIDE (2001) concludes that the past efforts have not succeeded in vast improvement in the living conditions of rural poor. These policies have positive impact on raising the production but this has not brought about a real qualitative change in the rural sector. In other words, one can say that the soul of participatory approach was not internalized among community members. The situation in case of province regarding the performance of government alleviation programs was even more depressing. The dilemma experienced was that on the one hand very meager amount was allocated on the other hand even that was not fully utilized due to poor institutional capacity as such the province was considered as the graveyard of development projects.

During 90s province experienced redefined approach of the community participation especially in the shape of foreign funded rural development projects. Under the improved version, beneficiaries were no more agents' rather active partner and sharer of responsibility. Community as an institution experienced more flexible and realistic approach by adopting broad-based partnership strategy. They got strength through partnership with government, NGOs and Donner Agencies. Taking the stakeholders on board was considered essential They worked a lot to improve the efficiency of community organization by training and other capacity development initiatives' and thus produced human capital and they are now supposed to be cadre of development.

Today we can see the contribution of improved version of participatory approach in the development of rural sectors of province. They are contributing to poverty reduction and supporting the national commitment under poverty reduction strategy. Some of the worth mentioning important

programs and projects implemented under new version include: Pat Feeder Command Area Project, Balochistan Irrigation and Agriculture, Area Development Program Balochistan .Balochistan rural support program, The common goal of these projects and programs were mainly poverty reeducation as poverty was widely prevalent with highest incidence in the province. According to FBI 2001 to 2002 poverty incidence was 48 % which was thirteen percent higher than that of the national average.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Data based on observations and experiences during implementation of community development projects reflect both success and failure stories. Following are the context specific living examples of positive and negative experiences of community/participatory development in the province.

The communities where literacy rate is comparatively high and participation level is relatively better enjoy a good number of success stories. The positive changes include emergence of new middle income groups in the province resulting in fundamental change in the structure of social power especially in the northern Balochistan. The economic power of the new middle class has weakened the political power of the traditional elite. Farming community in mountainous areas of Balochistan has benefited from the irrigation development introduced by the mentioned programmes. Female education ratio has been promoted in Killasaifullah District by special concentration of the NGO for a period of 10 years. The difference of the education level in male and female segments of society especially in Muslimbagh Tehsil is entirely visible. Success in forest and conservation of Natural Resources in Loralai and Ziarat District is an extraordinary achievement. In this regard plantations in KINGRI, DERGAI and in AGHBARG valley are the key examples. Schools established in Balochistan with participatory management (Parents Teacher Community Management Committee PTCMC) are more functional comparing to other Government schools. The physical infrastructures constructed by participatory approach are more sustained and functional across the province. However, there are some Projects in some areas came across difficulties due to poor social capital and problem of future sustainability. The ground realities are contrary to the claims of participatory approach especially with respect to strengthening grass root institutions such as women groups, farmers associations and water user associations. According to Public Engineering Department, more than one hundred water supply schemes handed over to the community failed to be functional. In the same way, a considerable number of community schools under Balochistan Primary Education Program have been

found defunct. What is important to note that most of the community based schemes run by NGOs like Taraqee Foundation failed to sustain.

The following are some specific failures: cases of participatory development in the province. Some where the plantation and protection became unsuccessful like in Dilsora and Samkhail Micro credit schemes become failed like in Naseeabad by Taraqee Foundation and in Sanjawi by Area Development Program and in Mastung by BRSP Watershed management project in Northern Balochistan especially in Muslim bagh Bund khushdal khan irrigation project was delayed due to involvement of community at the stage of designing and implementing.

Evaluating the overall performance in term of poverty reduction, the Government initiatives were discouraging and less effective whereas the improved version of participatory approach was comparatively found more effective particularly in the short run. Balochistan has experienced different level of achievements and failures. And definitely there are many cases where the impact of such practice is marginal.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The major Findings coming from the successful cases reveal that the participatory approach can be successful provided the issues such as poor sustainability, reaching the less benefit to the ultra poor, political interference and weak targeting are resolved by the management similarly effective strategy and relevant focus are also indicators of the positive performance.

However, findings from the negative cases indicate that community based development approach faced constraints due to unaffordable financial contribution designed during planning of the project. Sometimes un-prioritized focused field of work for the sack of wasted interest of different NGOs created mistrust and confidence in NGOs, Poor social mobilization, tribal conflict and ineffective monitoring and evaluation are also contributing factors to the failure cases. In short, future sustainability of community run development is major concern and has future implications for poverty reduction strategy. The lessons learned imply that gender balance needs to be improved. The strength of existing women COS can be used for launching new creative targeted schemes especially for extreme poor woman such as micro credit coupled with training in small scale business within the acceptable cultural framework. Desire for changes are always noticed among the community members however, it was also observed during field survey that poorer of the poorest still remain meagerly benefited from the programs / project activities. The problem of maintenance of physical infrastructure such as water tank, livestock water ponds, irrigation water courses were also noticed. Intervention in populous villages (high population density) are more

cost effective and have high degree of externalities as compared to the villages with low population density, therefore in future the criteria for intervention should strictly include this factor into consideration. As targeting the poor and the vulnerable is one of the basic components of poverty reduction strategy paper [Balochistan (2003)] and is in line with the new version of participatory approach therefore, Poverty mapping based on research is needed to explore the pockets of poverty in rural area for effective targeting of extreme poverty in future poverty reduction program. . .

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