

# Factors Affecting Community Participation in Development Activities in Rural Areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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**Abstract:** Globalization is associated with the dominant process of change in community development. It opens the new opportunities and level at which international NGOs, local and national NGOs linking internationally, can make a contribution in encouraging the development of global links between local activists around the issues. The present paper explored the factors which affect community participation in development activities. The universe of the study was rural areas of KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Research was conducted in District Mansehra to find the factors responsible for the participation. Stratified Random sampling was used to extract the sample size. All respondents were the beneficiaries of the service provider and they were the part of participation in the interventions. The data collected with the help of interview schedule comprising open ended questionnaire in order to obtain consistent and reliable responses. Key informants were also selected from the communities who provide detailed information about the village. Contextual analysis was used to analyse the data. The major findings of the researcher indicated that factors which affect community participation in development activities are perception about development, nature of participation, motivation factor behind the participation, sustainability of the participation, access to the service providers, nature of projects implemented and consensus of the community in the projects. The study recommended that for the productive participation of the community, the first and foremost factor is awareness rising. Before going for the mega project and great implantations, there is need to sensitize the people about the purpose and importance of interventions otherwise the true spirit of the participation will not be achieved and the dependency will persist for long period of time.

**Key Words:** Community participation, development activities, globalization, contextual analysis.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Globalization provides a platform for the community development workers, helping local groups move from campaign slogans to constituencies for change, linking local to regional and supranational arenas and supported by participatory form of research, policy analysis and continuous organizational learning. These are all processes to which community development can make a strong contribution [1]. A refocusing of the developmental strategy in the mid 1970s led to the emergence of people's participation as a central concern and to increasing recognition of the need for developmental strategies. In the 1980s however, the interpretation broadened into a more general argument for wider people's participation in national development. In the 1990s people's participation has strengthened into a well established principle of development which has received support from Government, International Developmental Agencies and Non Governmental Organizations and has been implemented across the sector in many different countries [2]. There are numerous motives which advocate the importance of citizen participation in developmental activities. As a concept, participation of the community is used and inferred in different contexts in diversified situations [3]. Community development seeks to change these conditions through the participation of the people as emphasized in the definition of community development. The 1948 Cambridge conference agreed on community development as an undertaking to endorse improved living for the entire community with the dynamic participation [4]. Community development experts work together with communities to classify their collective needs and priorities to develop assets and resources. Community development is the supposition that all communities have existing resources. It is empowerment of the poor and the deprived [5]. Community participation is usually conceptualized as a process by which members of the communities individually or collectively assume increased responsibility for assessment of their own needs, and once these are agreed upon, identify potential

situations to problems, and plan strategies by which these solutions may be realized[6]. People participation is a key for successful implementation of developmental projects [7]. Community participation seems most appropriate when (1) projects aim to enhance the self reliance of beneficiaries, (2) the design of projects calls for interaction among groups of beneficiaries, and (3) project effectiveness depends upon a process of negotiation between beneficiaries and project authorities [9]. The present study was aimed to highlights the main factor which promotes community participation in development activates. The present study was conducted to explore the factor affecting the community participation in development activities.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

1. To identify the socio-economic characteristics of respondents
2. To highlights the factors affecting community participation in development activities

## **3. MATERIALS AND METHODS:**

The universe of the study was rural areas of KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). The present study was conducted in Tehsil Oghi of District Mansehra. Purpose of working in this particular area was the interventions of the National, international and governmental organization at the large scale after earth quake in this province of Pakistan. Research was conducted in two villages, Chulundrian and Malookara to find the factors responsible for the participation. Stratified Random sampling was used to extract the sample size. Respondents of the study were community elder, children and women, CDVs (community development volunteers), members of CBOs (community based organization), CCBs (citizen community board), Elders of Committees, member of NGOs, governmental organizations and other stakeholders. Interviews were taken from 200 respondents with the ratio of 50:50 males and females from the beneficiaries and 20 interviews from the member of different organizations including local, international and government who are the services provider. All respondent were the beneficiaries of the service provider and they were the part of participation in the interventions. The data collected with the help of interview schedule comprising open ended questionnaire in order to obtain consistent and reliable responses. Key informants were also selected from the communities who provide detailed information about the village. Contextual analysis was used to analyses the data. Generally, techniques extend for analyzing qualitative data are used to analyze the responses to open-ended questions. Through the analysis, researcher examined patterns and trends in the answers to attain certain means. The socio-economic variables were analyzed into frequency and percentage using Microsoft Excel.

## **4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:**

The study has observed various factors (independent variable) effecting participation of people in community in developmental activities (dependent variable). The independent variables are :

1. Perception about development
2. Nature of participation
3. Motivation factor behind the participation
4. Sustainability of the participation
5. Access to the service providers
6. Nature of projects implemented
7. Consensus of the community in the projects

## **5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION:**

### **Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents**

Age of respondents was categorized from 18 to above 60 years. Majority of the respondents falls between the age group from 30 to 50 years and participation of the youth was least among all which is only 18% of the total population. Majority of the respondents acquired primary education while 14.5% people were middle pass. The 69.5 % respondents were found to be married while 28.5 % respondents fall in single category. The trend of joint

family system was the most prevailing in the community which is 68% of the total population while 32% people spending their life in nuclear family settings. Highest frequency of the unemployment which is 66% was revealed in the research among the males. The largest percentage of the total population earn up to 10000 while 29% respondent claimed to earn in the category of 1001 to 20000

## 6. FACTORS AFFECTING THE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

### 6.1. Perception about development

There were diversified opinions of the people about the development. Some consider owning good business is development and few believe that getting good job comes under the heading of development. They also deem the importance of education as one of the big factor in development. Many responded that availability of the opportunities will make us developed people. Those activities by the government or NGO that bring happiness to the people of the village come under development. Pavement of streets, save drinking water, construction of schools, proper sanitation is development. Many think that when all the facilities are available to the community than that community is called a developed one. That said that we want different projects and employment opportunities for the area and vocational centre for the women should be introduced that provide us plat form to gain skills and earn money that we will be developed community.

*“Kam ghar main kerain or us ka istemal bahir ho (homemade product should be give platform for their marketing)said by shahida bibi.”*

It can be inferred from their responses and perception about the development that they have not any set standard of development but it based on the condition and circumstances they are living in, extend to which their needs are fulfilled and the degree to which they are given awareness. Diversified opinions were received but the common understating among all about the development is anything or any activity that can bring happiness to the people and they can get more opportunities to earn money.

An enlightened approach about the development was also demonstrated by some of the people of the community which may be the result of the awareness raising program by many NGOs. For example, if future of our children is secure than we can say that our area is developed. Some consider the development is continuous process that can bring changes in mind set of the people as evident from their responses, to know about our rights and become responsible citizen and to change one's self and think about the benefits of the community is development. These are responses from the community which reflects their progressive thinking.

Many people believe that having advance agricultural means of production and enough live stock are the source of development that shows they rely on their indigenous local resources more and hold much experience in this area which if flourish by introducing more trainings and related project will produce good quality results.

Few were those who consider awareness is development. Both male and female should participate in developmental activities than we can get progress in our area. Resolving all the issues of the people and provision of good environment is sources of development that include parks, recreational activities and schools.

Another important point can be extracted from the responses, for example, basic needs should be provided to the poor so we can meet all the needs of life. This shows that many projects introduced by the service providers were working on issues that were not addressing their basic needs instead, they were delivering some high quality trainings but people participated in those projects with the intend to eliminate their basic problem. This was the one the factor of their low participation.

### 6.2. Nature of participation

The concept community participation has proven difficult not to define but to practically initiate and sustain. There are verities of reasons behind this fact. [9] Explains that the concept of participation is main indicator of community development. Community development defines as a group of people in a locality initiating a social

action process that seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by providing this group s with the skills they need to effect change in their own communities.

Theoretically, when groups within the community lack the requisite skills or power to represent them, efforts to increase their abilities in these areas can be undertaken. Determining how the community problems and solution to them are indentified continue to pose two of the most serious challenges to the community, community participation and empowerment. No consideration of the community participation would be complete without a brief analysis to its relation to participation.

*“Nature of participation depends on the nature of problems and it is directly depending upon the amount of interest and attitude created as apparent from their response, “We participated in those projects which give us benefit said by a respondent”.*

How people perceive nature of participation can be analysed from their direct responses.

*“We left our work to attend the meeting. We helped them in gathering people. We offered our services and spared time for them. They provided us platform to express our views. We attended the meetings and registered our self on attendance sheet but there is not any productive work. There was lack of awareness and this was the first time where NGO worked in this area and increased awareness among them”.*

*“Jo seekhti or sunti wo doosron tk pohanchati (whatever I have learn from them, I spread the same knowledge to all) said by Shazia”.*

These responses reveal the participation at the village level that resulted in increase in awareness among them. This also shows that people realised the worth of their presence in term of getting some benefits. The importance of participation is also discovered from the work [10] who says that effective people’s participation inevitably challenge both government and vested interest groups. Issues of basic right, the importance of indigenous information, services and concepts and structure them into developmental program and overall need for bottom up approach to development have all been elevated in errand. Increased empowerment and ownership among the community is also evident from some of their responses. For example they said, we initiated and participated in campaigns where we highlighted the issues and offered labour for the payment of streets.

*“We can have direct communication with parents to discuss our problems which was not possible before but the activation of the PTA by the NGO is great initiative” said by a teacher Saime.”*

Saving schemes is the approach where 20 % of contribution is offered by the community in the projects and community own those projects more where some contribution is done by the people. This approach has enhanced a sense of ownership of the projects by the community members, a more powerful factor in sustainable development. This fact is also identified by the works of [11], according to him, for successful implementation of developmental projects; people participation plays a major role. He approves that the profits which he observes a community should get if participate properly in indigenous development. He contemplates that community participation initiatives are always exaggerated by organizers and the outcome of these community projects continually harm the allied for feeble communal groups.

### **6.3. Motivation factor behind the participation**

When participants were asked about what they consider the motivation factor behind the participation of the people should be, majority of them responded that to get some material good and to have access on relief stuff. Some people go with the intentions to seek jobs for their children.

*“Kuch mil jai (To get some personal benefits) said by a respondent”*

Some of them ascribed their participation in the projects as mean to resolve their issues. They said, most of the staff belongs to us and we trust them that they will offer something good for the people. Water, road, education and heath are the issues that stimulate people to participate. Few deem the participation as starting place for awareness raising and provision of detailed knowledge. People participate in those activities from where they get benefit was the frequent response that show the intentions for relief is more than the purpose of development which also weaken the spirit of real participation which is the root of sustainable development. Some revealed

that poverty and unemployment are the motives and they align participation with source of income which in turn increases the expectations of the people from the service providers. When they participate with these occupied notions and their expectations are not fulfilled, they quit to take part.

Another perspective of their participation can be highlighted from their response,

*“They talk about our livestock and agriculture and they are not different from us so we come here.”*

It shows that there will be more acceptability by the people if their indigenous knowledge is inculcated and their folk wisdom is valued. It is also worth mentioning that there were few who realised the real purpose of participation, as evident from their response.

*“They enlightened us, before their arrival, we were unable to communicate properly and not aware of our rights.”*

For women, approach of participation is accepted if the meetings are arranged in their own houses as disclosed from their response.

*“ Perdy main reh k hum sy baat kerty hain ( They approach us in our own home and maintain our cultural values of perda).”*

It is noteworthy that during earth quake, many NGOs and other service providers started their work with providing relief and initial participation of the people was to get some relief. After the relief phase when developmental activities were started, people were going with the same mind setup to get some relief instead of awareness. It provides the rationale for the participation that is not productive.

#### **6.4. Sustainability of the participation**

The community development approach includes a devolving of control away from the “experts” and towards the community. [12] Arnstein's seminal article on citizen participation in planning activities offered this idea concisely by way of a ranking symbol, with citizen “empowerment” moving from non-participation (management, therapy), to degrees of minimum effort (updating, discussion, pacification), to degrees of citizen power (partnership, power, control of community). It should be highlighted that additional participatory forms of decision making are not only substitute social capital (e.g., through a greater level of administrative participation and better responsibility of leading organizations), but are also likely to advance the excellence of verdicts through the operation of indigenous knowledge.

*“There is no one to sustain this participation. Local people are not literate enough to lead the meeting so they are dependent on NGO and there is no literate leader who can lead these people so we have quit the meeting. NGO was the motivating factor which is missing now said by Zahida bibi”.*

It was noted from their discussion that people are willing to work for the development of their area but they are lacking the capacity and resources. Participation subsists but not sustainable due to absence of proper leadership and proper organizational structure. NGOs were the source for building their capacity and providing them platforms for raising their voices to resolve their issues. Consequently, big gap has been created with the departure of the organizations thus leaving the community at the immature stage. Another point that came out of their responses is the participation with the purpose to get personal benefits instead of serving the community.

They said further disclosed a fact that initially the organizations provided us the relief and many project are still going with same approach for providing us material good, this was the worst aspect that made people dependent upon the organizations, they became lethargic and stopped working with the intend that organization will provide us food and relief thus people become more greedy. This factor is also responsible for arising many conflicts among the people and weakening of the social bond. ODO is a local organization that constitutes the local leadership, activists and volunteers initiated by the local people themselves after the departure of the NGOs and the members of the DO are those who were working with different INGOs as volunteers and attained many capacity building programs. ODO has great interventions including education, health, human security, governance, women and food rights. It has a number of achievements to its credit. In the education sector, it includes activation of 65 to 70

PTCs (leading to improved teacher attendance and reduced dropouts), approval of 35 NCHD literacy centres, funding for Women Degree College after meeting with minister, and quality check on school reconstruction after the 2005 earthquake. The purpose of giving the example of ODO is to identify it as the best approach to sustainable participation that has given a formal and recognized platform to the local community to continue the process of participation even in the absence of other organizations. Finding of the National Human development Report [13] also suggests that enabling the appearance of independent groups of the deprived and their recognized relation with each at the level of indigenous government could empower the poor to break out of the connection of the local power structures and unsatisfactory access over markets, and thus reduce their income losses.

### **6.5. Access to the service providers**

Surprisingly within the development literature, there has been less attention to notions of ‘political participation’ which involve the interactions of the individual or organized groups with the state, and which often focus more on mechanisms of indirect participation. When they were asked about their access to the service providers, about more than half number of respondents revealed that it is a tough task. They thought that we are not empowered and skilled enough to raise our voices. Some people stated that direct contact is not possible but through proper channel it is done and only those people are successful in accessing the service providers who have relations with the political entities and influential. It was also noticed that there was a general understanding about the service providers that they are corrupt people who are not loyal towards their duties. Consequently people avoid making contact with them. They also said that there is no transparency in provision of services and information.

*“They do not consider themselves answerable to people”.*

*“We resolve our problem with the available resources at the village level”*

*“Hum ghareeb logon ke kon suntan hy (voices of poor are not heard)”*

Another aspect for not visiting their offices was the huge fare which they have to pay to go the District as all the offices reside in Mansehra.

*“It is done with sources and money which we do not have”.*

Few responded that representative of the community organization take issues to the higher authorities as they have considerable exposure of meeting them in discussion forums. They also seek the help of NGOs who play their role as mediators between the community and the service providers.

### **6.6. Nature of projects implemented**

The purpose of asking the question about the nature of the projects implemented by the NGO was to explore what kinds of project attract the attention of the people more and thus leading toward more participation. The most prominent factors as explored from the research that make their project successful were, mutual consensus of the community, participatory approach and need based contrary to the government approach who do not take the opinion of the people into account. Purpose and method of the project implemented by the NGO are more open and transparent as compared to the government approach. People were much satisfied with the work of NGOs and annoyed with institutionalized attitude of the government officials. They said many project of the government ruined due to personal interference and interest of influential. On the other side, the same views were shared by the service providers that participation was used as instrument by some of influential rather than a vehicle for radical social transformation. The participation of local leaders in development obstructs the real community to participate and mostly favour the self-chosen leaders as leaders of these groups. “Marginal participants of the community” a term used by [14], for such community groups. According to him the marginal people do not possess the ability and ways to fulfil their daily needs thus cannot 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 [15].

### 6.7. Consensus of the community in the projects

In answer to the question about the consensus of the people in the projects, a variety of judgments and opinions were shared. They asserted that our consensus will make the projects more acceptable. If our consent is taken while designing and implantation of the projects than every single person of the village will be aware of their activities and there will be more chance for ownership of the project by the community.

*“We should be aware of what is happening so no one can go for his personal benefit”.*

They said that consensus is also important from the point of view that there will be no conflict among people if the decisions are taken with mutual understanding. The evidence was also available as shared by the community which shows that there are many projects where People participate by joining with external professionals in analysis of their situation, developing action plans and determining common projects. Consultation is a significant portion of the democratic process at the indigenous level. In an powerful statement, the World Bank Learning Group on Participation defined participation as a procedure over which shareholders impact and share control over development edges and the decisions and possessions which affect them’ [16]. From this perspective, consultation of the community and their decision while designing the project, from identifying needs, to assessment, operation, monitoring and valuation come under the level of participation.

Another important aspect of the consensus was the utilization of the indigenous knowledge which is evident from their response.

*“We are well aware of our issues and resources so we can best design the projects”.*

They also said that those projects that are not compatible with our cultural settings are usually fail as community do not accept them and resource are dissipated. A substantial body of knowledge and experience can be share by the community to make the projects more successful.

### 7. CONCLUSION:

The corner stone of community-based development initiatives is the active involvement of members of a defined community in at least some aspects of project design and implementation. Although participation can occur at many levels, a key objective is the incorporation of local knowledge into the project’s decision-making processes. When potential beneficiaries also make key project decisions, participation becomes self-initiated action.

The research demonstrates that communities are dynamic, with specific motivations of participation and power to avail the organizational resources and human and social capital to engage in the process of development. Consequently, it is clear that the projects should not be designed or planned from outside, but must be consensually built by the stakeholders involved. Empirical findings support the structures of village organizations. They enhance the power of people and power is such a capability by means of which people can give practical shape to their resolutions. Such organization is a flock or group who work towards the achievements of their objectives on the basis of mutual consent and strives towards their common goals in an organized way. Resultantly, village organizations are the best source of sustainable development that develops linkages with other institutions through advocacy which gives voice to express their views.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. For the productive participation of the community, the first and foremost factor is awareness rising. Before going for the mega project and great implantations, there is need to sensitize the people about the purpose and importance of interventions otherwise the true spirit of the participation will not achieved and the dependency will persist for long period of time.
2. It was revealed from the research that there were many projects which were not aligning with need and cultural setting of the local community and resulted in poor out comes. The reason of their failure was the consensus of the community was not taken. Local people have deep knowledge about their issues and how the local resources can be utilized. They can also suggest the other alternatives to maximize the output within minimum availability

of resources and what would be the acceptance level among the community. To make any project successful and productive, the consensus of the community must be taken to avoid any incontinence in future.

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