

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF  
COMMUNITY DRIVEN PROJECTS IN PAKISTAN

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To my parents, wife and son

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## ABSTRACT

Research accords the significance of decentralization, community empowerment and alternate initiatives employed by several development agencies in West, but there is scarcity of empirical evidences in literature pertaining to sustainability of community driven projects implemented through the community in developing and under-developed countries like Pakistan signify the need to initiate research. The purpose of current research is to examine community empowerment relationship with sustainability of community driven projects in Pakistan. This study has undertaken 'sense of community' as the moderator to test the relationship between community empowerment and sustainability of community driven projects. The Government of Pakistan had initiated community driven development through Citizen Community Boards after the announcement of the Devolution Plan in 2001. Using proportionate stratified sampling, data was collected from 393 Citizen Community Boards' members from six districts of Khyber Paktunkhawa Province in Pakistan. The correlation of community capacity building and community participation with sustainability yielded high and positive correlation coefficients. Furthermore, the results of hierarchal regression demonstrated that individuals with an improved sense of community are more likely to believe that they have greater access to resources and their membership meaningfully contributed towards the development of a local area. The result of semi-structured interviews revealed that sense of community is a major predictor of sustainability of community driven projects and not the political and elite control. Although, few Citizen Community Board's projects are affected by the political interference as well as elite control, but overall results revealed that the community benefits from the projects. The findings would serve as the guidelines on ways to sustain community driven projects for developing countries like Malaysia, India and the local government in Pakistan.

## ABSTRAK

Kajian yang menekankan kepentingan pemusatan, penguasaan komuniti dan inisiatif yang berbeza banyak digunakan agensi pembangunan di negara Barat. Namun begitu masih terdapat kekurangan bukti-bukti empirikal bagi kajian mengenai kemapanan projek komuniti yang dilaksanakan di negara-negara membangun dan negara-negara mundur, misalnya Pakistan. Ini menjadi bukti keperluan untuk menjalankan penyelidikan ini. Matlamat penyelidikan ini adalah untuk menilai hubungan penguasaan komuniti dengan kemapanan projek komuniti di Pakistan. Penyelidikan ini telah menjadikan 'perasaan komuniti' sebagai moderator untuk menilai hubungan antara penguasaan komuniti dengan kemapanan projek komuniti. Kerajaan Pakistan telah mengadakan inisiatif pembangunan kemajuan komuniti melalui Lembaga Komuniti Rakyat (*Citizen Community Boards*) selepas pengumuman Pelan Penurunan Kuasa pada tahun 2001. Dengan menggunakan persampelan kadar berstrata, data daripada 393 ahli Lembaga Komuniti Rakyat dari enam daerah di wilayah Khyber Pakhtunkhwa di Pakistan dikumpulkan. Korelasi pembinaan keupayaan dan penyertaan komuniti dengan kemapanan menghasilkan nilai yang tinggi dan positif. Keputusan regresi hierarki juga menunjukkan bahawa individu yang mempunyai perasaan komuniti yang tinggi adalah lebih mudah untuk percaya bahawa mereka mempunyai akses kepada sumber-sumber dan keahlian mereka untuk menyumbang secara bermakna kepada pembangunan kawasan tempatan adalah lebih baik. Keputusan daripada temu bual separa struktur telah mendedahkan bahawa perasaan komuniti adalah petunjuk utama kepada kemapanan projek berdasarkan dorongan komuniti dan bukannya faktor politik serta penguasaan golongan elit. Walaupun begitu beberapa projek Lembaga Komuniti Rakyat telah terkesan oleh campur tangan faktor politik dan golongan elit tetapi keputusan keseluruhan mendedahkan bahawa komuniti mendapat faedah daripada projek-projek tersebut. Dapatan penyelidikan ini boleh dijadikan sebagai bahan rujukan kearah pempapanan projek berdasarkan dorongan komuniti kepada kerajaan di Pakistan dan untuk negara-negara membangun yang lain seperti India dan Malaysia.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ADP	-	Area Development Projects
CAM	-	Community Action Model
CCB	-	Citizens Community Board
CDD	-	Community Driven Development
CD	-	Community Driven
CBD	-	Community Based Development
DTCE	-	Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment
GOP	-	Government of Pakistan
HDI	-	Human Development Index
IRDP	-	Integrated Rural Development Projects
KPP	-	Khyber Paktunkhwa Province
LG	-	Local Government
LGO	-	Local Government Ordinance
NGO	-	Non Government Organizations
NRB	-	National Reconstruction Bureau
NWFP	-	North West Frontier Province
OED	-	World Bank Operations Evaluation Department
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Project
USAID	-	United States Agency for International Cooperation

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Recent global transformation in good governance had caused changes in many states of the world; which resulted in losing their ability to promote the development and well being of their peoples (Alderman, 2002b; Awortwi, 2011; Azfar *et al.*, 1999a; Dethier, 2000; Laverack, 2006b; Laverack *et al.*, 2009). Community development is considered a local phenomenon, therefore, countries started focusing on responsive governance and switching from centralized government system to decentralized system in order to improve the service delivery mechanism at the grass root level (Faguet, 2002). As a result, current governance practices starting emphasizing on interventions for local community development (Bardhan, 2002a; Dale and Newman, 2010; Mansuri and Rao, 2003; Watt *et al.*, 2000; WorldBank, 2002). This transition focuses on the improving and refining development strategies and objectives towards promoting socially balanced growth, which stresses equity and community participation to the basic need of millions of populations in many developing countries (Bowen, 2006; Foster-Fisherman.P.G. *et al.*, 2001; Khaleghian, 2004; Pawar, 2005; Tremblay and Gutberlet, 2010).

Decentralization is a recent phenomenon, adopted by many developing countries to promote the active participation of the community. Decentralization enhances local government accountability, and considered as a prominent source of community empowerment (Awortwi, 2011; Blair, 2000; Smoke, 2003). Perhaps, Blair and Smoke stressed to relocate the power, authority, accountability and management of resources from central to local government, to achieve the

fundamental objective of sustainability. Transferring authority to local government enables local authorities to allocate resources efficiently, provide communities with more appropriate and timely information, and more responsive towards local needs. Community empowerment is considered a fundamental step towards sustainability of community based projects (Bardhan, 2002a; Mansuri and Rao, 2003; Paul, 2010; Ribot, 2002; Toomey, 2009).

The concept of empowerment is defined and explained by literature in various disciplines including community psychology, social work, public health, community development and education. Mostly empowerment is discussed as a process which improves community participation and enhances community capacities , which helps communities to switch from state of helplessness to state of more control over life and environment (Adamson, 2010; Narayan and Petesch, 2002; Wallerstein, 2006). The World Bank's Empowerment and Poverty Reduction book defines the community empowerment as

“The expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives”

(Narayan and Petesch, 2002)

The main purpose of empowering local communities is to build trust among community members, strengthen the community feelings, and capacities prolong the sustainable benefits of project (Alexander *et al.*, 2003b; Haque A and H, 2006; Lyons *et al.*, 2001). Similarly, timely access to local information and resources (Rondinelli, 2006; Samia *et al.*, 2011), more institutional support (Mohan and Stokke, 2000), and accountability (Anjum, 2001; Blair, 2000) are also important elements of community empowerment. Community driven development assist the community to cope with personal as well as social problems; it means working in a group helps communities to tackle with situations, which an individual cannot handle alone (Lekoko and Merwe, 2006; Zimmerman, 2000a).

Community participation in local development activities is considered significant for economic as well as social growth. Involving communities in developmental activities improves the responsiveness of local governance (Bardhan, 1989; Hankla and Downs, 2010; Hicks, 2010a; Nasira and Zafar, 2009; WorldBank,

2002), as indicated by Bardhan (2002a) and Kurosaki (2006) that collective action from community escort towards community empowerment and sustainable management of common resources. Collective action is the source to create new feelings and capabilities among the participants, which improve their commitment for achieving shared vision, and to put pressure on local authorities against the decisions which affect the quality of their lives and environment (Tseng and Seidman, 2007; Wolff, 2001). Such empowered communities better sustain the project benefits over the period of time (Hoko *et al.*, 2009a; Narayan and Petesch, 2002).

Community Driven Development (CDD) refers to the community based development projects, in which community has direct control over the project planning, management and decisions including financial assessment (Mansuri and Rao, 2003). CDD is participatory development mechanism that guide and support communities in a participatory decision making process, local capacity building, community access to information, and control over the resources. There are five key pillars of CDD approach including community empowerment, local government empowerment, institutional capacity, transparency and accountability (WorldBank, 2006). To fulfil the requirement of CDD projects, community share 20 % of project cost to improve the local participation, and ensure the community need of a particular project. CDD is considered successful mechanism as it involves the local communities ,especially poor peoples to indentify and serve their unmet needs, thus become a source to gain local owner as well as empowerment among communities (Dongier *et al.*, 2003; Lavery *et al.*, 2005; Mansuri and Rao, 2003; WorldBank, 2006).

After the announcement of the devolution plan in 2001, Government of Pakistan initiated a scheme named as Citizen Community Boards (CCB's) for development of local communities. CCB's are working according to the principles of CDD approach and contributing in empowerment of local communities.

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Community development projects like Area Development Projects (ADPs) and Integrated Rural Development projects (IRDPs) were initiated by the World Bank and other donor agencies in 1970's. These projects focused on the elements including decentralization, empowerment, and capacity building in local institutions. However all these projects failed due to the lack of coordination with local actors; lack of appropriate technology; centralized approach; and bureaucratic setup in governance. Due to the failures of these initiatives, during the early 1990's, World Bank and other donor organizations discarded these community development approaches (Farrington *et al.*, 2002). In the meanwhile, different governmental agencies started development projects by collaborating Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) with local communities and experienced improvement in local development, community commitment and also in local skills. Such community development approaches were also found successful during emergency settings. These approaches came to be known as community driven development initiatives, as the results were quite satisfactory in Mexico, Brazil, Indonesia and West Africa. Via these experiences, it becomes increasingly apparent that community development projects require local coordination via local government structures and technical support from other actors. At the same time many governments adopted the decentralization initiatives including America and later in Africa, India and other South East Asian countries (Blench *et al.*, 2002).

Involving communities in anti-poverty and developmental projects has become increasingly common. Integrating local knowledge with project objectives improve project local ownership; decrease the information costs; ensure high quality of implementation and project sustainability (Bardhan, 2002b; Hoko *et al.*, 2009a; Hoko and Hertle, 2006; Kurosaki, 2006; Narayan *et al.*, 2000). Such compensations are likely to be recognized only when there is institutional support and mechanisms, which guarantee local accountability (Cheema and Mohmand, 2007; Khwaja, 2004; Paul, 2010). However, decentralization results in Bangladesh, Philippines and Bolivia indicated local inequality in relations of power and authority and most of the project benefits were confined by the non-target groups i.e., politicians and local elites. So in the extreme, such community based empowerment projects become a source of



deteriorating local inequality and perpetuate local power relations (Awortwi, 2011; Conning and Kevane., 2002; Kakumba, 2010; WorldBank, 2006).

In 2001, Government of Pakistan (GOP) announced devolution plan to decentralize the powers from central government to local government. In order to fulfil the cause of decentralization, Local Government Ordinance (LGO) was approved. The rationale behind decentralization initiatives is the idea that decentralization through community participation can contribute to project efficiency, local government accountability and transparency of poverty reduction policies through utilization of local knowledge and resources and thus nurturing the sense of ownership among local community (Bardhan, 2002b; Cheema and Mohmand, 2007; Kurosaki, 2006). In order to promote community participation, GOP announced a scheme named as Citizen Community Boards (CCBs). The working mechanism of CCBs is similar as those CDD projects of the World Bank. CCB, like CDD development projects adopts bottom up and participatory approach that involves community capacity building, self development and strengthening of local institutions. There are three types of CCBs i.e. Male, Female and Mixed. Mixed CCBs consists of both male and female members. People from local area structure their own groups, consist of 25 members (non-elected) and become a source to energize and empower local communities. It is the responsibility of CCBs to collect 20% of the total project cost from the community to ensure that the community really needs this project, while remaining 80 % of the fund is shared by the district government in instalments (GoP, 2001). Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment (DTCE) is a registration controlling body for CCBs. According to DTCE records up until Sept. 2010, the total numbers of registered CCBs in Pakistan is 27,736. This study targeted the CCBs working in the Khyber Paktunkhwa province (previously known as North West Frontier Province) of Pakistan to assess the impact of community empowerment on sustainability of community driven projects. Total number of registered CCBs in Khyber Paktunkhwa Province is 8,522 and the number of completed projects are 4, 887 (DTCE, 2010).

CCBs are working from 2001 in all four provinces of Pakistan, yet there is no preliminary assessment of these community based organizations and their contribution in community empowerment. This study is an attempt to assess the community empowerment and sustainability of projects implemented by CCBs.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Sustainability of community-based projects is the outcome of community empowerment (Laverack, 2006a; Mancini and Marek, 2004). Literature accords the significance of community empowerment and alternate initiatives employed by several developmental agencies in the west, but the dearth of empirical evidences in literature pertaining to the sustainability of community driven projects implemented through communities in developing and under-developed countries like Pakistan signify the need to initiate research in order to discuss the sustainability of these projects (Dongier *et al.*, 2003; Mansuri and Rao, 2003; Paul, 2010). The ideology of community participation is mainly based on the decentralization initiatives (Alderman, 2002a; Azfar *et al.*, 1999b; Azfar *et al.*, 2001; Patrick and Scott, 2011; Paul, 2010). Several embedded decentralized models were developed and executed in these intervening years by developmental and donor organizations, but the results failed to accord the factors that contributed to the project's sustainability, especially in developing and under-developed countries of the world (Bamberger and Cheema, 1990; Hoko *et al.*, 2009a; Hoko and Hertle, 2006; Kaliba and Norman, 2005; Paul, 2010; Pomeroy *et al.*, 2005). For instance, the World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) community-based project of East Timor, results indicated that time constraint, disparity in education levels among the members of the community, lack of institutional awareness support, and the capacity of the community substantially contributed to the failure of the project (Lavery *et al.*, 2005; Mansuri and Rao, 2003).

Most of the studies on community-based developments describe CDD as a participatory approach, but it is often difficult to distinguish the extent of which the community actually participated (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995; Titterton and Smart, 2006). Similarly in current practices, the projects are considered successful projects based on the number of projects completed as well as the infrastructure built, but the main concern is community participation and the improvement in local people capacities: a fundamental requirement for project sustainability (Mansuri and Rao, 2003; Paul, 2010).

Peterson and Hughey (2004) highlighted that empowerment theory successfully describe the community participation linkage with empowerment but

often weak ties were observed between community empowerment and sustainability of community driven projects. Participatory process is a crucial element in Empowerment theories through, which people interacts and fulfil their social needs; however there is much work needed on variables that influence the association between community participation and community empowerment. Other authors also highlighted similar apprehensions in community health perspectives and concluded that the connection of these variables with community connectedness can better explain the practical aspects of the empowerment theory (Rissel, 1994; Wallerstein, 2006; Wallerstein and Bernstein, 1994; Zimmerman, 2000b).

Community connectedness is a source to improve community ownership at the grass root level. Ownership of project objectives enables supportive environment for collaborative partnership between local institutions and community organizations to undertake the initiatives of local planning and development, resource allocation, evaluation and monitoring of development activities that better cater the local needs and requirements (Mashek *et al.*, 2007; Pooley *et al.*, 2005). Pual (2010) signified the importance to test the role of sense of community as moderator among the CCBs members for community empowerment and project sustainability as members affiliation with different political parties could influence their sense of community which might be the reason that the number of CCBs completed projects are very low as compared to number of registered CCBs.

Kurosaki (2006) and Paul (2010) advocated that the Citizen Community Board (CCB) scheme is influenced with the issue of community financial participation in community-based projects. Communities, which are struggling to survive in the era of economic recession, are finding it difficult to become a part of such projects because financial contributions contribute largely to the design failure of such community-based models. The Human Development Index (HDI) of Pakistan is indicative of the situation (0.572), and illustrates that 60.3 percent of the population is living under \$ 2 per day (UNDP, 2010).

In the context of Pakistan, the decentralization initiative provided the support for community empowerment but the requirements for community empowerment were not fulfilled as required. Authorities (powers) were transferred to the local government and community involvement in projects is also apparent but there is no mechanism to assess and improve the participation and capacity of the community as

well as the concerned institutions (Khwaja, 2004; Kurosaki, 2006; Nasira and Zafar, 2009; Paul, 2010). Paul (2010) illustrated that there is a need to assess and improve the capacities not only at individual and institutional level but it is mandatory to improve the capacities of entire system to achieve the desired objectives of community empowerment and project sustainability. Empowering communities through decentralization is a systematic change process that affects the methods and functioning procedures of institutional system (Khwaja, 2003b, 2004). Moreover, the way community groups establish their relation to new systems also changes significantly after decentralization. Funds were transferred to communities without any prior assessments in community capacity, and limited trainings were only provided to a few CCBs members. Rural communities with limited background of participatory development and with low capacities are too handicapped to fulfil the requirements of local development. This limited community participation, community connectedness and capacities all can implicate the sustainability of community driven projects. As there is no prior model available to assess the linkage between community empowerment and sustainability through a sense of community, this research seeks to establish a framework and provide a source to identify factors that hinder community empowerment and project sustainability.

### **1.3 Purpose of Research**

There is scant literature both about the direct effects of dimensions of community empowerment and sustainability of community driven projects, and the joint effect of community empowerment on sustainability in the developing countries (Khwaja, 2004; Kurosaki, 2006; Nasira and Zafar, 2009; Paul, 2010). Contemporary literature pertaining to the alignment of community participation and sustainability for CDD has produced preliminary articles and indicated positive confluence of community participation and sustainability for CDD projects.

Correspondingly, the purpose of this research study is to examine the community empowerment linkage with sustainability of community driven projects in

the context of Citizen Community Boards in Pakistan by identifying: 1) the critical determining factors of community empowerment influencing the sustainability of community driven projects; 2) examining the direct linkage between the constructs of community empowerment and sustainability of community driven projects; and 3) sense of community (membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of goals and shared emotional connection) that moderate this linkage.

However, the major purpose of this study is to contribute meaningfully to the wider body of community development and good governance practices literature by means of exploring the under-explored phenomenon of community empowerment and sustainability of community driven projects in developing economies like Pakistan, also to extend knowledge to address the gaps that exist in the literature in the form of under-explored know population group i.e. Citizen Community Boards in Pakistan.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The study is based on following research objectives:

- I. To identify the critical determining factors of community empowerment (community participation, community capacity building and community access to information) influencing sustainability of community driven projects.
- II. To determine the direct effect of community empowerment on sustainability of community driven projects.
- III. To determine the impact of community empowerment through the moderating role of community connectedness (sense of community) on sustainability of community driven projects.
- IV. To identify the barriers which impede community empowerment and project sustainability.

## 1.5 Research Questions

This study provided insight to the following research questions:

- I. What is the relationship of community empowerment dimensions (community participation, community capacity and access to information) to sustainability of community driven projects?
- II. What is the effect of community empowerment on sustainability of community driven projects?
- III. What is the impact of community empowerment on community driven project sustainability through the moderating role of community connectedness (sense of community)?
- IV. What are the potential barriers impeding community empowerment and sustainability of community driven projects in Pakistan?

## 1.6 Significance of Research

The concept of community empowerment emerged in Pakistan after the announcement of CCBs in Devolution Plan 2001. CCBs are considered as a basic step towards involving the local communities in proactive development. Local people can register CCBs by adopting a simple registration procedure, to identify and implement projects according to local needs. This research is an effort to measure the community empowerment and sustainability of community driven projects through the moderating role of community connectedness. The significance of this research is critical in a way that association of different constructs i.e. community empowerment; community connectedness and project sustainability assisted in recommendation for policy as well as for theory. The collective measure of these constructs provided a basis for improvement in rural development policy of Pakistan. In fact, proponents of rural development argue that community empowerment and project sustainability must be at the forefront to address the rural problems (Khwaja, 2003b; Kurosaki,

2006; Nasira and Zafar, 2009; Paul, 2010). Similarly, the direct relationship of community empowerment and sustainability with the moderating role of community connectedness was not yet measured. Thus, the key significance this study is that it also validates the direct relationship of community empowerment and sustainability with the moderating role of community connectedness.

The results of this research are not only constructive for CCBs projects, but also appropriate for the other community driven projects particularly in Pakistan and generally over the world. The methods applied in this study can be used to improve community participation and capacity in development projects to achieve ultimate goal of project sustainability.

For Researchers, policy makers, professionals and donor agencies, the outcome of this study provides a foundation to assess the community empowerment and project sustainability. The outcomes of this study provide a platform to the researcher to explore future research and strengthen the community empowerment and sustainability development. The proposed model helped to assess the impact of community empowerment on community driven project's sustainability through the moderating role of sense of community ownership and institutional support.

## **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study considered sense of community as moderator to measure the community empowerment for the sustainability of CCBs completed projects. More specifically, this research focuses on projects completed by CCBs during 2003-2008 in the Khyber Paktunkhwa Province (KPP) of Pakistan.

## 1.8 Limitations of the study

The study has following research limitations:

- I. There are several constraints create slight deviations in getting ideal results. For instance, time and money were the major limiting factors during the study
- II. The results of community driven projects may vary from community based projects as CCB's projects are supported by the local governments, while the community based organizations were supported by local NGO's and support groups in locality.

## 1.9 Important Definitions

There are several terms employed in this thesis that have numerous meanings in different subjects. In order to avoid any ambiguity, major terms are defined below as they are operationalized within context of this study

**Community:** A group of citizens residing in a particular locale. There are three elements to define community (i) a local ecology (ii) sufficient structure to meet the requirements and common interests of the local people and (iii) all community actions are coordinated locally (Wilkinson, 1986).

**Decentralization:** Decentralization is the process of transferring authority from the central government to local authorities (Azfar *et al.*, 1999b).

**Empowerment:** Empowerment refers to the delegation of authority or granting power to individuals or entities (Conger and Kanungo, 1988), improving their participation and capacities (Narayan and Petesch, 2002) with provision of useful information that leads towards empowerment.



**Community Driven Development:** refers to the local development mechanism that give the community greater control over the resources, planning as well as an investment decision (Mansuri and Rao, 2003).

**Community Based Development:** is an umbrella term used for those projects that actively engage project recipients in project design and mission, but communities don't have direct control over project planning and implementation (Mansuri and Rao, 2003).

**Community Participation:** Community participation is an active development process, whereby recipients don't only receive the benefits of the project, but also sway the project direction and execution (Tandon, 2008).

**Sense of Community:** The sense of community is feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling of members matter to one another and the group, and a shared faith that member needs will be met through their commitment to be together (McMillan and Chavis, 1986).

## **1.10 Organization of the thesis**

Dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter one consists of introduction of the topic, background of the study, problem statement, research questions and research objectives. Chapter two focuses on decentralization initiative and working of Citizen Community Boards in Pakistan. Chapter three discussed the literature on key identified variables including community empowerment, sustainability, community capacity building, community participation; community access to information and a sense of community. Research framework was also discussed in chapter three. Chapter four focuses on research methodology including research population and sampling details. Chapter five includes detailed analysis of research objectives including factor analysis, correlation and regression analysis. Chapter six discusses in detail the findings and recommendation and future research direction was provided accordingly.

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