

## **CHAPTER 5**

# **RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN PAKISTAN: AN ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPATORY COMPONENTS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Participation has proved increasingly effective in promoting community development. According to planners and policy makers this has been seen to be a more direct route to knowing a community problems and finding their solutions through a most realistic development programs (Mansuri and Rao: 2004). Political scientists' writing on development projects place an emphasis on the process by which projects are formulated and executed - how to decide and how to control the project. It is not only cheap in terms of economic costs but also in terms of cutting short the long route of intellectual wrangling, economic and social analysis and long at twigs dubious, ways of ascertaining community needs. In Pakistan the tragedy is that the concept of participation has never been conceived and followed in its true sense. In Pakistan central government has exercised great power in decision-making and the role and participation of local government in development is very limited.

This chapter critically analyses National Developmental Programs launched by the Government of Pakistan from time to time, concentrating on analyses of the project making process at district level, and on the participation of local government in formulation and implementation of such programs.

### **5.2 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Pakistan is pre-dominantly a rural country. The prosperity of the country and welfare of the vast majority of its people are intimately linked with the efficient harnessing of the rural resources on a progressively sustained basis to cope with the needs of a fast growing population. Pakistan has an experience of extending government support to the villagers and operating rural development

programs through bureaucratic, democratic, and party political approaches, each of which provided for distinctive structures and rules and has its own style of operation.

In the colonial period, the British created the 'District' and made the district officers (Deputy Commissioner) the hub of central authority in the locality. The Deputy Commissioner exercised so much control over the district that the politicians have not been able to aggregate rural interests under his control. He was the head of a miniature government in the district, and exercised general supervision and control over all other government functionaries. The Deputy Commissioner often sought the cooperation of the landlord or tribal or caste leaders for the maintenance of law and order and collection of revenue. A freer and more open participation of the people in the local institutions could not be facilitated. The participation was limited to 'Zamindars' a class of local notables and traditional tax collectors. This helped 'zamindars' to enrich themselves at the expense of other villagers and often, at that of the central government.

To counteract the drawbacks stemming from the tenuous link between the district bureaucracy and the rural society, the British introduced another intermediate structure - a hierarchy of local bodies such as the 'Chowkidari Panchayat', the union committees, the local board(s), and the district board(s). These institutions were made responsible to maintain peace and order and provide services to the villagers. But they did not strike deep roots, as the bureaucrats dominated them.

After the emergence of Pakistan in 1947, the same process was continued. Development programs were formulated centrally and implemented by the district administration of the central and the provincial governments. The American sponsored community development programs - V-AID (Village Agricultural and Industrial Development) - was launched by the government through district officials but with a different approach both in ideology and operational style. Unlike the traditional bureaucrats the village level workers (VLW) - the 'harbinger' of the new ideology and program, was introduced as a carrier of innovative values and an agent of social change. His main task was to organize village councils to plan for local development and to foster effective citizen participation in village self-help projects. Later on, throughout the 1960s, the rural development programs were implemented by the 'Basic

Democracies' (local councils) - a blend of bureaucratic and democratic approaches. Councils were made responsible for village development and the central government followed a liberal grant-in-aid policy.

In 1972, the democratically elected government introduced another approach to rural development - the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP). The participation of people in the development projects formulation and implementation was immense. The small projects were identified by the village councils or co-operative societies, and after approval by the project manager, who invariably belonged to the central superior services (CSS), the projects were implemented by the village project committee. Most of the village councils or project committees organized by the Government were dominated by the so called 'social leaders' landlords, or the notables of the village.

The rural development of the 'Eighties' began with the reintroduction of the decentralized democratic local councils in 1979 to stimulate development in villages and to encourage people's participation in development. The councils were involved in formulation and implementation of the local development projects of the central and provincial governments. But the government has armed itself with power of such a sweeping nature that it easily prevented the local council from undertaking activities which it considers undesirable. This has been used in 1985, when a 'District Development Committee (DDC), consisted of and chaired by elected legislative members of the district, was made responsible for formulation and implementation of the government development programs. The central grant was being channeled through this committee to villages and hence by-passing the local government. This era of a party political approach is still continued. Nonetheless, a major factor in the creation of the DDC, which have taken over hitherto local government functions, has been the varied political motives of the post 1985 central administration. It is clear that the Central Government has simultaneously followed more than one approach since the 1920s, although the extent to which priority is given to one or the other depended mainly on its ideology and interests, and sporadically on local reactions and responsiveness.

### 5.3 SCOPE OF COUNCILS IN DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

In most developing countries, National Development Plans are a common practice in the development process. All level of governments, namely Central and State / Provincial and other government agencies take part in the formulation and implementation of these plans. Local councils also make a contribution to the planning and implementation of national development plans.

Pakistan, like other countries, is steering its economic and social development within the framework of medium term (Five Year) plans. These plans are set in a long term perspective of 15 years and are operationalized through the instrumentation of annual plans. There has been an essential continuity in the process of planning, since the inauguration of the first five year plan (FFYP) in the late 1950s. The continuity has been maintained despite a seven year interregnum during the 1970s when medium term planning was abandoned in favour of annual programs and budgetary allocations. Medium term planning was revised once again with the Fifth Five Year Plan in 1978. Up to the current plan (Ninth Five-Year Plan, 1998-2003) Pakistan had nine medium term development plans:

First Five Year Plan	:	1955-60
Second Five Year Plan:		1960-65
Third Five Year Plan	:	1965-70
Fourth Five Year Plan	:	1970-78 (Annual Plans)
Fifth Five Year Plan	:	1978-83
Sixth Five Year Plan	:	1983-88
Seventh Five Year Plan:		1988-93
Eight Five Year Plan	:	1993-98
Ninth Five Year Plan	:	1998-2003

All development plans have stressed the participation of local councils in project formulation and implementation. But in practice development programs of the public sector have been

dominated by the central government and its agencies and the participation of local government and even provincial government is quite small and nominal.

At the district level, development projects are processed through two different but related institutions or units. These are the provincial district team and the local government bodies. The first is a formal institution through which the various elements of government could coordinate their efforts to promote development. The institution that has emerged was originally known as the district coordination committee (DCC) and is now called the district development committee (DDC). The membership of the DCC initially included the members of the district council, all the district heads of the provincial departments, as members, and the assistant director of district local government and rural development department as the secretary. This was a typical arrangement as the chairman of the district council acted as committee chairman, and was responsible to review and assess the development plans of the village level development councils (union councils) and district council throughout the district. The committee would then coordinate and arrange priorities of all these proposals achieved and form a development master plan for the district. As the local government bodies were also the members of the committee and thus liaison was maintained between the district council and the DCC.

By 1985 the name and structure of the DDC was changed to District Development and Coordination Committee (DDACC). With the inclusion of the local legislative members and exclusion of the district council members, the local MPA chaired the committee. The DDACC remained the agency for all development works of provincial government in the district. The projects were then implemented by the village project committee already established or to be established for this purpose. The government's order formalizing and integrating the committee in 1985 aimed at providing the institutional framework for development at the district level. On the other hand, the development works initiated by the various local councils were forwarded for approval and funding to the provincial local council's board through the Assistant Director of local government and rural development. Development proposals made by local councils were evaluated by the Local Government and Rural Development Department. After approval, the project proposals were passed on to the provincial finance department for funding. Any approved local project was administered by the Provincial Local Government and Rural

Development Department (LGRDD) staff at district level. The same arrangement is continued despite the reinvention of district government system in 2001, as the State's formulated development projects and programs are implemented by the provincial government offices at district level.

According to the Local Government Ordinance 2001, the formal planning system for development activities has to begin at the union council level for both urban and rural areas in consonance with the bottom up methodology and participatory development. Informally, the Citizen Community Boards and the village councils have to identify local development priorities to the Union Councilors/union councils. Municipal and development needs are to be communicated to the Tehsil and District levels respectively. The Tehsil and the District administration and planning offices have to prioritize development initiatives based on locally identified priorities commensurate with financial capacity. The development inventory is then become part of the Tehsil and District budgets and the respective councils are responsible for passing these budgets.

In addition to this, the union councils, with expanded and strengthened capacity for revenue generation and implementation, are empowered to initiate development schemes. The schemes targeted for development by the union councils are also communicated to the tehsil and district levels to complete the integrated planning picture of the district. After allocation and approval of the plan/budget, the implementation is done either by the union councils or through private contractors where councilors monitor the project implementation.

So the position at present is that there are in each district two distinct bodies i.e. the DDC/provincial government district offices and district government. Both are engaged in the same work of development and both are being advised in the preparation of plans by the same department field officers. This set up has created a duplication of efforts and in many cases, has resulted in uncoordinated development in the district and uneconomic expenditure of manpower and money (Rizwi: 1980). So there is a need to guide the development energies of the government into realistic and productive channels.

This development process at district level shows that participation of local bodies has been underestimated. Thus, the institutions closest to the people and, presumably better informed, have a lesser voice in the villages' development decisions. There is no participatory mechanism available at the local level which could bring the local bodies into the mainstream of national development.

The next section details some of the development programs undertaken by the central government since 1947, the purpose of which is to analyze the people's involvement in program formulation, implementation and evaluation.

## **5.4 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

Pakistan has a very long history of experimenting with various approaches to rural development. This is because 68 percent of the total population lives in rural areas where the social and economic situation has been deteriorating. Poverty and destitution have become almost endemic. The tempo of increasing mass unemployment and underemployment has also been accentuated by the rapidly growing population. There are a staggering number of people living in absolute poverty, malnourished and underfed, and with limited access to basic necessities of life: potable water, shelter, health and education.

In the early days of independence, for a few years, no specific strategy could be implemented for the uplift of rural sector due to the multitude of political, social, economic and financial problems that emanated from partition. But despite all the difficulties, the administration did pursue the rural reconstruction program, popularly known as, *Dehat Sudhar* program of the pre partition era. It was carried out as a village-centered movement based on the principles of voluntary efforts. However, 'conforming to the general paternalism of colonial administration, even an ostensibly populist movement of rural uplift was imposed from above. District officers were nominated as guides, philosophers and friends of villagers. As always, the officers adopted the gentry, the supposed natural leaders, as assistants. It was presumed that the government officers would pursue rural uplift with missionary zeal and the masses would obediently follow official advice, especially if the gentry supported it which

did not happen.

Later on, the strategy adopted for rural uplift was to set-up cooperative societies for providing cheap credit and organizing farm services to overcome the problem of stagnation in agricultural production. However, despite numerical expansion of cooperatives in the country, their contribution to the economic growth of the rural sector was, by and large, insignificant.

It was in the early fifties that the nation launched its first major program of community development in order to provide social services to the people on the bases of their felt needs. It was a comprehensive rural development effort based on ideas of motivation, self-help and self-reliance.

Since then the successive governments in Pakistan envisaged various programs and policies for socio-economic restructuring of rural areas. These programs range from the Community Development Program 1952 to the Social Action Program 1993 and Tameer-e- Waten program 2003. The following is the scenario of the rural development efforts of the Government of Pakistan. The objectives here are to explore the program in terms of their objectives, strategies, and participation of people in program formulation and implementation.

#### **5.4.1 Village Agricultural and Industrial Development Program (V-AID)**

The village agricultural and industrial development program was introduced in Pakistan in 1953. It was the first determined effort on the part of the government to tackle the multifarious problems which daily confront the villagers. The program was based on the recommendations of the Sufi Committee. In 1951 a group of five officials of the Agriculture department headed by Mr. Sufi, the then Deputy Secretary to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of Pakistan visited the USA, studied the US Agriculture Services for four months under the auspices of the US-ICA and submitted a report which envisaged this program. The basic philosophy of the program was to foster leadership initiatives, and cooperation among the rural people, promote social and cultural activities, and to improve the economic conditions of the

villages in the shortest possible time. The underlying philosophy, the Pakistani version of community development, was to encourage the villagers to respond to modernizing norms and to achieve the self sufficiency in every aspect. As a V-AID document read:

"The main objective is to solve the problems of the villagers by helping the villagers to help themselves individually and as communities. It is also an attempt to look at the village as a whole through the eyes of its people and in the light of their accumulated knowledge and wisdom" (GOP: 1956).

The V-AID was thus aimed at "bringing better living standards and a new spirit of hope and confidence to the villages, where . . . about 90 percent of the people of country live" (GOP: 1956). The primary aim of the program was to foster effective citizen participation in the rural self help projects in the fields of agriculture, health and sanitation, adult literacy, primary education, cottage industry, minor irrigation and reclamation, secondary road construction, cooperative societies, village social and recreational activities etc.

Administratively each district was divided into a number of development areas. At the district levels, V-AID advisory committees were formed, the composition of which included Deputy Commissioner as Chairman, Senior Development Officer as Secretary and all SDM / Tahsildars, Development Officers, District level heads of Departments and Village Council members from each development area of the district as members. At the village level, the development area was represented by V-AID workers, their main tasks were organizing village councils for local development planning and fostering citizen participation in village development projects. In each village there was a V-AID council elected by the villagers themselves and comprised of a Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer and six to eight members without any statutory authority. There was no uniform mechanism of organizing the village councils. It varied widely from place to place considerably depending on the attitude of the V-AID worker and the development officer (Abedin: 1973). The Deputy Commissioner and the Tahsildar not only headed V-AID advisory committees at the district and subdivision levels respectively, but they were also made responsible for the successful implementation of the program. Their main responsibility was to supervise the working of the V-AID organization and

to ensure the cooperation between councils and the technical departments.

Under the V-AID program usually small projects such as approach or feeder roads, repair or construction of small schools or dispensary buildings, improved sanitary arrangements, filling useless village ponds, digging of village wells etc. were included in village development plans. The plans were usually prepared by the V-AID workers and the development officer and then the formal consent of the village council was obtained. All development projects were presented to the development area committee, which could approve or disapprove the plans with or without necessary modifications or readjustments. The projects were then implemented by the village council.

A review of the organizational functions of the V-AID program reveals that the local bodies were kept separate from the V-AID organization with the result that two parallel institutions, intended for virtually the same purpose, were operating side by side. This situation often led to rivalry, jealousy and unnecessary competitions between the two parallel institutions (Abedin: 1973).

Though, later on the local bodies and the local administration (executive arm of the government) were closely associated with the whole gamut of community development, the councils were terminated. Thus, despite the existence of elected union Boards and District Boards in the 1950s, the invigoration of the democratic process was not matched by a major redefinition of the functional jurisdiction of local government. The participation was limited to elites, as Ahmad (1989) observes: "Most of the village councils organized by the V-AID workers were dominated by the so-called 'social leaders'. Though the program did not prove to be as great a success as had been expected, however, some observers as Abedin (1973) noted, it demonstrated the importance of self-help participative projects in rural development. The program also radically improved the government image to the rural community. The participation of the villagers in the program and its dramatic progress gave them confidence (Rizwi: 1980).

V-AID, its achievements and shortcomings, were subjected to frequent and detailed review. A

number of these have highlighted the tangible achievements of V-AID in terms of distribution of improved seeds, use of chemical fertilizers, improved farm tools and equipment, construction of roads, wells, establishment of primary health centers, primary schools etc. It has its criticism too. In discussing the working of V-AID, Akhter (1960) found that while the program and organization had made very useful contributions in several respects, the organization had been prevented (by its governmental nature) from allowing the community to occupy the place of prime importance in planning or implementation as was envisaged in the approach governing the program. As a result the four tier structure of 'Basic Democracy' (BD) institutions was introduced and the V-AID program was integrated with these new local bodies in 1959 until the winding up of the program on 30th of June 1961.

#### **5.4.2 Rural Work Program (RWP)**

The RWP was introduced in Pakistan in 1961 as a 'pilot project' on an experimental basis at Comilla (East Pakistan now Bangladesh) and extended to the entire country after successful experimentation in 1963-64. The basic philosophy of the program, as well as the intended method of its administration, was summarized in the Revised Second Five Year Plan (RSFYP), to the Consortium aiding Pakistan's development plan. The importance of the program was well documented in the RSFYP (1961) and the Third Five Year Plan (1965-70) as decentralized participatory rural program and as an integral part of the Five Year Plans.

The objectives of the program were two fold: First, building essential infrastructures relating to agriculture and communication and second, generating temporary employment opportunities for landless laborers in the lean season through physical infra-structural development projects.

With the introduction of 'Basic Democracies' in 1959, the planning, formulation and implementation of the work was entrusted to local councils while the funds were channeled through the central government administrative departments. Local government bodies - the District Councils (DCs), the Tahsil Councils (TCs) and the Union Councils (UCs) - were responsible for planning and implementation of the projects in cooperation with local-level officials. The procedure they have to follow was: identification of and proposals for wards

problems / demands in consultation with villagers, discuss the proposals in a village meeting in which necessary modifications and adjustments would be made according to the suggestions put forward by the villagers. This procedure was followed almost everywhere during the early period of works program but later on, as the government evaluation report (1963-64) noted, this procedure was not followed in most cases.

Each member submitted his plan to the union and district councils respectively. In the council meeting these plans were discussed and then, after having made any necessary modifications and adjustments, the plans were coordinated and the union council and district council plans were prepared. The plans were, then presented to the respective 'Approving Authorities' for final approval. The 'Approval Authority' was a committee of the tahsil councils, a committee of the district councils, and a committee of the Provincial Government for union, tahsil and district councils planning respectively. It should be mentioned here that all the 'Approving Authorities' consisted of Provincial Government officials and of course, they had full power to approve, reject or amend any plan submitted to it for approval.

After receiving the approval of the respective Approving Authorities, the projects of district councils were implemented by either project committees or contractors, and the tahsil and union councils projects were necessarily implemented by project committees headed by the Chairman of the Union Council, other members of the project committee were supposed to be elected in a meeting by the villagers but studies reported that in most cases the members of the project committee were nominated by the respective Union Council's Chairman (GOP: 1963).

It was asserted by the government side that the RWP was the most viable program through which employment opportunities and the participation of the poor can be ensured. It is true that the RWP have contributed something to employment generation and a successful expansion of public investment in rural infrastructure - roads, irrigation, land reclamation, etc. There have been a number of surveys and studies which have highlighted the tangible results of the program and provided statistics on the construction of roads, wells, streets, irrigation canals, etc., but it is more difficult to find out to what extent that program has developed local initiative and changes in the attitudes and behavior of people to solve problems at their own level. One observer

(Abedin: 1973) notes: "of course, under the Works Program the councilors received some training and rural people occasionally received some information about new methods of or new ideas about agriculture, sanitation etc, but the primary concentration was on material improvement of the rural areas'.

The RWP has also been subjected to criticism, primarily on the grounds of leakage and maldistribution of benefits. Commonly, local councils have served only as further levers of power in the hands of the rural elites and instruments of their enrichment through leakage from the RWP. The structure of the local councils and project committees were controlled by the representatives of the rural dominant classes and the project committees were dominated by the Union Council's Chairmen and their close allies which resulted in biases in favour of activities that offer them maximum opportunities for money making. Paradoxically this permissiveness was to be made the subject of adverse comments by critics of the program. Rehman Sobhan (1968) strongly criticizes the emphasis given to rural roads which, he argued, should have received much lower priority than irrigation in the early years of the program. Furthermore, the Pakistan Economic Survey (1964-65) observed that the "Chairman of the District Council, that is, the Deputy Commissioner, was given extensive power over the completion of the district programs, for the sanction and execution of schemes and for the coordination of the resources of the council and the technical departments within the district. The Deputy Commissioner was the project director of the Rural Works Program in the district. Hence, the schemes were mainly dominated by bureaucrats rather than the people or their representatives.

Despite these problems, the RWP did show some sign of progress in the rural areas. Public investment in rural infrastructure was boosted, which helped to increase the economic prosperity and political aspiration of the villagers, thus large funds were channeled to villages. Though some of the observers (Abedin: 1973) see it as the political motives and self-interest of the Ayub Government.

### **5.4.3 Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP)**

This program was initiated by Mr. Bhutto, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, in 1972 when he

pointed out that the economy of Pakistan derived its strength from the villages and that the economic development of Pakistan should be based on rural development. In this regard the IRDP was launched in 1972 with the aims of providing opportunities to improve the social economic status of a large majority of small and medium villagers to enable them to rise above the poverty line once and for all. It was designed for community development and the development of local leadership at the grass roots level in the rural areas leading to the logical conclusion of community and cooperative farming (Naseem: 1973). In this context the IRDP was aimed at the convergence of rural development activities, of the people and their organizations, government departments, local government institutions, and business and professional groups. Through this integration the objective was to improve the quality of rural life by increasing agricultural productivity, developing the village economy, creating employment opportunities, improving rural employment conditions and ensuring an egalitarian social structure.

Prime Minister Bhutto stressed for the participation of the people in development projects while launching the program. Declaring 1976 as the year for social welfare and rural development, Bhutto stressed that "unless we structure our rural society, all our efforts to provide such inputs as electricity, village roads, water supply schemes, fertilizers, seed and pesticides, credit for investment in tractors and tube wells will fail to yield their full benefits" (The Dawn: 1976).

In terms of approach and strategy the IRDP represented a synthesis of the various approaches tested and found effective in Pakistan's rural development programs. A host of new programs were launched covering agricultural development, basic needs and social development.

The organizational structure of the IRDP was not markedly different from the standard bureaucratic form; the only difference being the establishment at the village level of cooperative agencies called 'project committees' selected by the villagers themselves. The 'markaz' (below district and above village) was made as the unit of rural development administration, where a project director (an employee of central government) implemented, supervised and coordinated the IRDP. At the national and provincial level, the Ministry / Department of Social Welfare, Local Government and Rural Development were responsible for planning, coordinating,

directing, monitoring and evaluating and supervising the IRDP projects. The needs and wants of the village were identified in a meeting of village council, passed on to 'markaz' administration by the village project committee for onward actions. The proposed projects of the village council were then processed and coordinated by the 'markaz' administration and after approval funds were channeled through the 'markaz' to the village project committee for implementation. Projects were thus identified and implemented by the villagers in a village council meeting. Many development observers (e.g. Rizwi: 1980) noted that it provided an effective opportunity to villagers to participate and play their due role in development process as compared to other development programs of the past, despite the fact that local bodies never become a part of this program. Furthermore, the literature including the Ministry of Social Welfare, Local Government and Rural Development, annual report, enthusiastically recorded an all round progress. However, the role of IRDP to be singled out was pretty difficult.

From July 1977 to the end of 1979, the program remained in operation without the political umbrella at the provincial and federal levels and any institutional linkage with the rural community. As an interim arrangement, rabta committees with village "Lamberdars" as their members were created at the union council level. The chairmen of these rabta committees were in turn made members of the markaz level rabta committees. Administrative cover to the program was provided by the Assistant Commissioners, who themselves started chairing the meetings of the markaz rabta committees to facilitate the coordinating role of the project managers.

With the reintroduction of the 'Local Council' system in 1979, the IRDP and rural development projects were transferred to the councils. In 1980, the chairmen of the union councils falling within the territory of *Markaz* along with the project manager, the representatives of various departments posted at the markaz and the district councilors from that area constituted the markaz council. The chairman of the markaz council was elected from the non-official members of the markaz council. The project manager worked as the secretary of the markaz council. Above the markaz council was the district council with its own elected chairman. The chairman of the district council was also the project director of rural works program. Funds earmarked for rural development in the annual development program of the province

were to be transferred to the union councils via the respective markaz councils. Similarly development schemes prepared by the constituent union councils were to be scrutinized at the markaz level before they were sent to the district council. Though markaz had no constitutional status under the local government ordinance 1979, it was incorporated in the system through an executive order.

#### **5.4.4 Prime Minister's Five Points Program (1985 – 1988)**

With the establishment of local government system in 1979 under the military regime and subsequent phasing out of PWP and IRDP, the responsibility of nation wide rural development was entrusted to the local government institutions. Such efforts were funded from local resources, i.e., without donor support, and were implemented by elected local government system in a case manner of individual small-scale projects, mainly in infrastructure.

Similarly the rural development programs of the provincial and central governments were formulated and implemented by the elected members of the Councils through the officials of the Provincial and Central Governments. This practice of developmental process continued until democracy restored in 1985.

Nation wide rural development programs since 1985 are generally devoid of vision and sensible strategies. In the beginning, responsibility of rural development was shifted to the local government system, newly established with partyless elections to muster support for the military regime. Later on, with similar motivation, the elected representatives, i.e., senators, ministers and members of the national and provincial assembly (MNAs & MPAs) were also allocated development funds for the uplift of their respective areas without any comprehensive conceptual coverage.

So with the restoration of democratic government in the country in 1985, the federal and provincial development programs, including the Prime Minister's Five Point Program and Community Uplift Program, People's Program and Tameer-e-Watan Program were formulated

and implemented through the elected Members of the Parliament.

Under the five points program of Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo (1985-88), direct funding of small scale projects in the field of education, rural roads, drinking water, health and sanitation in rural areas was introduced by providing substantial budgets to the political representatives, i.e., senators, federal and provincial ministers, MPAs and MNAs. An annual allocation of Rs. 5 million to senators, ministers and MNAs, and a sum of Rs. 2.5 million to MPAs was made available for funding of development works in their respective constituencies. With this move, project bound funding was basically used to reinforce the power base of politicians without any systematic procedure of accountability or public involvement. The actual use of these budgets for project implementation was basically left to the discretion of politicians, who could approach line departments directly or even involve who ever they wanted, including private contractors, their factotums or members of their own family. Quite a substantial share of such allocations was however, still channeled through the local government system, which being elected bodies, contributed to reinforce legitimacy of politicians and increased their public backing in their constituencies.

The major problems encountered during the 1985-88 period – tussle between members of parliament and councilors, lack of consensus in the project selection, lack of people's participation, and corruption of the members - prompted major modifications in the rural development project's design and organization during 1988, when Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was elected as Prime Minister.

#### **5.4.5 Peoples Program (1988 – 90)**

During the first government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto from 1988-1990, the system of budget allocation to politicians was basically maintained but the so called people's program was added to it; again exclusively funded from government resources. This program of mainly small-scale infrastructure projects was started to be implemented under the supervision of the federal government. In 1988, new organizations called 'District Administrator Peoples Program,'(DAPP) and 'People's Committees' were introduced at district

and village level respectively. The district committees included some elected representatives but were basically dominated by nominated persons from the ruling party. The district committees could commission the implementation to any government department or any private agent. They were given special organization status and placed under the direct control of the Central Government. The autonomy and effectiveness of DAPPs increased, but their separate status made a positive institutional impact more problematic in the long run for local government.

Establishing the DAPPs, the government proudly announced the taking of government closer to the people through the network of 'Village People's Committees'(VPCs) and to ensure fast and closer development of rural areas. The appointment of District Administrator, who usually belonged to the ruling party, in fact, supplanted democratic and decentralized local government and was highly criticized by the opposition parties who demanded the implementation of peoples' program through Provincial and local governments.

Another fairly large scale Community Uplift Program was also started in 1989 and basically implemented along the same lines. In 1991 the elected local governments were also dissolved and replaced with district councils of nominated representatives of line departments and local politicians under the chairmanship of the deputy commissioner.

#### **5.4.6 Tameer-E-Watan Program (1990-93)**

In 1990, after the dismissal of the Benazir government, the rural development administration and organization were re-modified. The succeeding Muslim League government under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (1990-1993), replaced the People's program with Tamer-e-Watan program, which basically continued the elements of the previous system under a new name and with a bias towards different segments of beneficiaries. The program was again funded from government's own resources and implemented under the supervision of federal government via the local government system (now based on nomination), as well as by the MNAs and MPAs. 'District Development Committees' comprising of local MPs were reestablished. These committees worked as parallel organizations of 'Local Councils'.

Surprisingly, the community uplift program started by Benazir Bhutto was also retained.

#### **5.4.7 Peoples Program (1993-96)**

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, during her 2<sup>nd</sup> term (1993-96) revitalized the people's program. Tamer-e-Watan program was replaced with the People's program which basically continued the elements of the previous system under a new name. The community uplift program also remained intact. Again, sponsors and beneficiaries changed but the basic political structure of the program remained the same. The Peoples Program was in operation from December, 1993 - 96, the basic concept and approach of which was the participation of elected representatives (Senators, MNAs) of the people at national level in identifying development schemes in their respective constituencies on the basis of assessment of development needs of the area. The program concentrates on the provision of basic amenities such as drinking water, sanitation, education, health and supply of natural gas.

#### **5.4.8 Social Action Program (SAP) 1993**

There is a persistent dichotomy between a respectable rate of economic growth and a marginal improvement in social indicators in Pakistan. The social indicators lag considerably behind other developing countries at a comparative stage of per capita income. In the country, comparison on the social side, according to the World Bank, Pakistan ranks 132 compared with 86 for Sri Lanka and 101 for China (UNDP: 1993). Having realized the sensitivity of the problems of these disturbing indicators, a 'Social Action Program'(SAP) was launched in 1992-93.

The main objective of the SAP was the removal of poverty, incorporation of gender concerns, improved rural access and environmental quality. It focuses on broad targets and requires a large outlay in its five concerned areas, i.e. basic education, primary health, nutrition, population welfare and rural water supply and sanitation. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto termed this program as "the poverty alleviating" strategy of her government while addressing the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industries on 8, March, 1996 in Jakarta. She said, 'the

social action program aims to arm the poor with good health and education. This will upgrade our labor force, will promote equity and will lead to gainful employment' (Bhutto: 1996). The main responsibility of its implementation lies with provincial governments with the involvement of public sector, NGOs, and the community in general to make it a more mass oriented program. Its operational plans have therefore been designed to attract all sections of the community.

At the district level, there were 'Social Action Boards' (SAB), headed either by MNA or MPA but dominated by the ruling party. Although it was envisaged in the beginning that local government would be responsible for SAP implementation, the government decided to establish 'SAB' of MNAs / MPAs who supported the government at central and provincial level and set aside the local councils of overseeing its implementation. These boards were (1) initiating participatory mechanisms embodying broad based decentralized organizations at the village and district level, and (2) implementing the SAP projects with sidelining of local government. Hence the SAP's aims of involving the community and 'NGOs' project formulation and implementation could not be materialized.

#### **5.4.9 Development Programs During 1997 – 1999**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Nawaz Sharif government, commencing from 1997 apparently embarked on changing the structure of development program. As a first step, and forced to do so, by the imminent financial crisis, the development budget allocation to politicians, dating back to the Junejo period was abandoned. Moreover, a new local government ordinance was promulgated and countrywide local bodies elections were announced for April 1998. However, fearing the absolutism and manipulative behavior of the ruling party at the center and its protégés in the provinces, the opposition parties in the provinces of Sindh and NWFP challenged the intent and legality of the new local government ordinance in the court of law. Accordingly, local bodies' elections were held in the provinces of Punjab and Baluchistan in time but had to be deferred in the provinces of Sindh and NWFP due to the legal battle till the army takeover in October 1999.

#### **5.4.10 Development Programs After 1999**

An unexpected development took place when the army dismissed the political government and took the control of administration on October 12, 1999. Within weeks of the takeover, prominent people from the civil society were appointed as ministers and advisors. A six point agenda was announced for effecting comprehensive institutional reforms in the socio-economic and political life of the society. Along with other measures, the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) was established to reform the power structure of the polity. The NRB, after a wide-ranging consultation came up with the Devolution of Power Plan. The devolution strategy is designed to provide an institutional mechanism for most of the critical elements of sustainable development like, administrative decentralization, grassroots participation, empowerment, equity, gender issues, local initiatives and urban rural integration.

The new design not only envisages a decisive role for the district and union councils but also has provision for civil society institutions to work in tandem with the elected bodies. In order to organize people for increased participation, the community boards and village councils have established which identify/prioritize development needs of the villages and participate in its implementation through monitoring etc.

A nationwide poverty alleviation program, i.e., Khushhal Pakistan is also initiated on March 11, 2000. The program is pro poor and pro-backward areas, with strong emphasis on local participation. A large number of infrastructure and social sector schemes were initiated by district administration in consultation with local communities during the first phase of the program. With the establishment of the new local government system, the implementation of development program has been entrusted to the elected representatives at the local level.

The government has revitalized the Tameer-e-Watan program initiated and implemented by the district officials of provincial government departments at district level in consultation with local communities through MNAs/MPAs.

## **5.5 ASSESSMENT OF PEOPLES' PARTICIPATION IN THE ABOVE PROGRAMMES**

Local participation, being a core element in all the programs, failed to a large extent. All programs operated more a political than socio-economic programs; hence generally applied a top-down approach, imposing a centralized pattern of decision making for local level operations. Only in the period of the Basic Democracies, and local councils in 1979, some local political commitment through the elected union councils was generated and some participatory involvement emerged at the local level. All other programs were implemented in the absence of elected local bodies with no functional substitute that could have promoted local participation by other means. In all the programs, the prospective beneficiaries were never directly involved in both the project planning or implementation stages. Local participation in the aided self-help projects decreased over each subsequent program. Only under the IRDP, a bottom-up approach of decentralized decision making from the local level was attempted to some extent. However, without democratic control, even these attempts were soon undermined by the rural elites taking over the lead in participatory bodies. With the reconstitution of the elected union councils in 1979, a more genuine step for local participation was attempted.

Nevertheless, the rural development projects contributed to people's participation in development process by one way or the other including consulting with local people, encouraging local resource contribution, discouraging contracting style of implementation, and reinforcing local organizational capabilities in development. Each program has affected association of the people in one or the other form in carrying out developmental activities.

A council of village elders – an informal body of chosen or selected individuals - was formed under the Village –Aid Program (1953-1960) which was actively associated and consulted by the Village-Aid worker in assessing and identifying the village needs and problems, mobilizing local resources, and executing developmental projects.

A project committee – led by the basic democrats, the elected representative – was formed for

the formulation and execution of physical development projects under the rural works program during 1962-63. Village needs were identified by the respective councilor in an informal meeting with fellow villagers, were discussed in the union council meeting approved by the district council and were executed by the councilor through the project committee.

The IRDP introduced the concept of broad based village collective forum - the village cooperative organization – which paved way for broad based participation by organizing the villagers to participate in decision making and resource mobilization at village level.

District Coordination Committees comprising district councilors and district heads of sectoral departments as members with chairman of district council as its chairman affected participation of people, indirectly through their representatives, in planning and execution of development activities not only of the councils but also of the provincial and federal governments.

Similarly District Development Advisory Committees comprising of assembly members were constituted in the early 1980s at district level for identifying and planning development programs in the district.

Towards the end of 1980s, and in the early 1990s, the peoples program and social action program were planned and executed by the project committees at district level comprising members of a provincial assembly and headed by a selected or nominated administrator usually belonged to the ruling party.

After 1996, the development programs of the federal and provincial governments were formulated and implemented through the reinvented district development committees mostly comprised of local Members of Parliament belonged to the ruling party. This practice continued up to the termination of a democratically elected government in 1999.

With the reinvention of local government system in 2001, the formulation and execution of all the development programs is made the responsibility of the district government. But with the introduction of democratic institutions at national level, such arrangements could not be realized

as members of the parliament identify/prioritize the needs/problems and provincial government official in district offices make arrangements for the formulation and implementation of the projects.

To conclude, the various programs have tried various mechanisms i.e. Village Development Councils; Project Committees; Village Cooperative Organizations; District Coordination Committees; District Development and Advisory Committees and Social Action Boards which have indirectly associated the people in planning and implementation of development programs. Studies (Zaman: 2004; Minhajuddin: 1985; and Rashid and Tunio: 1990) have confirmed that participation of common people could not be realized at all.

## **5.6 Strategies and Approaches for Promoting Participation**

The developing states established a number of new local government institutions to replace the old and exclusive structures that seldom allowed participation of all sections of the community. But the outcome has not been adequately successful since the existing political system did not facilitate the entrance and participation by the poor and powerless groups. There is a persistent tendency to retain control over local institutions and programs by the central government. In addition, a centralized bureaucracy often emerges as a major obstacle to effective participation at the local level.

Despite these significant barriers, the message is not that efforts to strengthen popular participation in local governance should be abandoned. Indeed, around the world we can find a number of important innovations and interventions which show promise to make a significant impact in enhancing citizenship participation in democratic local governance. What is needed is to learn more about the potential of these strategies, and the conditions under which they might widen openings for greater political participation of the popular sectors at the local level, and under what conditions they are likely to serve the opposite purpose, namely, the integration and co-optation of the popular majorities into a political system that essentially remains unchanged (Sch^nwvalder, 1997:756).

Despite the fact that there are a number of innovations occurring around the globe, few of them seem to have been systematically documented or assessed. In a workshop in March 1999, IDS convened a workshop in co-ordination with SEARCH, OUTREACH, and Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and Dr. Kripa specifically to examine the use of participatory methods in strengthening participation in local governance. The workshop brought together practitioners and groups working on these issues from India, Bangladesh, Philippines and Nepal. The workshop pointed to the significant window of opportunity for strengthening grassroots participation brought by current initiatives for reforms in governance in the context of decentralisation.

Measures that can help safeguard participation by all, particularly by women and by scheduled tribes can be of two types. The first type are concerned with making changes in formal structures, while the second type are more concerned with enhancing individual citizens' capacity to participate. Public policy has been almost exclusively focused so far on the first type of safeguard measures. Structural improvements have encompassed primarily reserving electoral offices in local government for low-participating categories, especially women and scheduled tribes. However, reservations have not so far resulted in significantly improving participation by either of these categories. Reservations have been in force for only seven years so far, and it is possible that continuing with reservations for a longer period might have the desired effects. There is no assurance, however, that this is likely to happen. A hope, shared with many others (including Mathew and Nayak 1996 and Mayaram 1999) is that by providing them with access to office, the reservations policy might indirectly strengthen among women and scheduled tribes the desire to participate more fully in politics at the local level.

In addition the IDS workshop (1999) has also showed the following different and multiple kinds of strategies that were being used to strengthen participation.

- **Participatory Planning**

In a number of countries, perhaps most notably the Philippines, India and Bolivia, new

legislation offers possibilities for new processes of participatory planning to influence the priorities of local governments. Perhaps the most extensive model for this is found in the Peoples Campaign for Decentralised Planning in Kerala, which has mobilised thousands of people at the panchayat level to prepare plans for economic development and social justice (Bandyopadhyay 1997:2450). Similarly, in the Philippines, the Batman project is using participatory planning in a large number of municipalities across the country, and in India the National Coalition of Resource Support Organisations associated with PRIA has promoted participatory micro-level planning in a number of states (Oldenburg 1999). In many instances, participatory planning methodologies, such as PRA, are being used, and local governments to provide such assistance are calling upon NGOs and others who have these skills.

- **Citizen Education and Awareness Building**

Another set of strategies has involved using popular education and communication methodologies to strengthen the awareness of local citizens of their rights and responsibilities under new local governance legislation. In the state of Karnataka, Dr. Kripa and colleagues have pioneered the use of radio as an awareness building tool, while in both Bangladesh and India popular theatre is being used for similar purposes. Also in India, PRIA and the NCRSO have developed strategies for strengthening the Gram Sabha or village meeting as the most basic unit of direct democracy. In Zimbabwe, the Community Publishing Process has developed popular education materials on citizenship and democracy, which have been used widely across the country.

- **Training and Sensitising Local Officials**

While some participatory education strategies have focused on building the awareness and capacity of local citizens, others have focused on training of elected officials and government staff. These are largely of two types. In some places such as India, where reservations have been made for women and lower caste representatives, a great deal of work has gone into training these newly elected representatives, many of whom have no previous leadership

experience in formal politics. In Karnataka, for instance, SEARCH, as well as others, have offered training and leadership development programmes for thousands of newly elected women representatives. As a result, these women have now held their own convention, formed their own network, and are using village-to-village peer education and support methods to strengthen their capacity.

In other settings, the focus has been on enabling existing government officials to engage with citizens in a more participatory manner. In Uganda and in Tanzania, for instance, large scale participatory poverty assessment projects have been used not only for helping to identify the priorities of the poor, and their perceptions of local governance, but also to strengthen capacity of local government staff in areas such as participatory planning. Similarly, in India, partly as a result of a national workshop on Attitude and Behaviour Change in Participatory Processes held at the LBS National Academy of Administration, work has begun by government training institutes to experiment with large scale methods of sensitising government staff to more participatory approaches.

- **Advocacy, Alliances and Collaboration**

A fourth set of strategies discussed at the Karnataka workshop involve the need for learning new skills of advocacy, as well as how to build effective alliances and collaborative partnerships, especially those that cut across power differences. This involves new skills for both sides of the equation. Citizens, community-based organisations and NGOs previously excluded from decision-making in government need to learn skills of advocacy and effective policy influence, as well to guard against co-optation. Similarly, government officials and existing power holders need to learn new skills and to develop appropriate mechanisms for involving new stakeholders in policy formation and decision making. Reviewing possible strategies for popular participation in local governance, Sch`nwaldner (1997:768) finds this approach potentially most promising:

Multiple alliances with a variety of other actors appear to be a way of safeguarding the relative autonomy of popular movements operating at the local level and of maximising

resources available to them. In the end, whether or not these movements will succeed in getting their voices heard, while at the same time weathering repression and fending off attempts at co-optation will depend to a considerable extent on their skills at bargaining and negotiating with others.

- **Participatory Budgeting**

Presently one of the most successful experiences in citizen participation in decision-making at the local level is the experience of participatory budgets. In Brazil at least 70 cities have established a participatory budget system which allows citizen participation in decision-making over allocation of resources.

The participatory budget strategy was initiated in 1989 when the City Hall of Porto Alegre created participatory structures with decision-making power over the allocation of resources for the development of the municipality. The Municipal Council of Government Plan and Budget (MCGPB) is responsible for the co-ordination and organisation of the process of developing the investment plan, and checking the execution of the planned budget. It is constituted by elected citizens from the 16 regions in which the city is divided as well as by government representatives with no voting right. Through a participatory planning process involving people from all the regions, the investment plan of the previous year is reviewed, priorities are defined and councillors for the MCGPB are elected. An open and elaborate consultation process with the population follows, which ends when the investment plan is approved by the MCGPB and sent by the Executive Power to the Municipal town councillors. Subsequently a negotiation process takes place around the specific details.

- **Promoting Accountability of Elected Officials to Citizens**

While a number of participatory methods focus on enhancing direct participation of citizens in the governance process, others are focusing on maintaining accountability of elected officials and government agencies to the citizenry. Traditionally, in democratic governance, accountability is thought to be maintained in a number of ways, e.g. local elections, strong

and active opposition parties, media, public meetings and formal redress procedures (Blair 1998).

In the newer and more active forms of citizenship, citizens are developing other accountability mechanisms. In Rajasthan, for instance, as the work by Goetz and Jenkins (1998) documents, the women's led right-to-information movement has demanded a minimal level of transparency by local governments, especially in the use of local funds. Other more professional advocacy organisations, such as the Public Affairs Centre in Bangalore, have used a relatively sophisticated research processes to develop a Report Cards of local governments in the delivery of services.

In both Bolivia and India, legislation allows for local vigilance committees to serve a monitoring and watchdog role. So far there is little evidence that these have developed the capacity and independence to do their job, but there may be great potential. In Kerala, for instance, local vigilance committees are empowered to sign off on local projects ñ inspecting both for quality and for proper use of funds ñ before final payments are made to contractors. An NGO coalition associated with Interaction is beginning to explore how to strengthen these citizen-monitoring committees as a bottom-up device to insure accountability.

These, then, are just some of the strategies which are beginning to be used for strengthening citizenship participation in the potentially new spaces found in democratic decentralisation programmes. Clearly their potential for success will vary across context and will depend a great deal on broader enabling factors. And much more research is needed to learn about the impact these interventions can have in helping to overcome the barriers to participation which were discussed in the previous section, and in which contexts.

Such participation does not usually provide good return due to the disorganized state of local interests, and their input in the process remains vague and aimless. The failure of such arrangements points to the need for meaningful participation. Non-profit and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can perform this vital task of providing focus, meaning and direction to the weaker groups in the community and build them up as a cohesive and

productive force. I would agree with Hashemi that it is such organizations that may “ultimately pave the way for the development of a civil society that can independently protect its own”. I would add that only such self-reliant organizations have the potential for breaking the clientelistic mode of domination in developing countries including Pakistan which perpetuates the status quo and hampers the development potentials.

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

Throughout Pakistan's history, successive governments have tried to reach the village through adopting a number of measures, mostly a blend of democratic and bureaucratic approaches, each of which provided for distinctive structures and rules and its own style of operation. The dominant approach to rural development in Pakistan has been administrative rather than political. The administrative approach is aimed primarily at achieving efficient allocation of available resources and corresponds in many ways to a 'growth' strategy, which is more elite based and elite oriented, choosing short-run over long term gains by utilizing those resources most readily available. The political approach, on the other hand, relies more on mobilization of resources, primarily through appeals and promises and citizen involvement. With the introduction of 'local councils' in 1959, the Pakistan government provided for a more political approach to rural development. Despite local reforms in 1979 and 2001, this political approach, however, is still limited and dominated by the administrative approach, which provided rural development with few achievements and many pitfalls. The extent to which priority is given to one or the other depends mainly on government ideology and interest, and sporadically on local reactions and responsiveness.

Most projects have been / are being carried out through local councils, district development committees or field offices of central ministries and provincial departments. The establishment of village committees was prerequisites for the initiation and implementation of development projects. This requirement was rigorously enforced for increasing participation in order to manage and mobilize local resources. Although constrained by central structures and processes, the development projects worked with local government and other decentralized organizations to achieve a variety of positive results - responsiveness, improvement in planning,

administrative and technical capabilities of local government resource mobilization and management, contribution to economic development and strengthening of inter organizational and inter governmental networks at the local level. However, policies and regulations emanating from the central government have limited the institutional development of local councils as a participatory agency of development. So revitalization of local government for active participation of people in development is required.