

Pro-Poor Participative Practices in Pakistan: An Analysis of Typology of Community Participation in Social Action Program (1992–2002)

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Abstract

The idea of participatory approach to public policies and programs is something, which the policy community and bureaucracy in Pakistan like to endorse and love to preempt. Very often, this hybrid attitude prompts them to use a mix of manipulative and passive forms of participation. This practice is immaculately visible in typology of community participation in the Social Action Program (SAP), which aimed to improve the delivery of four basic social services, namely primary education, primary healthcare, rural water supply and sanitation, and population welfare. Although the Government of Pakistan accepted in principle the need for community participation in SAP sector strategies, the implementing agencies perceived it as unpreventable official ritual. As a result, they galloped to demonstrate achievements in numerical terms by involving more and more existing community groups or creating new participative structures without delegating any substantial authority to them. At the level of program planning and formulation, participation of communities was non-existent. During implementation, their participation remained largely manipulative and passive with some degree of consultative and functional types of participation. Steps need to be taken to graduate from lower levels of participation to higher and more effective levels of participation by overcoming bureaucratic resistance to the concept of participation and institutionalizing participatory approaches in formulation and implementation of public policies and programs.

Keywords

Community, participation, social services, Pretty, Pakistan

Introduction

The policy community and bureaucracy in Pakistan have very often entirely precluded or only partially included the marginalised groups in decision-making processes of public policies and programs. The level and type of participation are decided on the basis of actual or perceived political needs, technical feasibility and practical convenience in given circumstances. Whatsoever space is made available to stakeholders, the key considerations are always the same, namely enhanced legitimacy through broad-based support, democratic flavour in decision-making, and financial and managerial sustainability of action. While exclusion is increasingly

becoming politically nonviable due to local and international emphasis on 'engaged governance' (Guthrie 2003), the public sector is reluctant to institutionalise participatory approaches either. The outcome of this cold tussle between external pressures and internal resistance is manifest in manipulative and superficial forms of participation in public policies and programs.

In Pakistan, participative practices in decision-making at public policy and program level, though episodic, are predominantly an outcome of politically motivated choices. Internal pressures exerted by the civil society and external demands imposed on the political regimes and government machinery by the donor community have often created some space for the poor to influence the decisions, which affect their lives. The decade of the 1990s is particularly significant in this regard, as the government moved generously to allow the poor participate in one of the largest poverty reduction initiatives, the Social Action Program (SAP). The SAP can be viewed as an immaculate embodiment of government's proclaimed commitment to community participation in poverty reduction programs. Between 1990 and 2001, there were eight governments but all of them extended broad support to this Program and endorsed the involvement of private sector, NGOs and community.

The SAP aimed to increase the government spending on coverage, quality and effectiveness of delivery of four basic services: primary education, primary healthcare, rural water supply and sanitation (RWSS), and population welfare. The federal and provincial governments implemented the SAP in two phases: SAP Phase-I (1992-93 to 1996-97) and SAP Phase-II (1997-98 to 2001-02). The Government of Pakistan contributed a major proportion of the total expenditure while roughly one-third of total development expenditure came from various donors including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Department for International Development, European Commission, United Nations Development Program and the Netherlands Government.

The government decided formally to close the SAP on 30 June 2002 in a cabinet meeting held in May 2002. The reason behind its closure was that it could not achieve the desired objectives. Poor participation of communities and lack of ownership are believed to be among the major reasons for poor performance of the SAP (GoP 2000; ADB 2001; SPDC 2001; Khan 2003). The donor agencies were particularly dissatisfied with the way communities were involved in the formulation and implementation of the SAP. Although multi-donor appraisal reports and other anecdotal literature on the project counts 'lack of community participation' as a structural defect in the SAP, there is no in-depth and scientific analysis of available on this subject.

This paper attempts to analyse the structural features and nature of community participation in both phases of the SAP at the levels of program planning and implementation. For this purpose,

secondary literature has been used. It first provides an overview of the concept of community participation and its relevance with the delivery of social services. Then, it explains typology of participation, which has been developed by Jules N Pretty to distinguish different types of participation. Using this typology as the criterion, the paper then analyses various types of participation in each SAP sector and categorises it into the relevant, though overlapping, types and attempts to explain it. In the last section, some conclusions have been drawn on the basis of the analysis.

Concept of community participation in social services

'Participation' is a word that is experiencing a renaissance in the 1990s (Chambers 2000 cited in Olico-Okui n.d.). Civic initiatives, which are based on universal values of openness, representation, engagement and accountability, have emerged as staunch proponents of participation in decisions of the government that affect citizens. Now, it is considered to be the most important characteristic of and a prerequisite for good governance.

Extensive use of this term in the development literature and debates has led to a perception that 'participation' has become an abused concept. Some people argue that this concept is abused in two ways: First, when it is used as a cosmetic label to make what is proposed or what is done appears good; second, when participation is used as a co-opting practice, to mobilise local labour or materials and reduce costs-meaning 'they' (the local people) participate in 'our' project (Olico-Okui n.d., p. 3). Drinkwater (1999) highlights similar problems with the term. According to him, it can be used to describe activities where the role of community members is, in fact, either manipulated or extremely passive, or if this is not the case, where that of the project staff instead becomes rather passive and accepting of anything that community members say. In fact, both views target the lowest levels of participation, where it is used as pretence to accomplish some political goals.

Despite that considerable ambiguities exist in its meaning, participation holds tremendous intuitive appeal, especially when it is connected with the terms 'stakeholders' and 'community'. 'Community participation' is an umbrella term for a people-centered approach to development. In practice, it has been viewed as the basis for legitimacy of an action executed in the name of public. Increasingly, the governments and civil society organisations have felt the need to make community participation an integral part of development projects. Those programs, which are aimed at service delivery, consider community participation as a core value and basic instrument to achieve sustainability of projects.

The rationale for community participation in service delivery comes from two arguments represented by different schools of thought and practice. The first argument is that communities are in an advantaged position to operate, manage and monitor local facilities, as compared to government, which is located far away. Community has to be allowed to participate for sharing management and operational costs. This approach works best for civic facilities, especially where choices are limited. This line of argument is closer to the school of thought that views participation as a means to increase efficiency. The central notion in their thinking is that if people are involved, then they are more likely to agree with and support the new development or service (Pretty 1995). The second argument is that participation has a democratising connotation because it can ensure broad-based inclusion of people in decisions. For this purpose, community participation has to be premised on the broad needs and interests of the community as perceived by the community (Elliot 1975 cited in Olicio-Okui n.d.). This argument is closer to the second school of thought and practice, which views participation as a fundamental right, and in which the goal is to initiate mobilisation for collective action, empowerment and institution building.

Community participation has become a recognised supplementary approach in social service delivery. There exist a large number of international agreements and declarations, which stipulate it as a necessary element for sustainable management of services. In rural water and sanitation, for example, the Declaration of New Delhi (UNDP/UNICEF 1990), the Nordic Freshwater Initiative (1991), the Agenda 21 (UNCED 1992) and the Dublin Declaration (1992) recognise that participation and community management are central to the issue of sustainability of rural water and sanitation projects. In the health sector, AlmaAta Declaration (WHO/UNICEF, 1978) proposed community participation as one of the main principles of primary health care. A large number of developed and developing countries have adopted these declarations. Therefore, no wonder that the concept of community participation in social service delivery in developing countries has been very well accepted.

There is considerable evidence to show that those service delivery projects, which included community participation as an important component, met with huge success. A study of 121 rural water supply projects in 49 countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America found that project effectiveness and maintenance of water schemes had been significantly influenced by the participation of local people (Narayan 1993). The review found out that out of these projects, many just referred to community participation, which could not be translated into practice. The result was that they showed poor performance in comparison to those, which involved communities from planning to implementation. Such examples can be found in development projects in Pakistan as well. Orangi Pilot Project, which created one of the best community-based models of low-cost water and sanitation systems is a case in point.

Pretty's typology of participation

Apart from problems in defining 'participation', the real challenge is to measure it in terms of the extent of its effectiveness and the influence that a participant exerts on decision-making. The complexity in its measurement becomes difficult to simplify due to differences in perceptions about its meaning, its context-specific rationale, and unclear path of the influence exerted by participants. A number of researchers and development practitioners have attempted to devise tools and instruments, which are useful for measuring this concept piecemeal and in sector-specific terms.

Jules N Pretty (1995) has developed a typology, which outlines seven types to distinguish the interpretations and use of the term participation. These types range from manipulative and passive participation, which are characterised by a situation wherein people are told what is to happen and making of unilateral decisions, to self-mobilisation, where people are able to take initiatives themselves. In this last type, which represents the highest level of participation in Pretty's classification, there is no influence of external institutions over resources, as people take initiatives independently (Table 1).

Some other researchers have also developed distinctions between different types of participation. However, they are less clear than those prescribed by Pretty. Generally, the line of distinction is very thin and therefore, it is difficult to get a clear idea. For example, the classification by Gustavo de Roux views 'participation' in the context of relationship between the state and community in terms of power. He categorises participation into four forms: *collaboration*, *joint management*, *self-management*, and *negotiation*. *Collaboration* makes community subservient to institutional decisions and, in effect, members of the community are excluded from decision-making. This approximates Pretty's first three categories. The other three categories denote relatively better forms of participation.

Table 1. A typology of participation: How people participate in development programs and projects

Typology	Characteristics of each type
1. <i>Manipulative participation</i>	Participation is simply a pretense, with 'people's' representatives on official boards but who are unelected and have no power.
2. <i>Passive participation</i>	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.

3. <i>Participation by consultation</i>	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes, and so control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
4. <i>Participation for material Incentives</i>	People participate by contributing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Farmers may provide the fields and labour, but are involved in neither experimentation nor the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end.
5. <i>Functional participation</i>	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents. At worst, local people may still only be co-opted to serve external goals.
6. <i>Interactive participation</i>	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
7. <i>Self-mobilisation</i>	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Self-mobilisation can spread if governments and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilisation may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power.

Source: Pretty (1995)

Although Pretty's typology appears to cover most of the salient types of participation, it has certain limitations. The most fundamental criticism, which it deserves to draw, is that it tends to

put the reasons for low levels of participation on part of external actors, which cannot be true in many cases. For instance, participation cannot be passive only if people are told what has already been decided; it can become passive due to certain deficiencies on part of participants as well. A well-designed interactive type of participation can turn into passive participation, if participants do not have adequate knowledge and information about the relevant issue and therefore, accept what others decide for them. This leads to another conclusion that a certain type of participation is not necessarily an outcome of external actors' intention or poor design, it also depends on what is possible in a given setting. Expecting interactive participation or self-mobilisation in a far-flung rural area with majority of population being illiterate, for example, may be too ambitious goal in absence of prior community organisation.

The second limitation is that this typology suggests types, which are overlapping; hence, it is difficult to place participation in a given program in a single type. One type of participation can be part of another type of participation. For instance, manipulation is possible, at least partially, in several other types as well, e.g. participation for material incentives, or functional participation, or interactive participation.

The third limitation of this typology becomes evident when it is applied to analysis of participation in a program or project. The typology begins with a type in which there is at least minimum degree of participation; there is no type included in it, which describes non-participation. Probably, Pretty's intention was to design a typology for participation, and not for non-participation but this restricts its analytical application significantly. Although some have suggested that manipulation is central to types one to four and therefore they should be seen as types of non-participation (Hart 1992 cited in Pretty 1995). But this rather extended definition of non-participation cannot be acceptable because even very small degree of participation cannot be treated as non-participation as it can influence decision-making, be it very small. The application of this typology becomes wider if it includes an additional category of non-participation. In this paper, I have added this additional category to Pretty's original typology for the purpose of categorising those components of the SAP in which there was no participation at all (Table 2).

Community participation in the Social Action Program (SAP)

The Government of Pakistan and the donors fully agreed that community participation would be an integral part of all sector approaches in SAP. This appreciation came from overall participatory orientation of the donor community and recommendations of background studies, which identified lack of involvement of local communities as an important factor in impediment of social development in Pakistan (GoP 1991). Although the government and the donors distinguished the

community, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private sector as three different stakeholders, confusion persisted throughout SAP implementation about the definition of community. The donors defined community as a client of the services and used the concepts of 'client' and 'community' interchangeably (World Bank 1994). By implication, it meant that the donors wanted partnership with community based on commercial principles, which restrict direct participation of the client (in this case community) in planning and management decisions. The government perceived the community as a passive entity, which was ready to accept what would be offered to them by the government officials. This perception is best epitomised in the manner, which characterised the mushroom formation of school management committees and water user groups through executive orders.

The participative element of the SAP was based on a two-pronged strategy. First, the federal or concerned provincial government could involve communities and NGOs in SAP sector strategies. For this purpose, funds were earmarked for contracting out schemes to community-based organisations (CBOs) and NGOs under technical assistance component of the SAP. The federal and provincial governments were autonomous to adopt the most suitable form of participation according to the local needs and societal values but in practice, there was no much difference in the design of various participative structures envisaged in the SAP.

Second, a Participatory Development Program (PDP) was specifically designed to develop partnerships between the NGOs and the public sector in the delivery of social services. The PDP aimed at involvement of community, CBOs, and NGOs in the SAP sector strategies. The PDP provided a framework within which NGOs and CBOs could initiate projects. However, it could never attain the rigor of a functional institution. In early 2000, eight years after the SAP began and only one year before it was formally closed, the PDP was still passing through "fragile beginnings of a longer term process of improving and increasing the coverage of service delivery and of bringing greater decision-making and accountability at the community level" (GoP 2000a, p. 7). Until February 2000, not even a single NGO had received financing through the PDP mechanism at national level.

In the following parts of this paper, community participation has been analysed at the levels of program design and planning, and implementation. Then, each sector has been categorised in one or more relevant types.

Program planning and formulation

Community participation at the level of planning and formulation of SAP was almost non-existent. The overall government-centric design of the SAP presumed that communities would accept what

the government would offer to them. Various participative structures envisaged in the SAP such as parent–teacher associations, school management committees, village water committees, water user groups etc were brainchild of the government, and not suggested by the community. Therefore, this one-size-fits-all approach was significantly deficient of needs of communities and local knowledge.

The design of both phases of the SAP was highly complex, making it inevitable to involve a large number of government ministries, line departments and agencies in its implementation. Community participation was included as an approach in the sector strategies partially due to budgetary constraints. As the SAP was largely to be financed through special allocations of the federal and provincial governments in conditions when already there was high budget deficit (Pasha et al. 1995), it was more than apparent that the government would not be able to bear the recurring expenditure liabilities. Community participation was incorporated to meet at least some expenditure in water and sanitation, although it did not make much difference to financial sustainability of the project.

In Phase I, the involvement of stakeholders in planning process remained very low. However, Phase II broadened the base of stakeholder participation, but their recommendations were only inadequately incorporated in the project design (ADB 2004). Consequently, the design remained government and aid-agency-driven. Involvement of stakeholders was the first component objective and first activity in the Project Framework of SAP Phase II. Similarly, strengthening of the involvement of stakeholders, particularly at provincial, district, and community levels was a component objective of the project. However, this commitment could not be translated into practice fully. Moreover, the Government of Pakistan and donors agreed that line agencies, not NGOs/CBOs, would identify needs and scope of potential activities of NGOs/CBOs in the Participatory Development Program.

The fundamental reason for the exclusion of communities in planning is found in bureaucratic style of the planning machinery of Pakistan. The Planning and Development Division prepares and appraises large development projects according to given formats called PC-I and PC-II. The other relevant federal ministries and line agencies feed their inputs into the plans. The ministries and departments can also prepare projects themselves but they have to get approval from the Planning Commission, if the total size of budget exceeds certain threshold. The PC-I and PC-II include a section on beneficiaries' participation. This is aimed to illustrate how the participation of beneficiaries would be engendered. There is no obligation on the part of the planning machinery to take on board the views of community, which can be affected by a policy or program. The undeniable fact is that for the planning machinery, the term 'stakeholders' means the federal

ministries and funding institutions only; community has not been recognised as a legitimate stakeholder. Surprisingly, even provincial level ministries were not much involved in the SAP planning, thus containing the ownership of the SAP. Whatever ownership was articulated at the provincial level was washed away during implementation due to frequent problem of staff turnover.

Some structural defects were built into the overall approach to community participation because of factors, which were overlooked. First, cultural factors were not considered in due place. Lack of social cohesion in clans living in rural areas, which can be a barrier to organise communities, and geographical dispersion of settlements were not taken into account to a satisfactory level. Second, there was no communication strategy in the design of the project. Consequently, the SAP objectives and strategies could not be shared with government and non-government stakeholders on a wide scale. The Canadian International Development Agency took the initiative to plan and implement a clear communication strategy as a separate project but it could not be operationalised.

The above analysis shows that there was no systematic incorporation of community perspectives in program formulation. Community-focussed ethnographic research should have provided the basis for understanding social systems leading to effective interventions in support of desired social change (ADB 2001). However, the policymakers and government agencies perceived inclusion of communities in decision-making as an encroachment over their functional domain.

Implementation of the SAP

The federal and provincial governments were responsible for delivery of the SAP sector services through vertical programs. The federal government's sub-programs were implemented nationally and in federal areas including Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Northern Areas (NA) and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). The provincial governments executed sub-programs in their respective provinces.

At the implementation level, community participation in all the SAP sectors can be placed in the following one or more types: manipulative, passive, consultative and functional. The first three of these types represent the lowest levels of participation in Pretty's typology, whereas functional type represents relatively better form of participation with some degree of authority resting with the participants. In the following paragraphs, an effort has been made to explain the reasons of classifying the SAP sectors into these types.

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS)

Low-cost water and sanitation is included among basic social services. In view of the disparities between rural and urban areas in Pakistan in accessing this basic service, the sub-programs in this area were designed to benefit rural areas only. In both phases of the SAP, two kinds of RWSS facilities were planned: LGRDD (Local Government and Rural Development Department) schemes and PHED (Public Health and Engineering Department) schemes. PHED generally provides pumped and piped systems, whereas the LGRDD provides non-mechanised systems such as hand pumps. In this sector, a uniform policy was adopted with similar procedures of site selection, appraisal of community proposals, selection of design, construction and handing over schemes to the community.

The process of development and implementation of both PHED and LGRDD RWSS schemes clearly envisaged the role of communities in site selection, design and operation and maintenance. At the stage of site selection, the concerned line department would invite applications and village water committee or community would submit written requests. The applications would then be short-listed, assessed for technical feasibility and discussions held with community. If the community agreed to location of the scheme, its design and technology and bear the operation and management costs, a memorandum of understanding would be signed. The scheme would be developed by the concerned executing agency and then handed over to an existing village water committee or users committee. In case of the absence of such committee or group, the government could organise the community. In practice, significant deviations from the above criteria have been detected in Third Party Validation studies (AJP 2000), especially in selection of sites.

Although the level of participation appears to be the highest in RWSS schemes as compared to other SAP sectors, the involvement of community remained passive and functional in both phases. The passivity is visible in the process of site selection and design of schemes. The schemes gradually became “politically motivated, poorly designed and mostly unwanted by communities” (ADB 2004, p. 9). Schemes were built even in those areas where the people had many other sources of drinking water such as wells and boring. The community was treated as a passive recipient of the schemes, which were constructed to oblige the local leadership. This led the government to put a moratorium on building new schemes until the old schemes were completed. According to Project Completion Review Mission of the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank (2004), communities were sometimes not consulted in the identification of schemes. Women are more involved in collecting water in rural areas but they too were not usually consulted.

Functional type of participation in this sector is visible in implementation of the criterion of cost-sharing. This community-managed-cum-financed model failed to work because of high electricity charges forcing people to get back to other unhygienic sources of drinking water. In many cases, where the site selection was politically motivated and did not involve the consent of the community, there was no motivation for bearing operational and management costs. Moreover, in the areas where people had alternative drinking water sources, the SAP schemes were viewed of no use to them, and hence, lack of ownership was a real problem.

Table 2. Typology of community participation in the Social Action Program

Component/sector	Typology of Participation							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Non-participation	Manipulative participation	Passive participation	Participation by	Participation for material	Functional participation	Interactive participation	Self-mobilisation
Program planning and formulation	✓							
Participatory Development Program (PDP)		✓						
Community participation in different sectors during implementation								
Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS)		✓	✓			✓		
Primary education		✓	✓					
Basic health care		✓		✓				
Population welfare		✓						
<p>Note: The original Pretty's typology has seven types of participation (Types 1 to 7 above). In its application to analysis of participation in a program or project, this typology does not provide space for categorising a component, which has no participation at all. The 'non-participation' column has been added to fill-in this gap and has been numbered '0' to denote that this is not a type of participation but only an additional category to indicate those components of a program in which there is no participation.</p>								

Consequently, toward the end of the SAP, only 30 per cent of the transferred schemes were functioning (ADB 2004). In consultations held by the Project Completion Review Mission, the participants from government departments were critical of the donor policies, which were not cognisant of the realities of poor communities and imposed unrealistic policies on them such as

cost recovery of rural water supply. In rural areas, where people live from hand to mouth, thinking of cost sharing is very ambitious and at the same time, unpractical strategy. In SAP Phase I, water user committees were paying user charges in 56 per cent of the communities. Only 28 per cent of committees were paying user charges to an extent that covered the operational costs.

Despite the gaps in participation planning, considerable success was achieved in numerical terms. For example, in the second phase, the government decided that at least 20 per cent rural water schemes should be community owned. Substantial progress was made in this regard. In NWFP, 490 schemes had been transferred to communities or NGOs until December 1999; 370 schemes in Balochistan until December 1999; 104 schemes in Sindh until Feb 2000, and 36 schemes were transferred to the communities out of a total portfolio of 53 in Islamabad Capital Territory.

The real reason at the core of poor participation in this sector was the failure of the government to articulate sustainable, or at least long-term, community ownership of the schemes. This, in turn, was an outcome of two factors: First, in presence of alternative sources of drinking water, which incur negligible or no cost at all, the community-managed-cum-financed model could not work even if the government schemes promised to provide drinking water, which was more safe and hygienic. In rural areas, the poor people preferred to save a penny than spending it on safe potable water. Second, a periodic mentoring and follow-up support to organised structure such as water user groups or committees is a precondition for their survival because ethnic and political forces in rural areas are too powerful to pull them apart. The SAP did not envisage such follow-up mechanism. In fact, the training and mobilisation needs of community could not be addressed even at their minimal.

Primary education

The focus in this sector rested on improving access through establishment of more schools, especially for girls and recruitment of more teachers. Quality enhancement was another key objective. The structures, which were created to include parents and other community members, included School Management Committees (SMCs) in the Punjab, AJK and ICT, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in NWFP, Sindh, Northern Areas, and Parent-Teacher School Management Committees (PTSMCs) in Balochistan. Village Education Committees (VECs) were formed in FATA and rural areas in other provinces. Although the nomenclature was different, the rationale and basic functions of all these structures were the same: monitoring absenteeism and school performance. Members of these committees comprised of teachers, parents and active members of the community.

Community participation in this sector can be categorised into two lowest types of participation: manipulative and passive. The manipulative face is evident from the manner in which these committees and associations were formed and failure of the government to delegate powers to them. The SMCs and PTAs were mostly established through official notification, and therefore, they remained more or less an official obligation of the school headmaster and implementing agencies. Few efforts were made to articulate the interest of parents and community members after the formulation of these committees. Despite training of Village Education Committees (VECs) and School Management Committees (SMCs), the role of the community remained minimal with power resting with influential local people or groups (Smith 2002).

The passive nature of community participation in this sector is linked to the first type. The parent members of these committees had virtually no role in school management and utilisation of funds because the headmaster or headmistress had no interest to engage them in an interactive manner. By the year 1997–98, they existed *nominally* in 74 per cent of the elementary schools (ADB 2001). The head of a school, after receiving official notification, would consult with staff and propose the names of parents who would then be obliged to become member of the committee. In many cases, these committees were established by dictate; the district education officers nominated the members and directed their work. Of the total SMCs established until 1997–98, 71 per cent did not receive any funds. It is pertinent to mention here that no funds were earmarked for SMCs, and therefore were not fully authorised to receive and spend funds on educational materials and school repairs (GoP 2000b).

The official notification proved a miracle; a large number of committees and associations were formed in no time. In SAP Phase II, 38,290 PTAs were formed in all primary schools in Sindh. Until February 2000, there were 4445 SMCs among 4449 primary schools in AJK. In Northern Areas, 1400 PTAs and VECs were formed to identify needs, receiving and scrutinising bids/quotations, placing orders and disbursing funds. However, they remained without power, as non-salary funds were not transferred in their accounts. The involvement of NGOs to supervise and articulate these committees could have been a workable approach. However, the government agencies could not develop a productive relationship with NGOs at a larger scale throughout the implementation period of the SAP.

Primary health care

The SAP aimed to improve the quality and access to delivery of basic health services with a focus on promotional and preventive services, especially in communicable diseases. Community participation in this sector remained manipulative and consultative. At a limited scale, health committees and patients' associations were established to run basic health facilities established

under the project. Besides, some community mobilisation and awareness campaigns were launched. In the SAP Phase II, 28 village committees had been established in NWFP, which helped to run Basic Health Units (BHUs) and Rural Health Centres (RHCs). In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Union Council Health Committees were formed but they remained non-functional throughout the period. Moreover, some community questionnaires were conducted to collect information about access to health facilities in rural areas and map the existing level of knowledge and use of contraception. This can be categorised as 'participation by consultation', as the community participated by answering questions.

In the health sector, the bureaucrats and service providers responsible at the operational level had little concept of community participation and lacked the skills regarding the process of mobilisation and involvement (Karim and Shehla 1999). Over and above this, the implementing agencies were reluctant to decentralise authority to community representatives in Village Health Committees (VHCs). It is understood that involving community in health programs needs innovative approaches and greater degree of mobilisation, which could not be provided under the SAP.

Population welfare

In this sector, the SAP aimed to enhance access of people to population services and parental counseling through establishment of additional family welfare centers, reproductive health centers, recruitment of additional village family planning workers and increased contraceptive prevalence rate. Although the participation of community was not very significant, the role of private sector, especially in provision of contraceptives, was quite substantial. In the SAP Phase I, about 50 per cent of family planning users received contraceptives from a non-government supplier. Some NGOs were also involved in social marketing of contraceptives. In federal areas, the village-based Family Planning Workers Program, and community-based promotional programs in health and family planning, were some initiatives that sought to take the community on board.

On the whole, bureaucratic resistance to the idea of the involvement of private sector, NGOs and the community was underestimated at the SAP planning and formulation stage contrary to the targets, which depended substantially on participation. Consequently, the communities were not provided sufficient capacity and authority to make decisions in planning, building or running of services, contrary to both the SAP's philosophy and its sector strategy. Most of the facilities, including schools, health units, and water supply schemes remained stagnant due to poor design and because they were not required in those areas. In addition, the local governments and local people had virtually no say in the development of those sector activities, which were driven by a

one-size-fits-all approach. The private sector could not be involved at all, except in provision of contraceptives in population welfare. Almost, no resources were earmarked for this purpose.

Conclusions

The SAP made a mild start to greater community participation but failed to achieve the primary objectives of empowering the people at the grassroots level and enhance the quality of service delivery. Lessons need to be clearly identified from the SAP experience to guide the formulation and implementation of similar programs in the future. Following are the major conclusions and lessons, which flow from the analysis presented above:

1. The SAP design did not take into account the level of interest and capacities of the implementing agencies to implement initiatives with support from the communities, whereas the achievement of program targets was designed so as to depend significantly on community-based structures, especially in the RWSS and primary education sectors. Incorporation of participation as a component or sector strategy in a program must be based on comprehensive assessment of all concerned implementing organisations' understanding of the concept of participation and their capacities to engender support of people by using participatory methodologies, which are suitable in a given context.
2. Participation, which is manipulative and passive in nature, does not yield any benefits; instead, it reduces the chances of success. Steps need to be taken to graduate from lower levels of participation to higher and more effective levels of participation by overcoming bureaucratic resistance to the concept of participation and institutionalising participatory approaches in formulation and implementation of public policies and programs.
3. The SAP sectors of rural water supply and sanitation (RWSS) and primary education, which involved relatively higher levels of community participation as compared to other two sectors namely primary healthcare and population welfare, showed less satisfactory results. This unexpected performance can be explained in terms of non-accomplishment of some ambitious targets in the RWSS and primary education sectors, the achievement of which substantially depended on contributions from community organisations. However, few efforts were made to allow these structures grow to a level where they could contribute to achieve these targets. Moreover, the issue of sustainability of these structures was ignored. These groups fell into local political divisions or lost interest due to other reasons. Unless there is a mechanism of regular mobilisation and motivation, community-based initiatives begin to drop their level of effort and effectiveness over time.

4. The SAP experience shows that community participation, as a means to achieve certain objectives and as an end in its own right, requires missionary zeal for its success. Unless the level of inputs into formulation and mobilisation of participative structures is commensurate with the nature and scope of desired objectives, the outcomes cannot be satisfactory. In this regard, the most fundamental reform, which needs immediate attention, is to align the public sector with new development paradigm, which is based on the notion of 'good governance'. There is a need to orient the policy community and bureaucracy about the concept and rationale of participation of stakeholders in the changing realities around the world.

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