

Reinforce Democratic Values for Socio - Economic Development with Sustainability

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ABSTRACT

Development program are taking place in regular basis all over the world. The activities are taken place either by the support of the government agencies or by the development partners. It was found that majority of the development program are short in lived due to one or another reasons. It shows the weakness of the program implementing agencies and lack of clarity on sustainability issues. To overcome the basics of the problem and make the development program sustainable the policy makers and program implementing agencies should given enough attention in reinforce democratic values in community, equity & sustainability and must addressed all together.

Keywords: Development, accountable governance, community, reinforce, sustainability, livelihood and equity

The development implies the improvement and advancement of economic, social, cultural and political conditions of the community. The process of development improves quality of life means the implementation of change that ensures every person a life of dignity; or life in a society that respects and helps realize all human rights. These changes must include the eradication

and alleviation of widespread conditions of poverty, unemployment, and inequitable social conditions. Sustainable development ensures the well-being of the human person by integrating social development, economic development, and environmental conservation and protection. Development helps in fulfilled the basic needs include access to education, health services, food, housing, employment, and the fair distribution of income. Social development promotes democracy to bring about the participation of the public in determining policy, as well as creating an environment for accountable governance. Social development works to empower the poor to expand their use of available resources in order meet their own needs, and change their own lives. Special attention is paid to ensure equitable treatment of women, children,

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people of indigenous cultures, people with disabilities, and all members of communities considered most vulnerable to the conditions of poverty.

Economic development expands the availability of work and the ability of individuals to secure an income to support themselves and their families. Economic development includes industry, sustainable agriculture, as well as integration and full participation in the global economy. Social and economic developments reinforce and are dependent on one another for full realization. Therefore truly sustainable development affirms and reaffirm that "human beings" are at the centre of concern for sustainable development. So, social and economic developments must be carried out in a way that is environmentally and ecologically sound; ensuring the continual rejuvenation and availability of natural resources for future generations.

Active participation of the community in sustainable development ensures that those who are affected by the changes are the ones determining the changes. The result is the enjoyment and sharing of the benefits and products generated by the change. Participation is not exclusive, ensuring equitable input, self-determination and empowerment of both genders and cultural groups.

BACKGROUND AND STUDY FINDINGS

A research study was carried out in three socio-economic development projects in three different states i.e. Bihar, Rajasthan and Orissa. In Rajasthan and Orissa the projects were on "Supply of Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation" implemented by the Govt. with the Development Partners and in Bihar it was on "Livelihood" Program implemented by Bihar Rural Livelihood Mission supported by World Bank. The projects and sites were selected as these projects are successfully continued for the last 8-10 years and community are satisfied with the project outcome. The sole objective of the study was to find out the reasons behind the successfully running the projects for a longer period and management principle applied for implementing the program to make it sustainable by the Govt. Agency, Development partners etc. Based on the project background and different study reports, the

overall objective of the current study is to understand social and economic feasibility on program sustainability and development in India with special reference to Rajasthan, Orissa & Bihar during the period 2001-10. The specific study objectives on program sustainability and development are a) to assess the issues important to make the society involved in the development activities; b) to assess the influence of gender in decision making process in the society; c) to assess how the community decides the relative needs in respect to development projects and its sustainability; d) to assess which will influence the community (cost-benefit) to invest in the development project; e) to assess how the perceived fairness influence in making the project/development program a success; f) to assess how the community as a whole are ready to take a risk in investment on development issues which may or may not change their lives over a period of time; and g) to assess how the social capital played an important role in creating conducive environments in implementing development project and its sustainability.

"Jeevika has given me the confidence to speak out at village meetings"

(Sushila a 27 year old woman from Tumbo village, Nalanda District)

The exploratory research method is applied to assess the specified objectives. The study result shows how it influences the issues which directly or indirectly impact on the project stability at the community level. The study instruments were developed to understand the ground situation and perception of the

individual community members, knowledgeable and group opinion of the communities on aspects linked with study objectives.

The study objective wise analyzed data are discussed below to understand how the issues influenced & reflect the community, project implementer and stake holders to maintain the development project sustainability over the years.

It was found from the different project by state that involving community to the project was possible when the proposed project given attention their immediate requirements. The project should be as per the needs of the people. The selections of the development project itself influence the community to be part of the team efforts.

The results also highlight that the process of implementation have an important role like it should be free from gender biasness, social status and above all based on equity principle. The democratic principle and transparency were the other factors which influence the people's participation for the longer period and its involvement.

The community level study data shows that in social development project the outcome of the project influenced the household and mainly women in the family. The three different socio economic conditions it was found that the project implementation agency had given enough space for the women of the community. The successful project operation the role of gender has an immense impact for sustainability of the program.

In the developing economy the community needs number of things which is important for better standard of life. The sectors like health, education and livelihood are the areas where they felt need for the projects. The importance to fulfill the needs are sometimes depends on the environmental and priority issues. The study results show that to identify the project, the pre project meetings with the community members are the major criteria. The project evaluated in Bihar on "livelihood" was a perfect decision by the implementing authority to take up the project. Similarly in Orissa and Rajasthan "Water and Sanitation" was very much relevant at that point of time. In three places it was also noticed that people are feeling happy that the projects are not only fulfilled their immediate requirement but also change their outlook on life.

The finance has an important role in decision making. The study shows that cost-benefit analysis by the community play a role in making decision. The community was concerned about the finance issue but as these projects were on their priority so the community was not rigid in this aspect.

To develop a proper congenial environment at the beginning and maintain the same for a longer period, the perceived fairness has an important role in maintaining sustainability for a longer period. The community fairness concept was tested from various angles to understand the trust they have on the other agency and among themselves. It was found from data and during discussion with the community that they were very much satisfied with the implementing process of project.

The another important objective of the study was to understand that how the community as a whole are ready to take a risk in investment on development issues which may or may not change their lives over a period of time. In the field study, issue was raised in both individual meeting and community discussion to understand their opinion on this important decision

making factor. It is found that taking risk of any venture at an individual level may be hindered based on the expected outcome and expenditure but when the community is involved and the project will beneficial for the community, the issue of taking risk on investment is not a factor at all.

In the society other than social issues many things in the community are working behind the scene. So one should very much sincere to understand before planning & designing the social development project , the dynamics of the society on caste, culture and power equitation etc. It has given an enough in-sight about the society and played a crucial role in developing social

capital which is important to the project for the future. The study shows that the implementing agency have given enough time o the community and make it open to all for participation and valuable comments. In the system not a single community

*"Our village is better than the town. We have 24*7 piped water supplies to all families, without exception. Every family has their own toilet and bathing room as well. When we seek marriage alliances, our daughters ask us – 'would there be similar facilities as well?'"* Lalita Malik of Tamana village in Berhampur District excitedly shared this, when asked what changes they see in their lives from the "Water & Sanitation" project.

"Now, I get more time to take care of my children. I do not have to go and fetch water and wash clothes. I use the toilet and bathing rooms with total privacy. This, now, is very important to me."

(Ms. Hamida – woman in Churu village, Rajasthan shared her opinion about the benefits of the "Water & Sanitation" Project)

members raised any question on issues linked with omission of the members from the community for his/her social position. It is an interesting findings from the field study that by way of developing social capital the organizers were generous for the community members those who are generally treated badly by other community members. All these issues are creating conducive atmosphere to follow democratic principles and ensured individual rights and values in the system. It is the ultimate which will give the project stability and sustainable future development.

RECOMMENDATION

The multi-dimensional attributes of sustainability from the study findings implies that to enhance project sustainability, a rigorous sustainability analysis is needed at the time of formulation of a project or a program. It is expected that such an analysis at the design stage of a project is very much helpful to identify & incorporate the elements of sustainability to the project design. Sustainability analysis is the identification and analysis of degree of presence or absence of the factors that are likely to impact, either positively or negatively on the prospects of sustained delivery of project benefits. The sustainability analysis is to be followed by development of a sustainability strategy, so as to ensure that all sustainability enhancing elements are incorporated right at the design stage of a project. The sustainability strategy is a follow up activity of sustainability analysis and is expected to indicate the way various elements of sustainability are to be identified, assessed and incorporated into a project or a program, right at the design stage. The strategy is expected to specify various complements/constraints to sustainability and make provisions for their incorporation/tackling during: (i) formulation/design; (ii) implementation, and (iii) operation and maintenance stages of a project.

The study result shows weakening of any one of these has the potential to endanger the sustainability of the entire project, in the long run. In development projects, the issue linked with sustainability is crucial and should be made right at the planning stage. This will then help incorporating those elements that are relevant for 'sustainability'. The core indicators that

contribute to sustainability vary from sector to sector. For the economic sector projects, the core indicator will be economic and financial returns, whereas, the main indicator for social sector projects will be the extent and degree to which the delivery of goods and services, have been continued and the proportion of target area population that continue to receive the benefits from project activities.

There are several issues linked with the project sustainability. Depending on the nature of a project, each of these issues has the capacity to influence project sustainability in one or other way. The major important issues to maintain the sustainability are:

- ❖ Continued community participation
- ❖ Equitable sharing and distribution of project benefits
- ❖ Continued flow of net benefits
- ❖ Institutional stability
- ❖ Continued operation and maintenance of project facilities
- ❖ Maintenance of environmental stability –

So at the time of designing of a project a number of analysis, such as economic and financial analysis; social analysis etc are important and should be undertaken to ensure incorporation of sustainability enhancement inputs during the preparation and the design stage of a project. These analyses include the following:

- ❖ Relevancy
- ❖ Acceptability
- ❖ Economic and Financial Viability
- ❖ Environmental Sustainability
- ❖ Implementation and Monitoring Strategy
- ❖ Post-implementation operation and maintenance

Quite often, it is seen that when a project is taken up without due regard to various priorities set by the government, its ability to attract required support from various parties and its capacity to operate in a conducive environment, gets severely restricted. So 'Relevancy' review is expected to help analyzing these issues and assess the relationships between the proposed actions and their consistency with different priorities that have been set by the government.

The low level of acceptability by anyone or more of this stake holder has the risk of compromising long term sustainability of a project.

The project output to be of benefits for both to the community as well as the economy. In some cases, the project induced output and services may not reflect the natural project cost and nor the capacity of the community to pay the price which may mean that the project will not provide benefit direct to the community & incur economic losses.

Every development project has induced environmental impacts - both positive and negative. If negative impacts are foreseen and no mitigation measures are planned then ultimately the project may yield benefits at a reduced rate and depending on the extent of environmental costs.

Quite often weak management and inadequate monitoring provisions contribute to implementation problems which than weakens the project sustainability. The implementation and monitoring strategy should well defined implementation plan with clearly defined functions, responsibilities and have necessary provisions been made thereof.

It was found that quite often projects tend to encounter sustainability problems due to weak or inadequate operation and maintenance support. The Post implementation operation and maintenance (O&M) management support (either by implementing agency or community or both) required after implementation of a project.

It is, therefore, important that the project planner becomes aware of these elements and develops a strategy for enhancing sustainability.

The certain specific recommendations for the implementing agency arising out of the study reports which will prove to be effective & sustainable for the development project/s implementing at the community level are as follows:

- ❖ To achieve the objectives of development with sustainability impact that every attempt of economic development should be coupled

with the appropriate social and cultural change for generating broad based people oriented development policies and efficient practices.

- ❖ To make the development program success and make it sustainable, the community participation is essential at every stage from decision making, planning and implementation.
- ❖ To start with project planning phase to implementation, participation and control the management aspects are involved at every stage and judicious application of management principle in every stage will make the program affordable, reliable & sustainable and dividend oriented.
- ❖ The project implementing agencies should developed the vision and transferred the same to the community that the project outcome will not only provide long term benefits to the community rather it will make the community self reliant.
- ❖ The program will be result oriented and sustainable in the community if benefits arising out of the project should be shared in equitable manner to the stake holder especially the community. The development process should help to realize every community member that the fruits of the development have not only fulfilled their demand but at the same time changed their life towards quality.
- ❖ The social development project implementing authority should be given more emphasis to built social capital in the community & make the approach more humane along with physical capital to make the program sustainable.
- ❖ The decision on implementing development project/s at the community level should be based on community centric and demand driven. The community needs to given special priority for selection of the project and
- ❖ To uphold the democratic values at every stage from project initiation to final stage of implementation to make the project outcome more reliable and sustainable.

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Chattopadhyay

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