

Participatory Development and its Impact on Poverty, Vulnerability and Social Exclusion in Baluchistan

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Abstract

This paper evaluates the impacts of Baluchistan Area development program in terms of reduction of rural poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion in the selected regions of Baluchistan (Pakistan). Using the participatory approach, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected by impact surveys. Then they were categorized and analyzed by applying descriptive ordinal scale technique in such a way as to reach the distributional impact. The key findings confirm durability and relevancy of some interventions for effective reducing of poverty; vulnerability and social exclusion but some were found less effective in the context of study. Basic physical infrastructure in social sector such as water supplies, dams, water channels were found more productive putting the positive effect on the well-being of beneficiaries. Positive linkage in the reduction of poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion was found with different degrees of impact on different segments of population. Finally, the study concludes program's overall temporary positive impact on above three correlated concepts of poverty. But has found it insignificant for durable development as such suggests measures to strengthen the impact of certain interventions by getting them more innovative through strong and viable community organizations.

Key Words: Cross-sectoral interventions, Participatory approach, Social exclusion, Vulnerability

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Introduction

There is a growing consensus that rural community based development projects are more effective in creating physical, financial, human and social capital assets than government projects as the development interventions under participatory approach are multi -sectoral involving the different stakeholders in their delivery and increasing their access to development of assets (IFAD, 2001). The recent studies have confirmed the contribution of participatory development in reducing poverty including vulnerability and social exclusion. SenAmarta, 1998 explored the theoretical links as poorer of the poorest, when get the opportunity to participate in the process through their own indigenous grass root organization have developed social capital and, therefore, have reduced poverty ,vulnerability and social exclusion. Similarly, the importance of social capital in project success has also been highlighted in the studies of World Bank (World Development Report, 1999/2000). Developing social capital through mobilization of poorer of the poorest gets them powerful against the dominant class, which in turn promoted the mutual trust and confidence that is the foundation of social inclusion process (Dongier and others 2003).

Realizing the importance of participatory development especially for poverty alleviation, the provincial government of Baluchistan with the collaboration of foreign development agencies adopted it as an institutional approach to combat the poverty at the gross root level. Since then a number of foreign funded participatory development projects both with and without government partnership have been implemented under the guidance of Baluchistan Poverty Alleviation Strategy (BPAS, 1999). In the former case, the role of Pakistan poverty alleviation Fund (PPAF) is important as she has been supporting the partner organizations (NGOs, CBOs) with financial support for poverty alleviation since (2000). However, it is beyond the scope of study to evaluate their performance. As such the study is limited only to the latter case. Some worth mentioning major projects under the collaborative system (Government, Community, foreign development agencies) implemented include; Baluchistan Community Irrigation and

Agriculture Project BCIAP. The Pat Feeder Command Area Development Project (PFCADP). Currently, its increasing importance is even more evident from the report of PSDP analysis (2015-2016), showing the increasing number as eighteen foreign funded participatory projects in different development sectors are in the process of implementation. The increasing trend towards participatory approach is the reflection of positive policy response and is likely to be sustained and boosted as it has become the top priority area of development agencies.

The picture emerging from the regional documentary evidence based upon above projects, however, shows contrasting results. Participatory development has experienced positive outcome in terms of physical infrastructure and therefore, has resulted in output development but has failed to effectively reduce poverty in the province on sustainable basis partly because of irrelevancy of packages (Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2003). Moreover the approach being slow in creating and expanding assets especially for the poorest of poor is criticized as is evident from the experiences of Participatory Development Projects especially completed during (2002, 12) in the province. The experience also suggests that the institutions created for some specific purpose by community driven development projects were not sustainable after the completion of projects therefore, the received benefits, in most cases, proved to be bubble up with the negative implications for poverty alleviation (Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund -Baluchistan strategy,2013).

In view of the above, the need arises to explore and evaluate the impact of multi-sectoral interventions on the important indicators of wellbeing i.e. poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. The Baluchistan Area Development Program, being the largest poverty alleviation initiative, is taken as a case study. The program, covering three major regions of province Quetta, Khuzdar and Lorelei, was completed in 2012 with major policy and research implications.

Objectives of the Study

The overall purpose of study is to assess the impact of program on poverty reduction through participatory method. The specific objectives include the followings:

- a) To assess the poverty reducing impact of program on different classes of society
- b) To identify the sources of vulnerability
- c) To assess the effectiveness of program packages on vulnerability reduction
- d) To assess the impact of interventions on social exclusion
- e) To suggest the ways for durable poverty reduction.

Organization of the Study

The paper is broadly organized within the following logical framework that poverty including vulnerability and social exclusion alleviation is multidimensional and long term process requiring an integrated approach of development interventions. Following the introduction, research methodology is described in section 2, followed by empirical results covering the main poverty related findings of the Baseline survey on Pre implementation scenario, the distributional impacts of cross-sector intervention on poverty, vulnerability, social exclusion. In section 4, the key findings and their implications for long term poverty reduction strategy will be drawn. Finally, section 5 presents the concluding remarks covering findings and their policy implications.

Figure: 1.

Indicators %Change	P ₀	P ₁	P ₂	P ₃	P ₄	P ₅
<i>Agriculture</i>						
Area under Cultivation	-2	1	2	4	5	15
Livestock	2	3	5	7	6	7
Crop Yield	2	2	3	3	7	11
Land Ownership	-3	0	1	1	2	5
<i>Assets</i>						
Household Assets	3	3	5	4	6	9
Production Assets	4	5	3	2	4	10
Combined Assets	2	4	3	5	5	7
Water Availability	6	4	4	7	4	3
Female Skills Set	5	6	6	4	2	2

Source: *The impact survey results 2012.*

Causes of Vulnerability

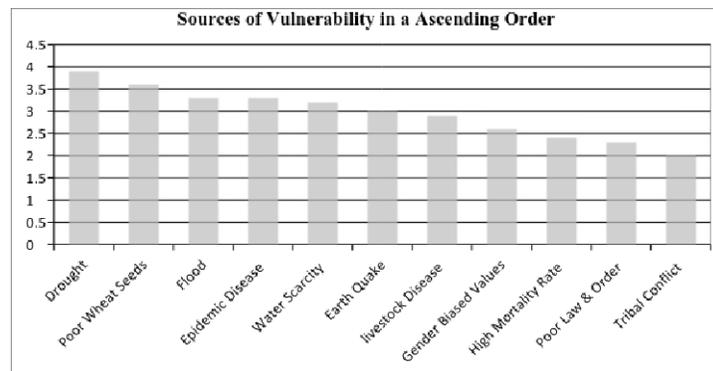
Vulnerability is a dynamic concept referring to negative outcomes on the wellbeing of individual coming mainly from economic and financial shocks. The World Bank (2002) explains it as the likelihood of negative income shock coming from social disintegration, violence at the family as well as at society level, and also arising from fluctuations in the micro and macroeconomic environment. Using participatory approach, the Community organizations were asked to identify and prioritize the determinants of vulnerability. Since vulnerability is difficult to measure, it was therefore, defined as the probability of falling into poverty tomorrow.

Relative factors responsible for vulnerability as per perceptions of community organizations are presented in the figure (2). Ranking wise it ranges from 1 to 5, one is the least important and five is the most important factor. The tribal conflict, poor law and order situation, high mortality rate falls in the first quartile implying that they are the least important factors constituting the vulnerability of the area followed by gender

biased social and cultural values, outbreak of livestock diseases, earthquake lying in the second quartile. Similarly, water scarcity, epidemic diseases and flood are the next important factors responsible for vulnerability and lastly the poor quality of wheat seeds and drought were ranked as the most important sources of vulnerability. The identified causes of vulnerability were found consistent and relevant. The poor law and order has intrinsic value for the poor should have been identified as the most important factor but probably was not identified as it does not come under the domain of project. Area due to its geographical location and social, cultural factors have been under the threat of both type of vulnerability.

The World Bank report (2000-2001) highlights the importance of identifying the sources of vulnerability for preventing them but at the same time also points out it as being straightforward as the exogenous factors like macroeconomic shock can have a similar effect on household income. Therefore, one of the components of survey was designed to identify the sources of vulnerability by the community themselves as they know better with their indigenous knowledge and can be used for planning to handle the issue of vulnerability of beneficiaries to economic and financial shocks in future. The sources of vulnerability, from the perspectives of community, are summarized in the summary statistics table given below in(Appendix)reflecting the divergent views on the sources of vulnerability in the study area

Figure: 2.



Source: Author's calculation from impact study 2012

Vulnerability Initiatives and their Impact

Different vulnerability coping strategies have been suggested in the development studies (Villanger, Espen, 2003). From asset accumulation through saving, micro credit and social capital to income diversification towards informal risk sharing arrangements are generally recommended to evade vulnerability. While examining the effectiveness of initiatives for reducing vulnerability of the beneficiaries, the study found that multi sectoral interventions such as CO savings, construction of lined water storage reservoirs, irrigation channels, and introduction of high efficiency irrigation systems have reduced the overall social and economic vulnerability. Under these interventions, the exposure of people to risks especially drought has been reduced confirming the findings of study (Balisaca and Pernia, 2002)

Comparing the strength of interventions, the study found the distribution of goats and poultry Birds as the most effective one for reducing the level of vulnerability by 48% as it directly contributed to income of poor women suggesting more interventions related to livestock sector which is also culturally accepted in the tribal society. TB training/ kits and new enterprises were found the second major effective interventions, reducing mortality rate by 43%. Finally the micro loaning was found the least effective intervention therefore, suggesting new flexible strategy conforming the local socio economic environment.

Table: 2. The Overall assessment of effectiveness of interventions on reducing vulnerability

Interventions	Overall %
1 Goats and poultry birds distributions and Management skills training	48
2 Mortality rate reduction due toTBA training/kits	43
3 New Enterprises	43
4 Reduced grazing	39
5 Micro loaning by COs	34

Source: Calculated on the bases of Impact Survey, 2012.

Reducing Impact on Social Exclusion

The empirical results based on direct indicators confirm overall reduction in the social exclusion by mainstreaming poor households and rural women especially living in the remote study areas. Worth mentioning interventions related to social sector include ; providing clean drinking water therefore, reducing workload of women and children from the ordeal of fetching water from far off places, trainings of women in livestock and health, involving poorer of the poorest especially women in the decision making process, mainstreaming women by constituting one hundred and sixty (160) community organizations.

Assessing the impact from distributional perspective, the degree of social exclusion index was calculated by dividing into five classes S_0 to S_4 . The most socially excluded class, S_0 while, S_4 is the least socially excluded class. A decreasing gap among different classes of beneficiaries was found as is evident from (Table 3). These positive distributional changes can be mainly attributed to the focused and integrated interventions. The empirical results confirm reduction in the overall social exclusion by mainstreaming poor households and rural women especially living in the remote areas. The project has been beneficial to the higher socially excluded class as two percent change in their production assets not only has been the source of sustaining livelihood but also have increased their assets.

Assessing the above mentioned positive impact of program on poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion, it was found that the program benefited the poorer of the poorest less than the non-poor due to structural rigidities. From the sociological perspective, poverty is rooted in underlying structural inequities and deep deprivations suggesting to reform macro policy frameworks and distributional systems which is definitely beyond the mandate of micro project level Similarly it cannot be ruled out that the issue of exclusion is deeply seated in the rural area of province in general and in the study area particular due to existence of most backward physical infrastructure, sparsely

population and huge social gaps. Therefore, the impact of program on marginalized group especially women seems to have been shallow and temporary. Similarly, no plan was available to follow up the activities after the end of project women groups who are more fragile to sustain themselves as is evident from the experience of women empowerment under the similar project like pat feeder command area development project (PFCADP). Moreover, In view of the current poor situation of rainfall, the reemergence of drought has been occurred in some parts of the province. Therefore it can be reasonably assumed that poverty is likely to reproduce itself in the study area. Rather the macro level analysis of poverty at province level has confirmed its increasing level (Social Policy and Development Centre, 2013)

.Table: 3.Major interventions and their Social Exclusion Reducing Effects (% change)

Levels	Area Cultivation	Live stock	Crop Yield	Land Ownership	Household Assets	Production Assets	Combined Assets	Water Availability	Female Skills Set
S ₀	4	3	5	4	3	2	3	4	3
S ₁	3	5	4	3	2	1	2	2	2
S ₂	2	2	3	4	1	4	4	3	4
S ₃	2	2	4	3	2	3	4	4	2
S ₄	1	3	5	2	4	2	3	2	3

Source: Computed from the Survey Results, 2012.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

The above discussion clearly leads us to conclude that the above program has reduced poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion in the study area confirming their positive interrelationship. The degree of change, however, was found different on different groups due to a variety of reasons such as cultural, nature of asset, scattered and sparsely population, low level of social capital, empowerment, participation and poor security. Agricultural interventions were found more favorable to the large farmers. The other non-agricultural interventions such as new enterprises and micro credit were also found effective towards reducing vulnerability. More specifically, basic physical infrastructure in social sector such as water supplies, water channels were found effective in the enhancing of overall well-being of poor people suggesting them to be expanded and replicated in the coming rural development program.

Although the study concludes program's temporary positive impact on poverty alleviation, it was found insufficient for durable solution to the vulnerability and social exclusion due to prevalent huge social gap and structural poverty. Moreover, one time intervention cannot make any significant dent in deep rooted chronic poverty therefore, the study suggests continuing the efforts through indigenous sustainable institutions. In addition, the program packages must be more relevant and should be selected on the bases of elaborate analysis of poverty in such a way as to improve the resilience of community for future sustainable development. Finally the findings of study can be used for future research. As the study was based on cross sectional data, therefore, it cannot explain the true changes in the dynamics of poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion; therefore, the future study must be based on longitudinal surveys.

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