

RURAL DEVELOPMENT; AN ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH IN NWFP (A CASE STUDY OF ATTITUDE OF PEOPLE TOWARDS "SRSC" IN DISTRICT CHARSADDA)

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ABSTRACT

Participation is considered as a key to success in developmental activities. Participatory approach has proved its worth in many developing countries including Pakistan. The approach when was applied in NWFP the results were not so encouraging. The paper in hand assesses the application of Participatory approach in a typical district of Charsadda, where the developmental activities were under taken by Sarhad Rural Development Corporation (SRSC). Findings shows that in Charsadda as a result of half truth propaganda of religious and rich people (Khans) the rural population was not enthusiastic about developing partnership with SRSC, Still the beneficial policies of SRSC has established a good will in the community.

INTRODUCTION

Rural development is the heart of economic development of a country like Pakistan. The World Bank views rural development as "a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people--the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in rural areas. The group includes small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless." (World Bank,1983) The rural development program combines the objectives of increased productivity, Employment opportunities and income distribution for the socio economic uplift of the rural masses (Saeed, 1995) The World Development Report 1990 applies this universal phenomena to Pakistan, "In Agrarian societies such as Pakistan, the expansion of Agriculture is the driving force behind rural development, which in turn, lays the foundation for broadly based poverty reducing growth. Indeed, rural population represents more than two thirds of total population, and is thought to be more actively stricken by poverty than urban population. Agriculture is still a key sector in Pakistan; poverty assessment could not but tackle what can be perceived to be at the core of the relationship between economic growth and poverty alleviation in Pakistan". (Valerie and Ecole, 1995)

But unfortunately Pakistan like other developing countries has not successful in reducing rural poverty. The underlying

reasons includes: Top down planning, emphasis on growth with the assumption that increased income will automatically trickle down to the poorer strata of the population and urban / industrial biases of the public policy makers.

The failure of the past development strategies ultimately convinced scholars that:

- Rural development has to play a dominant role in the over all development of the agrarian economies.
- Secular economic growth without institutional reforms to offset its negative fallout creates more problems than resolving it.
- Development efforts without the active participation of all the stakeholders tend to be inequitable and therefore unsustainable. (Zaman ,2002)

The recent past has observed wide spread acceptance of participatory development¹ approach throughout the developing countries. The new paradigm is largely supported by donor agencies² and some how accommodated by the national governments as a critical and pragmatic consideration.

¹ Participatory development, according to the World Bank, "is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them (The World Bank, 2000).

² The World Bank, UNDP and their affiliated agencies have taken a number of initiative like, Commitment to the International development Goals, Poverty reduction and Growth Facility, support for Institutional reforms and Social development etc.