

Study of Role of Participatory Planning on Rural Poverty Alleviation (Lazur) A Qualitative Method

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

What's rural poverty, and why urban poverty was separated in study? It said the situation dominate the villages differentiate looking to rural poverty and deprivation. Review of the dominant patterns of rural poverty alleviation displays exogenous interventions. World experience shows that wherever the poor as the subject, not the object, participate in the development process, create growth, human development and equality there. But despite the obstacles, including shortcoming of knowledge resource, how is this possible? Villagers are well acquainted with their problems and even in many cases they get use to the problem and culture of poverty, according to Lewis, have created a special lifestyle themselves. Thus, in order to overcome these barriers, if there were catalyst conditions, funds should be provided with support and participation, the current situation can be improved. But what are the facilitating conditions? Approaches in which participatory strategies are suggested, people are means and goal of development. Recently emphasized the active participation of villagers achieve through rural communities that their primary goal is pursuing and materializing of economic or social objectives. So, this article searches the role of villagers' participation on rural poverty alleviation: this issue has the proponents and

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opponents and there is no straight answer for it. Opponents argue that participatory action spends much money and time, about poverty is irrelevant and luxury, is a destabilizing force in the social and political, is ideological rather than actual, and gets authorities shirk their duties toward their responsibility. Proponents believe that through participation we can make better use of the external costs, and they enumerate other virtues of participation: more effectiveness, ability to increase coverage of plans, more and better identification of target groups and their willingness to maintain the momentum of activities and to provide more opportunities for women benefits.

Despite prevailing centralization of rural development programs in Iran, there are projects that the experts tried to intervene stakeholders to fulfill all or most of the project, including the Hableh-rud National Project. This project has sought to engage local participation and maximize communities' interventions in planning and implementation of natural resource conservation projects. The main objective of the project is natural resources conservation through rural poverty alleviation and reducing the deleterious effects of unstable economic of region on resources, thus, this project seems suitable for this research. Between pilot projects in villages, Lazur was selected; the village was a pilot of Watershed Sub-project of Hableh-rud National Project. In the pilot villages, NGOs and CBOs formed to handle and monitor designing and implementing of projects.

Methodology

Method is study of library documents. Researcher was consulted by the experts in the Forest, Range and Watershed Management Organization, and Lazur village of Watershed Hablehrud Project was selected for field research. Documents of Project Office and the village were studied to accommodate local data obtained from field method to the documents.

The following components of Human Well-being Index in the evaluation of the test can be considered: nutrition, clothing, shelter and housing, employment, health,

physical environment, social environment, education, social security, human freedom, social opportunities and participation activities.

The index seems to be good in some aspects: it includes all monetary and non-monetary approaches; it is near to the situation of the village (the case study); it seems to be influenced directly or indirectly by the general goals of participatory projects; and the rural mentality can assess project's impact on the index.

Participation is a quality issue and it retrieved from socio-economic realities of society, so that method in this study was qualitative. Local key informants' interview is a core rapid appraisal method. The 12 informants were interviewed. Interview questionnaire guide was used in interviews. The snowball technique was used to select some local informants. All interviewees were selected from Lazur people: group 1: trained local facilitators (known as Development Contributors); Group 2: members of "Central Nucleus of Sustainable Development"; Group 3: local contractors, Group 4: members of "Coordinating Council" and Group 5: internal rural managers including members of the village council or "Dehyar" (like mayor in cities) were selected.

I lived in Lazour one month, recorded men and women's experiences, and observed their participatory projects. Then data was collected in MS-Word word processor, accorded with official documents of the project. Data was analyzed through content analysis method. This method regards to replicable (objective and systematic) and valid data. According the method, key informants' sentences were spread in components of Human Well-being Index delivered in a frequency table.

Discussion and Conclusion

Since the majority of rural projects have monetary and non-participatory approach to poverty reduction and the projects are seldom success to access to "community level", hence Lazur was chosen for case study because this project had the possible ways to implement participatory rural planning.

Lazur informants (12 people) responded to the semi-structured questionnaire and

content analysis of interviews sentences showed the following results:

- Reducing spiritual poverty through increased self-confidence and self-reliance in villagers, motivation, entrepreneurship and optimal utilization of human and natural resources, increasing the level of knowledge and information resources, and more attention to cultural needs;
- Reducing the risk of chronic and acute poverty and increasing economic investment security and social security as a result of watershed projects and reducing the risks of natural hazards, particularly floods;
- Improving rural livelihoods a result of revenue relative increasing through direct and indirect, short and long term employment, Hablehrud project and medicinal plants project (the Project is defined by the rural women),
- Promoting entrepreneurial spirit and "encouragement" among the villagers, and preparing the basis for employment and development a result of rural participatory and collaborative projects;
- Sustainability, efficiency and coverage of participatory projects in targeting rural mass poverty are more successful than top-down projects, non-participatory projects aimed at reducing rural poverty goals are gradually away though in appearance or in the initial steps of participatory projects go faster.

Keywords: Participatory Rural Poverty Alleviation, Human Well-being Index, Lazur.

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