

# **Devolution of Power and Poverty Alleviation: The Missing Link**

## **Learning from People Centered Development in Pakistan**

# Devolution and government managed services

- While the government has failed in providing basic services in low-income areas the informal and non-government sector has very successfully provided these services to residents of these areas on user fee basis.
- It relates to decision on location, design, and user fee for the provision of services.

# The New Paradigm

- Working within the system and living within the means
- Sociology, economy and technology of low income settlements
- emphasis on human and social capital rather than physical capital

# Sociology of the poor

- Poor people are illiterate but they are not irrational-they know what is in their best interest
- Poor people can count and compare even if they cannot read and write
- Poor people use and believe numbers for decision making if they trust them

# Economy of the poor

- Poor people are willing to pay for the benefits received-poor are not destitute
- By coming together in community organization they create economies of scale-and reduce administrative costs
- Poor people develop their facilities incrementally
- Affordable solutions emerge with elimination of middleman and inappropriate specifications and partnership with the government

# Technology of the poor

- Based on factor endowment of the poor-land and labour
- Operated and maintained by community professionals
- Use of local of materials

# From representation to participation

- COs officer bearers are not appointed by elections but selected by the whole CO by consensus, it leads to elimination of rival political groups.
- Pooling of resources by community leads to economies of scale
- Participatory working eliminates corruption and wastage

# From complexity to simplicity

- I) Simplifying and clarifying operational procedures to reduce delays and possibilities for receiving kickbacks.
- ii) Decentralization of planning and execution and institutionalizing local responsibility for quick and community oriented development work.



# From complexity to simplicity

- iii) Checks on local decision makers are created by community participation in designing and financing development programmes. Each community is treated as a separate community, so there are no fixed standards and specifications to be followed. In addition local officials are required to go to the people and do not ask them to visit their offices.

# From complexity to simplicity

- iv) Explicit job responsibilities for the officials and professionals so that no one can hide behind the structural ambiguities.
- v) Reducing costs by finding low cost solutions and reducing overheads
- vi) Charging community members for the services provided.
- vii) Delivering services in the field.

# Missing Link: The People

- “we could not have done this work ourselves. When they saw outside, they would ask us to do it for them. If I went to them and said, ‘you people make the lane. They would ask, ‘what are you here for?. What do you have?. Their first question was always, ‘what have you come to give us/. However, they could not ask their own man [the activist] what he had come to give them”[1].

[1] Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan Looking for the man, 1998, pp.22, NRSP