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Doing Development in Armed Conflict Zones: The Practitioners' Voices from Balochistan–
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This research focuses on voices of development practitioners in implementation of development projects in conflict zones of Balochistan. For conducting this research, qualitative case-study approach was used. Four cases were selected for doing this study; two social sector projects were polio campaign in Balochistan focusing on districts of Quetta, Pishin, Killa-Abudllah and Khuzdar, and Balochistan Education Support Project (BESP) with selection of districts of Quetta, Khuzdar and Awaran. The remaining two infrastructure projects were Refugee Affected & Hosting Areas Project (RAHA) focusing on districts of Quetta and Chagai, and construction of Turbat- Buleda Road with concentration on Kech district. The tools used for data collection were structured observations and in-depth interviews.

Key Findings

1. The results of in-depth interviews of stakeholders of four projects show that practitioners faced challenges, they adopted strategies to deal with these challenges and same project faced multiple treatments in different areas of Balochistan due to customs and norms.
2. The results of the cases show that in conflict zones of Balochistan there are challenges of security problems, dominancy of local customs and religious thoughts, and scarcity of skilled labour for implementation of development projects.
3. Further, from findings it is shown that development practitioners adopted strategies of community based development, engagement with powerful actors, local approach and out of box solutions for implementation of development projects. Moreover, social and infrastructure sector projects are source of conflict in religiously dominated Pashtun and ethnically dominated Baloch areas of Balochistan respectively. Lastly, literature also may also be compared with findings of the research.

Policy Implications

1. It is recommended that first of all those schemes should be initiated which are needs of community. Further, needs are to be identified on priority basis by community members. When needs are identified then schemes should be designed accordingly. Otherwise, imposed schemes in any area might lead to increase intensity of conflict in the area. When projects are started with the consultation of community members, then implementation of projects will be easy. Further, those projects which are started on community identified needs, proved successful. These projects achieved their objectives and were beneficial for the community. Such projects will not clash with cultural interests of community. So, in conflict zones of Balochistan, community based projects are successful.
2. It should be seen whether project is in align with culture and custom of that society or otherwise. Project objectives and activities should not clash with norms of the society. Secondly, it is also assessed that project should not harm religious sentiments of any religion, sect or cast, because religion is dominant in conflict zones of Balochistan. Thirdly, misperceptions within society regarding project should be removed from the mind of people through awareness campaigns. Lastly, it is to be ensured that project should find skilled staff for execution of the project because without it performance will be nil. Skilled labour may be found for projects in conflict zones by providing security and attractive pay packages.
3. For conducting development activities in conflict zones of Balochistan, local approach of development should be followed. It means that first of all, local people should be hired for performing project tasks because they are aware of local environment. Secondly, they will be helpful in tackling local issues during implementation phase. Thirdly, it will prove a tool for good perception of projects within society. Moreover, in localized development, project administration can delegate some of their tasks to local organization. Through this way project implementation will be easy and increase employment ratio in community.