

Community Development Perspective in the Local Government System of District Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract

The present research study analyzes the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act, 2013 and finds out the role of elected leaders in community development. The quantitative research design employs a simple random sampling technique. The researchers also interviewed 300 respondents from district Mardan. The statistical results show that elected leaders are performing effective role in infrastructure development i.e. schools, basic health units, irrigation channels, roads and safety walls as well as in dispute resolution and generating revenue for the local government. The present research study recommends timely release of the annual development budget to elected leaders for addressing the local citizen needs.

Key Words: Local Government, Community, Development, Leaders, Citizens

Introduction

In developing countries local government system is playing its important role in the community development. The local government system not only make sure the representation of local citizens as elected leaders rather they are the great source to provide social services to the citizens at gross root level (Sellers 2007, Anjum 2001). According to the Pakistani constitution clause (i) of the Article 37 the government is required to decentralize the government administration for the public interest. Similarly, according to 140A article of the constitution the local government system establishment and devaluate power to elected leaders is the responsibility of the state (Cheema 2006, Bardhan 2006). For the purpose a Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act-2013 (KPLGA-2013) is introduced and implemented in the province (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2013). In this act the local government system is divided into three-tiered system of government i.e. village/neighborhood council, tehsil and district council. In the KPLGA-2013

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every village and neighborhood council is divided on the basis of population range 2,000 to 10,000 as per the calculation of last officially published population statistics. In the act tehsils and districts areas are declared and notified on official Gazette as per W.P.Act XVII of 1967. The executive authority of the district government shall be called District Nazim (DN). The DN shall be responsible for running all the district government business accordance with the current LGA-2013 and other laws being into force at the time. The DN is assigned some functions and powers accordance with the act i.e. provision of developmental and leadership vision to the district government, development of strategies and timeframe for accomplishment of district government goals, maintaining administrative and financial functions of the district council, proposal presentation to the council, sharing of progress report, monitoring of tehsil, village and neighborhood councils functions in their areas and representation of district council in civic ceremonial activities. Beside the DN individual power and functions the District Council has assigned some functions and powers in the KPLGA-2013 i.e. approval of by-laws for smooth functioning of the departments devaluated to district government, approval of taxes, approval of long and short term developmental plans and budget for the district, elect standing, finance, accounting, conduct of business, assurances and code of conduct committees to dealt with various matters related to district government in their respective districts. Similarly, the council is responsible for review of reports and recommendations to concern committee for necessary process when and where it is required.

The second tier of the KPLGA-2013 is called tehsil council. The executive authority of the tehsil council is called Tehsil Nazim (TN). Accordance to the act TN assigned some legal power and functions, i.e. provision of developmental and leadership vision to the tehsil government, development of strategies and timeframe for accomplishment of tehsil government goals, maintaining administrative and financial functions of the tehsil council, proposal presentation to the council, sharing of progress report, monitoring of village and neighborhood councils functions in their areas and representation of tehsil council in civic ceremonial activities. Beside the TN power and functions the tehsil council shall also exercise some power and perform functions within areas under his jurisdiction i.e. approval of taxes, fines, penalties, by-laws for social and municipal services, annual tehsil wise budget formulation, short- and long-term developmental plan and land use in the area of tehsil administration. The tehsil council is responsible for elect standing, finance, accounting, conduct of business, assurances and code of conduct committees to dealt with various matters related to tehsil government in their area. In the gross root level one of the important tiers of local government system is called village or neighborhood council. The executive authority of village or neighborhood shall be called village council nazim or neighborhood council nazim. Like the DN and TN there are some functions and powers assigned

to nazim in the third tier at gross root level i.e. provide leadership to the council in development and preparation of budget, chair dispute resolution in their areas and report various matters to tehisl and district council. Beside the nazim individual power and functions the village or and neighborhood Council has assigned some functions and powers in the LGA-2013 i.e. monitoring and supervision of all government departments in their geographical area. The council has power to monitor, inquire any matter related to above mentioned departments and report to tehsil and district government. The council is mainly responsible for dispute settlement, infrastructure development, child birth registration, death registration, monitoring of development work, trees plantation, organize and manage sport and cultural activities, develop and approve budget for the council and assessment of tehsil and district government in various activities planned and held in the area of the council. Under the KPLGA-2013 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after ten years the local government elections are held on May 30th, 2015. In local elections the contesting candidates were total 84,420. The citizens are the main beneficiary of local government system in the province. The present research study mainly focused on two objectives i.e. to systematically review the existing KPLGA-2013 and find out the role of local elected leaders in community development perspective.

Methods

The researchers used quantitative research design with application of simple random (Collins, 2010; Kothari, 2004) to collect data through interview schedule (Panter, 2011; Kelley, 2003) from 300 respondents including both the citizens and local elected leaders in District Mardan. The researchers divided district into three Tehsils namely; *Mardan*, *Katlang* and *Takhat Bai*. Further the researchers randomly selected two Union Councils (UCs) from each tehsil and sample population 300 is equally divided into six UCs.

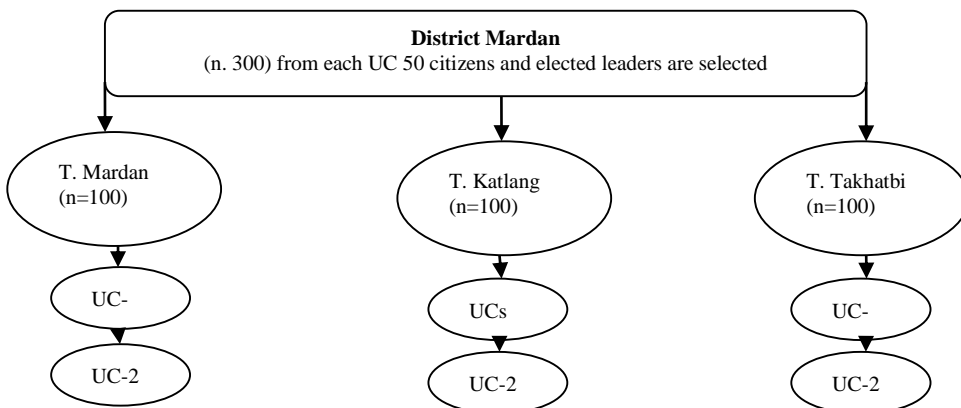


Figure 1: Sample Selection

Results

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis contains the various variables including age of the respondent, marital status of respondents, their qualification and residence area in the study setting.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	(%)
Age		
18-27 years	89	30.0
28-37 years	75	25.0
38-47 years	93	31.0
48-57 years and above	43	14.0
Marital Status		
Married	249	83.0
Unmarried/Widow/Separated	51	17.0
Education		
Primary or Below	45	15.0
Middle	30	10.0
High	153	51.0
Higher Secondary and above education	72	24.0
Area of Residence		
Urban	64	21.0
Rural	236	79.0

The above table shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Among the respondents 31% are 38-47 years old, similarly, 30% are in the age category of 18-27 years, one forth 25 percent respondents are in the age category of 28-37 years and the remaining respondents are in the age category of 48 years and above. Majority 83% respondents are married while the remaining 17% are unmarried respondents. It is interesting to state that majority 51% respondents having high education level, and nearly one forth 24% respondents are higher secondary and above level of education. 15% having below primary education while 10% having middle level of education in the study area. A majority 79% respondents permanently reside in rural setting while the remaining 21% are living in urban setting.

Regression Analysis

The regression analysis showed the relationships between local government system and community development perspective. In regression analysis the local government system is measured through gross root level representation, transparent system, accountable to citizens, citizen's equal political opportunities and community development perspective is measured i.e. local leaders role in dispute resolution, infrastructure development, education and health sector uplift and other social services provision to local citizens at door step.

Table 2. Regression Results of Local Government System and Community Development Perspective

Community Development Perspective	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	1.410	.203		5.360	.289
Budget allocation	.050	.023	.095	1.125	.238
Dispute Resolution	-.072	.021	-.189	-2.565	.004
Infrastructure Construction	-.165	.076	-.211	-2.660	.003
Political interference	.058	.123	.026	.446	.675
Birth & Death Registration	.145	.057	.111	2.219	.015
Water & Sanitation	-.135	.065	-.129	-2.469	.005
Health & Education	.127	.046	.132	2.521	.013

The regression results shows in the above table. The community development perspective is dependent study variable i.e. local leader's role in dispute resolution, infrastructure development, education and health sector uplift and other social services provision to local citizens at door step. The independent variable is new local government system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The independent variable is measured i.e. gross root level representation, transparent system, accountable to citizens, citizen's equal political opportunities.

The regression results show the role of elected leaders in dispute resolution significant (.004) and the negative β value is (-2.565) which indicate that when local leaders are not involved in dispute resolution the dispute are increased in community. This shows that in new local government system the involvement of local leaders in community dispute resolution is positively associated with peace in society. The regression results show the role of elected leaders in infrastructure development in the study area is significant and β value is negative which indicate that in the local government system community perceived the positive role of elected leaders in infrastructure development. The regression results show the

elected leaders role in birth and death registration is at P-value (.015) and positive β value (2.219) which indicates that there is no role of elected leaders in birth and death registration. The statistics shows no relationship because the community is not going for birth and death registration toward their local leaders. Community is unaware about the importance of registration and they only make registration when they required for a particular purpose. The regression results show the role of elected leaders in provision of water and sanitation services to local community significant level is (.005) and the negative β value (-2.469). The results show that in the local government system in the province leaders are responsible for provision of social services to their respective communities in the local area. The regression results show the role of elected leaders in health and education facilities provision in the study area. The education and health facilities provision P-value is (.013) while the β value is (2.521) which indicate that like other social services the elected leaders are providing and facilitating the local community in provision of education and health facilities to the community. The remaining regression results i.e. budget allocation and political interference are found with no relationship.

Discussion and Conclusion

The local government system in developing countries decentralized the power to local citizens at gross root level with the assumption that they understand the citizens needs and become the voice of the citizens at door step (Faguet 2014; O'Neill 2003). The local government plays several roles for community development and uplift of the local people. Many research findings stated that local governments in developing countries are integrating social services particularly in education, health and infrastructure development (Jabeen 2009; Mohmand 2008). The local government system creating awareness among the local citizens and providing social services and uplift of citizens. The local government system identifying and collecting the property taxes which are utilized in the same community for their development. The local government system playing its bridging role between the citizens and government officials for highlighting the problems facing by local community and suggesting the recommendations for addressing these problems. Researches indicated that local government system is the only system to motivate local citizens for community development and trust building on government machinery (Khattak 2010, Devas 2003). One of the key developmental functions performing the local government system is pavement of streets, roads, safety wall, irrigation channels and construction of other public places in their local community (Myerson 2014). Many research studies mentioned that local elected leaders are the key source to prevent citizens from disputes and they are the key actors to resolve the issues between disputed parties. Among the major functions performing local government system are i.e. installation and repair

of water supply schemes, construction of schools, basic health units, roads, streets and other public places (Walker 2013; Akramov 2008). One of the important roles assigned to local government is the birth and death registration in their community. The local citizens are provided opportunities to discuss their social issues with local leaders and suggest some remedies (Arif 2010; Douglas 2005). Research studies stated that local government system is raising the voice of the local citizens for fulfillment of their needs and demand. Conclusively, it is stated local government system is one of the gross root level tier of government which playing its important role in community development.

Limitation of the Study

The present research study is conducted only in one district in the province with only quantitative research design.

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