

A Comparative Study of Activities Conducted for Re-Strengthening of Community Based Organizations in District Bagh, Ajk

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to investigate the conditions of community organizations before and after re-strengthening in district Bagh, AJ&K. A total of 89 respondents were randomly selected while one union council (Islam Nagar) was selected purposively out of which three villages i.e. Bhount, Karl Maldayalan and Karl Abbasi were also selected purposively. Study indicates that majority of the respondents were female. Most of the respondents joined COs in 2003 while all COs were re-strengthened in 2005. About 70% respondents stated that old COs had partial achievements of objectives while 92% attended the trainings arranged by AJKCDP. Savings increased after re-strengthening of COs. Similarly, 78% respondents were facilitated with the credit programme of AJKCDP. Majority of the sampled respondents utilized credit on livestock. Similarly, majority of the respondents were of the view that after re-strengthening the conditions like agriculture, income generating opportunities, skill development, self-help, and empowerment were much improved as compared to old COs. It is concluded that AJKCDP has brought positive change in livelihood development of rural people. Moreover, at village level local people are always facing many problems in credit provision and are more dependent on livestock and agriculture for their survival. Provision of services from the government sector is very poor. People are not aware to utilize their natural resources well. Therefore, it is highly recommended that institutional approach should be adopted which is very productive to help each other and to make contact with other government and non-government organizations. It is also recommended that an attempt should be made to maintain self-sustainability and motivating the people to work by themselves for improving their socio-economic condition in future. Trainings should be enhanced so that they become better source of income generating activities.

Introduction

Social Mobilization is the process of discussion, cooperation and concurrence to induce participation at various levels like natives, communities, and organizations etc. to recognize, tackle and work out plausible solution to a common problem. This process can act as a useful approach in generating an encouraging atmosphere which stands integral in attainment of a persistent behavioural shift which in turn will entice a community level contribution to achieve sustainability and self-sufficiency (UNICEF, 1997).

The advent of social mobilization in Pakistan dates back to the Comilla Project which commenced in 1959 by the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development under the auspices of Dr. Akhtar Hameed Khan. Later on, in 1971 the same model was imitated by Shoab Sultan Khan in

Daudzai. The theoretical basis of both the Comilla and Daudzai models was the readiness of these communities to improve their own condition in collaboration with an activist and the government to assist the poor with existing resources. This was not possible because the poor could not help themselves till the time they were organized while the government was unable to reach out to this deprived populace within its current structure (Mahmood et al. 1992).

The IFAD (International fund for agricultural development) board approved the AJKCDP on 18th December 2003 and the IFAD loan became effective on 2nd September, 2004. The project concluded on 30th September 2011 and will be stopped by 31 March, 2012.

The project focuses upon consolidating, expanding and improving the well being of the rural poor in AJK by incorporating a gender sensitive, community based participatory planning, execution and monitoring method of rural development.(AJKCDP Progress Report, 2009).

This programme is based on participatory development approach. The CDP is mandated to help maintain the existing community organizations alongside encouraging the uncovered target areas to organize themselves. A total of 841 new organizations including 323 female organizations are working to assist these uncovered areas. They identify their needs, prioritize them and map out a village development plan. The prioritized needs are put forth to district program officer of CDP who in turn forwards them to the relevant departments. The relevant departments do the cost estimation of the scheme and re-submit to district program officer for presentation to the meeting of district coordination committee. This cash contribute is deposited in a dedicated separate account which is jointly operated by two nominees of the committee and respective social organizer of the programme. Rural economy largely depends on live stock through provision of milk and meat. Owing to the suitable climate and topography of AJK, animals of good breed with a capability to give high yields of milk are supplied to the farmers on a cost sharing basis. Poultry also plays an important role in enhancing the rural economy since it mainly involves women activity. Drinking water schemes have also been given due consideration in the programme (AJKCDP Progress Report, 2010).

Social mobilization is one of the fundamental ingredients of AJKCDP which aims at supporting rural men and women in their efforts to alleviate poverty. Community Organization provides an important platform for the people to participate actively in the management of local activities. AJKCDP social mobilization team urges upon villages for originating new COs and at the same time strengthen the organized COs for enhancing the human resource and capabilities of poor through need base capacity building activities. It supports the COs to generate capital through saving. The AJKCDP enhances COs need base skill through provision of training and extending small loans particularly to the developing women.

Some COs founded under the auspices of other NGOs had gone dormant but AJKCDP social mobilization team conducts meetings for their revival, holds training sessions with target group for economic empowerment of gender in the areas, chalks out methods of identification of inactive COs and aims at strengthening and sustaining the activation phase for appropriate length of time until the community matures to take the responsibility of running the CO by itself.

Objectives of study

1. To analyze the activities conducted before and after re-strengthening of COs in the study area.

Research Methodology

District Bagh constitutes the universe of study. Bagh district of AJK as reflected from its name (meaning garden) is greenest area of AJK. It has been Tehsil of Poonch till 1987. Area of Bagh is 1,368 sq km. According to 1998 census report Bagh had a population of 0.395 million, average household size was 7.4 per family. Majority 94% of population lives in rural areas. The working population of district is engaged in two major sectors i.e. agriculture\forestry and services\public administration. The study is limited to only one union council Islam Nagar where AJKCDP has implemented its project. The members of COs working with AJKCDP in Bagh, constitute the

population of this study. Keeping in view the time and financial constraints one union council (Islam Nagar) was selected purposively. Three villages named Bhount, Karl Maldayalan and Karl Abbasi were selected purposively. These villages were selected because these were easy to access; peoples were very responsive and were socially mobilized. From each village 15% respondents were selected randomly to meet the specified objectives.

Distribution of the sampled respondents in the study area @ 15% of the total population

Villages	No. of Cos	No. of members of COs	15% of the sampled members
Bhount	16	384	58
Karl Maldayalan	7	154	23
Karl Abbasi	2	52	8
Total	25	590	89

Data were obtained from primary and secondary sources. Secondary data refers to information gathered from already existing sources. It includes organization records, website, internet, journals, etc.

Data were collected through interview schedule from the members of community organizations. Data collected through interview schedule were analyzed by using computer software; Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. The results were presented in terms of counts and percentages.

Results and Discussions

The main objective of this study was to investigate the role of AJKCDP on social mobilization and conditions of COs before and after re-strengthening of COs. The data were collected through Interview schedule and 89 respondents were taken as sample size. Overall this chapter deals with the findings, results and discussions of the research carried out for study.

After Re-strengthening the work of COs

Table 1 shows that out of the total 89 respondents, 80% of the sampled respondents were of the view that COs after re-strengthen by AJKCDP has worked better than the COs formed by other NGO's. As, AJKCDP has not focused on single developmental aspect, rather it has covered many other aspects other than agriculture, as well. That was the main reason that every CO after re-strengthening, has worked better. Only 20% of the sampled respondents stated that the work done by COs after re-strengthening was the same as the old COs. All of COs were re-strengthened in 2005 in three villages. Because of the regular visits by social organizers and people's interest in developmental activities, results were much better after re-strengthening. Edward and Hulme, (1992) stated that Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are grass root organizations with wide socioeconomic objectives and are managed by the members of community itself.

Table 1 Distribution of the sampled respondents on the basis of work after Re-strengthening of COs

Village name	Work after re-strengthening						Total	Total %age
	Yes		No.		Better			
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age		
Bhont	09	10	-	-	49	55	58	65
Karl Maldayalan	07	08	-	-	16	18	23	26
Karl Abbasi	02	02	-	-	06	07	08	09
Total	18	20	-	-	71	80	89	100

Source: Field survey, 2011

Participation of members in training given by AJKCDP

Table 2 shows the sampled respondents response regarding training given by AJKCDP. Out of the total sampled respondents, 92 % of the sampled respondents reported that they have attended the trainings given by AJKCDP while 8% didn't attend any training because at the time of training they were not available and busy in other HH activities. This shows AJKCDP has given trainings to the community members and most of the people have attended. As trainings were designed to improve people skills, that is why people were interested and they attended trainings. The trainings which were given by AJKCDP were kitchen gardening, poultry management, skill development trainings, credit utilization trainings, de-worming of animals and sericulture. Most of the women were mainly interested in livestock and poultry management training. Skill development training includes tailoring; women after getting this training were able to share household expenses as they earned enough from tailoring. Gul (2001) reported that trainings established a close link between developmental skills and their ultimate use in self-employment and income generating activities. Therefore, trainings are very important.

Table 2 Distribution of the sampled respondents on the basis of participation of members in training given by AJKCDP

Village name	Participation in training				Total	Total %age
	Yes		No.			
	No.	% age	No.	% age		
Bhont	54	61	04	04	58	65
Karl Maldayalan	21	24	02	02	23	26
Karl Abbasi	06	07	02	02	08	09
Total	81	92	08	08	89	100

Source: Field survey, 2011

Credit Programme of AJKCDP

Table 3 shows the response of the sampled respondents towards the credit programme of AJKCDP. Table 4.15 shows that 78% of the sampled respondents said that they were facilitated with the credit programme of AJKCDP and 21% were not benefited with the credit programme of AJKCDP.

Table 3 Distribution of the sampled respondents on the basis of facilitation with the credit Programme of AJKCDP

Village name	Facilitated with AJKCDP Credit programme				Total	Total %age
	Yes		No			
	No.	% age	No.	% age		
Bhont	45	51	13	15	58	66
Karl Maldayalan	19	21	04	04	23	25
Karl Abbasi	06	06	02	02	08	09
Total	70	78	19	21	89	100

Source: Field survey, 2011

Utilization of credit among the sample respondents

Table 4 shows the utilization of credit given by AJKCDP. Majority (36%) sampled respondents utilize credit on livestock purchase. Only 28% reported that they utilized credit in

business. A small majority (15%) utilized credit on agricultural activities. As, 21% were not facilitated with credit therefore, they did not utilize it anywhere. Hashemi et al. (1996) found several uses of credit loans such as sericulture, poultry, livestock, fish and cow rearing, cultivation, paddy cultivation, house repairing, leasing and buying paddy lands, and buying rickshaws.

Table 4 Distribution of the sampled respondents regarding credit utilization

Utilization of credit	Village name						Total	Total %age
	Bhont		Karl Maldayalan		Karl Abbasi			
	No.	% age	No.	% age	No.	% age		
Nothing	13	15	04	04	02	02	19	21
Business	21	24	04	04	-	-	25	28
Livestock	18	20	08	09	06	07	32	36
Agriculture	06	07	07	08	-	-	13	15
Total	58	65	23	26	08	09	89	100

Source: Field survey, 2011

Income generation before and after re-strengthening of COs

Table 5 shows the condition of income generation before and after re-strengthening of COs. Out of the total 89 respondents, 69% reported that there were no income generation opportunities during old COs. While 31% stated that there were income generation opportunities but upto some extent. After re-strengthening, out of the total 89 respondents the 10% of the sampled respondents reported that there were no income generation opportunities after re-strengthening while 90% stated that income generation opportunities enhanced after re-strengthening, as most of the members have attended the trainings given by AJKCDP. It has given poultry hens to community members. About 40 hens were given to each deserving member. They told that because of selling the eggs of hens they earn to such extent that they can run their daily household expenses easily. Many of women were doing tailoring that was also good source of income for them. Some people sold agricultural products to the market. Some members who have done sericulture training also sold silk and earned from it. Now, they are able to generate income themselves by utilizing human and natural resources.

Table 5 Distribution of the sampled respondents on the basis of income generation before and after re-strengthening of COs

Village name	Condition before			Total	Condition after			Total
	Income generation				Income generations			
	Yes	No.	Partially		Yes	No.	Better	
Bhont	-	38 (43)	20 (22)	58 (65)	-	05 (6)	53 (60)	58 (65)
Karl Maldayalan	-	18 (20)	05 (6)	23 (26)	-	04 (4)	19 (21)	23 (26)
Karl Abbasi	-	05 (6)	03 (3)	08 (9)	-	-	08 (9)	08 (9)
Total	-	61 (69)	28 (31)	89(100)	-	09(10)	89(90)	89(100)

Source: Field survey, 2011

Skill development before and after re-strengthening of COs

Table 6 shows that out of the total 89 respondents, 86% of the sampled respondents did not experience any skill development while 14% had partial level of skill development during old CO's. After re-strengthening, 83% experienced skill development because of trainings given by AJKCDP. Rest, 17% did not experience any skill improvement after re-strengthening. Hartl (2009) observed that skill development, education and technical training are important for agricultural and rural employment. Mostly young people are prepared for work in the formal and informal sector in rural areas as they play a significant role in poverty reduction. The more refined the skills are in terms of human capital, and more better the trainings the higher the income and more improved the rural

Table 6 Distribution of the sampled respondents on the basis of skill development before and after re-strengthening of COs

Village name	Condition before			Total	Condition after			Total
	Skill development				Skill development			
	Yes	No.	Partially		Yes	No.	Better	
Bhont	-	51(57)	07 (8)	58 (65)	50(56)	08 (9)	-	58 (65)
Karl Maldayalan	-	18(20)	05 (6)	23 (26)	18(20)	05 (6)	-	23 (26)
Karl Abbasi	-	08 (9)	-	08 (9)	06 (7)	02 (2)	-	08 (9)
Total	-	77(86)	12 (14)	89(100)	74(83)	15(17)	-	89(100)

Source: Field survey, 2011

Saving before and after re-strengthening of COs

Table 7 shows details about savings were no savings during old COs. After re-strengthening every respondent do have some savings for hard time.

Table 7 Distribution of the sampled respondents on the basis of saving before and after re-strengthening of COs

Village name	Condition before			Total	Condition after			Total
	Savings				Savings			
	Yes	No.	Partially		Yes	No.	Better	
Bhont	-	58 (65)	-	58 (65)	58 (65)	-	-	58 (65)
KarlMaldayalan	-	23 (26)	-	23 (26)	23 (26)	-	-	23 (26)
Karl Abbasi	-	08 (9)	-	08 (9)	08 (9)	-	-	08 (9)
Total	-	89(100)	-	89(100)	89(100)	-	-	89(100)

Source: Field survey, 2011

Empowerment condition before and after re-strengthening of COs

Table 8 shows empowerment condition before and after re-strengthening of COs. Out of the total respondents, 75% of the sampled respondents stated there was no empowerment regarding decision making during old COs. While 25% reported partial empowerment during old COs. After re-strengthening, 19% of the sampled respondent's do not have empowerment while 72% reported better empowerment. This shows that empowerment was better after re-strengthening .Planning Commission, GOP (2005) stated that access to information, resources, and education; authority power and decision-making; and control over one's life is termed as an empowerment. Empowerment is the starting point for local development. World bank (2004) also stated that empowerment is the process of enhancing the real possibility that an individual or a group can make and express choices, and transform their choices into desired actions and outcomes.

Table 8 Distribution of the sampled respondents on the basis of empowerment condition before and after re-strengthening of COs

Village name	Condition before			Total	Condition after			Total
	Empowerment				Empowerment			
	Yes	No.	Partially		Yes	No.	Better	
Bhont	-	43 (48)	15 (17)	58 (65)	-	9 (10)	49 (55)	58 (65)
Karl Maldayalan	-	18 (20)	05 (6)	23 (26)	-	06 (7)	17 (19)	23 (26)
Karl Abbasi	-	06 (7)	02 (2)	08 (9)	-	02 (2)	06 (7)	08 (9)
Total	-	67 (75)	22 (25)	89(100)	-	17(19)	72(81)	89(100)

Source: Field survey,2011

Conclusions and recommendations

It is concluded that social mobilization brings positive change in the behaviour of the members of CGOs. Finding also showed that women were very much excited to participate in such type of healthy activities as a result variety of skills have been improved through different training programmes. Majority of respondents also got credit and utilized it for their needs. It was also concluded that majority of the sampled respondents were interested to learn more and more through trainings so that after skills improvement they share the financial burden of their family.

Base on the finding of the current study, following suggestion are made for future researchers.

- Skill development and capacity building trainings should be enhanced in such a way that they become better source of income generating activities.
- Well-equipped training centers should be opened as an opportunity to lean more and more.
- Agricultural trainings should be enhanced as a rural people are mostly concerned with agricultural activities.

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