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# COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT WITH COMMUNITY BASED WATER SOCIETIES IN RURAL AREAS DRIVING THEM FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EQUIPPING FOR DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY DIALOGUE

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## KeyWords

Community Based Water Societies, Safe drinking water, Community empowerment, Community development Community Participation, Sustainability

## ABSTRACT

In the world, 780 million people are suffering due to lack of safe drinking water. Sixth goal of the sustainable development goal is declared on safe drinking water for all. Community based water projects are initiating in the world to provide water for people in rural areas. This particular step is the point of empowering people for their development. Community empowerment as a long lasting process will be achieved through community participation leading them for community development. Empowering leads them for critical thinking, capacity building and power finally leading them for a policy dialogues to achieve their development by themselves.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

DEMAND driven approach for safe drinking water supply in rural and estate communities were introduced with the purpose of fulfilling safe drinking water need of people living in both rural and plantation area. One of the major purpose of this approach is, to provide their own water need by themselves as a community. In the other hand, it is empowering community to provide their basic safe water need by themselves as a result of their development as a community. Beneficiaries and community leaders are playing the key role in demand driven approach.

One important goal of community development is empowering the people and improves the quality of their lives. (Hedayat A. 2009) This empowerment is a long term achievement, as a result of the attempt contribute by development practitioners using different approaches. Capacity building, mentoring and coaching are important in empowering process. It is only by being able to organize and mobilize oneself that individuals, groups and communities will achieve the social and political changes necessarily to redress their powerlessness. This remains the dominion of community empowerment as political activity which enables people to take control of their lives.(Glenn L. & Nino W., 2001)

Community participation is essential in the process of empowerment. Without community participation, successful empowerment cannot be achieved. Cohen & Uphoff in 1977, revealed participation includes people's involvement in decision making process, implementing programmes, their sharing in benefits of development programmes and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes. Community participation is a social action process that promote participation of people, organization and communities towards the goal of increased individual and community control, political efficiency, improved quality of life and social justice. (Wallerstein, 1992) Amarasinghe, 2009 noted that community participation is high during planning and construction and waned often commissioning and it is depended on several factors, such as community leadership and organization, capabilities of CBO, ability to raise and manage the necessary finance, choices of technology ensuring the ability to maintain and meet water quality needs over the design life, economies of scale, the need to move away from voluntary to paid labors need for ongoing training and need for routine monitoring by external agencies. It revealed the need of right approach according to the contextual factors of the particular community to lead them for empowerment through successful community participation. In participation, as an end, people directly involved in process, they will get power and control over decisions that effect on their lives. Thus participation as an end that leads to empowerment. (Hedayat A. 2009)

Wallerstein 1992, defined commonly empowerment as social action process that promotes participation of people and organizations. It is clear that both community participation and community empowerment are interdependent parallel processes that have to be lead with right approach, which is best suited to the contextual factors of the particular community.

Most important agencies of development emphasis on participation as a key concept on development and they believe that without participation, sustainable development wouldn't be achieved. (Hedayat A. 2009)This community empowerment achieving with community participation, lead to success and sustainability for Community Based Water Projects, ensuring community ownership and ability to lead as a community.

The importance of community empowerment as a central theme in health promotion has been over shadowed since the 1990, with discussion of community capacity (Godman et al, 1998) community competence (Eng & Parker, 1994) community cohesiveness (Geyer, 1997) and social capital (Putnam, 1995; Madra, 1998)

Community empowerment commonly viewed in literature as both process and outcome.(Glenn L. & Nino W., 2001) As an outcome, community empowerment is interplay between individual and community change with a long timeframe at least term of significant social change typically taking 7 years (Raeburn, 1993) At an individual level, people may experience a more immediate psychological empowerment such as increasing self-esteem or confidence which evolved from collective action. (Labonate, 1998) Through Community Based Water Supply systems, based on community and empowerment of community in various aspects can expect. This empowerment leads for their development.

## 2. COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Community empowerment generally refers as enabling people in the community to increase control over their lives. Community Empowerment is a one part of the community development as same as force which is driving communities for community

development. The term empowerment says “condition of having power and being able to exercise it and obtain the benefits. (Norman U., 2012) Elements that go in to empowerment exist in both material and mental. Especially this is a people oriented approach in community actions. Address to the mentality of people also a one part of the community empowerment. It is a long lasting process of addressing the mentality of people and changes them with power called transformation.

Community Participation is a major essence in community empowerment. Community participation with active engagement, is the opportunity will be opened to change communities with power. Community Empowerment is a social action process that promotes participation of people, organization and committees towards the goals of increased individual and community control, political efficiency, improved quality of life and social justice. (Wallerstein, 1992) According to Narayanan, 2002, the empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in negotiation, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect the lives. For the process of empowerment and development as a community, community participation is most essential. It says as agencies committed for community empowerment, should have advisable approach to increase community participation for the purpose of maximum deliverables of community empowerment.

Empowerment is therefore both a value oriented for working in the community and theoretical model for understanding the process and sequences of effect to exert control and influence over decisions that affects one’s life organizational and function and the quality of community life. (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995) There are both tangible and intangible aspects behind community empowerment.

According to Narayanan, 2002, empowerment is generally seen as a key for good quality of life, increasing human dignity, good governance, pro poor growth, project effectiveness and service delivery. It is correct if we say that these are the outputs as results of the process called community empowerment. These are the drivers of community development. These community development drivers can be created through community empowerment.

There are communities in the world that cannot be correctly defined as a community, because of the isolation and depart of each one of them. Community empowerment is a process of creating a community and of much greater control over its environment. (Simson, 1990) Community empowerment is the process of creating community as a community.

In further to communities are dwelling as communities, they may have various gaps to fulfill their needs as a community. Way of addressing their gaps in poverty, knowledge and relationship is community empowerment. As a result of that, Communities are having power over their rights. The core concept of empowerment is idea of power. (Hedayat A. 2009) Empowerment can be defined as the process by which individuals, groups and/ or communities become able to take control of their circumstances and achieve their goals, there by being able to work towards maximizing the quality of their lives. (Adams, 1990; Hedayat A. 2009) This is the final goal of empowerment.

Empowerment is ability of individuals to gain control socially, politically, economically and psychologically through,

1. Access to information, knowledge and skill
2. Decision making
3. Individual self-efficiency, community participation perceived control (Rappaport, 1987; Zimmeronon and Rapoport, 1988; Hedayat A. 2009)

Abolt 1996, Empowerment thus involves action at the grass root level, creating self-awareness and transformation of society, leading to negotiated power sharing. (Hedayat A. 2009) Under that, If power changed, empowerment will be achieved or otherwise impossible. (Hedayat A. 2009) In one hand, this is like advocating people for take part in their development and decision making. Knowledge, skills and necessary capacity of community leaders and members are important to empower them to be a part of their own development. Community empowerment includes personal (Psychological) empowerment, organizational empowerment and broader social and political actions.(Beryl A. 2016) Community empowerment recognize and strategically acts upon this inter linkage and ensures that power is shared at both local and global. (Baum, 2008) Power is the one of the major aspect in empowerment and there is no empowerment without power.

Further the change is the ultimate objective of the empowerment. Empowerment is a construct that links individual strength and competencies natural helping system and proactive behaviors to social policy and social change. (Rappaport, 1981, 1984)

Change since individual member in the particular community is important for the process of empowerment to achieve the expected change with power. In literature, community empowerment is most constantly viewed as process in the form of a dynamic continuum, involving 1. Personal empowerment, 2. Development of small mutual groups, 3. Community organizations, 4. Partnerships, 5. Social and political actions. (Jackson et al, 1989; Labonate, 1994; Rissel, 1994) Through partially measured as self-esteem or self-efficiency, psychological empowerment is a construct that incorporates the person's perceptions and actions with their social context. (Zimmerman, 1990)

Empowerment approaches have an explicit agenda to bring about social and political changes and this is embodied in their sense of liberation, struggle and community activists. (Glenn L. & Nino W., 2001) Participants gain power as a result of a change in control over decisions in inters personal relationships that influence their lives. (Glenn L. & Nino W., 2001)

Communication plays a vital role in ensuring community empowerment. (Beryl A. 2016) Right communication according to the context is important in the process of changing community members. This has to lead with better and proper understanding since individual member to collective community as their needs, hopes and understandings.

### **3. HOW COMMUNITY BASED WATER SOCIETIES CONTRIBUTE FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT**

In the world, there are 780 million people are suffering due to lack of safe drinking water. Since the origin of demand driven approach to provide safe drinking water, world leaders are addressing these pressing issues by empowering and participatory development. In the word of bottom up is given an importance to the bottom as community is playing the grass root bottom role in development. This attempt will not be success, if the grass root level is not well empowered.

The key difference between community empowerment and other community based concepts is the sense of struggle and liberation that bound in the process of gaining process (Jeved P.,2012) Finally it is a power oriented concept of having power as a community over their lives. Especially this is an essential component in the community based concept.

Especially for water management, to apply community based concept, the community empowerment is important in order to lead community managing available water resources. Community capacity and leadership will be affected for successful community based water management.

As Lobtune, 1990 revealed, Community Empowerment as five point continuum comprised of following elements.

1. Personal action,
2. The development of small interest groups,
3. Community organizations
4. Partnerships
5. Social and political actions.

This is a step by step process have to be changed as a community.

Most community based water societies will appear in to above mentioned third stage and fourth and fifth stages would be achieved only through community empowerment. It is clear the need of community empowerment for sustainability with further level community actions.

Membership of the small group is not homogeneous and conflict regarding internal issues does arise. Especially during the shift from and inward (Self-help) to an outward (social action) orientation. (Jeved P.,2012) On one level to produce individual empowerment for the people activate in it, on another level, find social solutions for the community. (Richard F., 1997) Under that, The organization enables the people in the community to manage their lives by themselves. (Simon, 1990) Under community based water societies, communities are empowering to find solution for their safe drinking water. In most CBOs, communities are actively involving in it since project origin. Finally it will drive in to the community body for water conservation and management.

Empowerment or community empowerment a preferred usage because of the social context in which empowerment take place, thus embodies an interactive process of change, where institution and communities become transformed as people who

participate in changing them become transformed. The traditional community demanded the entire person, while organization is a means for achieving personal goals. (Drucker, 1995) Community empowerment is realized by means of organization and it may be identified as evaluated through them. (Richard F., 1997)

A community organization can serve as an alternative to external base of decision making and of expertise because it can involve community members in process which develop the skills and knowledge necessary for self-management. (Richard F., 1997) Maximum benefits of water and sanitation could be achieved through community empowerment and capacity building for self-reliance. (Manoharan B., 2005) As a society, through having experiences through out a long period, that particular community will lead for empowerment. This empowerment finally will be ended up with

The theoretical questions help to unpack community empowerment in an attempt to clarify how the application of this concept can be best approached. (Glenn L. & Nino W., 2001)

Many interpretations of community empowerment are based on undertaking of this concept as either a process or as an outcome (Bernstein et al., 1994) and whether it exist as an inter- personal phenomenon (Tore, 1986; Rappoport, 1987; Swift & Leviin, 1987) a broad socio political context (Friedmann, 1992; Craig & Maya 1995) or interaction of change at multiple levels (Wallerstein, 1992) For Community based water supply, the steps will be started through community participation and then empowerment will be happened as an outcome. This outcome is then needed to sustain it as a process to make sustain.

There are nine factors influence for community empowerment as, 1. Participation, 2. Problem assessment, 03. Leadership, 04. Organizational Structure, 05. Resource Mobilization, 06. Link to others, 07. Asking why, 08. Programme Management, 09. Role of outside agents. (Lauerack, 1999) These all steps are important in community based water management, benefitting all.

These aspects of community empowerment, operational domains provide a link between interpersonal elements like, individual control (Everson et. al, 1997) trust and community cohesiveness (Geyer, 1997), contextual elements such as political (As-thena, 1994), Socio cultural (Gordon, 1995) and economic (Taylor, 1995)

Empowerment promotes capacity building of heterogeneous individuals who have shared interests and concerns and strengths their sense of struggle and community activists through the process of community empowerment. (Glenn L. & Nino W., 2001) Through water management, as a community, formal and informal capacity building empower community for better water management with better understanding. It is clear the need of community empowerment for the sustainability of community based water project. Beyond that, it will lead community to extra mile to conserve water resources and water governance

#### **4. CONTRIBUTION OF COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN COMMUNITY BASED WATER SOCIETIES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Community empowerment in all formulas has become an increasingly important component of urban and rural development policies (Adamson, 2010; Cleark et al, 2007; Lauerack, 2006; Lyons et al, 2001; Phillips et al 2010; Ahmad M. & Talib A. 2004) to empower them for their own development, ensuring their ownership in development initiative, for consentized and ultimately for sustainability. Development practitioners and facilitators fundamental task is to consentize them and develop them in to the level of improving their critical thinking on their own development.

Critical thinking enables communities to understand the interplay of forces operating on their lives and help them to take their own decisions. (Baum, 2008) This step is the first step of empowerment for their own development in the way of empowering them as a community. In empowering them, the development practitioners are having a major role to develop the critical thinking of the community. It is like changing their ordinary habits in the social context of a developing country.

Community action and community change are among desired proximate outcome for community empowerment. (Faweett et al, Paine & Farweett, 1993) This is the next step of their development after developing their critical thinking ability. Community capacity related outcomes are the ultimate goals of the collaboration. Community capacity is the community's ability to pursue it's chosen purpose and course of action both now and in future. (Beryl A. 2016) With that, they will start to explore on their problems and development needs with facts and figures. This is the point of becoming them to be qualified for policy dialogues with relevant authorities. Then the task of the development practitioner is to facilitate to arrange suitable platforms for their policy dialogue. This Community change consist of new transformed progress, policies or practice related to the mission of the initiation. (Garbor, 1990)

In Community Based Water Supply schemes, community is familiar with their surrounding environment and community members. Empowering them to identify and address issues is the best suited way of being success of their development.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Water resource management is important in the way of achieving sustainable development goal 6 of water and sanitation. Especially to address safe drinking water scarcity, which is challenging for 780 million people in the world.

Quality of the water sources in many parts of the world, are reducing, increasing the crisis of safe drinking water to the 780 million people in the world. Community is the best solution for water governance as the group of people with experiences of their community and water resources surrounding them. Community empowerment is the way of capacitating and leading them for critical thinking to develop them as best suited group for policy dialogues. For Community Based Water Societies, empowerment will lead community for water resource management and sustainable utilization. In policy planning, recommend to use community for water management and water governance empowering them.

Since establishment of community based organization, the empowerment is an essential tool to sustain it and take community to extra mile using their critical thinking adopted with their surrounding environment. But this empowerment should be started since the project origin using right approach upon the context. Role of development practitioner is in it.

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