

Rethinking Development: A Paradigm Shift Towards Community-Driven Approaches

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Abstract

Despite significant investments in Official Development Assistance (ODA) and development initiatives, persistent gaps remain in addressing poverty, inequality, and other socio-economic challenges in low- and middle-income countries. Development actors often employ standardized approaches that fail to break cycles of chronic underdevelopment and disempowerment, even as their numbers continue to grow. Traditional theories, such as modernization theory, prioritize economic growth and Western industrialization models, neglecting critical social, political, cultural, and environmental dimensions. This pro-economic growth perspective overlooks sustainable, community-driven, and participatory approaches that empower local populations. A more holistic development model focuses on bottom-up ownership, local engagement, and multidisciplinary strategies that align with community needs. Using a critical analytical approach and secondary data, this paper highlights the shortcomings of conventional development frameworks and advocates for a paradigm shift rooted in Amartya Sen's capability approach. To foster sustainable development, communities must be well-informed about their political and social environments and actively participate in decision-making processes. They should analyze local challenges independently, formulate strategies, and take ownership of implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This paper critiques the role of external actors in development interventions and argues that true progress requires a transition from top-down approaches to more inclusive, locally-driven solutions. Emphasizing human capabilities and holistic development ensures that interventions align with the multifaceted realities of affected communities.

Key words: *community-driven development, political awareness, political participation, sustainable development, Amartya Sen's capability approach*

Introduction

Post development and alternative development theories which emerged in the 1990s showed that despite the generous amounts of resources spent on development initiatives and on Official Development Assistance to developing countries, issues of development gaps still persist. Statistics over the years have exposed that, the costs of both human and financial resources spent on addressing development problems in low- and middle-income countries are enormous yet poverty, inequality, malnutrition, discrimination, lack of water, food and other development problems are getting deeper.

In spite of all these, development actors still focus their interventions on similar modes of aid delivery, identical procedures of needs analysis, seemingly identical procedures of identifying problems, same method of arriving at goals and objectives, and finally, the identical procedure of proffering solutions to the problems. Thus, creating vicious cycle of extreme and chronic underdevelopment and disempowerment while the numbers of development actors and

organizations keep increasing and multiplying in developing countries.

An explanation of this trend could be that development practice has some structures it follows. There are incidences of donor's influence in development interventions where development programs are intervened to serve donor's interest and goals. This is so because, the driver of development has implications for who is held accountable for results. Many development practitioners work in hierarchically structured environments where development practice is not only driven by community or NGOs, but by a donor agenda.

It is important to point out that former methods of development process and interventions focused on theories like modernization theory which views development as following the stages of development attained by the developed countries of the West, reaching development coincides with pursuing industrialization following Western development path (Summer, 2008) often neglect other dimensions of measuring development other than economic growth. These theories neglect the social, political, cultural, and environmental aspects which affect development immensely. So, the pro-economic growth theories neglect the more encompassing approach to development that considers the inputs of the local populace, the participation of the citizenry, the bottom-top ownership of the project, the community-driven and social sustainability approaches which consider multifaceted and multidisciplinary aspects of development. Thus, a holistic concept of development is more community-driven or based and focused on people's capabilities (McGuire et al., 1994).

The research questions that motivate the paper are; what are the gaps in the systems that deliver development interventions through theories that focus only on economic growth as the yardstick for development? If the gaps are identified, then what is the new paradigm that would fill in the gaps to make development relevant and curtail the supposed high cost of resources in addressing development problems? In addition, what are the roles of external development actors to the development of an area? What is the relationship between development and politics leading to awareness and participation in formulation and implementation of interventions? How does this lead to realization of capacities of the people towards a holistic approach to development?

The paper seeks to explore the relationships among political awareness and participation towards community-driven development. Using Amartya Sen's capacity approach as a theoretical background, the paper will expose the gaps in the former approach to development, the roles of external actors in development interventions and the need for a paradigm shift. The new model will elucidate the implications of people's freedom to promote or achieve functionings they value. The implications of the concepts of "functioning" and "capability" and the need to give back agency to the grassroots.

Literature Review

This section will first of all, explain political awareness and political participation. It will further link the two concepts together in order to explain the relationship between the two concepts in understanding the social, political, and cultural occurrences in a given society. With this understanding, we establish a framework that will explain the implications of active participation of the people in any development intervention or provision of social services to a given society. This will lead us to community-driven development which is a bottom-top, people-centered method of delivering development.

Political Awareness

Here, we need to explain that awareness is as a prelude to understanding what political awareness is properly, before linking it to the political. Awareness means the act of realizing, recognizing, understanding and/or being conscious of something or someone. Awareness is the individual's perception of him/herself and of his/her surrounding environment (Al Faitouri,

2020, p. 133). It is the overall individual's outlook, recognizing, understanding, knowledge and deliberate assessment of events. It grows and develops with the growth and development of the individual's life and therefore results from the various social and cultural factors affecting the individual. This implies that, the more improvement in the social and cultural milieu results in the higher political awareness of individual in the society (Abonu, Ogunlade, & Yunusa, 2013). Politics is about mobilizing support for, and consent to, action in the context of diverse, and sometimes competing interests and may involve either collaboration or competition depending on purpose. This involves building alignment and alliances, strategic direction, and scanning (Hartley et al., 2013, p 18).

In this context then, political awareness is primarily a function of recognizing events and persons, intentionally getting conscious of things happening around oneself, understanding the power play around one's society, acquiring knowledge about politics (Amer 2009, p. 351). It is the knowledge, acceptance, and responsiveness of political strength in the community (Kholisoh, et al., 2019, p.131). It means access to political information, access to political undertones of events in the community, political participation, media exposure, interest in politics and education, with political information being the best indicator overall. It has also been defined as the interlocking set of knowledge, interest, and participation (Fiske et al. 1983) especially in the political aspects of what happens in the society.

Political awareness means then the citizen's knowledge of his/her political rights and duties, of the events and incidents happening around him/her in addition to his/her capability of wholly recognizing the state of affairs around him/her as a comprehensive truth whose elements are intertwined rather than separate incidents or distanced events (Kavita, 2017, pp 66-67). The emphasis here is on the connectedness of the constituents of the state of affairs in a given community.

In addition, it is the understanding of the members of the society of their rights and responsibilities in the face of occurrences in the society with a view to building a just and better society to the best of their knowledge and capabilities at any given instance. It is one of the main pillars upon which the social, political, and cultural systems of any society is based such that ignoring it throughout the process of construction and reconstruction of the state will inevitably mean a baseless construction that will collapse whenever the state is faced with any crisis within the state or with other states whatever the size of the political or demographic construction (Fairbrother, 2003).

In this sense, political awareness is the basic structure that would carry the management of crisis in a community. It would make the citizenry understand what happens in the community and be able to partake in identifying the different ramifications of a problems as well as provide credible solutions thereof. This is so because, ignorance of the situation of events in a community would create more crisis when the populace later become aware of their rights and responsibilities.

According to Zaller political awareness means "the extent to which an individual pays attention to politics and understands what he or she has encountered" (Zaller 1992, p. 126). It reflects "intellectual or cognitive engagement with public affairs" (ibid.), as indicated by factual information about government and politics that has gotten into people's minds". Political awareness operates in the political information exchange between the individual and various sources of political messages communicated in the public space. It is commonly understood as an important asset, which determines people's engagement with politics and how political awareness might be a key asset, which determines participation and active citizenship (Solhaug et al, 2018). So, political awareness is a force for good, and for getting things done in communities, and it is an essential skill in life.

Also, for Surbakti (2007, p.144), political awareness is the consciousness of the rights and obligations as a citizen. The level of political awareness means a sign that community members pay attention to state and/or development affairs (Budiardjo, 1985, p.22). There are four indicators of awareness (Soekanto, 1982), each of which constitutes a phase for subsequent phase and points to a certain level of awareness, ranging from the lowest to the highest, namely knowledge, understanding, stance, and behaviour (action) pattern. For Wilson (2013), as quoted in Dioso, M. (2019), there are five levels of political awareness, namely: politically illiterate, misinformed person, general awareness people, activists, and political experts. These levels are basically influenced on how and what elements influenced the knowledge of people with regards to politics.

From the foregoing it is evident that, being politically aware and empowered to participate in the political terrain of what happens within an individual's purview and affecting the decisions thereof implies having access to prepare the individual's capabilities, to probate his/her will, to consolidate his/her feeling of freedom and to boost the individual's self-esteem in order to develop the human potentials towards active participation in achieving sustainable change and transformation in the society (Al-Khaza'leh, & Lahiani, 2021, p.205). Political awareness is simply an understanding of these 'power webs' and an ability to navigate them, and therefore get things done (SkillsYouNeed, 2021), a recognition, understanding and utilizing the intricacies in the power play within a given society and make good use of the opportunity.

Political awareness is built and develops through some stages. These stages signify what transpires within the individual and the society, the active relationship between the individual and the society, that give rise to the consciousness of the political, social, and cultural sensitivities in the society and the responsiveness of the individual to recognize and contribute in what happens in the society.

In the first place, political awareness operates on the theoretical level. This involves either conscious generation of ideologies imbedded in the social, political, and cultural environment an individual lives such as cultural values, political events, and social norms. This occurs at the theoretical level in three phases, namely; the phase of knowledge, perception, and discovery, during which the individual is disposed to perceiving and understanding truths directly and which shows the readiness to admit the ideas, determine them, analyze, and select them.

Then, the second stage is that of political interest. This is kindled by the ideas the individual has analyzed and selected. Here, the individual shows interest in the community s/he belongs. This comes with the notion of obedience, acceptance, and the sense of belonging to the community becomes deep-rooted in the individual. This might be reflected through the acceptance and conformity to the numerous norms, deeds, rights, responsibilities, and activities the community stipulates for the individual for the harmonious living in the society.

The third phase is that of political adherence. Under this stage, political awareness requires that the individual observes and engages intellectually or religiously to a particular group, institution, or political establishment. The adherence to these institutions may sometimes make the individuals' awareness to some objectives benefiting the authority or institution the individual belongs to. For instance, when these institutions are compulsory, like in a school setting, the official awareness of the authority is reflected on that of the students so that they would defend and justify it. However, the individual's adherence to optional groups makes it difficult for the authority to control the awareness of individuals, and the organized awareness of the individuals often emerges in the case of confrontation with the authority (William, & Anthony, 2017).

In addition, political awareness can arise on a practical level. In this case, it results from the knowledge and experiences an individual has accumulated from the environment around him/her which then translates into practical ways of living. The knowledge and experiences influence the practical ways the individual lives and responds to events within the society. This

in turn is manifested through the individual's contribution to the political process which sometimes leads to the authority's approval of the students' requests and desires. (William, &Anthony, 2017).

Sequel to this, if political awareness is a factor that helps with political practice, then its role is contingent on a number of conditions mainly the feeling of political aptitude. Political aptitude is a state of the mind felt by the individual which has the capability to understand the important aspects of the social systems in a society and has the skill to support and promote them. This also entails an understanding of the wrong aspects of the system and criticizes them to reveal the areas of improvements as well as the negative effects on the individual and the community. Political awareness leads to readiness for political participation. Political awareness disposes an individual towards political participation. That is, the individual's awareness necessitates that the effective practice of political freedom which requires the individual to work hand in hand with other members of the political community in order to contribute to enlisting policies and decisions and choosing rulers that guides the way of life in the society. This leads also to mutual intellectual tolerance. The willingness of the individual to contribute to formulation and implementation of policies and decisions in a fair and equitable manner.

In addition, political awareness necessitates individuals to show positive feelings towards occurrences in the state that governs him/her without waiting for the authorities to issue laws and orders or use coercive means to induce the individual to participate in the good of the society.

Also, political awareness makes the individual to respect the principles guiding the society irrespective of the performance of the leadership of the community, the individual will in a civil manner respect the ultimate principle that underlies the philosophy of the community. This makes the individual to be civil always even when s/he wants to protest, it is done in a civil and non-violent manner. This in turn leads to mutual trust among the citizens. Not only trust between the ruler and the ruled, novice and expert, but among other members of the society so far, they share the same guiding principles and philosophy of life (Fiske, & Donald, 2000).

From the foregoing, we can deduce that political awareness is one of the main necessities of life because, it opens up avenues for initiation, understanding, analyses of and integration into the way of life in a given society. It also creates political freedom, mutual tolerance, obedience, voluntary actions towards common good, appreciation of the guiding principles and philosophy of life of the people, it builds mutual trusts and facilitates political participation towards a just, fair, and sustainable society.

Political participation

Political participation can be defined as citizens' activities affecting politics (van Deth, 2001, p.1). It is the actions and reactions of the citizenry within a given political milieu. Political participation means that a person is participating in the political process by making his/her opinions and beliefs known. It is an action taken by a citizen to influence the outcome of a political issue. Political participation derives from the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs (UN, 2001).

Political participation includes a broad range of activities through which people develop and express their opinions on the world and how it is governed and try to take part in and shape the decisions that affect their lives (NCBI, 2010). This can include voting, protest, public consultation, signing a petition, writing a letter to a public official, blogging about a political issue, donating money to a cause, volunteering for a campaign, joining an activist or interest

group, or holding a public official position. Barnes et al (1979) would include dissent, disapproval, rejection, and provocation which are evidently expressions of citizens' interests and opinions and therefore should be included in the repertoire of democratic political participation. Thus, the newer forms of participation also included many protest actions organized by upcoming "New Social Movements" initiated by pacifist, ecological, squatters', and women's groups.

Political participation has some characteristics that are worth mentioning. It is an activity (or action), it is voluntary and not ordered by a ruling class or obliged under some law. It is the activities of people in their roles as nonprofessionals or amateurs and not, say, as politicians, civil servants, or lobbyists. It concerns government, politics, or the state in broad senses of these words and is not restricted to specific phases (such as parliamentary decision-making processes or executing laws) or to specific levels or areas (such as national elections or contacts with party officials). Thus, any voluntary, nonprofessional activity concerning government, politics, or the state is a specimen of political participation (van Deth, 2001, p.3). So, nonprofessional, voluntary activities that are not located in or targeted at the sphere of government/state/politics can be considered as modes of political participation if they are aimed at solving collective or community problems. (van Deth, 2001, p.10).

Thus, the recent expansions of the repertoire of political participation in democratic societies seem to be based on a shift in the nature of involvement. As such, refusals to buy a specific brand of coffee, volunteering in a hospital, being a member of a sports club, or posting a blog on whales are not specimens of political participation, but nonpolitical activities that can be used for political purposes. Though social engagement are specimens of political participation, these activities need not require some organization or coordinated action. Surely, to be effective a large number of people should behave in a similar way, but they can all act individually, separately, and with distinct aims and motivations.

Going further to explain political participation and its varied influence on public policy, Ramlan Surbakti, as quoted by Cholisin (2012, p. 150), suggests that political participation is a form of ordinary citizen's participation in making any decision related to or having an impact on his/her life. Miriam Budiarjo, (in Cholisin 2007, p. 150) further elucidates that political participation can be defined as the activity of an individual or a group of individuals to take an active part in political life by choosing a state leader that will directly or indirectly affect public policy. The typology of political participation as an activity is distinguished into active participation, passive participation and abstain (Rahman, 2007, p. 288).

Political participation is relevant for any political system, but it is an indispensable feature of democracy: "Where few take part in decisions there is little democracy; the more participation there is in decisions, the more democracy there is" (Verba & Nie, 1972, p. 1). Political participation is one of the essential aspects of democracy. Political participation is a typical characteristic of political modernization. (Kholisoh et al, 2019, p.131).

In order to be engaged in influencing the outcome of the functioning of the society and taking part in decision making and implementation, three key components are involved which facilitate political participation. They are resources; engagement; and recruitment. Resources such as time, money, and civic skills are considered essential to a person or group's capacity to engage in political activities. The concept of engagement in this model involves several key psychological conditions. To be involved, people must want to participate, have a strong sense of self-efficacy, and feel personally fulfilled and connected to others. Additional indicators of engagement here include identification with a political party and family background of political activity; having politically active parents is considered a predictor for greater engagement than having politically inactive parents. Finally, recruitment entails asking and encouraging people to participate in political activity. Typically, recruitment occurs within the context of faith-

based communities, workplaces, or voluntary associations (Ostrander et al, 2018, p.45). After explaining what political awareness and participation, how they grow and develop towards the active engagement with the political, social, and cultural aspects of the life of a community, the question remains, is there a relationship between the two concepts. The next subsection will try to outline the correlation between political awareness and political participation and how these can be harnessed towards a sustainable society that encourages community-based development.

Relationship between Political awareness and Political participation

Politics is defined as the mobilization of support for a position, decision, or action whereby people act together through institutionalized procedures to resolve differences, deliberate together, analyze occurrences, to conciliate different interests and values, and to make public policies in the pursuit of common purposes (Leftwich, 2004, p.14). In this regard, politics is a pursuit of common interests wherein collective effort from the public, private sector, and the government is needed to achieve common purposes. This involves being conscious of what is happening around in the society, being empowered to engage with the occurrences and being able to take part in the decision, formulation of policies and implementation thereof.

Political awareness leads to readiness for political participation. Political awareness disposes an individual towards political participation, it is a precondition for political participation. That is, the individual's awareness necessitates that the effective practice of political freedom which requires the individual to work hand in hand with other members of the political community in order to contribute to enlisting policies and decisions and choosing rulers that guides the way of life in the society.

According to Althubetat and Jarrar (2013), the degree of awareness of individuals in any community affects the development of the state. They further added that man is both the means and purpose for development; the more the individual in the community is aware of his abilities and potentials, the more contribution is manifested in the field of development. Thus, awareness in politics and governance is an essential factor for social progress and prosperity (Dioso, 2019, p.1) which necessitates participation to influence the outcome of what happens around the society.

Political participation can be understood as voluntary rather than coerced activities of persons in political affairs such as voting, membership and activities connected with political groups, political parties, and political bodies. Therefore, it stands to reason that people who are unfamiliar with politics and related issues would be less interested to participate (Kuotsu, 2016).

Political participation derives from the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs; and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government. If an individual is not politically aware of what is happening within the society, the person will not be disposed to participate in political life of the society. In connection with this, those who engage in political discussions with others usually show an interest in politics and some level of knowledge (Kuotsu, 2016). Public forums are conducted so that people will be familiar with the candidates. (p.3), not only that, so that people will have the basic knowledge of what is happening and be empowered to take part in decision making process.

Such critical consciousness like freedom of speech, assemble and association, ability to question the political status quo, opportunities to influence what is happening around the society, may foster empowerment, which can increase political participation (Ostrander et al, 2015) fulfilling their obligation to the society. The consciousness develops and grows into active involvement in the occurrences in the polity to influence and be influenced by the decisions thereof for the growth and development of the society.

Political participation is generally considered to be symbolic of the extensiveness to which democratic ideals are applied (Rani, 2001). This extensiveness begins with political awareness which raises questions about what is happening in the society and these questions make an individual to be engaged in the political as well as social and cultural aspects of the development of the society.

When the members of the society participate actively in raising both individual and collective questions that move the society forward, they bring out opinions from the grassroots level, they bring out innovative ideas that would move the community forward based on their collective lived experience in which they share the values, norms, failures, successes, times of joys and sorrows, and these collectively form their unique way of life.

These nexuses of what they share at different levels and times and their positive influence on their experiences leads to community-driven development, which is the next sub-section to be discussed.

Community-driven Development

Community-driven Development (CDD) is a term, originally coined by the World Bank, that refers to Community Based Development projects where communities have direct control over key project decisions as well as the management of investment funds (Rao, 2003).

This is an approach to development programs that are bottom-top, people-centered method of executing development interventions that operate on the principles of transparency, participation, local empowerment, demand-responsiveness, greater downward accountability, and enhanced local capacity (World Bank, 2021). It contains five main components: (i) Empowering communities, (ii) Empowering local governments, (iii) Re-aligning the center, (iv) Improving accountability and (v) Building capacity (Nguyen 2005).

It follows that, community-driven development is an approach that provides control of the development process, resources, and decision-making authority directly to groups in the community. The underlying points here are that control of decisions and resources is given to the community groups under this approach to development. This approach is a way to provide social amenities and infrastructure services, to organize economic activity and resource management, to empower poor people, improve governance, and enhance security of the poorest with their participation.

Community-driven Development treats local communities as assets and partners in the development process. It builds on the institutions and resources of the poor in partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), demand-responsive support organizations and service providers including elected local governments, the private sector, NGOs, and central government agencies (Hebinck, p.1).

It empowers local people, helps to build upon and expand existing social capital and improves governance. Empowerment here is not only limited to gaining access to resources and services but also be viewed as empowerment in making decision for oneself and community at large (Hebinck, p.1).

The point is, why this methodology in planning and executing development programs? It aims to build long-term processes for sustainable poverty reduction. It also aims to change the culture of dependency and to avoid quick technical fixes. It focuses on strengthening the capacity of rural communities to play a greater role in their own development (IFAD, 2021).

In addition, the World Bank (2021) affirms that experience has shown that when given clear and transparent rules, access to information, and appropriate technical and financial support, poor communities can effectively organize to identify community priorities and address local problems by working in partnership with local governments and other institutions to build small-scale infrastructure and deliver basic services. So, this is a tested approach and actions that are important elements of an effective poverty-reduction and sustainable development

strategy.

The approach entails partnering with communities and local units of government, including putting resources under the direct control of community groups. This has led to the efficient delivery of basic services, and, when sustained over time, measurable reductions in poverty, particularly among the poorest populations and communities. This is so because, once acquainted to the political discourse, they should have been able to form local organizations to drive the resolution of their own needs, while still receiving financial help and expertise from external organizations (World Bank, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

Sen's Capability approach

A paradigm shift came with Amartya Sen who viewed and explained development in a different way which created a shift from analysing development in terms of an economic growth. The shift lies in the idea of a people-centered appraisal of development as an individual and community engagement emphasizing the social dimension of development. This brought about a holistic concept of development which is community-driven, inclusive, and participatory in nature and people-centered capabilities (McGuire et al, 1994)

The capability approach is a normative approach to human welfare that concentrates on the actual capability of persons to achieve their well-being rather than on their mere right or freedom to do so. For Sabina Alkire (2005), it is a moral framework, an evaluative approach. For it proposes that social arrangements should be primarily evaluated according to the extent of freedom people have to promote or achieve functionings they value.

The capabilities approach goes directly to the quality of life that people can actually achieve. This quality of life is analyzed in terms of the central concepts of "functioning" and "capability". Sen argues that the correct approach to assessing how well people are doing is their ability to live a life that we have reason to value, not their wealth of resources or subjective well-being. But to begin to assess how people perform in terms of capacity, we first need to determine which functions are important to the good life and how much, or at least we need to specify an assessment procedure to determine this.

Amartya Sen (1999) argued that a proper focus for understanding well-being is on what people can be and can do, rather than simply on what they have. In this way the capabilities approach engages with both objective and subjective perceptions of well-being.

Freedom is integral to Sen's approach which distinguishes between people's capabilities (what they can potentially be and do) and what they choose to do with them (their actual functionings). Here, not only does human function, but also on their having the capability which is a practical choice, "to achieve outcomes that they value and have reason to value" (Sen, 2001, p.291). Everyone could be deprived of such capabilities in many ways, e.g., by ignorance, government oppression, lack of financial resources, or false consciousness.

Freedom is "the real opportunity that we have to accomplish what we value" (Alkire, p.11). It is authentic self-direction – the ability to shape one's own destiny as a person and a part of various communities. It is not a maximization of choices without regard to their quality and people's values. necessarily direct control by an individual, groups, states, can increase freedoms by public action and investment.

Sen distinguishes between endowments and entitlements. Endowments are the assets that an individual owns such as labour, land, savings, and so on. Entitlements refer to the ability of an individual to translate these assets into goods, for instance, by hiring out their own labour in order to buy food in the market or by growing food on their own land. Entitlements can be

thought of as ways of making claims to resources whether it be through social obligations, or political rights or through market exchange. Importantly, entitlements are structured by wider social relations, political structures, and market conditions.

Another point to be considered here is Sen's explanation of agency. He describes an agent as someone who acts and brings about change, whose achievement can be evaluated in terms of his or her own values and goals (Sen, 1999, 19). This differs from the conventional understanding of an agent as someone who acts on behalf of another person, someone who represents another person. So, agency is the person's ability to act on what they value and have reason to value (Alkire p.14). Agency depends on the ability for an individual to personally choose the functionings one values, a choice that may not correlate with personal well-being. In the capability approach, agency primarily refers to a person's role as a member of society, with the ability to participate in economic, social, and political actions. Therefore, agency is crucial in assessing one's capabilities and any economic, social, or political barriers to one's achieving substantive freedoms. Concern for agency stresses that participation, public debate, democratic practice, and empowerment, should be fostered alongside well-being. The capability approach is a people-centered approach, which puts human agency (rather than organizations such as markets or governments) at the center of the stage.

Implications for inclusive and sustainable community-driven development

In the first place, it is pertinent to assert that there is a deep connection between development and politics and this connection should play out in delivery of development intervention. Indeed, it has been shown that excluding the political and social aspects from the development debate is likely to lead to a misinterpretation of the real causes of underdevelopment (Carothers, 2013; Li, 2007), and this would entail depriving the people their freedom to promote or achieve functionings they value.

With the old methodology set, the emphasis is on measurable targets and seeking to meet deadlines that leave no space for political and social issues, so as to achieve easily deliverable and measurable outcomes (Mansuri & Rao, 2004), this entails that we continue to practice business as usual in delivery of development interventions. But with the paradigm shift, the social and political aspects of the lived experiences and the totality of the people's way of life will be inculcated into planning and implementation of development interventions. This in return would improve the quality of lives of the people.

In order to allow this new paradigm to grow and flourish, the main actors of the former system would have to read, listen, understand, and appreciate what the new system has to offer and support the new method.

This is not to argue that one system is better than the other, or the former system is to be totally abolished and thrown away, rather a synergy is to be forged. This is so because the people should the formulation and implementation of development interventions. Thus, stressing the importance of agency and politics as a method for building development capacity in the communities.

So, the role of external development actors is to facilitate the formulation and implementation of development intervention in collaboration with the local populace, an inclusive and relevant to the people and not to impose models under matrices of problem identification and solutions that are alien to the people. Development processes should remove social constraints that prevent or block the people's political participation.

If the goal is to give back agency to the grassroots, practitioners should avoid in all circumstances to advocate for them and act on their behalf and should beware that the community-led proposals are formulated considering the interests of each and every citizen, not only of the elites. The appropriation of the strategy development process by the elites is in fact one of the most common critics usually moved to the approach (Mansuri & Rao, 2004).

Pointing out practical experiences of the implementation of Community-driven development and some challenges it faces, it is important to note that, the World Bank (2005) had been working with this community-driven model from the 1990s to enhance community participation, developing community capabilities in a transparent, accountable, and peculiar way generated by the local populace, in order to expand the capabilities of the people to choose freely their strategy for development (Sen, 2001). Developing countries instead of replicating Western economic models, can participate and pave the way for their own development path. But, there the problem of power imbalances in the implementation of community-driven development by the World Bank. Community participation has not been effectively managed at targeting the poor. Among the reasons for this is the domination of the elites in the formulation and implementation of the development intervention in question. The dilemma is that the elites will perceive collective action by the poor as a threat to their hegemony and will strongly discourage it. For their part, the poor are unlikely to want to engage in collective action for fear that the elites will seek retribution or appropriate the gains (Gupta, Grandvoinet et al. 2004).

The above problem shows the importance of Political awareness and participation in the formulation and implementation of development interventions. This is so because, Politics is defined as the mobilization of support for a position, decision, or action whereby people act together through institutionalized procedures to resolve differences, deliberate together, analyze occurrences, to conciliate different interests and values, and to make public policies in the pursuit of common purposes (Leftwich, 2004, p.14) and the degree of awareness of individuals in any community affects the development of the state (Althubetat & Jarrar, 2013). Man is both the means and purpose for development; the more the individual in the community is aware of his abilities and potentials, the more contribution is manifested in the field of development. In the same vein, Political participation derives from the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs; and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government. It follows that both political awareness and participation foster consciousness, empowerment, engagement, and ability to express one's opinions in the issues at hand. These would negate imposition of views or hijacking of the development process and intervention. Thus, giving the agency to the people to participate, debate and choose the functioning of their values, a choice that may not correlate with personal well-being. In addition, when development experts act as facilitators to the process of planning, formulation, and implementation of development process, it will be difficult for the elites to hijack the process.

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