Community Development

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*Key Book: Dr. ZariRafique. Community Development. Peshawar*

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# Meaning of Community

Some words that are used almost daily by the sociologists take on so many shades of meaning that it is difficult to endorse them with scientific precision. The word ‘community’ falls into this category.

For last two hundred years, the word community has been defined by different people in different times, but still it is an untidy, confusing and difficult term to comprehend appropriately, and no one is sure as to what exactly do we mean by this vague phrase. For example, Black’s community, Lawyers’ community, Teachers’ community, Students’ community, Newspaper community, World community, Muslim community, Sikh community, Hindu community, Christian community, Turkish community, German community, Pakistani community, Chinese community, Traders’ community, Businessman community, Doctors’ community, Engineers’ community, and so on and so forth.

As far as our subject matter is concerned, however, we take community as the one which has geographical boundaries, i.e. a concrete one not an ideological one.

David Minar (1969) comments that in spite of the fact that a large number of Social Anthropologists, Sociologists, Social Workers, and other students of social life, who made comprehensive studies of communities, it is difficult to find agreement even within each of these groups as to what a community is? It is difficult to define community with precision because of its diversity and complexity. The term community is still undergoing the stage of qualification of a standardized and scientific concept.

Anyhow, for the sake of reference, we can say that the concept of community refers to a large number of people living together, within a given geographical area, sharing a common way of life in such a way that they meet most of their basic needs from local institutions.

According to Popular Oxford dictionary, the word ‘community’ has been derived from two Latin words, *com*, and *munis*. The word *com* means *together* while *munis* means *to serve*. Thus *‘community’* means *to serve together*. It means that *community is an organization of human beings framed for the purpose of serving together*.

**Com🡪 together Munis🡪 to serve**

**Community 🡪🡪🡪🡪🡪 to serve together**

*Organization of people frame for the purpose of serving together*

*Source: Dr. ZariRafique. Community Development: Concept and Practice. 2nd edition. Peshawar*

*WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia*, also states that the word community comes from the Latin *communis*, meaning "common, public, shared by all or many."Nonetheless, it further states that the Latin term "*communitatus*" from which the English word "community" comes, is comprised of three elements, "*Com*-" - meaning with or together, "-*Munis*-" - the changes or exchanges that link, and "-*tatus*" meaning diminutive, small, intimate or local. We can infer that community is a small, intimate, local group of people who exchange with each other that links them together.

Community is as old as humanity or even older. Most species whether humans, birds, animals—or even insects—develop patterns of relations among their members to ensure reproduction, make food gathering easier and to defend themselves against outsiders. There is sometimes an obvious division of labour in these communities, for example, field studies have uncovered complex patterns of cooperation, antagonism, domination and submission among Gorillas, Champanzees and even in Ants and Bees.

***The ants*** live in communities, termed as colonies, which may be small or large. In both small and large colonies, ants divide up work tasks within the colony, such as digging tunnels, rearing the brood, collecting food, and laying eggs. This division of labor means that each ant is a specialist, performing some but not all of the various tasks needed for colony life (Encarta DVD, 2008).

## com

## munis

## tatus

Together

Change or Exchange that link

Diminutive, small, intimate, local

A small, intimate, local group of people who exchange with each other which links them together

# COMMUNITY

***The honey bees*** also live in communities, called colonies. Bees live in large colonies consisting of females of two overlapping generations: mothers (queens) and daughters (workers). Males, called drones, play no part in the colony's organization and only mate with the queens. In honey bees, the tasks of defense, food collection and storage, reproduction, and many other activities are regulated by the colony's response to environmental conditions inside and outside the hive. Individuals communicate by means of chemical messages, touch, sound, and, in the case of honey bees, a symbolic dance language (Encarta DVD, 2008).

Despites these findings, let us see how sociologists define the term community. The following list of definitions provides a bit varying meanings of the community.

## Definitions of Community

1. According to Encarta Dictionary (2008) the term community implies to people in area. It can mean two things: (1) a group of people who live in the same area, or (2) the area in which they (group of people) live.

Note

Group of people who live in an area

The area in which a group of people live

# Community

(ENCARTA, 2008)

1. According to Arthur Dunham (1958) community is a group of human beings, settled in fairly compact and contiguous geographical area and having significant elements of common life as shown by manners, customs, traditions and modes of speech.
2. He further says that community implies a group of people living in particular area (village or town) who share some common interests and functions. Hence community refers to a common life of some kind which is based on feelings of association with one another.
3. Prof. Abdul Hameed (1999) stated that community is a place where people can get the things they need and want. Communities have places for all the things people do. They have places where people learn and pray. They can be village, towns or cities.
4. MacIver and Page define community in the following words: the members of any group small or large, who live together in such a way that they share, not this or that particular interest, but the basic condition of common life, we call that group a community.
5. MacIver further states that any circle of people who live together, who belong together, so that they share not this or that particular interest, but a whole set of interests wide enough and complete enough to include their lives, is a community. He said that the mark of a community is that one’s life may be lived wholly within it, that all one’s relationships may be found within it.
6. According to Bogardus (1961), community is a social group with some degree of ‘we feelings’ and living in a given area.

At least four (4) major elements enter into most sociological definitions of community including;

1. Group of people;
2. Geographical area;
3. Social interaction; and
4. Common ties.

So, community consists of person in social interaction within a geographical area and having one or more additional common ties.

# Meaning of Development

The term ‘development’ connotes different meanings depending upon the context in which it is used. For example, in music, development means variation of musical theme, in biology, it means growth of an organism. Used in another sense, development may mean an incident that causes a situation to change. In literature, the term may imply the process during which a story or idea is written and formed into a script or a completed script is rewritten further to create a script ready to be produced.

***Development is a process of growth and improvement, or***

***The process of successive improvement.***

However, in the context of community development, the term development implies improvement in the condition of a community. The following three definitions of development by sociologists suffice our need to comprehend its meaning in the current context.

1. According to White Gordan (1988) development is the science which limits its teaching to inquiry of how a given nation can obtain (under existing condition of the world) prosperity, civilization and power by means of agriculture, industry and commerce.
2. Ewusi says that development means human progress, raising the quality of life of people and involving them in political, social and economic activities that affect their daily life.
3. According to Syed Abdul Siraj (1980) development is purposive change in a society to achieve what may be regarded as an improved state of socio-economic conditions.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A wide variety of definitions of community development is available in the literature in the field. It varies from one community to the other. It also varies from one geographical location to the other, yet as in defining what is a community; there are identifiable characteristics which all community developments have in common, whatever the differences which may distinguish one from another. Amongst the many definitions of community development the basic concept was stated by the United Nations in 1948

*"Community Development is a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and fullest possible reliance upon the community's initiative."*

***A group of people living close together, or a group of people sharing something in common, moving towards a positive goal of growth and improvement.***

(quoted in Head, 1979:101)

Ploch (1976) defined community development as the active voluntary involvement of community residents in a process to improve some identifiable aspects of community life. He further added that, normally such action leads to the strengthening of the community’s pattern of human and institutional interrelationships.

Hope (1980) viewed community development as a process. According to him, community development involves first and foremost an understanding of the basic social and economic problems of the community. It is a process of social and economic action for solving community problems. It combines the efforts and resources from the government and non-government agencies for effective and purposive change.

Community development is a process available to people of whatever political persuasion, working, and for whatever causes. It can be used alike by people of liberal, conservative or radical ideology. Indeed, community development is even more than a process; it is a movement, a philosophy, a value system, and an orientation.

Many people hold the conviction that those at the most fundamental level of social life, the community, are best able to judge what they want and need and that they ought to be considered and included in making the relevant decisions about their lives and properties (Ravitz, 1982). Adding to this definition, Hayes (1981) viewed community development as a process of dynamic change, involving conflict and concerned primarily with changing power relationships.

Sanders (1958) presents community development in four different typologies: (1) process; (2) method; (3) program; and (4) movement.

Community development *as a process* moves by stages from one condition or state to the next. It involves a progression of changes in terms of specific criteria. For example, a change from state where one or two people or a small elite within or without local community make decisions for the rest of the people to the state where people themselves make these decisions about matters of common concern. The emphasis of community development as a process is upon what happens to people, socially and psychologically.

Community development *as a method* which puts the emphasis on both the process and objectives, is a means to an end; a way of working so that some goal is attained. Sanders suggests that those who subscribe to community development as a method applies centrally advised programs which are inevitably less attentive to the needs of each community than may be desirable, especially if one is to subscribe to the ethos of community self-determination. A program is the third view of how Sanders defines community development.

Community development *as a program* is stated as a set of procedures and the content as a list of activities. By carrying out the procedures, the activities are supposedly accomplished. It is as a program that community development comes into contact with subject-matter specialties such as health, welfare, agriculture, industry and recreation. Community development as a program emphasizes on the activities.

The final typology of community development illustrated by Sanders is viewed *as a movement*. According to him, community development is a crusade, a course to which people become committed. It is not neutral, but carries an emotional charge: one is either for it or against it. It is dedicated to progress, as a philosophic and not a scientific concept, since progress must be viewed with reference to values and goals which differ under different political and social system.

Community development as a movement tends to become institutionalized, building up its own organizational structures, accepted procedures, and professional practitioners. It stresses and promotes the idea of community development as interpreted by its devotees. The Community Development Academy (CDA) (1997) in its definition of community development stressed the involvement of all parties in the projects. This would include the government, community developers, and the people in the communities. According to this view,

* Community development is the purposeful effort by community people to learn and work together to guide the future development of their communities making full use of their own resources as well as external resources.

# PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The principles of community development are rules of right action or value-judgment as to what is sound or good community development practice. Principle is a standard. Principles are the generalized expressions of rules of sound practice. At least the following five principles must be kept in mind for any community worker.

## 1. Principle of Community Organization

Organization connotes various meanings. However, in the context of current discussion, we use organization in somewhat different shades. The dictionary meaning of organization is “the coordinating of separate components into a unit.” To organize something means “to form into a coherent unity or functioning whole.”

The principle of community organization in community development means that for the community development, the worker has to form the community into a coherent unity so that it can function as a whole. The various groups within the community—the poor, the rich, the educated, the uneducated, the shopkeepers, the teachers, the young, the old, the women, the leaders, the religious scholars, the political figures, the public representatives, and so on—they need to be brought together to act in an organized manner, to act as a single unit, to act as parts of a larger whole, i.e. community.

McNeil (1954) said that community organization is the process by which people of communities as individual citizens or as representative of groups join together to determine social welfare needs, plan ways of meeting them and mobilize the necessary resources.

## 2. Principle of Acceptance and Meaningful Relationship

Acceptance, as the basic principle of social work, is also applied in community development.

As the entire community is taken as a unit of work, i.e. the entire community is the client. Neither this nor that particular individual, and neither this nor that particular group of the community but the entire community is taken as a client. Therefore, the community organizer who goes to a community must accept the community as it is and should get him-self accepted by the community.

It is this principle of understanding and accepting the community that put communities into action which is the soul of development. It is our community that stables our faith in community development. To quote J.M. Barri (That White Little Bird),

*The reason why birds can fly and we cannot is simply that they have perfect faith, for to have faith is to have wings.*

It is necessary that he should go to the community without any preconceived notion. For gaining acceptance in a community he should contact their leaders about his genuine interest in the welfare of the people in the community. He should have firm belief in the capability of the community to deal with the problems with which it is faced.

The community organizer should establish his relationship with community people, in such a manner that it may be able to contribute to the attainment of objectives for which he has gone there.

He should meet all the groups and sub-groups yet he should not become involved with or discriminate against anyone. He should continue his work in the community only as long as he feels that community has not developed capacity to deal, on its own, with its needs and problems. An unproductive relationship does not remain longer and sooner vanishes. Smooth functioning is only possible when justice, harmony and love are kept supreme on behalf of both, the worker as well as the community people.

## 3. Principle of Formal Discussion

The people of community should be made to sit at some common, central and formal place

* to discuss their problems, and
* to discuss their felt needs.

Whether it is

* Identification of needs,
* Identification of problems, and
* Identification of resources,

Or

* It is creation of an organization in the community or
* It is formation of community plans, and programs, or
* It is the implementation of community plans and programms,

discussion is very necessary.

Discussion also takes place at some ceremonial occasions or such other types of gatherings but such useless discussions do not mostly serve the purpose of developing the community or organizing the community, as these are aimless gossips and are merely an outlet of their frustration or a source of recreation for them.

It is the job of social worker to provide chances to the people to discuss their mutual problems or felt needs in an organized way at some formal gathering at a central place.

## 4. Principle of Local Adaptation

Adaptation means, to become familiar, or the process of changing to suit different conditions.

The principle of local adaptation requires that the social worker must understand the local needs. It is also necessary to understand the local environments, and local situation. Similarly, it is also essential to understand the basic requirements of the people for development.

The potential or possible reactions of the community towards different programmes ought to be considered in advance. It means that it ought to be known what the programmes are to which the people react negatively and for what they react positively and accept readily.

Let us take the case of a village, i.e. agricultural community lacking every facility of road communication and transportation, protracted and cutoff, having no good roads to facilitate the transportation of goods and linkages to the city. In such situations when people are crying for roads and you hasten to provide them with cinemas, opera and theaters or build music centers and internet cafes, they will never be satisfied. Similarly, introducing new social system or transplanting educational system that do not tally with the local conditions would result in utter failure, disappointment and chaos.

## 5. Principle of Equal Opportunities for all People

Community development believes in democratic principle of providing equal opportunities for all sections of people, irrespective of any difference of caste, creed, colour, age and sex. If one section of population of the community is ignored and left behind, balanced development of the community cannot be ensured.

# KEY READINGS

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