LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PARTICIPATORY
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
THE CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT GOVERNMENT
IN NORTHWESTERN PAKISTAN

BY
SHADIIULLAH KHAN

Department of Public Administration
Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan.
February 2009
I\n\nIN\n\nTHE NAME\n\nOF AL\n\nAH\n\nTHE MOST GRACIOUS\n\nTHE MOST MERCIFUL
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SHADIULLAH KHAN

Supervised by: Dr. Bahadar Shah

A dissertation submitted to the Gomal University Dera Ismail Khan in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

February 2006
DEDICATION

Dedicated to my beloved parents,
whose generosity and encouragement
provided the strongest foundation
for my education.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Allah the Almighty, the Benign, always bestows His divine blessings upon me. I pay my humble gratitude to the Omnipotent.

Research study, like this, is both a solitary and shared activity and I have been blessed with supportive and critical teachers and friends whom I owe my fondest and most lasting debt of gratitude. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this dissertation are entirely those of the researcher. Naturally, none of my teachers and friends bears the responsibility for my shortcomings.

Students always thank their supervisors, but Professor Dr. Bahadar Shah, Chairman Department of Public Administration, and my supervisor deserves particularly heartfelt recognition. I, therefore, unquestionably owe my greatest debt of gratitude, intellectual and otherwise, to him, not only for his inspiring guidance and stimulating suggestions, but also for the personal and friendly interest he took in my studies. It has been my very good fortune to work under his supervision and direction.

I am also grateful to Professor Morton Davis, Director, Liverpool Institute of Public Administration and Management for his invaluable criticism, advice and encouragement through the numerous iterations of this work throughout my study while I was in Liverpool University U.K for course work.

Neither of these investigations would have been successfully completed, however, without the wholehearted cooperation of those people and officials who took time from their busy schedules and generously allowed themselves to be questioned, observed and examined by still one more student of development administration. Sheer numbers and a desire to protect the anonymity of sources make it impossible for me to thank each person individually. I must express my sincerest appreciation and gratitude to them all.

Financial Support from the Government of Pakistan is also gratefully acknowledged.
I am also thankful to my brothers for the continuous support and cooperation they extended to me and to my children while I was off the home station.

Last but certainly by no means least, there is my family, who has lived with an increasingly distracted father and husband for many years. I owe many thanks to them.

SHADIULLAH KHAN
ABSTRACT

The government is almost the sole source of services in the rural sector of developing countries. Being closest to the people and central to the participatory development, local government in these countries has been assigned a strong role to play in rural development. This study is basically designed to evaluate the ‘district government system’ in terms of participation, representation and responsiveness. Using the illustrative experience of Pakistan, this research focuses on the workings of district government in rural NWFP, at a detailed level and seeks to appraise the role and participation of councils in developing and improving the Pakistani villages in three respects. Firstly, the research has attempted to analyze the local government system in Pakistan being reformed by the successive governments in order to assess people participation. Secondly, the study assesses the local council’s participation in formulating and implementing the centrally/provincially financed rural development programmes. Thirdly, it places the survey and case study analysis in context through a detailed assessment of activities and initiatives, which have been developed by councils for participatory development, and investigates the peoples’ involvement in development.

Following a case study of district government in Northwestern Pakistan, the study applied a cumulative methodology involving the collection of data from a sample of 400 villagers and 120 councilors, representing 16 villages in 8 union councils of 2 districts of northwestern Pakistan. It also presents case studies of 2 ‘district councils’ and evaluates the outcome and limitations of local government.

A chronological analysis of the history of the local government in Pakistan reveals that democratic decentralized institutions at village level, favoring participation in development could not be established despite frequent reforms by the military rulers. Similarly, the local government participation in development programs of the federal and provincial government is also minimal. Mechanisms to encourage more active involvement and participation of the local governments are severely restricted. However, both villagers and
councilors are nevertheless more inclined to favor people involvement in development activities which is encouraging for improved participation in future.

In evaluating the impact of decentralized government on development and participation, this research concludes that hitherto decentralization in Pakistan has not been altogether effective. Despite this, villagers have a strong confidence in district government as they perceived it a more effective means for participatory development. Due to a variety of internal limitations and externally imposed obstacles, the development initiatives of local government can make only limited progress. Usually, their effectiveness varies directly with the financial and administrative capabilities of local officials and with the degree of political support received from the central and provincial governments. The thesis concludes by underlining the potential barriers - poor financial base, a dependence on provincial /central governments for resources, lack of motivation, democratic deficit, lack of peoples’ participation and political interference - which have abated the development capacity of local government. There is a need to overcome these problems before it can act as a vehicle for rural development.

On responsiveness dimension local institutions are perceived at the highest position followed by MPAs and MNAs, It indicates the relevance of local government system to the local problems. It seems that despite the limited engagement of local government system in development endeavors, its weak institutional standing, lack of continuity, frequent interruptions and excessive dependence on headquarters for financial support and conceptual guidance, the potentials of local councils system have not been totally eroded. Ranking local council 1st on rank order despite its frequent molestation and manipulation by the successive governments is pointer to the potential role, this institution can play in the context of rural development.

On representation dimension, the councillors’ socio-economic profiles show that district and tehsil/town councilors (Union Nazims and Union Naib Nazims) constitute a group that are drawn from the higher socio-economic strata of rural society, that live with people in village and that have some experience of councillorship. So it is clear that councils are largely the
domains of traditional rural elites (landlords). However, the union councils, on the other hand, are comparatively consists of councilors majority of whom belong to landless and small land holding group, majority are young, energetic but comparatively less educated and less experienced. So taking collectively and generally, the data shows the majority of councilors belong to a group who are either landless or small landholders and are either of low income or medium income groups. It appears that local reforms have dislodged large landowners and social elites from control over the local politics and so the data does not validate the hypothesis of this research that local government units are elite dominant institutions.

What it suggests paradoxically, is that in order for local government to be an effective instrument of change, it must be integrated with other economic and fiscal decentralization and backed up by consistent political will (state commitment) and active society (people participation). The institutional framework must have an endogenous ability to serve greatly heterogeneous village demands. So there are reasons to believe, however, that given the opportunity to continue democratic local institutions over a long period, decentralization may gradually bring about better results.
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<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<td>BADP</td>
<td>Barani Area Development Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>BD</td>
<td>Basic Democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCB</td>
<td>Citizens Community Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCO</td>
<td>District Coordination Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDACC</td>
<td>District Development and Coordination Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GONGO</td>
<td>Government Organized Non Government Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRD</td>
<td>Human Resource Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMFED</td>
<td>Interior Mountain Federation for Economic Development</td>
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<td>IRDP</td>
<td>Integrated Rural Development Program</td>
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<td>IRSP</td>
<td>Integrated Regional Support Program</td>
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<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
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<td>LDO</td>
<td>Local Development organization</td>
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<td>LGO</td>
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<td>NOVIB</td>
<td>Netherlands Organization for International Development Cooperation</td>
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<td>NRB</td>
<td>National Reconstruction Bureau</td>
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<td>NWFP</td>
<td>North West Frontier Province</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>PRD</td>
<td>Participatory Rural Development</td>
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<td>PWP</td>
<td>Public Works Program</td>
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<td>RCD</td>
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<td>Village Based Organization</td>
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INTRODUCTION

1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the context of contemporary global economic restructuring, the nation-state is losing much of its capacity to promote the well being of its citizens (Cook 1995). Accordingly, as development has become increasingly a localized phenomenon, significant shifts are occurring in the locus of responsibility for development from national to sub-regional or local levels (Ettlinger: 1994). As Sengenberger (1993) observes, the 'local level' is exerting 'an increasingly strong attention on analysts and policy makers today' across a wide political spectrum of opinion. With the decline of the nation-state, the region or locality emerges as the relevant economic space in and for which coordinated efforts to promote wealth creating economic activities can be meaningfully undertaken (Cook: 1995).

Since the 1980s, participatory development has appeared as a major scholarly and policy research focus. With the shifting emphasis in development objectives and strategies towards promoting more socially equitable economic growth and meeting the basic needs in developing countries, widespread participation in decision making is considered essential to the development process and decentralization has been advocated as a way of eliciting that participation (Rondinelli: 1981). Decentralization has, thus, become a central concern of the development community, as many analysts and practitioners have argued that decentralization can facilitate various development objectives. The dominance of 'decentralized' and 'participative' development thinking has been extended in the 1980s with its application to underdeveloped countries. This dominance is reflected in current research agendas of both practitioners and professionals. Over the last fifteen years, a number of developing countries have attempted significant decentralization initiatives. Moreover, as major international donors - including various international organizations like United Nations, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the World Bank - have searched for ways to support more
participatory development efforts, they have displayed increasing interest in various modes of decentralization.

There is a widespread agreement among development practitioners, government officials and foreign donors that local authorities play an increasingly proactive role in participatory rural development. The ‘World Development Report (2003)’ strongly supports devolution for ‘making service delivery work for the poor’. The Earth Summit (1992) through its agenda 21 has endorsed and recognized local authorities as a major group in contributing to development. Recently, more over, a number of scholarly books, articles, and panels at conferences have dealt with the growing importance of local governments as providers of local services, valuable partners in rural development arena and a successful laboratory for local democracy (see Manor: 1995; Zehra: 1995; Stren: 1994; Hoshino: 1994; Yahaya: 1979; Chappel: 1977; Humes: 1973; Sady: 1962 etc). Today, the value of local authorities is obvious to the most casual observer of local politics.

The recognition and importance of local governments in the development process is prompted by the imperative to tackle local socio-economic problems and to manage participative development. Nevertheless, for most of the developing world, including Pakistan, the march of decentralization and participation could not contribute effectively to the solution of a variety of rural problems. Yet looking across the sweep of the developing world, the overriding impression today is of the weakness of local governments in responding to the challenges posed by participatory rural development. In predominantly agricultural developing countries, such as Pakistan, rural development forms an integral part of any national development strategy. In the first place, the vast majority (68%) of the population of Pakistan lives in rural areas (Government of Pakistan: 2003) and so programmes for national development must make these areas a priority. In the second place, poverty in rural areas is high and the standards of living are low. With the growing emphasis on development of the rural sector, it was suggested by some observers (e.g. Hayami and Ruttan: 1985) that the bloated and inefficient institutional structure at the local level be reformed. In Pakistan institutional change has
also long been seen to be central to the process of rural development. The outgrowth of
decentralization literature has emphasized Local Government as a way and vehicle for
good governance and participatory development. The Local Government is seen as a
vehicle that may accelerate people participation in development decision-making and
may make the Government accountable and responsive to the people's needs.

In recognition of the indomitable role of Local Government in participatory development,
the Pakistan Government stipulated in 1979 and again in 2001, that local government is
to be strengthened to play their developmental role adequately. Local Government has
been enshrined as the very essence of people participation, grass roots democracy and
accountability in the NWFP LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORDINANCE 2001. Therefore,
as the provisions of local government ordinance 2001 are implemented, we need to
understand the role it plays in participatory development as well as the place of local
government in the people armory.

Within this context, the study is designed to examine and analyze the role and
participation of Pakistan local government in rural development.

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this research study basically depend upon the objectives of the creation
of the 'district governments' in a country. The objectives of district government (NWFP
Local Government Ordinance: 2001) included:

- Decentralization of institutional agencies
- Creation of real democracy at grassroots level
- Promotion and involvement of citizens, especially women, peasants, and workers
  in policy decision making and
- Promotion of constitutional principles of fairness, representativeness,
  responsiveness and accountability.
The District Government system was set up to achieve greater decentralization, accelerated development, increased public participation in development decision making and to replace the traditional leadership. Within this context, the study is designed to be administered by the following objectives:

1. To analyze the role and participation of local councils in rural development.
2. To find out the extent of peoples' participation in council's activities and development projects.
3. To analyze the attitude of councilors towards peoples' participation in development programs and finally
4. To examine the perceptions of people about the present system of local government.

3 STUDY GUIDING PROPOSITIONS AND HYPOTHESES

In essence the theory of local government suggests that being closest to the people, local councils are assumed to promote and facilitate peoples' participation in development. Decentralization does increase responsiveness to local needs and improves peoples' access to public services. On the basis of these propositions, this study is designed to investigate the following:

1. Decentralized local councils do facilitate peoples' participation in the development activities as compared to other institutions at local level.
2. Being closest to the people, peoples' participation in local councils is greater than other institutions at local level.
3. Decentralized local governments are more responsive to local needs than other government agencies at local level.
4. Local government units, like other local institutions, are elite dominant.
5. People have more confidence on Local Government as compared to Federal and Provincial Governments.
4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In the past half century the structure and functions of Pakistan local government have been dissected, examined microscopically, and left hanging to dry on the sometimes arid branches of scholarship by political scientists, research analysts employed by private foundations, and others. Some of these studies have been historical in nature. More have been both descriptive and comparative, analyzing the structures of local governments, the functions they perform, and the activities they employ to accomplish their goals. However, the participative aspects of local government frequently have been neglected by the more traditional approaches. As a result of this neglect, current knowledge of participation is fragmentary and inadequate for general use by either the government officials or the observer.

This study examines the patterns of peoples’ participation in district governments and illustrates them by two specific case studies. It analyzes also the local participation in development projects by examining the local governments’ organizational arrangements in the district, assessing and evaluating the role of district government in rural development.

Although many researchers and research organizations in developing countries including Pakistan have conducted significant research like this, the study is still important to discuss and analyze the local authorities and development in a larger dialogue at the regional level.

Also as the discussion and research on local authorities and participation in developing countries particularly in South Asia has often taken place in the context of their role in urban development, the study, under consideration, provides a good opportunity to analyze their role in rural context.

Though hundreds of research studies on local authorities and peoples’ participation have been conducted, they lack general empirical verification. This study seeks to provide that
verification reduce the theoretical divergence in the field. This research focuses on the role of councils in creating more participatory, responsive and accountable local government and contributes an empirical grounded analysis to inform discussions of the reforms of local government.

The research can help in training the local government functionaries how to seek and achieve peoples’ participation at local level planning and implementation of development projects. It will help in capacity building of institutions at local level.

5 METHODOLOGY

The study covers NWFP. Administratively it is made up of 7 divisions and 24 districts. A multistage sampling involving three stages was used in the study.

The first stage involved random selection of Kohat, and Mansehra districts. Although the districts selected had diverse agro-ecological zones that range from very productive high potential to poor and unproductive arid and semi-arid areas and their relative progressiveness were also based on the differences in the socio-economic development and other qualitative and quantitative development criteria (Pasha: 1988; Government of Pakistan: 1993). But these districts had similar physical, socio-cultural, demographic, religious make up and topographical characteristics. Also, identical system of local government was introduced in the selected districts at the same time.

Secondly, four union councils in each selected district were selected randomly. Thirdly, a random selection of two villages from each of the selected local government areas was done. And finally, 400 households among the 16 selected villages were randomly chosen for the study.

In addition, all the members including the district nazim and naib nazim of the district assembly in all the sampled districts were also included in the respondents sample and were interviewed accordingly. Hence they constituted a sample of 130 respondents.
Relevant information for the study was collected from the sampled villagers through interviews using structured questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of various elements including respondents' personal data, their access to councils/representatives, participation pattern and behavior. In the same context data were collected on the peoples' behavioral aspects and their perceptions/images on the district government and local representatives. The questionnaires were administered face to face with the help of university graduates, resident enumerators, as villagers in developing countries prefer interpersonal channels of communication (Lingamneni 1981).

Informal discussions with key informants in the selected villages and districts provided additional information on the relevant issues.

The field work for this research was conducted primarily once in 2002 during May - August in rural areas of two districts-Kohat and Mansehra in Northwestern Pakistan and again during June - August 2003 which determines the value of this investigation.

The perceptions and attitudes of councillors and villagers may likely affect the councils' performance in development. It is the basic goal achievement approach that involves looking at the actual impact of the outputs provided by given levels of expenditure. Many analysts advocate public or external assessment of the usefulness or quality of organization's performance. It is concerned with the council's activities valued by the villagers, as councils cannot be studied in isolation. Measuring the councils' performance requires some assessment of the quality of outputs as well as the quantity of resources devoted to providing them. The villagers, for whom the councils function, are the most important element of this study. It was for this reason that the research methodology included a survey of villagers of two districts in the NWFP. The study also aimed at assessing the levels of satisfaction with the local government system in general and with the performance of the sampled councils in particular.

The way district governments operate, as well as the problems they encounter in meeting their objectives, the way they respond to ordinary citizens and the mechanisms available
to them to gain access to the council are examined in the study. Thus district
government’s role in participative development is examined in terms of (1) its
development activities and programmes and (2) mechanism developed by the district
government for villagers’ involvement in development activities.

6 THE STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

Turning to the structure of this thesis, it is a two-part study. Part one of this study is
concerned with the established development and development administration literature.
The concepts of development and participative rural development, and decentralization
are discussed in chapter one and two respectively. This part is dealing with a theoretical
survey and terminological clarification.

In part two, the study moves from the consideration of established literature to the
consideration of Pakistan and especially to rural local authority in the Northwest Frontier
Province. Chapter three details the overall methodological approach applied in this study.
While Chapter four provides a historical account of decentralised local governments in
Pakistan in order to assess their participative nature. It outlines the structure of present
local councils in Pakistan, as Faguet (2000) has recommended that the defining
characteristics of decentralization must be studied if the phenomenon is to be properly
understood. Chapter five discusses the main rural development programmes of the central
government since 1947 in order to assess the local government participation in its
formulation and implementation. Chapter six presents and analyzes the fieldwork data
obtained in two districts of the NWFP to assess the councils’ implications for
participatory rural development. The final Chapter, seven, concludes the study by
summarizing the findings and drawing the conclusions.

The bibliography represents the material referred to or consulted for the study. The
appendices at the end of the main text referred the details of many issues including
interview checklists for councilors, and interview schedules for villagers and profile of
council’s survey.
reconstruct a minimum state. The problem is that the contours of that minimum state are nowhere defined, which increases the fears for the developing world. Anyhow, the state is being called upon to work according to new models, in close co-operation with non-governmental organizations and poor communities, to confront the way of poverty breaking in many countries. This indicates that what is needed is a state that pursues human development as the ultimate goal; that strengthens and increases democracy; that works as a team with private enterprise and civil society towards development; that eradicates corruption and that uses every possible means to promote and support the organization and development of civil society (Kliksberg: 1994). Such a redesigned state should have the institutional features and management style of "DECENTRALIZATION and PARTICIPATION" (Ibid). Recently there has been a call to move 'beyond farmers first' through the addition of a political agenda incorporating basic changes in power relationships and thus addressing empowerment issues head on (Scoones and Thompson: 1994), since a lack of empowerment amongst people has identified as an important constraint to successful development (Scudder: 1993).

The staggeringly high figures of poverty in the rural areas are ominous for planners and administrators of developing countries. They have a vast rural population to cater for, as it is observed that more than half the people in developing countries live in the villages. Rural development, therefore, has acquired a special significance throughout the developing countries.

To understand the nature of rural development, one needs to go back to the concept of development and its characteristics. Because the policies with regard to development will have a bearing on policies for rural development. Therefore, the chapter starts with a short history of development - defining and explaining the concept of development, and its application to rural development and rural development participation.
CHAPTER 1

DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATORY RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, enormous and unprecedented changes taking place in the world economy. The speed of technological and political transformations is unparalleled in history (see, for example, Adamson: 1993). The World has achieved a level of economic prosperity that was unimaginable just one hundred years ago. The past several decades have seen a significant improvement in the lives of the people in developing countries: life expectancy has increased by 50 per cent; infant and child death rates have been cut in half; the proportion of children starting school has risen from less than half to more than three quarters - despite a doubling of population; and the percentage of rural families with access to safe water has risen from less than 10 per cent to almost 60 per cent. In the past 25 years alone, average per capita incomes in the developing world have doubled (Sandstrom: 1994). So achievements in human well being in the past 40 years have been remarkable, but also remarkable have been problems in the developing countries. Many people in poor countries still lack the essentials of life. Despite the progress, poverty remains the greatest challenge facing the world today. In 2000, an estimated 113 million children worldwide between the ages of 6 and 11 did not attend the school (Mingat and Winter: 2002). More than a billion people still struggle to survive on less than a dollar a day. Child mortality rates in developing countries are still ten times higher than in the developed countries. Seven million people still die every year from easily preventable disease. And the income gap between rich and poor countries is still widening: over the past 30 years, incomes in the countries with the richest 20 per cent of world population grew nearly three times faster than in those countries with the poorest 20 per cent. The disparity between the income of the richest 20 per cent and the poorest
20 per cent doubled between 1960 and 1990 (UNDP: 1992). Perhaps here the following words of Jules Feiffer are relevant:

"I used to think I was poor. Then they told me I was needy. Then they said it was self-defeating to think I was needy; instead I was deprived. Then they said deprived had a bad image; I was really underprivileged. Then they said underprivileged was overused; I was disadvantaged. I still don't have a cent, but I have a great vocabulary" (quoted in Naïs Sadik 1991).

Thus, the revolution that has appeared on so many fronts is a promise of prodigious progress, but at the same time, as the Earth Summit (Brazil: 1992) warned, the blind unregulated development may contribute to the rapid collapse of vital ecologically balanced systems. Moreover, it has been shown that job cutbacks go hand in hand with the type of economic growth produced. Much of the recent literature emphasizes an inverse relationship between poverty and economic growth (World Bank 1990, Gaiha and Deolaliker 1993). The UNDP (1990-1993) work on the evaluation of over 160 countries during the last thirty years have categorically shown that an improvement in the economic indicators does not automatically filter down to the population. On the contrary, in developing countries in the 1980s, GDP growth and improved macroeconomic balances frequently went hand in hand with a serious deterioration in the social conditions of the majority of the population. So the ambitions of economic development and reform are so often disappointed, especially in low-income countries. Thus, the decade that proclaimed so bravely the "Development, Equity, and Peace" has given so little of these to the majority of people.

The shrinking performance of developing states in economic development has led to the paradox which resides in 'less state' - criticising state intervention in the economy and its consequences for development - and the renewed expression of the demand for 'more state' made pressing by the exacerbated economic and social problems brought about by conditions of rigour and austerity (Piam: 1994). The macro-economists do seem to reduce the state to a sort of bureaucratic outgrowth, which must be staunchly cut back to
1.2 THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

The concept of development has changed significantly over time and even today, there are a number of different schools of thought. There is a controversy about the meaning and definition of development between economists and other social scientists such as sociologists and political scientists and even among economists themselves. Economists are sometimes chastised for their inability to reach a consensus view. George Bernard Shaw, the Irish playwright, captured the mood rather neatly when he wrote: “If all economists were laid end to end, they wouldn’t reach a conclusion” (quoted in Watkins: 2002). Most of discussion on development emanates from various interest groups in developing countries, developed countries, United Nations (UN) and the World Bank. All these groups tend to differ in their views of development. Many of these differences among academicians can be attributed either to different disciplinary background or to different political and ideological viewpoints.

So the concept and approach to development has gone through many changes. Development has been described as a generic term meaning growth, evolution, and stage of inducement or progress (Mehta: 1981). The concept of development gained currency after World War II. Simplistic attempts have been made to measure development exclusively with indicators such as gross per capita income. In this perspective the term economic development and economic growth were used interchangeably. The societies with sustained growth of GNP or per capita income were considered as developed. This was basically an economic criteria used by economists for the transformation of developing countries. Development was believed to be achieved through mass production, capital investment and more savings. The surplus output was expected to result in increased profit which, from the classical economist's point of view, was saved over time to raise capital needed for future investment and expansion of the economy (Dian Hunt: 1989). The increased profit or growth, it was assumed, would inevitably and eventually trickle down to the mass public. But this assumption has never materialized, as in most developing countries, a small proportion of the population receiving all of the advantages of technological improvement and economic reorganization which induced a
process of demographic transition, particularly to urban centre. It has become increasingly evident that most developing countries could not achieve the goal of poverty eradication, despite the fact that, some countries, particularly those with a large and varied natural resource base have made considerable progress in term of increasing national growth. The then president of the World Bank Mr. McNamara asserted:

"... despite a decade of unprecedented increase in the GNP of the developing countries, the poorest segments of their population have received relatively little benefits" (McNamara: 1972: 9).

The idea of measuring development exclusively with indicators of gross per capita income was long ago considered by economists like Simon Kosnetz as a fallacious concealing concrete realities (Kosnetz: 1972). Indeed, increased GNP brought many of the social and economic problems such as inequality and unemployment in most of the developing countries. As GNP increased so did poverty, inequality and underemployment (ILO: 1977; Griffin and Khan: 1982; Griffin: 1981, 1985). Rather, in many developing countries, rapid economic growth has further aggravated the problems of poverty, unemployment, and inequality (Aziz: 1977). Thus, the economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s did not automatically lead to the wider, normatively defined goal of development. Hollis Chenery in his Introduction to Redistribution with Growth, a joint study by the World Bank and the Institute of Development Studies, has summed up this situation in the following words:

"It is now clear that more than a decade of rapid growth in underdeveloped countries has been of little or no benefit to a third of their population. Although the average per capita income of the Third World has increased by 50 per cent since 1960, this growth has been very unequally distributed among countries, regions within countries, and socio-economic groups. Paradoxically, while growth policies have succeeded beyond expectations of the first development decade, the very idea of aggregate growth as a social objective has increasingly been called into question" (1974: 56).
This conceptualizing development merely in terms of GNP persisted more or less unquestioned until the mid-1960s. But the disastrous results and disillusionment in economic policies and programmes highlighted the significance of a need for a new conceptualization of development.

During 1970s, a new concept of development emerged, where development was conceived as a state of human well being rather than as the state of the national income. This concern was expressed in "Cocoyoc Declaration" adopted by the participants at a seminar organized by the United Nations Council on Trade and Development (UNCTD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Cocoyoc, Mexico in 1974. The declaration states:

"Our first concern is to redefine the whole purpose of development. This should not be to develop things but to develop man. Human beings have basic needs: food, shelter, clothing, health, and education. Any process of growth that does not lead to their fulfillment or, even worse, disrupts them is a travesty of the idea of development (Cocoyoc Declaration, quoted in Ghai, 1977: 149)".

The general concern of this approach was the dethronement of the GNP, and the promotion of direct attacks on widespread poverty, inequality and unemployment. This 'man-centred' development was associated with increasing concern about the non-economic aspect of development. Development is conceived and measured not only in economic terms but also in terms of social well being, political structure and the quality of the entire environment. Development thus defined as 'growth plus change'. The strategic framework to development here consists of two central and mutually reinforcing elements: economic growth and investment in people. One without the other is not enough - as highlighted by World Development Report (WDR) 1990.

It has been emphasised that apart from the 'economic problem' of producing goods and services, we have the 'social problem' of using those resources in such a way as to
improve the welfare effect of economic activity (Drewniwski: 1971). Thus, social indicators have to be considered along with economic indicators of development, as the former reflect the conditions in which people live and this makes the development matrix a complete whole. That is why, of late, it has been stated that development is not to be measured in terms of growth only, but is to be explicitly expressed as growth and social change. It signals the situation where development is not simply couched in terms of economic growth, but in which poverty, distributional justice and environmental sustainability figure as prominent concerns linking both components.

Development in the new perspective has been referred to as an overall process of transforming men and societies leading to a social order in which every human being can achieve moral and material well being (FAO). It is stated in the Study Guide on Development of the Food and Agriculture Organization that:

"the ultimate purpose of development is to provide every one with ever increasing opportunities for a better life. It, therefore, requires an equitable distribution of income and other social resources in order to promote justice and efficient production, to raise levels of employment substantially, to expand and improve facilities for education, health, nutrition, housing and social and cultural well-being. The qualitative and structural changes that development thus imposes on society must go hand in hand with economic progress while racial, ethnic and social inequalities must be substantially reduced. These are decisive factors in hastening development and hence must be handled with dynamism" (FAO: n.d).

Development, thus, is not merely defined in terms of economic growth (GNP / GDP) but is seen essentially as social development, with emphasis on equitable distribution, freedom of expression and qualitative aspects of life. Relatively less concern with the quantity of production or output, material needs or monetary gains and more concern with the general quality of human life and the natural environment thus characterized the new concept of development. The World Bank Development Report of 1982 states:
"GNP does not measure items that are important to welfare in most societies, such as the distribution of income and wealth, employment status, job security and opportunities for advancement, [and the] availability of health and education services" (World Bank: 1982).

Economic growth results from the interplay of investments in human, physical, and institutional development (Mingat and Winter: 2002). The same idea is confirmed long ago in the First Annual Report of the UNDP on Human Development in 1990, when the authors of the report addressed the need to transcend the narrow economic vision of development (Haq and Streelen: 1990), and showed dissatisfaction with the use of indicators such as per capita income or the rate of growth of national income as targets or measures of development and a corresponding search for alternative or additional indicators, such as life expectancy, standard of health or literacy, access to various social and public services, freedom of speech and the degree of popular participation in government decision making.

The other closely related manifestation of the concept of man-centred development is a concern with distribution of the benefits of development. In other words, the reduction of inequality between individuals or social groups and inequality between regions, including the gap between rural and urban areas is regarded as an important criterion and objective for development. This concern with equity was well expressed by Dudley Seers whose article called "The meaning of development" has twice been published (in 1969 and 1971) in the International Development Review. He emphasised dethroning the growth rate as a development measure in developing countries and sought instead to concentrate attention on equality, and the reduction of unemployment and poverty. Again in a seminal paper, Seers (1979) wrote:

"The questions to ask about a country's development are therefore; what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these decline from high level, then beyond doubt this has been a period of
development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, it would be strange to call the result 'development', even if per capita income doubled'.

Seers identified a number of objectives for development in the poorest countries. These are; (1) That family income should be adequate to provide a subsistence package of food, shelter, clothing and footwear; (2) That a job should be available to all family heads; (3) That access to education should be increased and literacy ratios raised; (4) That the populace should be given an opportunity in government and (5) That national independence should be achieved in the sense that the view of other governments do not largely predetermine one's own government's decisions.

Seer's list of development criteria or objectives is similar in basic respects to those suggested by others. Myrdal (1968), Streelon (1972), Brookfield (1975) for example, viewed development in terms of change in fundamental attitude to life and work and in social, cultural, and political institutions. Thus they emphasised the reduction of poverty, unemployment and diminution of inequality. Similarly, Todaro (1992) adopted the similar approach to development when he defines development as a multi-dimensional process that involves major changes in the social structure, popular attitudes, and the national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty. Some economists like Owen and Shaw (1972) conceptualize development in terms of participation of the underprivileged person in institutions so that they can have control over the economic, social and political benefits that are at present monopolised by the elites.

A new concentration has been seen in many developing countries in creating more and better education, health, housing, recreation and other facilities. The trend of development moved from the emphasis on per capita income to deal with poverty levels among the masses or satisfy the basic needs of the majority of the people - that is, to add both socio and economic dimensions and to examine the impact of development on the
life of people. The objectives of development were thus fixed as improving the general quality of life and meeting the basic needs of the majority of the population.

These new objectives of development have necessarily evolved into various new approaches and strategies. The redistribution with growth strategies - meeting the basic needs and people's participation approach - received currency in the development literature. (Chenery et al: 1974; Streten et al: 1981; and Hulme and Turner: 1990). Since a large proportion of the total population of the developing countries live in rural areas, high priority was given to the development of the rural sector. The section following paints the nature of rural development.

1.3 RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The increasing disillusionment with the modernization approach (emphasizing achievement of economic objectives and scant attention to the social dynamics of change) to Third World development in the 1960s, and in the early 1970s, have changed the concerns of the development economists in the mid-1970s, to rural development. Much of the literature analysing the social consequences of the past development programmes emphasise the fact that such modernisation approaches tended to lead to increasing inequality in the country in general and in the rural sector in particular and contributed to increasing mass poverty in many rural societies in the Third World (Griffin: 1979).

There has been a speedy acceptance of the concept of 'rural development' over the past few decades. It is enshrined as a policy aim in many developing countries' national plans during the 1980s. Indeed, it has become one of the key phrases in policy making in the 1990s. Yet among those engaged in the subject, there appears to be little consensus on what the rural development phrase includes. Writers have traced literally dozens of different uses of 'rural development'. These different uses or interpretations or definitions may simply reflect functional differences or policy approaches particularly concerning the achievability of rural development. Thus they relate to key issues and policy
initiatives. In order to provide a broad and well-defined concept of rural development, it is necessary to analyze these interpretations of rural development.

1.3.1 Concepts and Methods

A widely used definition is that of Jasina et al. (1981) who defines rural development as "an overall improvement in the economic and social well-being of rural residents and in the institutional and physical environment in which they live" (quoted in Shortall: 1994). One of the most comprehensive definitions of rural development is that offered by Buller and Wright (1990) who described it as an ongoing and essentially interventionist process of qualitative, quantitative and/or distributional change leading to some degree of betterment for rural groups of people. Rural development is thus defined as improving living standards of the masses of the low-income population residing in rural areas. Copp (1972) has defined rural development as a process aimed at improving the well-being and self-realization of people living outside the urbanized areas through collective efforts. These definitions clearly show rural development as an overall improvement in the economic and social well-being of rural residents. Thus, a vast corpus of literature, especially the modernization approach to rural development, equates rural development with agricultural development. In the modernization approach, the prime objective has been to increase the agricultural output. The operational goal of rural development included improved agricultural productivity, and thus higher income. This is because the main occupation of the rural masses is agriculture. Mosher (1969) recognizes the interdependence of agriculture growth and rural growth. According to him, the increased welfare of rural people depends on achieving agriculture growth. The modernizing approach advocates that in poor countries, where most of the people live on or near the land, they can only be developed or improve their conditions and ensure their children a less arduous and more prosperous life only when the agricultural output is grown. The whole idea behind the rural development was to produce more agricultural commodities in order to feed the people both in rural and urban areas; to provide raw materials to industry at home and to export agricultural products to finance capital goods from
developed countries to provide resources for human welfare and development. The World Bank also viewed rural development in the same way when the bank defined it as:

"Since rural development is intended to reduce poverty, it must be clearly designed to increase production and productivity . . . . It is concerned with modernization and monetization of rural society and with its transition from traditional isolation to integration with the national economy (World Bank: 1975a).

But due to the limited access to land and its uneven distribution in developing countries, the increased volume of farm production (agricultural growth) did little or nothing to improve the situation of the rural poor. So the central problem in rural development is not agriculture. Poverty in rural areas cannot automatically be cured by agricultural growth, though it is essential for development. Rural development is, therefore, defined as agricultural development plus distributive justice. The term agricultural development is too narrow to be used or equated with rural development because the latter entails much more than the former. Poverty eradication and inequality is the central objective in rural development.

The focus in rural development is on the poor. The central concept of rural development is of a process through which rural poverty is alleviated by sustained increases in the productivity and incomes of low-income workers and households. Lately, the World Bank observed:

"Rural development is a strategy designed to improve the social life of a specific group of people - the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood on rural areas. The group includes small holders, tenants and the landless (World Bank: 1975a)."
Similarly Anker (1973) conceives rural development as strategies, policies and programmes for the development of rural areas and the promotion of activities carried out in such areas (agriculture, forestry, fishing, rural craft and industries; the building of social and economic infrastructures) with the ultimate aim of a fuller utilization of available physical and human resources and thus higher incomes and better living conditions for the rural population as a whole, particularly the rural poor, and effective participation of the latter in the development process.

The U.N conception of rural development emerged as the outcome of a series of quantitative and qualitative changes occurring among a given rural population and whose converging effects indicate, in time, a rise in the standard of living and favourable changes in the way of life of the people concerned. Rural development, therefore, embraces a wide range of objectives and activities, including raising agricultural output, to improve education and health, to increase employment, to expand communications and to improve housing. It is a multi-sectoral process, which encompasses all sectors of social, agricultural and economic activities. Rural development in the present terminology means more than an increase in the productivity of the individual farmer. The rural poor are the focal point of rural development. International aid agencies, especially the World Bank have pointed out that in the present day vocabulary of international institutions the term 'rural development' now implies, among others, a focus on poverty (World Bank 1975a). Haque and his colleagues came forward with a similar views when they defined Rural development as essentially a dialectical process centred around man (Haque et al: 1977).

To Chambers (1983) rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of development. The group includes small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless. One characteristic, which has been associated with this new approach to development (rural development), has been an
emphasis upon the participation of the people in development process. All these definitions reflect the pragmatic and man-centred perspective of rural development.

1.3.2 Rural Development Approaches

Discussions on rural development are peppered with expressions like modernization (development through agricultural growth), community development, dependency theory, self-reliance, participation, women in development (now called gender awareness) and vulnerable groups. Policies and programmes regarding rural development in developing countries fall into two main categories: (a) Agriculture Development that concentrates on providing support for and stimulating development in the agriculture sector and (b) IRD (Integrated Rural Development) which aims at comprehensive rural development.

The advocates of the agricultural development approach argued that since the rural poor depend for their livelihood largely on agriculture, the causes of their poverty could be traced to low agricultural yields and low productivity of labour. A strategy for rural development must therefore aim to increase the agricultural productivity. Hence the growth of agricultural productivity as a pre-requisite for agriculture's role in economic growth without directly relating to its welfare implications for rural and farm people in the process was accepted. In relation to the question of who gains or loses from this development strategy, they appear to believe simply that a decrease in the number of farm people will increase farmer's welfare in the process of economic growth. However, the constructed world of neoclassical economics is a rare case among Third World countries. It is not even the case in capitalistic U.S. agriculture (George: 1979). The so-called 'Green Revolution' in developing countries did not improve the living conditions of the rural poor. The main benefits went to the land owning elites and other persons of wealth and property. Since the majority of rural people in developing countries are landless or small farmers with a limited access to inputs and credit facilities, the green revolution could not initiate any major change in their quality of life. Several studies (Misra and Bhooshan: 1981) indicate that the Green Revolution has not in any way improved the living conditions of the rural poor or reduced the immigration of rural
labour to urban centres, despite the implementation of land reforms in some countries. Misra and Bhooshan (1981) further argue that the strategy failed because of the fact that other rural development strategies such as land reforms, rural industrialization and other institutional reforms were not pursued by the national governments. This led to very unfavourable implications for landless and small farmers.

With respect to lending to agriculture, the focus upon poverty and the emphasis on development of human as well as physical capital led to the concept of integrated rural development which seeks to increase productivity, improve the quality of life of the rural population, and promote self-reliant development. Since rural development is intended to reduce poverty, it must be clearly designed to increase production, including projects to raise agricultural output, create new employment, improve health and education, expand communication and improving housing. The argument for integrated development went as follows: because all societal problems - but particularly poverty - result from a set of integrated causes (in the case of poverty, lack of education, income, health, information, political participation and so on), the appropriate societal responses to these problems also must be integrated (Friedman and Lindblom: 1978 quoted by Sonyal: 1994).

Misra and Bhooshan (1981) in their review of rural development experiences, quoted six basic elements of an integrated rural development programmes as suggested by Waterson (1974): a) labour intensive agricultural development; b) employment generating, minor public works; c) small-scale labour intensive, light industry established in and around farms; d) local self-help and participation in decision-making; e) development of an urban hierarchy supporting rural development; and f) self-supporting, appropriate institutional arrangement for multi-sector project coordination.

Arthur Lewis, one of the leading experts in development economics, identifies what has been learned so far about how to aid the poorest. There is general agreement today, he maintains, that the rural poor can be aided by a variety of governmental action - such as land reform, agriculture extension services, educational and public health services - and technological improvements including irrigation, better varieties of seeds, and increased
use of fertilizer. (Lewis: 1984). This sounds very similar to the measures advocated by the growth-with-equity approach.

Mosher (1972) has very long ago classified integrated rural development projects broadly into three types: a) Agricultural development projects that involves such activities and services as research, land development, agricultural training, production credit, extension work, agricultural support and produce marketing; b) Rural development projects without an agricultural comment which involves activities such as rural industries, public works, community development - social infra-structural construction and services, recreational and cultural activities, etc; and c) Rural development projects with agricultural comment - an amalgam of a) and b).

In a similar but slightly different approach known as the "Rehovot Approach", Rannan Weitz (1979) considers agricultural growth as a prerequisite for rural development and urbanization as a promotion factor for rural development. Weitz looks at transformation of the agricultural sector as the prime mover and advocates a fusion of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' strategies. The integrated rural development could be reflected in various dimensions or aspects, which more or less go together. They include (a) social infrastructure - education, health and sanitation; (b) physical infrastructure - roads, irrigation system, electrification of villages' etc; (c) agricultural development; (d) the development of cottage industries (Inyatullah: 1974). Thus rural development is a process leading to improvement in agricultural productivity, rural incomes, and rural welfare, in terms of health, nutrition, education, and other features of a satisfactory life such as security and equity.

In general, therefore, rural development is associated with two often-distinct traditions, agricultural development on one hand, and community development on the other. Rural development projects thus try to bring a basket of goods and services, consisting of production, social and infrastructure components to the poor in rural areas.
Traditionally, rural development objectives have been tried to achieve in some countries through a centralized approach called the 'directive approach' where planning for change and betterment of the rural people comes from the state (top-bottom model) and which, Long and Winder (1981) indicates, is characterized by:

“... A pattern of centralized control and administration by which the objectives and means of implementation are determined by government or international agencies” (p. 82).

It does not exclude the possibility of the people participating in some decisions that affect them, but all major decisions and policy design remain in the hands of the state’s officials (Batten: 1974). The objectives of the development program through this approach could not be materialized. So the failure of economically oriented projects to bring about any significant improvement in the social and economic position of the rural poor, led to the emergence of non directive approach which sees local participation as the key point of rural development. Thus the notion of rural development became participatory rural development as:

- development of the people
- development for the people and
- development by the people

1.4 PARTICIPATORY RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Over the past few decades new approaches to development have been adopted. The human element has lately acquired a new significance. Getting over their earlier obsession with economic growth, planners now readily appreciate that it is the involvement of people in the development process that ensures sustainable development. The whole purpose of development is being redefined so as to bring people to the central stage. Participatory Rural Development (PRD) also called by someone as community driven development, (see for example Ghazala Mansoori and Vijayendra Rao: 2004) or
community participatory development (see Rehman and Others: 2000), initiatives aim to foster a decentralized, participatory, and equitable development process in poor rural communities. While programmes differ substantially in design, objectives and target communities, a common organizing principal is clearly discernible. It is the belief and principle of participatory development, according to Keith R. Emrich (1984, p.360) that development must begin in the very lowest tier or level. There must be real opportunities for participative decision making for the target groups and those decisions must relate to their future development.

According to the advocates of PRD (Mansoori and Rao: 2004), Participatory development aims at accomplishing certain specific functions including:

1. Identifying and eliciting development priorities by the target community itself,
2. Strengthening the civic skills of the poor by nurturing community organizations and
3. Enabling communities to work together for the common good.

Such efforts are expected to ensure that resources are allocated in a manner that is responsive to the needs of the poor; that investments in community infrastructure can be used and maintained by recipient communities in a sustainable fashion; that private benefits, such as welfare or relief, are better targeted; that governments, local or national, are made accountable and responsive in the provision of public goods and services; that local elites are prevented from capturing the benefits of development programs; and, that the most disadvantaged in the community are able to participate in decision making processes, reducing social exclusion within poor communities (ibid).

In the last decade, many governments and development agencies, including the World Bank, have embraced PRD programmes with enormous optimism and enthusiasm, and investments in PRD programmes have increased substantially.
1.4.1 People's Participation

People's participation as a strategy of rural development was given a new fillip beginning in the 1970s, when the various governments in developing countries, international agencies and research bodies became disenchanted with the pace and direction of economic growth and social progress of the 1960s. Throughout the development decades, the United Nations has called for people's participation in the development process. The recent World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen (1995) reaffirmed the growing concern with participation in social development. With the shifting emphasis in development objectives and strategies towards promoting more socially equitable economic growth and meeting the basic needs of the poorest groups in developing countries, widespread participation in decision-making is considered essential to the development process (Rondenelli: 1981).

People's participation is considered as an integral part of both the ideal and practice of democracy, and reflects the basic aspirations of the people (OECD: 1994). The recent revived interest in participation is linked to concepts of good governance and democracy, which make the governments more accountable, and government accountability is considered essential to benefit the poor (World Bank 1994).

1.4.1.1 Nature and Definition of Participation

a) Defining Participation

Participation has been defined in narrow and broad terms. In its narrow connotations, participation is defined as the active engagement of citizens with public institutions, an activity which falls into three well-defined modes: voting, election campaigning and contacting or pressuring either individually or through group activity, including non-violent protests (Verba et al., 1978; Parry et al., 1992). Excluded in this definition are attitudes towards participation and participation in rural development efforts. In its broad terms, participation is a "collective sustained activity for the purpose of achieving some
common objectives, especially a more equitable distribution of the benefits of development" (UNESCO, 1979: 15).

Political participation has been an issue in development management from the beginning, but its significance has increased principally because it has become part of official rhetoric. Individual full participation in making societal choices and decisions is a natural outcome of the endowment of individual dignity because it contributes to individual self-development. Responsibility for the governing of one's own conduct develops one's dignity. In particular full individual participation within the local institutions contributes to the creation of community solidarity because everyone feels involved in what is going on relative to their welfare (Uphoff, 1986).

Individual full participation boils down to popular participation where the largest proportion of the citizenry is invited and expected to express their wishes on issues of governance. On every issue, the views of the majority should prevail. This popular participation may be achieved through meetings in small and large communities through ratepayers associations, neighborhood groups, and other political and social associations. Public or popular participation in decision making is an imperative tenet for democratic local government (Giddenjuys et. al., 1991). But in order not to deny the minority its rights of self-assertion, it is also a democratic imperative that while the majority would have its way, the minority must have its say. In return, the minority must accept the majority decision once that decision has been freely arrived at.

Although there are different ways to define participation, the dominant perspective is to treat it pragmatically and to view it as a strategy to improve the development process.

**Varieties of Participation**

Joan Nelson (1979) has identified three varieties of participation. They are:

- Horizontal variety of participation, involves partisan or political behavior – voting, campaigning, interest group activity and lobbying. In other words, the
horizontal type of participation relates to activities to get people involved collectively in efforts to influence policy decisions.

- Vertical variety of participation includes any occasions when members of the public develop particular relations with elites or officials, relations that are mutually beneficial. Examples include patron-client networks and political machines. In both these cases the public is not as concerned with influencing the government as it is with developing the particular relationship and receiving benefits from it.

- Participation in administrative processes (which may overlap with either horizontal or vertical participation) takes the form of interest group activity to shape administrative decisions or of a particular exchange between patron and client; but usually it is more inclusive than either of the other two varieties. It includes decisions by farmers whether to adopt a new technology, rural dwellers meeting together to plan communal efforts to put up a market or taking part in civic education programs.

Changes in the Meaning of Participation

Byrant and White (1982) have postulated that the dominant concern during the 1950s and 1960s was controlling the amount and type of participation. For example, military regimes were efforts to foreclose participation at the national level. Indeed, participation was feared as a disruptive influence. Even where participation was encouraged in a community development program, it was usually very limited in its scope. This preoccupation with the dangers inherent in participation was consistent with definitions of development as capital intensive and growth oriented and with administration as a hierarchical top-down structure.

Participation, during the 1950s and 1960s, was defined in purely political terms; it meant voting, party membership, activity in voluntary associations, protest movements, etc. As modernization proceeded, it was assumed that the benefits of growth would trickle down to the public and gradually stimulate their involvement in these political processes. In the
meantime, it was important to provide institutions to channel participation so as to prevent its potentially unstable results. Parties were particularly encouraged as a means to harness and manage the political energies and demands of the public (Deutch, 1961; Parry, 1972).

By the 1970s, the meaning of participation in the development context began to be redefined. Rather than being identified with political and electoral processes, it became associated with the administrative or implementation process. A number of reasons account for the redefinition of the political scope of participation. First, according to John Cohen and Norman Uphoff (1978: 11), the change of attitude was initially spurred by politicians, and "had a notable counter insurgency quality about it". Participation was valued as an alternative to revolutionary movements and uprisings. The reasoning was that if people could be mobilized to be part of the development process, they would be less available to revolution. Second is the realization that the political process was too undeveloped to elicit preferences or involve the public, and therefore participation would have more impact within the implementation process. In the words of Grindle (1980:3):

‘the implementation process may be the major arena in which individuals and groups are able to pursue conflicting interests and compete for scarce resources. It may even be the principal nexus of the interaction between a government and citizenry’.

Those in development projects picked up the involvement of the public in the implementation phase of development and particularly in administrative processes and referred to the practical values of involving farmers or peasants in the development taking place in their villages. For example, Uma Lele (1975) reviewed African rural development projects and found that participation had been a significant and positive component. This because:
Participation in planning and implementation of programs can develop the self-reliance among rural people which is necessary for accelerated development (Lele, 1975:150).

A similar study of thirty-six projects carried out by Morss et. al (1975) where they defined participation as involvement by the farmers in project design and implementation and as commitment of either labor or money.

Recently, the definition of participation in development has often been located in development projects and programmes, as a means of strengthening their relevance, quality and sustainability. In an influential statement, the World Bank Learning Group on Participation defined participation as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them (World Bank, 1995).

From this perspective, participation could be seen in the level of consultation or decision making in all phases of a project cycle, from need assessment, to appraisal, to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation. While these participation projects could be funded by the state, participation within them was seen not as related to broader issues of politics or governance, but as a way of encouraging action outside the public sphere. Moreover, the focus was often on direct participation of primary stakeholders, rather than indirect participation through elected representatives.

Surprisingly within the development literature there has been less attention to notions of political participation which involve the interactions of the individual or organized groups with the state, and which often focus more on mechanisms of indirect participation. Political participation has been defined in broad or narrow terms by different authors depending on the approach of inquiry. The classic study of political participation by Nie and Verba (1972:2) defines it as those legal activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental
personnel and/or the actions they take. Parry, Mosley and Day (1992: 16) who define it as taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies.

Political participation is more associated with representative democracy and indirect participation (Richardson, 1983; Cunill, 1991). It expresses itself in individual and collective actions that include mainly voting, campaigning, contacting, group action and protest towards influencing the representatives in government, rather than active and direct participation in the process of governance itself.

In her work in Latin America Cunill refers to citizen participation as the intervention of private citizens with determined social interests in public activities. As noted by Cunill (1997:76-77) citizen participation refers to political participation but distances from it at least in two ways: it abstracts both participation mediated by political parties, as well as the one exercised by citizens when they elect political authorities. It expresses instead - although with multiple meanings - the direct intervention of social agents in public activities. Citizen participation in this sense involves direct ways in which citizens’ influence and exercise control in governance, not only through the more traditional forms of indirect representation.

In sum, within the discussions on mainstreaming participation, we begin to see a redefinition of the concept of participation, such that it moves from only being concerned with beneficiaries or the excluded to a concern with broad forms of engagement by citizens in policy formulation and decision making in key arenas which affect their lives.

1.4.1.2 Dimensions of Participation

Participation is a very broad concept, and when the term is used in the context of development activities the question is how to operationalize that participation? The clear answer to this question demands familiarity with i) what (activities), ii) who (elites / ordinary people), and iii. how (the way / method of peoples' involvement) dimensions of participation.
The 'what' dimension of participation consists of the various activities where people may participate. The report of the United Nations (1975) and other development studies revealed that people should participate in development projects from needs identification to needs satisfaction stage, only then can they be benefited from the development project. It implies the involvement of people in goal setting, planning, formulating, implementing and evaluating of development projects. According to Cohen and Uphoff (1980), people's participation include a participation in decision-making and participation in programme implementation and evaluation.

The second dimension is a focus on who participates? In a truly participatory approach all those affected have to play a role at all stages of the development process (Lane: 1995). Cohen and Uphoff identified two groups of participants, residents and leaders, as particularly important in participation in development. The World Bank approach to the 'who' dimension of participation calls for the participation of 'stakeholders'. Stakeholders are defined by the Bank as the parties who either affect or are affected by development actions, who lack information and power and are excluded from the development process (World Bank: 1994).

The third dimension of participation is its organizational imperatives. The commentators and practitioners in development pleaded for participation through local organizations. The democratic, accountable and responsive organizations and associations including village councils, progressive unions, farmers societies, traders associations and multi-purpose co-operatives, may be effective in participatory development (Verhagan: 1980).

The focus of 'how' dimension of participation is also on the degree or level of participation - the degree of empowerment. In his World Bank Discussion Paper, Samuel Paul identifies four methods of participation: information sharing, consultation, decision-making, and initiating action (Paul: 1987). The latter indicates participation of the highest intensity. Each level of participation is characterized by a different relationship between the implementing agency and the beneficiaries. Information sharing participation refers to a process where the agency informs intended beneficiaries about the project, and so flows
of information and control are both in downward direction. In a process involving consultation information flows are more equal, with the agency often making use of local knowledge, however control is still from the top down. In decision making participation beneficiaries have some control over the process. Finally where participation has advanced to the stage of the beneficiaries initiating action both information and control flows are primarily upward, from the beneficiary group to the agency, but the donor agency retains some degree of control. The World Bank has put forward a number of practical suggestions for participatory involvement. These involve six sets of mechanisms, moving from those in which stakeholders have least influence to those in which they have most influence, viz.: (1) information-sharing mechanisms, (2) consultative mechanisms, (3) joint assessment mechanisms, (4) shared decision-making mechanisms, (5) collaborative mechanisms, and (6) empowering mechanisms (The World Bank: 1994).

Arnstein long ago considered peoples' participation as a categorical term for people power (1969). According to her, it denotes nothing less than a redistribution of power that enables have-nots to share in the benefits of society.

Figure: 1.1
Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen's Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Citizen Control</th>
<th>degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Delegated power</td>
<td>of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>citizen power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Placation</td>
<td>degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Informing</td>
<td>tokenism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Therapy</td>
<td>non-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td>participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Arnstein, 1969: p. 217

She proposes an analytical ladder of people’s participation that ranges from 1) non-participation - manipulation and therapy to ii) degrees of tokenism - informing,
consultation, placation, and then to iii) degrees of peoples' power - partnership, delegated power, citizen power. The classificatory principle in Arnstein's ladder is the amount of people power exercised. She presents her ladder of participation graphic with the least desirable element first and the most desirable element last.

Wanyande (1986) tries to operationalize the concept of participation by distinguishing three levels at which people may begin to participate in the development process. According to him people may participate at the level of identification of their own development needs and priorities without any outside or external interference. This is equated to the 'empowerment approach' of Oakley (1987) where people themselves identify, plan for and implement their own development projects. The second level is that where grass-roots participation begin to operate after the development needs, priorities and programmes have been drawn for the people by an outside agent such as central government or a foreign donors / development agency. The initial idea may not have come from the people but they are involved in making some important decisions relating to project implementation. This is equivalent to the 'community development' approach of Oakley (Ibid). The third level according to Wanyande, is the form of participation in which grass-roots participants take no part either in the identification of the project or the discussions about the project implementation. In this form the grass-roots participants only begin to get involved at the actual implementation stage and then only to provide labour. Some observers have labelled this a 'collaboration' approach (Oakely: 1987).

1.4.1.3 Participatory Approaches to Rural Development

There are indeed substantial impediments to broad participation in rural development. Different approaches for promoting participation have all had to contend with these obstacles. The concept of participation in development is far from new. Indeed, it was part of the rhetoric of the New Deal in the 1930s. It has become the dominating ideology in contemporary thinking in both non-governmental organization (NGO) and governmental / inter-governmental agencies (Cernea: 1991; Poulton and Harris: 1988; Oakley et al: 1991). Broadly speaking there are two main traditional approaches to rural
participation: (1) community development programmes which were aimed at preparing the rural population to collaborate with government development plans; and (2) the establishment of formal organizations (cooperatives, farmers associations etc) which were to provide the structure through which the rural people could have some contact with, and voice in, development programmes (Oakley and Marsden: 1984; Bergdall: 1993).

A. Community Development Approach to Rural Participation

The community development approach is an important step in the evolution of participatory approaches in rural development. It started after World War II in India and the Philippines, and spread throughout Asia and much of Africa. Gerrit Huizer (1984), while reviewing the studies on community development undertaken by A. R. Desai, observes, the approach implicitly accepted the assumptions that individuals, groups, and classes in a village community have common interests which are sufficiently strong to bind them together. It also assumed that the interests were sufficiently common to create general enthusiasm, and that conflicts of interests were sufficiently reconcilable. The approach attempted to work with total village community without recognizing the basic contradictions or conflicting interests that exist within communities (rich and poor, elite and non-elite, and the dominant - dependent). It was generally accepted in community development approach that working through the established traditional leaders in the villages, generally the better off would automatically benefit the whole community. But these assumptions proved to be unrealistic and the approach was, therefore, called 'betting on the strong'. It was the better off, mainly the dominant land owning groups, who benefited from the extension work and other projects, rather than the majority of the poor peasants in the community. Hoizer concluded that the 'harmony model' of community ironically enhanced and sharpened the potential for conflict at the village level.

The approach was based on 'developing the capacities of the people to better meet their needs through self-reliant local action (Korten: 1990). There are good reasons for the
close association of participation with a community development approach. First the aim to meet basic needs obviously requires the participation of all in benefits. Second, participation in implementation improves efficiency through the mobilization of local resources. Third, the development of a community's capacity to plan and implement change will require greater intensity and scope of participation as the project proceeds. But Oakley and Marsden (1984) concede that the strategy has not resulted in meaningful participation of the poor in development and the local elites continued to make and implement decisions in their own interests under the cover of a participatory organizational structure.

B. The Cooperatives Approach to Rural Participation

The cooperatives have been one common form of rural participation throughout the developing world. Cooperatives were conceived as voluntary associations where people organize together in order to mobilize the potential of their collective power. The intention was to establish democratically controlled structures whereby people can profit from economies of scale. Cooperatives were expected to serve as a vigorous instrument of rural development in many countries, because national elites assumed that rural life was permeated with cooperative solidarity in various forms. It was only necessary to provide new institutional frameworks, they believed, in order to mobilize this solidarity for national purposes. The cooperatives were intended to be institutions through which the people could participate in the development process. However, the actual experience of cooperatives has fallen far short of these expectations, as local cooperative societies have been formed more on the basis of strong top-down sponsorship by the state with the aim of changing the traditional egalitarian and individualistic social organization (Bergdall: 1993; Scudder: 1990) they could not contribute to rural participation.

Although cooperatives have been chosen as the primary institutions for development in various developing countries for ideological reasons, they have generally failed to stimulate development where they have not arisen out of the desires and social structures
of the people concerned (UNRISD: 1975). The then Director of the UNRISD, Mr. Donald McGranham observed:

"... rural cooperatives in developing countries today bring little benefits to the masses of poor inhabitants of those areas and cannot be generally regarded as agents of change and development for such groups. It is the better-off rural inhabitants who mainly take advantage of the cooperative services and facilities such as government supported credit and technical assistance channelled through cooperatives" (UNRISD: 1975).

Thus, cooperatives failed to empower rural people, as it led to undesirable patterns of benefit distribution. A lack of empowerment has been identified as an important constraint to successful development (Scudder: 1993). The major efforts, therefore, should be concentrated upon the empowerment of people.

C. Partnership Approach to Rural Participation

A third general approach to participation can be distinguished from fostering people's organizations or promoting community-based activities. It is an approach that seeks to include people in the planning and implementation of development projects, which are usually externally initiated, funded, and ultimately controlled. This approach attempts to create participatory partnerships between development authorities and the rural population (Bergdall: 1993). Some observers like Oakley and Marsdon (1984) have labelled this a 'collaboration' approach to rural participation where governmental or non-governmental organizations remain the primary driving force. Because decentralization programmes are an attempt to transfer specifically defined aspects of authority and control to District Councils or other local representative bodies. But many constraints, particularly ones of financial accountability and aid administration, make this a difficult task. In any case, as observers have noted, representative bodies remain just that: participation becomes the prerogative of a privileged few who now find themselves
included in a widening but nevertheless still quite small circle of decision-makers (LaCompte: 1986).

In all approaches, rural participation is understood to be a manipulative process, where rural populations are intentionally kept in a passive subordinate position. Some political authorities, of course, give rhetoric encouragement for rural participation. This often takes the practical form of half measures, of enlisting people to supply labour or make financial contributions to projects that have already decided elsewhere. The implementation of development programmes in Pakistan has been so exploited.

1.4.4 Obstacles to Rural Participation

The participative approach to rural development is now part of the normal language of many development agencies, including non-governmental organizations, governmental / inter-governmental agencies (Cernea: 1991; Poulton and Harris: 1988; Oakley et al: 1991; Adnan et al: 1992). Despite the perceived advantages of participation, there is relatively little participation on the part of rural people in development projects. There is however, a substantial gap between rhetoric and reality. There is also some indication that in a number of areas insufficient efforts have been made to encourage people participation and therefore any evaluation of the approach is difficult. This question is addressed directly by Van der Blick and van Veldhzwon (1993) with respect to the development. They concluded that:

"there seems to be a lack . . . of specific methods ensuring and stimulating participation of end users and producers. Experimentation with the target group mostly took place through trial and error".

There are certain inhibiting factors, which makes participation at the 'grassroots' level unlikely or difficult.
The first major limiting factor in people's participation at the local level relates to the nature of people's responses to opportunities for participation. There is the fundamental assumption implicit in discussions on participation that people are simply waiting to participate if they are provided with opportunities and/or helped to do so. But this assumption does not accord with the factor of apathy often reflected in people's failure to turn up for meetings or other activities to which they are invited. Correspondingly, an atmosphere of passivity and dependence prevails in rural communities. Mathur (1992) argues that exclusion of people from decision-making cannot entirely be blamed on administrators. Sometimes the people themselves see no reason to come forward and participate. He, however, added that people are prevented from venturing out of their isolation by a host of local circumstances, which they are in no position to circumvent. The apathetic nature of behaviour at the popular level is an incomplete explanation. In the development literature on people's participation there are various reasons given for this apathy regarding development decisions. Conyers (1982) argues, apathy reflects either a lack of personal interest in the matter in which participation is required, or a belief that one's participation will not make a real difference to the course of events. Apathy is a condition which, as Paul Colin (1975) believes, may be due to: the project does not reflect the felt needs, the inability of people to influence directly the allocative machinery, and the low sense of political efficacy.

Eyben and Ladbury (1995) have identified four main reasons responsible for relatively little participation in development decisions: economic, politics, professionalism and the nature of the product. The economic argument for non-participation is that sustained collective actions will only be achieved when people perceive that the opportunity cost of their participation is more than offset by the returns brought by the project. The benefits, in other words, must be greater than the costs of participating (Eyben and Ladbury: 1995; Ebrahim: 1985; UN: 1975). The economic position of rural people is so poor that they prefer to engage in activities/business directly contributing to their livelihood. They cannot spare time to attend village meetings, or participate in other activities of development process. For poor people, participating in community projects means their family going to bed without supper.
The political explanation for non-participation, according to Eyben and Ladbury (1995) is that participation is going to be limited and/or the participators will be unrepresentative if beneficiaries lack the power to organize and get themselves fairly represented. An alternative way of phrasing this would be that participation of all or some of the beneficiaries may not be in the political interests of other actors in the project. The participation by poor may be discouraged by the more powerful actors in the local community, as the local elite feels threatened when the poor organizing themselves into action groups (Ebrahim: 1985). This is why poor people are often the principal agents in development projects but participation is limited to elites. In rural areas, traditional local leadership is frequently vested in relatively large landowners, and religious figures. As a rule, these local leaders have a higher level of education, status as well as natural positions that enable them to act as brokers with agencies outside the community. The existence of the participatory channels do not help the situation if these comprise committees/councils of relatively privileged members of a community's socio-economic structure. In such a case, which is not uncommon, little or no real participation by beneficiaries is possible (Eyben and Ladbury: 1995). This is why Sachs (1987) said that participation is more frustrating than it is advantageous for those who are powerless. This will, in most situations, automatically imply conflict with more well to do elements in differentiated rural societies (Burkey: 1993).

The apathetic situation occurs mainly due to the poor economic, political and social position of people, but some times the latter themselves do not always want to participate. A recent Overseas Development Administration funded study observes that people feel that development functions were primarily the government’s responsibility. Rather they prefer to participate passively and/or through their community leaders (quoted in Eyben and Ladbury: 1995).

People's participation requires a substantial national level-commitment and considerable institutional capacity. In his study of developing countries, Korten (1981) indicated the lack of organizations, poor communication infrastructure, and factionalism arising from competing economic, social and political claims and the corrupting impact of influential
community leaders. Organization at village or even at district level are either short or membership of poor people in such organizations is nonexistent. Hence local organizations easily become centres of formal power controlled by the few elites.

The willingness and commitment of national leadership can establish bases for society-wide popular participation. It requires local autonomy (which is taken to mean here the freedom of locally elected bodies to set priorities which they see as in their localities) but the national leadership may be unwilling to share their powers with local leaders because of possible political opposition. Hence local committees / councils are established but without power and authority. Governments are often cool to the idea of popular participation, because it creates demands, raises expectations, and general political opposition and unrest, Ebrahim (1985), and Paul Colin (1975) call it the low sense of political efficacy.

Professionalism, according to Eyben and Ladbury (1995) is also a reason for non-participation. The professional bureaucrats both at national and local level pose important barriers to effective local participation. Lack of community participation in projects can be the result of bureaucrats assuming the role of knowledgeable specialists who do not take user's views into account because users do not 'know enough' (according to them) to make decisions. However, some times people themselves hand over their participatory rights to professionals, thereby saving time, energy, and in some instances, conflict. Moreover the desire of participation is likely depend on the 'product' offered as much as on the development of channels and structures to make participation a practical possibility.

1.5 CONCLUSION

Development is a complex and continuous process, defined and interpreted in a variety of ways. Economists identify it with economic productivity and higher standard of living; sociologists with social change and social differentiation; political scientists with democratisation and participation; and administration experts with bureaucratic
performance. Underlying all these divergent viewpoints is common concern to improve the quality of life for man.

The concept and approach to development has gone through many changes. Increasing the GNP (production-centred development model) was one of the earliest approaches, wherein benefits of growth would percolate to all the people at all levels, but it did not succeed in developing countries, because of the increased disparities of income distribution. The search for alternatives to this economic growth model in the 1970s led to 'human development' or 'man-centred' approach where there was advocacy of "growth-with-equity" - a strategy directed at expanding the productive use of resources in small-scale agriculture and meeting basic needs of all the people through subsidies and packaged programmes. Another discernible trend was emphasis on people participation at the grass-roots level in planning and administration. Many of the contemporary approaches in human development model like basic needs approach highlighted participation of the people in development process. Participation became one of the new 'mantras' of the official aid establishment, being chanted even in the most powerful agencies of all, such as the World Bank. In this way, the underlying principles and implications of participatory development can be clarified while also recognizing the difficulties and complexities of participation in practice. But there is substantial discrepancy between rhetoric and reality of participation in several developing countries. State and its bureaucracy continued to play the role of initiator in development and elites reap many of the benefits of development programmes. Despite good progress over the past generation, more than one billion people still live in acute poverty and suffer grossly inadequate access to the resources - education, health services, infra-structure, land and credit - required to give them a chance for a better life. The essential task of development is to provide opportunities, so that these people and hundreds of million not much better off can reach their potential (World Bank Report: 1992). It would, thus, seem that the ultimate goals of development have yet to emerge clearly. The recent call in development is to move 'beyond people first' to 'people empowerment' - incorporating basic changes in power relationships, as a lack of empowerment has been identified as an important constraint to successful development. Development agencies (e.g. World Bank) thus call
for the operational rubrics of accountability and the legal framework of institutions, to be achieved through decentralization, competition, and participation (Goetz and O'Brien: 1995).

With the shifting emphasis in development strategies towards promoting more socially equitable economic growth and meeting the basic needs of the poorest groups in developing countries, widespread participation in decision-making is considered essential to the development process, and decentralization has been advocated as a way of eliciting that participation (Rondinelli: 1981). The chapter following, therefore, paints the conceptual framework of decentralization.
CHAPTER 2

DECENTRALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Decentralization is a well-known and widely applied concept in the present day world, and the popularity of decentralization as a policy to promote development is increasing. It has increasingly been promoted as a key component of the strategies aimed at alleviating poverty. The developing societies, at the threshold of a new era, placed major emphasis on decentralization for the contribution it can make to social and economic development. Indeed it is no panacea, but it can yield substantial benefits.

The transfer of power from the central government to more peripheral levels has been seen as a means for overcoming physical and administrative constraints of development, improving the management of resources, and increasing community participation (Vaughan et al. 1984; Mills et al. 1990; Manor 1995). Most of the donor nations and international development institutions substantially shifted their focus from urban-industrial strategies to a focus on rural dwellers. Agriculture, and equitable growth and decentralization are regarded as an appropriate policy tool to achieve such development (Kliksberg: 1994). The disappointing performance of the state in development and the increasing poverty in rural areas in developing countries, as Kliksberg (1994) asserted, led to calls for a state that "pursues human development as the ultimate goal; that strengthens and increases democracy; that works as a team with private enterprise and civil society towards a national project of productivity, competitiveness and growth; and that uses every possible means to promote and support the organizations and development of civil society". So competitiveness, development, democratization, equity, strengthening civil society and participation are the basic characteristics that the redesigned state or as Kliksberg calls it the 'intelligent state', should have in the new management paradigm. The new paradigm stresses that "the state must fully encourage citizen participation by decentralizing, creating
transparency in public actions, favouring all kinds of co-management by citizens, encouraging institutions to take part in development, and striving for political systems that enable the citizenry to mature gradually and fostering organization and expression by civil society" (ibid.). Decentralization was thus touted as an alternative, promising a set of governance arrangements more conducive to determining local needs, responsiveness to citizens and further autonomy and democracy. Decentralization was counselled as an alternative approach to promote a country's economic and social development. The progress towards growing decentralization of state management, a generalized process at the international level, has many implications in terms of democratization and participation, as well as management efficiency. This was the background to the evolution of 'development from below' as compared to 'development from above' (see for instance, Stohr and Taylor: 1981; Mabogunji: 1980) and today it is viewed as the most appropriate development strategy in developing countries (IIAS: 1994).

This chapter explores and outlines the conceptual framework of decentralization and explains the local governments.

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF DECENTRALIZATION

Throughout the world, participatory development is the basic objective of the governments and decentralization is tagged as an effective device for achieving such development. Since the 1970s decentralization has become a particular mode of development administration, what Conyers (1983) calls 'the latest fashion in development administration', in many developing countries not only to accelerate development but also to develop new political and administrative arrangements for planning and managing development programmes and projects. National Governments and international development agencies came forward with a focus on decentralized administration, which was expected to provide an effective means of promoting development for the rural poor.

Decentralization has been a perennial tool for development in Third World countries since Independence, with three main phases of popularity. Conyers (1983) notes that the interest
in decentralization in the late 1950s and early 1960s was associated with the transition to Independence and the concomitant desire to create democratic structures after the imposition of colonial rule. Through the 1970s, decentralization was advocated as a salve to unresponsive centralised planning (Cheema and Rondinelli: 1983) and avowedly as a means to increase popular participation in development (Conyers: 1983).

Despite a growing interest in decentralization, its interpretations suffer from what Curbelo calls 'its ambiguity, its capacity to conceal more than it reveals, its identification with long-established sentiments, its facile justification from purely technocratic points of view and the political instrumentality that it potentially engenders' (quoted in Slater: 1989). Slater (1989) refers to the mosaic of meanings attached to decentralization so it will be useful to provide some definitions.

The concept of decentralization is very broad. The term itself can have many meanings depending on the goal and objectives of the programme. Many developing countries in Asia and the Pacific have so far attempted to implement decentralization as being the transfer or delegation of planning, decision-making, or administrative authority from the central government and its agencies to field organizations, subordinate units of government, semi-autonomous and parastatal organisations, local governments, or non-governmental organizations. This implies that decentralization can range from the shifting of routine workloads to devolution of power to perform specified functions. It refers to 'public function', namely those activities most likely to be provided by government or agencies and, secondly, that it is territorial, involving transfer to sub-national levels rather than to peripheral agencies at the same (central) level.

The liberal democratic tradition in the West perceives decentralized government as the institutional vehicle for political education, training in leadership, political stability, equality, liberty and responsiveness (Smith: 1985). In terms of the developing countries, the term is used in a wider context. It has positive connotations as well as 'emotional overtones' particularly when it is used for achieving such objectives as 'popular participation', local
democracy', power to the people', relevant development', co-ordination', integration', and debureaucratization' (Conyers: 1986).

Samoff (1990) differentiates between those who treat decentralization from a liberal interventionist perspective and those who see it as a more thorough political project. The former sees decentralization as essentially an administrative matter, which can be achieved through a more efficient organization. Whether popular empowerment accompanies the administrative change is not really the issue. The political analysts, on the other hand, see decentralization as a means of increasing citizen participation in decision-making. Hence issues of empowerment and local autonomy become more important. The result of these normative differences is a lack of intellectual communication and misunderstanding. The interventionists take top-down views of efficiency and focus on issues of deconcentration, while the political analysts look upwards from the periphery and see decentralization as a means of strengthening central control rather than a more desirable devolution of political power. Resurfacing in the 1970s and 1980s, decentralization is seen purely from a developmental perspective, which facilitates achieving a wide range of development objectives: implementation of national plans, co-ordination of national development programmes and popular participation in development.

However, this methodological pluralism conceals the fact that advocates of decentralization ignore the fundamentally political nature of decentralization, namely 'who rules and who benefits?' Slater's (1989) framework of 'mirage, myth and mask' is useful in tying these various themes together. Decentralization as 'mirage' refers to a situation where the power that is devolved further strengthens the already locally powerful. Decentralization as 'myth' is the rhetoric of decentralization where a universal discourse is used to conceal particularistic state intervention on behalf of either capital or the personal gains of officials. Decentralization as 'mask' refers to its use in smuggling in other political schemes such as deregulation or a more pervasive removal of national sovereignty by lender agencies. The development agencies, therefore, make universal assumptions about decentralization and search for the ultimate causes of the under-development malaise solely at the national level. However, reality is far more complex where 'there are no root causes but interactions and
reciprocal effects (Sarnoff: 1990). Similarly the populist tone evidently among many of the political analysts is uncritical as neither centralization nor decentralization necessarily benefits the disadvantaged (Sarnoff: 1990). Decentralization in the real world, it is argued, can be used by a regime as a tool for accumulation and for gaining political legitimacy, incorporation and political control. The liberal development administration group has failed in addressing crucial issues of the context within which decentralization takes place. This is why Mullard (1987) maintains that governments in developing countries involved in the process of decentralization but no one would believe that this process is empowering the ordinary people. The strongest advocates and observers of decentralization even recognize that it is not a panacea (see for example Rehman: 2002) for the social and economic ills of the poor and will not alone change political and social relationships that have obstructed greater participation in development planning and administration in the past. Griffin, a radical political economist, advocates decentralization but emphasises that:

"it is conceivable, even likely in many countries, that power at the local level is more concentrated, more elitist and applied more ruthlessly against the poor than at the centre. Thus, greater decentralization does not necessarily imply greater democracy let alone 'power to the people'. It all depends on the circumstances under which decentralization occurs (Griffin: 1981)."

The sharp observation made by Gerard Marcou must be taken very much into account. He points out that decentralization does not necessarily promote democratization and participation. If certain conditions (for example participation by citizens and not just by social elites) are not present, 'local autonomy may lead to the confiscation of power, and hence the resources that come with it, by a dominant political or social group (Marcou: 1993). The UNDP's Human Development report (1993) states that "decentralization can end up giving more power to local elites than to the local population. In other words, there can never be efficient local participation in the developing countries if there is no redistribution of power. If decentralization is to be expected to promote Human Development, it must promote democracy at the local level".

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Similarly Mullard (1987) notes, 'decentralization represents a specific discourse which implies empowerment, participation, democracy, humanism and other desirable objectives. . . [yet] . . . we need to look at a strategy which disables rather than empowers, which creates new political elites with no forms of accountability, which fails to provide a holistic strategy but instead replaces it with ad hoc bodies often concerned with narrow interests'. Thus decentralization should be seen as part of the process by which dominant classes, including those at the local level, articulate their interests through state policies and institutions (Smith: 1985).

Indeed it can be demonstrated from experience in developing countries that decentralization might bring about minority repression by a few powerful local elites, especially if such elites were chosen to lead the local councils on the basis of heredity, or other favours. These alleged problems of decentralization are not to be dismissed lightly. Indeed, one observer has noted that "many of the arguments for and against decentralization are as Herbert Simon pointed out 'like proverbs'. For almost every principle one can find an equally plausible and accepted contradictory principle. Decentralization promotes efficiency and reduces it. Decentralization enhances national unity and inhibits it and so on" (Larmour: 1985).

2.3 MODALITIES OF DECENTRALIZATION

Academics are in no greater agreement over the appropriate use of the term 'decentralization'. Brian Smith, in one of the fullest accounts of decentralization to date (Smith: 1985), sees territoriality as the essence of the term. Thus 'decentralization involves the delegation of power to lower levels in a territorial hierarchy, whether the hierarchy is one of governments within a state or offices within a large scale organization'. In contrast, management specialists, such as Gareth Morgan, use the term 'decentralization as an organization principle in divisionalised organization (Morgan: 1986). The normative values inherent in these competing analyses of decentralization are different. There is deconcentration / devolution dichotomy, administrative decisions and political power, territorial and functional decentralization. Decentralization essentially refers to the systematic and rational dispersal of governmental power and authority to local level
institutions so as to allow multi-sectors decision-making as close as possible to problem areas (Guzman: 1988). Decentralization is the exercise of power at lower levels in an organizational hierarchy or inter organizational network, whether or not a territorial sub unit is involved, in such a way that a significant change takes place in the way that organization or network performs (Stevens: 1994). Seen from this standpoint, decentralization is generally considered to take four fairly well known modalities and approaches, (Hicks: 1961; Maddick: 1963) or degrees (Rondinelli: 1981). When central government decentralize, they may choose to do so in different ways and to different degrees.

2.3.1 Administrative Decentralization or Deconcentration

With deconcentration (also known as 'administrative decentralization'), strong centralizing tendencies coexist with particular forms of bureaucratic decentralization (Hoshino: 1994). It refers to efforts at deconcentrating or delegating decision-making from headquarters of central government ministries to field offices. In other words, it is the dispersal of agents of central government into lower level arenas (Manor: 1995). Deconcentration refers to the simple dilution of centrality by distributing various elements of political and administrative activity to non-central offices (Morris: 1992). It implies the delegation of purely administrative decision-making to dependent field offices of a central ministry. All major policy decisions are continued to be taken centrally, but the services are delivered and routine administrative decisions are taken by locally based but centrally employed civil servants. Deconcentration involves the redistribution of administrative responsibilities only within the central government so that decision-making tends to revolve around implementation rather than allocation. It is the delegation of responsibility and authority by the national government departments and agencies to regional, district, or field offices. The arrangement is administrative in nature and implies no transfer of final authority from the national department whose responsibility continues. In Smith's model, field offices are part of an organizational structure and hierarchy with spheres of competence formally defined by superior officials at headquarters (Smith: 1985) and consequently have very limited power. At one extreme this merely involves the shifting of workload from central government ministry headquarters to staff located in offices outside the national capital, and the staff
may not be given the authority to decide how those functions are to be performed. Fesler argues that the shifting of workload may not really be decentralization at all: "to move workload out of the capital may be efficient and convenient for the public and may even promote a feeling that government is close to the people", he notes, "but it may not involve any decentralization of power, that is, it may not provide the opportunity to exercise substantial local discretion in decision-making" (Fesler: 1968). It is a means of increasing central control. Many writers, for example Heager, are critical of the deconcentration approach to decentralization. He considers, deconcentration as a method for the central government to increase its power by more effectively curbing liberties" (Heager: 1974). Similarly Manor (1995) is critical of deconcentration when he says 'indeed, it is often used as a device to provide such governments with greater penetration into and control over lower level arenas and civil society'. But sometimes a greater degree of deconcentration is achieved through field administration which implies the transfer of decision-making discretion to field staff, allowing them some latitude to plan, make routine decisions and adjust the implementation of central directives to local conditions, within guidelines set by the central ministries. The power of field administrators, as Smith (1985) stresses, is 'bureaucratic rather than political'.

Deconcentration, thus, means creation of field units for central agencies; deployment of more personnel to field stations; the elaboration and integration of their functions and structures into multi-functional microcosms of their parent agencies to accelerate economic growth in the concerned areas.

**2.3.2 Functional Decentralization or Delegation**

Functional decentralization is also deconcentration to parastatal agencies with some financial and administrative separation from the main bureaucratic hierarchies (Manor: 1995; Hoshino: 1994). The principle of bureaucratic hierarchy has now been replaced by the delegation of both programmed and non-programmed decisions to subordinate units, allocating unit heads power over large areas of decision-making. Central government can create semi-independent agencies / organizations to run specific services. Political scientists
label such organization as quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations (QUANGOs) that represent the arm's length relationship with central government. Delegation implies the transfer or creation of broad authority to plan and implement decisions concerning specific activities - or a variety of activities within specific territorial boundaries - to organizations that are only under the indirect control of central government ministries. Often the organizations to which public functions are delegated have a semi-autonomous nature to perform their responsibilities, and may not even be located within the regular government structure. Delegation of function, as Rondinelli (1981) observed represents a more extensive decentralization than administrative deconcentration.

Delegation implies the lending of central authority, responsibility, and resources for exercising administrative and substantive functions to subordinate units or organizations in the centre and in the field that are technically and administratively capable of carrying them out. Although these organizations and agencies have been decentralized, they really serve to reinforce centralization and decision-making at the higher levels. The relative autonomy of these agencies, and their bureaucratic way of assuming certain functions and responsibilities, have given rise to serious problems of coordination and control (Harris: 1983).

Many developing countries applied this approach to decentralization during the 1950s and 1960s to development administration. It was seen by many development motivated political leaders as a way to short-circuit the normal government machinery and endow it with developmental derive, coherence and authority to plan and pursue economic development.

2.3.3 Political/Democratic Decentralization or Devolution

Central government can devolve policy-making responsibilities in a wide range of service areas to relatively autonomous and directly elected regional, provincial, or local government multi-purpose, multi-functional institutions. Devolution, as defined by Manor (1995), is the transfer of resources, tasks and decision-making power to lower level authorities, which are (a) largely or wholly independent of the central government, and (b) democratically elected.
Devolution implies more permanent and inter-governmental transfers, from national to local governments, of political as well as administrative and technical functions, answerable to the local community as a whole. Certain writers such as J. W. Fesler, A. H. Hanson, and Henry Maddick have called it democratic or political decentralization. The political decentralization view equates devolution with local autonomy. Political decentralization or devolution involves a degree of political autonomy, with decision-making transferred from central government to local government. In this regard, devolution is the degree of self-determination and self-government enjoyed by local units in their relation to central government, thus implying a measure of independence from national control. It is usually gauged by the allocation of powers and functions between national and local units and the control and supervision exercised by the national government over local units. Thus devolution perceives the local autonomy as a constitutional right of local units. This interpretation of decentralization is more consistent with the revolution in public management thinking and the idea of power sharing (Osborne and Gaebler: 1993). The historical dimensions of developing countries indicate that this type of devolution is nonexistent and in spite of the positive and encouraging panorama that many countries present, local governments are constrained by their poor administrative, technical, and financial capabilities. There is no financial and fiscal autonomy. As the local representatives may use the local autonomy without accountability as anti-government political power base. This is an anathema to the philosophy of individual responsibility and professed government probity under the central government (Pycroft: 1995). The local government may challenge the central government's mandate, as asserted by Mrs. Thatcher, when she states that: "the hard left power was entrenched in three institutions: the Labour Party, local government and the trade unions. From all these bases they . . . proceeded to challenge our renewed mandate" (Thatcher: 1993 quoted in Pycroft: 1995).

Some administrative theorists argue that devolution is a concept and arrangement quite separate from decentralization, in that it implies the divestment of functions by the central government and the creation of new units of governance outside the control of central authority. Sherwood (1969), for example, has noted that devolution means "the transfer of power to geographic units of local government that lie outside the formal command
structure of the central government'. Thus devolution represents the concept of separateness, of diversity of structures within the political system as a whole. He and others argue that decentralization and devolution are two different phenomena and would use decentralization to describe an intra-organizational pattern of power relationships (Sherwood 1969).

2.3.4 Privatization

It connotes the transfer of responsibility and resources for certain governmental functions to the private sector. Through privatization, governments divest themselves of responsibilities either by transferring them to voluntary organizations or by allowing them to be performed by private business. It is a recent fashionable policy prescription and political philosophy for national development. It is claimed to have many virtues. It could relieve government of its fiscal burdens, rationalize its role in development and improve the administration of programmes appropriate to the public sector. Its advocates argue that this constitutes both decentralization by passing power from central government to private firms and democratization by increasing choice for 'customers' who receive services (Rondinelli: 1989, 1990). By decentralizing power through the reduced scope of the government, it may be said to contribute to the redemocratization in a nation that has otherwise been insured to dictatorship (ibid.). But its critics (e.g Slater: 1989, 1990) argue that the private sector firms which take over tasks from the State are themselves often quite large, so there is a fear that from being decentralized, power is actually passing from one major power centre to another. They also argue that user charges, which often come with privatization, exclude many poor people and thus do not necessarily increase choice. If privatization is indiscriminately applied, however, it may instead impair necessary services and help erode public confidence in government, for this kind of policy is based on theoretical premises that cast serious doubts on the competence of government to provide goods and services in an efficient and effective manner. Moreover, while privatization may enhance the freedom and power of dominant forces, it need not strengthen democracy in the sense of broader popular participation in the process of development and governance (Ocampo: 1988).
The definition of decentralization as "the transfer of planning decision making, or administrative authority from the central government to its field organizations, local administrative units, semi-autonomous and parastatal organizations, local governments, or non-governmental organizations (Cheema and Rondinelli: 1983) opens up questions about the market provision (deregulation, privatization) of services since the market can be regarded as a centrally regulated, but with decentralized allocation mechanism (Harvey: 1988). The public choice approach and the emergence of the 'New Development Administration' school stresses deregulation, privatization, minimal government and popular participation (Werlin: 1992). It is this approach that opened up a debate between Slater (1989; 1990) and Rondinelli (1989; 1990) in the journal of 'Development and Change'. Rondinelli et al (1989) produced a political economy model which combined public choice and public policy approaches and added privatization as the form of decentralization which marked a shift from his earlier work of ranking deconcentration and devolution as the prime decentralization methods. This directly contradicts another of his statements: 'especially the poor' must be allowed to express their needs and demands' and 'press claims for national and local development' (Rondinelli et al 1989). Therefore, privatization can be found in this context, implicit in the concept of debureaucratization.

2.4 THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In many countries renewed attention is being paid to decentralization and the revitalization of local government reforms (U.N: 1992). Establishment of local government has received emphasis within the reinventing government movement, especially in the application of decentralization to the government (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). The structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), initiating during the 1980s, generated a growing awareness among government officials of the potentially productive role of local government in the development (Keliien: 1998; Smoke: 1993). The emerging focus on a broader role for local government is strongly supported by multinational development agencies. At the Tuluca Conference (1993) and in the 1990 study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD: 1990) much attention
was directed at the potential for an enhanced role for local government in economic development.

2.4.1 The Nature and Definition of Local Government

The question of what is local government is to certain extent a definitional one but, at the same time, substantive problems are involved. By concentrating on the legal provisions the authors do not determine whether the local structure is local government or local administration. Such a question can only be answered by looking at the actual workings of the structure and asking what is the relationship between national and local governments. So the term local government is an elusive one, not least because most people comfortably assume they understand what it is. But in fact, it can mean different things to different societies. In many developing countries the concept of local government has become confusing, with changing colonial administrative strategies, with shifting strategies of different post-colonial elites, and also with uncertain attempts at creating development oriented administrative structures. It is why W. J. M. Mackenzie (1961) in his 'Theories of Local Government' said that there is no theory of local government and there is no normative general theory from which we can deduce what local government ought to be. By this he meant that it was difficult to give one single definition and explanation of local government. Nevertheless, his work and that of other scholars including Rudolf Von Gniest, Toulmin-Smith, J. S. Mill, Langord, Moulin, D. M. Hill, Sharpe, Wilson and others provided a framework within which local government can be defined.

There are two approaches to the definition of local government in the literature. One approach, which is usually adopted in comparative studies, is to regard all sub-national structures below the central government as local government, which considers the administrative decentralization and democratic decentralization as equal terms, used for local government. A second approach is more circumspect in that local governments are identified by certain defining characteristics. These characteristics usually focus on five attributes: legal personality, specified powers to perform a range of functions, substantial budgetary and staffing autonomy subject to limited central control, effective citizen
participation and localness. These are regarded as essential in distinguishing it from all other forms of local institutions and also to ensure its organizational effectiveness (Mawhood: 1983). The public administration office of the United Nations defines local government as: "a political sub-division of a nation or (in a federal system) state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the powers to impose taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected" (quoted by Sady: 1962). This definition has been widely accepted and is adequately comprehensive. A.H Marshall has suggested that local government have three essential characteristics:

"Operation in a restricted geographical area within a nation or state; local election or selection; and the enjoyment of a measure of autonomy including the powers of taxation" (Marshall: 1965).

Similarly, D. M. Hill defines local government as a system of territorial units with defined boundaries, a legal identity, an institutional structure, powers and duties laid down in general and special statutes, and a degree of financial and other autonomy (Hill: 1974). S. Humes and E. Martin define local government as, 'infra-sovereign geographical units contained within a sovereign state or quasi-sovereign province states' (Hume and Martin: 1969).

As such local government is said to have the following characteristics: a defined area of jurisdiction, a population, a continuing organization, the authority to undertake and the power to carry out public activities, the ability to sue and be sued and to enter into contracts, to collect revenues, and to determine a budget (ibid.).

The characteristics attributed to local government can also be found in other local administrative agencies. The basic point is that questions of autonomy cannot be answered by reference to legal texts. The identification of local government depends on the relationship of a particular local institution to the national political system. It may or may

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not be autonomous. The point is not one for assertion but one to be ascertained (Rhodes: 1971).

2.4.2 The Rationale of Local Government

Having defined local government as a decentralized unit below the national government, it is important to know the characteristics, value or as various authors have phrased it, the justification of local government (Clarke and Stewart: 1991; Smith: 1985; Young: 1986). In the context of the long-standing and even complex theoretical debate over local government by various scholars at different times it is said that the reason scholars attached to local government are different. One group sees the value of local government as its contribution to an educated citizenry and a democratic climate of opinion. Another group stresses its value as an efficient service provider and a check on central government. Hence its values are mainly classified as its value as a protector and promoter of pluralism; its contribution to the political education of the citizen and his political participation; and its effectiveness as a service provider. Kalien, Walter in a report prepared for UNDP/SDC in 1998 has pointed out the following rational for strengthening local governments.

1. Efficient and Accountable Administration

Many of the recent constitutional and legislative changes in countries all over the world have been primarily motivated by the desire for a more efficient administration. The past has shown that central governments were often unable to proficiently implement policies and programmes. In fact, in many countries, decentralization is associated with affording a "better government". Local governments have the potential to perform better for several reasons:

- As one author stressed, a decentralized body "in comparison to national government, ..., is more accessible, more sympathetic and quicker to respond to local needs" (Paddison: 1985). On a local level, programmes and services can be more easily
adapted to particular local circumstances and needs: Necessary information is more readily available, and local authorities are obviously more knowledgeable about a local situation than authorities who are far away from realities at the grassroots level (Fleiner-gerster Thomas 1987).

- The close relationship between citizens and government at the local level also fosters accountability: the best way to prevent governments from abusing their powers is by keeping decision-making close to the people (Kendall: 1991). Where people know each other, it is more difficult to hide corruption than in situations where government is far away and inaccessible. It is also easier at the local level to hold officials and elected office-bearers accountable, as politically they will be less protected than persons at higher levels will (ibid).

- Finally, decentralization helps to reduce costs. As the Human Development Report 1993 has stated:

  'If local people feel that it is their money being spent, they are likely to keep a tighter lid on expenditures and to use resources more efficiently... Local development also opens up the opportunity for people to add voluntary contributions to amplify a programme or projects impact' (UNDP 1993).

2. Better Local Development

In many countries one of the primary motives for decentralization is the prospect of improving local development. Local authority rural development work may be defined as any action taken deliberately by a local authority to alleviate what it perceives to be a local development problem. The advantages of decentralization for a more efficient administration just outlined above also apply to local development projects. In addition, two elements are of particular importance:
If development activities are undertaken with the participation of those involved they not only can be better tailored to the real needs of the local population but also enhance the sense of ownership and responsibility for the project and, thus, produce better results.

Decentralization removes institutional and legal obstacles to self-help and it encourages innovative forms of solutions of local problems:

One of the most important benefits of local decision-making is that it allows diverse solutions to emerge in response to general problems. Instead of central government attempts to solve the housing shortage with one programme which it imposes on the entire country, various regions and communities act as laboratories for testing numerous ideas, the best of which are then imitated elsewhere (Henkin Louis 1987).

Local government may make development activities more sustainable: For example, beneficiaries who "own" the project will be more easily ready to assume the responsibility of maintenance. In Nepal, for instance, forests are much better preserved since they have been handed over to "user committees".

Experience has shown that people are ready to contribute to local development projects if they can participate in the decision-making and feel that the particular project improves their situation. Thus, local resources for social and economic development can be more easily mobilized if such projects are decided and implemented on the local level.

3. Democracy, Peoples' Participation and Protection of Liberty

The democratic value of local government has long been acknowledged by the political scientists and scholars of public administration (see for example Young (1986), Smith (1985), Stewart (1983), Mill (1968), and Cole (1960). For most citizens, the notion of democracy is not restricted to participate in national elections. Primarily, democracy
means for them the possibility to influence those decisions that effect their life directly and to live every day in freedom and liberty. In addition, local level administration can be more accessible for the average person and thus more "human" than a very distant and mighty central administration (Kaelin 1998). All of this gives democracy a clearly local dimension.

Although a state's respect for democracy and individual freedom does not depend on decentralization, such form of government may further these two fundamental values. The idea that local self-government promotes democracy and individual liberties is deeply rooted in many decentralized countries. The right of citizens to participate in decision-making on local level furthers true democracy. Decentralization builds a sense of community and permits more meaningful participation in self-government. In many countries, the autonomy granted to local units is designed to assure self-determination and the rights of minorities and their members against abuse by national majorities (ibid). This, however, implies that local entities are organized in a way allowing real participation and that national authorities do not tolerate the creation of autocratic and authoritarian forms of government on the local level.

Distribution of power to different levels of government and the competition between these levels allows for a system of checks and balances which is likely to set limits on the central government if it attempts to overstep or abuse its powers. Thus, decentralized government also constitutes a specific and extended expression of the basic constitutional principle of the separation of powers (Higuchi, Yoichi 1987; Fleiner-Gerster 1987).

Decentralized government allows, to a certain extent, for a specific kind of politically power-sharing. If a specific government is ousted from power, that particular political party may still control some local governments. This is compatible with the role of opposition on the national level but mitigates the harsh principle of 'the winner takes all' at the local level and thus may add to political stability.
So the outgrowth of decentralization literature has emphasized Local Government as a way and vehicle for good governance, and participatory development. The Local Government is seen as a vehicle that may accelerate people participation in development decision-making and may make the Government responsive to the people's needs and accountable.

But this democratic value of local government had been confronted in the well-known debate on 'local-self government as a basis for democracy' in the JOURNAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION during 1953-54. Professor Langrod contended that the extension of democracy through local government leads, through the mobilization of the people, inevitably to the achievement of a centralist democracy and the suppression of local government itself (Langrod: 1953). He further argued that local authorities could exist in non-democratic systems as well as democratic ones, and even in democratic system local bodies may have little real autonomy. He further argued that the existence of local bodies does not mean the existence of a democratic national government, nor vice versa. Langrod then, apparently saw a basic contradiction between democracy and local government. For him democracy is synonymous with national government, incompatible with decentralized political structure (Langrod, 1953). Similarly to Moulin, local government is in many respects parochial, anti-democratic, weak and outmoded, an obstacle, in short, to the higher democratic will of the nation (Moulin: 1953). Moulin also disputed the contention that local government was an effective training ground for national politicians.

L. J. Sharp (1970) has also criticised the more extravagant version of the political values of local government on the grounds that local authorities are not immune from arbitrary tendencies. The dispersal of power may lead to corruption. As Allen (1990) notes, despite all the national and international evidence that central agencies are often at least as incompetent, inefficient or corrupt as, local bodies, local authorities are perennially in the news for alleged corruption and graft... one or two notorious cases can suffice to keep the whole concept of local government in disrepute. Of course, local governments particularly in developing countries are prone to corrupt, inefficient and unethical practices and they are described as "a conspiracy against the public, an institution that is riddled with bribery,
nepotism, politics and corruption”. But, as some protagonists of local government (Johnes and Stewart: 1985; Hampton: 1991) have retorted that this criticism observed is not entirely satisfactory. No one would argue that local governments always act fairly or that central government is always autocratic. The argument is simply of pluralism: when there are several centres of power, disagreements are likely to come into the open, and open government is preferable to the coteries of centralism.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Decentralization as a policy of rural development is consistently focused in many developing countries since the 1970s. The motivation for and application of decentralization policies varied considerably. In past deconcentration type of decentralization was favoured in many countries. In most decentralized systems in the Afro-Asian states, local units function under heavy control and supervision from the centre. In a decentralized system, that stresses people's participation and devolution of authority, local units must be autonomous and clearly distinguished as a separate jurisdiction over which the centre exercises little or no direct control. However, the decentralized units in developing countries are far from attaining such autonomy, and are almost fully dependent on the centre for financial allocations. In many of the cases the central governments initiated, introduced and heavily publicised decentralization policies only to see them falter during implementation (Rondinelli: 1983a). Haque (1986) emphasising the great extent of central control over local units as an "illusion of decentralization". The impact of decentralization varies from country to country; however, the results of decentralization policies so far implemented in developing countries are not impressive. This is mainly because of the mis-implementation of such policies by the central governments, as some observers (Cheema and Rondinelli: 1983a) have pointed out. The decentralization choice was made without a consciousness of the whole political commitment - the functions to be given to local bodies, the resources to be provided and the structural supports and defence for the new system. Cheema and Rondinelli (1983a) viewed that financial, administrative and political support of the central government is very important towards the successful implementation of decentralization policies. But they also argued that if the central government's support leads to control of
routine operations in the local level, it can become counter productive and the actual goals of the policy may remain unrealized.
CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an outline of the research methods employed in the fieldwork and identifies the process of collecting the study's data.

The sample survey technique was used to collect the data for this study. The information about the services local authority provide in the village, local council's role in development, peoples' participation in development activities etc was gathered from a sample of the people who lived in villages in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan.

It became clear from the early stages of this research that the survey technique would be most appropriate for collecting well-defined quantitative data on evaluating the role of district government in Pakistani village development. The strength of the survey method lies in its potential for quantification (the availability of valid and empirical indications), replication (measuring instruments of survey can be repeated in different times and places), and generalization of the findings to a larger population within known limits of error (Warwork and Lininger: 1975, p. 7-8).

The sample survey is practical and economical in terms of time, effort and resources. Bulmer and Warwick stated the advantage of sample survey as:

"... providing extensive quantitative data relatively cheaply. Broad generalization can be made from relatively small number of observation as long as probability sampling methods are used" (1993b: 31).
3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main objective of this study was to investigate the role of the decentralized government in the development of the Pakistani village. To achieve the objective of this study and to determine the research problem more precisely and clearly, it is better to state this objective in terms of questions (Fox: 1969). Therefore the study would aim to get answers to the following questions:

1. What are the services that are actually delivered by the district government?
2. Do all villagers receive these services?
3. What are the needs of the people and priorities of the district government?
4. How are these projects/services formulated/performed and implemented/delivered?
5. Do people participate in such services and development activities?
6. Does district government involve people in its development activities?
7. What are the factors that could obstruct the role of district government in participatory rural development?
8. Are the people satisfied with the district government?
9. Do people want to continue the system of local government in the country?
10. What is the level of local government participation in State's development programmes?
11. What are the attitudes of the elected councillors towards participation of community people in development programmes?

3.3 THE SELECTION OF RESEARCH AREAS

The study was conducted in the NWFP, which is divided into 24 districts. So the universe for this study would be the people who lived in the villages in the NWFP of Pakistan. It was not the intention of the researcher to survey the entire population who lived in the NWFP. Thus, to achieve the objective of the study, the sample and sampling techniques were used. The advantages of using a sample are saving time, reducing costs,
and giving more accurate data if it is chosen correctly, due to the high rate of response from the respondents (Bailey: 1987). Accordingly this technique was used in the study.

Among the probability samples used in this study is the multi-stage cluster sampling. This kind of sampling is used when the population is large and widely dispersed over a large area, which makes choosing the sample expensive in time and travel. This technique of obtaining a final sample depends upon drawing several different samples such as clusters or areas for concentration rather than using a simple or stratified random sample of the whole population. The idea is to begin from more inclusive to less inclusive sampling units until reaching the population elements that constitute the final desired sample (Kidder and Judd: 1987). The purpose of using the multistage cluster sampling was to ensure that units of population were adequately represented in the final sample. The selection procedure of the area and respondents in this study was similar to the procedure outlined and adopted by Verba and Kin (1980) in the case of India for their research of this type. From this point of view the multistage of the research was done as follows:

3.3.1 Selection of Districts

It has been discussed earlier that Pakistan is comprised of four provinces, each province is divided into various administrative districts and each district consists of a number of villages. Since the goal of this study was to analyze the role of district government in the villages' development, the survey was designed to be representative of the rural population as a whole in NWFP. Since the homogeneity is high among each district, therefore only two districts were chosen as Peil (1982) said:

“If a group or area is truly homogenous, a large sample is unnecessary (p. 40)”

So the first stage involved random selection of Kohat, and Mansehra districts in NWFP. Although the districts selected had diverse agro-ecological zones that range from very productive high potential to poor and unproductive arid and semi-arid areas and their
relative progressiveness were also based on the differences in the socio-economic development and other qualitative and quantitative development criteria (Pasha 1988; GOP: 1993). But these districts had similar physical, socio-cultural, demographic, religious make up and topographical characteristics. Also, identical system of local government was introduced in the selected districts at the same time.

3.3.2 Selection of Union Councils

Since there are 58 and 27 (total: 85) widely dispersed union councils in district Manschra and Kohat respectively, it was impractical in terms of time and expense to conduct a survey of households in all. So we decided to select four union councils’ areas randomly in each district for a survey study. The procedure adopted was as follows:

The list and name of 'union councils' in each district were obtained from the district government secretariat concerned. Then four 'union councils' namely 'Togh Bala', 'Gumbat', 'Lachi', and 'Khushalghar' were randomly selected in district Kohat while in district Mansehra four union councils namely 'Mansehra rural', 'Dhodial', 'Battal', and 'Nikka Pani' were selected randomly. Hence we selected 8 union councils in two districts.

3.3.3 Selection of Villages

Regarding villages’ selection, a one-stage sample design was adopted. Within each 'union council', we got a list of the villages from the concerned union council’s office. Then within each union council, we selected randomly two villages. Thus we selected 16 villages in both the selected districts (two per union council).
3.3.4 Selection of Respondents (The Sample Unit)

The sample unit, which was used in this study, was the households who lived in the selected NWFP’s villages and the district councillors, district Nazims and district Naib Nazims of the district government.

Many writers argue the difficulty of determining the appropriate and optimum size of the sample in social research (Bailey: 1987, Cohen and Manion: 1989). The correct sample size is dependent upon the nature of the population and the purpose of the study. In general, it is better to have as large a sample as possible to reach general conclusions. Nwana (1982) highlighted this point and said:

“The larger a sample becomes, the more representative of the population it becomes and so the more reliable and valid the results based on it will become” (p. 71).

From this point of view de Vaus (1990) suggested two key factors for determining such a size: these are the degree of accuracy the researchers require for the sample and the extent to which there is variation in the population in regard to the key characteristics of the study.

There are many ways of determining the sample size required for achieving representatives for a given population. One is to select a minimum of 10 per cent of the population, or to apply statistical formula or in the of sample size used in previous research. It could be achieved also by using a handy guide table particularly designed to determine this sample size.

The author adopted the method of using the table that is designed to help any researcher to know his representative sample of population without using formula or doing any calculation. Such method is an acceptable one among social sciences (Krejcie and Morgan: 1970, Fitz-Gibbon and Morris: 1987 etc).
This table as a ready and easy reference is used to determine the sample size in this research. According to the table the required sample size in this research should not be less than 384, because the size of the research population is about 100000. But the larger the sample size the more representative the sample is. The researcher chose a sample size of 400 respondents, as Fitz-Gibbon and Morris (1987) indicated that:

“If you can match the suggested size, you can fairly certain of accurate representation through simple random sampling” (p. 162)

The villagers sampling frame is based on the household list and employs a two-stage sampling design, with the households selected in the first stage and the particular individual for interview within chosen household, selected in the next stage. With limited time and facilities at the researcher's disposal, it would have been difficult to interview all the villagers in the area of the two selected districts of NWFP (Pakistan). After obtaining a good up-to-date list of households for each village from the district administration, we used a simple random sampling method for selecting households. The benefits of using a simple random sample include: its effectiveness in generating representative sample size; and the greater precision of survey estimates compared to those of other methods. Since there were wide variations of size among villages selected, a constant sampling ratio was not favoured. So it was decided that households should be selected proportionately to each village population. That is, the village sample size is proportional to the relative village population. However on average 25 households per village were sampled and so 480 respondents in 16 villages.

For the selection of a particular individual for interview, the researcher obtained the details of all the adults in the selected household currently aged 18 or over from the household in each village, from which the researcher selected one person through a random selection procedure. The survey sample was therefore, a simple random sample of all names contained on the households. This selection process suggests that the principle of securing representation by rational criteria was pursued. It is, therefore,
contended that representativeness in these premises was ensured, thereby strengthening the study claim to bring a reasonable reflection of the sample in the whole province.

In addition to households, we also selected a sample of councillors, Nazims, and Naib Nazims in the particular district councils. This was done because of the fact that they are the persons who actually know the internal functions of the local authority. Here again we adopted a random sample approach in order to select councillors in the selected councils and eventually we achieved a sample of 120 councillors for interviewing.

3.4 THE OVERALL RESEARCH TOOLS

Once the councils and respondents were selected, they were studied using a combination of methods. Weighing one method against another in terms of criteria, such as accessibility, economy of resources, accuracy and relevance, and the nature of data needed for the study, it was decided to go for a triangulated approach i.e. secondary data analysis, survey data analysis through questionnaires and interviews and observation. The strength of one method often offset the weakness of another. Also data that is available via one of the methods may not be available through any other approach.

To meet the needs for an 'explicit synthesis between conceptual theory and empirical field research' a number of alternatives techniques are utilized in social research in order to provide as wide a database as possible. So following Smith and Cantley's (1985) principle of 'methodological triangulation', we also used a variety of data sources in order to uncover the viewpoints of different stakeholders. We feel that this approach would reduce the shortcomings inherent in any one particular method and the depth and quality of the information we obtained provides adequate compensation for the study limitations.
3.4.1 Data Collection

3.4.1.1 Questionnaire Development

Data for the study was collected through a questionnaire specially designed for this study. The questionnaire is a highly structured data collection technique since each respondent is asked the same questions (de Vaus: 1990).

Two kinds of questionnaires were used in the study. The first one was the questionnaire (A) that was used to gather information from the people in order to examine, in their opinion, the effectiveness of the “District Government” in the participatory village development. Questions were also included regarding the peoples’ attitude towards the villages’ development their opinions concerning the work of district government.

Since rural dwellers are the people whom the councils intended to serve, therefore, the study sought the ordinary rural dweller’s perception of local councils and their role in rural development. The villagers interview schedule has been constructed and administered among villagers. The aim of this was to provide a precise statistical survey, though such techniques are extremely time-consuming, to find out how much the local population participated in local development projects, how much interaction they had with their councillor and what changes had occurred in their lives after the introduction of the local council system in general and the completion of development projects (if any) in their village in particular. The objectives were to assess the responsiveness and participative and democratic aspects of councils from villagers’ point of views. The interview schedules were developed around such key terms as: villagers’ communication with their councillor, their participation in leader selection, their participation in development projects and evaluation of their councils. A short but comprehensive interview checklist, the details of which are given in Appendix A, was designed and developed well before hand. The size of the interview schedule was kept short, as D. J. Casely and D. A. Lury (1987) consider it important for improving the accuracy of
responses. However, we tried to cover each required aspect of our research in the interview.

Peoples’ questionnaire began with a covering letter or introductory statement informing the people about the identity of the researcher, the propose of the study, importance of the study in order to encourage them to answer all the questions and finally assure the confidentiality of the answers and the respondents.

Accordingly, to ensure the high response rate for the questionnaires and to have all the questions answered the researcher had to gain the trust of these people (Hershfield et al: 1993). Therefore two university postgraduate students who belonged to the respective district were appointed by the researcher to do these interviews with people. The researcher trained the investigators in the procedure of the survey. The purpose of the survey, survey method, how to choose the particular household in each village for interview and how to introduce the questionnaire to him were explained to the investigators by the principal investigator. Some practice with these investigators about how ask the questions and write the answers had been carried out before doing the fieldwork. Using these method much of the shortcomings and problems faced the researcher would be minimized (Hoinville and Jowell: 1985).

The other one (questionnaire B) was designed for the officials including councillors, Nazims and Naib Nazims of the district government in the NWFP of Pakistan in order to collect information for the evaluation of decentralized government. This set of questionnaire contained questions for information about the general background of the councillors, their relationship and communication with people, and functioning of the councils. The questionnaire included questions on participative, developmental and administrative aspects of the district government.
3.4.1.2 The Administration of the Questionnaire

The researcher decided to use face-to-face interviews to administer the questionnaire with the people as well as with the councillors, Nazims and Naib Nazims. Face-to-face interviews enabled the researcher to probe, to explain, to follow up important points that were raised by the people and councillors, and to obtain detailed and rich information. In this the language of the survey can be adapted to the ability or educational level of the person interviewed. Therefore, it is comparatively easy to avoid misinterpretations or misleading questions. In addition, however, we had other reasons in mind. These included the villagers’ inability to read and write and that they preferred talking face-to-face rather than filling in forms. Therefore, the researcher avoided the postal questionnaire administration. There were other reasons for the researcher in using the face to face interview. (1) using the interviews will ensure the clear understanding of the questions and will raise the rate of data quality, (2) due to the lack of clear addresses in villages, it is difficult if not impossible to use other techniques like mail questionnaires, and finally (3) through using this method the researcher ensures the high rate of responses to the questionnaire and the high rate of returning ones.

On the other hand, studies using published data and postal questionnaires can cover a much larger number of instances but they cause the researcher to miss the nuances of local politics in the communities studied. Hence we may learn much less from them. Furthermore, political leaders in particular are reluctant respondents to postal questionnaires and would be even less likely to submit to psychological profiling. On the other hand, they are much happier chatting relatively in interviews about their roles and activities. So we extended face to face interviews with councillors as well.

The time that the interview took with the respondents was between 30 to 45 minutes, although some interviews especially with Nazims and Naib Nazims of the district lasted about one hour.
3.4.1.3 The Pilot Testing of Questionnaire

Before applying any research instrument it is necessary to ensure that it is a valid and reliable tool. It was therefore decided to have a preliminary field testing of the questionnaire. Sudman and Bradburn (1982) indicated the objective of using the pilot study and said:

"The pilot study can be used to indicate questions that need revision because they are difficult to understand, and it can also indicate questions that may be eliminated" (p. 284).

After constructing the questionnaire it was tested and revised before it was administered. In August 2001 during a field trip to the selected districts, the questionnaires were tested with a random sample of about 25 respondents in two villages not included in the present design. A total of 20 interviews were successfully completed. Analysis of these pretest findings resulted in the elimination of certain questions and the refinement of others. So subsequent to the pilot test, individual questions were redrafted and the questionnaire was remodeled into its final form. Accordingly, the researcher revised the questionnaire. Items that were irrelevant to the study were eliminated. Other questions were added and sentences of the questionnaire were restricted, reordered and regrouped in order to achieve a consistent flow of information.

By January 2002, the reconstructed and revised questionnaire was ready for administration. On June 10th, 2002 the main fieldwork was started by the researchers and extended until September 2002. The second phase of fieldwork took place during June – August 2003. An interview started with a brief introduction, followed by explanation from the researcher about the purpose of this research and an assurance that it had nothing to do with the government. To avoid any confusion on the part of respondents, the researcher also carried, and left with respondents, a letter of introduction from his supervisor. Someone else in the household replaced those who wished not to be interviewed. But fortunately there were only about a dozen people (all women) who were
replaced. This was probably related to one factor i.e. the purdah in Islam. We did feel it important to involve female researchers, yet it was hard to find women field workers in rural areas. In such cases, the selected person (who refused to be interviewed) was asked to nominate another member of his/her family for interview.

Interviews with villagers were usually conducted in their houses (hujras) to enable more involvement of the respondent and minimize the involvement of other villagers. The interviews were held either in the morning or the late evenings when villagers were free from their work, to enable them to participate in the study. During the day the researcher had discussions and interviews with the councillors and visited the councils for secondary data.

A total of 120 councillors and 480 villagers were included in the sample and fortunately an overall response rate of 75% and 85% was achieved for councillors and villagers respectively. This was probably related to two factors: First is the villagers own social customs and traditions, which associate the refusal of visits and requests of their guests as social impoliteness. Second is the fact that the research assistants made a great effort themselves, as they made at least three calls at an address before declaring some one a non-contact.

3.4.1.4 Documentary Sources

Before starting the fieldwork, the researcher made an attempt to study and collect a considerable amount of literature, general as well specific, on the subject. Surprisingly, valuable materials on Pakistan local government and rural development were found in Liverpool University library. In addition, a substantial amount of Pakistan government material in the form of documents, government reports, assessment papers and other kinds of material was obtained from a number of institutions such as the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development (PARD) Peshawar, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) Islamabad, Planning Commission Islamabad, Directorate of Local Government and Rural Development (DLGRD) Islamabad and Peshawar, Local
Councils Board (LCB) Peshawar, Centre for Rural Development Research (CRDR) Islamabad and offices of District Council Kohat and Mansehra. However, the researcher faced considerable difficulties in gaining access to reliable government sources. The study data was secured by collecting the required information from among the records available within the district council itself i.e. their brochures, doctrine, annual reports, evaluation reports etc. Apart from this, information available with the local government offices, relevant for the purpose of study was also gathered.

3.5 DATA PRESENTATION AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

After the completion of the fieldwork period, the data collected from the sample of people and councillors through interviews was finally checked before coding and editing. The data was classified according to districts, respondents (councillors and villagers) and socioeconomic status of respondents i.e. lands holding, occupation, and education of the respondents and objectives and hypotheses of the research. The classification was designed to see the extent of difference of perception in one area/group from the other. Required information was organized in tabular forms in order to be more useful.

Descriptive statistical methods were used for the data analyses. Two statistical devices/tests have been used in the analysis of the data throughout major parts of the study depending upon the nature of the questions. For many questions, for which there were too short a response, the test of percentages was used to determine whether the percentage of respondents in one area/group giving one answer differed from the percentage of another area/group giving that answer. So the main forms which are used in the descriptive technique are frequency distribution and the percentage forms. Using such a technique aims to provide an overall view of characteristics of the villages and villagers such as services.

For some questions the data was cross tabulated and tested for statistical significance by using the chi-square test to determine whether or not the expressed relationships in the data and differences between respondents were real. The levels of significance to be
accepted in this study were established before the application of the statistical tests. Using the 5 per cent level is a convention. we could make it higher or lower, but scientific usage has defined this level as representing a tolerable margin of error. On the other hand, we refer to differences at the 10 per cent level of confidence as suggesting a relationship, but we cannot interpret them as confidently as we do differences significant at the 4 per cent level. So differences are referred to as significant (.05 level) and suggestive (.10 level). Any probability greater than .10 is referred to as not significant. The statistical significance / non-significance are indicated at the bottom of the relevant table.

The methods of analysis and data presentation included two parts: In the first part is the presentation of the factual aspects of the survey and the outline of the basic variables (socioeconomic characteristics) of the villagers and councillors. The second part of the analysis assesses and evaluates the local council from the councillors' and villagers' point of views.

3.6 RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Every survey is subject to some field problems, which cannot be fully anticipated. Some problems were encountered in this survey as well. Besides no financial assistance for the fieldwork from any agency including my sponsor, many other difficulties were felt during the fieldwork.

First, the general problems encountered in the collection of such data stemmed from the extreme transport difficulties within the villages and the hot weather conditions of the area. Secondly, some respondents (all women) directly refused to be interviewed. In Pakistan, especially in the rural areas, it is extremely difficult to gain access to women to conduct interviews. This is largely because of the doctrine of 'purdah' system of Islam where there is the absence of any form of 'outside the home' social activity for women and where women are forbidden from talking / speaking to a man other than her husband / son / or relatives. So all these added to make our task of research difficult and a longer time was taken than anticipated.
Thirdly, using a set of questionnaires for District Nazims, District Naib Nazim, councillors and other officials of the district government was very difficult to administer. The questionnaires had many sensitive questions. Some of the respondents had a tendency to bypass direct answers. So strenuous efforts and patience were required to complete the survey. They were willing, however, to discuss informally aspects of decentralized government.

After data collection, it was discovered that the analysis of data was a much more troublesome task than initially anticipated. Technically it is the difficulties of aggregating and systematizing of data collected from different sources and by a variety of methods. In this case, the problem was aggravated by the large quantity of the data itself. Hoinville et al. (1978) has suggested that a month in collecting data should be matched by two months for the analysis of that data.

### 3.7 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research methods used in this study. It identified the research questions that the study aims to answer through using the face to face interviews to administer the questionnaire in the Northwestern Province of Pakistan.

The study adopted the multistage sampling technique to choose the villages of the study and used the random sample to select the 480 households and 80 councillors in the area.

The chapter highlighted the development and administration of the questionnaire and finally it showed how the data was analyzed and what kind of statistical techniques were used.

In a multi-stage sample design was adopted: selection of districts, followed by selection of four union councils per selected district with equal probabilities, followed by a selection of two villages from each union council and finally a selection of 30 households from each selected village.
The following table summarizes the methodology used in the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE-3.1</th>
<th>METHODOLOGICAL SUMMARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Frame</strong></td>
<td>Elected councilors in 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Districts selected</strong></td>
<td>Kohat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Union councils selected</strong></td>
<td>1. Togh Balia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Gumbat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Lachi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of Villages</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent sampled</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nazims / Naib Nazims &amp; Councilors' Survey)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Achieved sample</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Response rate</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent sampled</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Villagers)</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Achieved sample</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Response rate</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interview method</strong></td>
<td>face-to-face</td>
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</table>
CHAPTER 4

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN PAKISTAN:
AN ASSESSMENT OF PEOPLES' PARTICIPATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Local government in Pakistan has a long history with continuous efforts for reforms. It presents a mosaic of alternatives between spells of progress followed by long periods of stagnation. Like other developing countries, the successive governments in Pakistan reformed local government (at least in theory) to create and foster a more democratic and participative approach to setting policies and shaping political and economic practices. During its fifty-seven years existence, Pakistan has witnessed a growing disenchantment with democratic institutions both at local and national level. No serious efforts have been made to decentralize political authority and the direction of government programmes. It was in 1959 and again in 1979 and 2001, when the Military governments reorganized and reformed the local government system in the hope that conditions of rural folk would improve and that a framework for people participation and an accountable, democratic and responsive local government would be provided. But the central / provincial governments never did empower the councils to play a due role in local development. The central / provincial government kept the latter dependent on them for resources - legal, financial, personnel etc. This central dependence model of local government resulted in dispensing political patronage amongst central / provincial and local leaders and created an atmosphere of corruption where the country's resources were being used by the members for vested interests.

With this philosophy and background of local government and their implications for Pakistan's rural development, this chapter examines the nature of rural local government and administration. Without an understanding of the historical context, the causes and effects of local reforms cannot be fully understood.
The main objective of this chapter is to offer a panoramic overview of the development of local government in Pakistan focusing on a number of issues including: the strategic role of the centre, the application of people’s participation, and accountability and responsiveness to the citizens.

4.2 THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Pakistan had been colonized by imperial power before it became an independent state. Reforma and De Guzman (1993) wrote: “Pakistan shares with India the colonial experience of decentralization and local government. Thus, immediately after independence, Pakistan experienced the same setbacks that India had regarding the weakened local government institutions. The area which constituted Pakistan, in particular, had no progressive system of local self-government.”

At her emergence in 1947, Pakistan inherited the tradition of a centralized state in which local government had no more than a marginal role to play. Pakistan used to have a centralized government. In following its independence, decentralization schemes were employed to strengthen the economy and governance of the country. Most of the pre-Independence local government lacked not only representative character, but also worked more as extended agencies of the centre than autonomous self-governing institutions. Even after Independence, neither the government of military dictators nor that of the civilian governments took any particular measures to reform local government. However, it has undergone considerable transformation. This section provides a brief history of local government in Pakistan.

4.2.1 THE COLONIAL LEGACY

Local government in the Indian sub-continent has a long history. Local government is believed to have existed in pre-British India in the form of the ‘little republics’ that Charles Metcalf romanticized in the early nineteenth century (Blair: 1974). They were organized in village punchayats and were responsible for developmental, administrative and judicial
functions. But studies confirmed the existence of village oligarchy and the exclusion of villagers in these institutions (see Wajidi: 2000 and Rizvi: 1980) and the panchayats were largely dominated by village elites. Hence the people's participation and decentralization did not materialize.

There was no comparable development of local self-governing institutions in rural areas up to the year 1871, when Lord Mayo introduced his scheme for decentralization of administration. The scheme consisted of both rural and urban committees, largely nominated and official. But by 1880, the principle of local government had been put into practice in few cities and towns. Lord Ripon's resolution in 1882 on local government was a new landmark in the evolution of local government in the Indian sub-continent, when a definite policy of establishing a general network of rural local authorities as an instrument of political education was enunciated and district boards and circle boards were established throughout India. The resolution outlined the general principles, which were to govern the future development of local representative institutions. The resolution recognized the growth in local government finances and expanded the functions of local self-government by including aspects of public health, medical relief and education. Extra items of revenue and expenditure were transferred from the provincial budget and account heads to those of the local bodies. Following the Ripon resolution, some other basic laws were framed by the British Administration that helped the expansion of the administrative network down towards the local level. But despite such developments the local bodies were severely constrained by the system of financial controls exercised by the central government.

In 1907, the British administration established the 'Decentralization Commission' which examined the entire subject of local government and proposed adequate democratic local institutions with strict official control. But the recommendations of the commission, like others, lay unheeded.

A new era began when rural local government became a provincial subject under the Government of India Act of 1919. Following a resuscitation of village panchayat, district and taluka or tahsil boards and union committees with elected presidents and majorities,
were set up and endowed with wider functions including village administration and increased powers of taxation in all provinces. Under the 1919 Village Self-government Act punchayats were given a statutory basis and were established in larger numbers in some of the provinces. This system continued until India and Pakistan gained Independence in 1947.

During the British colonial administration, "the 1935 Government of India Act allowed provincial autonomy and permitted provinces to frame legislation on local government systems," said the UN ESCAP (2002). Provincial autonomy envisaged under the Government of India Act of 1935 was expected to give further impetus to the development of local government. Under the new arrangement, almost all the provinces enacted legislation for further democratization of local bodies. But on the other hand, the 1935 Act also repealed the scheduled taxes and rules introduced under the 1919 Act and so Local government was not accorded a constitutional status. Consequently, provincial autonomy did not bring about any noticeable improvement in the local bodies.

Generally speaking, local governments, established during the British colonial rule, were financially and politically dependent on central government. There were no taxes constitutionally reserved for local bodies. This enabled the State government to exercise a degree of supervision and control over the affairs of local bodies. The local bodies were financially anemic, politically subservient to certain dominant classes, bureaucratically dominated, and legally powerless. The local institutions were refined and reformed for the extraction of resources and participation in political life was actively discouraged. The popular participation in development administration for the benefit of people, in the sense that we understand it today, was not a strong consideration during the British period. The real authority remained with the District Officer (D. O). Nevertheless, the participation of villagers in the councils was ensured. There was a lack of any linkages between the rural communities and the Administration. The rural oligarch mediated the articulation of power between the village and the colonial administration. The local bodies were never assigned the task of rural development, though there were isolated attempts at rural development associated with individual British Officers.
However, some aspects of the process of decentralization during the British administration may be better appreciated. Though weakened considerably by bureaucratic centralization, the colonial decentralization reforms served as the basis for a limited decentralized democracy. Despite the uncertainty of operational autonomy of local councils from bureaucratic control, it had far-reaching political implications. It provided for political parties to enter energetically into the arena of national politics by establishing ties with the leaders of rural factions. Tinker (1968) observes that the resolution of 1882 provided a wide scope for democratic local government system in India up to the district level and claims that it was the native leaders and bureaucracy which failed to utilize that opportunity. The nationalist politicians considered the reforms in local government as bait by the British to induce them to relinquish their national aspirations and to look downwards (Ahmad: 1989). However, if the nationalist politicians were hostile to democratic reforms in local government, the bureaucracy was not hospitable to either. In Tepper’s words, the bureaucracy considered the ascendancy of politics in local government as a threat to its authority and it therefore did not support the proper working of the new councils (Tepper: 1966). The general political conditions further deteriorated and clogged the whole machinery of local government. So the local bodies which had been set up during the British rule could hardly be described as functioning effectively.

4.2.2 The Pattern of Rural Local Government Since Independence

Pakistan inherited a very rudimentary form of local government institutions in 1947. Independence was expected to infuse vitality and strength into local government, but the position was not basically changed. The basic objectives of the local government - i.e. to co-opt the rural landlords in administration; to satisfy the democratic aspirations of the educated middle class in the urban centres; and to legitimize the rule - introduced by the British in the Indian sub-continent were continued to be used by the undemocratic and authoritarian regimes in Pakistan. The only reform was the democratic process reinvigorated in local government in 1956 when the government introduced universal suffrage and the secret ballot in local body elections. But before the democratization policy could be tested, the
Pakistan army, under the command of General Ayub Khan, terminated it in 1958 on the grounds of its unsuitability for the country.

Reforma and De Guzman (1993) and UN ESCAP (2001) have noted the following developments in the decentralization process of Pakistan:

- The Basic Democracies system 1969 which continued until 1971 and was abolished in 1972 by the PPP Regime.
- In 1972, as directed by the Federal Government, the Provincial governments in their respective jurisdiction promulgated the People's Government Ordinance.
- In 1979 a process of devolution was reopened to Pakistan.
- In 2001 the reinvention of local government institution as 'district government' has taken place.

4.2.2.1 Local Government Reforms during 1958-69

To legitimize his capture of power, Ayub Khan wanted to improve the economic condition of the country. Therefore he introduced some administrative reforms to involve people at local level in development and to increase the capability of local institutions for implementing programmes of rural development. The government of General Ayub introduced a system of local bodies called "Basic Democracies" (BD) in 1959 and introduced a series of local councils, all of which, excepting the 'union council' - the base unit, were headed by the generalist bureaucracy and composed of officials of nation-building departments and people's representatives. It was a blend of democratic and bureaucratic approaches. The "Basic Democracies Ordinance of 1959" provided for a five-tier local government system with a Provincial Advisory Council (PAC) at the top and a Union Council (UC) at the base. The other three councils - Divisional Council, District Council and Tahsil Council - were headed respectively by Divisional Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Sub-divisional Officer. The PAC, which was headed by the Provincial Governor, was abolished within one year of its creation. Initially, all local bodies, excepting the union council, were composed of three categories of members: elected representatives (25 per cent), bureaucrats (50 per cent) and government appointed members.
The union council had two categories of members: elected representatives (67 percent) and appointed members (33 percent). But after the promulgation of the 1962 Constitution, provisions for appointed members were withdrawn. Henceforth, all councils above the union council level were composed of appointed officials and elected members (union council's representatives) while the union council remained the only representative body. For all practical purposes, the District Administration occupied a pivotal position in the structure of the "Basic Democracies" under the leadership of the Deputy Commissioner. Thus, the system did not break the paternal control of bureaucracy and it is said without exaggeration that the Basic Democracies were highly dependent on the active participation of its civil servants. The main defect, as observed by M. Ali and others (1983) of the BD system was not the lack of technical staff, but too much centralization - the authority exercised by the Deputy Commissioner as the Chairman and the Assistant Director of Basic Democracies (the bureaucrat) as Secretary of the district council - made the position of elected Vice Chairman of the council obscure and powerless.

Under the BD Order, the union councillors were made responsible for carrying out government policies in rural areas, and to provide a source of political support for the national government. The various local bodies, especially the district and union councils, were assigned responsibilities for at least four categories of functions, i.e. regulatory, municipal, administrative and developmental. Councils gave special emphasis to village development activities and the national government followed a liberal grants-in-aid policy to help them to carry out their functions. There was a massive rural works programme, which made local government active and important during that period and which infused the rural population with a confidence in their governments including local government. This is why some of the observers like Khan, M. H (1989) observed that the BD system provided significant support for the military government, as rural elites - landlords emerged as a viable political constituency and they helped create legitimacy for the military regime of General Mohammed Ayub Khan. Later on the BD members were used as an electoral college to choose the Head of the State and Legislative members. It was widely believed that the system had deliberately been introduced by the Ayub government for the purpose of giving itself an appearance of being a democratically elected government and keeping itself...
in power for an indefinite period (Abedin: 1973). However it had the effect of politically decapitating the democratic norms and creating an elite democracy. This effort of democratizing the country stood in stark contrast to authoritarian patterns of government laid down under military rule. These reforms presented a two-dimensional picture. On the one hand bureaucratization became imperative and on the other hand rural elites were brought to the political forefront and the concept of participation remained beyond the reach of the ordinary people.

The basic democracies program was meant to involve villagers in development programs through direct elections to union councils and indirect elections to bodies serving large administrative units to supplement the rural development strategy of the state. Researchers say that the program did not fully realize its objective. However, it cultivated “awareness of development and need for change at the grassroots level. It also helped in improving infrastructure and in providing other basic facilities,” noted Reforma and De Guzman (1993).

4.2.2.2 Local Government Reforms during 1972-77

After coming into power, the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) government headed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1972-77) concentrated more on national than on local issues. The devastation occasioned by the civil war in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and war with India in 1971 stimulated the rethinking of the centralizing pattern of government. Besides promulgating a constitution and rehabilitating a war-ravaged economy, the PPP had to undertake measures to develop both the input and output sectors of the political system. The party decided to supplant the councils, especially the union councils in rural areas by multipurpose co-operatives called village committees. Although the exact composition of these committees was not detailed in any government decree or legislation, they were composed of a president, manager, treasurer and model farmer - all appointed by consensus in a village meeting, and chaired by the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) manager (the bureaucrat appointed by the central government). The committee had no power and no resources and was basically a consultative body to identify village problems and implement
development projects in the village under the IRDP of the central government. The logic behind the creation of such village committees was to promote national unity, eradicating corruption and to ensure the participation of 'underdogs' in the development decision-making in the village. It was therefore, the first direct central government intervention aimed at village development and people participation. Though all the villagers would become members of the village committee, the composition of the committees revealed that these were mainly dominated by landowners. Resources and power were evidently lacking in the committees which perhaps confirms, as one finds in the context of the developing countries especially Pakistan, the belief that central governments are reluctant to decentralize their power.

However, in spite of political centralization, the Bhutto government enunciated and enacted some pro-decentralization policies and laws. No new strategy aimed at reforming the local government was forthcoming until the promulgation of the 1973 constitution which provided for the creation of local councils by each administrative unit or province. Specifically Article 40 of the 1973 Constitution provided: 'the state shall guarantee and promote the autonomy of local government units to ensure their fullest development as self-reliant communities'. The provincial legislative assemblies voted for reforming and reintroducing the three-tiered, fully democratic people's councils- Dehi council, Halqa council and Zilla council. The specific legislative act (People's Councils Act 1975) constitutionalised the local government units, their power including taxing power. The Act likewise emphasized the corporate personality of local councils vested with accompanying corporate powers. The Act defined the relationship of the local governments with provincial and national ministries performing general development functions in the area including education and health. It provided for relatively wide latitude of powers over local financial matters.

But despite a strong commitment to local government in the constitution and introduction of the 1975 Ordinance, local government was not developed. In practice, there were neither basic changes, nor any reorganization in local government during this period. Therefore, essentially decentralization under the resulting policy was only in terms of division of
responsibilities for management of central government financed services in the various localities. The policy was concerned with how cheaply Central Government could be run without losing its power. It is surprising that local government and decentralization suffered greatly in the democratic period of the populist Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Elections to the councils were not held and the laws were not implemented. The ad hoc arrangement continued to exist and the legislative members of the ruling party or wherever the ruling party member was not available, the Deputy Commissioners were made administrators of district councils. This in fact supplanted the local government. These local arrangements ended with the military intervention and seizure of power by General Zia in 1977.

4.2.2.3 Local Government Reforms in 1979

The assumption of power in 1977 by the fourth post-independence military government headed by General Zia-ul-Haq, and the abandonment of the representative government caused a strong political opposition and unrest in people. The Military Government was desperate to do something concrete and immediate with a view to legitimizing its unconstitutional moves and actions and to create power bases at grass roots level. Like his military predecessor General Ayub Khan, Zia also planned for the democratization of Pakistan's political system at the local level. In September 1979, he announced local government reforms in order to bring the government closer to the people. The Military Government issued the Ordinance of Local Government 1979 with the following objectives:

"to make appropriate and development activities responsive to local wishes and initiatives by devolving or delegating them to local representative bodies; to facilitate the exercise of democratic self-government close to the local levels of our society and encourage initiative and leadership potential; to mobilize human and material resources through the involvement of members of the public in their local development; to provide a two-way channel of communication between local communities and government".
The Military Government argued that the key goals of the reforms were to encourage local participation and representation through decentralized authorities. Thus the reform reintroduced local government in all the four Provinces. The Ordinance made local governments the creature of the province. Every Province was required to establish local councils and ensure the availability of adequate staff, and their financing and training for local government. Accordingly, each province promulgating their laws in 1979, provided for the two main groups of local government - the rural local governments and urban local governments. These reforms broke the earlier tradition of absolute authority of the district administration, to control the local authorities. It was thus an important move towards the reorganization of local government.

The rural local government comprised a two-tier system of popular institutions from the village to the district, formed on democratic principles. These authorities followed more or less the same pattern in all the provinces - the elected councils, the power of taxation, rural development functions et cetera. The principles governing these aspects of local government were basically similar in all the four provinces. Differences existed only in size and area of the councils. The rural local councils’ structure was as follows:

(a) Union councils formed the base of the structure and had a membership of 8 - 15, elected in wards or at large by the adult residents of the village, and each representing 1000 - 1500 of their fellow villagers. The council members usually elected the chairman and vice-chairman themselves for a term of four years. 4270 union councils covered almost the entire rural area of the country.

(b) The next tier was the 'Zilla' or district council. It was always coterminous with the old revenue districts of which there were about 93 at Pakistan level. The number of members was usually determined on the basis of population of the council area concerned. The members included the elected representatives of people and women, workers, peasants and minorities. A pre-determined number of councillors were directly elected from the electoral divisions (wards) in the district.
The new rural authorities were intended to be units for the provision of services as well as instruments for economic and social development. The assignment of powers and functions to the different tiers were made with this in view. The functions of the councils were classified as obligatory or compulsory and optional in all cases and included development work. The compulsory list covered services that local councils have to provide while the optional list referred to functions that councils may or may not perform at their discretion. In the case of rural councils viz.; union and district councils, a separate legislative allocation of functions was given. There was an exhaustive list of functions, some of the most important of these were:

"provision and maintenance of roads, sanitation, registration of births and deaths, acts as construction and maintenance agency for primary, middle and secondary schools, rural health centres, piped water supply schemes, tube wells, hand pumps, farm-to-market roads, drains, streets, lights etceteras. So their functions relate to rural development, public health, education, promotion of culture, sports, public safety, environmental and social development".

The Local Government Ordinance 1979 standardized responsibilities, powers, and organization of the district councils, municipalities, and union councils. Although the legislative allocation of functions was wide ranging, financial and institutional constraints have generally limited district councils' involvement to construction and maintenance of link roads, drainage, drinking water schemes, and partial involvement in construction of buildings for schools and rural health centres, while the role of union councils was negligible. The councils were systematically elbowed out of their main functional arena by the provincial governments by creating a host of special purpose organizations such as 'district development committees' and 'district social action boards', chartered to formulate and execute special programmes for the benefit of specified target groups and areas.

Furthermore, there was a basic imbalance between the assigned range of functions and the fiscal powers granted to councils (Pasha & Ghous: 1995). The scarcity of resources made
the major limiting effect on their activities. The finances of rural local authorities were derived from taxes, licenses and fees, voluntary contributions and grants from the provincial and central governments. Councils might levy a variety of taxes such as tax on transfer of property, export tax and local rates. But many of the major local taxes had been pre-empted by the Provincial Government (ibid). Besides, the councils collect fees for services rendered, license fees and fees in the nature of fines and penalties. Other non-tax revenues, which yield some income to rural councils, are from ponds and tanks as well as fairs and markets. Though making a marginal contribution to council’s revenue, grants-in-aid were the most important source of finance for rural councils. The councils generally had no access to capital markets or deficit grants from higher levels of government. This put a tremendous pressure on rural councils especially on union councils, which had narrow tax bases and limited fiscal capacity. Grants were usually allocated to councils on ad hoc basis and with political objectives. The intergovernmental grant programmes differed across the provinces. Broadly there were two types of grant given to the councils, viz., recurrent grants and developmental grants. Recurrent grants essentially took the form of deficit grants since the Department of Local Government and Rural Development used to review the local council budgets and attempted to ascertain from these budgets whether or not own-source revenues would be sufficient to meet local employee salaries and maintenance. Developmental grants were allocated through the Provincial Annual Development Programme (ADP). These grants were in the form of block grants to unions and districts. Union councils usually received an equal allocation without regard to population or any other characteristic of the union, while district council's allocations were usually based on both population and an equal allocation across all jurisdictions. Both recurrent and development grants were provided to rural councils in Baluchistan and Sindh provinces, but the grant programmes in NWFP and Punjab were mainly developmental.

Few strings were attached to the intergovernmental grant system in Pakistan, indicating considerable local decision-making power. At the same time, the flow of resources through local councils was relatively small. The grant scheme was not developed in a systematic manner. While much thought was given to allocations of national government funds to provinces in the country, similar efforts were not made regarding transfers to the local
Nevertheless, the Central Government did retain some influence over how the funds were spent and the bulk of all employees serving at local level especially in union council were attached to central ministries or provincial departments.

Thus, like local councils in the past, the basic issue in the local system 1979 was also of finance. The apathy of the Centre towards the Provinces recoiled on the local governments more viciously leading to an ever widening gap between needs and resources. This problem was more acutely felt in 1985, when the Central and Provincial Governments introduced the 'District Development Committee' (DDC) system and allocated grant to each member of the national and provincial assembly (MNA and MPA) for development projects in their constituencies. Thus physical planning and regulatory functions of local councils were centralized through DDC and district level officials of the Provincial and Central governments. The DDC, who were all members of Legislative Assemblies and belonging to the ruling party, worked under the direct guidance of central and provincial governments and performed duties assigned to them from time to time. The introduction of the DDC scheme would obviously encourage the extension of national administrative and political networks down to the villages thereby stifling local initiative and participation and independent thinking. So it could be inferred that the DDC scheme made the local councils mere appendages to the ruling party in the rural areas. The allocation of the development grant to Legislative Members circumvented the local government system. The higher levels of government thus continued to dominate local fiscal policy and development administration.

The question of the functional efficacy of the councils was, of course, intertwined with the issue of resources placed at their disposal and the prospects in this regard appeared to be bleak at least in the near future, as neither the Provincial Governments were likely to enhance the quota of resources they were already devolving upon the councils nor the councils likely to undertook the political risks involved in resource mobilization on a large scale. The councils, being very close to the grassroots, did not want to incur the odium of collecting large revenues from the people. This means that either the Central Government or Provincial Governments would have to undertake the task of resource mobilization on
behalf of the councils and councils continued to depend upon grants in aid from the Provincial Governments. So a solid fiscal base for councils could not be developed. The rural councils especially the union councils were precariously dependent upon the Provincial Government to keep their wheels moving. The councils own revenue was not sufficient even for defraying their charged expenditures.

Furthermore, the policy did not represent a radical departure from the past, nor did it provide for a wholesale devolution of authority. Provincial Government continued to exercise "general supervision over local governments to ensure that local affairs were administered according to law". General supervision was exercised through the Department of Local Government and Rural Development. The powers of supervision and control by the Provincial Government over councils were wide including powers to call for reports and returns, to inspect, to suspend chairmen and councillors, to supersede and reconstitute councils, and to direct actions to be taken or to act directly in default of the local authorities. It should be emphasised, however, that these were reserve powers, which to be used only in extreme cases of necessity. So a comprehensive system of central assistance and tutelage, nevertheless, posed the danger of jeopardizing local autonomy, and there are several cases where such jeopardy has come about. It is through this general supervisory power that Provincial Government continued to hold a tight rein over the local governments in spite of the autonomy provisions. Many times councils were dissolved and superseded throughout the country by the respective Provincial Governments for reasons unknown and despite the Lahore High Court verdict on restoration of and election to councils, councils remained under the control of administrators mostly belonging to the ruling party and appointed by the Provincial Governments. This did change the democratic nature of local government.

Furthermore, the provincial governments also retained the authority to quash the proceedings and suspend the execution of resolutions passed by the councils. The provincial government can withdraw, at its own direction, any or all of the functions transferred to the councils.
Additionally, the aggressive strategy of the provincial government towards acquiring the allegiance of locally elected politicians, and its attempt to make them immune from local control were likely to widen the gap existing between the authoritarian centre and the rural society. Paradoxically, it was and is the Provincial Government that has restricted the participation of the majority in the process of local governance. Decentralization was therefore, operative within the confines of the prevailing authoritarian centre. The Provincial Government has made a mockery of some of the basic principles of decentralization, namely participation of people in the selection of their own leaders and accountability.

Despite these inherent limitations, the system of local councils was distinctive in several ways, and aimed at a far greater degree of decentralization than in the past. Adult voters in the districts directly elected the councils and councils were brought under popular control. It had brought changes in politico-administrative relationships at the local level. The councils were chaired by the elected representative members and not by the bureaucrats.

**4.2.2.4 The Momentum of Continued Reforms (1989)**

Shortly after her ascendancy to State power, the Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto appointed a task force in November, 1989 to look into the deficiencies of local government in Pakistan and to suggest measures for their rectification. The task force headed by Kamal Azfar (the then Governor of Sindh province) identified main weaknesses as:

1) Over-centralization of authority and resources,
2) Excessive fragmentation of ministries, and
3) Weak - almost completely ineffective local government.

The recommendations were not similar to the other committees in the past where local government was seen as an arm of Central / Provincial government. It calls for measures that one can easily classify as decentralization, although it did retain the central control over councils in toto. The main recommendations were:
1- Two tiered structure - district, town / village councils;
2- The fulcrum is the district;
3- The creation of the district assembly to be comprised of a centrally nominated District Governor as head, and elected persons as members;
4- A four member district cabinet (deputy ministers) for governing the district;
5- Appointment of a deputy commissioner as the secretary of the district assembly;
6- Involvement of district / village councils in formulating and implementing development schemes in their areas concerned; and
7- Local councils' share in Provincial revenues.

Perhaps these reforms were the most ambitious of the Benazir Bhutto government. However, the proposed structure was overly centralized where nomination of Governor was preferred over election by people. The recommendations empowered the centrally nominated District Governor to exert control over both regulatory and development administration. The Governor was in fact given discretionary authority with very little accountability to the assembly and people and more to the Central Government. Clearly this demonstrated the Central Government interest in controlling the local government. The intent of these decentralization policies seemed to give the appearance of merely a means to enhance control, whereby local governments become an appendage of Central Government under generally pro-government bureaucrats. It is worth mentioning and surprising that the Central Government could not claim responsibility for implementing the task force recommendations. Perhaps, this was due to the reason that local government in Pakistan is a provincial subject and the proposed recommendations of the task force called for minimum role of Provincial and National Legislative members and maximum role of councillors in local development process. This is why the recommendations were being publicly opposed by MNAs and MPAs. They thought they might lose their power and privilege not only in relation to locality but also within the State structure itself. So they did feel their legitimacy will be threatened because of the pressures engendered by the District Assembly. Being dependent on MNAs and MPAs for their existence, the Central and Provincial Governments could not afford the enmity of the Legislative Members. So the recommendations of the task force were waiting for acceptance and implementation even in 1996 when Benazir
government was dismissed. The government continued the dissolved position of the democratically elected councils and preferred the appointment of legislative members belonging to the ruling party or central officials as administrators of the councils.

Since 1985, when the DDC became a contending force in the political landscape, the central and provincial governments have shown increased interests in developing a local system where legislative members occupy the central position. For the government, DDC is likely to be more hospitable to central government interests than one that is dominated by the councillors.

4.2.2.5 The Devolution Plan 2001: The District Government System

Exasperated by corrupt and ineffective government, General Musharraf assumed power with the support of the army, and some politicians, on October 12, 1999. As throughout Pakistan, different sectors of society have recognized and voiced the need for reform in governance. So following his army predecessors, Musharraf government also embarked on a global reform of local government and a high powered commission called ‘National Reconstruction Bureau’ (NRB) headed by Lt. General Tanveer Naqvi was formed to design a local government system. The first term of reference of the NRB for local government reform in 2000 was ‘the Revision of the Local Government System with the purpose of reorientation and reorganizing it on the basis and principles of the peoples’ participation and local democracy’.

On 23 March 2000, the military government of General Musharraf unveiled a new local government system under a plan called the “Devolution of Power to the Grassroots level” within a larger framework of its 7-point agenda to build a ‘genuine’ democracy and revive country’s economy. A state-managed think-tank, National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) drafted the new plan. The Devolution Plan, after extensive debate and consultation in the country underwent some changes and finally the new system of decentralized governance in Pakistan entered into force on 14 August 2001 as “Local Government Plan 2000”. The Local Government Plan is considered as one of the most
significant reforms by this government in the context of restructuring of governance institutions.

The Local Government System, according to the local Government Plan, is based on five fundamental principals: devolution of political power, decentralization of management functions, diffusion of the power-authority nexus, and distribution of resources to the district level. The purpose of the law is to ensure that the genuine interests of the people are served. The law enforces new system of working for administration and police under supervision of elected head of the district. The new local government law integrates rural with urban local governments on the one hand, and the bureaucracy with local governments on the other.

Through separate legislation by the provincial governments known as Local Government Ordinances of 2001, provided for the constitution of the district government in each district. Its legal basis is provided not by a national law but by Local Government Ordinances promulgated by each of the four Provinces. These ordinances are identical regarding the structure of the new system. Differences in context and formulations are only minor, a feature that is in accordance with the traditional understanding of Pakistani federalism that the Provinces should speak with one voice. The legal basis in NWFP is provided by “The North -West Frontier Province Local Government Ordinance, 2001, N.W.FP. Ordinance No. XIV of 13th August 2001”.
Accordingly, 105 district governments including the city governments of Karachi, Lahore, Quetta, and Peshawar; 30 town councils; 305 tehsil councils and 6022 union councils are formed throughout the country by election under the supervision of the Pakistan Election Commission (IDB & Aurat Foundation: 2004). As a result of local election held in phases, 126,462; 8,192; 773; and 8,806 councillors were elected to union councils, tehsil councils, town councils and district councils respectively throughout the country (Ibid). The Ordinance prescribed the establishment of the district government as separate tier in the hierarchy of government and provided the basis for their constitutions, proceedings, staffing powers and duties, financial arrangements, and their supervision and suspension and dissolution. The ordinance also describes the functions, which may be conferred on district government and also set out the local government institutions at district level.

According to this legislation, the main unit of decentralized governance is the District. Each District is subdivided into Tehsils and Union Councils (for the rural areas) and Town Councils (for the urban areas). Union Councils comprise several villages which, however, do not constitute local governments but are just sub-divisions of the Union Councils. Large urban areas (e.g. Peshawar) are constituted as City Districts which are subdivided into Towns that exercise the functions of the Tehsil. Towns are subdivided into Neighborhoods which, however, are not local governments but sub-divisions of the town.

What is peculiar is the fact that Tehsils have powers limited to certain areas (in particular infrastructure), meaning that in other areas Union Councils (e.g. education) directly report to the Districts. Within their areas of powers and responsibilities Tehsils are not really subordinated to the Districts but, at the same time, are not fully independent from them which justify calling them a kind of 2nd tier of local governance.

The organization of the local governments can be best understood by looking at the structure of the local bodies at different level.
As this overview shows, the devolution plan of the Government of Pakistan combines elements of devolution of powers to local governments with the administrative deconcentration of the Provincial departments. Prior to the present local government system, the deputy commissioner (DC) was the only government representative in the district, enjoying considerable power and prestige. As elsewhere in developing countries, he was vested with extensive administrative and judicial powers including the supervision of the local bodies. After 2001 the DC’s power declined as the new district government assumed the responsibilities in district. The government has modified the district administration as a separate district institution.
### The Composition of Councils and Women's Share

#### Union Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seats Reserved</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 general (Muslim) seats</td>
<td>(Open for men and women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 women's (Muslim) reserved seats</td>
<td>(Only for women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 workers and peasants reserved seats</td>
<td>(Open for men and women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 workers and peasants seats reserved for women</td>
<td>(Only for women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 reserved seat for minorities</td>
<td>(Open for men and women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Nazim and 1 Naib Nazim (in a panel)</td>
<td>(Open for men and women)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Tehsil/Town Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seats Reserved</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Nazim and 1 Naib Nazim (in a panel)</td>
<td>(Open for men and women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33% seats reserved for women</td>
<td>(Only for women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5% seats reserved for peasants and workers</td>
<td>(Open for men and women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5% seats, subject to a minimum of one seat reserved for minorities</td>
<td>(Open for men and women)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### District Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seats Reserved</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Nazim and 1 Naib Nazim (in a panel)</td>
<td>(Open for men and women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33% seats reserved for women</td>
<td>(Only for women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5% seats reserved for peasants and workers</td>
<td>(Open for men and women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5% seats, subject to a minimum of one seat reserved for minorities</td>
<td>(Open for men and women)</td>
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</table>

The District government includes the Zila Nazim and Naib Zila Nazim, the Zila Council, and the District administration. The Naib Zila Nazim is the speaker of the Council and the Zila Nazim is not its member. Zila Council consists of directly elected Union Nazims as members - which show that each union therefore have one representative in the Zila Council, the number of general seats in the Zila Council vary depending on the number of unions in the district; thirty three percent seats reserved for women, five percent for workers/peasants, and five percent for minorities - all the Union Councillors of the district is Electoral College for these reserved seats.

Tehsils have an analogous structure with a Tehsil Nazim as head of the Tehsil government and the Tehsil municipal officer as head of the administration. The Tehsil Council is composed of the Naib Nazimeen (Deputy Chairpersons) of the Union Councils in the geographical area of the Tehsil. Tehsil Councils have more or less the same tasks as District Councils; in addition they approve land use and zoning plans.
Due to the fact that many Provincial Departments have been deconcentrated to the District and Tehsil level, these local governments have powers and responsibilities in most fields of governmental activities. The specific powers have not been regulated in the Local Government Ordinance but in the relevant sectoral legislation.

The Ordinance lists an impressive number of taxes and fees that can be raised by local governments and mentions transfer of resources from the Province to the District and Tehsil. However, the new system of fiscal decentralization has not been finalized.

Different persons and institutions have voiced several characteristics and issues and concerns about the system. According to the National Reconstruction Bureau (2000) the Local Government Plan integrates the rural with the urban local governments on the one hand, and the bureaucracy with the local governments on the other, into one coherent structure in which the district administration and police are answerable to the elected chief executive of the district. Citizen monitoring by elected representatives, the civil society’s involvement with development, and a system of effective check and balances, completes the hard core of the political structure and system of the Local Government.

The main strengths of the devolution plan, according to the World Bank (2001), were:

(i) it specifies a political process that would weaken central and provincial governments discretion by devolving more powers to nonpartisan local government elected officials;
(ii) emphasizes the need for grass-roots accountability of local government;
(iii) puts in place checks and balances and external accountability mechanisms including citizen monitoring committees, the District Ombudsman, clear procedures for selection and removal of senior officials and elected representatives.
(iv) incorporates provisions to promote popular participation at the local level;
(v) reserves 33% of elected positions at the union and tehsil level for women thus attempting to break with traditional non-representation of women in the political process; and
(vi) provides for representation of peasants/workers and minorities to prevent capture by the current power blocks.

Donna Lou Q. Moscare (2002, p.82) and also the Local Government Ordinance 2001 has pointed out the following features of the Local Government Plan 2000:

- Financial resources are distributed to local governments through formula based provincial fiscal transfers and decentralization of specified taxation powers to enable local governments to effect credible development and service delivery.
- Large cities, like Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Multan, Hyderabad, Peshawar, Sukkur, Quetta, Rawalpindi, and Bahawalpur are transformed into city districts in a phased manner.
- “Nazim,” a new elected position, is introduced. Nazims is responsible for delivery of basic government services in an area. Grass roots-level appointed officials are subordinate to nazims.
- The district government includes the Zila Nazim and Naib Zila Nazim, the Zila Council, and the District administration. The Zila Nazim is the executive head of the district and is not a member of the Council. The Naib Zila Nazim is the speaker of the Council.
- The fundamental functions of the Zila Council are: legislative, monitoring, and approval of budget and development plans.
- The division as an administrative tier is ceased to exist.
- The Tehsil government includes the Tehsil Nazim, the Naib Tehsil Nazim, the Tehsil Council, and the Tehsil administration. Tehsils will eventually evolve into cities. The evolution will be facilitated by the elimination of municipal boundaries.
- The Union government is composed of the Union Nazim, the Naib Union Nazim, the Union Council, and the Union administration. The Union is the unit for delivery of services.
- The Village Council will facilitate citizen participation. It will undertake their functions in close coordination with the monitoring committees and Citizens Community Boards.
The institution of Citizen Community Boards has been created to enable the proactive elements of society to participate in community work and development related activities in both rural and urban areas.

Despite these positive points, the system is highly criticized by various people. Some concerns raised by Talpur in 2000 in an article entitled “Decentralization or formula for strong centre” are paraphrased below:

- Financial resources of the provinces are to be decentralized through formula-based fiscal transfer and decentralization of specific taxing powers but the plan is silent on the decentralization of federal financial resources to the provincial government.
- Real power is not transferred, that is financial and ownership of natural resources is not being devolved.
- On the legislative aspect, the plan stated that if any resolution passed by any district is considered against the public interest, the provincial assembly could only set the resolution aside with the approval of the governor. This set up is against provincial autonomy according to Talpur since governors of provinces are appointed and controlled by the federal government.
- Bottlenecks in decision-making on important economic and social activities remains.
- Absence of strong administrative or technical capacity at the local levels may result in less efficient delivery of service.
- The claims that only a structure of the local government is being changed. It contend that devolving power to the provinces instead of districts would solve much of the problems of centralized systems since provincial governments are better aware of the local conditions and hence is in a better position to devise district government structure that will suit their province.
- It also asserts that “decentralization in shape of complete provincial autonomy would have been a better step instead of a very complex local government plan.”
In the history of governance in Pakistan, provincial governments could always dismiss local governments. As some studies (Khan & Davies: 1999) have pointed out, they were "at the mercy" of their respective provincial governments. This is primarily because the existence of local government is not protected by the Constitution.

Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) has pointed out in 2000 that both of Pakistan's previous military governments tried grassroots, non-party approach to reforming the political structure. In both cases, the reforms were co-opted by the feudal social structures they had hoped to supplant, and their hope for transition to elected government was long time in coming. This plan (Local Government Plan 2000) appears to be a bit more carefully thought out, but has understated the social, political and economic challenges involved.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The discussion in this chapter has revealed that local government in Pakistan is a peculiar tier of government, always recognized as the most important and pragmatic form of government, on grounds of both effectiveness and democracy, by every regime, yet seldom comprehensively reformed and practiced. During the first two decades after independence in 1947, there was a growing centralization in the performance of government functions in Pakistan. Pakistan used to have a centralized government. In years following its independence, decentralization schemes were employed to strengthen the economy and governance of the country. The various governments of Pakistan saw that decentralization could make a difference in the lives of its people, especially the poor. They attempted to reform the local government structure and district administration system to provide better access to basic services needed by the people. By bringing the government nearer to the people through the reformed structure, increased people's participation and involvement in governance was and is being expected.

The experience of Pakistan local government under different regimes is approached by two ways:
(1) The Martial Law regimes - authoritarian regimes - the military governments - that instituted authentic local government and have moved forward more rapidly and forcefully in implementing reforms, and on a much broader front, than attempted by democratic governments in Pakistan. In practice, of course, the reality was often only a nominally decentralized council, whose decision making and executive actions were dominated by representatives of the central bureaucracy and despite assertions to the contrary, every time the political decentralization has been successfully launched but the next on-going steps in terms of fiscal decentralization, personnel or management as a whole, were often ignored. But the concept of decentralization was present. Decentralization in Pakistan shows that the first martial law government was the pioneer in devising an extensive system of local governments, the second martial law regime of General Zia implemented the principle of elected local governments, which were revived in 1979 under the provincial local government ordinances and now it is the third martial law government which has introduced a new set-up for local government in 2001. Consequently, a fairly stable type of local government in the form of devolution prevailed.

(2) The democratic regimes that were often not ready to reform and develop local governments. They distrusted the idea of fragmenting central power, and were confident in their ability to organize development from the centre. A supposedly autonomous local government was not seen as consistent with resource aggregation and allocation to determine the national priorities. But as leaders began to be aware that their available options did not include the blotting out of locality identification and priorities, local participation came to rank higher in their priorities and they opted to a package of norms related to decentralization. Consequently, decentralization prevailed mostly in the form of deconcentration, and delegation under the strong control of the centre. Ironically, local government is being ignored by democratically elected regimes in Pakistan.

Local government strategies in Pakistan since 1947 afford a remarkable alternation between a pragmatic, incremental, and administrative approach and a comprehensive, idealistic, and political approach.
The history local government in Pakistan, before and after Independence, gives a picture of local institutions which docs vary with the type of regimes, but nevertheless shows up a number of repeating patterns. It shows a great emphasis on decentralization to place the locus of decision-making as close to people as possible. Both type of regimes look for the benefits of people’s participation in some form, and conceive of decentralization government as a way to it. The structures that they set up vary in the degree to which decision making is formally controlled from the centre: whether by limiting the resources for local allocation, or by granting large resources and closely supervising their use. The normal picture is that a regime hopes for the advantages of decentralization without paying the costs of power sharing and so decentralization in the form of devolution is still far away. The decentralization to which Pakistan has resorted is based on delegation of authority to district bureaucracy rather than to peoples' representatives. This is merely deconcentration and not devolution.

The historical overview of local government in Pakistan clearly explains the following conclusions:

- Bureaucratic rule and administrative decentralization dominated the local decision making process.
- Local government institutions remained resourceless both in terms of human and financial and highly dependent on grants and subsidies of the Provincial and Central governments.
- Mechanisms to encourage more active involvement and participation of the local governments are severely restricted.
CHAPTER 5

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN PAKISTAN: AN ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPATORY COMPONENTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Participation has proved increasingly effective in promoting community development. According to planners and policy makers this has been seen to be a more direct route to knowing a community problems and finding their solutions through a most realistic development programs (Mansuri and Rao: 2004). Political scientists' writing on development projects place an emphasis on the process by which projects are formulated and executed - how to decide and how to control the project. It is not only cheap in terms of economic costs but also in terms of cutting short the long route of intellectual wrangling, economic and social analysis and long at twigs dubious, ways of ascertaining community needs. In Pakistan the tragedy is that the concept of participation has never been conceived and followed in its true sense. In Pakistan central government has exercised great power in decision-making and the role and participation of local government in development is very limited.

This chapter critically analyses National Developmental Programs launched by the Government of Pakistan from time to time, concentrating on analyses of the project making process at district level, and on the participation of local government in formulation and implementation of such programs.

5.2 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Pakistan is pre-dominantly a rural country. The prosperity of the country and welfare of the vast majority of its people are intimately linked with the efficient harnessing of the rural resources on a progressively sustained basis to cope with the needs of a fast growing population. Pakistan has an experience of extending government support to the villagers and operating rural development
programs through bureaucratic, democratic, and party political approaches, each of which provided for distinctive structures and rules and has its own style of operation.

In the colonial period, the British created the 'District' and made the district officers (Deputy Commissioner) the hub of central authority in the locality. The Deputy Commissioner exercised so much control over the district that the politicians have not been able to aggregate rural interests under his control. He was the head of a miniature government in the district, and exercised general supervision and control over all other government functionaries. The Deputy Commissioner often sought the cooperation of the landlord or tribal or caste leaders for the maintenance of law and order and collection of revenue. A freer and more open participation of the people in the local institutions could not be facilitated. The participation was limited to 'Zamindars' a class of local notables and traditional tax collectors. This helped 'zamindars' to enrich themselves at the expense of other villagers and often, at that of the central government.

To counteract the drawbacks stemming from the tenuous link between the district bureaucracy and the rural society, the British introduced another intermediate structure - a hierarchy of local bodies such as the 'Chowkidari Panchayat', the union committees, the local board(s), and the district board(s). These institutions were made responsible to maintain peace and order and provide services to the villagers. But they did not strike deep roots, as the bureaucrats dominated them.

After the emergence of Pakistan in 1947, the same process was continued. Development programs were formulated centrally and implemented by the district administration of the central and the provincial governments. The American sponsored community development programs - V-AID (Village Agricultural and Industrial Development) - was launched by the government through district officials but with a different approach both in ideology and operational style. Unlike the traditional bureaucrats the village level workers (VLW) - the 'harbinger' of the new ideology and program, was introduced as a carrier of innovative values and an agent of social change. His main task was to organize village councils to plan for local development and to foster effective citizen participation in village self-help projects. Later on, throughout the 1960s, the rural development programs were implemented by the 'Basic
Democracies' (local councils) - a blend of bureaucratic and democratic approaches. Councils were made responsible for village development and the central government followed a liberal grant-in-aid policy.

In 1972, the democratically elected government introduced another approach to rural development - the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP). The participation of people in the development projects formulation and implementation was immense. The small projects were identified by the village councils or co-operative societies, and after approval by the project manager, who invariably belonged to the central superior services (CSS), the projects were implemented by the village project committee. Most of the village councils or project committees organized by the Government were dominated by the so-called 'social leaders' landlords, or the notables of the village.

The rural development of the 'Eighties' began with the reintroduction of the decentralized democratic local councils in 1979 to stimulate development in villages and to encourage people's participation in development. The councils were involved in formulation and implementation of the local development projects of the central and provincial governments. But the government has armed itself with power of such a sweeping nature that it easily prevented the local council from undertaking activities which it considers undesirable. This has been used in 1985, when a 'District Development Committee (DDC), consisted of and chaired by elected legislative members of the district, was made responsible for formulation and implementation of the government development programs. The central grant was being channeled through this committee to villages and hence by-passing the local government. This era of a party political approach is still continued. Nonetheless, a major factor in the creation of the DDC, which have taken over hitherto local government functions, has been the varied political motives of the post 1985 central administration. It is clear that the Central Government has simultaneously followed more than one approach since the 1920s, although the extent to which priority is given to one or the other depended mainly on its ideology and interests, and sporadically on local reactions and responsiveness.
5.3 SCOPE OF COUNCILS IN DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

In most developing countries, National Development Plans are a common practice in the development process. All levels of governments, namely Central and State / Provincial and other government agencies take part in the formulation and implementation of these plans. Local councils also make a contribution to the planning and implementation of national development plans.

Pakistan, like other countries, is steering its economic and social development within the framework of medium term (Five Year) plans. These plans are set in a long term perspective of 15 years and are operationalized through the instrumentation of annual plans. There has been an essential continuity in the process of planning, since the inauguration of the first five year plan (FFYP) in the late 1950s. The continuity has been maintained despite a seven year interregnum during the 1970s when medium term planning was abandoned in favour of annual programs and budgetary allocations. Medium term planning was revised once again with the Fifth Five Year Plan in 1978. Up to the current plan (Ninth Five-Year Plan, 1998-2003) Pakistan had nine medium term development plans:

- **First Five Year Plan**: 1955-60
- **Second Five Year Plan**: 1960-65
- **Third Five Year Plan**: 1965-70
- **Fourth Five Year Plan**: 1970-78 (Annual Plans)
- **Fifth Five Year Plan**: 1978-83
- **Sixth Five Year Plan**: 1983-88
- **Seventh Five Year Plan**: 1988-93
- **Eight Five Year Plan**: 1993-98
- **Ninth Five Year Plan**: 1998-2003

All development plans have stressed the participation of local councils in project formulation and implementation. But in practice development programs of the public sector have been
dominated by the central government and its agencies and the participation of local government and even provincial government is quite small and nominal.

At the district level, development projects are processed through two different but related institutions or units. These are the provincial district team and the local government bodies. The first is a formal institution through which the various elements of government could coordinate their efforts to promote development. The institution that has emerged was originally known as the district coordination committee (DCC) and is now called the district development committee (DDC). The membership of the DCC initially included the members of the district council, all the district heads of the provincial departments, as members, and the assistant director of district local government and rural development department as the secretary. This was a typical arrangement as the chairman of the district council acted as committee chairman, and was responsible to review and assess the development plans of the village level development councils (union councils) and district council throughout the district. The committee would then coordinate and arrange priorities of all these proposals achieved and form a development master plan for the district. As the local government bodies were also the members of the committee and thus liaison was maintained between the district council and the DCC.

By 1985 the name and structure of the DDC was changed to District Development and Coordination Committee (DDACC). With the inclusion of the local legislative members and exclusion of the district council members, the local MPA chaired the committee. The DDACC remained the agency for all development works of provincial government in the district. The projects were then implemented by the village project committee already established or to be established for this purpose. The government’s order formalizing and integrating the committee in 1985 aimed at providing the institutional framework for development at the district level. On the other hand, the development works initiated by the various local councils were forwarded for approval and funding to the provincial local council’s board through the Assistant Director of local government and rural development. Development proposals made by local councils were evaluated by the Local Government and Rural Development Department. After approval, the project proposals were passed on to the provincial finance department for funding. Any approved local project was administered by the Provincial Local Government and Rural
Development Department (LGRDD) staff at district level. The same arrangement is continued despite the reinvention of district government system in 2001, as the State’s formulated development projects and programs are implemented by the provincial government offices at district level.

According to the Local Government Ordinance 2001, the formal planning system for development activities has to begin at the union council level for both urban and rural areas in consonance with the bottom up methodology and participatory development. Informally, the Citizen Community Boards and the village councils have to identify local development priorities to the Union Councilors/union councils. Municipal and development needs are to be communicated to the Tehsil and District levels respectively. The Tehsil and the District administration and planning offices have to prioritize development initiatives based on locally identified priorities commensurate with financial capacity. The development inventory is then become part of the Tehsil and District budgets and the respective councils are responsible for passing these budgets.

In addition to this, the union councils, with expanded and strengthened capacity for revenue generation and implementation, are empowered to initiate development schemes. The schemes targeted for development by the union councils are also communicated to the tehsil and district levels to complete the integrated planning picture of the district. After allocation and approval of the plan/budget, the implementation is done either by the union councils or through private contractors where councilors monitor the project implementation.

So the position at present is that there are in each district two distinct bodies i.e. the DDC/provincial government district offices and district government. Both are engaged in the same work of development and both are being advised in the preparation of plans by the same department field officers. This set up has created a duplication of efforts and in many cases, has resulted in uncoordinated development in the district and uneconomic expenditure of manpower and money (Rizwi: 1980). So there is a need to guide the development energies of the government into realistic and productive channels.
This development process at district level shows that participation of local bodies has been underestimated. Thus, the institutions closest to the people and, presumably better informed, have a lesser voice in the villages’ development decisions. There is no participatory mechanism available at the local level which could bring the local bodies into the mainstream of national development.

The next section details some of the development programs undertaken by the central government since 1947, the purpose of which is to analyze the people's involvement in program formulation, implementation and evaluation.

5.4 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Pakistan has a very long history of experimenting with various approaches to rural development. This is because 68 percent of the total population lives in rural areas where the social and economic situation has been deteriorating. Poverty and destitution have become almost endemic. The tempo of increasing mass unemployment and underemployment has also been accentuated by the rapidly growing population. There are a staggering number of people living in absolute poverty, malnourished and underfed, and with limited access to basic necessities of life: potable water, shelter, health and education.

In the early days of independence, for a few years, no specific strategy could be implemented for the uplift of rural sector due to the multitude of political, social, economic and financial problems that emanated from partition. But despite all the difficulties, the administration did pursue the rural reconstruction program, popularly known as, Dehat Sudhar program of the pre partition era. It was carried out as a village-centered movement based on the principles of voluntary efforts. However, conforming to the general paternalism of colonial administration, even an ostensibly populist movement of rural uplift was imposed from above. District officers were nominated as guides, philosophers and friends of villagers. As always, the officers adopted the gentry, the supposed natural leaders, as assistants. It was presumed that the government officers would pursue rural uplift with missionary zeal and the masses would obediently follow official advice, especially if the gentry supported it which
did not happen.

Later on, the strategy adopted for rural uplift was to set-up cooperative societies for providing cheap credit and organizing farm services to overcome the problem of stagnation in agricultural production. However, despite numerical expansion of cooperatives in the country, their contribution to the economic growth of the rural sector was, by and large, insignificant.

It was in the early fifties that the nation launched its first major program of community development in order to provide social services to the people on the bases of their felt needs. It was a comprehensive rural development effort based on ideas of motivation, self-help and self-reliance.

Since then the successive governments in Pakistan envisaged various programs and policies for socio-economic restructuring of rural areas. These programs range from the Community Development Program 1952 to the Social Action Program 1993 and Tameer-e- Waten program 2003. The following is the scenario of the rural development efforts of the Government of Pakistan. The objectives here are to explore the program in terms of their objectives, strategies, and participation of people in program formulation and implementation.

5.4.1 Village Agricultural and Industrial Development Program (V-AID)

The village agricultural and industrial development program was introduced in Pakistan in 1953. It was the first determined effort on the part of the government to tackle the multifarious problems which daily confront the villagers. The program was based on the recommendations of the Sufi Committee. In 1951 a group of five officials of the Agriculture department headed by Mr. Sufi, the then Deputy Secretary to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of Pakistan visited the USA, studied the US Agriculture Services for four months under the auspices of the US-ICA and submitted a report which envisaged this program. The basic philosophy of the program was to foster leadership initiatives, and cooperation among the rural people, promote social and cultural activities, and to improve the economic conditions of the
villages in the shortest possible time. The underlying philosophy, the Pakistani version of community development, was to encourage the villagers to respond to modernizing norms and to achieve the self-sufficiency in every aspect. As a V-AID document read:

"The main objective is to solve the problems of the villagers by helping the villagers to help themselves individually and as communities. It is also an attempt to look at the village as a whole through the eyes of its people and in the light of their accumulated knowledge and wisdom" (GOP: 1956).

The V-AID was thus aimed at "bringing better living standards and a new spirit of hope and confidence to the villages, where . . . about 90 percent of the people of country live" (GOP: 1956). The primary aim of the program was to foster effective citizen participation in the rural self-help projects in the fields of agriculture, health and sanitation, adult literacy, primary education, cottage industry, minor irrigation and reclamation, secondary road construction, cooperative societies, village social and recreational activities etc.

Administratively each district was divided into a number of development areas. At the district levels, V-AID advisory committees were formed, the composition of which included Deputy Commissioner as Chairman, Senior Development Officer as Secretary and all SDM / Tahsildars, Development Officers, District level heads of Departments and Village Council members from each development area of the district as members. At the village level, the development area was represented by V-AID workers, their main tasks were organizing village councils for local development planning and fostering citizen participation in village development projects. In each village there was a V-AID council elected by the villagers themselves and comprised of a Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer and six to eight members without any statutory authority. There was no uniform mechanism of organizing the village councils. It varied widely from place to place considerably depending on the attitude of the V-AID worker and the development officer (Abedin: 1973). The Deputy Commissioner and the Tahsildar not only headed V-AID advisory committees at the district and subdivision levels respectively, but they were also made responsible for the successful implementation of the program. Their main responsibility was to supervise the working of the V-AID organization and
to ensure the cooperation between councils and the technical departments.

Under the V-AID program usually small projects such as approach or feeder roads, repair or construction of small schools or dispensary buildings, improved sanitary arrangements, filling useless village ponds, digging of village wells etc. were included in village development plans. The plans were usually prepared by the V-AID workers and the development officer and then the formal consent of the village council was obtained. All development projects were presented to the development area committee, which could approve or disapprove the plans with or without necessary modifications or readjustments. The projects were then implemented by the village council.

A review of the organizational functions of the V-AID program reveals that the local bodies were kept separate from the V-AID organization with the result that two parallel institutions, intended for virtually the same purpose, were operating side by side. This situation often led to rivalry, jealousy and unnecessary competitions between the two parallel institutions (Abedin: 1973).

Though, later on the local bodies and the local administration (executive arm of the government) were closely associated with the whole gamut of community development, the councils were terminated. Thus, despite the existence of elected union Boards and District Boards in the 1950s, the invigoration of the democratic process was not matched by a major redefinition of the functional jurisdiction of local government. The participation was limited to elites, as Ahmad (1989) observes: “Most of the village councils organized by the V-AID workers were dominated by the so-called ‘social leaders’. Though the program did not prove to be as great a success as had been expected, however, some observers as Abedin (1973) noted, it demonstrated the importance of self-help participative projects in rural development. The program also radically improved the government image to the rural community. The participation of the villagers in the program and its dramatic progress gave them confidence (Rizwi: 1980).

V-AID, its achievements and shortcomings, were subjected to frequent and detailed review. A
number of these have highlighted the tangible achievements of V-AID in terms of distribution of improved seeds, use of chemical fertilizers, improved farm tools and equipment, construction of roads, wells, establishment of primary health centers, primary schools etc. It has its criticism too. In discussing the working of V-AID, Akhter (1960) found that while the program and organization had made very useful contributions in several respects, the organization had been prevented (by its governmental nature) from allowing the community to occupy the place of prime importance in planning or implementation as was envisaged in the approach governing the program. As a result the four tier structure of 'Basic Democracy' (BD) institutions was introduced and the V-AID program was integrated with these new local bodies in 1959 until the winding up of the program on 30th of June 1961.

5.4.2 Rural Work Program (RWP)

The RWP was introduced in Pakistan in 1961 as a 'pilot project' on an experimental basis at Comilla (East Pakistan now Bangladesh) and extended to the entire country after successful experimentation in 1963-64. The basic philosophy of the program, as well as the intended method of its administration, was summarized in the Revised Second Five Year Plan (RSFYP), to the Consortium aiding Pakistan's development plan. The importance of the program was well documented in the RSFYP (1961) and the Third Five Year Plan (1965-70) as decentralized participatory rural program and as an integral part of the Five Year Plans.

The objectives of the program were two fold: First, building essential infrastructures relating to agriculture and communication and second, generating temporary employment opportunities for landless laborers in the lean season through physical infra-structural development projects.

With the introduction of 'Basic Democracies' in 1959, the planning, formulation and implementation of the work was entrusted to local councils while the funds were channeled through the central government administrative departments. Local government bodies - the District Councils (DCs), the Tahsil Councils (TCs) and the Union Councils (UCs) - were responsible for planning and implementation of the projects in cooperation with local- level officials. The procedure they have to follow was: identification of and proposals for wards
problems / demands in consultation with villagers. discuss the proposals in a village meeting in which necessary modifications and adjustments would be made according to the suggestions put forward by the villagers. This procedure was followed almost everywhere during the early period of works program but later on, as the government evaluation report (1963-64) noted, this procedure was not followed in most cases.

Each member submitted his plan to the union and district councils respectively. In the council meeting these plans were discussed and then, after having made any necessary modifications and adjustments, the plans were coordinated and the union council and district council plans were prepared. The plans were, then presented to the respective 'Approving Authorities' for final approval. The 'Approval Authority' was a committee of the tahsil councils, a committee of the district councils, and a committee of the Provincial Government for union, tahsil and district councils planning respectively. It should be mentioned here that all the 'Approving Authorities' consisted of Provincial Government officials and of course, they had full power to approve, reject or amend any plan submitted to it for approval.

After receiving the approval of the respective Approving Authorities, the projects of district councils were implemented by either project committees or contractors, and the tahsil and union councils projects were necessarily implemented by project committees headed by the Chairman of the Union Council, other members of the project committee were supposed to be elected in a meeting by the villagers but studies reported that in most cases the members of the project committee were nominated by the respective Union Council's Chairman (GOP: 1963).

It was asserted by the government side that the RWP was the most viable program through which employment opportunities and the participation of the poor can be ensured. It is true that the RWP have contributed something to employment generation and a successful expansion of public investment in rural infrastructure - roads, irrigation, land reclamation, etc. There have been a number of surveys and studies which have highlighted the tangible results of the program and provided statistics on the construction of roads, wells, streets, irrigation canals, etc., but it is more difficult to find out to what extent that program has developed local initiative and changes in the attitudes and behavior of people to solve problems at their own level. One observer
(Abedin: 1973) notes: "of course, under the Works Program the councilors received some training and rural people occasionally received some information about new methods of or new ideas about agriculture, sanitation etc, but the primary concentration was on material improvement of the rural areas'.

The RWP has also been subjected to criticism, primarily on the grounds of leakage and mal-distribution of benefits. Commonly, local councils have served only as further levers of power in the hands of the rural elites and instruments of their enrichment through leakage from the RWP. The structure of the local councils and project committees were controlled by the representatives of the rural dominant classes and the project committees were dominated by the Union Council's Chairmen and their close allies which resulted in biases in favour of activities that offer them maximum opportunities for money making. Paradoxically this permissiveness was to be made the subject of adverse comments by critics of the program. Rehman Sobhan (1968) strongly criticizes the emphasis given to rural roads which, he argued, should have received much lower priority than irrigation in the early years of the program. Furthermore, the Pakistan Economic Survey (1964-65) observed that the "Chairman of the District Council, that is, the Deputy Commissioner, was given extensive power over the completion of the district programs, for the sanction and execution of schemes and for the coordination of the resources of the council and the technical departments within the district. The Deputy Commissioner was the project director of the Rural Works Program in the district. Hence, the schemes were mainly dominated by bureaucrats rather than the people or their representatives.

Despite these problems, the RWP did show some sign of progress in the rural areas. Public investment in rural infrastructure was boosted, which helped to increase the economic prosperity and political aspiration of the villagers, thus large funds were channeled to villages. Though some of the observers (Abedin: 1973) see it as the political motives and self-interest of the Ayub Government.

5.4.3 Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP)

This program was initiated by Mr. Bhutto, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, in 1972 when he
pointed out that the economy of Pakistan derived its strength from the villages and that the economic development of Pakistan should be based on rural development. In this regard the IRDP was launched in 1972 with the aims of providing opportunities to improve the social economic status of a large majority of small and medium villagers to enable them to rise above the poverty line once and for all. It was designed for community development and the development of local leadership at the grass roots level in the rural areas leading to the logical conclusion of community and cooperative farming (Naseem: 1973). In this context the IRDP was aimed at the convergence of rural development activities, of the people and their organizations, government departments, local government institutions, and business and professional groups. Through this integration the objective was to improve the quality of rural life by increasing agricultural productivity, developing the village economy, creating employment opportunities, improving rural employment conditions and ensuring an egalitarian social structure.

Prime Minister Bhutto stressed for the participation of the people in development projects while launching the program. Declaring 1976 as the year for social welfare and rural development, Bhutto stressed that "unless we structure our rural society, all our efforts to provide such inputs as electricity, village roads, water supply schemes, fertilizers, seed and pesticides, credit for investment in tractors and tube wells will fail to yield their full benefits" (The Dawn: 1976).

In terms of approach and strategy the IRDP represented a synthesis of the various approaches tested and found effective in Pakistan's rural development programs. A host of new programs were launched covering agricultural development, basic needs and social development.

The organizational structure of the IRDP was not markedly different from the standard bureaucratic form; the only difference being the establishment at the village level of cooperative agencies called 'project committees' selected by the villagers themselves. The 'markaz' (below district and above village) was made as the unit of rural development administration, where a project director (an employee of central government) implemented, supervised and coordinated the IRDP. At the national and provincial level, the Ministry / Department of Social Welfare, Local Government and Rural Development were responsible for planning, coordinating,
directing, monitoring and evaluating and supervising the IRDP projects. The needs and wants of the village were identified in a meeting of village council, passed on to 'markaz' administration by the village project committee for onward actions. The proposed projects of the village council were then processed and coordinated by the 'markaz' administration and after approval funds were channeled through the 'markaz' to the village project committee for implementation. Projects were thus identified and implemented by the villagers in a village council meeting.

Many development observers (e.g. Rizwi: 1980) noted that it provided an effective opportunity to villagers to participate and play their due role in development process as compared to other development programs of the past, despite the fact that local bodies never become a part of this program. Furthermore, the literature including the Ministry of Social Welfare, Local Government and Rural Development, annual report, enthusiastically recorded an all round progress. However, the role of IRDP to be singled out was pretty difficult.

From July 1977 to the end of 1979, the program remained in operation without the political umbrella at the provincial and federal levels and any institutional linkage with the rural community. As an interim arrangement, rabta committees with village “Lamberdars” as their members were created at the union council level. The chairmen of these rabta committees were in turn made members of the markaz level rabta committees. Administrative cover to the program was provided by the Assistant Commissioners, who themselves started chairing the meetings of the markaz rabta committees to facilitate the coordinating role of the project managers.

With the reintroduction of the 'Local Council' system in 1979, the IRDP and rural development projects were transferred to the councils. In 1980, the chairmen of the union councils falling with in the territory of Markaz along with the project manager, the representatives of various departments posted at the markaz and the district councilors from that area constituted the markaz council. The chairman of the markaz council was elected from the non-official members of the markaz council. The project manager worked as the secretary of the markaz council. Above the markaz council was the district council with its own elected chairman. The chairman of the district council was also the project director of rural works program. Funds earmarked for rural development in the annual development program of the province
were to be transferred to the union councils via the respective markaz councils. Similarly
development schemes prepared by the constituent union councils were to be scrutinized at
the markaz level before they were sent to the district council. Though markaz had no
constitutional status under the local government ordinance 1979, it was incorporated in the
system through an executive order.

5.4.4 Prime Minister's Five Points Program (1985 – 1988)

With the establishment of local government system in 1979 under the military regime and
subsequent phasing out of PWP and IRDP, the responsibility of nation wide rural
development was entrusted to the local government institutions. Such efforts were funded
from local resources, i.e., without donor support, and were implemented by elected local
government system in a case manner of individual small-scale projects, mainly in
infrastructure.

Similarly the rural development programs of the provincial and central governments were
formulated and implemented by the elected members of the Councils through the officials of the
Provincial and Central Governments. This practice of developmental process continued until
democracy restored in 1985.

Nation wide rural development programs since 1985 are generally devoid of vision and
sensible strategies. In the beginning, responsibility of rural development was shifted to the
local government system, newly established with partyless elections to muster support for the
military regime. Later on, with similar motivation, the elected representatives, i.e., senators,
ministers and members of the national and provincial assembly (MNAs & MPAs) were also
allocated development funds for the uplift of their respective areas without any
comprehensive conceptual coverage.

So with the restoration of democratic government in the country in 1985, the federal and
provincial development programs, including the Prime Minister's Five Point Program and
Community Uplift Program, People's Program and Tameer-e-Watan Program were formulated
and implemented through the elected Members of the Parliament.

Under the five points program of Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo (1985-88), direct funding of small scale projects in the field of education, rural roads, drinking water, health and sanitation in rural areas was introduced by providing substantial budgets to the political representatives, i.e., senators, federal and provincial ministers, MPAs and MNAs. An annual allocation of Rs. 5 million to senators, ministers and MNAs, and a sum of Rs. 2.5 million to MPAs was made available for funding of development works in their respective constituencies. With this move, project bound funding was basically used to reinforce the power base of politicians without any systematic procedure of accountability or public involvement. The actual use of these budgets for project implementation was basically left to the discretion of politicians, who could approach line departments directly or even involve whoever they wanted, including private contractors, their factotums or members of their own family. Quite a substantial share of such allocations was however, still channeled through the local government system, which being elected bodies, contributed to reinforce legitimacy of politicians and increased their public backing in their constituencies.

The major problems encountered during the 1985-88 period – tussle between members of parliament and councilors, lack of consensus in the project selection, lack of people's participation, and corruption of the members - prompted major modifications in the rural development project's design and organization during 1988, when Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was elected as Prime Minister.

5.4.5 Peoples Program (1988 – 90)

During the first government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto from 1988-1990, the system of budget allocation to politicians was basically maintained but the so called people's program was added to it; again exclusively funded from government resources. This program of mainly small-scale infrastructure projects was started to be implemented under the supervision of the federal government. In 1988, new organizations called 'District Administrator Peoples Program', (DAPP) and 'People's Committees' were introduced at district
and village level respectively. The district committees included some elected representatives but were basically dominated by nominated persons from the ruling party. The district committees could commission the implementation to any government department or any private agent. They were given special organization status and placed under the direct control of the Central Government. The autonomy and effectiveness of DAPPs increased, but their separate status made a positive institutional impact more problematic in the long run for local government.

Establishing the DAPPs, the government proudly announced the taking of government closer to the people through the network of 'Village People's Committees' (VPCs) and to ensure fast and closer development of rural areas. The appointment of District Administrator, who usually belonged to the ruling party, in fact, supplanted democratic and decentralized local government and was highly criticized by the opposition parties who demanded the implementation of peoples' program through Provincial and local governments.

Another fairly large scale Community Uplift Program was also started in 1989 and basically implemented along the same lines. In 1991 the elected local governments were also dissolved and replaced with district councils of nominated representatives of line departments and local politicians under the chairmanship of the deputy commissioner.

5.4.6 Tameer-E-Watan Program (1990-93)

In 1990, after the dismissal of the Benazir government, the rural development administration and organization were re-modified. The succeeding Muslim League government under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (1990-1993), replaced the People's program with Tameer-e-Watan program, which basically continued the elements of the previous system under a new name and with a bias towards different segments of beneficiaries. The program was again funded from government's own resources and implemented under the supervision of federal government via the local government system (now based on nomination), as well as by the MNAs and MPAs. 'District Development Committees' comprising of local MPs were reestablished. These committees worked as parallel organizations of 'Local Councils'.

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Surprisingly, the community uplift program started by Benazir Bhutto was also retained.

5.4.7 **Peoples Program (1993-96)**

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, during her 2nd term (1993-96) revitalized the people's program. Tamer-e-Watan program was replaced with the People's program which basically continued the elements of the previous system under a new name. The community uplift program also remained intact. Again, sponsors and beneficiaries changed but the basic political structure of the program remained the same. The Peoples Program was in operation from December, 1993 - 96, the basic concept and approach of which was the participation of elected representatives (Senators, MNAs) of the people at national level in identifying development schemes in their respective constituencies on the basis of assessment of development needs of the area. The program concentrates on the provision of basic amenities such as drinking water, sanitation, education, health and supply of natural gas.

5.4.8 **Social Action Program (SAP) 1993**

There is a persistent dichotomy between a respectable rate of economic growth and a marginal improvement in social indicators in Pakistan. The social indicators lag considerably behind other developing countries at a comparative stage of per capita income. In the country, comparison on the social side, according to the World Bank, Pakistan ranks 132 compared with 86 for Sri Lanka and 101 for China (UNDP: 1993). Having realized the sensitivity of the problems of these disturbing indicators, a 'Social Action Program'(SAP) was launched in 1992-93.

The main objective of the SAP was the removal of poverty, incorporation of gender concerns, improved rural access and environmental quality. It focuses on broad targets and requires a large outlay in its five concerned areas, i.e. basic education, primary health, nutrition, population welfare and rural water supply and sanitation. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto termed this program as "the poverty alleviating" strategy of her government while addressing the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industries on 8, March, 1996 in Jakarta. She said, 'the
social action program aims to arm the poor with good health and education. This will upgrade our labor force, will promote equity and will lead to gainful employment' (Bhutto: 1996). The main responsibility of its implementation lies with provincial governments with the involvement of public sector, NGOs, and the community in general to make it a more mass oriented program. Its operational plans have therefore been designed to attract all sections of the community.

At the district level, there were 'Social Action Boards' (SAB), headed either by MNA or MPA but dominated by the ruling party. Although it was envisaged in the beginning that local government would be responsible for SAP implementation, the government decided to establish 'SAB' of MNAs / MPAs who supported the government at central and provincial level and set aside the local councils of overseeing its implementation. These boards were (1) initiating participatory mechanisms embodying broad based decentralized organizations at the village and district level, and (2) implementing the SAP projects with sideling of local government. Hence the SAP's aims of involving the community and 'NGOs' project formulation and implementation could not be materialized.

5.4.9 Development Programs During 1997 – 1999

The 2nd Nawaz Sharif government, commencing from 1997 apparently embarked on changing the structure of development program. As a first step, and forced to do so, by the imminent financial crisis, the development budget allocation to politicians, dating back to the Junejo period was abandoned. Moreover, a new local government ordinance was promulgated and countrywide local bodies elections were announced for April 1998. However, fearing the absolutism and manipulative behavior of the ruling party at the center and its protégés in the provinces, the opposition parties in the provinces of Sindh and NWFP challenged the intent and legality of the new local government ordinance in the court of law. Accordingly, local bodies' elections were held in the provinces of Punjab and Baluchistan in time but had to be deferred in the provinces of Sindh and NWFP due to the legal battle till the army takeover in October 1999.
5.4.10 Development Programs After 1999

An unexpected development took place when the army dismissed the political government and took the control of administration on October 12, 1999. Within weeks of the takeover, prominent people from the civil society were appointed as ministers and advisors. A six point agenda was announced for effecting comprehensive institutional reforms in the socio-economic and political life of the society. Along with other measures, the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) was established to reform the power structure of the polity. The NRB, after a wide-ranging consultation came up with the Devolution of Power Plan. The devolution strategy is designed to provide an institutional mechanism for most of the critical elements of sustainable development like, administrative decentralization, grassroots participation, empowerment, equity, gender issues, local initiatives and urban rural integration.

The new design not only envisages a decisive role for the district and union councils but also has provision for civil society institutions to work in tandem with the elected bodies. In order to organize people for increased participation, the community boards and village councils have established which identify/prioritize development needs of the villages and participate in its implementation through monitoring etc.

A nationwide poverty alleviation program, i.e., Khushhal Pakistan is also initiated on March 11, 2000. The program is pro poor and pro-backward areas, with strong emphasis on local participation. A large number of infrastructure and social sector schemes were initiated by district administration in consultation with local communities during the first phase of the program. With the establishment of the new local government system, the implementation of development program has been entrusted to the elected representatives at the local level.

The government has revitalized the Tameer-e-Watan program initiated and implemented by the district officials of provincial government departments at district level in consultation with local communities through MNAs/MPAs.
5.5 ASSESSMENT OF PEOPLES’ PARTICIPATION IN THE ABOVE PROGRAMMES

Local participation, being a core element in all the programs, failed to a large extent. All programs operated more a political than socio-economic programs; hence generally applied a top-down approach, imposing a centralized pattern of decision making for local level operations. Only in the period of the Basic Democracies, and local councils in 1979, some local political commitment through the elected union councils was generated and some participatory involvement emerged at the local level. All other programs were implemented in the absence of elected local bodies with no functional substitute that could have promoted local participation by other means. In all the programs, the prospective beneficiaries were never directly involved in both the project planning or implementation stages. Local participation in the aided self-help projects decreased over each subsequent program. Only under the IRDP, a bottom-up approach of decentralized decision making from the local level was attempted to some extent. However, without democratic control, even these attempts were soon undermined by the rural elites taking over the lead in participatory bodies. With the reconstitution of the elected union councils in 1979, a more genuine step for local participation was attempted.

Nevertheless, the rural development projects contributed to people’s participation in development process by one way or the other including consulting with local people, encouraging local resource contribution, discouraging contracting style of implementation, and reinforcing local organizational capabilities in development. Each program has affected association of the people in one or the other form in carrying out developmental activities.

A council of village elders – an informal body of chosen or selected individuals - was formed under the Village –Aid Program (1953-1960) which was actively associated and consulted by the Village-Aid worker in assessing and identifying the village needs and problems, mobilizing local resources, and executing developmental projects.

A project committee – led by the basic democrats, the elected representative – was formed for
the formulation and execution of physical development projects under the rural works program during 1962-63. Village needs were identified by the respective councilor in an informal meeting with fellow villagers, were discussed in the union council meeting approved by the district council and were executed by the councilor through the project committee.

The IRDP introduced the concept of broad based village collective forum - the village cooperative organization - which paved way for broad based participation by organizing the villagers to participate in decision making and resource mobilization at village level.

District Coordination Committees comprising district councilors and district heads of sectoral departments as members with chairman of district council as its chairman affected participation of people, indirectly through their representatives, in planning and execution of development activities not only of the councils but also of the provincial and federal governments.

Similarly District Development Advisory Committees comprising of assembly members were constituted in the early 1980s at district level for identifying and planning development programs in the district.

Towards the end of 1980s, and in the early 1990s, the peoples program and social action program were planned and executed by the project committees at district level comprising members of a provincial assembly and headed by a selected or nominated administrator usually belonged to the ruling party.

After 1996, the development programs of the federal and provincial governments were formulated and implemented through the reinvented district development committees mostly comprised of local Members of Parliament belonged to the ruling party. This practice continued up to the termination of a democratically elected government in 1999.

With the reinvention of local government system in 2001, the formulation and execution of all the development programs is made the responsibility of the district government. But with the introduction of democratic institutions at national level, such arrangements could not be realized.
as members of the parliament identify/prioritize the needs/problems and provincial government official in district offices make arrangements for the formulation and implementation of the projects.

To conclude, the various programs have tried various mechanisms i.e. Village Development Councils; Project Committees; Village Cooperative Organizations; District Coordination Committees; District Development and Advisory Committees and Social Action Boards which have indirectly associated the people in planning and implementation of development programs. Studies (Zaman: 2004; Minhajuudin: 1985; and Rashid and Tunio: 1990) have confirmed that participation of common people could not be realized at all.

5.6 Strategies and Approaches for Promoting Participation

The developing states established a number of new local government institutions to replace the old and exclusive structures that seldom allowed participation of all sections of the community. But the outcome has not been adequately successful since the existing political system did not facilitate the entrance and participation by the poor and powerless groups. There is a persistent tendency to retain control over local institutions and programs by the central government. In addition, a centralized bureaucracy often emerges as a major obstacle to effective participation at the local level.

Despite these significant barriers, the message is not that efforts to strengthen popular participation in local governance should be abandoned. Indeed, around the world we can find a number of important innovations and interventions which show promise to make a significant impact in enhancing citizenship participation in democratic local governance. What is needed is to learn more about the potential of these strategies, and the conditions under which they might widen openings for greater political participation of the popular sectors at the local level, and under what conditions they are likely to serve the opposite purpose, namely, the integration and co-optation of the popular majorities into a political system that essentially remains unchanged (Sch¨nwalder, 1997:756).
Despite the fact that there are a number of innovations occurring around the globe, few of them seem to have been systematically documented or assessed. In a workshop in March 1999, IDS convened a workshop in co-ordination with SEARCH, OUTREACH, and Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and Dr. Kripa specifically to examine the use of participatory methods in strengthening participation in local governance. The workshop brought together practitioners and groups working on these issues from India, Bangladesh, Philippines and Nepal. The workshop pointed to the significant window of opportunity for strengthening grassroots participation brought by current initiatives for reforms in governance in the context of decentralisation.

Measures that can help safeguard participation by all, particularly by women and by scheduled tribes can be of two types. The first type are concerned with making changes in formal structures, while the second type are more concerned with enhancing individual citizens’ capacity to participate. Public policy has been almost exclusively focused so far on the first type of safeguard measures. Structural improvements have encompassed primarily reserving electoral offices in local government for low-participating categories, especially women and scheduled tribes. However, reservations have not so far resulted in significantly improving participation by either of these categories. Reservations have been in force for only seven years so far, and it is possible that continuing with reservations for a longer period might have the desired effects. There is no assurance, however, that this is likely to happen. A hope, shared with many others (including Mathew and Nayak 1996 and Mayaram 1999) is that by providing them with access to office, the reservations policy might indirectly strengthen among women and scheduled tribes the desire to participate more fully in politics at the local level.

In addition the IDS workshop (1999) has also showed the following different and multiple kinds of strategies that were being used to strengthen participation.

- **Participatory Planning**

In a number of countries, perhaps most notably the Philippines, India and Bolivia, new
legislation offers possibilities for new processes of participatory planning to influence the priorities of local governments. Perhaps the most extensive model for this is found in the Peoples Campaign for Decentralised Planning in Kerala, which has mobilised thousands of people at the panchayat level to prepare plans for economic development and social justice (Bandyopadhyay 1997:2450). Similarly, in the Philippines, the Batman project is using participatory planning in a large number of municipalities across the country, and in India the National Coalition of Resource Support Organisations associated with PRIA has promoted participatory micro-level planning in a number of states (Oldenburg 1999). In many instances, participatory planning methodologies, such as PRA, are being used, and local governments to provide such assistance are calling upon NGOs and others who have these skills.

- Citizen Education and Awareness Building

Another set of strategies has involved using popular education and communication methodologies to strengthen the awareness of local citizens of their rights and responsibilities under new local governance legislation. In the state of Karnataka, Dr. Kripa and colleagues have pioneered the use of radio as an awareness building tool, while in both Bangladesh and India popular theatre is being used for similar purposes. Also in India, PRIA and the NCRSO have developed strategies for strengthening the Gram Sabha or village meeting as the most basic unit of direct democracy. In Zimbabwe, the Community Publishing Process has developed popular education materials on citizenship and democracy, which have been used widely across the country.

- Training and Sensitising Local Officials

While some participatory education strategies have focused on building the awareness and capacity of local citizens, others have focused on training of elected officials and government staff. These are largely of two types. In some places such as India, where reservations have been made for women and lower caste representatives, a great deal of work has gone into training these newly elected representatives, many of whom have no previous leadership
experience in formal politics. In Karnataka, for instance, SEARCH, as well as others, have offered training and leadership development programmes for thousands of newly elected women representatives. As a result, these women have now held their own convention, formed their own network, and are using village-to-village peer education and support methods to strengthen their capacity.

In other settings, the focus has been on enabling existing government officials to engage with citizens in a more participatory manner. In Uganda and in Tanzania, for instance, large scale participatory poverty assessment projects have been used not only for helping to identify the priorities of the poor, and their perceptions of local governance, but also to strengthen capacity of local government staff in areas such as participatory planning. Similarly, in India, partly as a result of a national workshop on Attitude and Behaviour Change in Participatory Processes held at the LBS National Academy of Administration, work has begun by government training institutes to experiment with large scale methods of sensitising government staff to more participatory approaches.

- **Advocacy, Alliances and Collaboration**

A fourth set of strategies discussed at the Karnataka workshop involve the need for learning new skills of advocacy, as well as how to build effective alliances and collaborative partnerships, especially those that cut across power differences. This involves new skills for both sides of the equation. Citizens, community-based organisations and NGOs previously excluded from decision-making in government need to learn skills of advocacy and effective policy influence, as well to guard against co-optation. Similarly, government officials and existing power holders need to learn new skills and to develop appropriate mechanisms for involving new stakeholders in policy formation and decision making. Reviewing possible strategies for popular participation in local governance, Schinwalder (1997:768) finds this approach potentially most promising:

Multiple alliances with a variety of other actors appear to be a way of safeguarding the relative autonomy of popular movements operating at the local level and of maximising
resources available to them. In the end, whether or not these movements will succeed in getting their voices heard, while at the same time weathering repression and fending off attempts at co-optation will depend to a considerable extent on their skills at bargaining and negotiating with others.

- Participatory Budgeting

Presently one of the most successful experiences in citizen participation in decision-making at the local level is the experience of participatory budgets. In Brazil at least 70 cities have established a participatory budget system which allows citizen participation in decision-making over allocation of resources.

The participatory budget strategy was initiated in 1989 when the City Hall of Porto Alegre created participatory structures with decision-making power over the allocation of resources for the development of the municipality. The Municipal Council of Government Plan and Budget (MCGPB) is responsible for the co-ordination and organisation of the process of developing the investment plan, and checking the execution of the planned budget. It is constituted by elected citizens from the 16 regions in which the city is divided as well as by government representatives with no voting right. Through a participatory planning process involving people from all the regions, the investment plan of the previous year is reviewed, priorities are defined and councillors for the MCGPB are elected. An open and elaborate consultation process with the population follows, which ends when the investment plan is approved by the MCGPB and sent by the Executive Power to the Municipal town councillors. Subsequently a negotiation process takes place around the specific details.

- Promoting Accountability of Elected Officials to Citizens

While a number of participatory methods focus on enhancing direct participation of citizens in the governance process, others are focusing on maintaining accountability of elected officials and government agencies to the citizenry. Traditionally, in democratic governance, accountability is thought to be maintained in a number of ways, e.g. local elections, strong
and active opposition parties, media, public meetings and formal redress procedures (Blair 1998).

In the newer and more active forms of citizenship, citizens are developing other accountability mechanisms. In Rajasthan, for instance, as the work by Goetz and Jenkins (1998) documents, the women's led right-to-information movement has demanded a minimal level of transparency by local governments, especially in the use of local funds. Other more professional advocacy organisations, such as the Public Affairs Centre in Bangalore, have used a relatively sophisticated research processes to develop a Report Cards of local governments in the delivery of services.

In both Bolivia and India, legislation allows for local vigilance committees to serve a monitoring and watchdog role. So far there is little evidence that these have developed the capacity and independence to do their job, but there may be great potential. In Kerala, for instance, local vigilance committees are empowered to sign off on local projects after inspecting both for quality and for proper use of funds before final payments are made to contractors. An NGO coalition associated with Interaction is beginning to explore how to strengthen these citizen-monitoring committees as a bottom-up device to insure accountability.

These, then, are just some of the strategies which are beginning to be used for strengthening citizenship participation in the potentially new spaces found in democratic decentralisation programmes. Clearly their potential for success will vary across context and will depend a great deal on broader enabling factors. And much more research is needed to learn about the impact these interventions can have in helping to overcome the barriers to participation which were discussed in the previous section, and in which contexts.

Such participation does not usually provide good return due to the disorganized state of local interests, and their input in the process remains vague and aimless. The failure of such arrangements points to the need for meaningful participation. Non-profit and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can perform this vital task of providing focus, meaning and direction to the weaker groups in the community and build them up as a cohesive and
productive force. I would agree with Hashemi that it is such organizations that may "ultimately pave the way for the development of a civil society that can independently protect its own". I would add that only such self-reliant organizations have the potential for breaking the clientelistic mode of domination in developing countries including Pakistan which perpetuates the status quo and hampers the development potentials.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Throughout Pakistan's history, successive governments have tried to reach the village through adopting a number of measures, mostly a blend of democratic and bureaucratic approaches, each of which provided for distinctive structures and rules and its own style of operation. The dominant approach to rural development in Pakistan has been administrative rather than political. The administrative approach is aimed primarily at achieving efficient allocation of available resources and corresponds in many ways to a 'growth' strategy, which is more elite based and elite oriented, choosing short-run over long term gains by utilizing those resources most readily available. The political approach, on the other hand, relies more on mobilization of resources, primarily through appeals and promises and citizen involvement. With the introduction of local councils in 1959, the Pakistan government provided for a more political approach to rural development. Despite local reforms in 1979 and 2001, this political approach, however, is still limited and dominated by the administrative approach, which provided rural development with few achievements and many pitfalls. The extent to which priority is given to one or the other depends mainly on government ideology and interest, and sporadically on local reactions and responsiveness.

Most projects have been carried out through local councils, district development committees or field offices of central ministries and provincial departments. The establishment of village committees was prerequisites for the initiation and implementation of development projects. This requirement was rigorously enforced for increasing participation in order to manage and mobilize local resources. Although constrained by central structures and processes, the development projects worked with local government and other decentralized organizations to achieve a variety of positive results - responsiveness, improvement in planning,
administrative and technical capabilities of local government resource mobilization and management, contribution to economic development and strengthening of inter organizational and inter governmental networks at the local level. However, policies and regulations emanating from the central government have limited the institutional development of local councils as a participatory agency of development. So revitalization of local government for active participation of people in development is required.
CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As mentioned earlier, rural development is universally recognised in Pakistan development policy. Since 1952, Pakistan has become a laboratory for rural development programmes, as National government and international aid agencies have realized the poor conditions of people living in villages. The focus of these development experiences have been the organizational and institutional means of rural development, where the institutions are often considered as pre-requisites to any subsequent form of change. With the changing economic and political circumstances, the traditional approach to development – the view of development as bringing activities under the control and order of the state, relied primarily on a national civil service bureaucracy to deliver technically determined services to meet predetermined needs of the population (Pritchett and Woolcock: 2002), also labeled ‘bureaucratic high modernism’ - was replaced with a new approach called participatory development and deliberative development that aims to engage people in decision making (Alatas, Pritchett, and Wetterberg: 2002).

Pakistan has long been considered a classical example of a 'developmental authoritarian' state – one that foster and process economic development and deliver services to its people through public sector bureaucracies while simultaneously creating institutions through which popular participation was structured, channelled, and thereby marginalized. With the re-evaluation and reconsideration of the role of the state in development in late seventies, stimulus was given to local government not only in Pakistan but throughout the world. Accordingly local government institutions were created and reinvented to play a role in development.

In Pakistan the decentralization of responsibilities to district government has taken place
since 2001. This chapter contexts the survey and case study analyses in a detailed assessment of the role of district government in rural development and peoples' participation.

By looking at the administrative and development aspects of councils in two districts - Kohat and Manschra - the chapter outlines and assess the councils in two respects: firstly in terms of councils development initiatives and its response to the problems and needs of the people and secondly in terms of councils initiatives to promote and encourage peoples' involvement in development activities.

6.2 DIMENSION OF THE REGION: NWFP

Pakistan is divided into four geographic and administrative regions – NWFP, Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan. About 89 millions of Pakistan's population of 132 millions lives in rural areas, 13.4% (17.7 millions) of them in the NWFP, 55.6% (73.6 millions) in the Punjab, 4.9% (6.6 millions) in Balochistan and 23% (30.4 millions) in the Sindh province (GoP: 1998). By virtually any measure of welfare, residents of rural areas appear to be worse off than their urban counterparts. According to the 1998 Census report of Pakistan, per capita expenditures in rural areas are about half of what they are in urban areas, and the proportion
of people who live below the poverty line is about 25 percentile points higher (68.3%, compared to 42.0%). About two-thirds of total expenditures made by rural households are devoted to food, compared to less than 50% for urban households.

Indicators of educational attainment calculated from the Economic Survey 2002-2003 show that about 12% of school aged children in rural areas are not enrolled in school, and more than 20% of those aged 15 or older are illiterate. In every case, the comparable statistic for urban areas is about half that for rural areas, except for adult illiteracy, which only affects 5% of adults in urban areas.

Rural Pakistan shares many features with other traditional rural societies. In-migration into urban communities is limited: more than 80% of adults in rural areas are born in their current place of residence. Almost 90% of households are headed by males. Households tend to be slightly larger than those in urban areas (5.3 members, compared to 5.1 members), and to have more children under 16 (2.4, compared to 1.7). Labor market participation in rural areas is high: almost 80% of the population above age 14 has a job. About three-quarters of the employed people work in agriculture.

The NWFP is the second most backward province of Pakistan in many respects, according to the production and infrastructure index elaborated by Pasha and Hasan (1982). Although the province stands, in certain respects, above the Pakistan level, in others it is below the national average.

The NWFP has an area of about 74,521 square kilometers (GOP: 1998). In 1981, it had a population of 11.06 millions, which grew at an annual rate of 3.6 percent (ibid). The population density is one of the highest in the country, 148 per square kilometers (ibid). Under the constitution, legislative power is vested in the Provincial Legislative Assembly. The provincial cabinet holds executive responsibilities and is the highest decision-making body for the Provincial Government policies. The chief minister who heads the provincial cabinet is the head of the Provincial Government. The provincial secretariat is the nucleus of the provincial government administration. It provides administrative support in the
implementation of decision and policies of the provincial government and the provincial legislative assembly. The provincial government is given full authority to determine and manage the province according to the laws of the country and is empowered to borrow funds for development.

Administratively, the province is divided (in the devolved scenario) into 24 Districts, 61 Tehsils/Towns (Tehsil Municipal Administrations) and 957 Union Administrations (Union Councils) with approximately 11000 villages (PEC: 2001).
6.3 DIMENSIONS OF DISTRICT GOVERNMENT MANSEHRA

Mansehra is one of the twenty-four districts of the NWFP with a population of about 1,076,171 people (Government of NWFP: 1998), located 250 kilometers north of Peshawar (the provincial capital), at the ecological boundary between the Azad Kashmir and the NWFP. The district comprises an area of 12,66,511 acres, bounded northwards by the districts of Kohistan and Diamir, to the east by the district of Muzaffarabad of Azad Kashmir, and to the west and south by the districts of Swat and Abbottabad respectively.

The district Government Mansehra traced its origins back to the 'Basic Democracies' scheme of 1959, which made provisions for local institutions in rural areas. With the need to enhance the growth and development of rural sector in 1976, the Mansehra tahsil was converted into a 'District'. The district is split into three tahsils - Mansehra, Baffa, and Balakot. With the introduction of the NWFP Local Government Ordinance 1979, Mansehra council was upgraded to 'District Council. Thus Mansehra district council was created in 1979 and represented a consolidation of the district council structure initially set up in the NWFP Local Government Ordinance 1979. With the introduction of Devolution plan 2000, there also established a 'District Government' in Mansehra in 2001.

The Mansehra district assembly or council is comprised of 80 members - in which 58 are elected directly by the people, whereas the Nazim, and Naib Nazim, 16 women members (3 seats reserved for women are vacant), 3 workers members and 3 minority members are elected indirectly by all the union councilors in 2001.

Soon after the elections in 2001, the Mansehra district Government outlined a development plan in 2001 for Mansehra, which has been mostly carried out. Hence an integrated and comprehensive multi-year plan (Five-Year Plan) was proposed in a council meeting in 2001 to be established. Recognizing the importance of villagers' involvement in councils' development plan, and the philosophy behind the system, each councillor as required held a meeting in his respective union council to know villagers' development priorities. The district council consolidated these priorities and proposals into a council wide Five Year
Plan (2001-2006). For the implementation of any development plan considerable funds are required. So the first task of the council was to raise sufficient funds for financing the plan. Since council is resource led, it had no alternative, but to exploit the opportunities presented by provincial/central governments and development agencies 'carrots' if it was to develop the locality at all. As a result, the maximization of resources, to enable council to achieve, maintain and, if possible, to expand its development activity became a policy objective. Accordingly, the council adopted a more pragmatic and flexible approach within the parameters of the so-called 'dual strategy'. This comprised of two broad elements, outlined in the council's Five-Year development plan document:

1. to maximize the local resources by taxing and cooperation and contribution across all sections of the community.
2. to work closely with provincial and central governments and national and international agencies to lever resources into the council (District Government Mansehra: 2001).

In view of the various financial problems, the District Government pursued a strategy to maximize the resources for promoting development in the locality. In this regard, the Government has taken several initiatives to secure additional resources for the plan implementation through negotiations with provincial government and private organizations. Eventually Government has succeeded in getting additional resources/extra grant from the provincial government and development fund from UNICEF and SRSP which has enabled the District Government to multiply the resources devoted to development plan. In addition, the Government has mobilized the local resources by levying certain local taxes such as export tax, professional tax and tax on immovable properties and community contribution, since all the development projects in a particular village are necessarily partially financed by villagers' contribution - land free of cost, labour free or with nominal payment and construction material. At present the Government raises its income from the direct tax through the graduated personal levy; indirect tax, which consists mainly of rates on property; and earnings from enterprises and utilities, such as housing rents, licence fee, rent of district council's property, water and other charges and interests on investment.
In order to establish links between the District Government and the villagers, the council has established a series of committees both at council and village level. The configuration of the committees includes:

- Committees covering particular interest such as, Women Development Committee;
- Advisory committees such as education committee, health committee, poultry farming committee, and manpower training committee;
- Functional committees responsible for development project formulation and implementation as well as evaluation such as community participation promoters’ team, village project committee, and finance committee, citizens’ community boards and village councils.

Some of these committees are formally constituted with devolved powers; others are established for consultation purposes. The process by which councillors became involved with the villagers varies. The consultation takes the form of:

- informal meetings between councillors and villagers;
- consultation meetings with village project committee (members of which are selected by villagers themselves);
- consultation meetings at village council and citizens community boards.

The development plan of Manschra Government (2001-2006) has outlined and defined five general areas of development including potable water, health, education, skills training and women development. The plan did not, however, trigger the anticipated propelling multipliers of growth for the Manschra due partly to the population being scattered in small villages and archipelagic characteristics, the lack of a well integrated system of socio-economic infrastructure, and the shortages of local capital, human resources, and business opportunities (Khalil et al: 2002). More important, Manschra development requires the effective management of the geo-strategic and geo-economic environment, resources, and
external relations. These requirements far exceed the capability of the Mansehra District Government.

To ensure smooth development of the district, DDC (district development committee) originally established in 1985 by the Provincial Government, is reintroduced in the province. Although, the delegation of development functions to DDC may have provided the financial assistance leading to the growth and development of Mansehra, the role of council has become more passive than before. However, the special preferences given to DDC cannot be interpreted as incapacitating the development functions of district Government. The Government of Mansehra is undertaking the development of most of the infrastructural facilities. According to the District Government Development Report 2002-2003, it has completed the construction of 70 km of arterial roads, and 50 km of collector roads is under construction. Government has recently completed 1700 projects of water supply, constructed buildings for 55 primary schools, 10 middle schools in 2001-2003 and provided training to 69 community health workers, and teachers (District Government Development Report: 2003). Provincial and central governments withdrawal of development grants and channelization of development funds to villages through district development committees represents the worse cut of them all because from the vantage point of the Mansehra District Government, it would seem like disarming the unarmed.

Further, the step can hardly be said to be in line with the government intention of providing local authorities with reliable sources of income to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively and economically. The implications of this for the fiscal health of the District Government are indeed far reaching. The district government is not guided firmly by provincial government on how to tap new financial resources for development except a suggestion that the council should consider levying local taxes in order to reduce its dependence on government. But unfortunately the provincial government has already pre-empted all the worthwhile taxable resources of revenue. Under these circumstances the District Government role in development is also reduced. Council has to rely on the regular and predetermined set of government guidelines and assistance. Nevertheless, steps are not being taken to increase the revenue by local taxation, as different types of taxes allowed for
council are not levied. Such a trend also implies the negligible role of Mansehra district council in development.

6.4 DIMENSIONS OF THE DISTRICT GOVERNMENT KOHAT

Set in a valley characterized by gently sloping land, Kohat is located 64 kilometers to the south of the provincial capital and generally one of the most mountainous districts in the NWFP, with an area of 1892 square kilometers and a population of 538000 (Government of NWFP: 1998), thus ranking fifth in terms of area in the province. Most of Kohat falls under non-agricultural area that is mostly unsuitable for cultivation. The district as a whole has 290321 acres of cultivated land, of which 59212 acres (23.8 %) have irrigation facilities (ibid). Canal irrigation provides 21 per cent of the irrigation and the remaining is mostly under well irrigation. Most of the district area is dry where dry cultivation of grain is done. But agricultural production is not high. Wheat, oilseeds, sorghum are main crops of the district and where canal irrigation exists sugar cane and maize are the principal crops. The significant economic activities include the nine industrial units including textile, cement and
sugar mills. This solid industrial base puts Kohat in a viable economic position and represents a significant potential source of local revenue.

Kohat is predominantly rural as more than 80 per cent of its 50144 households reside in 335 villages (ibid). The population is largely composed of various communities - Bangash, Khattak, Orakzai, Awan, and Afridi, who are engaged mostly with labour and public services especially military services. Labour is sold primarily for manual tasks both in Kohat and outside in Pakistan cities and more recently in the Arabian Gulf. Both labour and public service bring money as income into the district economy. The literacy rate in the district is the third highest in the province (19.4 %) and above the provincial literacy rate (16.1 %) (ibid). Having a solid industrial base and opportunities for employment and education, the district generally is an economically dynamic area.

In keeping with the Devolution Plan of 2000, Kohat has one district council, and 27 union councils. The local authority covering the communal lands in Kohat district is known as the Kohat District Council. It has been reorganized through a series of provincial Government directives. The first measure was the enactment of the 'Basic Democracies Order 1959', which created local councils in the province. The second reform measure was initiated in 1979 through the Martial Law administrator's directives on decentralization, which was given legal standing through the enactment of the Provincial Government's NWFP Local Government Ordinance 1979'. The present District Government Kohat is established as a result of the recent Devolution plan 2000 under the NWFP Local Government Ordinance 2001.

The area covered by the District Government Kohat is divided into a District Council, two town councils and 27 union councils, which are further divided into several villages. In general, a district councilor represents people from 10000-15000 within 3 to 8 villages. Thus the council has 46 members where 27 are general councillors, - one from each of the union council, representing each union council in a District Council – 9 are women members, 5 are peasants members and 5 are minority members.
In terms of its operations, the district council has established five general and specific purpose committees, each of which is chaired by an elected councillor and is required to prepare proposals in its respective field submissions for the council annual development plan and annual budget estimates. The council’s annual and five-year plan ideas are reviewed and approved by the council in its meeting. Although the elected district council has substantial power to determine both annual and five-year plans, the council has never produced such plans except the annual budget estimates. The council, as required by law, produces annual budget estimates and the balance sheet for each financial year in June. The annual expenditure estimates are prepared by the respective head of the devolving provincial department with the consultation of councillors and committees and then are submitted to the district council for approval or modification. The councillors, after approving the budget, are charged with the implementation of the annual development plan of the council in their respective areas/wards. It is the councillor responsibility to form committees at village level in order to involve people in plan formulation and implementation. At the time of fieldwork in 2003 we observed no such committee in council records and villagers during interviews with them duly certified it.

Council revenues are derived from two principal sources classified in accordance with the council’s data storage procedures. These are administrative services and commercial activities which lumps together about six different sources related to taxes, rates, fees, rents, water charges, and transferred guest house profit. The most important source of council revenue is its administrative charges and taxes, which contributed largely to council revenue. The provincial government grants contribution is minor even non available-. Thus the potential for effective development role of council is dependent upon its capacity to expand its revenue base. Like Mansehra council, district council Kohat is less stringent on rural development. To build up its own financial capacity to cover the rising expenditures, the council has shown its usual organizational incapability by not maximizing the use of available resources and developing and accommodating itself on the existing avenues for capital formation.

The council records show by far the most important area is public works, which constituted
more than sixty per cent during 2001-2002 followed by administrative expenditure. Public works play an important role in the capital formation of the community. They mostly included the construction and repairs of roads, digging of wells, schemes of piped water supply to villages and construction of primary school buildings. The annual development plan and annual budget estimates of Kohat district council show that emphasis was laid on the construction of a network of roads in rural areas. Over the last three years, efforts have been made to construct and repair new roads, drainage, and bridges. The council linked its 60 villages with main markets by constructing more than 50 kilometers of rural roads during the 2001-2003 (District council Kohat: 2004). It has favourably affected the vegetables and fruits trade to the market of Kohat.

The council also participates in the provision of drinking water. The digging of wells and schemes of piped water supplies were other salient features of the council's works programme. The council has completed 711 new wells and also repaired 54 old wells; the piped water supply scheme had covered 43 villages in the years 2001-2003 (ibid).

Among the rest of schemes under 'works', provision of primary school buildings (classrooms), and construction of buildings for primary health units (dispensaries) occupy an important position in council's development expenditures. The council had constructed 10 primary schools and with respect to health care, there are 50 dispensaries and clinics constructed/repai red by the council in rural areas during the 2001-2003 (ibid).

As stated earlier, the council was entrusted with organizing villagers in order to participate in community development. As far as the council's performance in this field is concerned, it is not very encouraging. There are no village level committees formed by the council. The researcher found no established procedure or mechanism for people's involvement in development programmes. The council involves villagers through councillors and hold meetings to discuss the village problems but not on regular bases. The council meets at intervals varying from once every six weeks to twice a year. Council meetings, as the council records show, are attended rigorously by most of the councillors including 9 women councillors. The issues to be discussed in meetings may be brought up by any member, and
after discussion they are voted upon. The schemes to be taken up are discussed and decided upon in council's meetings. However, during the interview with councillors it was observed that councillors especially belonging to the opposition group were not asserting themselves in council's meetings.

In sum, the council's activities are mostly limited to public works - roads, streets, primary school buildings, dispensaries and drinking water schemes. Although financial resources do not permit the council to develop a comprehensive development plan, it has never initiated efforts to establish development plan and mobilize local resources for financing such plans. Moreover, council has not bothered to form villagers committees to make the latter involved in council activities.

If we compare the responses to participatory development in the Kohat district council to Mansehra district council, there are some differences. The councils' responses to the initiative revealed some very interesting facts. Mansehra council has established a formal mechanism for developing a local development strategy which ensures its contribution (at least in theory) to participatory development. Mansehra council provided a means of involving local groups and individuals in the processes of policy formulation and implementation. The actions taken thus far by Mansehra council on participatory development are clearly admirable and point to a determination to work towards a fair and prosperous future for their people. On the other hand, Kohat district council had not put in place any formal structure for this purpose. It was yet to find ways of involving local interests that go beyond the normal patterns of elections.

Additionally, activities undertaken by both councils are also different. The Mansehra case study showed that the council had responded to rural development by establishing a five-year development plan and developing a partnership with the provincial government and UNICEF for provision of basic necessities to people. The council assumed that an effective strategy of rural development is the setting of targets and the measurement of progress made on development performance within a specified time frame. The council leadership successfully lobbied for getting financing the local plan. On the other hand, Kohat district
council implemented the various programmes through the provincial government directives without taking much initiative of its own.

The local government modernization agenda, largely set out within the Musharraf's 2001 'Reforms Plan', is intended to bring about improvements under key themes including participation, efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Aspects of the modernization agenda relating to public participation, council decision making and wider governance are considered to be a programme for a democratic renewal of local government. The Local Government modernization agenda includes encouragement and involvement of people in the decision making at local level, as public participation - at local elections and between - is vital to enhancing the democratic legitimacy of local government, the development of community leadership and in improving service delivery (ODPM: 2002).

In this background, the hypotheses developed were:

1. Decentralized local councils do facilitate peoples' participation in the development activities as compared to other institutions at local level.
2. Being closest to the people, peoples' participation in local councils is greater than other institutions at local level.
3. Decentralized local governments are more responsive to local needs than other government agencies at local level.
4. Local government institutions are generally dominated by local elites.
5. People have more confidence on Local Government as compared to Federal and Provincial Governments.

As planned and designed, the study examine empirically - through a survey of villagers and councilors - the three elements of the workings of district government: people's participation, representation and responsiveness to local problems and needs.
Peoples’ participation in the development process is the core element of the emerging rural development paradigm. The concept is however much elusive when it comes to actual implementation. Academically the debate on whether local level institutions have a greater role in increasing/facilitating peoples’ participation is long enduring and will continue. Significantly, however a recent World Bank study on the local level institutions suggests a role for local government in facilitating and creating a supportive environment for the emergence of local associations, as well as ensuring that the poor are able to participate in them (Grootaert: 2001).

Being closest to the people, local government, it is assumed, may facilitate people involvement in community and development affairs. Sanjeev Prakash & Per Selle in a World Development Report 2003 background paper have clearly mentioned that local government forms a potentially important source of participation, though its reach across rural areas can be limited too. Local councilors in the course of their work often maintain links with a wider cross section of community than members of local private organizations, provincial and central government. Since members of the local government do live among the villagers, they often have access to forums, funding and facilities that can act as a focus for creating linkages between local or village residents and the government. It ensures easier access of villagers to government officials.

In this background the study is designed to evaluate the participative aspect of the decentralized government by conducting a survey of villagers as well as councilors where information was gathered on sampled villagers’ participation in various activities including their participation in project process.

Keeping in view the dynamic and multi-dimensional nature of people’s participation, the endogenous participation activities are divided into two main types: (i) political participation and (ii) development participation.
The political participation is further divided into activities such as:

(a) Villagers participation in local elections: existence of organizations at village level for the involvement of villagers in development process, openness of local institutions, the mode of electing/selecting leadership

(b) Participation in activities related to villagers organizations constituted by the local councils at village level (such as Citizens Community Boards (CCBs) and Village Councils (VC)).

The development participation covers the activities such as:

(a) participation in expression of village problems (problem identification)
(b) participation in decision making
(c) participation in project planning
(d) participation in project implementation (provision of inputs such as free labour, financial contribution, free of cost land provision, supervision and monitoring etc)
(e) participation in project evaluation and maintenance

The first element of the survey involved detailed interviews, using a semi-structured interview format, with 400 villagers drawn from sixteen rural communities in Kohat (200) and Mansehra (200) to get information on the above aspects of peoples’ participation and then some core questions were asked, designed to assess the perceived status and public image of various units of government at district level in terms of participation and development. While the second survey is regarding the councilors perceptions of participatory development is involved interviews with 82 and 48 members including district Nazims and Naib Nazims in district Mansehra and Kohat respectively.

6.5.1 Villagers' Survey

This is a main research endeavor carried out in 8 union councils in two districts of NWFP in 2003, through a multi-module questionnaire – demographic information and villagers’
participation in, and perception of, local government.

6.5.1.1 Profile of Sampled Villagers

Table 6.1 shows the relative characteristics of the heads of the sample villagers, including occupation, landholding size, education and age. An examination of the occupation characteristics indicates that nearly 68 per cent of the total villagers were engaged in agriculture. Business is the primary occupation of 13 per cent of the total respondents; while 11% are employed in the service sector (farming is the secondary occupation of this group).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Kohat (%)</th>
<th>Mansehra (%)</th>
<th>Sample average (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Occupation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agriculture / farming</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business / trading</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labourer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landholding Size</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small/landless (0-1 hectares)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium (1--3 hectares)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large (more than 3 hectares)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schooling</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle schooling</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High schooling</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College education</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University education</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21--30 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30--44 years</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45--59 years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and above</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The occupation of each respondent was recorded as actual responses during the survey but was, later on regrouped as shown in the table 6.1. Most of the categories are self-explanatory, but there are overlaps between some types. As majority of the respondents in
business and service categories belong to small business and low paid jobs, they are not further desegregated according to the level of business or type of the job. Similarly agriculture or farming is not desegregated on the basis of tenure system. There are two types of tenure farmers: pure tenants and owner-cum-tenant farmers. The former do not own any land but cultivate lands of others on a share-cropping basis, while the latter cultivate a portion of lands with the rest being cultivated by tenants, or they cultivate all of their lands together with the lands of others as share-croppers.

Looking at the table-6.1 again, the villagers are classified as small, medium, and large landholders. Villagers, who have lands up to one hectare, are categorized as small landholders. In addition, this category also includes a number of pure tenant farmers and landless agricultural and other labourers. Villagers between one and three hectares are termed as medium landholders while the large landholders are those who have land size more than three hectares. The number and percentages of them are listed in table-6.1.

Data on the educational attainment given in table-6.1 indicate that 69 per cent of the total heads of sample households were literate; twenty one per cent of the respondents have an education up to primary level. Almost 18% and 12% are educated up to middle and high level respectively whereas 11% and 8% of the respondents are educated up to graduation and post graduation level. The literacy rate in the sampled districts is higher than the national literacy rate. But as the sample consisted of male only and male literacy rate in Pakistan is much higher than female literacy. In the total survey household (340) 31 per cent of the villagers are completely illiterate in which 32 % are in Mansehra district and 30 percent are in Kohat district. This shows that the level of education is slightly low among the rural villagers of Mansehra as compared to Kohat.

An examination of the villagers' sample indicates that 19 % of the respondents were 29 years old or younger, and 43 % of the sample belonged to the age group of 30-44. The percentage then continuously decreased as the age group years increased (Table-6.1).
6.5.1.2 Results of the Survey

In order to assess the study propositions and hypotheses, we designed a research to analyze the councils in terms of participation from two different aspects:

1. The Institutional Aspect: the institutional arrangements made by the district government for participation, and villagers' participation in election of their councillors;
2. The Functional Aspect: villagers' participation in development project, their contribution to development in the form of money, material and manpower.

6.5.1.2.1 The Institutional Aspect

A) The Institutional Arrangements

Section 93; Chapter IX of the NWFP Local Government Ordinance 2001 has a provision for the establishment of village and neighborhood councils in order to promote people involvement in development activities at local level. Within ninety days of the assumption of office, upon a proposal of the Tehsil Municipal Administration, the union council has to make arrangement for the formation of a village council in each village of the union council. The Village and Neighborhood Council may consist of five to eleven members each provided that for each Council one seat is reserved for women and one seat for peasant and workers.

The functions envisaged in the ordinance for the village council are participative in nature. All development activities are to be initiated through the council for which it is required to hold meeting of the village once in a month in order to discuss the village needs and priorities which are then to be communicated to the union council concerned.

In the sampled districts – Kohat and Mansehra – there have not been formed any village council which shows the indifferent attitudes on the part of local councilors. This is
verified by the ‘AURAT’ foundation and the Asian Development Bank in a joint research study, in February 2004 that the elections and formation of Village/Neighborhood Councils have not been held so far in any of the districts in NWFP, except Charsadda. This is a clear breach of the provisions of the Section 93; Chapter IX of the NWFP Local Government Ordinance 2001.

Since the village or neighborhood councils are at the doorstep and provide people a formal space for participation in community affairs and this is the level where local affairs are decided. But participation is denied by not providing the people a forum.

**Table 6.2: The Statutory Arrangements for Peoples Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Village and Neighborhood Councils</th>
<th>Citizen Community Boards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mansehra</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWFP</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 98, Chapter X of the NWFP Local Government Ordinance 2001 also has a provision for citizens community boards (CCBs) to be formed either at union level or village level, either the union council or groups of non-elected citizen may set up any number of Citizen Community Boards. These Boards are a mechanism through which 20% funds for development schemes are to be mobilized at the community level, matched by 80% provided by Local Government resources. They provide a framework within which community level development concerns will be reflected in development schemes and hence villagers’ concerns are also likely to be reflected there.

Citizens’ Community Boards (CCBs) have also not been set up in all of the NWFP districts. There were 357 community boards in NWFP in 2002 while at present there are 400 CCBs working in 957 union councils of NWFP. This is in non-application of Section 98, Chapter X of the Ordinance.
There are 20 and 15 CCBs formed and working in Mansehra and Kohat respectively and where too, villagers' participation is minimal. This shows that the institutional arrangements for involving people in the development activities are not made by the councils. The councils have not fulfilled the legal requirements for participation. This is apathy on the part of elected representatives.

B) Participation in Local Government Institutions

Since the above organizations are part of the structure of local government and an integral part of the local government at village level, the study elicited on villagers' awareness of, and involvement in such organizations. Participation in local government activities was assessed by asking villagers if they voted in local election, attending meetings, contacting councilors.

(i) Awareness measurement

Respondents were asked if they knew about the five types of local government units and whether any member in the household belonged to such organization. On average, awareness was quite widespread with between 40 and 50 percent of household having heard about any one of the local institution and 35 percent having heard of all five (Table/chart 6.3). This shows people's interest in local governments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent of household informed about various units of local government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansehra</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample average</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3 Villagers awareness of Local Governments units
(ii) Villagers Involvement at Meetings

As indicated earlier, awareness of the local government institutions was found to be reasonably high (between 40 – 50%). The high level of awareness does not correspond with the level of involvement, as the majority did not get involved at meetings and other activities of the councils.

Table 6.4: Villagers Participation in Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local unit</th>
<th>Kohat %</th>
<th>Mansehra %</th>
<th>Average %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Village Council</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens Community Board</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Council</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>17.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tehsil Council</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Average</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>15.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Involvement in these organizations was assessed by asking villagers if they participated in any activity such as attending meetings of village council or citizens community boards. Almost three fourth (74.45%) of the total respondents reported no participation in any unit of the local government's meeting including CCBs and village councils. However, the level of participation is different in different units of local government. The closer the unit to the villagers, the more is their participation in meetings. In this case, the
level of awareness cannot be regarded as an indication of the degree of participation. This can be ascribed to various reasons, ranging from illiteracy to apathy as expressed by the respondents themselves.

(iii) Peoples Participation in Elections

The first important forum, which provides opportunities for villagers to participate in council's activities, is the council's elections. Because participation in local election is correlated strongly with positive attitude towards local democracy. When local councils were first reintroduced in 1979, the popular enthusiasm for the councils was remarkably high. The voter turnout in NWFP was as high as 62 per cent in 1979, 65 per cent in 1983, and 65 per cent in 2001 despite political parties boycotting of local elections. The survey study also shows that a significant majority (more than sixty two per cent) participated in local election to their councillors (see Table-6.5).

Table-6.5 showing the Respondents' Participation in Local Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>62.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't remember</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we compare the local election 1983 turnout with that of the 1979 local elections, the turnout has slightly increased. Similarly it was good when compared with national elections 1985, 1988, and 1993 where turnout was between 35 to 45 per cent. So if participation is taken as voting in elections, then the council system represented a significant contribution to the development of local democracy. But this in no way can be taken as a sufficient index of participation. There are scholars of politics who hold that the act of voting under modern representative governments is connected in so remote a fashion to political decisions that it is not to be ascribed any political quality (Parry: 1971). So the simple act of voting in local elections does not appear to be enough for participation. Almond and Verba (1963) regarded
voting 'as a relatively passive form of participation in community life, though a form of participation it certainly is'.

Of course, it is almost a universal norm that participation in local government elections is significantly much lower than in provincial and national elections. Given the nature of the local government devolution plan 2000 and the crucial importance of popular participation to ensure its success, the level of participation in the local elections 2001 - 65% of registered voters -is a particularly good start. There are many understandable reasons why the local government poll is comparatively higher in our case.

Firstly, the new local government system has clearly enormous potential to mobilize people to actively participate in governance - and people probably have realized this potential.

Secondly, the high turnout in local elections, it is assumed, was due to the resources and attention government paid to the projection and promotion of local councils in 2000 and the resources channeled by the military governments in 1960 and in 1979 for the problems of the rural areas.

Thirdly, being a resident of the same village, the candidates in the local election could easily either convince or force their fellow villagers to cast vote. This is very much endorsed by villagers when we asked them regarding the reasons for participating in elections to local councils, the responses revealed that political / influential family (rural elites) was the main reason for villagers' participation in voting. More than fifty per cent (54 %) of villagers who participated in election attributed their participation for village's so called elites.

Fourthly, the polling stations are organized very near to the villagers, may be in the village or in the nearby village, people can easily go to the station without arranging transport.

The social context within which electoral participation takes place has made elections ineffective mode of participation. There is a patron-client relationship in rural areas where...
people are dependent on local elites for urban contacts, transport, loans, and other services. By the reciprocity ethic, all help has to be repaid in some way. Because of this the poor villagers have to caste their votes and that also in the favour of village elites. So the elites exercise tremendous control over the political choice during elections. Those who remain dominant can also put economic sanctions, and even apply physical force, to have their choice acceptable to the poor villagers (Arn: 1982). Their relationship with the local bureaucracy and also those at the nexus of power in centre help them buttress their control over the majority (Sobhan: 1968).

Table 6.6: Peoples Considerations in Local Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Considerations</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Followed the 'Malik' of the Village</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Followed the Tribe</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate’s characteristics, personality and his services for community</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependence and elite solidarity in village level politics preclude the possibility of election of those belonging poor groups. It leads the assumption that village life is governed by a system of petty despotism, whereby the wealthy and powerful leaders have almost complete control over their fellow villagers, and can thus force the majority to act in a fashion which suits the interests of the dominant elite. Tribe / caste consideration in election was also evident from the responses (29 %). Candidate’s characteristics, personality and his services for community received some consideration (17 %) as well. Councils are directly elected bodies through secret ballots, but despite these concessions, the fact remains that elites' (wealthy people: landlords and rich businessmen) preferences coloured the selection of councillors. The data revealed that elites and caste/tribe were the two major factors, which influence the election.

Indeed local government cannot bring all the benefits perceived by villagers or discussed by local government scholars in decentralization literature, because worldwide, local governments have seldom achieved such goals and objectives. In fact, the achievement of
such perceived benefits is dependent on sincere implementation of decentralization policies.

(iv) Villagers Contacts with Councillors

As mentioned earlier, communication serves as a bridge between council and villagers. It is necessary to know the villagers needs and encourage them to participate in development activities. But communication is a two-way process where initiatives and feelings can be transmitted from elite to non-elite and vice-versa. According to this theory people should have the opportunity of freely approaching the council / councillors and communicating their feelings and demands to it / them. We tried to find first the upward communication and then downward communications from the villagers' perspectives, as we assumed that councillors might exaggerate their contacts with villagers.

Traditionally, a powerful justification for local government (as opposed to provincial/central governments) rests on the closeness of local councils to the people. Local councils are uniquely able to detect and respond to the wishes of local people and community and are best placed to adapt national legislation to meet particular local circumstances. In view of villagers, how successful are councils in this regard.

So beginning with general participation, villagers were first asked about their contacts with councillors and then about councillor's contacts with them. The data on Table/chart-6.7 shows that 44 per cent of the respondents are of the view that ordinary people do not have any contact with council or councillors. This frequency of contacts between villagers and councillors does not denote the low level of communication but is low than the contacts villagers have with the MPAs/MNAs. The reason, as mentioned by the villagers, behind that is 'councillors have nothing to offer to the village and its people. As a matter of fact, people indicated that it is a waste of time to contact councillors. This is also because villagers are daily struggling with their basic bread-and-butter survival issues for themselves and their families. It is highly unlikely to expect ordinary villager to see his councillor for a particular community problem.
Table/Chart 6.7 showing the contacts of villagers with councilors, MNAs/MPAs and vice versa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keys</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VCC</td>
<td>VCMP</td>
<td>CCV</td>
<td>MPC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsehra</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast, the contact of people with the legislative members is higher (60%) than their contact with councillors. This is because villagers saw that the councillors could not do anything for them, therefore, they thought that the legislative member would be able to do anything good for them. The frequency of contacts by villagers with councillors for their problems is shown in Table/Chart 6.7.

On the other hand, villagers were asked about councillors' contacts with them. The results show that proportion of councillors' contact with villagers is 40 per cent, suggesting that
there remains a lower level councillors' interest, sufficient to generate not pro-active behaviour from councillors. This is surprising, since it is often assumed that councils are a relatively more visible contact point for villagers and councillors. From this perspective the local councils, which existed to achieve the participatory rural development, their role in such a development is negligible. The villagers were also asked to reveal the reasons for the councillors low contacts with them. Villagers (87%) disclosed that councilors do not like to contact poor people, as they are sure that such people have to follow the malik of the village in voting. The nature of the contact shows that elites, the village so-called headmen are the major point of contact for councillors. Majority (52 %) of villagers reported that the most frequent contact of councillor is through elites. This higher frequency of contacts through elites strongly supports the idea that councillors did not establish links with ordinary citizens. Hence both down-wards and up-wards communications are not developed.

6.5.1.2.2 The Functional Perspectives: Villagers Participation in Development

Both the council theoretical model and the Local Government Ordinance 2001 are agreed on the importance of participation in development (NWFP LGO: 2001). The Ordinance states that development programmes are to be developed, implemented and administered with the maximum feasible participation of residents of the area and members / representatives of the people. In order to examine grass roots perspectives, various questions on local involvement in development projects were asked in the interview with villagers. The general participation was perceived in terms of contacting/visiting councils, meeting councillors regarding individual/community problems. While specific participation focuses on the involvement of villagers in need identification, project formulation, implementation and evaluation.

(i) Participation in Development Process

One of the central aims of the decentralized local government was to stimulate villagers to initiate, participate in and implement such village level projects as the construction of schools, roads, or drainage systems. Villagers were supposed to participate and contribute
what they could: money, material, or labour. People were asked if they think they have to participate in their village’s development or not. As shown in Table/chart-6.8 the large majority of the villagers pointed out they should participate in development activities if they have to benefit from this development.

The data shows that the large majority (82.9 per cent) of the villagers believe they should participate in development which will lead to village development and eventually to their own development. The villagers asserted that if they do not participate, the village will not get a development project, because unless baby cries, mum does not feed her milk.

People who indicated they should participate in village’s development attributed the aim of this participation to two main reasons as seen in the following table (6.9).
Table-6.9 showing the Motives/Reasons for Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation leads to our village development</td>
<td>82.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village development is a cooperative process and we must participate</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The improvement and development of the village should be a cooperative process between the villagers and councils. But the result, which is seen in the table (6.10) below, indicated that only a small proportion of villagers participated in such projects. In the sixteen villages in the sub-sample, less than 15 per cent said they had done so and for many of these the participation was not of the voluntary sort of the development programme had in mind, but was either done solely for pay (a third of the 15 per cent) or was compelled through patron-client relations. The data further showed that 26 per cent of big landholders said they had participated in a community development project, while only 8 per cent of small landholders including landless said they had done so (see Table-6.10).

Table-6.10 showing the Villagers Participation by landholding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>landholding size</th>
<th>Participation in Development Project (%)</th>
<th>Development projects have benefited</th>
<th>None (%)</th>
<th>Some people in the village (%)</th>
<th>All in the village (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>small/landless</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample average</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>25.26</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After knowing the participation of people in development projects, we enquired about the main areas of their participation. This participation is considered in many areas - from provision of inputs (suggestions/ideas to labour, cash and material contribution) to decision making. The respondents' participation at different stages of development programmes have been presented in Table-6.11.
Participation of villagers at different stages of development program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Provided input</th>
<th>Problem identification</th>
<th>Decision making</th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Maintenance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansehra</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample average</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>24.55</td>
<td>15.25</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participation in councils' development project was assessed by asking those villagers who reported that they had participated, the particular mode of their participation. As mentioned earlier, about 83 percent of the villagers reported no participation, with 26.7% providing an opinion or suggestion (input provision), 24.55% and 15.25 percent reporting that they participated in problem identification and decision making stages respectively. Participation in planning and maintenance stage was more closed with 100 percent and 95.5 percent reporting no participation respectively and only 3.5 percent reporting having participated in the maintenance of the project. 30 percent of the respondents on average reported that they have participated in implementation of the project by providing money, material and manpower and supervised and monitored the projects. As for as contribution in the form of money, material and manpower was concerned, it was reported that landowners contributed in the form of land for a particular project (for school building, dispensary, tube well etc) and in response the landowner was offered a job by the government to one of his family members for contributing land free of charge to any development project in the village. We find in the survey villages that 100 per cent land contributors eventually and understandably got employment when the project completed. In the case of manpower, the landowners naturally had supervisory duties while for other villagers the choice was practically restricted to manual labour.

As participation also means people's share in benefits, they were asked whether they had gained from any of the development projects since the councils' introduction in 2001, most people interviewed acknowledged the general benefits of the projects but they complained
that they had received no individual benefits. Interviews revealed that the small / landless, poor labourer class is of the view that some groups are better-benefited (62.3%). Almost 87% of this class said they had nothing of the development projects. One old landless person stated that "the general improvement of the village through the construction of roads, installation of drinking water facilities and the improvement of education (in terms of school buildings) is outstanding, but poor villagers like me have gained nothing". Most of the programmes undertaken had construction-bias and amenities-orientation. These benefited the rich section of the village community. However, more than two third of the respondents reported that projects did benefit all the people in the village. Hence it revealed that government efforts to dispense justice and involve people in projects benefits are not failed.

But in summary, the thesis that decentralized government increases people participation is not fully supported by the data. It seems appropriate to conclude that councils have not been able to promote widespread community involvement in development. What then were the causes of low participation?

When we asked this question from the villagers sample they (55%) outrightly replied 'poverty'. The replies of some of the villagers are best presented in the translated words of the respondents themselves.

"to give a days' work free was equivalent to the loss of a day's meal - this sacrifice was disproportionate, as land contributors get employment and we the labourer just nothing"

This was a pungent remark by one of respondents. Similarly, for another respondent, "free labour means letting our children go to bed without supper".

Thus, the data indicates that the socio-economic status of villagers was an important cause of the low participation found in these villages.

Among a list of reasons given by villagers for low participation, the next most reported one was the biasness of officials / councilors, as the elected officials (councillors, MNAs,
MPAs) do contact usually the well to do (elites) who supported them in election or who belonged to their party/group in the village. This has generated an atmosphere of pervasive distrust and fear and caused decreased villagers willingness to participate in development projects. Underlying this, in part, was the fairly common perception that their personal and social ties with village elites, biased councilors and officials, and, as a consequence, development projects benefited some segments of the village only. Thirty seven per cent of the respondents who did not participate gave precisely this reason. Furthermore, villagers (8%) also pointed out illiteracy is also one of the reasons due to which participation is not realized. The reasons reported by villagers with their percentage are listed in Table-6.12.

Table-6.12 showing the Reasons for not Participation in Development Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do not participate due to Poverty</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biasness of officials / councillors</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not participate due to Illiteracy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So these results lead to a conclusion that our hypotheses (1) ‘local government facilitates participation is partially proved while hypothesis no. (2) ‘being closest to the people, people’s participation in local government is greater than other institutions at local level’ is fully proved. For further confirmation, the respondents were asked to rank the various units of government at district level in terms of their importance and role in peoples’ participation. The data in the Table-6.13 however confirms that local government units are perceived and ranked number one as compared to other government’s functionaries in the district.

The data show a significant contrast in the public image of grass roots units vis-à-vis the other government institutions. It is quite visible that people are having most trust in the UCs (88 %) followed by TMA (62%) and District Government (61%). Despite limited institutional capacity and disrupted history of operation, local councils as a whole ranked higher than other government departments and Members of Assemblies. Ironically the MPAs/MNAs, despite being elected by the people and having spent huge development funds in their respective constituencies scored the lowest percentage in the comparative
ranking which indicates the general distrust of people in spending development funds through MPAs and MNAs. The ranking is comprehensible in the sense that a governmental unit that is nearer to, accessible to or comparatively under the control of the general public has been credited higher.

Table 6.13: Comparative Score of Governments units at District level on participation Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units of Government at District Level</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Union council (UC)</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tehsil/Town Municipal Administration (TMA)</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• District Government (DG)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provincial Government (MPAs)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Central Government (MNAs)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But taking collectively, however, the data do not explicitly validate the 1st hypothesis that (1) 'local government facilitates participation and so is not approved. However, the 2nd hypothesis of our research i.e. (2) 'being closest to the people, people's participation in local government is greater than other institutions at local level' is partially validated by the data and is partially proved. This conclusion however must be taken with the caution.

(ii) Participation and Development

There is the abundance of research studies that stress the relationship between development and people's participation. Milbrath and Goel (1977) cite several studies, which lead to the conclusion that "countries with higher economic development have higher absolute rates of participation than countries at lower levels of development". The validity of this conclusion is, however, questioned by other research studies, Cornelius (1975) for example. Cornelius has provided evidence that underdevelopment may actually stimulate participation rather than inhibit it.
In this section of the study, we assessed the various modes of participation i.e. voting, contact with councillors, and community development project participation, in two different districts in order to examine the relationship between development and participation. Voting is measured by the respondents' answer to a question regarding his participation in the last election prior to the survey, contact with local government is measured by the individual's meetings with councillors, and community development project participation refers to the involvement of the villagers in projects such as school / road building etc. Table-6.14 provides frequency distribution information regarding people's participation in Kohat and Mansehra, the developed and least developed districts respectively (see chapter 3).

The data shows patterns directly contradicting the hypothesis that development leads to higher participation levels. In each case of participation mode, people living in developed district (Kohat) exhibit the lowest participation levels. Thus participation is higher in the poorer district than it is in the wealthier one. The results in this regard are very much in line with the study alike conducted by other researchers as well (Zaman: 2004). On average, in Kohat - a comparatively developed district – participation ratio is 39% as compared to the 46% in Mansehra district that is comparatively a less developed. It can, thus, be concluded that poor people get involved in such activities to satisfy their basic needs, which are taken for granted by individuals living in the richer regions. In Mansehra where the infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation mode</th>
<th>Kohat %</th>
<th>Manshera %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in local elections</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication between villagers and representatives</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in village development projects - from input provision to implementation and maintenance.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample average</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-6.14 showing the average Participation of villagers by District
is poorly developed and government services are minimal, people have to participate in development in order to get services i.e. roads, schools, dispensaries, for themselves, as in developing countries, including Pakistan, services are not provided if they are not demanded. However, this conclusion cannot be generalized, because the participation modes nevertheless present the complete list of participation. Further, it ignores the other factors such as regime type and political culture etc.

6.5.1.2.2.3 THE SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE: DECENTRALIZED GOVERNMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

(i) Responsiveness of Councils to Villagers Needs

It is widely acknowledged by practitioners and scholars alike that local government is a viable instrument for rural transformation and delivery of social services to the people (Akinsanya: 1995). Indeed, the strategic importance of local government to the development process is not in doubt. The central question that we seek to answer in this research is does decentralized government increase the sensitivity of public investment decisions to local needs? And so is developed a proposition that local government is more responsive to the local needs as compared to the provincial and federal governments.

Economists and political scientists have often disagreed on the question of the needs-responsiveness of central v. local government. This is largely due to the focus that each discipline gives to the problem. Economists such as Oates and Besley and Coate (1999) tend to assume a better match between local government outputs and local preferences, and accordingly find local government preferable when this advantage is not outweighed by spillovers or inefficiencies in central government provision of public services arising from distortions in their financing or production and allocation. Economists do not agree on how this better matching come about, however, with some ascribing it primarily to the character of the information involved, and others to local elections or institutions.

Political scientists, on the other hand, (see for example Crook and Sverrisson (1999) and
Smith (1985) tend to concentrate more on interest group capture of the local political process, and the distortions of political representation in small electoral environments. When these phenomena exist, interest groups will gain a decisive influence over local government, and decentralization will tend to favor these small local groups disproportionately over everyone else. In this context, centralization can be preferable, as interest groups which are sufficiently big locally to distort the local political process will tend to be small in comparison to national government, which can then match policy to (general) local needs in a disinterested fashion. Economically, local government is intended to accelerate development activities and creating socio-economic overheads in rural areas. The extent to which councils had been successful in meeting villagers' perceived or identified needs in areas where the district council had direct responsibility for need satisfaction. Research on the responsiveness of governments to their citizens is spares and sporadic. It is generally recognized that society has certain responsiveness expectations for its governments. The emphasis of these expectations is most often on the governments’ responsiveness to economic and legal factors and to additional ethical behaviors and norms not codified into law. Beyond these expectations and norms, however, are the activities of government which are left to the discretion of representatives and officials. These activities are known as ‘discretionary responsiveness’ (Carroll: 1979). This study deals with such responsiveness, here defined as ‘the degree to which government (officials as well as representatives) responds readily to the perceived needs of a citizen’.

Following the Alatas, Pritchett and Wetterberg (2002), this aspect of the research is operationalized as follows:

a. First, examining the changes in resource flows that local government catalyze to the rural areas, as the extent of the change is perhaps best appreciated by the resources transferred to and from local government for the development.

b. Second, examining the pattern and composition of local government investment in rural development.

c. Third, assessing the match between the needs of the people and the
priorities of the local government.

a. Assessment of the Resource Flows and Evaluation of the Pattern and Composition of Local Government Investment

The extent of the responsiveness is perhaps best assessed by examining the changes in resource flows that it catalyzed. Devolution plan multiplied district governments' share of public investment 17 times, from 0.7 to 70 percent of the total development funds of the provincial government, and significantly altered its distribution.

So far all the four provinces have announced Provincial Finance Commissions (PFCs) for their respective districts but all are interim and just for a year instead for the total three years of the local governments.

According to PFCs, the share of districts in the provincial budgets remains 40 per cent. For example during 2002-03, the 24 districts of NWFP received around 40 per cent of the province's total budget at Rs15 billion from Rs 46 billion total annual revenue receipts. Of this amount, Rs12.3 billion was earmarked for establishment charges/salary bills and over Rs1 billion for current expenditures other than salary bills. The Peshawar city district government was projected to get over Rs 1.4 billion to meet its expenditure on account of salary and non-salary development expenses. The amount included a grant of Rs 71 million in lieu of octroi and zila tax. Mardan district got a total of Rs 1.05 billion, Mansehra Rs 1.01 billion, Swat Rs 947 million, Abbotabad Rs903 million, D.I. Khan Rs885 million, Swabi Rs765 million, Haripur Rs758 million, Charsadda Rs 725 million and Nowshera Rs 725 million.

The interim PFC for Sindh also suggested an allocation of 60 per cent funds for the provincial administration and 40 per cent to be shared by the 16 districts. In the province the districts were ranked according to the number of schools, enrolment of students, health facilities and the number of houses.
In Punjab the PFC raised the local government resource allocation -- for 34 districts, 122 tehsil municipal administrations (TMAs) and over 3,453 union councils -- to Rs 60.70 billion for the fiscal year 2002-03 from Rs 49.17 billion in 2001-02. The local government's share in the budget comprised 39.8 per cent of the total proceeds of the provincial consolidated fund in 2002-03 as compared to 33.8 per cent in the previous year.

According to the NWFP Provincial Finance Commission revenue sharing between Provincial and District governments for the year 2004-2005 is done on 60:40 bases while for development activities during 2004-2005 it is to be distributed on 30:70 proportion bases. Though this is temporary and not permanent arrangements for revenue and funds sharing.

Total resources devolved from provincial to local governments increased by 70 percent. Though this is certainly significant, much more impressive is the change in the distribution of these funds among the union councils in a district. Before devolution plan union councils were given nominal or no resources. After devolution their shares increased to 10 percent in development funds. This results in a massive shift of resources in favour of the smaller, poorer councils in Pakistan. Starting from a tiny or nonexistent base, these districts see enormous increases in their transfers. The district councils see very nominal gains in transfer of resources from provincial governments which itself is a sign of how disproportionately it benefited under the old system.

Within district breakdowns similarly show movement from extreme skewing of resources in favour of the urban areas to a more equitable distribution among union councils, town/tehsil councils and district councils. The formula for distribution of funds among the various local government units at district level is: 10 percent of the 70 percent development fund transferred from the provincial government to district government directly goes to the union councils; whereas the remaining funds is distributed between district government and tehsil/town governments on the bases of 40:60 proportions respectively. Certain principles have been enunciated in the local government law.
according to which the recommendations should be based on principles of fiscal needs, fiscal capacity, fiscal effort and performance. Fiscal needs mean a particular district's situation in terms of poverty and backwardness. Capacity is a local government's ability to tax with regard to taxable income levels. Effort is the amount of work a district puts into enhancing its capacity. And performance depends on other indicators for instance if a district has child vaccination, household drinking water etc. This is made possible only because of the large increase in total devolved funds to the district governments.

In order to assess the claim that in decentralized governments resources are distributed equally for development, villagers and councilors were asked whether district government gives equal share to every village or union council in terms of funds and services. Majority (65%) of the respondents, both villagers (68%) and councilors (62%) replied positively. This shows that every village and union council receives its due share in the services and development funds.

Table 6.15: Councilors and Villagers Perceptions of Development Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Councilors %</th>
<th>Villagers %</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Services and development funds of the district government are distributed equally among villages and councils</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government investment patterns correspond to needs of the locality</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a increased flow of funds towards villages and union councils</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The distribution of investment are reasonably equitable across councils after decentralized governments</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation of investment were extremely skewed in favor of a few areas/councils before a devolution plan</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government investment was very much low before devolution</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The investment of local government increased to a reasonable amount after devolution</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council's services are in accordance to the villagers needs and priorities</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most important change wrought by devolution, however, is to the composition of investment. In our results below, local government provides a level of public goods different from central/provincial government due to its more accurate detection of local preferences. The investment priorities of local government after decentralization, provides initial evidence in support of these changes. After devolution, district governments invested most heavily in education, municipal services, health facilities, community development and water & sanitation together accounting for 79 percent of council investment during the period 2002-4. Thus, we find evidence through the annual development programmes of the district government and survey data that local government have investment patterns that corresponds to the needs of the locality as are shown in the Table 6.15 above.

The increased flow of funds towards villages and union councils is also verified by the villagers and councilors in a survey. A reasonable percentage of councilors (43%) and villagers (42%) have endorsed the increased flow of funds (see Table 6.15).

Lastly, it is instructive to examine how investment was distributed geographically among union councils before devolution, and compare that to the current regime. Although detailed maps of project locations and types are not currently available, we can get a very good sense of the distribution behind the sums by examining the perception of councillors and people in two districts surveyed. The research data shows that allocation of investment were extremely skewed in favor of a few areas/councils before a devolution plan, as asserted by 54% of villagers and 65% of councillors whereas the distribution of investment are reasonably equitable across councils after decentralized governments (40% of villagers and 72% of councilors asserted this).

Our initial impression is confirmed. Investment under decentralized government is not terrifically skewed in favour of a few councils/areas. Some councils/areas received enormous sums, whereas other villages/areas received nothing before devolution. Almost three fourth of councilors and villagers are of the view that an average local government investment was very much low before devolution plan because the provincial government
development funds were not shared with the councils. The annual budget 2001-2 and 2002-3, the annual development plans of district governments of Kohat and Mansehra and survey data (51.5%) clearly show that the investment of local government in villages increased to a reasonable amount. The documents on annual development plans in these districts and also the councilors survey confirm that the overall distribution among councils/areas is much smoother and more equitable.

Comparing the various governments' investment in provision of goods, it is easy to see that, ceteris paribus, public goods provision under central and provincial governments are higher than under local government when the former has a finance advantage. So villagers ranked provincial government first in terms of provision of the public goods than local government. However, the villagers reported that decentralized government invests more heavily in a type of public good where it is scarce, and hence presumably where it is more strongly preferred and needed by the people. Decentralization thus leads to a more progressive investment pattern in terms of objective need. The arguments put forward by political scientists for local government's superior assessment of local preferences and needs include greater sensitivity to grass-roots demand, greater accessibility of local lobby groups to local government, and greater political accountability to the local populace. Some of the ways in which this can happen include the use of participative planning techniques, and the existence of private sector and civic organizations that are strong and dynamic.

Given high levels of poverty and low levels of public investment before decentralization, poor councils have a need for investment in more than one sector. But many types of council reasonably chose to concentrate investment in a few, high-priority sectors during the initial years of decentralization rather than spread resources around thinly (Pasha & Ghous: 1995, 2002). Now all councils have funds to invest, which are being responding to their greatest needs in the locality. So the most pronounced changes in investment patterns are accounted for by the poorest councils.

By revealed preference we can infer that local administrations in these areas prioritize
basic social services projects above productive projects, and productive (i.e., income-enhancing) projects in turn above economic infrastructure. Hence they invest in education and water before agriculture and agriculture before transport or communication. The annual budgets and annual development plans of district government Mansehra and Kohat show that decentralization significantly changed local public investment patterns. Investment changed unambiguously in education, water & sanitation, water management, agriculture and community development after the 2001 reform. These changes are strongly and positively related to real local needs in villages. In education, water & sanitation, water management, and agriculture, post decentralization investments are higher where illiteracy rates are higher, water and sewerage connection rates lower, and malnutrition a greater risk respectively.

We interpret the average rise in investment (i.e. Mansehra and Kohat) in education, health, water management and community development after decentralization as due entirely to the need-orientation of local government. The fall in average investment in agriculture in the sampled districts, combined with the significance of need, is evidence that the center/province was over investing in this sector, and that given the choice councils prefer to redirect resources elsewhere. So it is confirmed that local investment patterns are in correspondence with the local preferences and needs which shows the responsiveness of local government to local problems.

b. Villagers' Needs and Availability of Services

In this study, governments' responsiveness is evaluated by means of field stimulation. In order to assess responsiveness, the researcher chose to focus on evaluating the outcome of a typical interaction which might occur between government official/representative and a citizen. In an attempt to determine whether officials/representatives perceptions of services are related to people perceptions, we first enquired about the villagers' needs and then asked about the council’s priorities and efforts to fulfill such needs.

Here we are concerned about the villagers' perception of needs, wants, and priorities and
availability of services in villages in order to assess one of the decentralized government's assumptions i.e. local government acts according to local needs. Respondents were asked an open-ended question to talk about what they saw as 'the most important needs of the people in the village'. It was assumed that closed questions in this respect would not reflect the key needs of the village. Therefore, respondents were given the option to enlist their needs. If the respondents thought there was a problem they were asked, who, if anyone, had attempted to address those problems and one of the options was the local government (district government, tehsil municipal administration and union administration). The frequency with which the different government is seen responding to existing problems is a crude indicator of its responsiveness to citizen concerns. The different popular needs and the frequency with which the governments do respond, as perceived by the villagers are summarized and manipulated in Table-6.16.

The local needs and priorities as pointed out by the respondents of both districts emphasised the need to provide clean potable water as the number one problem. Road construction was the next most frequently mentioned need followed by education and health facilities. Irrigation facilities and electrification were another category of needs mentioned by the survey respondents.

Table-6.16 showing the perceived Needs / Priorities of the Villagers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Kohat (%)</th>
<th>Mansehra (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>drinking water</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roads / streets</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>health facilities</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irrigation facilities</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>electrification</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though there were differences between the two districts as road construction, and provision of health facilities were mentioned most important needs in Kohat district whereas in Mansehra, there was a more agreed focus on drinking water, education, roads, health
facilities, irrigation and electrification.

In order to know that there is a match between the needs of the villages and priorities of the council, villagers were asked whether council’s services are in accordance to their needs and priorities. Almost half of the respondents (49.8%) asserted in positive which shows the match between the villagers’ needs and council services. (see also Table 6.15).

To investigate the expression of ‘voice’ in response to problems of the village, villagers were asked whether the problem was discussed with the council leadership in the previous year.

Table/Chart 6.17: Reported outcomes for villagers who express the problem to their representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported outcomes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No solution</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>41.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely successful</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>31.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some success</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily successful</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not remember</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 270 cases respondents reported that they have expressed the problem to the union council.
leadership. Such villagers were further probed about the outcome: most villagers (41.12%) reported that there was not yet a solution; a third reported a complete (31.12%) or partial solution (15.92%); and in almost 5% cases there was a solution but then the problem reemerged.

From those villagers who did not express the problem with the representatives, we queried about why not. Roughly two third said that expression of problem would not result in a change, so in spite of the problem, there was no expression of this. This does not show necessarily and presumably the less responsiveness of local government to the villagers’ problems which is further verified by the data in the next table where on average 42.5 percent of the respondents acknowledged the government efforts made for their problems.

Table 6.18: Respondents reporting Problems and Addressed by whom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Efforts made</th>
<th>By whom (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (%)</td>
<td>No (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansehra</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample average</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the needed services by villagers are not among the council’s functions and councils do not meet the needs of villagers. Although, in theory, councillors help determine and fulfill priorities at ‘ward’ level, councils continually fail to be integrated into mainstream development. In all sixteen villages, on average, only 33 percent of the respondents thought local government has extended its efforts for the problems of their village whereas, about 77 percent of the respondents reported that no body knew what the council did or what it is supposed to do. For such fraction of villagers the councils were ‘invisible’. The perception of villagers was that local councils were essentially moribund. This is not a good performance on the part of local government. There are some cross districts differences and patterns.
Villagers in Mansehra were more likely to report local government responsiveness (35.5%). Kohat respondents report less responsiveness of their local government (30.8%) as compared to the Mansehra district government.

In comparison, 43 percent of the respondents acknowledged the efforts extended by the provincial government. The central government efforts in this regard are also disappointing whereas the NGOs contribution is almost non-existent.

However, comparing these perceived needs with council’s pattern of development priorities in both districts as discussed earlier, we found a match between the two. Provision of drinking water, continued either directly or indirectly to be one of the important items of development plan and expenditure in Mansehra council. Similarly, Kohat council’s patterns of development expenditure reveals that most of its expenditure is allocated to the construction and maintenance of rural roads - the most frequently mentioned need of Kohat respondents. It likely suggests that councils are aware of the rural development issues and are not complacent about their importance. It also suggests that councils responded to rural development according to local priorities. However, in both districts, the findings show that the DDC is more dominant than the councils in distributing such services. This lack of council services could be attributed to the fact that services require more personnel, funds and efforts that the councils can not afford.

Finally, the respondents were asked to rank the various units of government at district level in terms of their importance and role in development of their villages. The data in the following table confirms that local government units are perceived and ranked number one as compared to other government’s functionaries in the district.

On responsiveness and sensitivity dimension local institutions are at the highest position with 54, 52, and 49 percents for union councils, tehsil/town municipal administration and district government respectively, followed by MPAs with 49% and MNAs with 39%.
Table 6.19: Comparative Score of Governments units at District level on Responsiveness Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units of Government at District Level</th>
<th>Rank Order Percentage</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Union council (UC)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tehsil/Town Municipal Administration (TMA)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• District Government (DG)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provincial Government (MPAs)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Central Government (MNAs)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The comparative status of local government in terms of development performance is further consolidated by summing up the average perception of people and councilors regarding the different aspects of responsiveness as shown in the table below.

Table 6.20: Average Score of Local Governments on Responsiveness Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsiveness activity</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Resource Flows</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Pattern and Composition of Local Government Investment</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Efforts made by local government for problems</td>
<td>33.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Matching of needs and priorities</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Average</td>
<td>47.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On average 47.26 percent of respondents confirmed that local governments are responsive to their needs, which is comparatively a very reasonable average of responsiveness in developing countries in terms of rural development.

It indicates the relevance of local government system to the local problems. It seems that despite the limited engagement of local government system in development endeavors, its weak institutional standing, lack of continuity, frequent interruptions and excessive
dependence on headquarters for financial support and conceptual guidance, the potentials of local councils system have not been totally eroded. Ranking local council 1st on rank order despite its frequent molestation and manipulation by the successive governments is pointer to the potential role, this institution can play in the context of rural development.

So taking collectively, the data explicitly validate our 3rd hypothesis i.e. 'local government institutions are more responsive to the problems and needs of the people as compared to other institutions at district level' and is proved. This conclusion however must be taken with caution.
Table-6.21 showing the actual / estimated income and expenditure of district council Manschra for the period of 1999-2000 to 2002-2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEAD OF ACCOUNT</th>
<th>ACTUAL INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Taxes</td>
<td>2,25,34,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rates</td>
<td>3,08,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Licenses</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fees</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rents</td>
<td>82,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Receipts</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Grants</td>
<td>3,59,948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Contribution</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Investments</td>
<td>7,69,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Loans</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Miscellaneous</td>
<td>10,42,691</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gross Total: 2,50,97,263 2,66,63,033
Opening Balance: 1,59,52,488 1,43,31,989
Grand Total: 4,10,49,751 4,09,95,022 10,86,50,100 12,67,78,400

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of expenditure</th>
<th>Actual Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-developmental</td>
<td>67,10,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>2,00,07,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,67,17,762</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Finance and Development section, District Government Manschra
Table-6.22 showing the actual / estimated income and expenditure of district council Kohat for the period of 1999-2000 to 2002-2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEAD OF ACCOUNT</th>
<th>ACTUAL INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Taxes</td>
<td>1,54,74,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rates</td>
<td>2,99,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Licenses</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fees</td>
<td>15,16,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rents</td>
<td>80,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Receipts</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Grants</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Contribution</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Investments</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Loans</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Miscellaneous</td>
<td>8,10,522</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gross Total: 1,66,64,786 1,92,51,322
Opening Balance: 24,45,000 89,04,896
Grand Total: 1,91,09,786 2,81,56,218 834,147,288 733,387,221

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of expenditure</th>
<th>Actual Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-developmentl</td>
<td>47,22,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>65,69,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,12,91,657</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Finance and Development section, District Government Kohat
2. Evaluation of Council Services

Generally, people were asked about their opinion whether the councils are doing a good job or not. The measurement was obtained by asking certain questions. When the villagers were asked how they assessed the overall performance of their council, 50% said it was poor. 28.5% termed it average and 21.4% saw it as good. No one thought it was very good. Although the subjective judgments required for making such a summative assessment of performance is not very reliable indicator of underlying feelings of respondents, the responses to this question do logically follow from those to the question on benefits gained. One would have expected as high 50% of the sub-sample to say that the performance of their council is poor after as high as 87% had said they got nothing from development projects. However, there reflects an anomaly in the perception of two districts villagers regarding their councils performance. In Mansehra, almost 25% termed the council’s performance as good as compared to 17.8% in Kohat district. It is not surprising that levels of popular disillusionment and dissatisfaction with the performance of the two councils are different.

Table-6.23 showing the Assessment of Councils' overall Performance by Villagers (Percentage distribution)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mansehra</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample average</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is obvious from the illustrative data that Mansehra council is more active in distributing services as compared to Kohat. The reason behind these differences is probably due to the fact that district council Mansehra, especially the chairmen and now the district Nazim has managed to get development funds both from foreign donors and provincial and central governments. The provincial government supported the council with the development grants for water supply, sanitation, health and education facilities. Several development programmes have been initiated through a partnership programme with provincial
government and private organizations. This allowed the council to build most of the infrastructures in its area and to deliver more services to the people since the fund was increasing and not decreasing.

In Kohat, on the other hand, the district council did not get any development grant from the provincial or central government and its own revenue did not permit the council to cope with rural needs, council did allocate major parts of its revenue to those development services that do not require much funds. It only chooses small bridges, streets, wells, hand pumps or some extension in primary school buildings. The major development projects are being initiated, without having a role for district government, by the provincial government rather by the Governor who belongs to the same district. This can be acknowledged by councillors who attributed the lack or absence of services due to the shortage of council's budget and personnel.

3. Villagers Attitudes towards Councils

The villagers' different experiences have had an impact on how they perceive the local council system. In both districts, most villagers had great faith in the local councils. Nearly 75% of respondents thought that councils are necessary element in village development. They asserted that our interests are better served through councils. This might be attributed to a number of factors.

Councils represent a very small number of population, the villagers might have higher access to the council. The degree of confidence may also be attributed to the performance of councils. The responsiveness of local government to people's needs and their opportunity to participate in the decisions made by local government were assessed as good by 38% and 42% respectively. This is not strong support, but some other comparisons may help to put this figure in perspective. For Provincial government, the equivalent figures for these two factors were 23% and 30% respectively, and for Central government, 20% and 22% respectively. The assessments of local government are also affected by a more general lack of confidence in government, in Pakistan and elsewhere.
Table-6.24 suggests that 70% of the respondents of Kohat area favour the local council system. The corresponding percentage was 80 in the Mansehra area. The nearly unanimous support can be explained in a number of ways.

The data thus leads to validate our 4th hypothesis ‘despite dismal performance, people prefer a local government system in the country’. One possible reason for this could be their recent experience with the catastrophic situation of political crises created by politicians’ power war at national level, which caused the dissolution of four governments without completing their terms. This shows that people are likely fed up of this situation and wanted to solve their problems locally at council’s level. Thus there was a trend for increased confidence in local institutions. However, there remained ambivalent attitudes as well.

Table/Chart 6.24: showing the Support for Local Councils System (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mansehra</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample average</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **Reasons for the Failure of Local Government**

As is mentioned earlier, local government share in the development is very nominal. Respondents were asked to list the vital potential barriers to council's development efforts. The respondents may have sufficiently understood and appreciated the powerful and complex factors underlying the failure of their council. The results are most easily encapsulated by presenting the percentage of respondents who saw each factor as a barrier to council's development efforts.

Table-6.25 shows the reasons to which ordinary villagers attributed the failure of their council to address the rural needs. As high as 30.49 per cent of the respondents said they did not know the reasons for the failure of councils to yield development. This perhaps indicates how little they know of and/or cared about their councils. However, of those who listed possible reasons for the council's failure in rural development, 28.66% asserted that council was failing because of the lack of financial resources. There is no means of financing the council's development projects. As a result, the council made no progress in its development performance. This also made the council not to have enough capital to plan for more development activities or have more essential projects to generate income. So the respondents saw lack of sufficient inputs in terms of finance as the basic reason for council's ineffectiveness in terms of development.

Some respondents (18.29%) shared the view that discontinuation of local democratic process rendered their council incapable of yielding rural development efforts. In addition to this, respondents mentioned other reasons including by passing of councils by other agencies (10.98%), mis-using of allocated funds (10.98%), and lack of interest on the part of councillors (0.60%).

Despite the fact that councils are unsuccessful in development, it enjoys a high support of people but this is not universal. However the combination of support for councils suggests that people are aware of the difficulty of the situation in which the councils are acting. A significant majority of respondents that considers low performance due to insufficient fund
is suggesting a confidence in the councils.

### Table-6.25 Villagers' Perception of Barriers that Retarded Councils' Development Efforts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Respondents %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>don't know</td>
<td>30.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insufficient fund</td>
<td>28.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discontinuation of democratic process</td>
<td>18.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by-passing councils</td>
<td>10.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mis-use of allocated funds</td>
<td>10.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of councillors' interests</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So it should not be surprising that despite failure, people have preferred councils. The council may not be able to do everything it wants to, but its position in the government is important.

### 4. Elected and Appointed Councils Performance

In the preceding chapters, we stressed the fact that the Pakistan local councils, since independence in 1947, have been functioning as two distinct types of local government - the elected councils and appointed councils. The local government in Pakistan are developed and reformed mostly during the Martial Law regimes where the entire council was a democratically elected body. Ironically, local institutions were termed as appointed body most often consisted of centrally nominated party worker or bureaucracy. The recent discussions in development literature have explored the interrelationship between development and the nature of representatives as it basically affects the institutions capacity for development.

While it is common to find Western politicians and political commentators on development waxing eloquent about the positive developmental consequences of democratization, there is
by no means a consensus on the issue among development professional and analysts. Some authors have stressed that lack of democracy goes hand in hand with underdevelopment (Arafat: 1991). There is an optimistic view that democracy is a powerful stimulus to development because it carries the potential for more efficient and accountable government (The Economist: 1994). The advocates of participatory development also see democracy as opening spaces for developmentally positive forms of popular mobilization. The historical evidence of the last twenty years suggests the need to reconsider such views. This optimistic view is however, debated.

Huntington and Nelson argue that it is economic development, which establishes the conditions for democracy. They argue that there is a trade-off between democracy and development (Huntington and Nelson: 1976). Similarly, the Singapore's Lee Kuen Yew states that the exacerbance of democracy leads to indiscipline and disorderly conduct which are inimical to development (cited in the Economist op.cit).

In this research, we felt a need to seek the peoples' appraisal of the performances of the councils, under the two models. Pointing to certain characteristics in the operation of the councils which were then categorized as local development and peoples participation, we asked the respondents if performance of their council regarding the mentioned characteristics was more than four years ago.

**Table/Chart 6.26: showing the Comparative analysis of councils' performance (Past and present)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Appointed status</th>
<th>Elected status</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Village/Local development</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peoples' participation</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample average</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>60.45%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On average, a substantial majority (61 percent) asserted that councils work effectively when consisted on elected officials whereas a minor fraction of people (24.7) thought councils doing better when they are not elected rather selected or nominated or appointed while 14.7 percent of the respondents abstained from making any judgments.

The data on the questions of council’s development activities was termed as council’s role in local development in the villages. A total of 11.3 per cent of respondents expressed the council role high in local development when it is of appointed nature while seventy four percent thought councils play a high role when are democratic. So a significant majority in each of the two districts maintained that council’s performance regarding local development is high when councils are democratically elected as compared to the appointed councils.

The second category of activities / characteristics, which were asked on the question of performance comparability, was ‘people participation’. Of those who expressed their views, 46.9 percent said that there is more improved participation in development during this period when councils are composed of elected councillors. Those who felt that public has been actively involved with the council in development during the period when councils were appointed formed 38.1 percent, while 15.0 percent failed to give any answers. Thus from the information presented through these responses, we can likely say that democratic nature of councils may foster development and participation. However, it is not generalizable. The potential synergy or trade-off between development and democracy need further investigation, this is just the perceptions of the people.
6.6.2 COUNCILLORS' SURVEY

The research approaches the task of assessing council's role in development of their areas from the councillors' point of views. Along with quantitative data, certain selective anonymised quotes from respondents are also used here to highlight something of the range of views, which encountered.

6.6.2.1 Councils' Composition and the Representativeness of Local Leadership

Councils by law in Pakistan should compose of elected councillors of villagers. The legal rules relating to local government are such that almost any one can become a candidate. Councils were formed on the initiative of the provincial government through general local elections in 1979, 1983, and 2001 in order to curb the historical bureaucratic and political elite's domination in villages and provided the villagers a chance to elect among themselves their leaders. Pakistan is a country where governmental organizations including councils have been uniquely tied to social class. In this section, we look at kinds of persons that lead the villagers in councils, as they have a special implication for representation and village development.

An activist judges the representativeness of a leader by simply comparing the interests of people, as he perceives them, against those of the leader, as he perceives them. Our empirical approach is at once more, and less, precise. More precise because data will allow comparison of characteristics as held, not perceived. Less precise because we must deal in collectivities that may or may not relevant in a particular situation. The socio-demographic data of councilors is assessed to analyze whether local councils are dominated by local elites.

The local institutions are dominated if not captured by local elites (Mansoori & Rao: 2004). Poor people are systematically excluded from the participatory process because of their weak social and economic power. The related body of literature on decentralization provides insights. Bardhan and Mookherjee (2000) theoretically evaluate the hypothesis that local
governments have better information but are less accountable and thus are more prone to capture. They show that the probability of capture increases with local inequality and that it is unlikely that local governments are universally more prone to capture.

Some degree of elite domination may be inevitable for development, particularly in rural areas, where the elites are often leaders who embody moral and political authority (Mansoori & Rao: 2004). Often these elites are the only ones who can effectively communicate with outsiders, read project documents, keep accounts and records and write proposals. This domination may, however, work against the kind of broad based democratic participation envisioned by advocates of community driven development because the rules crafted may discourage poor people participation in the councils.

Rao and Ibanez (2003) argue, however, that elite domination is not always elite capture. In their case study, they find a potentially more benevolent form of elite domination, with more than 80 percent of beneficiaries ultimately expressing satisfaction with the project. Substantiating this point, Khwaja (2001) finds that participation by hereditary leaders tends to improve maintenance.

In this context, in order to assess one of the research hypotheses that ‘local councils are elite dominant institutions at local level’, we have considered three aspects of councillors: socioeconomic profile, localism, and number of chances they elected to councils. Socioeconomic profile is defined demographically. Councillors are considered less representative to the extent they differ from the villagers generally in occupation, income, landholding, and education. Localism is considered a second aspect of councillors’ representativeness. We presumed that people who live among villagers and are accessible on a day-by-day basis best represent the villagers. Councils’ membership more than once by any councillor is considered presumably as the most representative because of his familiarity with local problems and grievance mechanisms. All these dimensions have some effects on development.

Judging from the characteristics of councillors, the data shows that the traditional stereotype
disguises is a far more diverse picture in reality, in the characteristics of district and tehsil/town councillors. Essentially district and tehsil councillors do not come from more diverse background. The general picture in terms of occupation and landholding shows that district/tehsil councils are not in any respect microcosms of society as a whole. But dissimilarity among socio-economic status does not connote absentee leadership however.

The village development demands leaders who can mediate between local activities and relevant professional, and deploy leadership resources in villages.

So on one hand the higher socio-economic profile could develop the village. On the other hand, it is one of the hardest realities of social life in developing countries that leadership there is subject to constant attrition. Many of the qualities that enable a person to become an effective leader can be readily turned to personal advantage. It is clearly suggested in the literature (Cornelius: 1975) that local offices are dominated by such entrepreneurial leaders, who are used by politicians for their personal gains. It is important that leadership be of the people, but also important that it be a force for change in critical areas.

However, the composition of union councils is widely distributed among the various sections of the community. On average agriculture (58%) and business (27%) account for larger percentage in the case of union councilor’s occupation. It is significant to note that district, tehsil and union leadership is mainly held by the agriculturalists.

It may be observed from Table 6.27, though about two-third of union councilors have rather modest education up to secondary level, the proportion of college graduates is not negligible. About 30 % of union councilors are college graduates. The district/tehsil/union Nazims, Naib Nazims are relatively better educated than of union councilors, where 45%, 35%, and 20% have completed their school, college and university education respectively. Differences, however, in the educational levels are observable between union councilors and district and tehsil councilors.

It is evident that academically more educated people are getting into the local government for there are minimum qualifications prescribed for councilors in the NWFP LGO 2001.
Although councilors generally (district as well as union) are drawn from higher socio-economic strata, they are not highly educated (hardly 12.5 percent) and many (more than half: 55 percent) are simple matriculates.

Table 6.27 showing the Data on Socio-economic Background of Councillors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>District / tehsil Nazims, and district and tehsil councilors (%)</th>
<th>Union councilors (%)</th>
<th>Average %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Occupation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculturist</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businessmen</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Landholding Size</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landless</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-25 acres</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-50 acres</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above 50 acres</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Educational Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high schooling</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>college education</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>university education</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D. Age Range</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25—30 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31—35 years</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36—40 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41—45 years</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46—50 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 and above</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E. Monthly Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 1000</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>23.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001—2000</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001—3000</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3001—4000</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001—5000</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>12.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5001—6000</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 6000</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The economic status of the councilors is measured by the average monthly income of the councilor. It is seen from the Table 6.27 that on the whole, district/tehsil councilors have better economic status than the union councilors. Making arbitrary grouping of below Rs. 1000, 2001-4000 and 4001 and above to index low, medium and high incomes, respectively
the data also reveals that councilors of district and tehsil council come from relatively better off families compared to their counterparts in the union councils.

As more than 61 per cent of councilors are agriculturists, landholding size of councilors was also taken as the base to ascertain their economic status. The distribution of councilors in various landholding groups, (Table 6.27) reveals that on the whole, more than 47% of councilors belong to the small landholding group having 1-25 acres of land whereas 22.15% of councilors are in the medium landholdings group having 26-50 acres of land. The point to be worth mentioning is that 17.5% of councilors belong to a landless group of village. This reveals that councilors generally come from a landless, small and medium land holding group of the people.

It is observed from Table 6.27 that the union councilors are far younger when compared to the district/tehsil councilors. About 63 per cent union councilors are below the age of 40 whereas only 55 per cent district/tehsil councilors fall in this range. In the upper age group, we find that 45 per cent of district/tehsil councilors are above 45 whereas only 37 per cent of union councilors come in this category.

The data also shows that almost all the councillors are more permanent members of village community. They have resided in the village for a full time and have an experience of councillorship as one third of them are elected more than once.

According to our data, the councillors' socio-economic profile show that district and tehsil/town councilors (Union Nazims and Union Naib Nazims) constitute a group that are drawn from the higher socio-economic strata of rural society, that live with people in village and that have a some experience of councillorship. But it is clear that councils are largely the domains of traditional rural elites (landlords). However, the union councils, on the other hand, are comparatively consists of councilors majority of whom belong to landless and small land holing group, majority are young, energetic but comparatively less educated and less experienced. Also taking collectively and generally, the data shows the majority (65%) of councilors belong to a group who are either landless (17.5%) or small landholders.
(47.5%) and are either of low income (23.75%) or medium income (41%) groups. It appears that local reforms have dislodged large landowners and social elites from control over the local politics and so the data does not validate our 4th hypothesis of this research that local government units are elite dominant institutions.

6.6.2.2 Elected Members and Peoples Participation

**a) The main purposes and benefits of participation perceived by the Councillors**

In order to know whether the elected representatives are in favour of people involvement in development activities, we asked them if people should participate or not. Almost two third of the councilors asserted positively that people should be involved in development activities. This shows certainly a complete confidence of elected representatives on people’s participation. Indeed it is a good sign of people’s democracy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>District councillors</th>
<th>Union councillors</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People should participate in development activities in order:</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain information on citizens views</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To meet statutory requirements</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To meet donor agencies requirements</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits of participation perceived as:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. improvements in services</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. better decision-making on specific points</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thinking now about why councilors favour to engage the public in development project and decision-making. The questionnaire listed a number of possible purposes for public participation to rank them according to importance. A clear majority of respondents
(57%) selected ‘to gain information on citizen’s views’ and ranked this factor as number one in the ranking order. ‘To meet statutory requirements’ came second, ranked by 26% of the councilors, and followed by ‘to meet donor agencies requirements’ with a percentage of 17 (see Table 6.28).

No doubt this reflects the increasingly important role that elected representatives play in promoting public participation in development activities.

It would seem that councilors see engaging the public as particularly important in helping to improve service delivery and decision-making when they were asked about the benefits of this involvement. The greatest number of councilors 52% indicated that ‘improvements in services’ is the most important benefit of consulting the public – closely followed by allowing ‘better decision-making on specific points’, which was selected by 48% of respondents.

b) The main problems with implementing participation initiatives

Respondents were asked about the possible problems that they may have/ would encounter in implementing participation initiatives and asked to rank them according to importance. The results are illustrated on table below. Whilst local authorities are clear about the benefits that engaging the public can bring, the survey suggests councilors still have some concerns. A ‘lack of resources’ was ranked number one problem in implementing participation initiatives by the greatest number of councilors: 48% ranked this as the number one. A ‘lack of time’ was ranked the second important problem by almost as many councillors: that is 22%.

Support from outside the council is also seen as presenting some difficulties, since a ‘lack of public interest’ is ranked as the third problem, received the next highest percentage (20%) score. Public apathy towards local politics is an enduring concern – issues associated with low turnout in local elections would seem to extend to participation between elections. Councilors continue to experience difficulties motivating people to
become involved in local development.

**Table/Chart 6.29: Problems in the Participation Process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of public interest</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Support from within the council</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support from within the council – either from councillors or officers – can also be a problem in implementing participation initiatives, but to a lesser extent. Looking at the percentage scores (10%) from the data, the problem is ranked as number 4 in the ranking order. This suggests that councilors face different challenges in pursuing the participatory development agenda.
c) **Disadvantages of participation initiatives**

The majority of councilors responding to the survey claim to have experienced some sort of negative effect when carrying out participation initiatives: 97% reported this to be the case. It would seem most likely that councilors have experienced negative effects relating to public perceptions and managing public involvement:

- Nearly one-thirds of councilors responding to the survey (31%) are concerned that public participation initiatives may lead to consultation fatigue amongst the public.
- 29% of responding councillors also seem concerned that consulting the public may simply capture the views of dominant, but unrepresentative groups.
- 28 percent of the councilors reported that public participation undermine the legitimacy of elected members.
- 5% of councillors believe that participation exercises can raise public expectations that the authority cannot meet.

**Table/Chart 6.30: Disadvantages of public participation as perceived by councillors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantages of public participation perceived by councillors</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultation overload</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captures the views of dominant, but unrepresentative, group</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undermine the authority or democratic legitimacy of elected members</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise public expectations that council cannot meet</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow down the decision making process</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote disagreement and conflict among different sections of the community</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A sizeable number of councilors report that public participation initiatives may cause negative effects on the internal processes of the council:

- 5% of councillors feel that engaging the public can slow down the decision-making process. However, as discussed earlier, other councillors see 'better decision-making' as one of the most important benefits of engaging the public.
- 2% feel that conducting participation exercises promote disagreement and conflict among different sections of the community.
d) Councillors' Perceptions of Council's Development Role

In this section we largely sought the councillors' perception of council's role in development of the area. Specific efforts were made to get some idea of how council's role was understood and described by councillors themselves. A battery of open-ended questions was asked to specify the role councillors perceived for councils. Some of these perceived roles are best presented in the Table 6.31 below.

Table 6.31: Council's Role as perceived by the Councillors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role as perceived</th>
<th>District/tehsil councillors</th>
<th>Union councillors</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Councils' role is networking and improving the profile of community interest</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council is a mediator. It identifies the needs of the area and communicate the problems to concerned authorities</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council acts as ambassadors of villagers by taking their problems, needs, and demands to higher government and seeking new development projects for the village</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councils could contribute to improving people's understanding of development in their localities, thereby enhancing their potential for more meaningful participation in its policy making role</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local council is the only arena of participation at village level which bringing local needs to the authority and lobbying the views of the locality</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is common for the councillors to claim that councils' role is networking and improving the profile of community interest (72%). This was acknowledged as a key role of councils. A greater sense of localism is indeed often seen to be the main positive distinguishing feature
of councils. The councillors clearly perceived the local councils as the jewel in the crown of the Pakistan decentralization programme. At least council is better linked with the village community than any of the other representative bodies could be.

Local councils are very near (geographically and physically) to the people and it is reasonable to assume that consistent with behaviour of other institutions at all levels of governments; they might use the public arena to a much greater extent than other members. It is in this context that many councillors expressed the council's role as a mediating and communicating agency (68%).

"Council is a mediator. It identifies the needs of the area and communicate the problems to concerned authorities" (union councillor).

Council acts as ambassadors of villagers by taking their problems, needs, and demands to higher government and seeking new development projects for the village (66.5%).

Councils could contribute to improving people's understanding of development in their localities, thereby enhancing their potential for more meaningful participation in its policy making role (62%).

Local council is the only arena of participation at village level which bringing local needs to the authority and lobbying the views of the locality (62%).

Judging from these data, councillors have accepted the Greenwood and Stewart's (1974) 'governmental' role under which they acknowledge a responsibility especially in relation to issues like village development and the welfare of their communities which is wider than the statutory responsibilities conferred on the local authorities itself. They accepted such a broad view of their authority's proper role, rather than accepting that local authorities should confine themselves to discharging their statutory responsibilities. They also emphasised on co-operation between and collaboration with other local authorities or governmental departments to improve social services in villages. So a considerable number of councillors'
roles may be emphasised:

* Identifying problems in their area;
* Making Collective choices;
* Lobbying for resources;
* Exerting political pressure to get funds for development; and
* Encouraging self-help schemes to develop the area.

It appears from the foregoing discussion that councillors perceived a greater local government role in development. The local development mandate of councils has strengthened with their clear role in preparing their annual development plans and budget (district council only), and has been further consolidated with the development programmes. Councillors were keen to seek a leading role in local development.

When asked about the main achievements of the councils at village level, there were no clear lead categories, except possibly a widespread appreciation of the role of bringing villagers interests into this sphere: bringing development programmes, acting as local ambassadors in building interest about self-help activities, and also helping to bridge the gap between villagers and the government. Generally speaking, councils are credited with sensitizing development provisions to rural areas and have been successful in creating stronger sense of local focus to development programmes. In councils, there is evidence of interest and ambitions in development, considerably greater concern was voiced over the institutional implications of this development. But in consequence of limited involvement in local development networks and activities, the councillors acknowledged that council had little credibility in this area.

e) Causes that Obstruct the Council's Development Capacity

So we reached a conclusion that councils have little credibility in the area of village development, we asked the causes of this poor development record of councils in village development? In this section we have tried to discuss the various causes that obstruct the
councils' development performance from the councillors' point of views.

There is a simple but very useful dichotomy between two basic approaches to the issue of improving the performance of organizations. This can be expressed in terms of the economists' distinction between supply and demand. 'Supply' approaches focus on the adequacy of resources: does the organization have enough money, qualified and experienced staff, equipment, and knowledge to do this job? If not, the answer is to provide the missing resources. 'Demand' approaches focus less on the organization itself than its environment: what are the features of this environment that will encourage the organization to strive to do a good job? Does the organization make good use of the resources they have available?

There is a range of research looking at the causes of organizational performance in developing countries that point to the importance of a range of other factors that can be classified as 'demand' side. Arturo Israel's much cited work (Israel: 1987) draws attention to the incentives to good performance that can be contained in - or crafted into - the nature of tasks. Tasks that are highly 'specific' - clearly defined in terms of content and process, and clearly allocated to particular people and offices - tend to be performed more effectively.

When we enquired about the reasons which rebuffed the council's development efforts, the majority of the councillors termed the poor performance because of councils' funding. As councillors expressed it, one of the reasons for a wariness of overreaching on capacity and involvement in development was simply a matter of funding "we are very much concerned with development, but we can't do anything about it, because we haven't got enough money to put village problems (councillors), and the other statement says, "the councils cannot do more with limited money" (councillors).

The main factor which has most effect in providing and delivering the services to villagers by councils is the funding that allows the councils to provide more services to more people. But if this money is insufficient, then the councils are faced by a severe dilemma in providing the services to whom and to where. As a matter of fact this is one of the reasons for finding differences among councils in their development performance. Because councils in the era of Martial Law, when all development funds of central and provincial government
channelised to villages through councils, provided more services and built more infrastructure projects than in democratic era, when development resources started to inject in villages through DDC.

Table 6.32: showing the reasons for low development performance of councils as perceived by the councilors (percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) inadequacy of funds</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mansehra</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) inadequacy of authority</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mansehra</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) lack of human resources</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mansehra</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>58.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv) appointed officials do not provide adequate</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cooperation and guidance</td>
<td>Mansehra</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v) people are not cooperative and participative</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27.35</td>
<td>72.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minded</td>
<td>Mansehra</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in the above table, councilors (79%) indicated their councils' funds as insufficient and even totally inadequate. But again lack of funds is felt more by the Mansehra (84.4%) than Kohat councilors (73.8%). However, a sizeable number of both districts (Mansehra 15.6% and Kohat 26.2%) disagree with this view and feel that problem is not of adequate funds, but of the proper utilization of available resources. Therefore the poor performance of councils, as perceived by councilors, in village development is mostly due to the lack of adequate funds, which makes the councils unable to provide more services and infrastructure projects to villages. Availability of resources is the basic factor for role
performance. There is a general consensus among the councilors as a group that the higher level of government initiates reforms without adequate resources.

Lack of funds could be attributed to two main factors: (1) the councils do not raise their own resources; (2) the government has abandoned almost all the schemes under which funds were made available to councils. Now the funds are channalized either through the district development committee of which local councilors including District Nazim are not members or provincial government bureaucrats stationed at districts.

Another important aspect of development functioning is the power and authority the councilors enjoy. The councilors in Mansehra and Kohat were asked that if they have sufficient authority in their position to do such work effectively. The data, which appears in the table above (6.32), is not encouraging since more than fifty percent (56.4%) indicated the absence or lack of such authority. They asserted that council has to take prior approval of the higher authority for any development initiative to be taken in villages and that causes delays in development, because higher authorities do not take the council's initiative seriously and respond very late.

For proper working, a good number of employees have to be available to the councils. This is particularly the case in respect of the rural councils where personnel are provided by the provincial government from its various departments stationed at district level. The provincial government provided them with technical and professional guidance and salaries, when contradictions over policy and work arose between the council and the provincial government, the extension personnel tended to obey the latter since they depended on them for their day-to-day livelihood. By now, this had become a major issue for the councils. In effect there was a misalignment between development activity and administrative mechanisms. The agreed point among all the councilors was that all of them indicated the insufficient quantity and quality of employees make councils unable to work effectively.

In addition to a recognition of the limits of their internal capacity, for some councillors, however, the perception appears to be is that council's antipathy found in this area is mainly
due to the anti-councils policy of the central and provincial governments, where elected councils are dissolved without any reasons for years and where DDCs are being created in pursuit of government funding and the carrot of funding is further reduced in size or removed altogether. The extent that some new thinking and resources may be being injected into local economies through the creation of DDC is positive and beneficial to village development, but this policy has seized the opportunity available to council to frame their work in the context of village development and the councils ceased to play a major role in rural development programmes. Some councillors in the study area lament:

"The councils are rubbing along with DDCs because latter have got money and former have to get money"

So in the case studies area some tension did remain, particularly with the DDC, often with the large amount of central and provincial governments’ fund. Indeed, councillors saw the DDC as "hijacking the development fund" and decentralization agenda and this has upset the council".

In a similar vein, one of the reasons of council's failure in development may be that of the government interference in the council's affairs. Some councillors cynically stated:

"Governments are using us. We are agents of government. They are driving us, they are dictating to us the agenda, they have got the money and the budget, and they drive us and when we do not follow, they deprived us of development funds" (district councillors).

One major professional body has commented:

"The government unleashed a barrage of legislation on to local government which has a perverse and surprising effect on the latter" (PARD: 1989).

In a review of local government in Pakistan they concluded that the government's actions had no guiding policy. Local government legislation had been approached in a very piece
meal fashion spurred on by political stimuli rather than reasoned research and consultation (ibid).

"Government is constantly telling us that we should generate our own revenue by taxing locally. But when we ask for any local tax to be left for council, certainly they are not agreed" (councillors).

It appears from the foregoing discussion and data that councils are not providing all the services mentioned in the ordinance. Actually the services provided and delivered by councils are only municipal while in the ordinance it was indicated in addition to these municipal services councils have to provide other cultural services such as environment protection and improvement etc. Through the data in the last section, it appears that the most important factor which plays a fundamental role in the council's development capacity is the councils' funds, authority, personnel, lack of communication between villagers and councillors, instability and uncertainty of national and provincial governments, corruption and anti-councils policies of higher authorities.

Even critics of the councils recognize that it is unfair to criticize the councils for not being more responsive to local development in the light of the funding and other restrictions, which they face. However, local government as Clarke and Stewart (1994) asserted, should focus not only on 'choice' - or the pluralising of top-down provision - but also on encouragement of 'voice'.

"The key role of the local authority is not local choice, but local voice. It does not assume significant responsibility for local services, but its key role is to express and to press for what the community wants . . . the direct provision of services or even responsibility for that provision is seen as a distraction or even as a distortion of that role. It is left to other agencies and organizations".
6.6 The performance of decentralized Governments in Some Developing countries

Governments in Latin America, Africa and to a lesser extent, Asia, have experimented with decentralised governments over the past two decades. Initiatives have centred on the transfer of powers and resources to lower tiers of government, through a combination of measures centring on deconcentration to state agencies operating under central line departments, and devolution to elected local authorities. But the apparent gap between the promises of decentralized governments on the one hand, and the everyday realities of participatory politics on the other, suggests the need to understand more fully the determinants of successful local governance.

While a number of studies have now been done on decentralisation, we have found few studies which have focused on decentralized governments in this new context. We have reviewed several recent studies on local governance which may enable us to assess the decentralized governments in terms of their outcomes for the responsiveness, representation and participation variables described earlier.

6.6.1 India

The Indian system of local government, or Panchayati Raj, was originally a utopian Gandhian idea, based on village self-government, which was embodied as an aspiration in the 1950 Constitution but devolved to the states for implementation. In practice, little was achieved and only limited autonomy given to local government for the first three decades following independence. (The term ‘Panchayati Raj’ came to denote all governmental organisations below the state level. The term ‘panchayat’ is derived from the word five, panchayat, meaning forum of five village elders (Mathew, 1996). In the late seventies and early eighties, however, opposition parties were elected into power in some states, notably West Bengal and Karnataka, who gave a new impetus to local government, aiming, at least in part, to enhance thereby their electoral strength. In both
cases, therefore, the reforms were at least partly an attempt to build the influence and power of the new ruling parties at the grass-roots. The underlying thrust of these new panchayat systems was to create devolved, democratic local authorities, thus transforming them from mere implementers of development programmes to political organisations in their own right (Mathew, 1996). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a wider recognition that national level reform was required, and in 1993 the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution envisaged the universal application of three tiers of democratically elected local government. The foundation was to be the village assembly (gram sabha), with councils at village (gram panchayat), intermediate (panchayat samitis or mandal panchayats) and district levels (zilla parishads). In addition, seats are now reserved for Scheduled Castes and Tribes according to their proportion of the population, at all levels, together with 33% quotas for women (Meenakshisundaram, 1994: 70). However, although all states were required to pass or amend their panchayat legislation by April 1994, the extent of devolved power and resource allocation was left to the discretion of individual states (Webster, 1995: 191), and to date, only four states have introduced functioning decentralised systems (Crook and Sverrisson: 1999).

6.6.1.1 West Bengal: In 1978, a leftist coalition, known as the Left Front, led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI (M)), was elected to government in the state of West Bengal. In order to challenge the power of the Congress party and the landlord classes in the countryside, and to provide a strong popular power base, the Left Front government aimed to increase the decision making power of the poor by devolving implementation of government programmes to the gram panchayats, and mobilising poor peasants to participate, using the CPI(M) machinery. This was critical in that one of the most significant political aspects of the reform had been to open up local elections to party competition for the first time. The district or zilla parishads (ZP) – which were the main level of authority in the new three-tier decentralised system - were devolved local government bodies which were legally obliged to liaise closely with the district-level state Ministries, but did not have any authority over them. The power of the state government was exercised through the District Magistrate, who was ex officio the Chief Executive of the ZP (Meenakshisundaram: 1994). All of the reforms carried out by the
Left Front clearly had an ideological motivation, which meant that the political and economic empowerment of poor and landless peasants was deliberately intended to give impetus and mass support to the CPI (M)'s radical agrarian reform programmes. The latter aimed to restructure the semi-feudal basis of Bengali rural society through sharecropper protection and land redistribution.

**Representation:** In terms of the representation, West Bengal's record of representation of the poor, whether defined by caste, occupation, or land ownership is good. In Birbhum District, for example, the approximate proportion of total panchayat membership held by SCTs increased from 26.9% in 1977 to 46% in 1988, and at gram panchayat level, the proportion held by SCTs went from 34% to 41.5%. By 1988, 44.3% of all gram panchayat members were small peasants, sharecroppers or agricultural labourers, or a combination of the above (Lieten: 1988, 2070-2).

Webster's study showed that small peasants and the landless increased their share of representation between 1978 and 1988 (Webster: 1990, 71), and the perception is that vested interests have been removed (Webster: 1989, 206). The record on female representation had been very poor during the 1980s (Lieten: 1988, 2071 and Webster: 1990, 67), but since seats were reserved for women in the 1993 elections, women now account for just over the statutory one-third minimum (Lieten: 1996, 127).

Although representation of the poor and previously excluded in West Bengal has increased significantly as a result of the panchayat reforms, it has nonetheless to be recognised that mobilisation through the party machine has meant that the electoral necessity to build broad cross class coalitions has also played its part. The electoral success of the CPI(M) attracted many opportunists and by the early 90s the panchayat representatives included a substantial group of 'middle class' or white collar employees (school teachers, clerks ) and middle peasants, the so called 'rural middle strata' who formed a new ‘party elite’. Echeverri-Gent's study of Midnapur District revealed that 65% of the elected leaders of the gram panchayats (called pradhans) were white collar employees (mainly school teachers), and a sample survey across the whole state recorded...
that 29% of pradhans were teachers of middle caste (Mahishya) origin (Echeverri-Gent: 1992a).

**Participation by the People:** However, even if representation of the poor has improved, and compares favourably with the situation in other Indian states, this does not translate into meaningful participation in the affairs of the panchayats. One study showed that panchayat members from scheduled castes or tribes rarely spoke in meetings, and if they did they tended to be ignored (Westergaard, 1986: 88). This is backed up in another study which demonstrated that just 2% of scheduled caste and tribe members spoke in meetings (Webster, 1990, 113). Nevertheless, the Left Front has set in motion important changes that will encourage greater popular participation (Westergaard: 1986, 89).

**Responsiveness:** Measuring responsiveness in terms of perceived change under the panchayat system, Webster’s survey of 150 households shows some positive results. The vast majority (78%) of landless or land-poor (under two acres) men saw substantial change under the panchayat system, as did 84% of interviewees from Scheduled Castes, and all respondents from Scheduled Tribes. Amongst women the results were less striking, although a slight majority among the landless or land-poor and Scheduled Castes or Tribes did see positive change (Webster, 1992: 158). However, the impact of participation has been restrained by the kinds of functions and resources that have been devolved to local government level. The ability of local government institutions to provide ‘voice’ to the poor is limited by their role as, for the most part, implementers of government programmes (particularly those relating to poverty alleviation), rather than being instigators of development in their own right (Webster, 1989: 206). Their main function is to select beneficiaries for poverty programme benefits such as work or loans.

**6.5.1.2 Karnataka:** The Karnataka decentralisation system was introduced in 1987 by the Janata Party state government which had won power for the first time in 1983. The Janata Party was a centrist, agrarian reformist coalition formed mainly to challenge the Congress Party’s dominance of Indian politics. The decentralisation reform in Karnataka was principally intended to build the party’s rural electoral base by giving
power and resources to the dominant middle peasant, landowning castes and the associated elites. The 1987 scheme set up two tiers of panchayats at District (Zilla) and local (Mandal) level, with village assemblies (gram sabhas) for each of the villages within the Mandal areas of around 8,000 – 12,000 people. The resources and power given to the Districts (average population around 2 million) were far more radical than in West Bengal, in that the devolved authorities were given control over deconcentrated state line Ministries. This meant that the elected Presidents (with the status of junior minister in the state government) took responsibility for more than half of the state’s civil servants, 40% of the state budget and nearly all the main developmental functions (Crook & Manor: 1998, 22 and 53). This first set of councils elected in 1987 lasted only until 1992, when the experiment was suspended by the incoming LIM! as a new three tier system was introduced under the 73rd Amendment provisions. Further elections were held in 1993 (gram panchayats) and 1995 (taluk and zilla panchayats) (Subha: 1997).

**Representation:** The initial prognosis was not good, and within the state-level bureaucracy, there was a feeling that decentralisation would strengthen vested interests in rural areas, and promote the exploitation of the weaker sections of society (Meenakshisundaram: 1994, 83-84). Nevertheless, the Indian commitment to reservation or quotas for underprivileged groups, dating from the setting up of quotas for the SCTs in the 1950 Constitution, was almost guaranteed to balance that tendency to some extent. Karnataka was no exception and under the 1987 system, 25% of seats on the councils were reserved for women and a minimum of 18%, or in proportion to their share of the population, for the SCTs. These reservations were extended after 1993 to include 33% for the ‘Other Backward Classes’ (OBCs), subdivided into 26.6% for the ‘most backward’ and 6.4% for the others, and the women’s quota was increased to 33%; in all, therefore, 84% of seats are reserved for so-called disadvantaged groups, although the politics of reservation is such that in Karnataka many of the dominant castes can benefit from the OBC provisions, and not all women representatives will be poor or low caste.

The reservation policy has undoubtedly brought about a shift in the composition of local representative bodies in Karnataka. In the 1987-92 councils, the Scheduled Castes held
20.4% of all seats across the state (although they account for only 15.1% of the population) and women 25% -- no more than their allocated quota of reserved seats. On the other hand, the two politically dominant landowning castes, who accounted for 27% of the population, held 50.6% of the seats (Crook & Manor, 1998).

In the councils elected between 1993 and 1995, however, a sample survey of 4,775 elected panchayat members (around 10% of the total) found that 40.5% belonged to OBCs, representing an upward trend, and SCTs had 20.5% of the total. The two dominant castes were reduced to only 31% of members between them. Although Scheduled Tribes were poorly represented, with just 5% of panchayat members, this was roughly equivalent to their share of the total population. It should be noted, however, that while nearly 50% of Karnataka’s population is illiterate, this sector of society was under-represented in Karnataka’s panchayats, as only 9.6% of members surveyed were illiterate, whereas 13.3% had received some form of higher education. Women did even better than their quota amount, achieving 43.6% across the state (actual figure) but they tended to come mainly from the dominant and higher castes (Subha: 1997, 11). A further problem in interpreting the significance of reservations is that, in spite of the political importance attributed to caste in India, economic privilege cannot be automatically ‘read off’ from caste category. Thus the survey of panchayat members showed that 60% at the Zilla level owned irrigated land and 27.5% admitted to an income of over 50,000 rupees, as opposed to 43% and 9% respectively at the Gram level.

This indicates that the richer landowning groups were still over-represented on the District Councils, but that less privileged groups were achieving a substantial presence in the village-level councils (Subha: 1997, 50-63).

**Participation by the People:** The Karnataka local councils have offered the poor, the disadvantaged and women enormously enhanced opportunities for participation, both through the representative system and directly. Survey evidence from the 1987-92 period shows that both the uneducated and the SCTs did engage in such activities as contacting officials and councillors, sending petitions, attending meetings and joining associations at
almost the same rate as other social groups, and in proportions not significantly less than their numbers in the population. They were therefore by no means excluded by representative politics as is often alleged. The story for women was different, in that men still tended to dominate these kinds of activities. But when it came to participating in meetings and making a contribution as elected councillors, the outcome was much less positive. At the District level, neither the poor nor the Scheduled Castes were able to form effective pressure groups, whilst at the Mandal level the social dominance of the landowning elites and the more intimate scale of the encounter was such that these individuals were effectively excluded from making any real contribution - as were the women (Crook & Manor: 1998).

The Karnataka gram sabhas or village assemblies also offered real possibilities for direct participation, including decision-making about the allocation of benefits from centrally funded poverty programmes. But the record of this kind of participation has continued to be extremely disappointing. After they were introduced in 1987, the village level meetings worked well for the first two years, but the number of meetings, the number of villages where meetings were held, as well as the attendance levels, gradually declined, until they were virtually abandoned. Crook and Manor’s survey of four sub-districts recorded that 17% of respondents had attended such meetings, which was superior to the Mandals in Bangalore and Dharwad Districts studied by Bhargava and Raphael who found that average attendance declined from 5.2% to 2.1% of the registered electorate between 1987 and 1991 in the former and from 7.5% to 5.2% in the latter. Their explanation is that the meetings became too politicised, leading to unhelpful ‘mob discussion’ shouting matches between rival groups which alienated ordinary people, and they eventually degenerated into being little more than “complaint -lodging meetings” (Bhargava & Raphael, 1994). The highest attendance, at 30-35% of the electorate, was recorded by Sivanna in a two village case-study in Chitradurga District. But even here he notes that attendance gradually dropped to the point where the only citizens who attended were those who were going to get benefits from the poverty programme. This was because the meetings were perceived as being called by and run by the President, who made the real decisions on who the beneficiaries would be. Their main general function was to raise
issues of location of amenities and pass resolutions on the 'needs' of the village. He argues that the commitment to participatory planning was largely rhetorical, as there had been no serious effort on the part of the state government to establish planning machinery at either mandal or block level. (Sivanna: 1990).

**Responsiveness:** The Crook and Manor survey found that in their case-study Districts the development project outputs of the councils were quite congruent with the perceived needs expressed by their respondents, and that the majority were very or fairly 'satisfied' with both the projects and the general record of the councils. The local Mandal councils, however, were much less highly rated than the Districts (Crook & Manor: 1998, 40). But responsiveness to the specific needs of the poor and the vulnerable was found to be quite low, and this can be related to the failure of these groups to achieve effective participation, that is, to establish accountability. The implementation of specific poverty programmes and the requirement to spend 18% of development funds on the Scheduled Castes were widely distorted or flouted by the council leaders and the bureaucrats. Indeed at the Mandal level, the councils 'systematically prevented funds from reaching the SCTs' (Crook & Manor: 1998, 40). SCTs only received 40% to 44% of benefits from the national IRDP credit programme (Sivanna: 1990, 198), in marked contrast to West Bengal, where the SCTs received 85% of the total work in the national works programme (Webster: 1990, 135). The crucial difference lay in the fact that selection for IRDP benefits in Karnataka was based on information provided by panchayat chairmen and other influential leaders, and this meant many quite well-off families were included (Sivanna: 1990, 200 and (Kurian: 1999).

Nevertheless, in spite of the imperfections of the Karnataka system it is still argued that the general level and scope of participation which has developed since 1987 is an improvement on the previous system (Crook & Manor: 1998 and Aziz, Nelson & Babu: 1996, 155). Electoral participation certainly improved and continued to remain healthy, showing a high degree of general interest and competitiveness (Crook & Manor: 1998, 27 and Subha: 1997, 12).
6.6.2 Colombia

The decentralisation reforms in Colombia from 1982 onwards were part of a general reform in the structure of state organisation. The reforms attempted a democratic opening in local government, and reallocated sectoral functions to municipalities, away from quasi-autonomous agencies. Mayors were to be elected, plebiscites on particular issues allowed, and consumer and local voices were to be represented on local development agencies (Collins: 1989, 144-5). The reforms can be interpreted either as a significant democratic opening, or as an attempt to devolve conflict to the local level, making it more manageable for the national government, although one study concluded that they were essentially progressive and democratic (Collins, 1987). However, it is important to note that a major motivation behind the reforms was an attempt by the two traditional parties in Colombia (Liberal and Conservative) - an effective oligarchy at the municipal level for a century - to restore legitimacy and rebuild local power bases in the face of growing opposition from sub municipal juntas (Velasquez C., 1991).

The Colombian case is difficult to evaluate because of the paucity of evidence and the nature of the data available. There are few detailed studies, and most of the material below originates from the same research project. The fact that the cases cited were to an extent hand-picked as "interesting" examples may undermine their representative value. It is also the case that the findings of Fiszbein appear counter-intuitive, especially given the impression found elsewhere in the literature on Colombian local government. However, other studies are, if anything, less representative – Velasquez’s study is based on just two cities.

Representation: There is some evidence to suggest that democratic decentralisation has increased the representation of non-elites in Colombia. It is argued that the integration of state and society, when organized interests seize opportunities provided by decentralisation, as occurred in Colombia, can often outweigh some of the problems associated with decentralisation, such as elite capture of local government (World Bank, 1996). Certainly, if the Liberal and Conservative parties are taken as a proxy for local elites, the “near absolute control of municipal apparatus” that had persisted since the late
nineteenth century (Velasquez C., 1991) has diminished. In 1988, the two parties had 80% of the popular vote, increasing to 90% in 1990, and controlled almost 90% of municipalities, but this decreased to 65% of the popular vote by 1992, and non-traditional parties controlled about 300 of Colombia's 1,007 municipalities (World Bank, 1995: 17).

**Participation by the People:** The Fiszbein study provides examples of direct participation, where individual municipalities have adopted a participatory approach to local governance. One of these is in Valledupar, where local government staff wears badges which proclaim "we govern with your participation", and the mayor has established various means of dissemination through local media. In other municipalities, community participation occurs in just one sector, or independently of the municipal administration. However, it is concluded that the local authorities that have followed a more open and inclusive approach have enhanced their capacities and are thus better positioned for better outcomes (Fiszbein, 1997: 1034). However, some important qualifications need to be made with respect to the Colombian case study. It should be noted that some participatory practices in Colombia pre-date decentralisation, especially with regard to community self-help (Fiszbein, 1997: 1036). Furthermore, other studies, while lacking detailed empirical evidence, remain skeptical about increased community participation in local government, and tend to emphasize the continuing strength of traditional, elite run patronage politics in the new municipalities (Forero & Salazar, 1991 and Velasquez C., 1991).

**Responsiveness:** A key element of the Colombian reform programme is the move towards a 'demand-driven' approach to public services, involving extensive participation. Opinion surveys of four municipalities show that the resulting sectoral allocations of resources are consistent with community preferences (World Bank, 1996: 140). Most individuals saw local government as central to service provision, and the overwhelming majority trusted local government more than the national government – the figures ranged from 90% in two municipalities to 75% and 60% respectively in the other two. The majority of respondents stated they would prefer the municipality to be in charge of service provision, with the notable exception of the education sector (Fiszbein,
The World Bank study of sixteen Colombian municipalities showed that competition for political office acted as a catalyst for responsible and innovative leadership, which in turn became the driving force behind capacity building. For their part, active local communities have been able to increase demands for effective local government, adding to local accountability. However, the extent to which participation has enhanced accountability remains dependent on the functioning of individual administrations with the 'leadership factor' being heavily emphasized by the World Bank research team. Democratic decentralisation in Colombia has also meant an increase in 'voice', with protests leading to local government action. There are many cases where local governments have established channels for systematic expression of needs and problems by the community. In one municipality, the policies were changed once a survey had revealed a gap between the local government programme and local needs (Fiszbein, 1997:1032-4).

6.6.3 Cote d'Ivoire

Decentralisation in Cote d'Ivoire has taken a very particular form that of the commune based upon a single town or settlement (ranging from large villages to the capital city) with its jurisdiction restricted to the 'urban' area and the immediately surrounding countryside. They are devolved authorities with no control over any of the deconcentrated central line Ministries, and are monitored and controlled by the prefectural territorial administration. Although a few communes existed from the colonial period, the process of communalisation of increasing numbers of towns on a step-by step basis really began in 1980. The reform was very much associated with an attempt by President Houphouët-Boigny to revive the then single ruling party, Parti Démocratique de la Cote d'Ivoire (PDCI) through a process of internal democratisation. It was hoped that the election of local councillors and mayors would bring new generations of cadres into politics, and address the perceived problem of public apathy. There was also an expectation that local development would be enhanced by encouraging the elites of these towns to associate themselves with the new bodies, participate in the elections, bring in
patronage and organise community projects. The main boost to the reform came in 1985, when 98 small ‘towns of the interior’ were made into communes, bringing the total up to 135; by 1996, the total had reached 196 – mostly with populations of less than 20,000 (Crook and Sverrisson: 1999). They do not therefore present any political challenge to a regime whose power is based upon the construction of ‘winning’ ethnic coalitions, held together by Presidentially-controlled patronage and a consensual form of politics which prefers where possible to co-opt. (Opposition is confined to a few ‘excluded’ sub-regional areas, and some disgruntled Muslim elites in the north).

Such a fragmented and partial form of decentralisation keeps central power strong and helps to prevent the consolidation of any possible ethnic or regional power bases. A further step in the democratisation process occurred in 1990, when multi-party competition was introduced, and the communes have experienced two multi-party elections, in 1990 and 1996, although the ruling party won control of 93% of all communes in 1990 and 80% in 1996.

**Representation:** As very small, community-based councils, it might be thought that the Ivorian communes would have developed a genuinely popular base. But the structures of power both local and national and the logic of Ivorian politics produced a very elite-dominated system. Most of the elected councils, elected on a single closed list system without ward representation, are in effect the lists put together by the powerful political entrepreneurs who became mayors. Such representativeness as they have is a product of the desire of the political elite to represent main interests and factions in the town – or to exclude others. Crook and Manor’s case-study of four communes showed that, as in Ghana, the socio-economic profile of the elected councillors was very sharply divided, with 33.3% from elite, highly educated professional and managerial occupations (clearly an over-representation) but the rest illiterate farmers, traders, artisans etc. – many of whom were in fact important community leaders. 3.7% were women. Politically, the lists tended to reflect a multiplicity of criteria: the representation of geographical quarters; the incorporation of interest groups, community leaders and certain political office holders; the need to involve the town’s cadres and people perceived as ‘competent’; and loyalty to
the Mayor and his party or faction (Crook and Manor, 1998:162). The councils did therefore offer a new opportunity for significant numbers of uneducated, younger and often low status citizens to participate in public life. But representation of 'disadvantaged groups' was not really a concern of the system, nor part of the political discourse. In Cote d'Ivoire, there is a strong popular expectation that effective representation of a community's interests is best assured by electing the town's 'cadres'. This is recognition of the realities of politics in a stable and deeply entrenched patronage-based dominant party system.

A further factor to note about the significance of the elected councils is that they have a very limited role compared to that of the mayor and his deputies, elected from amongst their number. And the social profile of all the mayors elected in 1985-90 reflected very accurately their politically connected, elite status. 74 of 125 mayors of communes outside Abidjan actually resided and/or worked in Abidjan; 29% were simultaneously députés in the National Assembly and 9% were actually ministers and holders of high office. 77% had modern sector, professional and managerial occupations (Crook and Manor, 1998: 171).

Participation by the People: The lack of connection between elected councillors and electors even in these small communities (58% of respondents in Crook and Manor's survey could not name a councillor), and the perceived domination of commune affairs by the mayors meant that participation rates in contacting activities were relatively low. The most frequent participation (17.7% of all respondents) was in the most direct form, that of the 'neighbourhood committee' – an institution long associated with the ruling party. Those who participated in this activity were mainly male (73%), but tended to be relatively representative of the (male) population in educational, age and occupational terms, although inevitably there was some skewing towards older people and the better educated. In the more remote, less developed northern communes, the very small numbers of educated people were over-represented. When it came to speaking or contributing at meetings, however, this activity was strongly dominated by older men, as might be expected. But this form of participation had little connection anyway with the
affairs of the commune, so the overall picture is one of very limited input by citizens generally, let alone the poor and disadvantaged. It could be argued that this was part of the legacy of quiescence developed over 30 years of single party rule and 'departicipation. But the political structure of the commune itself, particularly the electoral system, did not help to challenge this legacy, when combined with very clear 'elite capture' (Crook and Sverrisson: 1999).

**Responsiveness:** The responsiveness rating of the four communes studied by Crook and Manor was very low; only 36% of respondents felt that the commune could satisfy their development needs. The preferred development outputs of the communes – building ‘town halls’ and secondary schools – had little congruence with respondents’ preferences for roads, social facilities and water supplies. Even with projects that did have some popular resonance, the record of the communes in consulting their citizens was dismal; many projects, particularly schools, were stalled because political leaders were unable to persuade people to contribute to special funds for the purpose. The general view (which had some rationality to it) was that the wealthy and the powerful should provide.

Overall, the lack of responsiveness of the Ivorian communes can be attributed to a general failure of elected councillors and officials to establish any strong relationships of public accountability or communication with their electorates (Crook and Sverrisson: 1999). The commune council was very weak and councillors did not appear to ‘represent’ any particular group of constituents. The list system, moreover, meant that the winning list literally took all, and the losers were totally excluded from the council. This helped to give the council a partial or factional image, if the town was in any way divided, and encouraged non-cooperation from groups who felt themselves thus excluded. The Mayors were elite politicians whose main concern (symbolised by the amount of time they spent in Abidjan) was to work through central political patronage networks.

**6.6.4 Bangladesh**

The decentralised system introduced by the military government of President H. M.
Ershad in 1985 was intended to enhance the legitimacy of the regime and contribute to the building of its newly created party, the Jatiyo Party. There was only a marginal commitment to power-sharing, and the regime attempted to co-opt rural landed elites and power brokers in order to build a political power base (Ingham & Kalam, 1991: 4). The reform created two tiers of elected local councils; the basic authorities were the directly elected Union Councils with populations of around 20,000. Above them were the sub-District (upazila) Councils with an average population of 245,000, which consisted of the indirectly elected Union Chairmen, various appointees, the heads of a restricted range of newly deconcentrated ministries at sub-District level and a directly elected Chairman. The system therefore combined devolution and deconcentration, but of a much less radical kind than that found in Karnataka; the range of functions was more limited, and the status and power of the sub-District Chairmen much less elevated. The Councils had very limited revenue raising powers and in practice were dependent upon the (generous) funding given by the central government. Nevertheless these were more powerful local government organisations than had been seen before in Bangladesh (Crook & Manor, 1998: 85).

**Representation:** Unlike in India, there is no reservation or positive discrimination provisions which might have helped disadvantaged groups to gain access to the new councils. Only at the sub-District level was there a provision for the appointment of three women, who did not have voting rights, provisions which virtually guaranteed their political irrelevance. In the country as a whole, 6 women out of a total of 4,401 councillors served on the sub-District Councils in their capacity as Union Chairwomen, virtually all of whom were ‘stand ins’ for their husbands. As for the poor, most studies concur that both the Union and sub-District councils were captured by the wealthy landed classes; the landless were excluded, and even ‘middle peasant’ owner-cultivators were a minority. As one writer observes, the overall impact of decentralisation was to ‘intensify already extreme inequalities’ (Crook & Manor, 1998: 99); cf. (Ingham & Kalam, 1992) and (Khan, 1987). The majority of the elected sub-District Chairmen were prosperous elite politicians who spent most of their time in Dhaka cultivating their patronage links with Ministers, senior civil servants and MPs. After they were elected in 1985, 55% of
them 'joined' the Jatiyo Party, giving Ershad the support of three quarters of all sub-Districts (Crook & Manor, 1998: 104) (Khan, 1987: 411).

**Participation by the People:** The evidence with respect to participation in the activities which link citizens with the institutions of elected local government varies somewhat according to the districts studied and the time of the research. In the four sub-Districts surveyed by Crook and Manor (1998), it was found that overall nearly a quarter of respondents had contacted either Union councillors (11%) their sub-District councillor (6.3%) or an unspecified councillor, and the same proportion had attended officially organized meetings, a higher level than in Karnataka. Although the vast majority of these were men, the poor had not been excluded to the extent that uneducated people had participated in these activities more or less in proportion to their numbers in the population (Crook & Manor, 1998: 94-96). Ingham and Kalam’s earlier work in three sub-Districts between 1988 and 1989 produced much gloomier results, showing that the majority of their respondents had no detailed knowledge of the upazila, and an insignificant proportion had attended any meetings even those connected with offering information on agriculture, prices, or local development. Some respondents believed that decentralisation had increased communications, but this perception was based on the increase in visible local government apparatus – such as buildings, offices and staff – and not on any increased practical use of the facilities (Ingham & Kalam, 1991: 14). They also questioned 84 elite respondents, over half of whom said that political participation had decreased, and 70% of whom said that there was significant political pressure from central government, the ruling party and locally dominant groups on the local administration. Overall, they felt that there was no democracy in the upazila councils and over half of them said that the political environment had worsened (Ingham & Kalam, 1992: 380).

One explanation of the difference between the findings could be the time of the fieldwork, the earlier survey having taken place during the height of the Ershad regime’s grip on power, whilst the later one was conducted after the collapse of the regime. Another factor might be that two of the Crook and Manor cases were located in a District
where there was a high NGO presence, which could explain higher levels of participation. But it also gave rise to some interesting findings about the link between NGOs and local government, echoed by other scholars.

**Responsiveness:** The general failure of the poor and disadvantaged to gain any significant representation on the new local councils would suggest that their responsiveness was very low. But the record is in fact more ambiguous and complex than that. On the one hand, general views of the record of the councils were consistently bad; the Crook and Manor survey found that 64% of respondents were 'not at all satisfied' with either the Union or the *upazila* councils, mainly because of the corrupt and dictatorial behaviour of their political leaders (Crook & Manor, 1998: 129). Similarly, 75% of Ingham and Kalam’s elite respondents felt that NGOs and voluntary associations had performed better than local governments. 70% said there was increased corruption in the delivery of justice, and 90% claimed to have had personal experience of corruption (Ingham & Kalam, 1992: 380). It is also clear that a lot of the central funding given to the councils was spent on patronage related activities which benefited the better off and clients of the council leaders; one assessment is that hardly any projects specifically geared to the needs of vulnerable groups emerged from the decentralization experiment, and that the poor were rarely involved in the project selection process (Westergaard & Alam, 1995: 684).

On the other hand, as Westergaard admits, some projects were ‘wanted’ by and benefited the poor and Crook and Manor also found that many of the project outputs of the councils were congruent with expressed needs, particularly those for infrastructure. The main explanation would seem to be that a great deal of the spending created local employment opportunities, much of it through road building as well as water projects and educational buildings. Indeed, one of most frequently expressed popular demands was for employment. This propensity to engage in job-creating construction projects has, in turn, another very simple explanation: by 1988-9, 90% of the resources being transferred to the sub-Districts by central government came in the form of grain, which could only be used to pay people for work (Crook & Manor, 1998: 124). To this extent, therefore, the
decentralised authorities during the Ershad period did serve to transfer real resources to the rural poor, although it had little to do with any sense of accountability to the poor or to the electorate generally.

6.6.5 Ghana

Ghana’s District Assembly system was introduced in 1989 by the then-military government of Jerry Rawlings. The ‘Rawlings Revolution’ of 1981 was based on radical populist ideas of direct participation and no-party people’s democracy, and the decentralisation reform of 1989 was portrayed as a fulfillment of that commitment to introduce a ‘truly Ghanaian’ form of grass-roots democracy. With the transition to a more conventional, representative multi-party democracy in 1992, the District Assemblies (DAs) were incorporated into the 1992 Constitution of the Fourth Republic and strengthened with new legislation and extra sources of funding from a District Assemblies Common Fund in 1993. Politically, the reform was clearly an attempt to create a rural power base for Rawlings, embodying as it did a privileged position for pro-Rawlings revolutionary organisations (which later became the core of his party, the NDC), and mechanisms for co-opting rural business, professional and agrarian elites. The Assemblies themselves are directly elected representative bodies (two-thirds elected, one third nominated by government) and the original ban on party activity has been retained. The DAs’ official mission is still to create and encourage, in cooperation with sub-district town and village councils or committees, community-based forms of self-reliant economic and social development (or self-help, as it is called in Ghana), a project which forms the main political and ideological justification of the system. Administratively, they are a mixed form of decentralisation in that their other main function is to supervise the various former line Ministries which have been deconcentrated (or are in the process of being transferred) to District level since 1989, to form an integrated district governmental and financial apparatus.

Given its official aspirations and the strong political commitment of the central government, the prognosis for the pro-poor performance of such a system should have
been good. Yet the Ghanaian system exemplifies the problems which occur when new opportunities for participation are not matched by effective accountability mechanisms and a politics of local-central relations which undermines their operation.

**Representation:** The government’s aim to include the ‘poor and the unschooled’ in the Assembly system was only partially achieved. Elected representatives on the Assemblies still tended to come disproportionately from the male, educated and professional strata of society --although not as dramatically as might have been expected relative to the known preference of Ghanaian rural voters for ‘educated’ representatives. Across Ghana as a whole, 33% of those elected in 1989 had agricultural occupations (an under-representation), whilst 32% were teachers – a massive overrepresentation – and 13% civil servants. Only 1.6% were women. The two Assemblies studied by Crook and Manor had a distinctly dualistic membership, in which whilst 56% and 74% respectively of the elected members had secondary or higher levels of education, the remainder tended to be uneducated or poorly educated farmers. But the elite character of the Assemblies was substantially boosted by the government nominees who formed one-third of the membership. The most that can be said is that the Assemblies did give access and representation to small numbers of locally-based and uneducated farmers, traders, and artisans who had previously been excluded from politics even in previous democratic interludes (Crook and Manor, 1998: 224).

**Participation by the People:** The ‘poor and the unschooled’ participated much more widely in village-level and contacting activities. According to Crook and Manor’s survey, those who had engaged in contacting their representative (12% of respondents) or had attended official and unofficial meetings (32% and 5% of respondents) were fairly typical of the general population in terms of their age, occupation and educational level (Crook and Manor, 1998: 228). As regards the ‘gender balance’, men were strongly dominant in contacting but less so in the other activities. One area, however, where the female participation rate was better than or nearly as good as that of men was in the village level Unit Committee meetings, particularly in southern Ghana, but this can hardly be interpreted as a victory for the poor and deprived, in that the women tended to be younger
and well-educated. These Committees were very much part of the Rawlings ‘revolutionary structure’ and the women’s participation reflected the enormous strength of the 31st December Women’s Movement at the local level.

It was in fact at the level of direct participation in village-level bodies that the Assembly system failed to live up to the expectations loaded on it by government’s populist, radical aspirations. Even though the Unit Committees ceased to have an official connection with the former military government’s ‘revolutionary organs’ after 1992, legal delays and the political realities of domination by Rawlings’ party the NDC meant that they never really shook off their association, and never really functioned as intended. When popular elections for the Unit Committees were finally held in 1998 (9 years after the DAs were set up), 65% of the elections were uncontested, reflecting both apathy and alienation caused by conflict, intimidation of rivals and administrative chaos (Crook, 1999).

The one area of local politics where direct participation was and continues to be successful is in the well-established Ghanaian institution of ‘self-help’ community development associations. Unfortunately, these can hardly be cited as examples of empowerment of the poor and disadvantaged. One of the duties of the Assembly representative is to act as an animator and facilitator of self-help projects in his/her area. But few can achieve success in this without the support of local leaders such as the chiefs and the wealthy, professional often absentee elites (successful sons and daughters of the town) whose efforts underpin the community development association and its projects. Decisions taken in public meetings called by such an association might well respect ‘traditional’ Ghanaian procedures for achieving consensus through exhaustive discussion, but would rarely challenge existing social hierarchies, or go outside the parameters of choice offered by the local elite. It is also clear that Assembly representatives have in fact experienced growing contradictions between their role in community self-help activities and their role as District Assembly members. The more successful the self-help projects of the community association, the less willing local constituents are to pay Assembly taxes or accord any legitimacy or usefulness to its activities. A particular grievance derives from the fact that so many self-help projects which remain unfinished are those
where matching help has been promised by the DA, but never delivered (Crook and Manor, 1998).

**Responsiveness:** Compared to what had gone before, the DA system has greatly enhanced popular participation in local government, and included greater numbers of previously excluded groups. Yet the responsiveness of the DAs to popular development needs and to those of the poor in particular, has not been good. In the two Districts surveyed by Crook and Manor, 70% of respondents felt that the DA did not respond to their needs, and only 22% felt it was better than the previous (unelected) system. This was partly because general development performance was disappointing with recurrent expenditures continuing to dominate (on average, 85%) and per capita development expenditure remaining at derisory levels even after real increases. This picture was repeated in many other Districts across the country (Ayee, 1992; Ayee, 1996; Acheampong, 1995 and Kessey, 1995).

The critical popular assessments also reflected the lack of congruence between District Assembly funded outputs and popular preferences for road repairs, health facilities, water supplies and electricity. DA policies tended to reflect either government pressure to mobilise local revenue sources, leading to expenditure on commercial transport services, farming or manufacturing enterprises and markets; or they reflected centrally determined programmes and priorities, the costs of which had been pushed down onto the Districts. One of these was the government’s national educational reform which required the construction of Junior Secondary Schools throughout the country; another was the cost of office buildings and equipment, official housing and the like. Political corruption in the shape of excessive transport, travel and entertainment expenditures was again linked to the pressures on --and lack of local control over -- the government-appointed District Assembly bosses, the District Secretaries. So the development performance of the Assemblies had such little responsiveness to the needs of the poor.

Despite the inclusion of decentralisation in public sector reform efforts in the 1980s and early 1990s by developing countries, one leading commentator has stated that ‘there are
no real success stories as far as improved development performance at the local level is concerned' (Adamolekun, cited in Francis and James (2003). This stark finding is corroborated by Wunsch (2001), who attributes to failure of decentralisation to problems such as the over-centralisation of resources, limited transfers to sub-national governments, a weak local revenue base, lack of local planning capacity, limited changes in legislation and regulations, and the absence of meaningful local political process.

The evidence from the cases reviewed above gives a distribution of outcomes which enables us to classify some decentralisation schemes as having performed in a broadly positive manner, and others as having performed poorly with respect to responsiveness, participation and representation. The review shows that only the evidence relating to West Bengal indicates an unambiguously positive outcome on all dimensions, whilst Karnataka and Ghana show good results in some aspects or for particular local cases. The other cases -- Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Bangladesh have all to be regarded as examples of the failure of decentralisation in terms of all three dimensions. Comparing Pakistan with the countries reviewed, it is being the ‘least bad’ in that its responsiveness, participation and representativeness record was relatively good and recent increases in its funding mean that it may now have more potential, at least, to provide more development.

Two key lessons arise from this review:

1. Decentralisation does not automatically accomplish responsiveness, representation and participation objectives; The main preconditions to maximise the perceived advantages and minimize the risks of effective decentralization seem to be:
   - Local authorities with clearly defined roles, responsibilities and mandates for certain categories of function.
   - Adequate and reliable financial resources (central government subventions plus locally-generated revenues) to exercise those
responsibilities, with enough discretion to ensure that resource allocation is responsive to local priorities.

- **Autonomy in staffing** and **adequate human resource management policies** to ensure that staff is deployed effectively, loyal and accountable to their local authority, their councillors and the citizens they serve.

- Planning and management **capacities** and systems to underpin all basic functions.

- **Communication and accountability mechanisms** to link local governments with both the populations they serve and with the central government.

All this require commitment, devotion and sincerity on the part of central government as well as provincial and local government officials. Political factors are of intrinsic importance to the success of decentralised governments for several reasons. It is widely accepted that political commitment on the part of federal or state governments is a *sine qua non* of effective democratic decentralisation, and especially forms of decentralisation that are specifically geared to the interests of the poor (Crook, 2001; Blair, 2000). Successful decentralisation is associated with governing parties that are politically committed to the democratic empowerment of local governments (Heller, 2001; Escheverri-Gent, 1993).

The Indian state governments of West Bengal evince a strong commitment to decentralisation, reflected in supportive legislation and a significant flow of resources to lower levels of government. The provincial government has systematically devolved powers and resources to municipalities with positive consequences for local development. In contrast, evidence from Africa and Latin America and other countries in Asia such as Pakistan and Bangladesh demonstrates that weak commitment to decentralisation opens up the possibility of elite capture, the absence of participation, and ineffective outcomes.

Political commitment both at national as well as at local level lead towards the
combination of the added responsibilities, more resources and political reforms that created the environment conducive to the emergence of effective local governments’ (Fiszbein (1997: 1032).

2. Decentralisation requires a lengthy gestation period before it starts producing benefits. Continuous changes of policies regarding local governments are inimical to reform. It is a variable that would seem to be a simple, but often overlooked factor: the length of time a system has been in operation. Most decentralisation reforms take some time to get established and many are changed or abandoned after only a few years, or one electoral cycle. In reality, it may take at least ten to fifteen years in a context of financial and political stability, for a system to show any results which can be fairly judged. In this respect, West Bengal has enjoyed the longest and most stable existence of any of the schemes examined (twenty five years). This has enabled many detailed studies to reveal all its faults, but also given it a political and administrative solidity.

So it is tempting to draw the conclusion that responsiveness, representation and participation objectives are not well served by decentralized governments. At the same time, evidence suggests that increased participation, responsiveness and representation do result from democratic decentralisation, and that these benefits should not be underestimated (Crook and Manor, 1998; Blair, 2000). The challenge is to identify the conditions under which local governance is conducive to enhanced outputs in terms of the participation, responsiveness and representation. This may require further comparative research but it is possible to outline a schema in which the potential ingredients for success are political, institutional, financial and technical in nature, as outputs are closely related to the availability of financial resources and local government capacity. However, experience suggests that while decentralized government objectives may be realised, neither of these approaches is conducive to participation, nor are they guaranteed to produce outcomes that are more favourable to responsiveness and representation without the commitment of our leaders.
6.7 CONCLUSION

The NWFP Local Government was set up to achieve increased public participation in government, accelerated development and to replace the traditional leadership. Possibly the most advocated aspects were the degree and character of popular participation, the representation and development role for the councils. The discussion in this chapter has assessed these three aspects.

Decentralized government has not made any significant contribution to the creation of democratic institutions at village level which favour participation in development. There is, however, a reasonable increase in the political participation of people which highlights the significance of local democracy to the rural population. In terms of development participation, both villagers and councilors are nevertheless more inclined to favour people involvement in development activities which is, however, encouraging for improved participation in future.

Similarly the share of the local government in rural development is considerably low, explained very largely by a lack of resources and the preferences of the central/provincial government for directing major development projects by other bodies, so by-passing the local government system. But, despite the failures, belief in the democratic decentralized government as the viable institution for local development is continuously preferred by the people, ensuring that new district government with the passage of time might lead to local development in Pakistan.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It has been argued by a number of authorities that decentralization builds up democratic institutions at the local level, and helps delivery of basic needs to rural areas. This study has been guided by this philosophy in its examination of the practice of decentralized governments in Pakistan. The study was designed to examine and analyze the role of Pakistan's local councils in participatory rural development. Following the case study and survey methods, the study was carried out in 16 villages of eight union councils in the two district government areas of northwestern Pakistan, covering a sample of 120 councillors and 400 villagers. The study has examined the Pakistan decentralized government in terms of two aspects: people participation and developmental responsiveness as in the context of a developing reality, what is important is not how the system has been ideally conceived, but how it actually works.

7.1 Summary of Major Findings

Pakistan is a geographically diverse country with a heritage of economic and political centralization. Although decentralization has lacked sustained political support, economic and social trends have made it an enduring political and policy concern since 1959 and each successive governments has established decentralized organizations at the district level. Throughout Pakistan history many rulers - military and civilian - have rhetorically called for decentralization having diverse motives. However, they are being used in the same way, whatever is their political hue. The military junta, who dominated the national power during most of the republic's history, favoured a decentralized system which was to operate concurrently with centrally planned and implemented government programmes and was to serve as nuclei for rural development. Local government at the district and village levels has been enjoyed the elected status during periods of military rule (1958-69, 1977-88 and 2001 onwards) but with limited power and resources, they have played only a marginal role in
rural development. Political leaders used decentralization as political slogans to rally support in villages but after coming into offices, they were unwilling to implement policies that would significantly undercut central authority. Indeed, maintenance of central authority and resources upon attaining office increased the chances of rewarding one’s clientele. Hence no major force had a consistent interest in decentralization. It suffered from the general unwillingness of central authorities to decentralize power to local authorities.

The councils were assessed in terms of participation and development from three different aspects: Institutional, Functional and Social.

The Institutional Perspective:

1. Organizational Arrangements: Despite the legal provision under the NWFP Local Government Ordinance 2001 for the establishment of village and neighborhood councils and Citizens Community Boards (CCBs), in order to promote people involvement in development activities at local level, the institutional arrangements for involving people in the development activities were not in place in the sampled districts – Kohat and Manschra.

2. Political/electoral Participation: Awareness and involvement in local institutions: On average, awareness was quite widespread with between 40 and 50 percent of villagers having heard about any one of the local institutions and 35 percent having heard of all five. The high level of awareness does not correspond with the level of involvement, as the majority did not get involved at meetings and other activities of the councils. About 63 percent of the total respondents reported no participation either in the CCBs meeting or in the village councils’ meetings.

However, a significant majority (more than sixty two per cent) participated in local elections to their councillors but the fact remains that elites’ (wealthy people: landlords and rich businessmen) preferences coloured the selection of councillors.
3. Contacts: More than 44 per cent of the respondents do not have any contact with council or councilors, as ‘councillors have nothing to offer to the village and its people and also because of villagers’ poverty, whereas 40% of councillors and 34% of MPs, as villagers reported, contact villagers but through elites (52%).

The Functional Perspectives: Villagers Participation in Development

Majority (82.9 per cent) of the villagers and (66%) of councilors believe villagers should participate in development to improve services for village. But only a small proportion of villagers (Less than 17 per cent) participated in such projects, where too, 26% of big landholders and only 8 per cent of small landholders including landless have participated. Social and financial status of villagers has hampered popular participation.

Among those who participated, 26.7% providing an opinion or suggestion (input provision) and 24.55% and 15.25 percent participated in problem identification and decision making stages respectively. No participation in planning stage was recorded. 3.5% participated in maintenance stage and 30% have participated in implementation of the project by providing money, material and manpower and supervised and monitored the projects.

Most people (68%) acknowledged the general benefits of the development projects but no individual benefits. Also small / landless, poor labourer class is of the view that some groups are better-benefited (62.3%). Almost 87% of this class said they had nothing of the development projects.

People in developed district exhibit the lowest participation levels. Thus participation was observed higher in the poorer district than it is in the wealthier one.

Local government units in terms of participation are perceived and ranked number one as compared to other government’s functionaries in the district.
The Social Perspective: Responsiveness of Councils to Villagers Needs

A reasonable percentage of councilors (42%) and villagers (43%) have endorsed the increased flow of funds. 54% of villagers and 65% of councillors asserted that allocation of investment were extremely skewed in favor of a few areas/councils before a devolution plan whereas 67% of villagers and 72% of councilors asserted that distribution of investment is reasonably equitable across councils after decentralized governments.

On average, only 33 percent of the respondents thought local government has extended its efforts for the problems of their village. In comparison, 43 percent of the respondents acknowledged the efforts extended by the provincial government. The central government efforts in this regard are disappointing whereas the NGOs contribution is almost non-existent.

Despite the small share in rural development, Local government units are perceived and ranked number one (49.8%) as compared to other government’s functionaries in the district in terms of needs responsiveness

The responsiveness of local government to people’s needs and their opportunity to participate in the decisions made by local government were assessed as good by 49.8% and 42% respectively. This is not a strong support, but some other comparisons may help to put this figure in perspective. For Provincial government, the equivalent figures for these two factors were 23% and 30% respectively, and for Central government, 20% and 22% respectively.

The overall performance of the council was assessed as poor (50 %). However, nearly 75 % of villagers and 85% of councilors thought that councils are necessary element in village development and a substantial majority preferred the local council system despite its failure in participatory development. Respondents shared the view that council failed because of the lack of financial resources (28.66 %), discontinuation of local democratic process (18.29 %), by-passing of councils by other agencies (10.98%), mis-using of allocated funds (10.98 %),
and lack of interest on the part of councillors (0.60%).

Comparing the elected and nominated nature of councils, villagers, on average, a substantial majority (61 percent) asserted that councils work effectively when consisted of elected officials whereas a minor fraction of people (24.7) thought councils doing better when they are not elected rather selected or nominated or appointed.

**Councilors and Peoples Participation:**

Councilors acknowledged the benefits of peoples participation as almost two third of the councilors (66%) favoured the involvement of people in development activities to gain information on citizen's views, improvements in services (52%) and closely followed by allowing 'better decision-making on specific points' (48%). Despite this, councilors still have some concerns as consultation fatigue amongst the public (31%), capture the views of dominant, but unrepresentative, groups (29%), undermine the legitimacy of elected members (28%), raise public expectations that the authority cannot meet (5%), slow down the decision-making process (5%), and promote disagreement and conflict among different sections of the community (2%).

**Role perceived:** councillors perceived a greater local government role in development. But in consequence of limited involvement in local development networks and activities, the respondents acknowledged the council little credibility in this area. Regarding reasons, councilors indicated: insufficient and inadequate funds (79%), lack of authority (56.4%) and the anti-councils policy of the central and provincial governments (50%) where elected councils are dissolved without any reasons for years and where DDCs are being created in pursuit of government funding.

**7.2 CONCLUSIONS**

The NWFP Local Government was set up to achieve increased public participation in government, accelerated development and to replace the traditional leadership. Possibly the
most advocated aspects were the degree and character of popular participation and development role for the councils.

Decentralized government has not made any significant contribution to the creation of democratic institutions at village level which favour participation in development. There is, however, a reasonable increase in the political participation of people which highlights the significance of local democracy to the rural population. The universal and frequent tendency for decentralized governments to be dominated if not captured by local elites is effectively excluded, as landless, small landholders and poor workers have managed to be on councils list. This inclusion may work for the kind of broad based democratic participation envisioned by advocates of community driven development because other poor would be encouraged to be a member.

In terms of development participation, both villagers and councilors are nevertheless more inclined to favour people involvement in development activities which is, however, encouraging for improved participation in future. The links of villages with the local councils are still weak, both physically and psychologically and people, especially poor are not involved in decision making process and development projects. Despite this, villagers have a strong confidence in district government as they perceived it a more effective for participatory development.

Similarly the share of the local government in rural development in terms of investment and allocated resources is considerably low, explained very largely by a lack of resources and the preferences of the central/provincial government for directing major development projects by other bodies, so by-passing the local government system. The Pakistan experience demonstrates that the intervention of central and provincial governments has actually resulted in greater control over local development activities.

But the match between what a community needs and what it obtains was reasonably improved. In general local governments have been developed policy measures in a manner which have been responsive to the local perception of local economic problems.
Decentralized government has also brought an increase in the resources directed towards local levels from the provinces and centre. So despite the failures, belief in the democratic decentralized government as the viable institution for local development is continuously preferred by the people, ensuring that new district government with the passage of time might lead to local development in Pakistan. This suggests that despite weak performance, majority of villagers preferred the district government system, if participatory structure of local government is left in place for a long period; they can become instrumental in village development.

Devolutionary decentralization in Pakistan confronts a major political problem. That is the unwillingness of political and administrative leaders to share monopoly power inherited from the colonial period. There is also the fear that devolution might compromise the integrity of nationally delivered services. In many instances, these rational fears are often a cloak for the fear on the part of ruling elites at the center of loosening their grip on political power. Devolution is viewed as a zero-sum power game in which local actors gain at the expense of the center, rather than a positive-sum power game in which all players, both at the local level and at the center gain over time. There has been a worrying lack of political goodwill and commitment from the central/provincial governments to address the real problems of local government in the country, despite the emphasis on reinvention to favour the district government.

Government commitments to peoples' participation are common, but often observed that the rhetoric works out in practice and in actual policies. Local councilors and villagers clearly recognize the benefits of engaging the public, particularly in terms of having and improving service delivery and decision-making but without extending efforts for its realization. Local government continues to push forward the agenda on public participation - both villagers and councilors clearly recognize the benefits of involving the public. Though, the scale of public involvement in local decision-making is not sizeable.
Local government has a particularly important role to play, both in rural development and the renewal of democracy. Lack of financial resources both in the council and community has hampered councils and people’s participation in rural development, as people economically strong and sound participated more than people economically depressed.

There is a strong community support for a wider role for local government, although confidence in local government itself is not high but higher than other tiers of government.

Most people gave a high value to democracy and participation, and declared an interest in local government issues and a wish to be involved in local decision-making, however relatively few seldom have been involved in council decision making processes. The structure, however, purported to create wide opportunities for people’s participation, which were not generally grasped. A frequent reason for this was the belief that local government was not attentive to their views due to their poor financial and social status and did not provide the required opportunity to be involved; but these reasons probably also reflects personal choice as well. However, the barriers to participation in local government are real or perceived, there appears to be ample scope for the council to develop strategies to increase citizen participation. It is necessary not to prejudge an attempt to secure change which can only be attained over the long term. Opportunities, though not exploited as anticipated, have been created and awareness stimulated.

Councils are strongly trusted as an agent for rural development and citizen participation as some of the barriers are beyond the reach of local government alone. Lack of Resources (human and financial) and the preference of the central/provincial governments for directing major development projects through other institutions and by-passing the local government are some of the reasons for councils ineffectiveness in development. All these have created a sense of frustration among the councilors and also shaken their faith in the efficacy of the local government system.

In summary, the efforts of the government to promote the rural development through
popular participation or representative participation are still at an underdeveloped stage which is, as yet, not fully working and the attitudes of most councilors and villagers towards participatory development are generally not passive. The future of democratic local government, characterized by popular participation in decision-making leading to the village development, is rather bright and vivid in Pakistan. In the present decade, the existing trend is likely to continue, the district government is liable to lead to the most active role in participatory rural development.

7.3 DIRECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is fashionable in a study of this kind to suggest new models or as often towards new concepts and strategies for development. With some justification, attempts were made to deviate from the path of prescriptions, to discuss what are seen as vital issues. What this case studies and other experiences point to is the need for some way of putting councils in context - ensuring that they are grafted rather than bolted on to local set up. The results of this research suggest some general directions for improvement. Uphoff and Esman (1974) argue that local institutions which are separated and isolated from other levels are likely to be impotent developmentally. Local autonomy by itself provides little leverage for development. What make the most difference are systems or networks of organizations that make local development more than an enclave phenomenon. Thus for development purposes, the strength of local government units - in terms of the salience of functions they perform, the skills and professionalism of local officials, their base of financial resources and the effectiveness with which they carry out their responsibilities - may be much more significant than their legal status as independent units (ibid). The obvious implications of this are two-fold: (a) to make local decentralized government effective and (b) make development process more participatory by creating participation specific mechanisms for local input and control. To achieve these objectives, in the light of the Pakistan context, a number of measures may be considered. Although measures to be taken for enhancing local councils an effective development institution are varied, they fall into two distinct but connected areas:
Accountability and Participation

Development capacity

The most commonly talked about mechanism for improving local accountability is the election of councillors. Evidently, elections present no universal panacea in terms of improving local accountability, it creates a visible link to local accountability, and the evidence available so far shows that it can stimulate councillors to make sure that their achievements are visible for all to see. Although the extreme inequalities of most developing countries including Pakistan tends to mean that access to political power is seriously mal-distributed, notwithstanding the countervailing influence of electoral politics. In power and therefore policy terms, in consequence, democracies in developing countries tend to be dominated by well-resourced elites and a powerless ‘periphery’ of effectively disenfranchised citizens. To the extent that this is true in any given society, even then, Manor (1995) emphatically emphasized that local government must be democratic in order to achieve its objectives. Within local government, open and democratic processes are essential in empowering councils to withstand the social pressures that result from their participation in development.

It is currently envisaged that success of any decentralized policy is, to some extent based on peoples' participation. There is an urgent need to improve people involvement and participation in development process. Exactly what form this participation takes, may be defined differently by different people. In addition there is a compelling necessity to organize rural people at the village level, as it is the pre-requisite for participation. The recent trend in development calls for greater participation by people at all stages in the development process. Furthermore, the recent call is to move 'beyond people first' to 'people empowerment' - incorporating basic changes in power relationships (Goetz and O'Brian: 1995). The most commonly talked about mechanism for improving people involvement is to introduce village council and other organizations at village level which may deepen considerably the government and council links to the local community, providing a mechanism by which village problems, could be identified, discussed, and communicated collectively to higher authorities. These proposals lead to a strategy where considerable
attention should be paid to:

- rational democracy - creation of forms of participatory policy making and involvement of local councils in national development process;
- representative democracy - strengthening the position of the local councils and making them responsive and accountable to the local people; and
- direct democracy - engage citizens in the development discussion and decision-making (Tops and Depla: 1994).

Developing rural areas and ensuring public participation are two important dimensions that are being prominently stressed for making local councils more effective. There is nevertheless a vexing problem in development role of councils. The main concerns in this area, which are commonly raised, are: lack of clarity of development responsibilities of local councils, and mis-match between functions and resources. There is the need for a strict division of responsibilities between the local, provincial and the central governments. We should follow Richard's (1971) economic argument that local government is not suitable for the performance of distributive functions, but should be restricted to the allocation functions of public sector.

However, democracy and resources can neither be considered as the pre-requisite for councils' development capacity, nor can its values and potential contribution to rural development be dismissed. What are lacking are not resources, but political will. More generally, there is now a large amount of literature that points to what may be termed 'political commitment' as a key cause of levels of performance in developing countries (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith: 1992; Goldsmith: 1991; Paul: 1991; Paul: 1992; Tendler: 1993a; Tendler: 1993b; UN: 1996). In essence, it is concluded that local councils need political support if they are to obtain resources, be listened to, and generally be effective. We have to not only reinvent our governments (Osborn and Gaebler: 1993) but also to reinvent ourselves. What this really means is the reinvention of the concept of governments, both by the authorities and citizens (Carvajal: 1995). Only then we can establish an enabling environment for participatory rural development.
7.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Local government has always been a core area of investigation for the scholar and researchers which have made significant progress in advancing knowledge regarding the participatory development and decentralized governments. This research illuminates the participation aspect of local government in development which suggests synergisms between implementation and institution-building. However, the ideas discussed and analyzed need to be tested and refined through additional comparative research as constraints of time and resources have not permitted the researcher to cover all the significant aspects of decentralized government and rural development.

There is, however, an acute need for the detailed studies of specific issues and problems of local government. Studies are required which look at decentralized government in terms of central – local and inter – governmental relations. This is a research area where a particular contribution may be made by the discipline of political science, together with studies of public administration and multi-disciplinary studies on development. The empirical demands of such studies, however, need to be recognized. Although they can be found in the research literature of developed countries, it is not surprising that very few exist in developing countries.

Local governments are under severe pressure both from political and institutional quarters. As a matter of fact, since the inception of district government system, there has been a hitch between the elected district Nazim and the member of the provincial and federal legislative assemblies as well as the civil bureaucracy at district level. Research studies need to be conducted to analyze the local government and its institutional relationships with the members of parliament and the civil bureaucracy.
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APPENDICES

The full text of the English versions of the interview schedule for villagers and interview checklist for councillors are reproduced in the following pages as Appendix (A) and Appendix (B) respectively.
APPENDIX (A)
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR VILLAGERS

Reference No. ----------------- Name of the District. -------------------

Name of the Village. -------------------

Date of Interview. -----------/----------/ 2002

Section A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Age group:

   21---30  ----
   31---40  ----
   41---50  ----
   51---60  ----
   Above 60 ----

2. Sex:

   Male  ----
   Female ----

3. Marital status:

   Single  ----
   Married ----
   Divorced ----
   Widowed ----

4. Education Background:

   No education  ----
   Primary education  ----
   Middle education  ----
   Secondary education  ----
   College education  ----
   University degree  ----

5. Occupation  ----------------------------------
6. Do you own any land?

Yes
No

7. If 'Yes', how many acres?

1----5
5----10
10----15
Over 15

8. What is your approximate monthly income? (Rupees)

Section B. The Political and Participative Aspects

9. Do you know about the 'local council' system?

Yes
No

10. Did you vote during the last local election?

Yes
No
Don't remember

11. If 'No' generally why did not you vote?

No interest
Involvement in some personal work
Illness
Not present on the Election Day
Not enlisted on electoral list
Other reason

12. Have you ever been contacted the following officials?

Councilor
MPA
MNA
Others

13. Who you think is easily accessible to villagers?

Councilors
MPA
MNA
14. Did any of the following contact you?

- Councilor
- MPA
- MNA

15. What organization does your council have formed to improve your participation?

16. Do you know the existence of the following local units?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCBs</th>
<th>VC</th>
<th>UC</th>
<th>TMA</th>
<th>DGovt</th>
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17. Do you believe villagers should participate in development activities?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

18. If 'Yes', why do you think so? Please give reasons.

19. Personally, did you participate in any village development activities?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

20. If 'No' why not? Specify reasons.

21. If 'Yes' then how? Specify.

22. Did any of the development projects benefit you personally?

- Yes
- No

23. If 'Yes', what benefits did you actually gain from the project? Specify.

24. Did any of the development projects benefit this village as a whole?

- Yes
- No

25. Some people say that some people have benefitted more than others from development projects. Do you

- Agree
- Disagree

26. Which group of people do you think have benefited the least?

- elites/rich people
- councillors/M.Ps
- villagers
- others, specify
27. In your opinion, does the local council contribute towards ensuring peoples' participation in the development process?

Yes
No

28. If 'Yes' would you please specify the participation mode? Which one increased?

Electoral participation
Project identification, and implementation
Exchange of ideas
Others (specify)

29. What factors, if any, do you see to encourage or hinder the participation of people in the development project?

Section B. THE SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS OF COUNCILS

30. What development activities do you think need to happen in your village?

1
2
3

31. What major government rural development projects (if any) are operating in your village?

32. What council's facilities and services operate in your village?

33. How you assess the overall performance of your council in village development?

Poor
Average
Good
Very good

34. If 'poor' or 'average' what do you think is the main reason(s) your council did not provide a minimal services to your village?

Insufficient financial resources
Shortage of qualified manpower
Lack of democratic practices
35. What are your comments on the non-elected council’s performance as compared to the elected councils?

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<tr>
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<th>Non-elected</th>
<th>Elected</th>
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<td>Good</td>
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<td>Better</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worse</td>
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36. How much difference do you notice in the performance of the present local government as compared to the previous ones in your village?

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<td>Very much</td>
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<td>Not very much</td>
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<tr>
<td>No difference</td>
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37. Do you see the present system as an improvement on the previous one for village development?

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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
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</table>

38. If ‘Yes’ please state if there was any specific advantage(s) in this system over the previous system.

- Officials are more accountable to villagers
- People participated more in the election of their representatives
- More funds for rural development

39. Whether do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Services and development funds of the district Government are distributed equally among Villages and councils</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government investment patterns correspond to needs of the locality</td>
<td>-----</td>
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<td>-----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is an increased flow of funds towards villages and union councils

The distribution of investment is reasonably equitable across councils after decentralized Governments

Allocation of investment were extremely skewed in favor of a few areas/councils before a Devolution plan

Local government investment was very much low before devolution

The investment of local government increased to a reasonable amount after devolution

Council's services are in accordance to the villagers needs and priorities

40. There are no more specific questions that I would like to ask, if you like to express any opinions / suggestions concerning local councils, participation and development in rural areas, please feel free to do so.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.
APPENDIX (B)

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST AND BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COUNCILLORS

The interviews were unstructured but the list of topics and questions (Section B, C) indicate the focus of the interviews and serve as a checklist to ensure that the research objectives are covered.

Interview No. ----------------------
Name of Local Government Unit -----------------------------------------------

A. COUNCILLORS' BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Age --------------------------------------------------
2. Sex ----------------------------------------------------
3. Occupation ------------------------------------------------
4. Income per month (Rupees) ----------------------------------------
5. Landholding in acres (if any) --------------------------------------
6. Highest education attainment --------------------------------------
7. Marital status -------------------------------------------------------
8. Which of the following comes closest to describing your social class?
   Lower class ----
   Middle class ----
   Upper class ----
9. Position in the council --------------------------------------------

B. PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1. Nature of Councilors Participation in Development

Who usually initiates the development projects for villages?
What are their views of how they have participated in the development process at district level?
Should people be involved in development activities?
Advantages and purposes of people involvement they perceive, and problems if any, in people involvement.
How much do they do interact with representatives other than councillors (MNA, MPA).

2. Relations between the Councillors and Villagers
What did the villagers think about the position they took on the council?
Do they contact with villagers for their priorities and needs?
How do they hear from and communicate with villagers?
Whom they usually contact?
What participative initiative have been considered or introduced by them?
Do they think lack of contacts with villagers undermines rural development?

C. Council and Development
What major rural development programmes are operating in your community?
Which government (federal, provincial, local) is operating such programmes?
How they rate the performance of council in rural development so far?
Are they satisfied or not satisfied?
If not satisfied, what do they think is responsible for such state of affairs?
What they consider the essence of local government?
What sorts of things they like councils to do for rural development?
How much influence do they think a council can have on development process in a district?
What do they consider to be the major problems facing their council today?
What do they consider to be the major source of such problems?
Are they putting the village problems across to the higher authorities? If yes, how?
What changes they feel are needed and how it can be brought about?
Additional comments on the functioning of the councils and suggestions for other questions that should be asked.
RESEARCH PAPERS


8. Shadiullah Khan “Governmental Responsiveness to Peoples’ Needs: The Case of District Councils in Pakistan” submitted for possible publication in the Royal Journal of Public Administration and Development, UK


10. Shadiullah Khan “Local Governments and Local Elites Dominations”. submitted for possible publication in the Asian Review of Public Administration, Philippines