Role of Community Activities on Rural Development in Afghanistan

By

Farid Ahmad Farzam Rahimi

April 2013

Table of Contents

Abstract

Afghanistan's economy is basically agriculture and livestock. Most of populations (approximately 80%) are directly or indirectly involved in crop cultivation and animal husbandry, which are the main sources of earning income for them. Unfortunately, many opportunities were lost in the country such as; utilization of local resources, and linking the rural areas to urban areas. These opportunities are lost due to lack of basic infrastructure facilities, unexpected natural events (torrents), and lack of linkage and noncooperation or integration between government and different ethnic groups.

1. Introduction

1.1 General Information about Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a landlocked and mountainous county which is located in the Southern part of Asia. The area of country is approximately 650,000 km2. The country is called hearth of Asia, as well as the center of commercial and economic activities because of its strategic location in the region. It is the connecting point of many countries.

Afghanistan is comprised of 34 provinces and Kabul is the capital of the county which is located to the northeast. The country is controlled by central government that proceeds through presidential system. As a whole, the government structure is divided in varies level such as; Central, Provincial, Municipality/district, and village level.

The village is the lowest level in the government structure, but there is little government agency and influence at this level. In each village, three sources of authority are existed within the community. These are called: Arbab (A person who owns a large area of land within the community and also controls the resources in the community), Mirab (master of the water distribution), and Mullah (teacher of Islamic laws). Basically, if the community faces any problems within their area they can contact and link with government agencies through these sources.

The three endless decades of civil war, revolution and instability have deeply affected the people of Afghanistan in terms of social development and economic growth. For example, social and economic infrastructures have been decimated, many schools were destroyed and the education system as a whole in Afghanistan was devastated. Thus, most of population is illiterate. In addition, the majority of Afghan rural citizens live in

mountainous terrain and meandering valleys which cause limit access to educational opportunities that are more abundant the major cities.

After a long time instability, the Government of Afghanistan has begun to address these problems and has begun conducted many programs designed to address a variety of needs. Thus, the new government has been motivated to find financial resources in order to invest in important sectors. One of these programs is the National Solidarity Program (NSP) of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) which has been responsible for the building of thousands of kilometers of roads in various communities for all 34 provinces of the country since it was first established in mid 2003.

The establishment of NSP/MRRD, supported by the Government of Afghanistan and the International Community coincided with the formation of the Community Development Councils (CDCs) – A Community Development Council is a group of people among community which were elected by the community to serve as a decision making body under the NSP program of MRRD – that have a clear mandate to handle the villagers' difficulties and needs in several social and economic dimensions. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the impacts of local community activities on rural development.

1.2 Current Economic and Social Situation

After a long time of war, in 2002 the situation of Afghanistan has been changed and it was a starting point which has awakened Afghan society at that time many international societies and international organizations began to invest in Afghan society. Many developed countries allocated funds and assisted the government of Afghanistan and local communities to reconstruct and renovate the country. As a result, enormous amounts of financial resources have been flowing into the country to fund the projects in different fields therefore; the new government has focused on managing and planning some initiatives in the rural areas of Afghanistan. During the first few years the international community tried to build capacity at local level in public sector and civil society but these efforts made little impact. The lack of success was partly due to the fact foreign-driven initiatives didn't have the necessary experience and knowledge to effectively communicate with local communities of the country and know their needs.

The government of Afghanistan has drawn up various rural development programs for the amelioration of poverty. Still, many people are suffering from the continuation of poor situation, while the poor themselves find it more and more difficult to escape their plight.

Consequently, the implementation of poverty-alleviation programs was delayed and their benefits were slow in trickling down to the poor. Government poverty-alleviation programs are characteristically "delivered development," which is planned from the bottom, with people as objects of development.

For the most part, government development programs are focused on education, health, water supply, irrigation, infrastructure, agriculture, livelihood, power, public building, and rural development. In instances when government decides to engage directly in community development programs, it came in with funding and technical expertise and focus on livelihood projects and income-generating activities. Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) of Government of Afghanistan could draw some important rural development programs. One of the most important and largest programs is National Solidarity Program (NSP), which is launched to empower local communities and make them responsible to their own development. The government approach has been "participatory development" in which has been planned from the bottom, with the people, particularly the poor, as the subjects and partners in their own development. This "bottom-up" process involves social mobilization and a great deal of development of power in a truly democratic context.

In order to enable the Government to support rural communities in an unity situation to pay attention and be engaged with responsible agencies, MRRD has through National Solidarity Program formed Community Development Councils (CDCs) as local institution to be involved in most rural development activities and has formulated to follow their respective plan in terms of reconstruction and development efforts. MRRD has established quality rural road network that connect villages to district roads for access to service centers and markets, and provided employment opportunities. Based on the country situation, the urgent needs were considered to empower the people at the local areas, and to provide necessary infrastructures. Basic amenities like water, sanitation, health and education were mostly obvious needs in the rural areas.

In the community the CDCs learn to analyze their priorities problems and to assess their needs. At the same time, they are also the institutions most capable of determining the solutions and implementing the most appropriate responses. Government organizations and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) assist CDCs so that their potentials as actors in the development process could be greatly enhanced. Only with the meaningful

participation of CDCs can development be truly genuine. Since 2003, community mobilization, organization and development have been the strategies used to address poverty on a large scale. Community mobilizing as a participative development strategy in Afghanistan has been embodied in the goals and functions of the local community involvement in development.

2. Theoretical Framework

In the past eight years, much more attention has been paid to local areas and local community participatory approaches to involve rural communities in order to utilize the local resources, as well as to improve the living standard of local people. The reason for using this approach is that rural communities know the problems they face in their community and they have the sense to look for required solutions regarding their experience and collective activities. Based on their interest, they sit together to hear about the living problems and gradually they share their experiences and ideas to find the appropriate solutions and gaps.

> "Community development begins in the everyday lives of local people. This is the initial context for sustainable change. It is founded on a process of empowerment and participation. Empowerment involves a form of critical education that encourages people to question their reality: this is the basis of collective action and is built on principles of participatory democracy. In a process of action and reflection, community development grows through a diversity of local projects that address issues faced people in community (Margaret, 2005, p.1)."

2.1 Rural Development

Poverty alleviation and hunger elimination are the most fundamental challenges which many less developed countries face. A large number of people are compelled to live on less than one dollar a day. Many people are going hungry, because they cannot afford to buy the food they and their families need. James D. Wolfensohn president of World Bank Group (1997, p vii) states that: "Poverty reduction and ending hunger require focused attention on the rural economy". Therefore, paying attention to rural development programs is the way in which countries try to reduce poverty and prepare a better life for local communities.

The harmony between the qualitative and quantitative achievements of such development in a given context determines its sustainability. Lack of such harmony in the dynamics of developmental efforts is largely due to improper understanding of people's need and values system, based on economic and socio-cultural properties of the communities (Chita, 2000, p.9). Development is a process of change involves various economic, cultural, social, political and physical dimensions of the society.

Rural development is not a task solely for rural development professionals, but requires attention by specialists in private sector development, infrastructure, health, family planning, nutrition, education, and social development (World Bank Group, 1997, p.13). In general, rural development denotes the actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in remote villages. Rural development as a strategy to enable the rural people for gain of more economic values, improvement of production system and social justice aims at planning with the people for their development (Chita, 2000, p.10).

2.2 Community Empowerment

The concept of empowerment is mostly used for people capacity. The term is defined as the process of enhancing an individual's or group's capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (Alsop, et al, 2006, p.1). Community empowerment is defined as working collectively, which is about people and government, working together to make life better. Empowerment means real control by communities over resources, project/program design and selection, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (Hans & Swaminathan, 2003, p.10). The key actors within the community are needed to be involved in decisions about their life, it ensures that the people taking responsibility to deal with problems that they face. Importantly, community empowerment means that it is difficult for government to solve all the problems by itself. Therefore, local people must be active with the motivation, skills, and confidence to speak up for their communities and say what improvements are needed. The poor and the relatively powerless may become „empowerment" to participate more effectively in particular development projects and programs (Mayo & Craig, 1995, p.6).

Some community organizations have been formed spontaneously, in the sense of having been created by the people themselves, but the greater number of organizations have been stimulated and assisted by external interventions (Rahman, 1995, p.3). According to Janelle (2000, p.35) "Men and women will often have different views and perspectives on infrastructure problems and requirements and it is important that these different views are known and are incorporated in to project planning. Evidence shows that while there is a tendency for men to make the decisions about physical improvements in low-income areas, it is actually the women who are primarily involved in these activities." Local community involvement in decision-making regarding their development issues at the rural area is generally considered a core value in community development.

Participation of communities in designing and implementing projects is important for a number of reasons: it empowers communities and enhances their sense of ownership of development outcomes, communities are convinced that their views are important and that they have a right to decide how resources are utilized for their benefit, and communities become highly aware that they have certain "collective" responsibilities to ensure overall well-being.

In order to empower communities to be responsible for their own priority development, they need to be formed as representative institutions and be involved in project or programme activities. The activities of this grassroots institution are mostly mobilizing internal resources of the people supplemented by resource and knowledge support from outside to undertake income-generating activities (including the development of infrastructure to support these activities (Rahman, 1995). Capacity building needs to be an ongoing and flexible process that can be adjusted to suit the requirements of the villagers and the direction of the project (Janelle & John G, 2004, p.48). The term empowerment is an instrument that can be used in the process of a program for reaching the goals. As Alsop, et al (2006, p.59) state that: "Empowerment can be an objective of an intervention or program (an end in itself), or it can be an instrument in the process of reaching a project or program objective (a means to an end)."

2.3 Conceptual Framework

A framework has been formulated by author according to the description of mentioned approaches and concepts. This framework is related to rural development and mostly presents the importance of local community action in their development. The primary means for dealing with the local people to search and assess their problems in terms of social, economic and agriculture situation, at the first step community need to be mobilized. This process is success with the help and participation of local governmental organizations, community elders, service agencies, local residents, and women group as well. NSP Afghanistan as a national priorities rural development programme efforts to work with community. Initially it has paid attention on the community mobilization concept to be used for enabling the community to solve their own problems and initiate their own projects. In terms of situation analysis an assessment of resources and identification of community needs must to be relevant to the problems that communities face in their residential areas.

Communities need to be encouraged to participate in discussions regarding their local issues. Their discussion is important for consideration and identifying appropriate solutions against problems in its various complex aspects and perspectives. Certain leaders or coalitions of actors is most important to active and move the community mobilization process ahead. This role can be played by specific structure in the best way of function for community development and problem resolution.

Conceptual Framework 1
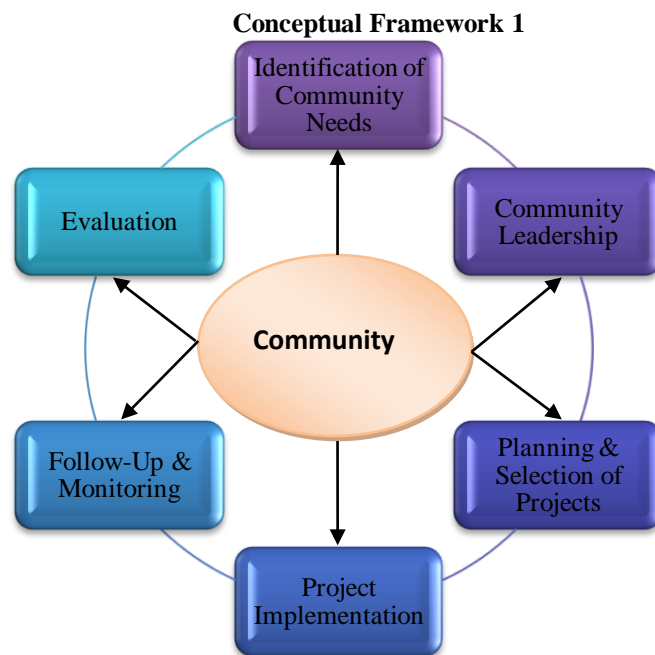
3. Research Methodology

Summary of Research Method and Strategy of Inquiry

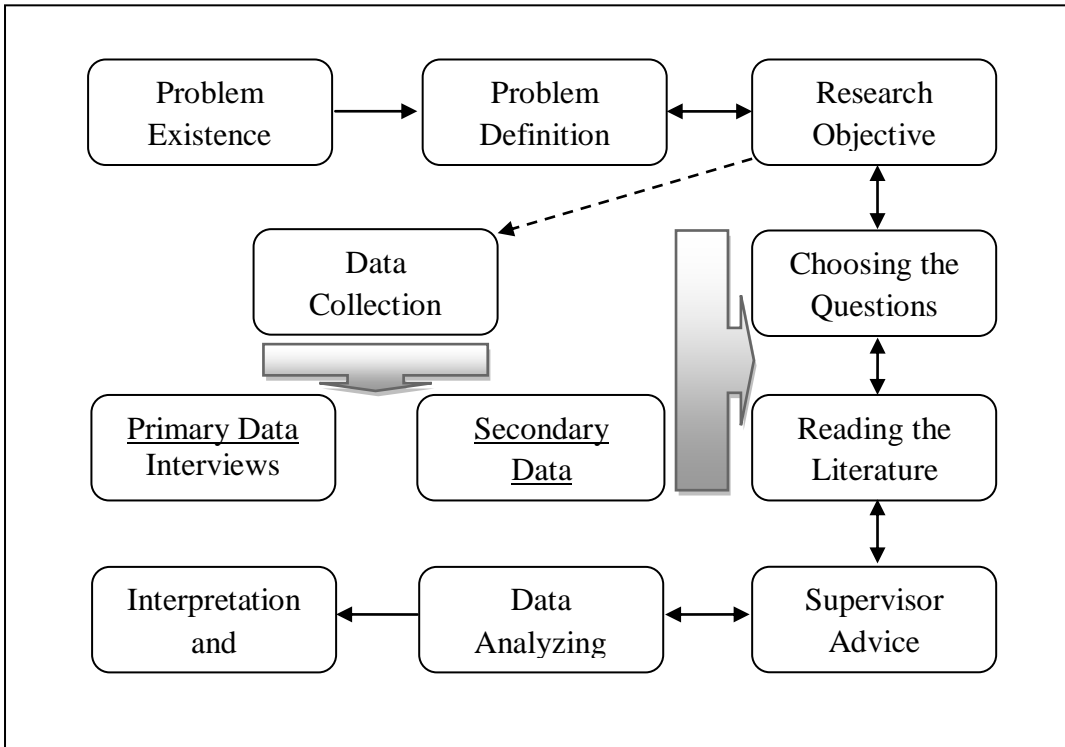| Tend to or typically research	Qualitative Approaches
Philosophical assumptions	Social constructivists
Strategy of inquiry	Case Study
Method of data collection	Open-ended questions & Documents
Practices of research as the researcher	Make interpretation of the data Focuses on concepts Accuracy of findings

Source: Prepared by author based on (Creswell, 2009).

Research Process

This study has been followed procedurally in order to consider the situation and issues in theory, as well as reality of occurred actions. Figure 3.1 presents this process, which started with problem existence and finished to data interpretation and conclusion. For the beginning, my attention has been paid on field of study and relevant topic for research.

Research proceeds by gathering the different types of data through conducting variety of methods. The collected data is consist of both primary and secondary data, which primary data in gathered by conducting interviews with key informants at policy level, as well as local community level, and secondary data is based on documents and government's reports which were related to context of research. Process of data collection was successes in the basis of kind and invaluable advice of my supervisor professor Miyoshi and reviewing of the prepared literature as well.

In generally, with the focusing on appropriate data, literature review, and advice of supervisor, data analyzing and interpretation have been done.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                                 │
│   ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐   │
│   │   Problem    │ ──▶  │   Problem    │ ◀──▶ │   Research   │   │
│   │  Existence   │      │  Definition  │      │  Objective   │   │
│   └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘   │
│                                                                 │
│                    ┌──────────────┐           ┌──────────────┐   │
│                    │     Data     │           │ Choosing the │   │
│                    │  Collection  │           │  Questions   │   │
│                    └──────────────┘           └──────────────┘   │
│                                                                 │
│   ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐   │
│   │ Primary Data │      │  Secondary   │      │ Reading the  │   │
│   │  Interviews  │      │     Data     │      │  Literature  │   │
│   └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘   │
│                                                                 │
│   ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐   │
│   │Interpretation│ ◀──  │     Data     │ ◀──▶ │  Supervisor  │   │
│   │     and      │      │   Analyzing  │      │    Advice    │   │
│   └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘   │
│                                                                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Source: Author

4. NATIONAL SOLIDARITY PROGRAMME

During the past 6 years, government of Afghanistan and international community has paid attention regarding social and economic problems in majority part of the country. Many social and economic development programmes have been drawn to be followed with specific impact on community well-being, particularly in rural areas. One of these programmes is NSP, which is working for the people, with the people, and by the people in almost all around the country. NSP has been launched to organize community at village level in all around the country, it has worked with members of the community to identify their concerns, problems and issues, hopes and dreams, and then brought those together in the form of Community Development Councils (CDCs) as local institutional to act collectively. NSP is in line with Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and its sectoral strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) (2008).

In a democratic situation, the people were able to participate and to help shape the decisions that affect their lives. Open talking with people was very important and success point for NSP, because in the more general sense of citizenship the people have rights living as human beings and they have responsibilities as well and that is informing people of both those rights and responsibilities and allowing them to decide. The most important function of NSP is as a community organizer to: a) being a trainer; b) a motivator; c) fund allocation source; d) think about local community issues and talk with them; and d) look at the local institutions (CDC) activities. This paper presents the appropriate issues regarding the NSP and CDCs activities at the village level. World Bank/International Association Development (WB/IDA) is the largest donor of NSP. The WB/IDA has given more than US$ 300 million concessional loan to NSP during the past 6 years. The World Bank is the main

source of financing for NSP. Other sources include: the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), the Japanese Social Development Fund, and several bilateral contributors. Since September 2003, it has reached over 14.9 million Afghans (around 78 percent of Afghanistan's estimated 19 million rural inhabitants) (Country Update, 2007).

NSP I and II are laying foundations for local governance and livelihood development, by establishing one CDC per community as a catalyst for community development. The government is recognizing CDCs as the primary service delivery instrument for rural development. CDCs could facilitate the implementation of other rural development projects such as the Horticulture and Livestock Project and the National Rural Access Project (ARTF, 2008). Despite significant contribution to the development of Afghanistan by reaching out to rural communities in dire need of basic infrastructure, NSP I experienced great difficulties in disbursing block grants to CDCs, due to unpredictability in financing. Since the start of NSP II in April 2007, funding has been more secure with US$120 million of IDA grants and $171.5 million from ARTF (ARTF, 2008).

Despite political instability and security problems, still some districts are not covered by this national programme. Many people are living in these areas that are suffering from the predominant situation. NSP is consisting of four core elements which are following:

➢ Community Mobilization is the first element of NSP to facilitate, encourage and pursue the community in election of CDCs. In addition, helping the CDCs to identify their priority sub-projects and enable them to prepare the Community Development Plans, as well as to be involved and responsible for implementation of sub-project(s).

➢ Building capacity of CDC and other community members including both men and women to participate in decision-making, getting

technical skills, engage in operation activities, follow-up the procurement procedure, and be capable to monitor and evaluate the progress of activities.

➢ Allocation Block Grant to community based on the number of families who are living in a certain are within a village and transfers the fund to concern account of community to be utilized for implementation of sub-projects by CDC.

➢ Finally, NSP efforts to link elected CDCs to government agencies, donors, local NGOs, and procurement firms to forward their activities and improve access more services and required resources.

Table 4.1 NSP Core Elements

Elements	Functions	Taking Place
Community Mobilization	• Organizing community and formation of representative institution • Contracting with FPs to be involved in facilitation. • Forming and election of CDCs with the support of FPs as community decision-making body. • CDCs and community consultation regarding the CDP to be illustrated the priority needs.	• Nearly three quarter communities have been mobilized around the country. • NSP has contracted with 29 FPs to be facilitators. • More than 22,000 CDCs have been elected by community and more than 21,000 CDPs have been completed.
Capacity Building	• Conducting the required and useful training program to	• Most of CDCs members (both men

|		
	CDCs. • Build skills and experience. • Gender inclusion and participation.	and women) have gotten skills and experiences in terms of management and accounting.
Block Grant Fund Allocation	• Community has to be considered in terms of family. • Receiving fund from central government and appropriate program (NSP). • Community contribution.	• At least a community is consisting of 25 households. • Each community at most receive US$ 66,000 for implementing sub-projects. • At least community contributes 10% of total project cost.
Institutional Linkage	• Linking CDCs to local government, provincial offices, and central agencies. • Linking CDCs to donors and NGOs. • Access community to more required services and resources.	• CDCs can easily access to government agencies. • Covered community access to provided services and are expected to utilize more resources by themselves.

Source: Author

4.1 NSP Project Cycle

According to the NSP core elements, activities are done one by one such as election of CDCs, than preparation of CDPs by CDCs, and so on. The following figure illustrates this procedure.

Figure 4.1 NSP Project Cycle
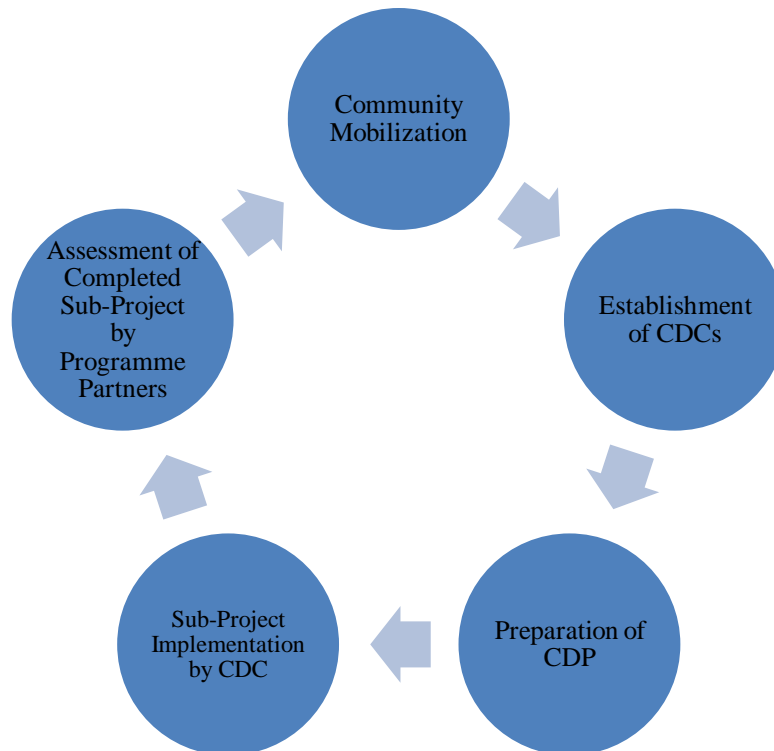
4.1.1 Community Mobilization

The key primary means for dealing with the local people in terms of community development, community mobilization was the first step for NSP to search and assess local community problems in both economic and social development. At the first step community was considered to be mobilized, as well as be involved in all stages of projects. This process was success with the help and participation of local governmental organizations, community elders, facilitating partners, and local residents. In the most important part of community mobilization, safety and security were challenges beyond the process to society at large. Despite many challenges and difficulties, NSP as a responsible body toward community development could follow community mobilization process.

4.1.2 Establishment of CDCs

According to NSP project cycle, the second step was the CDCs forming and establishment. Therefore, through conducting a democratic procedure CDCs have been elected by using the secret ballot by community themselves. In this process, all local residents (both men and women) were encouraged to participate in election. Local community inclusively democratically participated as candidate for CDCs member and voter as well. After the election of all members, this process has followed for election of chairperson, vice chairperson, treasurer, and secretariat among themselves.

4.1.3 Preparation of CDP

This is the most important step of NSP project cycle phase. In this step elected CDC members discuss with some other member of community to reach consensus on a list of priority sub-projects. Therefore, they are responsible to lead a community participatory process to develop a Community Development Plan (CDP)[1] and decide what local issues or problems should be prioritized and addressed. A project proposal, such as the construction of a bridge, school, community centre, road or village well, is then developed in consultation with the local FP. Through this process and with the technical assistance of FP CDP is prepared and based on that, standard sub-project proposal which is including of technical design of the project and project cost to be submitted to the provincial representative of the NSP. Then CDP is reviewed by the NSP and, if approved, grant funding to a maximum of USD 60,000 is allocated directly to the CDC.

Project proposal appraisal by technical staff of NSP at the provincial office with help of some related government agencies such as; education, irrigation etc. the purpose of appraisal is to determine the eligibility criteria, using transparency procedure. The communities are expected to contribute a minimum of 10% in funds or equivalent labor or material for the project. When the appraisal of project proposal is completed by NSP then tripartite agreement between the NSP, CDC, and FP is signed regarding the task of each party in terms of financing, activities, and disbursement schedule.

4.1.4 Sub-Project Implementation by CDCs

This stage presents the most activities of CDCs during the project life cycle. The

---

[1] Form 6 is prepared by NSP operational office to be used as CDP. For more detail information about this form see appendix 1.

CDCs are accountable to disburse the NSP allocated fund transparently for their own priority sub-project which is approved by NSP. Management, procurement, and monitoring during the implementation process are the main activities of CDCs in this step. Often CDCs have sub-committees for purchasing the materials, services, and other equipments. In addition, they are responsible for maintenance of sub-project after the completion.

Table 4.2 Main NSP Achievements by DCD Project Sector as of March 20, 2010

No.	Sectors	Sub-Projects Financed Since Start of Programme	
01	Agriculture	18	
02	Education	5,927	
03	Emergency Response	9	
04	Health	103	
05	Irrigation	8,602	
06	Livelihood	2,454	
07	Power	6,474	
08	Public Building	26	
09	Rural Development	1,512	
10	Transport	12,190	
11	Water Supply & Sanitation	11,578	
Total		**48,893**	
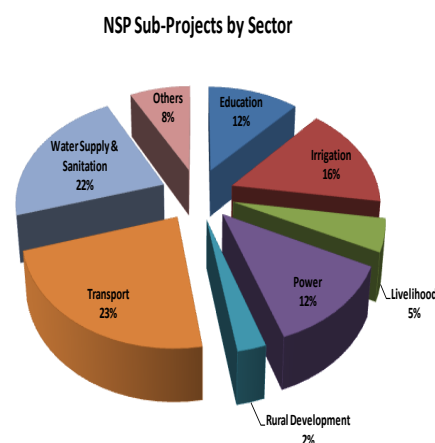
Source: (NSP Monthly Program Report, 2010).

Out of all implemented sub-projects in rural areas of the country by CDC, 75 percent is infrastructure projects such as irrigation, electricity, drinking water, and roads. The implemented community projects are accordance to the rural people priorities, which are focus on social and economic infrastructure. As of March 20, 2010 NSP funded 48,893 community sub-projects, which 22 percent are drinking water projects; 16 percent projects are rehabilitation of irrigation systems; 25 percent is roads and bridges for improvement of transport facilities; 12 percent is provision of electricity including solar energy and generators; 5 percent is livelihoods and income generation projects; 12 percent is building schools projects; and more 8 percent is other sub-projects.

Table 4.2 shows the NSP financed sub-projects as output of the program during the past 6 years in all provinces of Afghanistan.

Table 4.3 Sub-projects Financed by NSP as August 2009 in all Around the Country

Sector	Number of Sub-projects Financed		
	Ongoing	Completed	Total
Water Supply and Sanitation	3,086	7,528	10,614
Transport	3,334	7,706	11,040
Irrigation	2,673	4,918	7,591
Power	1,752	4,319	6,071
Livelihood	266	2,105	2,371
Education	1,510	4,164	5,674
Miscellaneous	775	636	1,411
Total	**13,396**	**31,376**	**44,772**

Source: the data analyzed by author based on (NSP Catalog, 2009)

Author pointed out that the preparation and analyzing of the above table is not based on quantitative method but it presents the NSP output during the past years as a whole. For detail information regarding the key sub-projects financed by NSP in all provinces of Afghanistan see appendix 3. I attempted to outline this national programme clearly to be explained the realities.

Figure 4.2 Sub-projects Financed by NSP as of August 2009
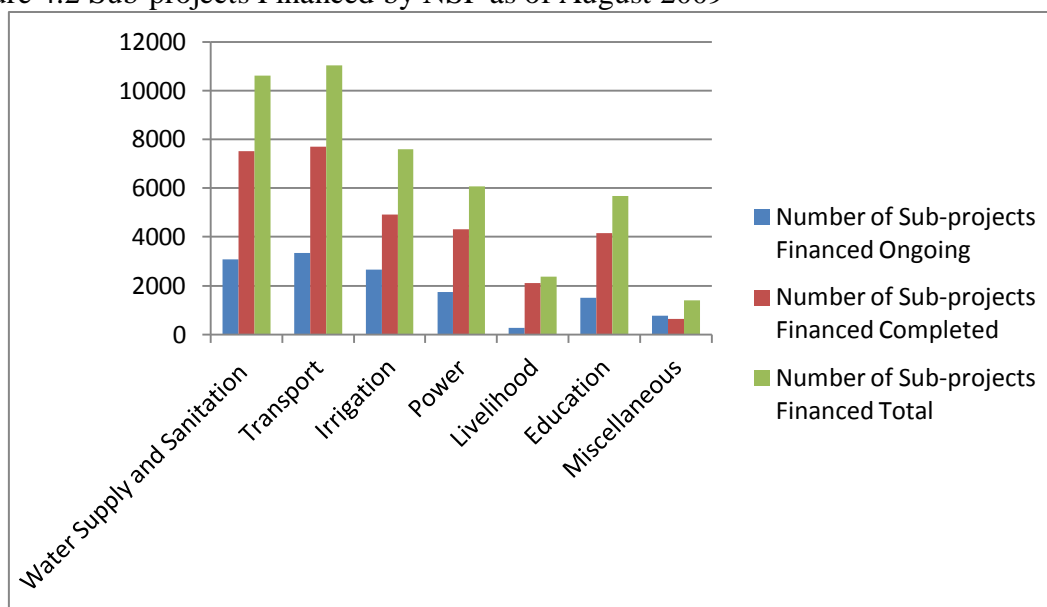
Source: Analyzed by Author

All the sub-projects which are implemented and completed through the cooperation and management of CDCs are checked by NSP. After checking out NSP issues a

Completion Certificate of provided sub-projects to the community that seems appropriate received funds from NSP have been disbursed. In addition, the CDC and its FP are required to prepare a completion report. If the allocated fund is remaining after the completion of the project, NSP might approve that the remaining budget has to be used for maintenance of the project or may be used for next projects. The sub-projects implementations during NSP I project period have generated direct employment for the beneficiary families, equivalent to 10.6 million labor days (ARTF, 2008).

Table 4.4 NSP II Targets

| Outcome 1: Inclusive local governance:	Outcome 2: Improved access to social and productive infrastructure and services:	Outcome 3: Human capital and livelihood improvement
• At least 21,600 CDCs established • At least 4,200 women subcommittees established within CDCs • At least 21,600 CDPs developed and completed	• At least 16,000 subprojects financed and completed • At least 50 percent of subprojects completed with O&M in place • At least 21 million people benefit from infrastructure projects	• At least 3,800 livelihood/human capital development subprojects implemented • At least 96,000 people benefit from livelihood/human capital development projects

Source: ARTF (2008).

4.3 Stakeholder Participation

Real participation means involving citizens at every stage and level. This includes the micro or community level, the meso or intermediate level (local governments, NGOs) and the macro or national/policy level (Hans & Swaminathan, 2003, p.10). Real stakeholder participation in the case of NSP is required in appraisal and planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Participatory appraisal and planning (PA&P) by all stakeholders help strengthen decision making at the community level. PA&P requires skilled external facilitators and

has been successfully used in urban and rural programs. It is the starting point for acquisition of citizen information, options, resources, constraints, latent capabilities, and the likely consequences of each subproject for each stakeholder. The next step is participatory implementation, operational, and maintenance. Communities and local governments need to be involved in the design, execution, maintenance, and operational of projects (Hans & Swaminathan, 2003).

Figure 4.3 CDC Stakeholder Map at Central and Provincial Level
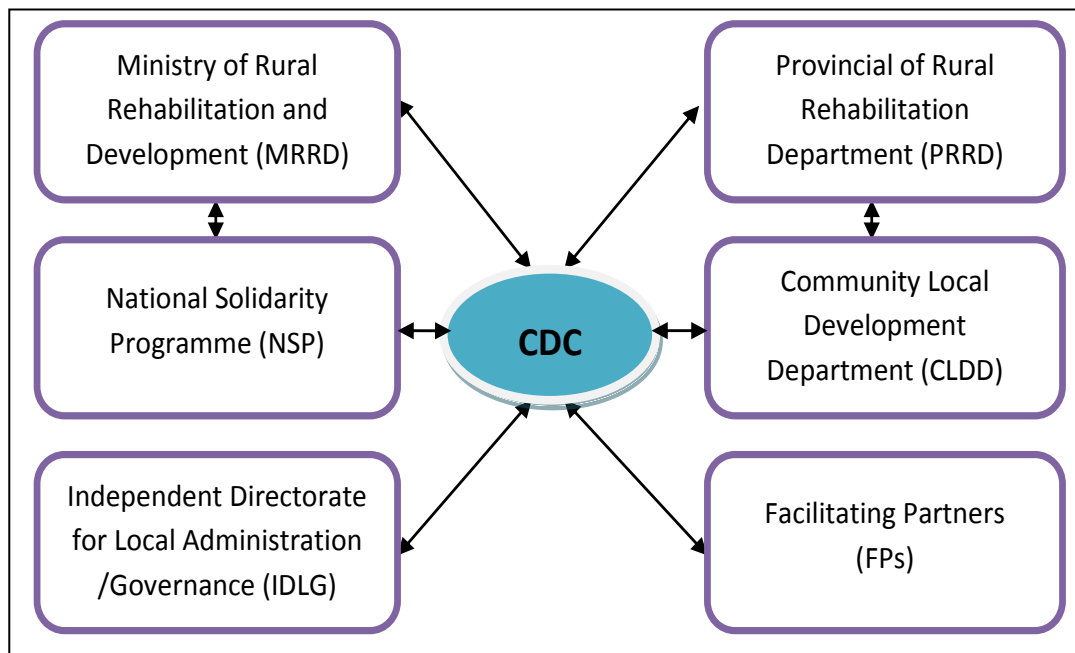
Source: Author

Figure 4.4 CDC Stakeholder Map at District and Village Level
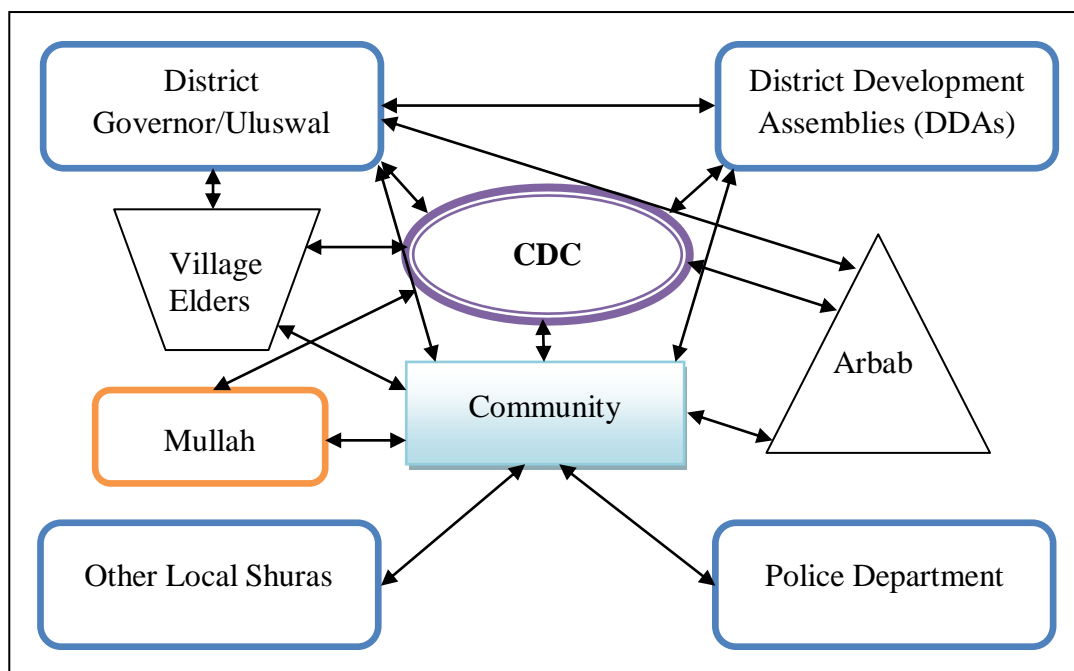

Source: Author

4.4 Type of CDC

As a whole four types of CDC has considered in different villages. One of the ways in which CDCs vary prominently in their institutional features is according to how they managing female participation in decision-making. This categorization is meant to demonstrate the variation possible along a primary dimension of inclusion, that of women, not to suggest that other variations are not possible, for example in terms of age or ethnicity. The author describes these four types of CDCs in details which are following:

- ➢ *Standard Mixed CDC*: initially NSP has expected that each community has to elect one CDC that to be formed the participation of both men and women as decision-makers.
- ➢ *Segregated Elected Male and Female Shuras*: generally speaking in some villages a single elected CDC have two separate bodies, which men and women meet separately in order to discuss regarding their local issues. In addition, in some villages the women's council is elected by women, in some villages it is selected with the social organizers in order to allow women's participation where women were not elected.
- ➢ *Male-Only CDC:* Sometimes a mixed election produces a single, all-male council.

In other cases, very restrictive local norms may combine with FP practice to allow only the formation of a male CDC by selection.

➤ *Segregated Elected Male and Appointed Female Shuras:* according the situation and culture issues, in some villages the election procedure is only allowed by males. Moreover, female are formed as shura and are involved in some appropriate activities that directly are related to women.

Figure 4.5 Type of CDCs
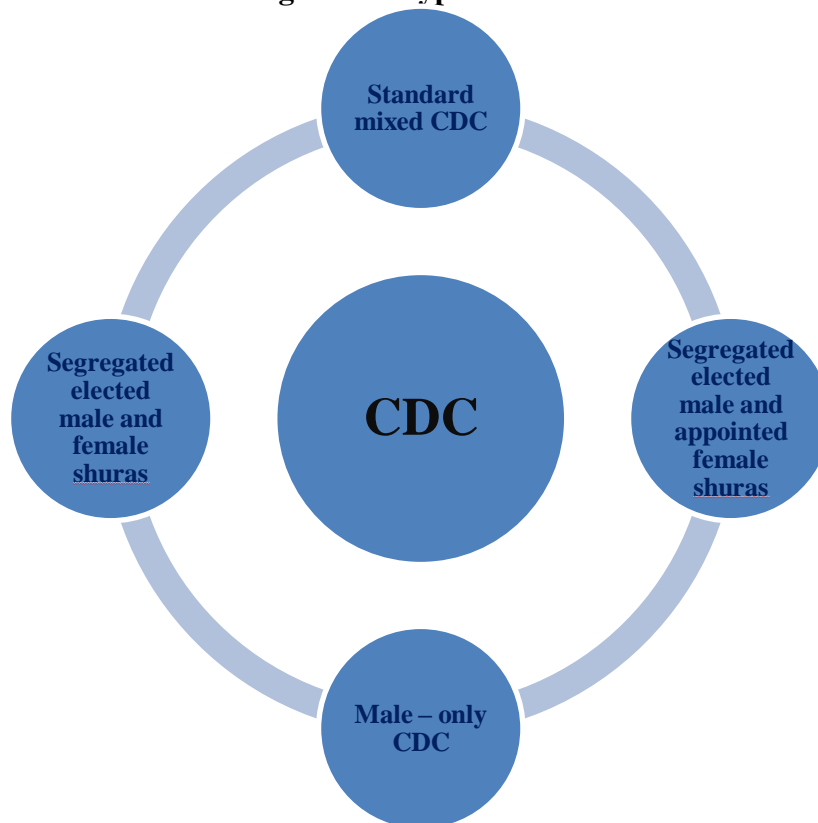
4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Department plays a significant role in monitoring of NSP interventions and assessing the performance, progress and achievements towards its objectives (M&E, 2010). The primary purpose of the M&E Department is to collect and report the required data. In addition, the M&E Department is responsible for coordinating the overall M&E tasks, liaising with NSP stakeholders in the collection and reporting of required data (Monitoring and Evaluation, 2008).

The M&E Department intends to ensure accountability, enhance learning among stakeholders and reflect the strengths and weaknesses for further improvement of the programme. In addition, the M&E Department will ensure that the information is

effectively transferred from the field to the NSP Headquarter to be analyzed and the key findings will be shared with the relevant NSP stakeholders to correct deficiencies and actions to be taken accordingly. The M&E data are continuously updated and consolidated quarterly for provision to the World Bank task team, and are made available to coincide with the supervision missions of the programme. One important issue regarding the monitoring and reporting on financial and physical progress of sub-projects by the CDC is that the information should give out the participation of women in project activities. The information has to be wide to ensure transparency on project implementation progress and expenditures.

Facilitating Partners at the province and district level, as well as the regional and provincial M&E staff support this department. FPs prepares quarterly progress report on the basis of covered district or province. In some provinces more than one FP is involved in facilitation, therefore, they aggregate their reports to be submitted at NSP provincial level. Furthermore, a quarterly progress report is prepared at the national level to be shared with key stakeholders and donors. The national quarterly progress report is aggregate on the basis of provincial quarterly progress report. Within the NSP M&E new framework, M&E Department monitors the NSP interventions through different components such as; Implementation Monitoring, Post Implementation Monitoring and Community Participatory Monitoring. These components are explained below:

4.5.1 Implementation Monitoring (IM)

The Implementation Monitoring (IM) is focusing on monitoring of the NSP intervention during the implementation of sub-project. The main objective of IM component is to assess the performance, process and quality of deliverables at different levels during the NSP life cycle (phase 1 to 5). Implementation Monitoring is carried out by IM Officers at provincial level. In most cases the IM team consists of one male and one female IM Officer in each province.

The IM Officers use the IM form A and B to monitor the sub-projects while conducting either mixed or separate (depending on the custom of the community) male and female focus group interviews of CDCs and community members. The teams use the stratified random sampling, taking into account the geographical location of the communities, Facilitating Partners (FPs) and the types of sub-projects implemented within the communities. In addition, the focus group interviews are followed by observations

taken place by both the IM male and female team members from Infrastructure and Human Capital Development (HCD) sub-projects to verify and cross check the data collected through different interviews.

4.5.2 Post Implementation Monitoring (PIM):

Post Implementation Monitoring (PIM) is focusing on monitoring of the NSP interventions beyond the utilization of the NSP Block Grant (BG) funds. The objective of PIM is to assess the sustainability of completed sub-projects and governance capacity of Community Development Councils (CDCs) beyond utilization of BG funds. The PIM teams who are currently based in the NSP HQ conduct their field visits according to their monthly plan and monitor the fully utilized communities and completed sub-projects six months prior to completion. The PIM teams use the PIM forms for conducting the focus groups with male and female community and CDC members.

4.5.3 Community Participatory Monitoring (CPM):

CPM provides an opportunity for the NSP to focus better on its ultimate goal. By broadening involvement of community members in identifying and analyzing change, a clearer picture can be gained of what is really happening on the ground. It allows people to celebrate successes, and learn from the failures. The NSP M&E Department already started the rolling out of CPM system based on the positive results and achievements of CPM pilot phase implemented and completed in 2008. The CPM roll-out covers about 2,000 communities in 106 districts of 23 provinces of the country. The CPM TOT (Training of Trainers) training has been completed for all involved FPs' staff members who are in the position to train all CPM teams on monitoring basics and clear their role and responsibilities in monitoring of their own sub-projects. In each community, four people who are not members of CDCs (two female and two male) have been elected by community members through an open voting process. The CPM team monitors the sub-projects using the simple checklists developed by the NSP M&E Department.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter first briefly presents main points regarding the subject of study both in theory, as well as the reality of happened contexts. At the end of this chapter, some issues recommended in order to sustainability and continuing of the programme.

5.1 Conclusion

The NSP is an ongoing and largest rural development programme in Afghanistan. This flagship programme has assisted many communities all around the country. As it is the central governments first such Community-Based Development (CBD) and Community-Driven Development (CDD) programme, it has major implications for the future. This programme has been introduced by World Bank/IDA according to the experience and lessons learned from Indonesia, which also was one of CDD project. CDD approach is mostly focusing on community at the rural areas to make them responsible for their own development. Community mobilization and empowerment are the key successes issues beyond this approach. Achieving these goals is gained by paying attention on community participation for discussion about their real life. The formation of CDCs have brought many changes in rural areas, for instance, many resources have introduced to be utilized by conducting successful sub-projects.

In terms of community mobilization, the efforts of NSP toward this context were followed systematically. It means that the process of community mobilization started with focusing on situation analysis of the country. In situation analysis most important issue is problem identification, need identification, and identification of best solution and action. This process is following by NSP from the time of starting the programme and ongoing activities as well. In addition, NSP has paid attention on community engagement in project activities to build empower communities and make them capable to control their own priorities projects. It was the success point of function for NSP in terms of community participation in development rural areas, because government can't achieve development goals by itself, as well as nor can communities. Despite the challenges and political conditions in Afghanistan, the NSP has so far reached almost three fourth of communities throughout the country. These attempts have been followed procedurally in terms of CDC election by community around majority part of country. Some of challenges are participation of women to be part of the community leadership. However, it takes must

more time to build-up the voices of the poor people and participation of women to become part of the leadership.

5.2 Recommendations

According to the Afghanistan's situation and fulfill natural resources, which the majority of population are involved in agriculture activities. Therefore, focusing on a vibrant and growing agriculture sector with the cooperation of existing CDCs as local institutions is essential. Growing of this sector will ensure that the benefits of economic development spread throughout the country and reach the bulk of the Afghan population. An effective and success opportunity for rural development as one of the development stage is to attract private sector investments to transform agriculture into a high-value commercial sector as a source of growth and expansive means of livelihood. Initially this opportunity can be gained by the government to implement a coordinated agricultural and more rural development programmes to be more focused at poverty reduction and the provision of alternative livelihoods. It has to be mentioned that this approach is possible with the assistance of local government, donors, NGOs, local institutions or existing CDCs, and the beneficiaries themselves. Whit the integration of these agencies the National Government will have a high enhance of success in meeting the challenges of poverty alleviation over the coming years. Some specific issues are recommended below:

5.2.1 Community Mobilization

Rural community's need more attention has to be paid by government key ministries regarding community mobilization and encourage local people to be in touch with government, and donors. In the case of rural areas of such country, which a long time has suffered from civil war and instability; it is impossible to empower rural communities in short term. Therefore, a long term rural development programmes are essential to impact on utilization of local resources, as well as to be sustainable for leading themselves. Community mobilization as a process of developing community, as well as agency capacities that focus on understanding and dealing with the problem through use of a variety of mechanisms and activities is needed to be followed more. Consideration of the distinctive factors of a particular problem in a specific community context is required for the effective mobilization of local interest and resources.

5.2.2 Capacity Building

Building capacity at village level is very important to build skills in terms of

management, accounting, project planning and design, and monitoring and evaluation. CDC as the main body of decision-making at village level needs long term support to be strengthen. Training programs will assist the CDC for future to identity more resources in order to solve their problems and develop their village. In addition, they will be able to link with the key ministries to discus about more issues regarding their challenges/difficulties and find the appropriate solutions such as; agriculture, water/irrigation, health, education, power, etc.

A local capacity to address important issues and improve local well-being depends upon the strength of the community field. Thus, community development involves purposive efforts to create and strengthen the community field. The most distinctive feature of these efforts is their focus on developing relationships and lives of communication across interest groups. This involves the conscious attempt to create linkages among actions and actors in different social fields.

5.2.3 Increase Support to Communities

Communities need more resources to be channeled directly to them in different ways. For instance, sufficient flows of funds to CDCs ensure more responsibility of community for their development and secure the future of the Programme. Through CDCs, channeling more funds is essential for specific sectors and projects at rural areas. In addition, where CDCs do not exist in some areas, responsible agencies for rural development can use other means of providing support to communities, for example through local government or shuras and local NGOs. CDCs as new local institutions require long-term follow-up programme to be sustainable in the future. CDCs due to their tasks and activities during the past 6 years got many experiences regarding the development issues. Therefore, more support in the future ensures their empowerment and sustainability. As a whole, it is the efforts of NSP to have implications for of the future CDCs, as well as for rural development.

5.2.4 Community Contribution

Since start of NSP many sub-projects have been implemented in many rural areas. Most of communities financially and physically contributed during the sub-projects implementation. Furthermore, these sub-projects after completion as public resources for communities have to be maintained as long as it can be utilized. This purpose can be achieved through in-kind contributions from beneficiaries/ communities and local actors

toward maintenance costs of services, which can help reduce the burden on scarce public resources and improve sustainability of service.

References

ARTF Annual Report. (2008). *Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund Annual Report to Donors*. Kabul: The World Bank.

Aslop, Ruth, Bertelsen, Mette Frost & Holland, Jeremy. (2006). Empowerment in Practice: From Analysis to Implementation. The World Bank/The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development: Washington, D.C.

Chita, Ranjan Dash. (2000). "Rural Development and Dairying in Orissa," in Rural Development, Tripathy S.N. (eds.). (pp 9-33). Delhi: Discovery Publishing House.

Janelle, Plummer, & John G., Taylor. (2004). *The Characteristics of Community*

Creswell, John W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed methods Approaches*. Third Edition. Los Angeles: SAGE Publication.

Country Update. (2007). *The World Bank in Afghanistan. Kabul*: The World Bank.

Hans P. Binswanger & Swaminathan S. Aryar. (2003). *Scaling Up Community-Driven Development: Theoretical Underpinnings and Program Design Implications.* Washington, D.C: The World Bank.

Margaret, Ledwith. (2005). *Community Development: A Critical Approach.* University of Bristol: The Policy Press.

Mayo, Marjorie, & Craig, Gary. (1995). *Community Participation and Empowerment: The Human Face to Structural Adjustment or Tools for Democratic Transformation*? In Mayo, Marjorie, & Craig, Gary (Ed.), Community Empowerment: A Reader in Participation and Development (pp. 1-11). London: Zed Book Ltd.

Monitoring &Evaluation. (2010). *NSP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and System*. NSP: Public Communication Department.

NSP Monthly Newsletter. (2010). *The Voice of Village*. Fourth Edition. NSP: Public Communication Department.

Rahman, Muhammad Anisur. (1995). Participatory Development: Toward liberation or Co-optation? In Mayo, Marjorie, & Craig, Gary (Ed.), Community Empowerment: A Reader in Participation and Development (pp. 24-32). London: Zed Book Ltd.

World Bank Group. (1997). Rural Development from Vision to Action. Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Studies and Monographs Series 12. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development: Washington, D.C.