

# CONCEPT, PRINCIPLES, THEORIES, AND CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

RAJBIR SAHA

MAZEDAN EDU. REVIEWS AND TEACHING METHODS

e-ISSN:

Article id-MERTM0101005

Vol.-1, Issue-1

Received: 10 Feb 2021

Revised: 23 Mar 2021

Accepted: 30 Mar 2021

**Citation:** Saha, R. (2021). Concept, Principles, Theories, and Challenges of Community Development in the Indian Context. *Mazedan Educational Reviews and Teaching Methods*, 1(1), 28-32.

## Abstract

Community development is a clear concept in the development discourse. Literature and scholarship of community development regarded as core theory and practice is considered a major policy agenda by national governments as well as international agencies. Community development is actually a broad concept. Community development essentially implies empowering individuals and groups through skill building to make profound changes in the society. This paper attempts to look at some of the important literature regarding community development. The paper discusses the concept, basic principles of community development, various theories of community development, major challenges of community development and finally it discusses some of the impacts of community development in India.

**Keywords:** Community development, Indian economy, society.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Many pupils see the origins of contemporary society's development as an area of reconstruction efforts to reform less advanced countries after global war II (War 1998). Others cite the American "struggle on Poverty" of the Sixties, which had a widespread impact at the improvement of current society, emphasizing the answer of neighbourhood housing and social issues (Green & Hines 2002). The technological, economic, and cultural adjustments that took place at some point of the commercial Revolution brought on groups to crumble, and in the mid-20th century North the US and the global South. today, network development has become more comprehensive and consists of social well-being in terms of social, economic, cultural, environmental and political components. The international association for network development, a global and democratic corporation affiliated with the United Nations with a network of over 70 nations, defines the modern-day concept of network improvement as a mastering-oriented career and that participatory democracy is an educational discipline that promotes sustainable development. Rights, financial opportunity, equality and social justice, via business enterprise, training and empowerment of people of their groups no matter locality, identity or hobby in urban and rural conditions (Strategic Plan-2020-24, IACD, 2020). absolutely put, it entails planned efforts to increase the ability of its residents and improve their first-rate of lifestyles by way of constructing assets. it's miles a planned attempt to create wealth that will increase citizens' capability to improve their satisfactory of lifestyles (inexperienced and Hines 2008). Social development has developed into a recognized discipline from sociology, economics, political science, planning, geography, and many other disciplines (Phillips & Pittman, 2009). It generally consists of three main

elements: (a) the well-being or welfare of the members of the community, which include both material prosperity and the non-economic aspects of life such as health and education; (B) development of resources to increase production and efficiency; And (c) organizational development, which involves the management and creation of social and economic structures through which community members can use their energies to improve community life (Baker, 1989).

## Objectives

To study the concept, principles, theories and challenges of community development in India.

## Research methodology

The research design is descriptive in nature and purely based on secondary sources of data. The data taken for analysis have been collected from different journals, books and articles.

## 2. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### Community Development – Concept

Community development literature contains diverse views and assumptions about community development and community development (Schafer and Summers, 1989). This difference is often described as process versus results (Robinson & Green, 2011). Community development is a combination of the two terms community and development. Both have a wide and varied meaning in relation to the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental aspects under study. To understand the concept of community development it

is necessary to first understand what is community and then what is development. The word community is derived from the Latin word 'communitas' which means common. Generally, community is defined through geographical location. (Matesch and Monsey, 2004) described network in phrases of individuals who live in a geographically described area and feature social and psychological relationships with every different and wherein they stay. a set of humans sharing common dwelling area and belongings can also be taken into consideration as a network. (Worsley, 1987) known as network locality, which is represented as a community of interrelationships and inferred from network sentiment or network sentiment. communities also can be defined through common religion, commonplace language, notion or shared hobby and so on. most folks belong to multiple networks, for instance, a person may be part of a religious community, a business network, a learning community. a labour community and so on. whereas improvement entails huge ranging changes in diverse socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental signs. improvement can and could imply very different things in special contexts. Evolution is a technique that drives choice, preference, diversification and greater alternate. It refers to the upward motion of the complete social device via supplying better dwelling conditions together with good enough food, higher housing, fitness, higher centers for training and schooling, and popular improvement of cultural centers (Gunnar Myrdal 1960). It includes exchange, reform and energy – a directed effort to enhance participation, resilience, equality, attitudes, capabilities of establishments and excellent of life (Schafer, 1989). it is crucial to gain fine exchange and renew the alternate. It includes structural changes and refinements of social, monetary and political institutions and agencies (Boothroyd and Davis, 1993). first of all, the United Nations (1945) described community improvement as a method where network contributors come together to take collective motion and generate solutions to not unusual troubles. however, while the scope and breadth of interest turned into realized, it broadened the definition after which in 1948 the United international locations created a basic definition for network improvement. It states, “community improvement is a method designed to create conditions for monetary and social progress for the entire network with its lively participation and fullest feasible dependence on the community initiatives.” Furthermore, as time passed, the scope and context of community development grew and became multidimensional. By the end of the twentieth century, community development has been recognized as a field, acting as a catalyst for the issues and problems of mankind and society. This indicates that communities became empowered, began to identify their own needs and problems, and that their collective actions mutually made it possible to take control of their own lives (Kenny, 1999). Community development is each a process and a final result with the aid of which communities grow to be more responsible, arrange and plan collectively, expand more healthy lifestyles, empower themselves, reduce poverty and inequality, growth employment and others. Create economic opportunities, acquire political desires and guard the environment. it is a holistic approach based at the ideas of empowerment, human rights, inclusion, social justice, self-willpower and collective motion (Kenny,

2007). The Planning Commission in India defined community development program in these words: “Community development is an effort to bring about social and economic transformation of rural life through the efforts of the people themselves.”

Effective community development must be a long-term endeavour for a well-planned, inclusive, equitable, holistic and integrated approach to support each community member to experience the desirable benefits available through shared responsibility and collaborative approaches. This type of community development recognizes and builds community capacity to balance competing interests and improve relationships within the community. Ultimately, community development is considered the economics of rural reconstruction.

### Principles

The core principles of community development practice have evolved from a top-down approach to a grassroots participatory approach (Sillito, 2002). (Ife, 2009) has given some major theories of community development. they are -

1. Bottom-up development
2. Values, intelligence, knowledge and skills from below
3. Self-reliance, independence and interdependence
4. Ecology and Sustainability
5. Diversity and Inclusion
6. Biological change
7. Partnership
8. Consensus/cooperation and conflict/competition
9. Community needs
10. Community Empowerment
11. Affirmation of human rights
12. Community ownership

### Major theories

York regards community development theory as the joining together of community agencies, a deeper political action for social change, and the building of local competencies. According to Paiva, community development theories are essentially concerned with structural changes in society, social and economic integration at the local level, development of local institutions and rural reconstruction (Paiva, 1977). Some theories are -

- a. Theory of Social capital - According to this theory, as stated by Putnam, community development is created through the creation of social capital within the society. Social capital refers to the trust, networks, and resources that are intrinsic to society and community. The theory argues that beliefs and networks build social capital within a community. This social capital promotes better civic engagement, public action, local community participation, self-

sustaining economic development and overall prosperity and harmony in the community. Thus, social capital theory believes in the important role of building internal trust and affinity among members to achieve the goals of community development (Putnam, 1993).

- b. Theory of Structural functionalism – The structural functional theory of community development argues that every society has some structure with specific functions. These structures include educational institutions, healthcare, professional organizations, informal groups, etc. Therefore, there is a need for capacity building of these structures for community development so that they can enhance the quality of works. Structural functional theory is useful in community development as it helps identify weak institutions as well as strong institutions in society and urges practitioners to train, nurture and develop structures that are dysfunctional. But structural-functional theories are criticized on the grounds that these theories undermine the role of power in society at large. Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton is the main exponent of this theory (Parsons and Shils, 1951).
- c. Theory of power & conflict – According to the theories of conflict, power and its manifestation play an important role in society. There are conflicts between different social classes and groups. The power gap and the consequent exclusion of certain sections of the society is a difficult reality in community life. It is therefore important to understand the interests of different groups in society, how power is distributed and used in society and how less powerful people are silenced in the process of development. Wallerstein, Marx, Foucault etc. are related to these ideas (Bhattacharya, 2004).
- d. Theory of symbolic interactionism – As explained by Bloomer, the emphasis is on the symbolic nature of human interactions, not the mechanical patterns of interactions. People give importance to place, event, symbols and language. Therefore, in community development, the pertinent question is how do people develop shared meanings and ideas about development and social change. In this theory, the shared meanings and gestures of community members are critically important in building community unity. Siddhant believes in their shared vision of the community's shared future. Therefore, in symbolic interactionism, a community development practitioner should focus on bringing people together under a common idea around which community cohesion will be built (Bloomer, 1969).
- e. Theory of communicative action – This principle upholds the primacy of people's participation, consultation, discussion and strong democratic networks in the community that can usher in change. It is communication activities and

discussions that integrate people within a society and make them work around common ideas. As Habermas has rightly pointed out, the most important in this framework is the participation of citizens in the problems affecting their lives. This communication action theory is influenced when mixed up with techno-scientific information logged with traditional and hand work information (Habermas, 1987).

- f. Theory of rational choices – As the name indicates, rational choice theory states that humans make rational decisions and choices based on utility, happiness, and profits. In his theory, Marshall stated that the rational person would analyze the various options available to him and select the most useful alternative. The theory argues that the collective behaviour of people can be expected under two circumstances. One is such stimulus could be rising community share, recognition, nonpayment of tax, etc. Second, there is a risk of sanctions if he does not participate. Therefore, when applied in the context of community development, rational choice theorists urge practitioners to focus on providing fair rewards for community members and minimizing the risk of non-participation (Marshall, 1895).
- g. Theory of Structuration of Giddens's - In structure theory, as Giddens put it, human behavior is based on structures (rules) and agency (human actions). Each community has its own ideas, rules and practices that should be taken into account in community development practice. They believe that cultural traditions and patterns become modalities in each society and need to be analyzed in social and community work. Structure theory emphasizes the role of human agency in development (Giddens, 1984).

### Challenges faced

- a. According to Lee, one of the major limitations is the undue reliance on public funds for community development which affects the outcome. Furthermore, many experiences on community development show that these are short-term projects aimed at achieving targeted results. It affects continuity and kills community spirit (Lee, 2003).
- b. Studies of the failure of community development programs show that in many developing countries the program failed due to deep social conflicts and lack of understanding about resource constraints. The complex social problems within the rural community were far beyond the competence of the rural community development workers. The issues of land ownership, the distribution of rural wealth, the caste system, exploitation by the elite and the associated complexities could not be addressed if none of the local community does not participate actively (Dayal, 1966).

- c. Research evidence also shows that community development programs often focus on providing social services in rural areas without an emphasis on increasing rural income and asset base (Dee, 1992). This is one of the main reasons for unsuccessful programs.
- d. Another study conducted in the context of India also found that the main reason for the failure of community development is the lack of an integrated approach. Although these approaches were partially successful and focused on the delivery of services, the initiative was not developed 'organically' in many areas. Rather, attempts were made to impose the initiative on people without waiting for actual participation in decision-making (Cavey, 2001). He identified some of the main dilemmas including the notion between participation and elitism, provision and empowerment, professionalism and voluntarism, maintenance improvement, focused action and community integration, etc. (Cavey, 2001).

### **Community Development in India – Some Implications**

Numerous research evidences highlight the diverse implications of community development programs in India. One of the seminal works on community development program was written by Bhattacharya. In his book, the author clearly states the origin, development and implementation of the program and the basic conceptual basis behind it (Bhattacharya, 1990). He argues that although residents were perceived as agents of social change, community development programs failed to achieve the desired effect mainly due to loss of vision from policy makers after initial enthusiasm. Many programs were added without looking at the real needs of the community. Therefore, community development programs were shifted to rural development projects. Furthermore, organizers were unable to separate community development from economic development. When the distinctiveness of ideology lost its relevance, the program also failed (Bhattacharya, 1990).

In his paper on Community Development Projects in India, Desai attempted to analyze the program within the framework of sociology. He explained the vital importance of community development in an agrarian society like India and highlighted the broad meaning provided by the central government in defining community to include all the people living in a locality irrespective of caste and religion. He argues that the ideological foundation of the community development program emerges from the social reconstruction projects of Sevagram and Sarvodaya centers in Bombay state, the Firka experiments in Madras and pilot projects conducted in Gorakhpur. The paper states that, unlike other movements to bring about social change in India, the community development program was realistic and intended to rebuild rural India through the active participation of rural society (Desai, 1958).

Role of social participation and social accountability in implementing community development programs with special focus on women empowerment, capacity building,

development of agro-industries with the intervention of local NGOs in a recent study in the context of North East India highlighted. The author believes that participation and accountability are two essential characteristics that need to be developed in the society through deliberate effort by external agencies or community-based institutions (Kasar, 2019).

In this critical analysis on community development programs in India, Neil argued that the program failed for several reasons, including rapid expansion within a short period, incompetent development officers, inadequate capacity building training, lack of funding, lack of innovation and adaptation, and indifference is involved. From the community (Blue, 1983). In another interesting study on community development program in India, Nair analyzed the political impact of community development program and argued that it increased the political participation of rural farmers and changed their political behaviour (Nair, 1960). Critics argue that the community development program in India failed mainly because of the lack of participation by the local community as it was a top-down initiative controlled by bureaucrats. Village level activists neglected rural power and worked with local elites which hindered the emergence of collective action and people's participation in community development (Cavey, 2001). One of the main limitations of the existing evidence on community development in India is the lack of recent research on the subject. Since community development programs have lost their attractiveness long back, there is hardly any research which substantiates the current relevance of community development in the context of globalization and liberalization. A recent attempt at the concept of community development appears in the book by Manohar Pawar. In his book on Social and Community Development Practice, he provides a comprehensive analysis of the concept in the Indian context, current status, methods, limitations and future of community development policy and practice in the country (Pawar, 2011).

In their study on community development and the role of self-help groups, Desai and Joshi argue that one of the effective strategies to ensure collective action in community development is the formation of membership-based groups. The study showed that membership of self-help groups increased the participation of women in household decision making. But there is no evidence to show a tangible effect of the program on increase in income or socioeconomic status in society (Desai and Joshi, 2014).

### **3. CONCLUSION**

Thus, the concept of community development has evolved over time and has become more widespread than ever before. It hopes to engage with local groups in order to achieve participatory democratic, developing sustainability, rights, social justice, equal status & more (CDF, 2017). It reflects the aspirations, actions and consciousness of the people. It now deals with the general social, political and economic aspects of society as well as integrates them with the latest technology, skills and digital development in every field. Today community development can be combined with grassroots innovators

to solve local problems and build a more developed community collectively. Therefore, according to (Goel, 2014), community development is important because it promotes active citizenship in which people work together to improve living conditions for general well-being.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Baker HR. "Extension Linkages with Community Development", in Donald J. Blackburn (ed.). *Foundations and Changing Practices in Extension*, University of Guelph, 1989.
- [2] Boothroyd Peter, Davis H. Craig *Community Economic Development: Three Approaches*, Journal of Planning Education and Research, Sage, 1993.
- [3] Brende, Borje, Erna Solberg. Why Education is the key to development, Article published in collaboration with Project Syndicate, World Economic Forum, 2015.
- [4] Christenson JA, Robinson JN. *Community Development in Perspective*, Ames, IA: Iowa University Press, 1989.
- [5] Cohen D, Prusak L. *In Good Company: How Social Capital Makes Organizations Work*, Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2001.
- [6] Green GP, Haines A. *Asset Building and Community Development*, 2nd edn, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007.
- [7] Green PG, Haines A. *Asset Building and Community Development*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002.
- [8] Ife Jim *Human Rights from Below: Achieving rights through community development*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2009.
- [9] Jacobs J. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York: Random House, 1961.
- [10] Kenny S. *Developing Communities for the Future. Community Development in Australia*, (2nd edition) Thomas Nelson, Melbourne, 1999.
- [11] Kenny Susan. *Evaluation and Community Development: Mantras, challenges and dilemmas*, Paper presented at the 2002 Australasian Evaluation Society International Conference.
- [12] Kubisch A et al. *Voices from the Field: Learning from Comprehensive Community Initiatives*, New York: The Aspen Institute, 1995.
- [13] Mattessich P, Monsey M. *Community Building: What Makes It Work*, St. Paul, MN: Wilder Foundation, 2004.
- [14] Mester J Loretta. *Community Development and Human Capital*, 2015 Policy Summit on Housing, Human Capital, and Inequality, Sponsored by the Federal Reserve Banks of Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Richmond, Pittsburgh, PA, 2015.
- [15] P Dasgupta, I. Serageldin. (eds) *Social Capital: A Multifaceted Perspective*, Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- [16] Phillips, Rhonda, Robert H. Pittman *An Introduction to Community Development*, Ed., Routledge, London, 2009.
- [17] Rainey DV, Robinson KL, Allen I, Christy RD. "Essential Forms of Capital for Sustainable Community Development," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 2003;85(3):708-715.
- [18] Shaffer RE. *Community Economics: Economic Structure and Change in Smaller Communities*, Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1989.
- [19] Sillitoe, Paul. *Participat observation to participatory development: making anthropology work*, Ed. By Paul Sillitoe, Alan Bicker and Johan Pottier, Routledge, London, 2002.
- [20] Sobel J. "Can We Trust Social Capital?" *Journal of Economic Literature*, XL (March), 2002, 139-154.
- [21] Tadaró MP. *Economics for a Developing World*, Longman, London, 1977.
- [22] Turkkahraman, Mimar. *The Role of Education in the Societal Development*, *Journal of Educational and Instructional Studies in the World*, Vol.2, Issue no. 4, Article-04, Turkey, November, 2012.
- [23] Uphoff N. "Understanding Social Capital: Learning from the Analysis and Experience of Participation," 2000.
- [24] Wise G. *Definitions: Community Development and Community-Based Education*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Extension Service, 1998.
- [25] Worsley P. *New introductory sociology*. London: Penguin, 1987.