The Relationship between Local Sub-culture and Participatory Development: An Assessment
(Case study: Villages around the Kahman region, Selseleh)

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Progress and development—and Making them Possible—are the results of a special view to the world, which is indicative of the need for an appropriate culture of progress. Culture has a special significance in development and overlooking it may cause Failing all plans. Therefore, the relationship between culture and development should specifically be mentioned in developmental plans. The present study aimed at understanding and investigating the relationship between local subculture and participatory development (via a case study in villages of Kahman, Selseleh, Lorestan Province, Iran) using qualitative research techniques (such as in-depth interviews and concentrated group discussions, and observations).

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Methodology

Qualitative methods are based on concepts such as relationship, interpretation, understanding, and human being’s daily life and the researcher enters into the world of the respondents and delves more deeply and accurately into the phenomena by understanding the systems of meanings and their interpretations of the respondents’ reactions. In this study, two types of sampling have been used: systematic sampling and theoretical sampling. Initially, the data were collected using systematic sampling because this method of helps the researcher to ask him/herself what kind of data are needed and the select the appropriate samples accordingly. The data collected in any of the forms (by interviews, observations of behavior, actions and happenings) using systematic sampling, provided the basis for theoretical sampling in the next step. In theoretical sampling, which was done on the basis of the primary results of the study (obtained using systematic sampling), in order to achieve theoretical saturation, the researcher decided what type of data were needed, about what topics, where and under what circumstances, etc. Therefore, the data were collected gradually and step by step in the process of sampling from the target population and interpretation of the interviews. In this way, 446 house holders were selected until theoretical saturation was achieved. Out of them, 40 have been interviewed; and in turn, 8 discussion groups of 4/5 households have been formed. During the discussions, the issues raised by the participants instigated a dynamic participation in the discussions. In order to form the discussion groups, an attempt was made to interview a group of strangers.

Results

As a result, the interview process was not static although it involved a mutual action. Surveys were also conducted in the process of the research with the sample population including 446 householders intended to address local issues from the
local people’s perspective trying to find the individuals’ capacities and potentials. According to the qualitative methods for data collection and analysis of the Study, the conceptual applied framework has been combinational are; meaning that the views that guided us further towards finding the answer were utilized in this study. Accordingly, discussions related to two separate paradigms were analyzed: local subculture and participatory development. Subculture proposed by Rodgers belongs to the development (modernization) paradigm and participatory development as a novel subject is in the postdevelopmental paradigm. The study has addressed two discourses: development and rethought. Therefore, by studying the local subculture (in terms of family orientation, local orientation, social trust, and motivation for development) with participatory development (sense of accountability and efficiency), a developmental model has been developed over which the rethought discourse predominated and in which there is a cyclic process too. In this model, family-orientation and local-orientation have been considered as the bases for the model and the social trust as the master key for participatory development. Besides, the elements of participatory development (accountability and effectiveness) which have been the result of the elements of the local subculture; and they acted as the effective factors in trust-building among the people generating motivation for development. According to the findings, it should be concluded that the appropriate developmental models are found in rural societies within their local [native] and traditional culture and beliefs. As can be seen, in this research an idea has been produced from within a subculture which was regarded as an obstacle to development for many years. But these subcultures are not so and development can be achieved based on these very subcultures, which lead to a sense of accountability and effectiveness in people. Finally, it should be added that the phrase ‘participatory development paradigm’ mentioned in this study, is associated with two views. One is that people’s participation acts as a purpose. Second, real development is always
realized by participation and public activities. Generally, based on this view, participation not only leads to development but it is an equivalent for that. There is no doubt that, if participation in development has been considered as a logical necessity in the past, today it is among the behavioral and human necessities.

Conclusion
Participation is one of the confirmed human and behavioral values and carries a sense of responsibility and a conscious and free effort. The word ‘participation’ is closely related to acceptance of justice and people’s equality principle. Therefore, real development can only be achieved when it is put at the service of realizing this value and achieving this human and behavioral goal. From this perspective, participation is no longer considered as a developmental factor but a purpose that development tries to achieve it.

Keywords: Participatory development, Local subculture, Family orientation, Local orientation, Social trust, Selseleh.

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