Inclusive and sustainable community development and poverty reduction: An empirical study of Sindh, Pakistan

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Abstract. The underdeveloped communities and multi-dimensional poverty are the most common dilemmas of developing countries. The study aimed to determine the inclusive and sustainable community development and poverty reduction, empirical evidence of the selected districts of the Sindh, Pakistan. The research has surveyed in five districts of Sindh and collected data from 230 respondents. The research is based on quantitative investigation through primary data collection from five selected districts of Sindh province of Pakistan, followed by descriptive and inferential analysis on SPSS. A total of three research questions representing different aspects of integrated and sustainable community development and poverty reduction are answered from the results. The study has explored that inclusive and sustainable community development and multi-dimensional poverty has significant positive relationship. The research also points to the significance of the livelihood creation on community development and poverty reduction. A set of recommendations is outlined from the results for effective and efficient policymaking in poverty reduction and community development.

1. Introduction
“O Allah! I seek refuge in You from disbelief (in You), poverty and torment in the grave.” The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was used to pray about protection from disbelief on Allah and poverty. As per the prophet, there is a correlation in poverty and disbelief on Allah. He understood that when there is poverty in the society, chances of lack of education, rise in crimes, and increase in ignorance is high. In another Hadith, Prophet Muhammad said that “The poverty will thus eventually lead to disbelief.”

Poverty appears to be increasing in almost all economies and is considered a social and economic evil. Poverty has reigned in society for a very long time and, according to the modern phenomenon, it has many dimensions. Despite the adoption of various measures, the reduction of poverty remains a challenge for almost all countries. However, this challenge can be addressed through sustainable and inclusive community development, as societies are key to addressing these issues.

“Shortage of monetary and non-monetary resources required for the existence of persons and families, which is a universal phenomenon identified in ancient period. However, this is changed in modern time and now it can be defined as disbanding of economic and social relations that ensure the steadiness of life and income [1]. Poverty can be defined as failure of the people to grasp adequate funds to gratify the necessities to survive [2]. Poverty measurement through income or expenditure is an incomplete method for understanding the poor. However, by supplementing both financial and non-financial aspects like basic requirements and public goods, poverty can truly be represented [3]. Alkire [4] has revealed that poverty is the multi-dimensional effect, which is primarily based on three basic indicators i.e.,
education, health, and living standard. She has defined ten multiple indicators of poverty for the rest of
the world, while for Pakistan, 15 indicators were given by her [3].

Community is a general entity and has no specific definition or measurement. It is based on certain
people of same or different cast, tribes and ethnical groups living in same area with some collective
objectives of wellbeing. Number of people or measurements of the area is not fixed or specified. The
community can be defined as a group of the local people who may go to share center for their
systematized facilities like schools, Prayer areas, shops or stores and medical or legal institutions. The
scope of community may include population, geography, and economic [5].

The community is shared territory and a local society, while community development is the process of
community sovereignty and authorization for betterment [6]. The notion of sustainable development has
introduced the standards of future models of economic and social progress with the primary objective
of human wellbeing and protection to natural environment. Considering current economic,
environmental, and decreasing natural resources, the objective of sustainable development is expended
to efficient use of resources along with maximizing the satisfaction of people [7].

A total of 14 indicators of multi-dimensional poverty is given by Alkire [8] for Pakistan, and if we go
through the sustainable development goals all of these indicators are included and targeted to be
achieved till 2030. So, it shows that by addressing these basic issues, both the purposes “poverty
reduction and community development” can be achieved. Poverty is one of the factors that lead to
violent conflict, and addressing inequalities can prevent the shift from complainants to violent [9].
Sustainable development can reduce systematic vulnerability, increased capacity, and promote
livelihood security for poor and disadvantaged people [10].

1.1. Problem statement
Community development is the best way to eliminate or reduce multi-dimensional poverty, while the
goal of community development can be achieved by integrating different development programs under
one roof. Creating livelihoods for community members is the first step towards development, while
sustainability can only be achieved through the participation of community members as beneficiaries.

1.2. Sindh Pakistan
With 47.89 million population, Sindh is the second largest province of Pakistan. Around 48% of the
population of Sindh is from rural areas. Although Sindh has the second largest economy of the country,
but poverty rate of the province is also high. As per Pakistan national, MPI results from 2014-15
calculated by Foster, 43.1% of population was identified as multidimensionally poor (H) and the
intensity of poverty (A) was 53.5%. Results showed that 75.5% of rural population was
multidimensionally poor (H) where the intensity of rural poverty (A) was 54.9%.

1.3. Research questions
The different questions guided and directed for the study are as under:
1. Does the multi-dimensional poverty (MDP) can be reduced through inclusive community
development?
2. Does the livelihood creation is the basic requirement of community development and MDP
reduction?
3. Does sustainable development is must for community development and MDP reduction?

1.4. Research Hypothesis
A total of three hypotheses are defined for the study:
- Ho. The inclusive development of the communities has no significant effect on multi-
dimensional poverty reduction.
- Ha. The inclusive development of the communities has significant effect on multi-dimensional
poverty reduction.
- Ho. The livelihood creation in the community has no significant impact on multi-dimensional
poverty reduction.
• Ha. The livelihood creation in the community has significant impact on multi-dimensional poverty reduction.
• Ho. Sustainable development has no impact on multi-dimensional poverty reduction.
• Ha. Sustainable development has significant impact on multi-dimensional poverty reduction.

2. Literature review

2.1. A theoretical framework for development

The concept of real development is presented in the following two theories of development given by different scholars:

2.1.1. Comprehensive community initiatives

An emerging theory presented by Torjman and Reid [11] called “Comprehensive Community Initiatives” is a community-based strategic approach to overcome the issues faced by the communities. It is primarily concerned with unemployment and poverty. The approach explores the local solutions and the role of different sectors and government in poverty reduction and community development. Different sectors may include the governments, social services, business, labor, educational institutions, and anti-poverty groups. Alliance of these sectors is helpful in determination of resources and solutions along with delivery of the messages to stakeholders. Together, these sectors can positively contribute to poverty reduction. These sectors play the role of mediators between different stakeholders for making them able to survey and implement the unrelated and interrelated interventions to reduce poverty.

2.1.2. Theory of change

In theory, presented by Guzman and Auspos [12], two different but interrelated concepts of development are discussed by establishing a relationship between economic development, improved housing, less or no crimes and development of social capital, etc. It describes the interconnected effects of both economic and community development towards each other. It is assumed in the theory that “community” and “community-based organizations” can improve the economic opportunities through inspiring the business activities in the area. With the help of business activities, access to capital and local goods and services can be improved. Entrepreneurship activities within the area can be inspired, and opportunities of employment for local people can be enhanced. The ownership of locally available resources should be given to the residence of the area, and the linkages of local community should be established with the regional economy. The purpose of reduction in poverty and unemployment can also be achieved by enhancing the local business but some of the govt. Policies can become the hurdles in achieving the objective. We can say that; the scope of the community members and community-based organizations is limited, but it can be helpful for the government in fighting poverty and inequality. However, despite of the limitation, the approach of community’s economic development has the high power to build the communities. The approach can also be helpful in the creation of jobs and encouragement of free enterprise at local level. The local businesses can also play a key role in building the infrastructures, strengthening the educational and vocational training institutes, and produces worthy leadership from the residence.

2.2. Empirical Framework

It is said by Infanti and Toye [13], that if sometime communities are avoided by the national economy, the vicious circle of economic and social issues may reinforce inside the communities, which creates the problem of disinvestment and declined human resource. Instead of contributing to the country’s development, such types of marginalized communities become the burden on economy as it leads to problem of unemployment, business failure, family stress, crime, poor health, diseases, and week housing. Community development requires establishing and strengthening the local institutes and developing social infrastructure. Communities’ capacity and resilience should also be enhanced by providing different skills and working with the members of the communities. An article concluded by Akbari et al. [14] and said, to empower the local communities, the concept of social sciences has increased the fame. For avoiding hostility, reducing poverty and social advantages among local
community, it is important to build trust. Social programs should be designed to produce improved social capital from communities as it is a way to make the network between poor people to increase their abilities. Among a lot of issues raised at global level, two major issues are poverty and environmental problems. Most of the poor are involved in agriculture, and they produce for their consumptions. Scholars argued that environmental problems and high growth rate of populations the result in poverty. Awan [15] concluded that There is close interconnection between human economic well-being and environmental sustainability. The change in socio economic sector may have immediate or long run positive or negative impacts on the globe. However, in many cases, negative consequences cannot be undone.

As per Aber et al. [16], child health and development are influenced by poverty as it is linked with mortality rates, injuries, asthma underdevelopment. As said Chilton et al. [17] said that it is a rising phenomenon that first three years of the child life are critical, for which a child should be provided with early education, required nutrition and food for proper growth otherwise, a new generation may be in danger to fall in poverty. Because of poverty, people who cannot afford to provide the required food and education to their children, give birth to another weak and unhealthy mind generation, which can be controlled by using two approaches: capability and human right approaches. Through capability approach, the dynamics between poverty and child development can be highlighted while by human rights approach government can take the required corrective measures to protect these children from injustice. The development approach can also be integrated with human rights approach for better planning, monitoring, and evaluation of child development policy to protect and improve the potential of young children in the world.

Available information about the effects of reorganization of the advanced industrial societies and social structure can be attained through development projects in the community. The earnings of the public can be improved through creation of new jobs, which may results in better amenities like housing, services, and other facilities while the best way of jobs creation is industries, in which capital migration may help in economic development. As industrial sector has been established and developed in urban areas so, it causes a double problem. Harris and Todaro [18] presented the model for rural-urban migration. The model is based on the assumption that the people migrate due to better-expected incomes while urban wage rate is better than rural while unemployment benefits are also high. So, people from rural areas migrate to urban areas for better earnings and benefits. But the people from the rural areas migrated to urban areas and became the burden on urbanite cities for their economic and social needs. The people who could not migrate have been kept in the poverty pockets due to sluggish economic activities and social weaknesses in their native areas. However, these problems can be handled simply by launching the home, cottage, or any type of industry within the rural areas by which the disparity between supply and demand of the labor can be avoided. The local public can be given the job opportunities at their home town by which their earnings can be increased, and their social and economic conditions can be improved. However, people should be given capacity building training on technical and vocational skills for providing them better jobs and utilizing their capacities properly. Unemployment is one of the major causes of underdevelopment and poverty, while the tourism industry is one of the ways of fighting the issue. It is also tested by Kafle [19], a research study on the same subject in Nepal and highlighted the tourism as one of the biggest industries of Nepal which can generate the ways of earning and helps in reducing poverty. He added that foreign exchange could be earned, and foreign direct investment can be enhanced through tourism. As a result, the transportation and communication industry can also grow. Supporting industries to tourism like hoteling business, local art industry (handicrafts), agricultural sector, and other gift shops can also be improved by tourism. It can be established that economic and community development are significantly correlated with the tourism industry, and by this the employment opportunities can also be produced. In his recommendations, he said that tourism industry in the Nepal shell is encouraged by applying marketing tactics and using five Ps for price, place, people, product, and promotion. In a case study given by Littlewood and Holt [20] of a crafts association naming “Mumwa” works in partnership with different organizations of private and government sectors, it was instituted by the local people of Zimbabwe with the support of international donors for long term survival. The association became a case study that evidences that local government and non-government institutions/organizations, general public, and free enterprise are
the different ways of developing communities in different sectors like education, water, hygiene, health, and nutrition, etc. These associations/organizations are also helpful in reducing the monetary poverty and increasing employment opportunities, and the economic development of the area can also be enhanced. As per Dewild [21], problem of multi-dimensional poverty can be countered by institutional activities. He stated that poverty could be countered by establishing new and improved earning opportunities, which also improves the living style of the general public of the area while stringent employment rules and regulations help in eliminating the danger of poverty.

Brundtland, G. [22] has defined sustainable development as development, which fulfills the requirements of present without compromising future needs, which means that implication of today’s development should be long term. It is described by Gladwin et al. [23] that the management theory separates humanity from nature and truth from morality, which is required to be re-integrated. Organizational science should also support favorable environment and sustainable development. Development, which does not affect the environment is always acceptable, while in case of negative impact of development on ecological system should not be accepted as it brings the future of coming generations on stake. It is proven that the right approach for the economic growth focuses on the benefits of people, by reducing poverty and inequality, without disturbing the environment and natural resources, which ultimately leads to the sustainable development. Integration involves all the economic drivers, social development, and environmental components. To achieve the objective of sustainable development, it is necessary to bring all the economic, social, and environmental factors into a single framework. Implementation and monitoring of this framework are the responsibility of the government and other relevant institutions/organizations. Economic factors are related to capital efficiency and improvement in growth rate, and social factors are based on different dimensions like human rights, community development, poverty reduction and gender promotion, etc. while environmental factors refer to protection of natural resources like clean air, water and forest etc. Although, at the initial stage, an increase in economic activities can also damage the environment, but environmental deprivation diminishes after a certain level. However, the whole population of the country, either rich or poor, or belongs to rural or urban areas should be benefited from the growth; otherwise, economic growth cannot affect the social factors. To sustain social development, participation of the community is must so, skill development and capacity building of the local community is also required. On the other hand, economic growth has negative impact on environment as due to increasing in industry and other technical things which uses fuel etc. polluted the air and pollution is expected to become a serious problem for the people however it can be controlled by bringing the average income of the people at a certain level. Safety and health of the people who are the key factors of social development are linked with good environment. Therefore it is necessary to make the policies to ensure the stability of environment. Hence it is proved that economic growth, social development, and environmental factors are interlinked, and the purpose of sustainable development cannot be achieved without taking the integrated measures.

2.3. Conceptual framework
The study is based on a model with five variables in total. The multi-dimensional poverty is taken as a dependent variable. Independent variables of model include inclusive development, livelihood creation, and sustainable development. On the other hand, multi-dimensional poverty is derived from three main components education, health, and living standards.
3. Methodology
The research type of study was quantitative and empirical. A survey was undertaken from five districts of the Sindh, and the survey was based on 28 Likert scale questions along with four demographic questions. A total of 230 surveys were carried out by the team of professional enumerators. The data collectors were given extensive training on the tool while the tool was also pre-tested. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) is used for data analysis or for applying the different tests. Data reliability and validity were also tested and discussed, along with a pilot test conducted for the data of 50 respondents.

In this study, the validity of the data was assessed by establishing a hypothesis test questionnaires to measure the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Validated the questionnaire beforehand and also used the validation of data by experts from different developmental organizations and university personals. The reliability of the data was measured by using Cronbach alpha (α), where the value is between zero (0) and one (1), which indicates that when the value approaches one (1), it means that tools and data are more reliable. In this research, the Cronbach alpha is calculated on database of 50 respondents shown in Table 2 which shows .846 or 84.6% reliability. Generally, .70 is considered acceptable.

Table 1. Reliability statistics.

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items | No. of items |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------|
| .846             | .838                                       | 5            |

4. Data presentation and analysis
The data collected from 230 respondents were orthogonally transformed through principal component analysis. The observations were further used for testing the four mentioned hypotheses. The linear regression was run to examine the impact of inclusive development on multi-dimensional poverty, livelihood creation on MDP, and sustainable development on MDP.

4.1. Goodness of fit model
Results are drawn from the analysis as below:
Table 2. Model summary.

| Model | R   | R square | Adjusted R square | Std. error of the estimate | R square change | F change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F change |
|-------|-----|----------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|
| 1     | .275 | .076     | .063              | .96784713                 | .076           | 6.156    | 3   | 226 | .000          |

*Predictors: (constant), sustainable development, inclusive development, livelihood creation.

The significance level of ID, LC, and SD were tested separately on MDP. In the model summary, the R-value .275 identifies the simple correlation among variables. R square defines the overall strength of the relationship and clarifies the data variability of the model around its mean. It is the variance of overall variables and explains the model fit. Generally, the model fits better below 1 while in case .076 proves that the model is fit. Std. Error of the Estimates is used for identifying the dispersal of the dependent variables and calculates the mean approximately.

4.2. ANOVA

Table 3. ANOVA.

| Model | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
|-------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| 1     | Regression     | 17.299 | 3   | 5.766   | 6.156 | .000 |
|       | Residual       | 211.701 | 226 | .937    |       |      |
|       | Total          | 229.000 | 229 |         |       |      |

*Dependent variable: Multi-dimensional poverty.

The sum of the squares of the slope is the amount of variance accumulated with the regression model which is the composition of the least square line. The sum of the remaining squares indicates the amount of variance for which the chance of the regression model is unknown. The total variance is the sum of square 229.000. The degree to which the sum of the regression squares is significant for the remaining sum of squares is the level at which more variation with the model is explained.

The regression model F-test is calculated from the mean regression and the mean residual value. For example, it is equal to 5.766 / .937 = 6.156. In null hypotheses, test R or R must be zero. The significance test reveals that the probability of reaching as F-state like the one we have gained or higher than a 3 F split and 226 degree of freedom is a very low value, .001. Therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis if R Square in the population is equivalent to zero and concluded that this hypothesis was not zero in the alternative statistical hypothesis. Sig = .000 (b) it means that our model is well adjusted.

4.3. Coefficients

Table 4. Coefficients.

| Model | Unstandardized coefficients | Standardized coefficients | Collinearity statistics |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
|       | B   | Std. Error | Beta | t    | Sig. | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1     | Constant | -7.286E-17 | .064 | .000 | 1.000 |           |    |
|       | Inclusive development | .164 | .068 | .164 | 2.402 | .017      | .875 | 1.143 |
The dependent variable MDP is construed as

\[ Y = \alpha + \beta_1 (x_1) + \beta_2 (x_2) + \beta_3 (x_3) \]

The researcher analyzed the independent variable Sustainable Development had a negative unstandardized coefficients Beta (-.175), which is negative variation in Y Beta caused by the positive standard deviation of the change in a unit of X, which was considered to be the negative beta coefficient. Standardized coefficient beta demonstrates the strength of the independent variable on the dependent variable. As a result, the higher standard parameters (β) of the independent variable have a greater impact on dependent variable such as LC .260 shows the highest impact. The significance statistics show that the all three independent variables (ID, LC, and SD) have significant impact on dependent variable (MDP) as values of all three independent variables were less than .050 (5%). The variance inflation factor values in collinearity statistics for all the variables are less than 10, which shows that there is no multicollinearity exists.

5. Summary of the finding

A total of three research questions were answered from the results drawn, and the relationship between variables was determined. The model was proven significant, and study found that:

Does the MDP can be reduced through ICD?

The significant value calculated for ID in coefficient table is .01 (1%) which is less than .05 (5%). It shows that ICD has significant impact on MDP, and the null hypothesis “the ICD has no significant impact on MDP” has been rejected. So, the objective of reducing MDP can be achieved through ID but it is a single factor and may work more efficiently when some other factors come together.

Does the LC is basic requirement of MDP reduction?

The significant value of LC presented through coefficients table is .002 which indicates that LC has significant impact on MDP. The null hypothesis “The LC in the community has no significant impact on MDP” is rejected. The LC also have a substantial impact on MDP reduction, and by creation of livelihood opportunities from the locally available resources is helpful for attaining the objective.

Does the SD is must for achieving development goals and MDP reduction?

Sustainability is the most important factor in development. The growth achieved without sustainability may become harmful. The SD is tested as an independent variable on MDP and the result shows that SD has a significant impact on MDP as sig. value of SD on MDP calculated is .035. From the results, the null hypothesis “The SD has no significant impact on MDP” has been rejected. It is stated by Duran (2015) that the idea of sustainable development takes up the criteria of the future model of economic and social progress, the fundamental objective of human well-being and the protection of the natural environment. Given the current economic situation, the environment, and declining natural resources, the goal of sustainable development is dedicated to the efficient use of resources and the maximization of people's satisfaction.

6. Recommendations and conclusion

The findings of this research indicate that MDP is a common dilemma of the underdeveloped countries. However, the issue can be overcome through inclusive community development. As communities are the roots of the economy, which contributes to development of the country and if ignored, can lead to poverty. By integration of different programs in a small community, may give more positive results, and more objectives can be achieved in a comparatively short span of time. So, it is recommended for the planning departments of GOs and NGOs that programs should be designed in integration. The purpose of inclusiveness can be achieved through integration of different departments/programs within the organization or inter organizations. So, the coordination amongst different departments and different organizations is must for which cluster meetings, etc. can be beneficial.
The research indicates that communities are the base point from where the development starts, while shortage of livelihood opportunities is the root cause of underdevelopment and poverty. Research suggests that livelihood creation should be an integral part of every development program/project. Locally available resources should be utilized effectively. Local population should be given training on different skills to use in different sectors of economy. The people should have access to opportunities at their doorstep. By providing the earning opportunities within the community can stop the migration and burden on cities can be reduced. Home-based cottage industry should be enhanced. Modernization in agriculture-based industries should be introduced to get high crops. Small scale industry can be promoted within the villages or at UC levels. Locally manufactured goods and handicrafts should be promoted within the cities of the country and also be used for exports. Women should be empowered to work from their homes. The suitable areas within the community should be identified for establishing the new industries. Food and agricultural production should be enhanced. The most important, environment-friendly industries and businesses should be launched at local level.

As mentioned by [24] that there is a conflict between development, poverty, and environment. He said that benefits of development in one area might cause social inequalities, poverty, and environmental deprivation. So, the development should be sustainable, which is possible through participatory management and environmental education. The achieved development should have long term positive impacts. It should not affect the environment. People of the area should be involved while planning and implementation of development programs. They should be given awareness on different aspects of development like education, health, control on population growth, water and sanitation hygiene, etc. Development without sustainability is wastage of time and resources. So, the development programs should be focused on long term effects and sustainability. The sustainability can be ensured by raising the sense of ownership to local community members for which they should be given complete awareness. However, the study is based on the data collected from a specific area and may have a limited scope. So, further research by adding some more variables like human capital, women empowerment, and population growth are suggested.

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