DESCRIPTIVE MODEL OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: DELIVERING URBAN SERVICES

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I. Introduction

Community participation means readiness of both the government and the community to accept certain responsibilities and activities. It also means that the value of each group's contribution is seen, appreciated, and used more tokenism or propaganda will not make participation meaningful. The honest inclusion of community representative as partners in decision-making makes for successful community participation. Basic urban services in India are inadequate to meet the needs of the population in low-income areas. This is evident from past studies undertaken at both the macro and micro level. Furthermore, the situation will continue unchanged in the future despite government agency efforts to improve the infrastructure and service delivery, as projected capabilities will not meet projected needs for services. There is a need, therefore to extend services through community participation strategies. Community involvement has been sought in the past through certain government projects. Therefore, is a model that will describe an approach to service delivery of a participatory nature? This should be considered not only as

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an option but also as a recommended approach in future plans for urban development. Therefore, this paper describe that the participatory management model and some policy implication towards community participation.

II. The Participatory Management Model

The participatory management model was conceived along the lines of establishing better collaboration and cooperation between the government and the community, especially through the awareness, organization and mobilization of government and community resources. Private agencies may also be tapped to enhance the work of the two sectors and result in better service delivery. Discussion of the model will be divided into three parts: input, throughput or conversion, and output. Emphasis will be placed on the throughput, as the processes of the community management cycle occur in this portion. The input-throughput-output model is used to situate the system and emphasize the fact that it is a living and growing system in which the outputs are fed back to the community, which then initiates a series activities beginning with the input portion.

Input

The environment at its broad (world and international) and specific (national and community) level forms the input. The environment is composed of physical, economic, demographic, cultural and political factors or conditions that generate needs, problems, and demands on an organized or unorganized basis. The environment provides the resources from which communities can input, such as infrastructure, human resources and information.

International organizations and national governmental and nongovernmental agencies that are not directly related or may not have direct transactions with the community constitute "remote resources." Groups that are interfacing directly with the community, on the other hand, are "proximate resources." Examples include change agents or facilitators of progress: government agencies, such as National Housing Authority, Ministry of Social Welfare and Development, and Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage System; nongovernmental agencies in the community such as civic organization, religious groups and industrial firms; and possibly academic institutions near the community. These groups affect some aspects of the community and are usually linked directly with groups or resources in the area.

Input resources directly or indirectly receive messages from the community for assistance, which may be in the form of resources needed for information of infrastructure and technology. The various proximate and remote agencies can

then assist the community in formulating action strategies that can be implemented to enhance the management of a community. Inputs may be external or internal as such resources may come form within or outside of the community. Specially, inputs can come in the from of infrastructure for water and sewerage, provided by proximate resources, and personnel for fee collection and control, provided by the community.

Throughput or Conversion

This portion of the model focuses on the internal processes that a system undergoes to achieve completion or attain goals, especially when innovations are introduced into a community. Dynamic interaction of ideas, knowledge, services, and people occurs through the institutionalized structure or through the facilitation of the leader of the community. The different members of the community - formal and informal leaders, community organizations, residents, and council, which is the recognized authority in the community - interact with the change agents and work toward common goals, in this instance, to provide better services within the community.

The community is an open system. It is growing, continually interacting with outside change agents and groups and constantly sending and receiving messages to and from outside resources. Community groups and outside resources, primarily government representatives (with or without nongovernmental members), form the coordinative structure. In the long run, the coordinative structure will form the screening body or entry structure that takes in problems, needs, and demands of the internal environment and taps information/technology/resources from the outside world. In both instances, the structure functions as a receptor. It will convey information and transmit messages to and from the community and act as a catalyst for change.

The coordinative structure will also implement decisions; monitor activities evaluate outcomes, and transmit information back through the feedback process, thus acting as effectors. In this role, the coordinative structure ensures the attainment of goals, screens community outputs, and acts as initiator when it feeds information back to the receiving portion and triggers a new set of actions or policy decisions.

In both instances, the coordinative structure screens the inputs and outputs of the community. It stabilizes the community and expedites the flow of programs/projects. It enhances the feedback mechanism so that whenever feedback is negative, a modification or adjustment is initiated to increase the adaptive capability of the system. On the other hand, whenever feedback is positive, there is reinforcement and strengthening of the mechanisms. Steps in the community Management Cycle of the affairs of a community is a day-to-day, week-to-week, and month-to-month process, which in the long run will form a pattern or cycle. Various phases of the

cycle can include Needs felt/planning, Need/Resources Assessment/Search for Information/Technology/Resources and Feedback, Design Action Strategies, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Modification/Integration. Therefore, the above all steps indicate the need for a strong group self-awareness and cohesiveness, and collaboration among all members of the group and with outside agencies.

Output

The main aim of the model is to provide access to services and to maintain them. As such, an immediate output could be in the form of a communal water system. The ultimate aim is to improve the well being of low-income urban community residents and extend the service coverage of government utilities and agencies.

III. Toward Community Participation in Urban Service Delivery: Some Policy Implication

Community participation is easily summarized as being a desirable approach: however, the approach is not as easily implemented. For government bureaucracies, the familiar path is straight service delivery, with community residents as clients or beneficiaries, not as partners in service management. For community residents, the pattern has been one of dependency on or militancy toward self-help approaches used in cases of protection, disaster relief, clan events, or community activities. There are several policy implications, therefore, to be considered in adopting community participation as an approach.

Role of Government Entities

Government agencies involved in coordination with city need to rethink roles as they relate to urban service delivery, strategies and technologies that requires more involvement on the part of community residents. The implication is that appropriate technology that may not be ideal or attractive may be more desirable because it can be used for a wider population group. Another implication is that community needs may be stronger for some communities that for others, with priorities not matching those of the government entities.

Decentralization of service delivery functions to levels close to the community should be carried out in coordination with city offices. Indicators of success should be established to stress community participation and service coverage. Performance standards for personnel should also be revised to include incentive to work with the community.

Role of Community Leadership

The structure should be supported and leadership kept on an elected basis. This ensures that the leadership will remain responsive to community needs and answerable to the constituents.

Reorientation and Training

Developing structure and systems is important, but they must be supported reorientation of the persons involved in the development effort. Much has been said about dependency, i.e., dependency of the people on the government for service. What is needed is reorientation of community leaders and bureaucrats toward joint/participatory planning and action. In other words, there should be some recognition that government cannot provide all services to all communities. Therefore, a method of setting targets and identifying areas for cooperative action is needed and have to be followed by mobilizing a joint effort. This is something that will take time, especially for the required trust to build up.

Joint orientation and training workshops should, therefore, be held periodically to develop skills, open lines of communication, and identify problems/opportunities. This is an area where academic or research institutions can play a major role. Even in this area, however, an attempt should be made to transfer technology so that, eventually, communities will serve as models for other communities. In this way, building support for and reorienting participatory community management should be an effective and self-sustaining effort.

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