
UNIT 3 STATE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we have discussed the role of participatory management in its historical perspective in relation to the problem of rural people and their socio-economic development. In the present unit we will deal with state policies and programmes relating to environmental conservation in terms of sustainable development.

The most striking feature of the environment from the institutional point of view is that it is a common property. Community institutions are institutions that manage common property. Yet most conventional thinking about resource management takes place at two levels – the individual household and the higher, usually at the governmental level. Correspondingly, current policies and projects focus on the individual and public sector management of environment, admitting private and state property but ignoring common property. One result of such an approach has been known for several decades as ‘the tragedy of the commons’ – the unsustainable use of common resources. The second result is that the strategy is inequitable, since the poorer segments of society depend on common property for substantial parts of their livelihood. In this unit we will examine. The present policies and programmes of Pakistan, Pakistan’s National Conservation Strategy, Elements of National Conservation Strategy (objectives, operating principles and instruments), implementation arrangements, action agenda and implementation strategy, co-operation of community organisations and NGOs, structure of community organisations and support systems.

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the approaches to development and natural resource management in Pakistan;
- understand the managerial and representative vs. participatory community management;
- describe the role of federal government, provincial governments, local bodies and NGOs; and
- discuss institutional arrangements and financial arrangements regarding community organisations.

3.2 POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES OF PAKISTAN

Exploitation of the earth's resources has increased at an unprecedented rate for the last two centuries. In the recent decades its rate of exploitation has reached unparalleled level. Human activities are now affecting some of the most basic climatic and biological cycles of the planet. Pakistan, with a per capita gross national product just one-ninth the world average, is neither a major global polluter nor a large consumer of resources.

It is commonly noted in Pakistan that traditional institutions, for the management of community resources and common problems, have disintegrated or become weak. There is a direct relationship between these two trends – that resources and infrastructure are being destroyed because the social organisation to manage them no longer exists. While traditional institutions for resource management have become weak, new ones have not been effective. Many specialised agencies have been created by the Government and the local government have been strengthened in the 1980s but little intervention has occurred that could qualify as institutional development at the village or neighbourhood levels. The contribution of the private sector to environmental management in Pakistan is regrettably little: a few consulting firms are active, mainly in the fields of engineering and town planning but the local expertise is limited to pollution control.

The government institutions for natural resource management are sectorally organised, in line with the general arrangements for administration and development between the Federation, provinces and local bodies. Co-ordination mechanisms for economic planning and project approval are well established, especially for large infrastructure projects. But generally speaking, the ministries and attached departments have limited capacities for analysis of environmental impacts, many of which are cross sectoral and agencies are not oriented towards joint facilitation of local development. Much more collaboration and coordinated extension is needed to promote the long-term rational use of resources.

Pakistan has no overarching policy that has been primarily and specifically conceived in the interests of conserving and developing its natural resources sustainably. The Perspective Plan (1988-2003) and Five-Year Plans make scant explicit references to the environment and natural resources. Yet there are complex and forceful linkages between economic policies, instruments and allocations and the conservation or degradation of the environment. In the absence of an explicit policy framework, economic and sectoral policies have worked at cross-purposes with respect to environmentally sustainable development and management.

Although specific environmental enactments are few and insufficient, Pakistan is fairly well endowed with 'incidental' environmental legislation – on land use, grazing control, forest conservation, parks and wildlife, fisheries, mineral development, water and air quality, noise, toxic substances, solid wastes, preservation of antiquities and special premises and public health and safety. As they were not enacted with a view towards environmental protection and resource conservation, these laws lack a proper definition of the environment, quantifiable standards and implementation tools, leading to sporadic and arbitrary enforcement.

In many cases, operational regulations under the laws have not been prescribed, penalties are punitive in character and inflation-depreciated fines are not regularly revised, all of which encourage corruption. Administrative agencies and the judiciary lack awareness of environmental hazards and risks. Above all, there is a lack of respect for the law and a lack of political commitment to enact and enforce it.

3.3 NATIONAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The Pakistan National Conservation Strategy (NCS) is a broad-based policy statement aimed at achieving environmentally sustainable economic and social development in Pakistan. The NCS was developed over a nine-year period (1983-1992) through the collaborative efforts of the IUCN and the Government of Pakistan. The NCS development process included extensive consultations with thousands of experts, interested individuals, communities, NGOs, and government agencies. The final product, according to several observers, is outstanding, in terms of both comprehensiveness and quality.

The NCS specifies the basic guidelines for an integrated effort aimed at protecting the environment and natural resources of the country. This broad framework provides a comprehensive point of reference for all agencies, departments, private sector companies, financial institutions and donor agencies for undertaking systematic efforts to bring about an effective change for sustainable development.

To be successful, large and complex endeavours require explicit objectives. The National Conservation Strategy (NCS) has three objectives:

- i) conservation of natural resources,
- ii) sustainable development, and
- iii) improved efficiency in the use and management of resources.

Although these objectives are comprehensive, their full implications are not necessarily evident at the outset. Operating principles identify the methods and approaches that will enable these objectives to be reached. The three main operating principles of the NCS are to:

- achieve greater public partnership in development and management,
- merge environment and economics in decision making, and
- focus on durable improvements in the quality of life.

Moral persuasion and leadership, social sanction and economic, legal and regulatory instruments of change – all with their various strengths and limitations – will have to be applied to bring about a hierarchy of value, knowledge, institutional change and technical innovations. Two key value changes needed are restoration of the conservation ethic and a revival of the community spirit.

3.3.1 Implementation Arrangements and Strategy

The National Conservation Strategy is a call for action addressed to senior and local governments, businesses, NGOs, local communities and individuals. But the sustainable development of Pakistan is a huge multi-generational endeavour. Where should we begin? And how should we proceed? It is necessary to set priorities and to begin implementation from undisputed resource management and conservation domains. Yet the priority actions must be those with significant wider economic and social ramifications that would not happen by themselves owing to market or institutional failure. Strategy implies a combination of hitherto desperate elements to achieve synergy and understanding.

The NCS seeks to transform attitudes and practices and to influence national consumption patterns, but it can only be one contributor to inculcating sustainable and socially productive behaviour. Development will profoundly change the nature of Pakistan in the coming decades. The NCS focuses on the influencing investment choices, which are more flexible than the consumption patterns. More particularly, it is designed to take leadership in investments relating to the maintenance of natural resources and to increase the efficiency with which critical non-renewable resources are used. This is literally an investment in having a future, as opposed to investments for a future return, yet it can pay well in economic terms.

3.3.2 Operating Principles

The three objectives of NCS are comprehensive. Their full implications may not necessarily be evident at the outset. Operating principles identify the methods and

approaches that will enable these objectives to be reached. These principles should be compatible with the objectives and they should illustrate, in their application, the approach of the NCS.

The three main operational principles of the NCS as mentioned earlier are discussed in detail as below:

Greater public partnership in development and environmental management

This operating principle has four components, which may also be seen as four sequential measures, ranging from a general base of more awareness to linking channels created and institutionalising participative community management.

- Develop greater public awareness and appreciation of the need for conservation of natural resources and the quality of the environment, using mass media as well as the formal education system;
- Promote environmental NGOs and participative community organisations that can implement environmental conservation programmes and consciousness raising events to achieve greater public awareness and understanding of the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable development;
- Provide for a two-way flow of communication between government, community organisations, and NGOs on matters relating to the conservation of nature and natural resources; and
- Identify and develop an institutional framework that will enable people in urban neighbourhoods and in villages to identify, design in detail, and implement projects and programmes that they desire and they will maintain or improve the quality of their community and its environment. The structure and relationship of this community-oriented framework to other public and private institutions should be designed to maximise co-ordination and co-operation and minimise conflict, since all institutional components have important roles to play and are essential to effective sustainable development. This is the essence of the full partnership between government and NGOs that the NCS seeks to foster.

A merger of environment and economics in decision-making

As economic development and ecological effects are bound together in the workings of the real world, their consideration needs to be similarly integrated in the decision-making. This will require changes in the attitudes, objectives and institutional arrangements at every level:

- Make the central economic planning and sectoral development agencies at the federal and provincial levels directly responsible for the maintenance of ecological systems and processes and for the sustainable use of natural resources. Specialised environmental agencies have a supporting role to play in the provision of technical expertise. But the mainstream departments and agencies alone should be held responsible for the impact of economic development on the environment.
- Set up a programme to identify the minimum requirements in establishing an environmental quality baseline and begin continuous monitoring of the parameters selected.

Durable improvements in the quality of life

To provide a focus that ensures improvement as durable and continues in perpetuity, it is important to match improvements in the quality of amenities and infrastructure with increase in the efficiency of natural resource use and the quality of human capital.

A major threat to the ability of the natural resource base to sustain Pakistan's population and an improved quality of life is the rate of population growth. Thus an important operational principle of the NCS is to reduce the rate of population growth

as quickly as possible. These initiatives entail a significant shift in government development allocations.

Improvements in the quality of life in human settlements must involve the efficient use of raw materials and energy. Their uses should be based on technologies with the greatest practicable recovery and recycling of materials and on the adoption of natural processes (e.g., biomass, direct solar, wind and wave power) as a replacement, complement, or supplement to the use of fossil fuels.

Expenditures required for restoring ecosystems devastated by pollution typically exceed by at least a thousand fold the costs of pollution abatement measures. Durable improvement in the quality of life requires control and prevention of pollution.

Preference should be given to the developments that rely on biological and natural processes rather than engineering or structural works, which are intrinsically capital – or-energy intensive. Biological solutions are frequently slow to establish and therefore need to be planned. Once established, however, they have the ability to operate on low-cost or free inputs, to be self-maintaining and self-replicating and to have increased rather than depreciated value and productivity over time.

SAQ 1

- i) Explain various approaches to development and natural resource management in Pakistan.
 - ii) Write a note on the following in your own words:
 - a) National Conservation Strategy.
 - b) Implementation Arrangements and Strategy
 - c) Operating Principles.
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3.4 COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND NGOs

Three broad approaches to development in Pakistan exist:

1. The departmental approach;
2. The representative approach; and
3. The participatory approach.

1. The departmental approach

The departmental approach is often used for building infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, roads, or a dispensary. It continues to be pursued by various government developmental agencies. It is important to note that these activities are usually carried out without the involvement of the people for whom the services are provided. This unfortunately leads people to think that the facility is a gift of government; they are not concerned with the cost of providing the infrastructure or with its operation and maintenance, and end up feeling dependent on the government. Another serious problem with the departmental approach is that it does not allow communities to incorporate changes according to their needs in the blueprints developed by the line agencies technical experts. There is no mechanism, for example, to either construct or maintain irrigation water channels outside the administrative control of the irrigation department.

2. The representative approach

Political representation is essential for many purposes, but it is not a substitute for participation by ordinary citizens in the process of development. Representatives cannot plan and implement the day-to-day economic activities of communities. They cannot substitute, for example, for farmers in the organisation of production, marketing, input supply, credit, and community resources and infrastructure. At the same time, representative approaches are more often than

not divisive and political rather than consensual, whereas consensus is a prerequisite of development at the community level.

The departmental and representative approaches are not successful in reaching people and solving their problems. This is not due to their inefficient working but to their implementation structure and mandates. The Federal and provincial governments have established specialised agencies for training, credit, input supply to create broad institutional base at the grassroots level. At the same time, development agencies are organised on a sectoral or functional basis instead of following an integrated multifunctional approach.

3. The participatory approach

To make optimal use of grassroots opportunities, it is important that the villagers and city dwellers be provided with an environment in which they can establish their own organisations, identify their priorities, organise their resources, manage their development agenda, and forge necessary links for the on-going technical and financial assistance by outside agencies. The systems of local government, development administration, and resource mobilisation are all incomplete without participatory community organisations.

The most important element in energising this local development is a change in the role of governmental departments; the government needs to recognise the potential role of local communities in mobilising capital resources and undertaking managerial tasks for resource management in keeping with the goals of the NCS. It needs to pay considerable attention to people's participation in their work, and to appreciate that community organisations and people's initiatives can complement the governmental initiatives in difficult areas. The government needs to accept and engage the community as partners in development, not competitors, for government alone can never succeed in ensuring the sustainable development.

The government does, however, have an important role in facilitating and encouraging the development of community initiatives and community organisations. It can create an environment in which people are encouraged to find solutions to their problems. It can remove obstacles but at the same time requires mechanisms for engaging the resources, ingenuity, and sense of ownership of communities, and a much greater understanding of people's priorities.

Overall, the provision of intercommunity infrastructure will remain the responsibility of the Federal, provincial, and local bodies. In the first phase, community organisations should emphasise development programmes within their own communities. In the long run, after gaining experience with small schemes, these groups can also play a role in the construction and management of intercommunity infrastructure.

The managerial approach is followed by most of the line agencies and development projects in Pakistan. The participatory approach is being followed by the Pak-German Integrated Rural Development Project in the NWFP and Balochistan, the Agha Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in Chitral and the Northern Areas and the Orangi Pilot Project in Karachi (See Box 1). Participatory models are also being tested by the Pak-Holland PATA Irrigation Project and the Pak-Swiss Kalam Integrated Development Project in the NWFP and the by the Hyderabad Development Authority's Khuda Ki Basti, a low-income housing project. It is clear that these initiatives are recent and few. Beyond these formally recognised ones, however, the participatory mode is common in many villages, where farmers may get together to scrape and maintain access to a pucca road or to run a custom-based water turn system.

The representative approach is followed in all programmes that depend on the public representatives (including Members of National and Provincial Assemblies, District and Union Councillors and political party office holders)

and in all models of organisations (including official co-operatives and Water User Associations) in which decision-making powers are vested not in the general body but in the executive committees, management boards etc.

All the three approaches – managerial, participatory, and representative – should be part of environmental management as none is a perfect substitute for the other. However, their domains have to be understood on the basis of their efficacy and their impact at various scales and levels.

Activity 3.1

What are the state policies and programmes of your country regarding participatory management of conservation and development (community mobilisation, participation and organisation)?

Box 1

An example of successful participatory management

The Agha Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in the three northern districts of Gilgit, Diamir and Chitral is a prime exponent of the participatory approach.

Some 1100 village organisations (VOs) now participate in AKRSP. The standard operating procedure for the establishment of VOs is to have the village to identify a productive infrastructure project. The nature of the project is less important than having it as the catalyst around which the participatory organisation can form. It shows villagers as to what they can do when they organise themselves and make use of their talents. The programme includes sending villagers away on courses that teach them special skills – veterinary or irrigation techniques, tree planting, basic management principles or accountancy, or any skill that they lack and are willing to learn on a short course at a training centre.

One important feature of the AKRSP approach is the insistence that the village organisation collect money from each member, no matter how impoverished, to help build a source of credit that the VO can use for whatever purposes it wants without having to satisfy the criteria and hurdles imposed by banks or governments. It also gives the members a feeling of participation in the VO and, since it is their money, they will be inclined to spend it wisely.

AKRSP understands well the limits of community-based management systems (CBMS). The system works best among small farmers and in small groups. According to AKRSP: “maximum workable group size is 100; beyond that it is difficult for groups to manage their activities and decisions, unless VOs or CBMS come together along traditional organisational structures. The implication is that for activities such as range management or forest management, involving activities beyond the scope of individual CBMS, some form of representational system is inevitable.”

SAQ 2

- i) Explain the following in your own words:
- The departmental approach.
 - The representation approach.
 - The participatory approach.

3.5 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A satisfactory framework for collaboration between government and community organisations involves agreements on the priorities for sustainable development; on the allocation of resources between government and community organisations on the

agreed-upon priorities; on the implementation roles for the government, and on the approach to be followed in promoting community organisations.

The NCS envisages two sets of priorities, with an implementation mechanism corresponding to each:

- Creation of institutions for common resources: This priority will be addressed by NGOs through the support and collaboration of Federal and provincial governments, local bodies, and other NGOs. These NGOs will be registered under the laws of Pakistan and should complement and supplement the policies, programmes, and new initiatives of the government.
- Other programmes for natural resources and urban waste management: These priorities will be addressed by the Federal Agencies, provincial line agencies and local bodies, working with the new institutions for common resources.

These implementation mechanisms differ in their relationship to the government machinery, but they are expected to follow a common arrangement for the allocation of funds and evaluation of performance, and a common approach to community organisation – the participatory approach to development.

The most important function attached to community organisations is to fill the gap that exists between communities and government in formulation, planning and implementation of projects related to common resources. As these organisations have to function and collaborate on two fronts, they should be created by arrangements through which both communities and the government can own them. Community response towards these initiatives depends greatly on the organisation's success at improving the conditions. The government has to take the first step towards the creation of these organisations with the help of NGOs, and should continuously facilitate their success by providing financial support and policy guidelines.

Role of Federal Government

Three main functions should be handled by the Federal government:

- ❖ formulation of policy guidelines,
- ❖ financial allocations, and
- ❖ provision of an enabling framework.

The Federal Agencies that can perform these functions, in co-ordination with the concerned ministries are the Economic Affairs Division (EAD), Environment and Urban Affairs Division (EUAD), and the Planning Commission, especially its proposed Environmental Cell, the ministries, will send proposals of project in which community participation seems necessary to EAD, EUAD, and Planning Commission to formulate the Policy guidelines, enabling framework, and financial allocation for the community organisation.

Role of Provincial Governments

All the provincial departments should collaborate and co-ordinate with the community organisations on the activities and projects related to natural resources conservation and environment as a whole. Many departments have extension teams to disseminate their specific messages to the communities. These departments can pool their human resources and share their experiences with community organisations. Proper co-ordination between these extension teams and community organisations will be needed to develop an integrated approach for the organisation and development of communities. Provincial governments will also make some financial allocations to community organisations.

The other important function of the provincial governments is to establish provincial environmental councils (PECs). Sitting on these councils will be senior officers of the provincial governments, heads of line departments, local bodies, and NGOs. Their main function will be to monitor and evaluate the performance of community

organisations, line departments, and NGOs. Evaluation reports will be submitted to the provincial governments and published for the general public.

Role of Local Bodies

The most important NCS function for local bodies is to develop a working relationship with the community organisations. While, preparing district development plans, community organisations should be consulted about the incorporation of environmental concerns. Local bodies will also allocate some financial resources to community organisations from their annual development funds.

Role of NGOs

A wide range of NGOs work in different parts of Pakistan on different subjects, and they have an extremely important role to play in creating community organisations. The groups can share their experiences and design joint ventures for broadening their scope of activities. This support is essential as the Federal provincial governments work to foster community organisations as part of the NCS.

SAQ 3

- i) Explain the following in your own words:
- a) Role of federal governments.
 - b) Role of provincial governments.
 - c) Role of local Bodies.
 - d) Role of NGOs.
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Structure of Community Organisations and Support Systems

Community organisations seek to help people in rural villages and urban neighbourhoods to undertake development on the basis of participation. Villages and Lane Organisations (VOs and LOs) are coalitions of residents whose common interests are best served by organising as an interest group. The VO/LO will identify the project that would benefit most of the residents and could be implemented by the residents themselves. In return for initial project funds, the VO/LO members commit themselves to the discipline of organisation, collective savings, training in use of new technologies, and implementation and maintenance of the project. All members of the organisation are required to attend weekly or monthly meetings where work done on a project is reviewed, plans are made for the future, and savings are deposited by all members; in short, the VO/LO would be the executing agency for all the village and lane-level projects.

VOs and LOs can be created by directly investing in the Productive Physical Infrastructure, as was done for the creation of Water Users' Associations. A support structure is crucial for these new organisations, lest they collapse after the consumption of seed capital. Two tiers of support structure are proposed – district/city programme offices (DPO/CPO) and technical support units (TSU). They need to organise communities so that they can generate their own revenue through savings to solve their common problems.

Five to fifteen technical support units per district and 5 to 25 per city should be established. Their most important function is to induce the formation of VOs and LOs as the primary vehicle for all development activities. Their responsibilities will include conducting physical infrastructure surveys, collecting information on the status and use of natural resources, performing land use surveys and budget estimates, and planning. One TSU will cover about 100 VOs/LOs.

One DPO per district and one CPO per city should be established. These will perform all programme planning and management functions, and will provide initial funds to a VO/LO as a grant. The main responsibilities will be project formulation; monitoring and evaluation of research, training, and development; co-ordination with Federal Agencies, provincial line departments, local bodies, and NGOs; and supervision and coordination of project implementation in the field.

Financial Arrangements

Rural development in Pakistan is highly subsidised, yet the credibility of existing community organisations has been questioned. In this environment, community organisations have to establish their credibility rapidly; they have to recognise that they will be operating in a buyer's market. They will need the resources with which to see/approach people through new staff, and institutional partners. The demonstration of new approaches will need to be subsidised which should be considered as an investment in institutional development at all levels. With these subsidies, community organisation should aim at bringing about behavioural change. But subsidies will need to be phased out over time as the organisation's approach becomes acceptable, and as they enter the seller's market. The NCS financial arrangements for community organisations are designed with these guiding principles in mind. Continued funding will be contingent on the performance of the community organisation.

The best available example of a technical proposal for the creation of a community organisation is that of the Sarhad Rural Support Corporation, NWFP. Its feasibility study was prepared by a forum of NGOs, senior Ministers, civil servants, donors, and prominent individuals in both Federal and Provincial government. The Aga Khan Rural Support programme served as the focal point for the documentation and preparation of the proposal. The NCS proposes that the Federal government should identify such potential NGOs in different parts of the country that can serve as local points for the preparation of such proposals. Finances for such exercise could be provided by the Trust for Voluntary Organisations (TVO) under the EAD.

Finances required for the creation of community organisations will be the responsibility of the Federal and Provincial governments. Once the organisations are created, they can raise their funds independently from EAD, Provincial Planning and Development departments (P&D), local bodies, and local and international donor agencies.

At the Federal level, these finances can be arranged from:

- the EAD resource pool for NGOs (project-specific bilateral funds for NGOs), and
- the Trust for Voluntary Organisations (funds received from donors without any project title but earmarked for NGO development).

Annual revision to determine the future allocation of Federal funds can be conducted by EUAD and the Planning Division, with the help of local government rural development, provincial P&D, and social welfare departments, and of the provincial environmental councils; the TVO may also want to use these review reports while considering future financial allocations.

At the provincial level, community organisations can raise funds from the provincial P&D and social welfare departments and of the Provincial Environmental Councils (PEC). The result of annual PEC evaluation reports should determine the future allocation of funds by provincial governments and P&D.

Local Bodies should also allocate some funds for community organisations according to the requirements of their development projects. At this level, allocation of funds will be monitored by the district councils.

An independent source of funds for community organisations is domestic and international donor agencies. The only condition should be that the organisations show these grants in their total receipts, so that the public sector evaluation bodies can do comprehensive evaluations.

SAQ 4

- i) Explain the following in your own words:
 - a) Explain the structure of community organisation.

b) Financial arrangements.

Let us summarise what we have studied so far.

3.6 SUMMARY

Natural resource and environmental management issues are complex. The forms of organisations most appropriate to sustainable development are intensely debated and controversial. However, a broad map of the applicability of various institutional forms and instruments at the farm-household, community, departmental, provincial and national levels show that managerial, representative and participatory approaches are required. Insofar as there is a vacuum at the grassroots level in terms of viable community-based management systems, a priority for the National Conservation Strategy should be given to promote such participatory community management.

3.7 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain the policies and programmes of Pakistan with regard to environmental conservation.
 2. Explain the objectives and principles of National Conservation Strategy.
 3. Explain the role of federal government.
 4. Discuss institutional financial arrangements regarding community organisation.
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