

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Using labour-based methods for road construction works has been an important part of the strategy to improve rural transport infrastructure in Sri Lanka for over the past twenty-five years. These methods not only produce gravel roads of equal quality to those produced using equipment-based methods, but they also generate rural employment in a cost-effective manner. Although labour-based methods have proved to be a cost-effective alternative to equipment-based methods in many low-wage developing countries and these methods have not been applied on a large scale.

The increasing emphasis is welcome by road construction planners on the use of local resources for infrastructure programs, can be explained in terms of the combined effect of deteriorating economic conditions an abundant supply of cheap labour, and a crippling scarcity of foreign exchange (Edmonds 1992).

Two crucial, linked issues relating to the provision of rural transport are brought into sharp focus of the situation. The first is a practical, technological one: where foreign exchange is at a premium and labour is an abundant and under employed, it makes sound economic sense to use labour-based technique to develop a rural road network. The second issue is a more general one concerning planner: where resources to develop rural transport are extremely limited, it makes sense to rationalize their use in such a way as to benefit the greatest possible number of people (Edmonds 1992).

Labor-based programs have many benefits. First, they provide a cost-effective alternative to Equipment-based methods for both road rehabilitation and maintenance. Second, they generate temporary employment for both men and women. Third, labour-based methods save foreign exchange. Fifth, labour-based construction methods facilitate the use of labour-based maintenance since, for example, it is much easier to maintain a hand-dug trapezoidal ditch by hand than to maintain a grade-dug V-ditch by hand. Sixth, they transfer knowledge of labour-based road works to local communities—knowledge that will be useful for later maintenance. Seventh, they have environmental advantages—labor-based works use less fuel, emit less exhaust, raise less dust, and are less likely to seriously damage the terrain bordering a

construction site. Labor-based methods require less manoeuvring space most work. Finally, they encourage the development of local industry for manufacturing hand tools and light road construction equipment (Stock, Expanding Labor-based Methods for Road Works in Africa 1996).

Transport infrastructure provides a basis for economic activities in the rural areas in the long term. But the environment consequences cannot be neglected only foreseeing long term economic benefit. Difficult topography and unstable geology make the road construction difficult in the rural hills. Beside, the predominantly absolute poverty in the region realizes the essence of the appropriate approach in the rural road construction. With its approach of constructing rural roads considering the environment and rural poverty alleviation measures, Green road approach are proving to be a sustainable way of constructing rural roads. Environment friendly construction techniques, participatory and decentralization approach, optimum utilization of local resources, simple technology, local capacity building and self help efforts justified Green road approach as a better way of constructing rural roads in hill districts (Mulmi, Green Road Approach in Rural Road Construction for the Sustainable Development of Nepal 2009).



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There is a growing recognition in developing countries of community-based infrastructure procurement and its potential to achieve sustainable development. The advantages of such an approach are that it encourages participative negotiation of activities and speedier implementation, the use of local resources, skills and appropriate technology, and entrepreneurship within communities. These wider socio-economic impacts arising from community-partnered micro-projects can lead to more sustainable infrastructure through meeting local stakeholders' needs, community empowerment and capacity building (A.N.Baldwin Dec 2004).

1.2 Problem Definition

Creating greater levels of beneficiary participation in rural road construction projects with community participation is therefore, an important major infrastructure development goal, but participation cannot simply be planned and implemented as the proposition looks very lucrative (Serageldin 1991). It is the result of whole heap constructive planning that needs to put into action with sound decision-making to induce interactions and interventions with beneficiaries, within agencies, and other stakeholders. There is ample labour available in village folk, and seen idle labour including youth that are 18+ qualified that those could be attracted.

There were reforms after the reforms that were rolling in every successive 6 year-long-term electoral regimes, and still we are talking such idealism without sustainable program implemented. Simply there seems to be a gamut of new rules play on and on due to controllable and uncontrollable issues that does not allow a solid system to be adopted. 25 years back, we saw and confirmed where gravel roads were done by the rural village folks, and similar inherited issues such as financial issues, management issues, and no such of heavy road construction equipment except for bulldozers were existed, but with participatory approaches were somewhat taken place. Even then the operations of highway constructions were decentralized, (Impact Evaluation of a Rural Road Rehabilitation Project - world Bank January 2002). Also there were labour laws, appropriate design standards, labour – based training, and government and donor facilitation existed, but certainly not latest technological development. There were reforms did then as well. However, the country is struggling more now to address this issue as a sustainable move for the future, and the researcher is objectively decided to address issues.

1.3 Objectives

As at to date, there are a number of rural road construction projects that are being executed with the ADB and JICA funding as it used to be like in the past. As stated there are rural breads as well as highways are concurrently moving towards country's infrastructure development projects, the researcher intentionally interested in seeking objective analysis of the project. Hence, the following broad objectives were set for research.

1. Identify the significant factors effect to beneficiary participation projects in rural road constructions
2. Develop recommendations to the future similar beneficiary participatory projects.

1.4 Methodology

In this research, qualitative approach is done to explore the research topic. A detailed literature review was carried out to determine the factors effecting on successful beneficiary participation projects and what are the failure factors. It was reviewed after informal interviews with a few project directors and JICA and ADB project officers. Finally the questionnaire was prepared according to the factors identified as above literature review and preliminary interviews.

The prepared questionnaire was distributed among the randomly selected sample from the internal estate road rehabilitation project. The questionnaire was distributed to RDA officials and Beneficiaries (i.e. Estate management staff, Superintendents, work supervisors and any other beneficiaries).

When collecting the questionnaire, it was separated to successful and unsuccessful projects. The data was analysed accordingly.

1.5 Summery

There is a growing recognition in developing countries of community-based infrastructure procurement and its potential to achieve sustainable development. The advantages of such an approach are that it encourages participative negotiation of activities and speedier implementation, the use of local resources, skills and appropriate technology, and entrepreneurship within communities.

Creating a greater level of beneficiary participation therefore is an important factor on infrastructure development in rural areas. There are many factors that effecting on the smooth execution of community participation. Identifying such restraints or obstacles is necessary for successful completion of a project.

This research has a focus on identifying of factors that effecting on beneficiary participation. Providing of valued recommendations for future similar projects will be a definite advantage for its targeted completion. Also it may help to reduce the return of funds to the donors without utilizing.



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Information on RDA, Beneficiaries, and other external experts is adopting exploratory & descriptive studies to attain the necessary information as regards to the research. This approach will further help us to understand and describe the phenomenon. Also it analysis the secondary data obtained from 'Estate development project' which has completed more than 1200km with beneficiary participation. The study also describes events, situation and draw conclusions on data collected. Also the study seeks to clarify understanding of problems which the researcher is unsure of the precise nature of the problems to be investigated.