

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPING SOCIETY

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Abstract : The development and modernity have constrained the society life lately with assorted issues related to economy, social, and any other physical aspects. Therefore, prosperous development and considering society needs are important to achieve. Behind the design and ‘top-down’ growth, the ‘bottom-up’ approach application should not be ignored. The development design approach imposed from the lower community level is important in line with the advanced justice and democracy concepts. Public participation in improving society is one of the approaches which can guarantee the tangible society welfare in some countries. The public participation can assist the society to attain their willing and necessity through voting and shaping or adapting their ideas. Thereby, this paper investigated about the public participation in developing society.

Keywords: Developing society, Public Participation.

Introduction

The development and modernity have constrained the society life lately with assorted issues related to economy, social, and any other physical aspects. It occurred due to the development and modernity which are not constructed by Islamic laws. The eastern and western societies mostly strive to achieve life prosperity. Specifically, it deals with sustainable life quality.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

“For each (such person) there are (angels) in succession before and behind him; They guard him by command of Allah. Verily never will Allah change the condition of people until they change it themselves (with their own souls)”. (Surah al-Ra’d, 13: 11).

That verse explains about life quality enhancement in religion regulation in guarantying better life in society and country development. The societies themselves should strive to change the conditions to be better through appropriate design approaches or participations. Hence, the improvement design which provides direct impact for qualified society should be reinforced well.

Society Development

The society welfare is the main purpose in developing country. It must require focuses on various dimensions such as the change toward society structure, attitude and institutions by involving economy growth, poverty alleviation, in miscarriage of justice in the society. In addition it requires some procedures like arranging and reforming social and economy systems, income increase, expenditure rise, social institutional change,

administration structure, cultures and beliefs (Todaro, 1977; Rozali Hashim, 2005).

Moreover it is irrefutable that maintaining and improving society eminence the responsibility of regional government in the cities and provinces. The government of the region should play an important role in taking actions to achieve a true development transformation of the society as a whole. As the prophetic tradition of the messenger of God (peace and salutation on him).

“You are a leader, and all of you will be responsible in what you have led” (quoted by Muslim)

Prior to that aim, a well-regulated and sustainable development design should be performed by choosing the best alternative through decision making processed by considering future possibilities (Conyers, 1990). Furthermore it entails policies to overcome the problems through the facts and conditions and the upcoming interest as well. In example, some basis correlated with society development and society life quality implemented in the design of long term country situation. The ninth Malaysia design for instance, the government has determined the fourth principal in national mission, 2006-2020 in improving the stages and welfare of life quality (Malaysia, 2006). Besides the interest of life quality in environmental aspects accentuated in the tenth Malaysia design which is an idea of ‘preserving the nature’ that is one of the main ten ideas in chapter six emphasizing about creating the environment led to life enhancement. Likewise, it covers interesting and progressive housing area development,

establishing public transportation system prioritizing ordinary people, transforming health care in improving life quality, providing universal access, ensuring accessible and affordable housings, providing public utilities and facilities efficiently, constructing the streets, and the community will be much safer and respecting the amazing surroundings. Likewise, those paradigms aim to society prosperity.

Nowadays, the modern society in the city and out of the city have been more sensitive about willingness, necessity and any kind of problems which should be noticed and handled by the government. There have been some obstacles faced by society i.e. deficiency and poverty, culture deterioration, natural damage and so on resulted from people's actions. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the deed) that the hands of men have earned. That Allah may give them a test of some of their deeds: in order that they may turn back (from Evil). (Surah Al-Rum: 41)"

This verse reveals that in this modernity and establishing development, the human should follow laws or regulations determined by Allah. Moreover they should notice appropriately two main things such as physical and spiritual improvement. The big damage in society occurs when human beings mischief from the right path. For instance, if their purpose in this life is simply focused on the material and physical benefit, it will lead to the damage of natural environment and furthermore it will give bad impression to the human.

Lately there have been sustainable development concepts which considers about *'win-win situation'*. It has been performed by the government on the whole of the world to guarantee every growth established can contribute worthy impression to both society and environment. This statement is confirmed by the verse of Allah:

"But seek with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on the home of the hereafter, not forget the portion in this world: but do thou good, as Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief". (Surah al-Qasas: 77).

Consequently, there are sustainable initiatives in developing society. It includes the efforts in enhancing sustainable community. Most of society or community relies on success factor policy failure besides the implementation of (*good governance*). In addition it involves some affairs such as accountability, participation, authority decentralization, predictability, transparency, and prevention (Rogers et al., 2008). The sustainable community applies good principle as well as by respecting and acting in the environment with its boundaries. For instance, the fundamental principle and actions will create sustainable community including responsible for preserving welfare and any other aspects of current until future life. The development guarantee which does not influence for the coming generation necessity is an upcoming positive perspective encompasses fair income distribution aspects, the use balance resource, and maintaining in some society clusters (Ibrahim Ngah, 2009).

In fact, in line with what Abdul Samad Hadi *et al.* (2008) cited that sustainable development has good balance between economy affair resulting economy growth, renovating social facilities and enhancing human resources required to increase the quality of society life. Similarly, it impresses well due to the well-prepared and wise application. The decent growth also applies win-win strategies which is able to alleviate poverty in addition to retention and environment maintenance (Chamhuri, 2001). For example, the effort in eradicating poverty can be conducted by some approaches like reformation improving villages and sustainable agriculture increase. Furthermore in achieving the prosperous development goal to the society wholly, individual or society participation will be very essential.

Public Participation in Developing Society

Rogers et al. (2008) reinforces that public participation is one of main factors influencing sustainable successful development achievement. It occurs owing to it has become an essential process in order that the established development can accomplish mass necessity and willingness through communication and wholesome relationship between the authorized ones with the public. Community participation in implementing some policies and gradual development will be able to generate one balanced and well processsikluscycle between the principle executor the target group in achieving better lifespan (Kamarudin Ngah, 1991). In addition the close cooperation is necessary to acquire agreement

which reveals impressive impacts to the society. Besides in line with the verse of Allah which means that:

“Those who harken to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation; who spend out what we bestow on them for sustenance” (Surah al-Syura: 38).

The concept deliberation is essential in the process of developing society. Public opinion is important in contributing useful inputs to the organizer and administrators in development process because they understand more the advantages and the impacts which will be faced correlated with the improvement decisions. The public involvement in designing and developing process is one of the main factors in constructing sustainable community. This participation allows the public to give influence and share assorted initiatives.

In designing and implementing the development. The active participation and authorized decision maker are fundamental in representing society input, solving the problem, designing and implementing (Dalal-Clayton & Bass, 2002; Grove & Procter, 1966; Ooi Peng Hong, 1986). This cooperation is necessary in designing better and natural environment. As a result, the society has right in expressing their opinion which is line with the prophetic tradition of the prophet Muhammad:

“In the community, you should express the truth and not to be separated” (HR Turmizî).

Furthermore the increase of global democracy practice, public participation interest in the process of development is really

reinforced. This term is really important due to be able to give advantage to identify the problem in improving the development for the first step which is possibly carried out while there are some other valuable options (Irwin, 2002). Arnstein (1969) as the first author of public participation stated that applying authority redistribution allows them to reform the social aspect and it contributes to some advantages for the existed society.

Furthermore public involvement is really noticed by the decision maker and the state administrators and development policy is correlated with the civil society improvement. Currently, the participation of public is applied in the process of designing and developing in some developed countries in the direct or indirect ways. The community plays a great important role in the process of public participation. According to Yahaya Ibrahim (2009), the community refers to some essential elements called human beings, accommodations, social intercourse, cooperative spirit and collective identification. It simply can be classified based on their ethnics, regions and jobs instead of the certain socio-cultural characteristics. In addition, the community also employs an autonomy and lifestyle, sharing aspiration and needs, participating in daily activity by associating and togetherness spirit.

The concept of society sovereignty which is related to the democracy and it is also confirmed by Arnstein (1969) that public participation can be classified as sovereignty or realization of the society. The authority distribution is a main case of public participation because it allows them to cooperate in development.

This distribution of the authority will reduce injustice problems, overcoming depraved management and ignoring misunderstanding resulted from the lack of the purposes of related party (Dalal-Clayton & Bass, 2002).

Public or society involvement is an agreement to react towards the failure and the weaknesses of the government for more satisfying governance (Riedel, 1972). The principles formulated and designed will be more realistic based on public necessity and forming the refutable elements of the society reacting to government decisions. The harmony and understanding between the public and government continuously will guarantee the available development and impressed (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). Besides, this public participation also has become the device for responsive government against public necessity especially for those who beyond the scope of government decision making process (Graves, 1972). The participation of public can finally be implemented as the *sense of belonging* (Young, 1958), *sense of ownership* *sense of shared responsibility* (Rogers et al. 2008) Love feeling towards neighborhood will strengthen society unity.

The concept of public sovereignty related to democracy which is also emphasized by Arnstein (1969) that public participation can be classified as sovereignty or society unity. The authority distribution has become the basis of public involvement in the process of social reformation and sharing the advantages of luxuriant society. It also can diminish inequality, managing disorder region establishment, and eliminating deterioration and

misunderstanding resulted from the lack of knowledge towards those who have other distinctive interests (Dalal-Clayton & Bass, 2002). It is in line with Dietz & Stern (2008) cited that the democracy system, all of decisions involving public viewpoint. Therefore, some efforts should be improved to implement good society participation in administering the country. Moreover, the balance authority distribution is required to be applied by giving the authority to the public in decision making will create better *sense of belonging* and *shared responsibility*.

Conclusion

It is obvious that the public participation is one of the essential elements in developing society. It allows the society to interact in expressing their opinion or right in addition to the implemented design conducted by the administrators. The close cooperation between government / administrators and the society will create the harmony and ideal development by fulfilling society necessity and willingness. Justice and equality in developing society will guarantee the participation and viewpoint of fundamental basis in designing, the process of decision making development implementation is related to what Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

“Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion; He admonishes you that you may be mindful”.
(*Surah al-Nabl, 16: 90*).

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