

Dynamics of Social Innovation in the Public Sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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ABSTRACT

This research generates an in-depth understanding of social innovation process by conducting empirical inquiry in the public sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Taking influence from case study strategy, three social innovation projects have been selected as cases. Research findings reveal that social innovations take place in the form of new services addressing social needs and creating public value. The stages of social innovation process initially occur in a linear and later in a non-linear sequence, with overlapping spaces. However, these social innovations do not fully go through all stages of the process specifically sustainability (except in one case) and systemic change (in all the cases). Moreover, important factors that influence the process of social innovations have been identified as well as recommendations and contributions are provided.

Keywords: Social Innovation, Social Innovation Characteristics, Public Sector, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

INTRODUCTION

The academic and research attention is increasingly drawn towards social innovation (SI) because of its role in coping with the significant societal challenges (El-Haddadeh, Irani, Millard, & Schröder, 2014). Social innovation seems to be a useful approach for bringing reforms in public sector through projects. (Bekkers & Tummers, 2017; Bekkers, Tummers, Stuijzand, & Voorberg, 2013). However, there is a lack of sufficient research on social innovation in public sectors of developing countries, where such studies can provide significant insights on public sector reforms (Rana, Weerakkody, Dwivedi, & Piercy, 2014). Additionally, there is lack of attention given to social innovation projects leading to poor understanding of social innovations (Hernandez & Cormican, 2016). Also, there is insufficient research on social innovation, its characteristics, its process, and on the factors that facilitate or hinder social innovation (Jessop, Moulaert, Hulgård, & Hamdouch, 2013). Recognizing that the gaps need to be filled through empirical and theoretical contributions, this study:

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- Presents the perspective of key stakeholder members regarding what characterizes social innovations in different contexts.
- Has been carried out in developing country context that is, Pakistan Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Consequently, the research objective is to understand social innovations in the public sector (RO) and research questions are: RQ1: What are the characteristics of social innovations in “selected cases”?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Social Innovation

The innovation studies and the innovation theory have a long history, and find their systematic beginnings and reference in the work of Schumpeter, which is valid to this day (El-Haddadeh et al., 2014; Howaldt, Butzin, Domanski, & Kaletka, 2014; Van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016). The focus and concern of scientific field of innovation studies has been changing in different time periods. Recently, the field of innovation studies has started giving increased attention to social innovation concept (Martin, 2013), emphasizing the role of innovation to tackle the societal challenges (Borzaga & Bodini, 2014; Howaldt et al., 2014). Social innovations solve societal problems and meet the diverse and growing needs, and create value for society (Ayob, Teasdale, & Fagan, 2016; Edler & Fagerberg, 2017).

However, innovation studies have not given due attention to the concept of social innovation (Cunha, Benneworth, & Oliveira, 2015; Krlev, Bund, & Mildenerberger, 2014; Marques, Morgan, & Richardson, 2017). The ongoing academic debates on social innovation are concerned with the questions of how to define and characterize it, and capture and study it empirically (Meissner et al., 2016; Van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016). The research of social innovation and its characteristics is still sparse (Choi & Majumdar, 2015; Grimm, Fox, Baines, & Albertson, 2013). Moreover, it is important to address how social innovation takes place in order to suggest the practical ways of carrying out social innovation. However, there is insufficient research on the process of social innovation, hindering the practice (Cunha & Benneworth, 2013; Lettice & Parekh, 2010; Nicolopoulou, Karatas, Özkan, Vas, & Nouman, 2015). Future research needs to examine social innovation characteristics and process empirically (Borzaga & Bodini, 2014; Nicolopoulou et al., 2015). Thus, the characteristics of social innovation is discussed as follows:

Studying Social Innovation: Characteristics of Social Innovation

The characteristics of social innovation facilitate the study of social innovation as they are helpful in deciding whether an innovation is a social innovation (Caulier-Grice et al., 2012). Caulier-Grice et al. (2012) provided a complete set of social innovation characteristics, which are also identified and confirmed by other researchers, see table 2. Moreover, in the innovation studies, novelty, improvement (effectiveness or efficiency) and implementation are regarded as important characteristics to be recognised as innovation (Fagerberg, 2005; Mulgan et al., 2007; Phills, Deiglmeier, & Miller, 2008), whereas meeting social needs and changes in social relationships are considered are core elements in social innovation literature (Van der Have &

Rubalcaba, 2016). Thus, this study considers these characteristics for studying social innovation (see table 2). Moreover, the other aspect of how social innovation occurs is discussed in next section.

Table 1

Characteristics of Social Innovation, their Sources and Descriptions

Characteristics of SI	Source	Description
1) Meets a Social Need/Public Value	Ayob et al. (2016), Bekkers et al. (2013), Bulut, Eren, and Halac (2013), Bund, Hubrich, Schmitz, Mildenerger, and Krlev (2013), Caulier-Grice et al. (2012),	Meeting social need/solving social problem focuses on public good that primarily benefits the public & society as a whole
2) Changes in Social Relationships	Edwards-Schachter and Wallace (2017), Krlev et al. (2014), and Van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016)	New social relationships among different stakeholders
2) Novelty	Bulut et al. (2013), Bund et al. (2013), Caulier-Grice et al. (2012), Krlev et al. (2014), Phills et al. (2008), and Ziegler (2017)	Newness to the field, context, market, region, sector, user or application and can include reinvention or adaptation
3) Improvement		Solution is more beneficial, effective, or efficient than other alternatives
4) Actual Implementation	Bekkers et al. (2013), Bund et al. (2013), Caulier-Grice et al. (2012), Fagerberg (2005), Krlev et al. (2014), and Mulgan et al. (2007)	The idea is actually carried/ solution is delivered

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applies multiple cases and holistic case study design on the three social innovation projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. These include Independent Monitoring Unit (IMU), Sehat Ka Insaf (SKI) and Mobile Court (MC). For the purpose of this qualitative study, the data have been collected through semi-structured interviews from 24 interviewees. The sample has been drawn through heterogeneous/ maximum variation, purposive sampling. The interviewees belonged to key stakeholders, occupying supervisory positions in the respective projects such as Project Director/Manager, Deputy Director, and Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist and so on. The interviews duration ranged from 30 minutes to 2 hours. An interview protocol has been designed as per the procedural model (from general to specific questions) allowing flexibility in probing (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The interview

protocol has been pre-tested with one of the interviewees from each case, making modifications and incorporating suggestions.

The data have been systematically analyzed by qualitative analysis framework (King, 2004). The framework has taken influence from Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) with respect to steps in qualitative analysis, and Saldaña (2013) for cycles of coding. Among the analysis steps, three core activities have been applied: data condensation- coding, data displays-network, and drawing and verifying conclusions (Miles et al., 2014), see table 4 below:

Table 2

Link of Research Questions with Data Collection and Data Analysis Techniques

Research Questions	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
RQ1.1) What are the characteristics of social innovations in “selected cases”?	Semi-Structured Interviews	First Cycle of Coding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Star-List of Codes • In-Vivo Coding • Second Cycle of Coding: • □ Pattern Coding

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section analyses and addresses research objective (RO) and the related research question regarding the characteristics of social innovation (RQ1) in public sector context.

Characteristics of Social Innovation

The characteristics include meeting a social need, changes in social relationships, novelty, improvement, and actual implementation.

Meeting a Social Need

The three cases show that the respective social innovation projects were meant to solve important societal challenges, meet social needs with respect to education, health, and law and justice (Bekkers et al., 2013; Caulier-Grice et al., 2012). IMU improved the provision of education in terms of quality and access to the children by improving public schools performance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. SKI improved the health services in terms of child routine immunization, controlling polio outbreak and free health services to community of Peshawar. MC was meant to improve the provision of justice to in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. community in terms of accessibility, easiness, inexpensiveness, and expeditiousness by supplementing formal justice system.

Changes in Social Relationships

The three cases show that the respective social innovation projects incorporated changes in the social relationships among stakeholders, developing capabilities and assets, and making better use of resources and assets (Bekkers et al., 2013; Caulier-Grice et al., 2012). IMU incorporated new social relationships between new actor IMU and already working key stakeholders such as education department, international partner, and donor, IMU performed new role of monitoring, its social accountability was created by increasing community awareness and their access to information, and informed decisions and efficient resource allocations were made by key stakeholders due to IMU. In SKI, new social relationships were found among new actors, the newly elected provincial government along with its departments, its political leadership and team, and between new actors and already working key stakeholders such as health department, international partners and donors, and community members. New roles incorporated political party leader, party workers, community members and religious clerics involvement in polio vaccination and its communication. In MC new social relationships were found between new actor, newly established in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Judicial Academy (KPJA) and already working stakeholders such as the Peshawar High Court, District & Session Court and international partner, and new collaboration between in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Judiciary and Philippines, Manila's Judiciary was established. New roles incorporated KPJA providing training and intellectual support for establishing MC, judges performing dispute resolution, and lawyers acting as mediators, and litigants were empowered by legal binding attached to the decision made.

Novelty

The analysis shows that novelty is found in all the three cases, which represent social innovations in the form of new products specifically new services addressing social needs and creating public value (Choi & Majumdar, 2015; Grimm et al., 2013). These social innovations were adapted and new in the context of in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region and with respect to its users (Phills et al., 2008; Ziegler, 2017). IMU, an Independent Monitoring System of Elementary and Secondary Education was earlier applied nationally in another province Punjab. It was adapted in context of KP with improvements, and was different from the monitoring system of Education Department (KP) with respect to: technology based, external and independent, monthly monitoring with wider coverage, and instant reporting to authorities, by technologically literate monitors with higher qualifications, and limited powers. Monitors' performance is checked weekly, and data is cross-checked through their job rotation.

The monitoring is supported by provincial government and data are used for policy matters, resources allocation and taking actions. SKI, a Health Package was earlier applied in Pakistan as supplementary immunization activities (SIAs) including short-interval additional dose (SIAD) campaigns. It was adapted in the context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with additional components and was different from conventional polio program conducted in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with respect to: operations of 1-day weekly, polio campaign rebranded as health package incorporating routine immunization, hygiene kits, and health camps, involvement of triple and new type of HR, increased and immediate, electronic payments; different and intense communication strategy including advocacy, social mobilization, mass media communication,

publicity, informative fliers, and branding of polio teams; different and intensified security arrangements and different type of security personnel, who were paid for it; and weekly monitoring at Union Council (UC), district, and provincial level. MC, Justice on Wheel System, informal justice system was earlier applied internationally, and adapted in the context of KP, Pakistan from Philippine's MC with contextual amendments. It was different from formal justice system in courts (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) based on the following aspects: mobility, courtroom in a bus, resolves petty nature cases (at doorstep) expeditiously and inexpensively (free of cost) based on Alternative Dispute Resolution, like 'Jirga' system, and decision with legal sanction.

Improvement

In all the three cases, respective social innovations were more beneficial than alternatives or existing practices in meeting specific social need and in terms of outcome and outputs, creating social value (Bulut et al., 2013; Phills et al., 2008). IMU worked better than previous monitoring system such as: reduced student, teacher and non-teacher absenteeism, and student dropouts; increased enrolment; improved school facilities; saved government's money wasted on ghost teachers; provided real time, authentic and evidence-based reporting; improved teaching quality, and governance. SKI was also more effective than conventional polio program in emergency (polio outbreak), such as: halted terrorist attacks, gained community's trust and acceptance, and decreased their refusal of polio vaccination, decreased polio cases, increased availability of HR, and improved coverage against preventable diseases. MC was more effective and efficient than formal justice system and brought improvements temporarily such as: provided litigants with option to resolve cases through mediation, supplemented formal justice system, provided legal sanction, provided easiness for both judges and community, and quickly relieved litigants from cases pending from years

Actual Implementation

The respondents indicated that in IMU, SKI and MC, the respective solutions/ideas of social innovations were practically applied/actually implementation (Bekkers et al., 2013; Krlev et al., 2014). MC was implemented in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and IMU and SKI were implemented in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other contexts to solve similar problem.

DISCUSSION

The research finds out that social innovations in different domains of public sector are in the form of new services incorporating new social relationships of existing stakeholders with new actor, and new roles. The implementation of these services addressed social needs by overcoming the problems pertaining to previous working systems and improving service delivery in different domains of public sector such as education, health, and law and justice. Moreover, social innovation process initially occurred in linear sequence and then occurred non-sequentially, in different orders. There were overlapping spaces and social innovations do not go through all stages. The social innovations were developed, implemented and diffused easily as compared to

sustaining, where sustainability was found to be a critical issue and systemic change was not fully achieved in public sector domains.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study acknowledges the characteristics of social innovation (incorporating meeting social needs and new social relations) and overlapping spaces, open to shortcuts, iterative, and non-linear nature of social innovation process, derived from literature by empirically investigating social innovations. This study provides comprehensive lessons and avoids ‘pro innovation biasness’ by using multiple case studies to better understand phenomena of social innovation including social innovations perceived as successful and unsuccessful. This study empirically contributes by providing important insights on social innovation in public sector of developing country as most of existing studies are carried in private sector of developed countries. This contextual difference reveals that social innovations in public sector of developing country Pakistan are similar with respect to characteristics and process to developed countries, showing wider applicability of these aspects. However, social innovations face sustainability issues and either get stuck or ended in sustaining stage in the context of public sector of developing country.

Future research needs to apply theory/theories for explaining social innovation phenomena and support it with empirical data. It is also recommended that future research should be conducted in public sector of developing countries to add new insights. Government and public sector need to give priority to social innovation in developing countries to bring public sector reforms and address societal challenges. This study helps the practitioners to better design, implement and sustain social innovation processes in the public sector by capitalizing on strengths and overcoming the weaknesses.

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