Participatory Development and Beneficiary Implementer Syndromes: A Study on National Poverty Alleviation Programme in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

There are many and varied explanations for public policy failures conducted both in the tradition of Top-Down and Bottom-up implementation studies. Governments have co-opted the participatory development strategy on account of domestic and international pressures. In this context, the implementation strategy has become that of creating partnership between public sector and beneficiary organizations. The role of grass root level implementers has become very important as they have to embrace the new role of change agent. However, the studies that highlight the cultural dimensions of public policy process have revealed the political construction of beneficiaries as well as grass-root implementers. Since they are both politically constructed, they share important syndromes and they remain largely un-explored. The present study is an attempt to explore them in relation to national programme for poverty alleviation in Sri Lanka.

Key Words

Implementer-beneficiary syndrome, poverty, public policy, participatory development.
Introduction

This study is about implementer-beneficiary syndromes that stem where participatory development strategy is co-opted by governments. As an alternative development strategy it involves questioning of established regimes and collective efforts by the poor themselves (Tilakarathne, 2004). Studies on non-for-profit sector had revealed the strength of participatory development is weakened when government co-opted civil society organizations that practice participatory development strategy (Nicholson-Crotty, 2007). Many governments have entered into partnership between Civil Society Organizations and Public Sector Organizations to alleviate poverty and many have observed policy failures. The reasons discovered are varied.

The studies done under top-down policy implementation paradigm and bottom-up policy implementation paradigm had offered different and competing explanations for the policy failures. The personal observation of the present researcher had shed light on important syndromes between beneficiaries and grass-root level officers of poverty alleviation programmes as one important element in policy failure on poverty alleviation. This study is an attempt to explore these syndromes in relations to Sri Lanka’s national poverty alleviation programme.

The study starts with review of many and varied explanations on the emergence of divergence between stated objectives of the policy and outcomes, objectives of the study and methodology and proceeds to explained the salient features of the national poverty alleviation programme in Sri Lanka.
It is followed by a discussion on policy-outcomes of the programme and finally the implementer-beneficiary syndromes are explained.

**Explanations on Policy Failures**

Many Governments throughout the world have started a process of devolution of power in two directions. One stream flows in the direction of supra national and international bodies while the other flows downwards towards local governments and civil society organizations. This is an outcome of both domestic and international forces. The economic globalization, on the one hand, is pressurizing third world governments to adopt market led development strategy. On the other hand, Internal dynamics such as inability to maintain welfare state etc also driving these societies towards market led development strategy (*Alailima, 1985*). The significance of international policy networks in the determination of domestic policy has been increased due to above forces. The third world governments are being encouraged to embrace a policy of privatizing the responsibility of overcoming poverty to the poor themselves while prescribing governments to play the role of facilitator to the efforts of the poor to overcome poverty by creating an enabling environment.

The strategy prescribed in the new development vision is the participatory approach to development. There are many variants of the same strategy adopted by many governments in the third world (*Okeley etal, 1994*). The new vision in any sense of the world implies to deviate from the market but integrate the poor with market process as the solution to the problem of poverty (*Wignaraja, 1991*). Further, it is clear that Developing Countries and World Development Institutions have co-opted elements of participatory...
development strategy while privileging the market as the sine quo none for development and poverty alleviation (Carvalho, 1999). It has envisioned an effective partnership between the Public Sector and Civil Society Organizations in implementing public policies on poverty alleviation. In this context, the role of the public sector has become that of steering and facilitating the efforts of the poor to overcome poverty. It also thought that some form of poverty is inevitable and to protect them, there shall be a permanent safety net for the chronic poor. Thus the role proper for the state is thought to be that of creating a space for the poor to integrate with the market (Fisher, 1987:35). The new policy also based on a strong belief in the abilities and possibilities of revitalization the seemingly lost communal knowledge, skills and virtues of self help (Wignaraja, 2004:21). The strategy shares with the alternative development discourse by recognizing the peoples’ ability to change the existing situation and believe in the cultural values and importance in alleviating poverty. New policy initiatives view poverty is not solely caused by economic factors but also other factors like lack of good governance etc. (World Bank, 1989). Revitalization of seemingly lost communal knowledge, skills and virtues of self help also involves a bringing the poor into the public policy process. The participation of the poor in the policy process has been presented as the end and means to alleviate poverty.

A good number of studies have revealed that the policies do not function as expected and had observed a divergence between the policy goals and real outcome of the policies. The literature on public policy has offered varied and sometimes, competing explanation for the situation. The politics of social choice (Heclo, et.al. (1975), demands for favorable treatments in
particular cultural situations ((Riggs, 1964:15), utility of the policy to gain power ( Warnapala and Woodworth, 1987) human beings’ rational, egoist and profit maximizing nature (Pierson,2002:65, Downs,1957), the vagueness of policy,(Appleby, 1949). Politicization of bureaucracy (Wijeweera, 1989.) bureaucratization of politics and bureaucratization of politics, (Peters, 2004:30) are some of the explanation given in the literature done within the tradition of top to down policy implementation studies. The public sector and civil sector participation is thought of as a mechanism that prevent all of the problems identified by above literature (Putzel, 2005, 11). However, practical experience has made it clear the process of globalization and channeling aid through civil society organizations have forced a challenge to the political elite in the third world. This has lead politician to co-opt with the organizations of the elite of the civil society and perhaps, to establish civil society organizations themselves (Sooryamurthy and Gangrade, 2006, 265).In this process, the cooptation of participatory development strategy becomes a tool of domination over the poor ( Srinivasan, 2005). The dominating role over the poor through civil society organizations under the participatory practices remain less explored. Exploration of the above identified lacuna of the existing literature marks the departure point of the present study.

In addressing the above major problem, studies of political culture and the role of gate keeper in the policy cycle is of immense significance in understanding how dominance is maintained over the poor under participatory development process. The studies of political culture in the third world countries had shed light on the patron client nature of the social rewards allocation in the those countries(Uphoff et.al., 1979, Uphoff and
Esman, 1974) the mobilizing of voters by the middle level elite around particular political parties during election times and the resulting political participation at the implementation stage demanding particularized benefits (Abeyrathne, 2005) and the incapacity to judge the outcomes of particular policies are the facets that those studies have brought out to the notice. Further, some of the studies have drawn attentions to the problem of local elite capture effects of benefits meant for the poor. The local elite role in policy implementation has not undergone thorough investigation by situating their relationship between the ruling elite and the masses of the society. The present student has observed the determination of beneficiaries on the basis of political affiliation as well as appointment grass-root level policy implementers as an strategy of strengthening the grips over the poor. In this process of political determination of beneficiaries on political allegiance, the said beneficiaries as well as implementers share many syndromes in common. This dimension has not undergone a serious scholarly treatment. This makes the major focus of the present study.

**Objective of the Study**

The objective of the present study is to examine the shared syndrome between beneficiaries of poverty alleviation programme and policy implementers of poverty alleviation programmes where participatory development strategy is co-opted by government.

**Methodology**

This study is based on two set of information collected in two stages. The first stage of the study was conducted to examine the role of policy in shaping the political behavior of the beneficiaries where the researcher
observed shared syndromes between beneficiaries and policy implementers. It was a case study of the Sri Lanka’s public Policy Programme for Poverty Alleviation, popularly known as Samurdhi (Prosperity) Programme during 2008-2009. Sri Lanka was selected for the case study as she is having a rich tradition of public policies for poverty alleviation since the introduction of universal franchise in 1931 under the colonial rule of Britain and its fame as a working democracy despite many criticisms. According to government sources of information, nearly, half of the households in Sri Lanka have been under the present poverty alleviation programme in 2004 (Sri Lanka Mahabankuwa, 2004, 102). The Samurdhi Programme was chosen for the study as it emphasizes the targeting the deserving poor and following a participatory development strategy through a public private partnership in implementing the policy.

Southern Provincial Council Area of the country has been selected for the present study taking into consideration of the followings.

1. Poverty is more serious in the rural sector of the country. Southern province represent this rural background

2. Southern province has been identified as one region where the phenomenon of poverty remains constant and two of the poorest Divisional Secretariats are in the Hambantota District of the province.

3. Southern province is also regarded as the breeding ground for two political insurgencies that strived to overthrow the established political regimes leading to political violence.

4. Fourthly, Southern province represents both rural and urban diversity to engage in a comparative study within the region.

Southern province is composed of three administrative districts. Administrative districts are once again subdivided into divisional secretariats. Galle District is the most urbanized district in the province. To represent the urban sector, the divisional secretariat of ‘Galle Four Gravetors’ was chosen for the present study. The second district of the province is the Matara. ‘Devinura Divisional Secretariat’ area from Matara district was selected as it represents one of the major occupations of the people in the province viz. the fishery sector and it has also been identified as one of the major pockets of poor in the country by the World Bank and the Government of Sri Lanka in their joint exercise of poverty mapping (www.ciesin.columbia.edu/povmapMethods/SriLanka_Povmap.pdf. visited on 25th December 2009).

From the Hambantota District, Suriyawewa Divisional Secretariat area has been selected on the ground that it represents a major village resettlement scheme and one of the most poverty ridden divisional secretariat area in the country and also a strong support base of radical left.

To obtain the required information for the study, the field survey method has been applied. First, the primary data is obtained from a field surveys administered in the Galle Four Gravetors, Devinuwara, and Suriyawewa Divisional Secretariat Areas. It has covered 300 respondent beneficiary
families. A questionnaire was administered through a trained interviewer in each divisional secretary area. The beneficiary families have been selected randomly covering at least five households in each village of the divisional areas while the researcher himself took part in administering the questionnaire.

Besides the above main tool of data collection, the present study had used other tools such as focused group discussion, interviews, personal diaries, participatory observations and in-depth case studies with the beneficiary families. Interviews were the main mechanism of data collection from the official of the government institutions as they are supposed to play an important role as social animators. The information collected for the above study also forms part of data.

The second set of data was extracted through discussion using semi-structured interviews held with 30 grass-root level policy implementers.

The data collected through the above named sources have been analyzed and interpreted descriptively. The researcher would like to note that the present study does not use sophisticated computerized data analysis as he believes technology dominated analysis techniques are not matching for the present purpose as those techniques dominate data collection process and limits the understanding of social realities. The tabulation of the data was done manually by the researcher himself.
Limitation of the Study

This study is not a cross-country comparative research. Findings and conclusions are limited to the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. However, it is a comparative study within the province as it has compared urban, rural, and occupational aspects of poverty. Sri Lanka is being a plural society, it has got a regional and other socio-economic characteristic which varies significantly from each other. The present research did not explore these dimensions. Hence, the generalizations and findings of the present study are limited in scope and coverage. The future researchers who use the information and conclusions of the present study have to be mindful of the limitations categorically listed above.

Salient Features of Samurdhi Programme

The government policy programme is known as “Samurdhi” (Prosperity). It has incorporated ‘welfare’, ‘rural development’ and ‘micro-finance’ component to deal with poverty into its project activities. Welfare component includes food stamp and social insurance for the poor who have been identified as one who could overcome poverty (empowerable poor) as well as for the poor who need permanent safety net (none-empowerable poor).

It is the successor to the previous government’s poverty alleviation programme known as Jana Saviya (People’s Strength) in Sri Lanka (Razana, 2008). Philosophically, the movement upheld the capitalist mode of production (Samurdhi Adikaiya, Undated). However, the novel feature of the movement is the identification of the necessity of linking the poor with the process of market (Lakshman, 1998).
presupposes that market to thrive there shall have a population with purchasing power (Mitraratna, 1998). Its identifies the necessity of removing forces like the marginalization of the poor due to lack of capital and the emergence of threat to market out of sheer inability to meet the basic needs of life by a majority of the people in market economies etc. which are inherent in the market (Lakshman, 1999). The above assumption had lead the official policy to recognize the need of facilitating the poor in their efforts of integration through providing support to meet the basic needs of living and assets transfer. This understanding and reasoning on the part of policy planners had lead to incorporate two elements in to the movement to deal with the public problem of poverty simultaneously. The first being “Empowerment” and the second a “Safety Net” for the poor.

The approach has resulted in categorization of the poor as Empowerable and Chronic poor who require a Safety Net to survive. However, it is thought, that a safety net is necessary even for the poor who can engage in profitable economic activities as a temporary means of attracting them to the programme (Samurhdi Adhikariaya, ibid) The temporary safety net will be removed after the poor families become self-reliant entrepreneurs through the micro-credit programme.

The novelty of the present policy programme is the privatization of the ‘responsibility’ of poverty to the poor. Privatization implies the taking of the responsibility for their poverty and measures designed to overcome poverty. The involvement of external actors, whether they are public or civil society agencies, is facilitative and temporary in this process. It approaches the ‘safety net’ as an altruistic act of the public.
It also assumes that success of the strategy depends on participation by the poor in every step of the project. For the purpose, the policy has visualized a partnership of government agency created for the purpose i.e. Samurdhi Authority and network of organizations of the poor\(^2\). The external agency has to progressively give the management responsibilities to the poor after they have become self reliant and self sufficient. The important departure from the previous policy is the belief on the ability of politically committed “state sector” to implement development with the participation of the poor rather than in partnership with civil society organizations. The neo-emphasis on politically committed carder of animators was thought of as a mechanism to humanize bureaucracy and build mutually supportive organizations of the poor.

The policy also has emphasized the need to go beyond consultation. The vision of the new policy is the ‘active and critical participation of the poor at each stage of the ‘project cycle’ giving responsibilities of overseeing of the state sector organization set-up to support and implement the policy by the poor (Mitraratna, 1999). The major task of development agencies is to help the poor escape from this disadvantageous environment and empower the poor through facilitation. The movement has approached welfare as a mean to reach the poor. It is assumed that the best way to make contact with the poor is tangible benefits and otherwise, the poor cannot be attracted to the programme. The stamp to purchase daily needs has been thought of attracting the poor to the project activities while making them trained in market transactions such as savings and loan. The empowerable
beneficiaries have to save a prescribed amount from the stamp they recieves in the Samurdhi Bank. They have to purchase at least one share of the bank individually and become members as a small group.

The project activities suggest that the programme had approached poverty basically as a rural incidence which caused the government to identify rural sector as backward. However, the programme has included some novel features into its approach. They as follows:

- The rural development activities have to support the basic needs of the poor
- The activities have to aimed at increasing the productivity of the produce of the poor.
- Rural development activities have to be means of livelihood for the poor by creating a labourer market
- The organized poor has to be given the responsibility of control over the rural development activities (Samurdhi Puvat Hasuna, 23 May 2000).

Cumulatively those emphasises suggest that the poor must be made responsible in the identification and implementation of project activities. It also had made a condition that at least 25 per cent of the cost of the project shall be in the form of labour contribution by the poor under the programme.

The most important element of the strategy is the micro-finance. The first and second elements of the strategy though related to the effort of poverty alleviation, they are supplementary and secondary to the third component of
the strategy of micro-finance (Glinskaya, 2008). The micro-finance was given high priority in the context of badly affecting global market forces at the macro-level. Globalization and marketization promote economic growth which leads to mal-distribution of benefits. The industries do not tend to spread in rural areas where there are pockets of the poor. Hence, the above processes contribute less to the improvement of the living conditions of the poor. The banking system disfavors the poor as they tend to promote savings in the rural side and channel to urban and well off entrepreneurs rather than the poor. Traditional banks distrust the poor. Hence, the policy supposes to start and initiate alternative credit market that was thought a precondition for the success in poverty alleviation (Wijerathne, undated).

**The micro-credit component was thought to achieve the following:**

- Creation of a credit market bias to the poor.

- Creation of Self employment opportunities to meet the challenge of unemployment and under-employment characteristic feature among the rural poor (Ibid).

The lack of credit facilities was identified as the major impediment to start self-employment by the poor. The fund owned and handled by the poor is the mechanism to overcome the impending situation in alleviating poverty. The organization built to reach the end is ‘Samurdhi Bank’ Society.

The salient feature of the bank is that it is owned by the poor and they are shareholders. The empowerable poor have to purchase, at least, one share of Rs.500.00. The bank collects savings in the form of compulsory savings out of the fringe benefits package under the programme and voluntary savings.
There is no rule that prohibits access to savings in the bank by non-poor but credit facility is limited to the poor alone. The loans are on flexible and easy to obtain. The new bank goes to the poor reversing the practice associated with traditional banking system.

**Implementation Mechanism**

The new policy paradigm has established a partnership between the beneficiary organizations and the government bureaucracy. The stated objective of the mechanism has been to direct the energies of the both towards eradicating poverty. The government had assumed the following responsibilities:

1. Provision of a safety net to ease the pain of economic reforms
2. Training and facilitation for the poor to credit and saving culture
3. Concientization the poor, organization and empowerment
4. Facilitation of extended services for the poor (Wijerathne, ibid.).

The responsibilities taken by the government are largely facilitative. Designing activities to overcome poverty has to be done by the individual poor and their organizations.

Government has established an authority is called ‘Samurdhi Authority’. The Government had recognized of having a separate institutional set up that could work flexibly and promptly bypassing the traditional bureaucratic style of functioning (Parliament of Sri Lanka, 1995).
The ‘Commissioner for Poor Relief’ ‘Samurdhi Commissioner General’ and Secretary of the Ministry of Rural Development are ex officio members of the Authority. The Distribution of the Poor Relief is the responsibility of the commissioner. The Samurdhi Commissioner General is responsible for the insurance scheme for the poor and the Ministry of Rural Development for infrastructure development in rural areas. Beside the ex-officio members, there are four other nominated members by the minister in charge. Further, he has to name one among the nominated to the post of Director General of Samurdhi. The public sector part of the organizational set up can be subdivided into one, such Staff absorbed from the existing Bureaucracy and two, the Permanent staff of the authority. Absorbed staff composed of the officers at district level, Divisional level of the permanent civil service. In addition to the traditional role, they are supposed to perform the functions of authority in their respective spheres of competence. For this purpose, the district secretary is appointed as the deputy commissioner and the divisional secretary as assistant commissioner. The functions and duties of the authority could be identified as the following

1. Provision of income earning avenue for the poor

2. Distribution of benefits among the poor

3. Coordination of different and varied development works in the best interest of the poor

4. Supporting and facilitation of initiatives taken by the poor to overcome poverty
5. Making the poor participate in the public policy process on poverty alleviation

6. Making accesses to credit facilities and extensive services and the development of the infrastructure.

The Village Society is direct representative body and it is the decision making body at the village level. Most important are the supervision and approval of the loan applications that come through small group and discussion and approval of the rural infrastructure development among others. Samurdhi Development officer has to attend the monthly meetings of the society. The Banking Society is a indirect representative body. It is composed of officers of the village level societies. It functions include provision of credit on flexible conditions and collecting loan on time. It Samurdhi Manager has been made the ex-officio secretary to the society. The beneficiaries are shareholders of the banking society. The fund of the bank built up through shares, compulsory savings and other savings of the poor. Maha Sangamaya is comprised of officers of banking societies. It is responsible for supervision over the village level societies and banking societies, insurance of the banking societies and extended services to the poor. The objective of the Balakaya is to bring the youth to the development of rural areas. The Development Officer is the ex-officio secretary to it.

Real World Outcome of the Programme

Expectation of the partnership between public sector and civil society on policy implementation has been to target the needy and deserving beneficiaries. It was expected that politically committed you bring the dully
deserving poor into the programme. The findings of the study suggests contrary to the expectation.

Income ranges of the beneficiary families and existing statistics question the effectiveness of targeting. The Monthly Income of the beneficiary families are given in the Table 1.4.

**Table 1.1: Income ranges of Families**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>No. of Families</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 500-1000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 1001-1500</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs.1501- 2000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 2001-2500</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 2501-3000</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 3001-3500</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 3501- 4000</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 4001-4500</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 4501-5000</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over Rs. 5000</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The criteria of selecting beneficiaries have been monthly income of less than Rs. 1500 and size of the family. If strictly followed the criterion of Rs. 1500.00, there would have only 44 worthy and needy families. The figure implies that there are only 15% of the 300 beneficiary families which are eligible for benefits in both empowerable and non-empowerable poor
groups. It is important to note low income families are from the Suriyawewa Divisional Secretary Area. There are 24 families from this area, according to the original criterion of Rs. 1500.00. This is quiet natural because this divisional secretariat area is one of the most poverty ridden area of the country. However, above data reveals that there are over 47% of beneficiary families which exceed the prescribed minimum level of monthly income.

Other criterion that could be employed to assess the efficacy of targeting the beneficiaries is the beneficiary assessment of the worthiness of the inclusion and exclusion. The beneficiaries agree that there are members who have been left out from the programme on other considerations like political allegiance and relationship with the street level implementers.

Beneficiaries also agree that there are beneficiaries left out of the programme who are needy and worthy. They had pointed out the political allegiance as the major cause of exclusion while personal grudging is the next cause. Some of them belong to the category of the poorest of the poor. The assessments of the beneficiaries on the left out but deserving poor households are given in the table 1.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Exclusion</th>
<th>No. of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1: the Beneficiary Assessment on the Excluded Deserving Families
The mean value of the above is 5.8. This implies that the Beneficiaries agree, according to their understanding of the process of beneficiary selection, there are 5-6 households that have been left out from the programme.

These finding suggests a dependent relationship between the beneficiaries and grassroots level officers.

The cost effectiveness questioned the efficacy of the programme. The objective of government civil society partnership was to reduce the reduction of implementation cost. The expenditure on benefits and expenditure on salaries and other allowances for officials are given in the Table 1.3. It presents the estimated annual expenditure on benefit allocation for the three divisional secretariat areas per annum.

**Table 1.2: Annual Estimated Expenditure on Benefit Allocation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Benefits</th>
<th>N0. Of Families</th>
<th>Estimated Expenditure per Annum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 1500</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Rs. 846,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 615</td>
<td>4405</td>
<td>Rs. 32,508,900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 350</td>
<td>6378</td>
<td>Rs. 26,787,600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 250</td>
<td>4368</td>
<td>Rs. 13,104,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 210</td>
<td>2798</td>
<td>Rs. 7,050,960.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>415</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Rs. 69,720.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Government spends Rs.82,893,180/= to provide financial benefits to the beneficiary families in the selected three divisional Secretariat areas. The total money value for non-empowerable poor is Rs. 46942560.00. It implies that the government spends 56.63 per cent of the total expenditure on Samurdhi for non-empowerable poor.

There is a deception in these statistics, because in reality, government does not spend the projected amount of money. The Programme has made it compulsory for the empowerable poor to contribute to Samurdhi Lottery by purchasing a ticket value of Rs.10.00 and contributing Rs. 30.00 per month to the Samitiya. In addition, they have to deposit as compulsory savings a prescribed amount of value out of the Samurdhi Stamp. In the case of beneficiaries of 1500, each has to deposit Rs. 400.00 as compulsory savings and the beneficiaries of Rs. 615 have to deposit Rs. 200.00 as compulsory savings. Both groups also have to contribute to Rs. 10 Lottery, Rs. 40 for the Insurance and Rs 30 for the membership in the Samitiya every month. The Rs.100 beneficiary has only a symbolic value as it is been deposited in the bank. Thus the treasury spends lesser than presented in estimate. The deductions are rolled back to Samurdhi Authority and The treasury.

At the divisional level, The Divisional Secretary, Accountant and financial officer of the Divisional Secretary Area, The Samurdhi Managers and the Source: The Progress Reports of the Samurdhi for Galle, Matara and Hambatota Districts 2009
Samurdhi Development Officers have to be paid for their services. The Table 1.4 presents annual estimation of the recurrent expenditure, in the form of salaries and allowances for the implementing officers of the three divisional secretary areas.

Table 1.3: Estimate on Salary and Allowances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Officers</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Monthly Allowance</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Annual Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Divisional Secretary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rs. 1500</td>
<td>Rs.54000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rs. 1000</td>
<td>Rs.36000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rs. 750</td>
<td>Rs.27000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samurdhi Managers</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Rs.21 500(^3)</td>
<td>Rs.6,192,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samurdhi Development Officers</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Rs. 17900(^4)</td>
<td>Rs. 49,404,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total                        |        |                   | Rs.55,713,000 |                 |

Government spends Rs.55, 713,000 for allowances and salaries of the staff in three divisional secretariat areas. Thus, the total expenditure occurred for benefit allocation and staff maintaining Rs. 138606180. This implies that

\(^3\) Not included the other allowances

\(^4\) Not included other allowances
the authority spend 40.19 percent of the total expending as salaries and allowances. This is not a plausible figure in a programme aimed at the poor empowerment.

**Deciding the Beneficiaries**

The foregone analysis of the process of inclusion into and exclusion from the programme has revealed that it has been failed to target properly the worthy and needy beneficiaries as defined in the original national policy on poverty. The divergence of policy objectives and what is implemented in this process of targeting beneficiaries warrants paying attention to understand and assess how the beneficiaries have been included into and excluded from the programme. Responses received are given in the table 1.5.

| Table 1.4: Beneficiary Responses on Selection Criterion |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Criterion                                      | No. of Responses| Percentage    |
| Poverty                                       | 114             | 38.00         |
| Party Connection                              | 112             | 37.33         |
| Social Relations                              | 56              | 18.67         |
| Petitions                                     | 18              | 6.00          |
| Total                                         | 300             | 100           |

Accordingly 38% of beneficiaries have declared that they had been included into the programme for their poverty. This implies that the remaining 62 percent of beneficiaries have been included into the programme on other
considerations. Discussions with grassroots officials have revealed that many members of this category belong to different but active political parties. Some Development Officers have declared that they approach the programme as an activity of the political party to which they had close link as local level leaders. They could have dropped any of beneficiary families in this group from the programme gradually if they wanted to do so. They had not taken that option for the sake legitimacy of the programme and sympathy. These officers opined the programme is a means to win over the heart of the beneficiaries to the party which had patronaged them. They explained the selection of real poor is driven by natural sympathy. If the poor in this category want to remain within the programme, they have to follow their dictate even in electoral politics. If other party comes into power, not only the beneficiaries but also the implementers at grass root are at risk of losing the benefits. There is an almost equal layer to the above who receive benefits under the programme due to their membership of the ruling party units at local level. The discussions with beneficiaries have revealed important aspect of electoral politics. They are careful to observe the way of the electoral behavior of the fellow citizens in the neighbourhood. If the majority of the fellow citizens choose a particular party, the vigilant

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5 In the context of Presidential Election of 25th January 2010, the Samurdhi beneficiaries of Elpitiya and Bentara Divisional Secretariat area have been dictated to participate in an election rally to help the Incumbent President Mahinda Rajapakshe and they were directed to put a piece of Paper to a box in the premise to make it known that they have participated in the rally. www.Lanka.truth.lk.

6 Discussion with a group of Samurdhi Officers at the Divisional Secretary at Devinuwara.
individual voters, in turn, declare their allegiance to that party, after obtaining the promises of benefits from the local party bosses in the village and in the case of Samurdhi, it was the present development officers. The method of getting benefits is showing active allegiance in the proper manner on proper time.

There are around 19 per cent beneficiaries that have included to the programme on social relations. These social relations range from social divisions such the caste, family relations, and friendship etc with the grass root level implementers. The smallest layer receive benefits from petitions to higher authorities such Divisional Secretary, Members of Parliament etc.

The discussion on inclusion and exclusion of beneficiaries and the failure to implement the programme in cost effective manner implies the policy has been unable to implement the policy as declared in documents. It is pertinent to explore why this situation has taken place.

The findings of the study suggest the divergence between stated objectives and outcomes has to with the equation between the beneficiary and implementer. The grassroot officers are also politically constructed beneficiaries. Implementers share many dimensions of the syndromes of beneficiaries.

**Implementer Beneficiary Syndromes**

The discussion so far had revealed the selection of beneficiaries were at the discretion of politically appointed implementers of the programme. Same thing is applicable in the case of policy implementers at the grass-root level. The interviewed officials had stated that they had got their appointment
through political patronage of the ruling party and they deserved patronage because they had been discriminated for long under the previous government. In this sense, they are not implementer of the policy but beneficiaries. One of the divisional secretaries had stated “They are beneficiaries and politically determined because they were appointed without giving equal opportunity to the people who are equally qualified”.

The foregoing discussion had revealed once included into the programme, it is extremely difficult to show allegiance contrary to the fancies and whims of the grass-root officers of the programme without taking the risk of losing the benefits of the programme. The grass-root officers also explained the politically pressurized environment in which they had to work. They are been under twin pressure. One emanates at the national level. In the enormous fiscal and financial pressure, authority has pressurizing them to exclude as many beneficiaries as possible from the programme by declaring them as empowered poor. On the other hand local level organizer of the party pressurized them to include as many as possible into the programme because his/her political fortune depends on preferential votes received at elections. They explained the excessive number of poor included under poor who needs safety net is due to this twin pressures. They have invented criteria to do this. They advised people register couples who are living together with parents and apply benefits separately. None can work as prescribed in the policy and contrary to the wishes of the local organizer of party under the politicized administrative system. They explained working as prescribed in policy is a punishable offense.

The next element of the syndrome is the inescapability from the political allegiance once entered. The inclusion into the project is determined whether
according to the objective criteria or not, once included into the programme, the continuation in the programme depends on the political allegiance of the beneficiaries. If they do not remain within the desired parameters of political behavior prescribed by the local political elite including the Samurhi Development Officers, they would be dropped from the project activities. In other words, the continuation in the project is politically determined. If the Samurdhi officers at grassroots are vigilant over the beneficiaries, the immediate higher layer of political elite in the ruling party is vigilant over the officers’ behavior. The Deviant behavior is punished by way of transfer to difficult areas etc. The poverty alleviation has become a resource of keeping power of the sponsoring party. The continuation in power the party which initiated Samurdhi is utmost important to the beneficiaries. As the implementers too are beneficiaries, the continuation of Samurdhi programme is their job security. Thus the implementers are ardent followers of the sponsoring party.

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7. I owe my debt to former Deputy-Commissioner of Election for Galle District and presently a Divisional Secretary of Galle for this understanding.

8. In the election to the presidency in 2005, the speakers of the United National Party spoke of the abolishing of the Programme. The Samurdhi Officers had organized mass rallies in protest to the suggestion and organized the poor in favour of the present president. One of the leading figures in the United National Party from the Southern Province had explained to the Researcher, that speaking against Samurdhi movement was a conspiracy from within the party to defeat their candidate party on personal hatred and power game.
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