

DEVELOPMENT OF SYSTEMS TO PROVIDE SOCIAL SERVICES TO THE POOR.

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**Abstract:** This article talks about the development of systems for providing social services to the poor and its modern methods.

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This section addresses points regarding the provision of services that are common to all sectors and specific services such as education and healthcare will be explained in respective sections. In developing countries, central governments, having control of budgets, and tend to make all decisions regarding administrative services. However, physical distance between the decision-making process and the field has several disadvantages such as unprofitable investments, the implementation of projects that do not meet actual needs and delays in schedules. Local governments play a significant role in formulating and carrying out projects appropriate for the needs of the field and in reducing such disadvantages as mentioned above, since they are in close proximity to the field. Local governments: 1) can clearly understand the actual conditions of the poor, 2) can be a main body (with their own financial resources) in making decisions regarding the provision of services to the poor, and 3) can be a main body in planning and implementing the provision of services to the poor. There is, however, a tendency for the local governments to carry out projects somewhat as a sub-contractor of the central government, as a result of constraints on human resources, know-how and funding. Also, sometimes, services are not adequately provided due to corruption or inefficiencies inside the government. Thus, in developing countries, despite the fact that various poverty reduction policies are advocated, government services often do not actually reach the poor. The poor may even feel a sense of resignation or mistrust towards the government because their voices are not adequately reflected in the local government and thereby, there is no improvement in the situation. In order for decentralization to be functional, related systems must be developed and budgets must be allocated accordingly. At the same time, the administrative capacity of both the central and local governments must be strengthened. In particular, local governments are limited in terms of finances and human resources, and so it is of paramount importance to develop the knowhow and mechanisms for planning and operating services for the poor assuming these limitations. To operate services effectively with the limited resources of the local governments, it is essential that public service plans be formulated based on the specific needs of the poor and the specific causes of poverty. To do this, it is important to promote the planning of public services that are based on accurate social assessment and participation of the poor. Furthermore, to increase the impact and sustainability of public services, it is essential that the poor participate, since the ownership of the poor, the recipients of the services, is needed in implementing and managing projects. Strengthening of partnerships between local government agencies and with the central government is also indispensable in providing effective and efficient services. For effective and efficient administrative services, accountability of the government and prevention of corruption play significant roles. Finally, as services that can be

provided by governments are limited, it is important to improve the capacity of cooperation, coordination and negotiation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs, private organizations, aid agencies) as well as to create mechanisms to involve participation of the poor. The basic human rights of the poor are not always protected in developing countries, and many policies and institutions are often not in the interest of the poor. If these situations are not improved, it would be difficult to find opportunities for the poor to realize their full potential. It is, therefore, necessary to protect the basic human rights, formulate democratic policies and develop systems that reflect the voices of the poor, based on an understanding of their actual situations. In terms of policies and institutions, there are voting rights, multi-party systems, separation of powers, protection of basic human rights, and measures to directly help those who are socially vulnerable. We must bear in mind, however, that careful planning is necessary since systems that provide preferential treatment for the socially vulnerable may bring about a backlash from other groups and may distort the self-image of the target group. Furthermore, the establishment of policies and institutions alone is not sufficient. For policies and institutions to be functional, capacity development and institution building of both government agencies and the poor themselves are indispensable. On the governments' side, it is necessary to strengthen the function of internal and external assessment, simplify administrative procedures, increase transparency and improve legal procedures as well as policing functions. The tasks on the side of the poor are to promote community education activities (self-education) and to foster organizations that can provide support for such activities. The poor are often left out of the development process, have little incentive to improve their own capacities and gain few opportunities to achieve their full potential. On the other hand, while the governments of developing countries and donors are providing various services and investing efforts for the poor, this type of assistance without ownership on the part of the poor may lead to their dependence and consequently, does not encourage the improvement of their capacities. It is, therefore, essential to build mechanisms that promote the participation of the poor in the decision-making process and motivate them to have their own goals, to think about the ways for improving their capacities and to act towards the goals. In terms of social development in assisting independence and community participation of the poor, while every country has local NGOs that are thoroughly knowledgeable about the local situation, local NGOs and local governments rarely work together, and in many cases they are carrying out efforts independent of each other. It is important to maintain and improve agricultural and fishery income since many of the poor live in rural villages and are engaged in agriculture or fisheries. Agricultural and fishery policies and institutions, however, are not always congruous with the actual conditions and needs of the poor. In many cases, the poor do not own land and receive an unfairly small distribution in proportion to the amount of their work, or they are unable to take advantage of public services such as subsidies. It is, therefore, important to first accurately understand the actual conditions and needs of the poor and then develop policies and institutions that can directly or indirectly alleviate or improve the adverse conditions faced by the poor. Land reform is especially important, but strong opposition can be expected from the existing landowners (often the influential people in the country). So, it is vital to carefully consider how to deal with predictable resistance when carrying out system reforms such as land reforms that challenge the vested interests.

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