

# **Analysis of Development Administration at District Level in KP**

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## **Introduction**

The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is situated in the North-West of Pakistan with an estimated population of more than thirty five and a half million after merger with the former “Federally Administered Tribal Areas” in 2018.<sup>1</sup> In the recent past, districts of KPK underwent some major administrative reforms in 2001.<sup>2</sup> Most remarkably, the more than one and a half century old system of district administration was revamped by abolition of the post of District Deputy Commissioner, which used to exercise its power and control over the provincial departments and their officers in the districts. In the reformed system, the district governments were empowered with administrative and financial autonomy over the devolved subjects.

However, the said administrative structure got revamped again in 2012<sup>3</sup> and provincial government revived the office of District Deputy Commissioner as its representative in all the districts. As per the new TORs of the Deputy Commissioners issued in 2013 by the Establishment Department<sup>4</sup>, the Deputy Commissioner(s) of district(s) were declared as the “representative (s) of the provincial government in the district.” Later on, the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa passed Local Government Act 2013 and provincial government promulgated its “Rules of Business” in 2015, under which the office of Deputy Commissioner, being in charge of district administration, was made the focus point of the infrastructure development to be executed from district fund.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, neither the LGA-2013 nor any standing order of the federal/provincial governments spelled out the coordination mechanism to exist between infrastructure development agencies working in the districts and the office of Deputy

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<sup>1</sup> Pakistan Bureau of statistics “Provisional Summary Results of 6th Population and Housing Census-2017.

<sup>2</sup> Local Government Ordinance, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, “Functions of District Administration” issued vide Notification No. SO(O&M)EM) E&AD/2-30/2007-Vol-II dated 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2013 by Establishment and Admn Department.

<sup>5</sup> Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, “District Government, Rules of Business, 2015” under “Schedule-II, Sr. # 1”.

Commissioners.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, difficulties arise at the time of execution of the developmental projects; caused delays in implementation, required revision of cost and bestowed inconvenience on public. Hence, the need of the hour is that all the executing agencies belonging to different echelons of government should have a structured coordination at district level for efficient implementation of infrastructure development projects.

## **Statement of Problem**

District is considered as policy implementation and service-delivery unit in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Practically, all infrastructure development activities ranging from mega projects of national importance like construction of dams, highways etc. to smaller projects of municipal level like street pavements, sewer lines etc. are executed at district(s) level. The district level representative of government i.e., District Deputy Commissioner is responsible for effective coordination among concerned stakeholders for smooth and timely execution of development projects. The office of District Deputy Commissioner has been staffed with technical human resource to supervise the implementation of district-level projects. Likewise, District Deputy Commissioner as chairperson of District Development Committee (DDC) supervises development projects of district level.<sup>7</sup>

However, executing agencies of infrastructure development projects report to different echelons of government. Some are district level agencies like District Councils, Tehsil Municipal Administrations, Village/Neighborhood councils etc. and some are provincial level agencies like Communication and Works Department, Irrigation Department etc. while others are federal level agencies like PESCO, SNGPL, PTCL etc. Their funding patterns and methods of execution are also different from one another. Different fora at district, province and federal level assign these agencies different nature of development projects to be executed within territorial jurisdiction of district(s).<sup>8</sup> Yet, there is no district level mechanism available to be utilized by District Deputy Commissioners, for coordination among the federal and provincial development agencies. Neither they are directly responsible to the office of District Deputy Commissioner(s) in which they are executing their development projects nor they have any idea about planned or ongoing development projects of their sister agencies in their areas of intervention. This results into lack of coordination, slow

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<sup>6</sup> DC Abid Wazir of Mardan, interview by author, Mardan, 07 November, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Schedule-III of Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, "Planning and Development guidelines (2015) for devolved tiers of local governments."

<sup>8</sup> Chief Economist Zaheer ud Din Babar of P&DD KP, interview by author, Peshawar, 07 November, 2020.

execution, wastage of resources, duplication of efforts and, above all, inconvenience to general public.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, this paper will explore the possibility of establishment of a “development hub” at district level of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which may not only coordinate among all kinds of development agencies working in the district but also guide them for acting synergically, while maintaining their institutional autonomy.

## **Significance/Scope of Study**

This study has analyzed deficiencies in coordination mechanism among different infrastructure development agencies at district level and legal lacunae coupled with capacity issues which bar development administration at district level play a central role in planning and execution of projects.

This study remained limited to the period in which The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act, 2013 was implemented from the year 2015 to 2019; with special focus on district of Peshawar and Mardan. This selection was made because these districts are the most populous districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa<sup>10</sup> and majority of mega projects are implemented in these two districts.

More importantly, instead of theoretical and philosophical discussions, this study focused on the critical analysis of the on-ground implementation mechanism of infrastructure development projects by different government agencies while maintaining their structural and functional autonomy. Neither resource generation or revenue mobilization via developmental activities was deliberated nor linkage of improvement of social indicators with infrastructure development came under discussion.

This study will be presented to the Additional Chief Secretary, Planning and Development Department, Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for further debate and taking policy decisions to fill the identified gaps by implementing suggested measures.

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<sup>9</sup> Chief PSDP Ameer Khan of P&DD KP, interview by author, Peshawar, 07 November, 2020.

<sup>10</sup> 6th Population and Housing Census-2017.

## **Review of Literature**

Since this study remained focused on the analysis of the subject-matter pertaining to the recent past (2015-2019) under the latest local government law and its subordinate secondary legislations, hence peer-reviewed and grey literature was not readily available. However, effort was made to review as much relevant literature as possible.

Annual progress report of 2016 of district administration Mardan<sup>11</sup> has dilated upon the development portfolio of district Mardan for the financial year 2015-16 as a part of overall performance of the office of Deputy Commissioner. It also focused on variety of development projects executed in Mardan in that period. The role of district administration in managing financial and developmental affairs of the district has also elaborated in this report. However, the major constraints and challenges faced by the district administration on the infrastructure development side are not highlighted in it, therefore, this study focuses on that aspect.

Ali, et al. (2016) focused on role of elected members in developmental activities under The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act, 2013. The statistical data revealed that elected representatives are performing their positive role in infrastructure development like schools, basic health units, roads, irrigation channels as well as in generating revenue for the local government. However, the role of permanent executives in the districts regarding infrastructure development is overlooked, therefore, this study centers this primary constituent.

Abdul Wahid et al. (2017) not only stated the basic concept and components of empowerment but also illustrated the barriers to empowerment among Citizen Community Boards in Pakistan and multiple perspectives of development that direct how local governments perform in Pakistan and the hurdles they face. In what way the building capacity at local/provincial level is imperative for a sustainable progress certainly offer indigenous stakeholders to contribute in decision making. Author also has addressed the implementation of the community driven projects, the developmental issues and how the policymakers may settle their priorities. However, grey areas in implementation of infrastructure development projects at district level have not been discussed anywhere, so, this study accentuates on such areas.

Perkins et al. (2012), has specified the basic connection between economic conditions of a country and its developmental priorities. Additionally, it has indicated the roles of

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<sup>11</sup> "Mardan Rising," Deputy Commissioner Mardan, last modified March 10, 2017.

different stakeholders involved in the sphere of development and their impact on economic growth that further shapes various aspects of fiscal and financial policies simultaneously. The article comprehends different strategies adopted for undertaking developmental activities, and critically analyzes the root causes of success or failure in executing certain projects.

## **The Research Questions**

1. What are the salient features of development administration in districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?
2. What are the coordination, legal and capacity related challenges of development administration in districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?
3. How federal, provincial and district governments can work together at district level for smooth implementation of their developmental projects?

## **Research Method**

To have a deep insight, this research used both qualitative and quantitative methods. However, it heavily relied on primary sources, hence a combination of semi-structured interviews, questionnaire surveys, observation and document analysis were used to find answers to research questions. Official documents were obtained under The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right To Information Act, 2013 from the offices of Deputy Commissioners of Peshawar and Mardan about infrastructure development projects.

The gist of different research methods/tools adopted in this study is given below:

**Table 1: Research Areas and Their Corresponding Tools**

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Research Area</b>	<b>Tool</b>
1.	Problem understanding	Discussion with research supervisor Framing of problem statement and research questions Literature Review
2.	Gap analysis	Interviews Perusal of official documents Survey
3.	Situation analysis	From available data using Problem Analysis Tree
4.	Extraction of outcomes from situation analysis	Discussion with research supervisor Logical approach to qualitative data
5.	Recommendations	Discussion with research supervisor Recommendation for policy formulation by using Objective Analysis Tree

## **Organization of Paper**

This paper is divided into three sections. Section-I deals with the salient features of approval and execution of infrastructure development projects and their current relationship with the development administration in districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Section-II focuses on the issues which arise during construction of infrastructure by different executing agencies due to lack of coordination under proper legal/policy framework. Additionally, it also highlights the capacity issues of district administration. Section-III concludes the discussion and gives recommendations for improving policy framework to establish “development hubs” at districts and provincial levels via technological strengthening of relevant offices, giving important role to district administration in planning and supervision of infrastructure development and effective coordination with federal government.

## **Section I**

### **1.1 Salient Features of Approval and Execution of Development Projects**

It goes without saying that well-knit administrative machinery is necessary for successful implementation of any agenda in the domain of public administration, especially when it comes to the complex phenomenon of infrastructure development which involves multifarious stakeholders. On one hand, the execution of infrastructure development projects on ground includes diverse activities ranging from land acquisition from private owners to relocation of existing facilities to installation of new amenities while, on the other hand, delay in execution of projects due to any factor results into escalation of originally approved cost and revision of detailed cost estimates. This matter becomes further complicated when an organization dismantles already established public infrastructure to execute its project which leads to wastage of public money. Hence, to handle such multifaceted subject of infrastructure development, there should be a robust structure of development administration at district level.

However, before discussion on the role of the current infrastructure development administration at district level, it is highly relevant to understand the mechanism of management of the funds of different development projects which are, ultimately, executed in territorial jurisdiction of some district.

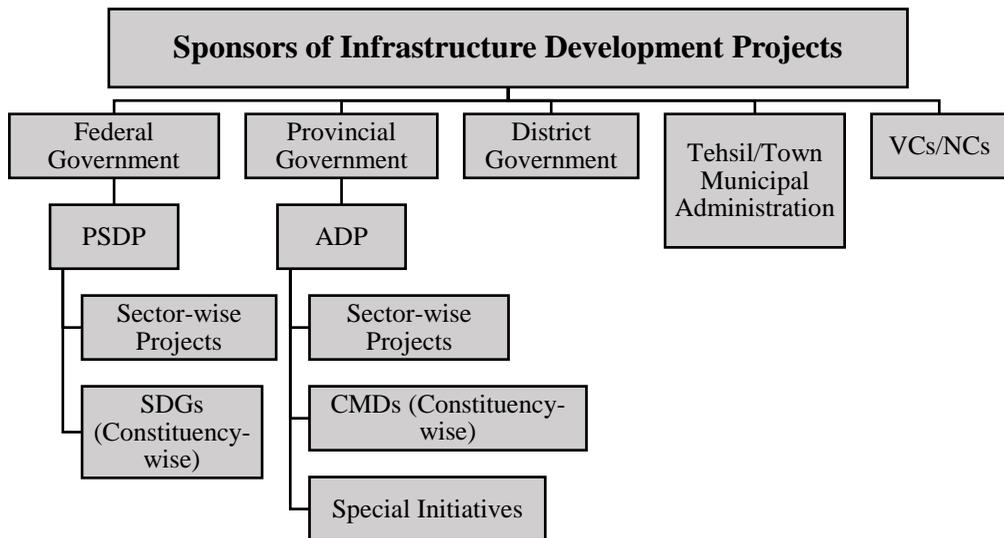
## 1.2 Management of Funds for Infrastructure Development Projects

The management of funds for infrastructure development projects in public sector is done as follows:

### 1.2.1 Sponsors of Infrastructure Development Projects

The following figure briefly throws light on different sources/sponsors of infrastructure development projects in a simplified manner:

**Figure 1: Sponsors of Infrastructure Development Projects**



## 1.2.2 Approval of Projects

The projects are approved at different fora, keeping in view the tier of government and cost of the project, as per the following table:

**Table 2: Mechanism of Approval of Projects**

Sr. No.	Tier of Government	Type of Project	Cost (In Millions)	Approving Forum	Chairperson of Approving Forum
1	District Government	District ADP	Upto 25 (M)	DDC	DC
			Over 25 (M)	PDWP	ACS
2	Provincial Government	Sector-wise Projects	Upto 60 (M)	DDWP	Secretary
			Upto 10,000 (M)	PDWP	ACS
			Upto 10,000 (M) with more than 25% share of foreign funding	ECNEC	PM
			Over 10,000 (M)	ECNEC	PM
		CMDs (Funds released to DC)	Upto 25 (M)	DDC	DC
3	Federal Government	Sector-wise Projects	Upto 2000 (M) with less than 25% share of foreign funding	DDWP	Secretary
			Upto 10,000 (M)	CDWP	Deputy Chairman Planning Commission
			Over 10,000 (M)	ECNEC	PM
		SDGs (Funds released to DC)	Upto 25 (M)	DDC	DC

Sources: 1. *Manual for development projects (revised 2019), identification, preparation, appraisal, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, ministry of planning, development and reform government of Pakistan, Islamabad.* 2. *Govt. of KP, "Planning and Development Guidelines (2015) for devolved tiers of local governments."*

### **1.2.3 Release of Funds<sup>12</sup>**

- a. Funds reserved for sector-wise projects of federal PSDP and provincial ADP are released directly to the executing agencies for utilization and district administration has no role in it.
- b. Funds of constituency-oriented projects sponsored from CMDs, special initiatives (like SDGs and other such projects) are released to the Deputy Commissioners of the districts for planning and execution.
- c. Funds for the projects to be sponsored by District Government are released to the Deputy Commissioner by the provincial government for utilization under P&D guidelines.
- d. Funds for the projects to be sponsored by TMAs are released to TMOs by the provincial government for utilization under P&D Guidelines.
- e. Funds for the projects to be sponsored by VCs/NCs are released to Assistant Director Local Government by the provincial government for utilization under P&D guidelines.

### **1.3 Role of District Administration in Infrastructure Development Activities**

Since all of the infrastructure development projects are executed in the districts, therefore, development administration in the districts, herein after called the district administration, needs to be well-shaped for efficient implementation of these projects. To cater this need, the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has given the responsibility of supervision and coordination of infrastructure development projects to the district administration headed by Deputy Commissioners of the districts. The operational component of the District Administration includes Finance, Planning and Development, Revenue Administration, Coordination and Human Resource Management.<sup>13</sup>

However, it can't be concluded that district administration plays a central role in all kinds of infrastructure development activities in the district. The ground reality is not very simple and straightforward. It changes with the change of sponsoring echelon of

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<sup>12</sup> Chief Economist Zaheer ud Din Babar of P&DD KP, interview by author, Peshawar, 07 November, 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Schedule-I, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa District Government Rules of Business, 2015.

government. The role and relevance of district administration in infrastructure development projects is summarized in the following table:

**Table 3: Relevance of District Administration in Different Types of Projects**

Sr. No.	Types of Projects	Relevance of Development Administration in Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Reason
1.	District level projects	Financial Authority: Yes Administrative Authority: Yes Role in Planning: Yes	Approval forum is headed by DC
2.	Provincial ADP Sector-wise projects	Financial Authority: <b>No</b> Administrative Authority: <b>No</b> Role in Planning: <b>No</b>	DC has no role in planning, approval and execution
3.	Federal PSDP Sector-wise projects	Financial Authority: <b>No</b> Administrative Authority: <b>No</b> Role in Planning: <b>No</b>	-do-
4.	CMDs and Special Initiatives like SDGs etc	Financial Authority: <b>Yes</b> Administrative Authority: <b>Yes</b> Role in Planning: <b>Yes</b>	Approval forum is headed by DC

Source: Former DO (F&P) Mian Ain Ullah of Mardan, interview by author, Peshawar, 07 November, 2020.

## Section II

### 2.1 Issues/Challenges in Construction of Infrastructure by Different Executing Agencies and Capacity of District Administration

Before looking into challenges, the data of Peshawar and Mardan is analyzed for gauging the efficiency in projects execution process in terms of revision of PC-Is purely on administrative/non-technical grounds like agitation by public, dispute on site, difficulty in land acquisition etc.

**Table 4: Efficiency in Project Execution Process**

District	Financial Year	Total No. of Projects Initiated (New Projects Only)		No. of Projects which Required Revision of PC-Is on Administrative Grounds		Efficiency in Percentage	
		District Govt.	Provincial Govt. (To be Executed by C&W Deptt. Only)	District Govt.	Provincial Govt. (To be Executed by C&W Deptt. Only)	District Govt.	Provincial Govt. (To be Executed by C&W Deptt. Only)
Peshawar	2015-16	137	11	00	03	100%	73%
	2016-17	260	04	00	01	100%	75%
	2017-18	194	07	00	02	100%	71%
	2018-19	138	09	00	01	100%	89%
Mardan	2015-16	81	16	04	05	95%	69%
	2016-17	184	03	02	02	98%	33%
	2017-18	243	08	00	01	100%	87%
	2018-19	175	06	05	02	97%	67%

*Source: This data is compiled with the amalgamation of the knowledge gained from ADP books; documents received under RTI Act and interviews of DOs (F&P) and Executive Engineers of C&W Department (Peshawar and Mardan).*

The above table clearly indicates that the projects in which district administration is involved in planning and execution (District level projects) are far more efficient than others. Although it is true that projects of local governments are comparatively smaller in cost and easier in execution, yet it can't be denied that their realistic planning at local level plays an important role in their smooth implementation. Even where the district government plans a project without taking cognizance of ground realities, its projects face difficulties. For example, district government Mardan allocated Rs. 7.25 (M) in the year 2016-17 for construction of office of a religious organization on the land of "Eid gah"<sup>14</sup> but could not materialize it because of the opposition of general public and technical issues raised by the DC office. On the other hand, unrealistic surveys at the time of planning done by federal or provincial executing agencies, without taking district administration on board, result into multifarious challenges during execution of infrastructure development projects.

<sup>14</sup> "Construction of Office in Eidgah for Khatme Nabovat, Shamsi Road, Mardan" District ADP 2016-17.

## **2.2 Challenges Due to Lack of Coordination**

Although the provincial government has authorized the district administration to coordinate, supervise and review the infrastructure development projects in the districts yet neither the district administration is involved in planning phase of the provincial or federal level projects nor it has any say in release of funds and other ancillary matters. Consequently, potential hindrances which may hamper the execution of the projects does not get identified at the planning phase. A few glimpses of perplexed situations arising in districts of Mardan and Peshawar during execution of federal and provincial level projects are cited below. These instances are based on the information received from DC offices of Mardan and Peshawar under KP RTI Act, 2013 as well as interviews of the then District Officers (F&P):

- a. In the ADP of 2015-16, the Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa allocated Rs. 596.427 (M) for “Construction of Mardan bypass road from Rashakai Interchange to Jalala (Missing Links) 8 KMs” (ADP #150230) to be executed by Communication and Works (C&W) Department. Out of these 08 KMs, 04 KMs of this road was proposed to be constructed along the Kuragh Canal. However, another project of “Reconditioning/improvement of canal patrol road along Kuragh canal branch RD 0 to RD 25000” (ADP # 140529) with the cost Rs. 319.32 (M) by Irrigation department was already in progress and the project of C&W department could not be executed without dismantling/chamfering of the retaining wall of the under-construction road of Irrigation Department. Likewise, additional piece of land (having built commercial properties) had to be acquired for achieving desired width of the road. Consequently, the Provincial Planning and Development Department had to allow the dismantling of the said retaining wall as well as acquisition of additional land for smooth execution of the C&W department’s project.<sup>15</sup> The said dismantling was done with the cost of Rs. 20 (M). Not only the funds utilized on construction of the said retaining wall got wasted but the project of C&W department also got delayed and its cost escalated from 596.427 (M) to 1346.668 (M).
- b. In the FY 2015-16, the provincial government initiated a project of Girls Residential School (Echole’ Fatima Al Fehri) in Mardan with the cost of Rs. 218.823 (M) (ADP # 150710). However, when the Education Department wanted to transfer the ownership of the selected piece of land in its name, it surfaced that

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<sup>15</sup> “Minutes of the meeting regarding issues in construction of two parallel roads of C&W and Irrigation Division, Mardan along Kuragh Canal” issued from the office of Deputy Commissioner, Mardan vide No. 3489/DC(M)/DA/Minutes dated August 1, 2017.

the said parcel of land, called Jahazuno Ground, was actually an emergency landing strip of Pakistan Air Force. The PAF authorities raised this issue with the Deputy Commissioner and it took more than seven (07) months to resolve the said matter by providing alternate strip for emergency landing of PAF aircrafts. Delay caused by faulty planning resulted in escalation of cost of the project from Rs. 218.823 (M) to Rs. 354.886 (M).

- c. A highly important project of construction of overhead bridge in Takhtbhai (Mardan), connecting 11 districts and a population of around 7 million people got delayed extraordinarily and its cost jumped from Rs. 582.124 million to Rs. 851.524 million<sup>16</sup> because of changes in its design. The said changes had to be done when local populace started severe agitation against the said project and members of Senate standing committee visited the site and ordered the said changes after holding “open hearing” from public in Takhtbhai. This embarrassing situation could have easily been averted if the NHA authorities (a federal entity) had coordinated with district administration before the initiation of project. District administration, being cognizant of ground realities, could have guided NHA better.

Similar kind of situation exists even in the capital district of Peshawar. For example:

- a. The signature project of construction of Ring Road Peshawar by National Highways Authority (a federal entity) to resolve traffic issues of Peshawar is being delayed for more than a decade because of lack of coordination among different stakeholders on its northern side. Many coordination conferences have been held by the Deputy Commissioner as well as the higher authorities of Provincial Government without fruitful results. The sole reason of this fiasco is faulty planning by NHA in which cost of land and dynamics of its possession were not taken care of properly.<sup>17</sup>
- b. In the year 2016, the SNGPL started excavation of newly constructed Kohat Road for laying gas pipelines. After laying the said pipelines, SNGPL left the work with dilapidated road conditions. The District Administration raised this issue with SNGPL but in vain.
- c. The construction of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a classic example of non-cooperation among different stakeholders. Neither maps of drainage from TMAs

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<sup>16</sup> “Takht Bai Railway Flyover To Be Completed By End Of August,” UrduPoint, last modified August 2, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> “Traffic and Environmental Issues on Peshawar Ring Road” Visit Report by Technical Expert PDA and other members on February 20, 2019.

were taken at the time of planning nor proper analysis of removal of amenities was conducted. Many sensitive issues were raised by cantonment authorities as well as Lady Reading Hospital management at the time of execution which not only delayed the project but also escalated its cost.<sup>18</sup>

### **2.3 Challenges Due to Overlapping Jurisdiction**

Another complication in implementation of infrastructure development arena is that different departments, reporting to different echelons of government, have overlapping jurisdiction i.e., they execute similar nature of projects in the districts e.g., TMAs of District Governments, Public Health Engineering Department of Provincial Government and Pak PWD of Federal Government construct streets and their drainage systems as one of their portfolios while there is no mechanism available at district level to check the duplicity of work or quality of the executed works. Although in 2017, the Provincial Government ordered that no such project will be initiated unless it shows GPS coordinates of its implementation sites<sup>19</sup>, yet the same decision was relaxed after a few months due to agitation from TMAs and other executing agencies. The government then allowed the executing agencies to take GIS coordinates during or even after the completion of such projects. This issue of duplicity is legally taken care of at the level of district government as, under The Local Government Act, 2013, the office of DO (F&P) is part of all the district level committees constituted for recommending or approving the projects. However, no such involvement of the office of DO (F&P) of the concerned district is there when the provincial or the federal government plans or executes their projects.

### **2.4 Challenges Due to Lack of Formal Jurisdiction of District Administration Over Executing Agencies**

Frequent changes in the management systems of the districts have adversely affected the relationship between district administration and executing agencies. The district administration, currently, lacks formal jurisdiction over executing agencies due to which the said agencies respond to the call of Deputy Commissioner as per their own convenience. As a consequence, at times, the district administration has to approach higher offices to implement government's agenda. For example:

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<sup>18</sup> Ismail Khan, "Damning Report of Public Money Waste on Peshawar BRT," DAWN.COM, last modified April 3, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Planning & Development Department Circular No. chief/coord/p&d/01/05/gps/-2015 dated May 10, 2016.

- a. In the year 2016, the Deputy Commissioner of Mardan decided to plant trees along the ring road of the district which had a potential of planting around 50,000 trees. However, the said proposal could not see light of the day at district level because the plants were to be sown by Forest department and land belonged to Pakhtunkhwa Highways Authority (PKHA) and both the departments were at logger heads with each other on the ownership of those plants. Since the district officers of those departments were responsible only to their provincial high-ups and district administration had no legal supervisory role on any of them, hence, the cooperation of them towards DC office was not very encouraging. Finally, district administration had to manage the intervention of the highest executive office of the province i.e., the Chief Minister who settled this issue by giving directions to both the departments to comply the instruction of DC office.<sup>20</sup>
  
- b. In the year 2017, the District Education Officer (Female), Mardan informed the District Deputy Commissioner that infrastructure of 12 No. of schools have been completed, however, they have not been made functional because of lack of installation of external electrification by PESCO in spite of deposition of the requisite amount. Since PESCO was a federal entity and not responsible to the directions of district administration, it did not pay heed to the instructions issued from DC office. As a consequence, delay in installation of transformers, meters etc. delayed the pedagogical activities in those schools.<sup>21</sup>

## **2.5 Capacity Issues of District Administration**

The office of District Deputy Commissioner, fulcrum of development administration in the district, lacks sufficient capacity to conduct proper examination and analysis of the infrastructure development projects going on in the districts. Although there is an office of the District Officer (Finance and Planning), now re-designated as Additional Deputy Commissioner (F&P), at the disposal of the Deputy Commissioner to assist in the affairs of development yet the office of DO (F&P) has meagre resources at its disposal. It does not have enough capacity to smartly identify overlapping of small projects with the help of technology, thoroughly examine detailed cost estimates, assess quality of complex projects etc.

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<sup>20</sup> Minutes “Progress Review of Developmental Schemes in Mardan Division” issued from the Office of Commissioner Mardan Division vide No. 923/ACD/DEV/2-20/V-04 dated May 10, 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Letter No. PTC-File/Electricity/2017 dated 18-07-17 issued from the office of District Education Officer (Female), Mardan.

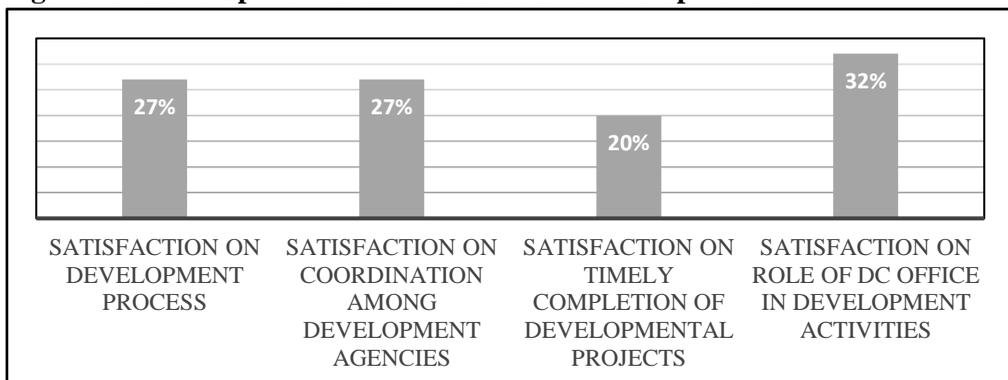
Theoretically, it comprises of a District Planning Officer (BS-19), a Deputy District Officer Planning (BS-18), a Planning Officer (BS-17), a Technical Officer (BS-17), a Statistical Officer (BS-17) and Support Staff.<sup>22</sup> However, practically, the situation is different. The post of District Planning Officer remains vacant and junior officials remain in charge of the planning side. For example, in Mardan, the post of District Planning Officer & Planning Officer remained vacant from 2015 to 2019 and a Sub-engineer used to handle these tasks.<sup>23</sup> In Peshawar, the post of District Planning Officer remained vacant and matters were handled by the Planning Officer from 2015 to 2019.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, this office lacks qualified GIS Analysts to plot coordinates of the projects on GIS maps.

To add further complication, it was observed during data gathering that in addition to the duty of overall supervision of developmental activities in the district, the office of DO (F&P) is also responsible for preparation and execution of budget’s salary and non-salary components of district governments. In this way, the DO (F&P) remains highly overburdened due to lack of sufficient support staff.

## 2.6 Public Opinion about Infrastructure Development Process

In addition to the analysis of the execution of infrastructure development administratively, a survey was also conducted in district Mardan to gauge the sentiments of public about their satisfaction. The result of the said survey is given below:

**Figure 2: Public Opinion about Infrastructure Development**



Source: Detail at Annex-A

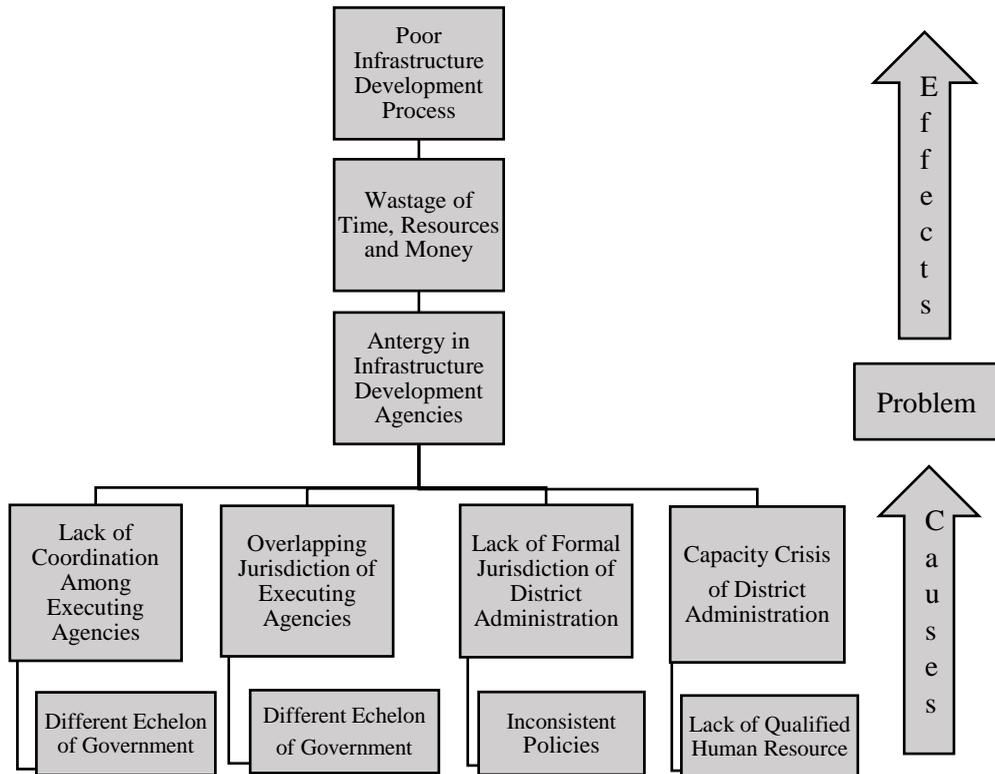
<sup>22</sup> Annexure-8 of Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, “Planning and Development guidelines (2015) for devolved tiers of local governments.”

<sup>23</sup> Former DO (F&P) Mian Ain Ullah of Mardan, interview by author, Peshawar, 07 November, 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Former DO (F&P) Ameer Khan of Peshawar, interview by author, Peshawar, 07 November, 2020.

To sum up the above-mentioned issues/challenges in construction of infrastructure, the “problem tree analysis” is plotted in the following figure:

**Figure 3: Problem Tree Analysis**



## **Section III**

### **3.1 Conclusion and Recommendations**

From the above-mentioned analysis, it can safely be concluded that the goal of synergic implementation of infrastructure development projects can only be achieved if the district administration is given a central role in planning, monitoring and supervision of federal, provincial and district level projects after proper legal and technological strengthening.

There is a widespread agreement among development practitioners, government officials and foreign donors that local government plays an increasingly proactive role in participatory community development.<sup>25</sup> The World Development Report (2003)<sup>26</sup> strongly supports devolution for making service delivery work for the poor. A number of scholarly writings and articles have dealt with the growing importance of local government as providers of local services, valuable partners in community development arena and a successful laboratory for local democracy.<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, currently, neither the districts administrations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are scientifically capable in handling the portfolio of infrastructure development in the districts nor all the infrastructure development agencies are responsible to them. Although there are examples where the district administration played a pivotal role in completing projects of public importance by making effective coordination among different stakeholders of district and provincial governments yet such examples are the outcome of personal efforts of the concerned officials. Establishment of “Women Shelter Home (Dar ul Amaan)” is one of such examples where the then Deputy Commissioner of Mardan steered the whole process and made it possible.<sup>28</sup>

Apropos, there is a dire need to take corrective measures in the structure and strength of the district administration for smooth implementation of the infrastructure development projects relating to federal and provincial governments. Here, the stages model of policy analysis will be used to identify the stage which requires intervention for taking corrective measures.

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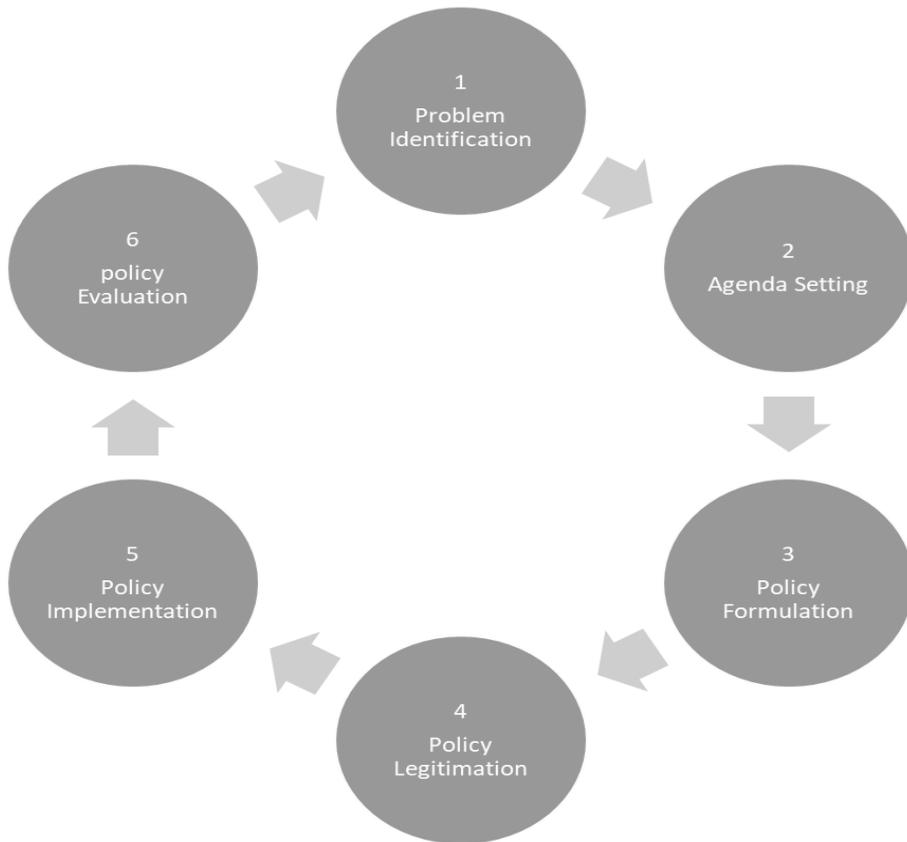
<sup>25</sup> T. Vadeveloo and K. Singaravelloo, "Local Government and Community Development," *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law* ISSN 2289-1552 2, no. 2 (June 2013).

<sup>26</sup> "World Development Report 2003 (Overview)".

<sup>27</sup> Timothy D. Sisk, *Democracy at the Local Level: The International IDEA Handbook on Participation, Representation, Conflict Management, and Governance* (International Idea, 2001).

<sup>28</sup> "Darul Aman in Mardan gets a new building costing Rs25m," *The News*, February 20, 2018.

**Figure 4: Stages Model of Policy Analysis**

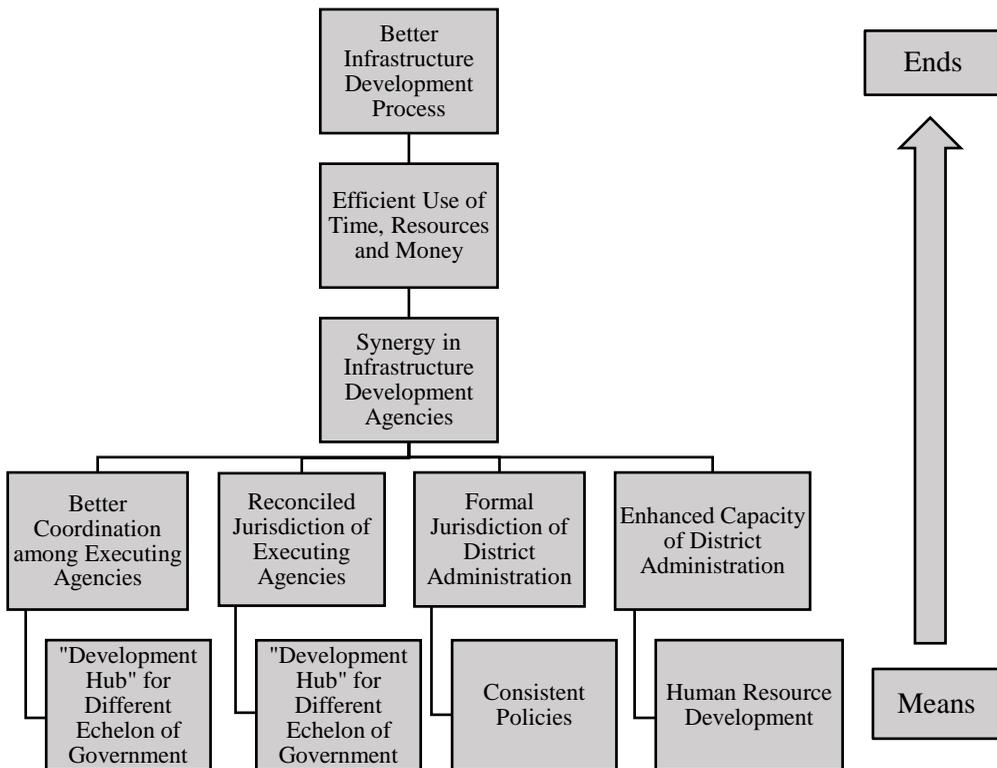


The information gathered from primary sources reveals that stage 1 and 2 have already been crossed as these issues have not only been identified but discussed quite a few times in P&D Department.<sup>29</sup> Hence, intervention is required at stage 3 i.e., “Policy Formulation” as better policy formulation will trigger the process leading to better outcomes. Since “problem analysis tree” has given the insight into the problem areas, hence “objective analysis tree” is plotted here for identifying the measures suggested to the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa via Additional Chief Secretary, P&D Department for improvement in the infrastructure development related role of districts administrations.

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<sup>29</sup> Chief Economist Zaheer ud Din Babar of P&DD KP, interview by author, Peshawar, 07 November, 2020.

**Figure 5: Objective Analysis Tree**

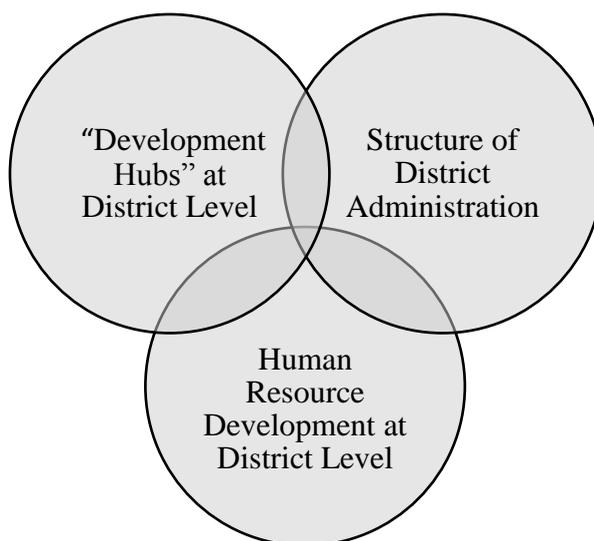


Apropos, the suggestions are grouped in the following inter-dependent key areas:

- a. Establishment of “development hubs” for better coordination
- b. Consistent policies about structure of district administration
- c. Human resource development at district level

These inter-dependent key areas are figuratively reflected as under:

**Figure 6: Key Areas which Require Policy Intervention**



**a. Establishment of “Development Hubs” for Better Coordination**

The prime suggestion of this research is that the office of ADC (F&P), previously known as DO (F&P), should virtually be made a “development hub” in the districts which means that it should be mandatory for all the executing agencies belonging to different echelons of government to coordinate with this office during planning phase particularly and during other phases in general. This office can give informed input (about on ground situation) in planning of different infrastructure development projects, including that of complicated ones sponsored by federal government. It can also propose actionable remedial steps, if any, during reviews of such projects, especially at the time of site selection, handling public complaints on quality and timelines of the project.

This suggestion can practically be implemented through a notification from the Planning and Development Department, after approval of the provincial cabinet. Release of funds to the executing agencies should be made conditional to the certificate that the said executing agency has coordinated with the ADC (F&P) office at least once while preparing PC-I of the project.

Concurrently, provincial government should take steps to strengthen the office of Additional Deputy Commissioner (Finance and Planning) technologically. There should be a smart unit of surveyors and engineers at the disposal of ADC (F&P) to give relevant input on detailed cost estimates, site selection as well as quality of the work executed on ground. Likewise, the GIS analysts should be posted at the disposal of ADC (F&P) so that information of all the infrastructure development projects may be plotted on GPS maps and duplication of projects may be checked. Such maps will also be helpful in planning of new projects like establishment of schools, hospitals, water-supply schemes etc. as these digital maps will be available to all infrastructure development agencies (even of the federal government). Likewise, it should be made mandatory to get “site clearance certificate” from the district administration before starting small projects like street pavements, drainage etc. It will make the duplication of projects extremely difficult and highly minimize the possibility of drawing money without execution of projects.

Side by side, the P&D Department should establish a dedicated wing under Chief of PSDP section to connect federal government agencies with district administrations. Since PSDP section of P&D department is already focal point for coordination with federal government’s development related activities, therefore, this section is the most suitable one for this purpose. Hence, the Planning and Development Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should coordinate with Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and get the policy guideline approved that all federal agencies executing their projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will implement their projects in coordination with the said dedicated wing of P&D Department.

## **b. Consistent Policies about Structure of District Administration**

Inconsistent policies towards structure of district administration have already weakened the administrative writ of provincial government including the satisfactory implementation of infrastructure development projects. Recently, provincial government has enacted The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Civil Administration (Public Service Delivery and Good Governance) Act, 2020 clarifies the mandate of district administration officers. However, this law does not give any legal role to district administration in planning or supervision of the developmental projects. Concurrently, the amendments made in 2019 in The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act, 2013 has abolished the tier of District Government and reduced the local governments to Tehsil level only. Owing to these changes, there is a likelihood that the problems of planning and coordination among provincial departments at district level identified in this paper will continue in future. Provincial government should draft appropriate

legislation, after a broad-based consultation with all stakeholders and get it passed from the provincial assembly. Under the said law, district administration should be given a formal consultative role in planning and supervision of infrastructure development projects.

### **c. Human Resource Development**

Although enough posts have been created to assist ADC (F&P) for better management of the important task of budgeting and development. However, majority of such posts remain vacant due to lack of qualified human resource. This situation not only mars the very concept of creation of this office but also results in minimization of efficient role of district administration in the realm of development.

Hence, P&D department should launch a project to groom the available human resource of Provincial Planning Service and also expand its number to fill all the vacant posts. In this way, development administration at district level (district administration) can play an effective role in better implementation of infrastructure development projects and save precious resources of the country.

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