



Instilling and Fostering a Sense of Community through Inclusive Security and Development

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Research Article

Abstract

Community security and development face significant challenges because of many factors like corruption, social divisions, and economic inequality. Such factors impede the building of a cohesive and resilient community through weakening social bonds and mutual trust. This study examines how inclusive security and development can foster a sense of community by enhancing shared interests, peace, and identity. It employs a qualitative research approach depending solely on secondary data. This descriptive research collects data from secondary sources like books, journal articles, newspaper articles, blog writings, and websites. The findings of this study suggest that addressing inclusive security and development together contributes significantly to building stronger community ties, enhanced social cohesion, and a sense of belongingness. It also argues that a safe and cohesive community environment promotes social collaboration and harmony. This paper recommends emphasizing inclusive approaches in the security and development process to ensure equal access to resources and a favorable climate for peaceful coexistence.

Keywords: Inclusive Security, Community Development, Social Cohesion, Collective Well-being, Community Engagement.

1. Introduction

The concept of community has evolved with the transformation of race, conduct, and behaviors. A community is a group of people living in one area or considered a unit because of their common interests, social group, or nationality (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). Many philosophers used community and society interchangeably. However, Ferdinand Tonnies, a famous philosopher of the 19th century, explained community as relations that share feelings among individuals, friends, family, and neighbors (Bond, 2013). At the same time, society highlighted associations that do not necessarily share time and space (Tonnies & Loomis, 1957). A community is considered a geographically defined area where people live in clusters and share a common lifestyle and heritage. They have a common sense of identity, interdependency, and involvement, where individual needs can be fulfilled through institutions and agencies (Smucker, 1960). A sense of community is important for a sustainable, secure, and developed environment for people. The sense of community has been characterized by four elements: membership, influence, fulfillment of needs, and emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

On the contrary, in present days, security and development are two essential aspects that have emerged as prerequisites for fostering and instilling a sense of community among the people. Security and development are often considered two sides of the same coin. Thus, both security and development are essential to a peaceful and inclusive community is important. However, many researchers argue that ensuring inclusive security and development for a peaceful community is challenging for community members. Therefore,

they have also suggested approaches for inclusive security and development. This paper examined why security and development are essential for instilling and fostering a sense of community. Thereafter, it highlighted the challenges of community security and development. Finally, the paper explained the approaches for instilling and fostering a sense of community through inclusive security and development.

2. Literature Review

The sense of community is a multifaceted concept developed by McMillan and Chavis (1986) and revisited by McMillan (1996). It is a perception with an intuition that fosters belonging, safety, and well-being (Hyde & Chavis, 2008). It is related to active participation in community life and influenced by significant factors like neighborhood relationships, residence tenure, marital status, etc. (Prezza et al., 2001). It has a crucial impact on promoting strong relationships and enhancing sustainable community dynamics. A strong sense of community ensures social support, shields people against threats, and helps them adapt to changes (Sonn, 2002). McMillan and Chavis (1986) described the various elements of a sense of community and the process of these works. He emphasized community cohesion and the engagement of members in community activities. He also highlighted the means to foster a sense of community by ensuring the voice being heard and strengthening the bond amongst community members. Chavis et al. (1986) developed a sense of community index, which is used for determining shared domains within different groups. It offers behaviors conducted by community members under different interactions and connects those to social outcomes. They perceived indicators of dominance, affection, involvement, similarity, and trust for community members. Inclusive security is a holistic approach that emphasizes the involvement of citizens from all community sectors in security governance. It is strongly related to local ownership in security sector reform and is crucially important for promoting public trust and preventing the resurgence of conflict (Gordon, 2014). The concept of inclusive security encourages incorporating local communities in the decision-making process to ensure legitimacy and effectiveness in security initiatives. Inclusive security can be exemplified by Bangladesh's community policing system, which demonstrates how community involvement can enhance security outcomes (Biswas, 2023). It is crucial to strengthen community ties and foster mutual trust by promoting safety and protection for everyone. Key principles of inclusive security encompass broad participation, equitable access, and preventing discrimination, where diverse perspectives are crucial for effective and fair security strategies.

Inclusive development has emerged due to the shortcomings within the concept of sustainable development, emphasizing social and ecological aspects over economic growth. This development phenomenon encompasses marginalized people, sections, and countries in socio-political and economic progress to enhance human well-being, empowerment, and sustainable society and environment (Gupta et al., 2015). Hickey et al. (2015) defined it as a process through which social and material benefits are shared among different sectors of society, income groups, genders, ethnic groups, religious groups, regions, and others. These benefits also include aspects similar to those mentioned by Gupta et al. (2015), such as improved well-being, socio-political empowerment, and capabilities alongside economic and material gains. Inclusive development focuses on some significant facts such as the material, social, relational, and psychological well-being of people (Gough & McGregor, 2007), the poorest, vulnerable, and the most marginalized or disadvantaged people (Rauniyar & Kanbur, 2009); knowledge and ambitions of local people in the development process (Fritz et al., 2009); affordable access to civic amenities and basic infrastructure (Arthurson, 2002; Mansuri & Rao, 2004); and participatory styles in governance and capacity building (Sachs, 2004).

In recent days, the intersection between security and development has achieved important consideration for its significant extent of how it can work to foster a stable community. Studies explored the integration of security into development policies that have progressively influenced development agendas (McConnon, 2014). Scholars analyzed the security-development nexus through different lenses, including gender, human security, and cyber humanitarianism (Jackson, 2015). The concept of community security has also been

explored by scholars, in which states play roles in developing a shared identity and peaceful conflict resolution (Adler & Barnett, 1998). Policies regarding inclusive security and development can perform together to instill a sense of community by ensuring safety and well-being for society members and building strong, resilient, and cohesive communities. Such integration between security and development helps in promoting peace, trust, and cooperation which are significant components for developing a sustainable sense of community.

The existing literature on the sense of community mainly highlighted the dynamic aspects of the community, evaluated the elements of the sense of community, and described the process of developing cohesion and community harmony. However, limited literature on fostering and instilling a sense of community through security and development is available. Therefore, an effort has been made to analyze the importance of inclusive security and development to foster and instill a sense of community.

3. Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative research approach to understand the dynamics of inclusive security and development to enhance a sense of community. A descriptive research design based on document analysis was employed to identify the interconnection between these phenomena. Descriptive research investigates the exploratory nature of the questions to discover the varieties and aspects of a particular phenomenon (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). Moreover, the authors adopted a narrative review as a suitable approach (Baumeister & Leary, 1997; Bui & Deakin, 2021) for subjects that demand an informative and thorough synthesis of existing literature (Sukhera, 2022). Firstly, a search strategy was developed to identify and retrieve available documents. Secondly, searches were made in open-access databases such as DOAJ and Google Scholar using combinations of keywords related to community, security, and development (such as sense of community, inclusive security, inclusive development, community governance, social cohesion, mutual trust, and sustainable society). Thirdly, the returned results were screened based on relevance, publication date, keywords, and abstracts. Selected papers were studied to identify appropriate themes and organized for discussion. Themes were developed through a systematic process of qualitative document analysis, involving careful reading and coding of selected literature to identify recurring patterns and key ideas. These codes were then grouped into broader categories aligned with the research objectives, such as social cohesion, mutual trust, and sustainable community governance. Finally, the themes were validated through triangulation, comparing findings across sources to ensure coherence and alignment with the study's focus.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Elements of Sense of Community

A sense of community is an internal relation and belonging to a community and its environment. McMillan and Chavis (1986) explained that a sense of community is a feeling that members belong, members matter to one another and the group, and a shared belief that members' needs will be met through their commitment to being together. McMillan and Chavis, whose studies are frequently referred to in the literature, evaluated the sense of community with four elements:

4.1.1 Membership

Membership is considered as feeling and belonging to the community. It is instrumental in fostering a sense of being part of it. However, there should be boundaries to identify the members of the team. Besides, the boundaries can be so distinct that they should be easily recognizable. It aims to determine the emotional safety boundaries that protect the community against any kind of danger. The community members must

believe in and experience a feeling of strong bonding with the group. Individuals should contribute positively to the community's overall development (Ditzel, 2008).

4.1.2 Influence

The second element is influence. It is a concept where people will be associated with a community where they will feel more connection and influence. On the other hand, the community needs to reciprocate, providing equal value and a sense of belonging. It is important to understand that each community member must realize the importance of their role in the community. Besides, their opinions are acknowledged and listened to with due consideration. Thus, the influence of both members and the community functions simultaneously (Henell, 2019).

4.1.3 Integration & Fulfillment of Needs

It implies that the community will meet the needs of the members. The reinforcement of resources should continue so that members feel associated with the group. It is expected that the community will be able to meet the needs according to the priorities. If the rewards do not flow with the participation of the community members, this element will be lacking. The outcome may not be positive, and further participation of group members in the community may make it difficult to retain Chavis et al. (1986).

4.1.4 Shared Emotional Connection

The shared emotional connection is based on common history, belief, and emotional connection. Shared emotional connection explains that people are likely to become close when interacting more. Members will develop greater bonds with their relationship. However, if the relations are confusing, group cohesiveness will shatter. The crisis will also strengthen the community bond. Community members should spend more time and work to remain more emotionally connected. It is important to understand that each reward and punishment will have consequences (Pratt, n.d.).

4.2 The Importance of Inclusive Security and Development for Community

A stable security situation is a prerequisite for a peaceful and developed community. Over the years, the concept of development has been interlinked with the concept of security. Security includes both physical and external. Community members need to remain vigilant to safeguard both traditional and non-traditional threats. Ensuring these will be key factors in promoting sustainable development in the community will underpin inclusive peace and well-being. Since the Westphalian order after the 1648 peace treaty, the current world order has had so many ups and downs. Now, security and development are considered as two sides of a coin.

Development has become closer to security, and securitization of development was more pronounced in the 1990s (Buur, 2007). It is important to understand that the effect of security or insecurity is directly proportional to the well-being and development of society. Insecurity directly affects the elements of growth or development. It should go side by side (Anabel, 2018, November 29). Therefore, there is no denying that a secure community will prosper and develop than that of an insecure one. A developed community without proper security will perish over time. Thus, both are essential for a peaceful community and keep the elements for the sense of community alive.

4.3 Challenges for Community Security and Development

Economic inequality in the community is a concern resulting in social crimes. It remains a security threat and poses challenges for growth and opportunities for community members (Stiglitz, 2012). The non-availability of resources can directly impact security and development issues (Aleshchenkova et al., 2017). On the other hand, insufficient infrastructure facilities like shelter, water, transport, and office will significantly hinder development, resulting in insecurity (Oyedele, 2016).

Corruption and politicizing government organs are instrumental in determining the lack of development and insecurity in the community. Misappropriation of resources will create a sense of deprivation among the general citizens. Thus, establishing accountability, transparency, and good governance remains a challenge for the community (Jamal, 2017). If there is a high crime rate in the community, the development in the form of investment is likely to reduce (Cabral & Saucedo, 2018). Therefore, community engagement is necessary to deter such issues. However, it is seen that a lack of engagement may not meet the needs of the community members (Nubani et al., 2023).

Maintaining community cohesion is one of the important challenges in sustaining security and development (UNDP, 2009). Thus, community members should practice and maintain inclusivity through comprehensive approaches. On the other hand, the increase in population and environmental degradation remains challenges for community development (Dovers & Butler, 2015). Health hazards can hamper peaceful community life, resulting in long-term impacts on both security and development (Peralta & Hunt, 2003). Inaccessibility to quality education can limit opportunities for economic activities, resulting in poverty, which may lead to criminal activities (Miller, 2023). Ensuring appropriate education for community members is necessary for any community to deter future insecurity and continue community development. Apart from local issues, present global trends and conflicts can also impact economic activity, security, and the development of the community. Therefore, a fine balance between community needs and global issues may enhance community security and development.

4.4 Sense of Community through Inclusive Security and Development

Inclusive security and development are essential pillars in fostering a strong sense of community. The following subsections explore various components, such as community alert mechanisms, governance, cohesion, social work, partnerships, and well-being, highlighting their interconnected roles in creating harmonious, inclusive, and thriving communities. These dimensions collectively strengthen social bonds and promote sustainable development.

4.4.1 Inclusive Security

Community Alert Mechanism: Community Alert is a safety program designed to assist vulnerable people in a community. The developed countries in the world have introduced and been practicing this system for ages. This system operates as a partnership between the community and the law enforcement agencies. The objective is to share responsibility for crime prevention and reduction (An Garda Síochána, n.d.). Whenever there is criminal activity in the community, the information that is dangerous travels through the existing alert mechanism to the security forces. This is a participatory program by community members to maintain security and largely foster a sense of community.

Community Policing: Community policing is a collaborative model of policing where members of the community participate in the process of policing to detect crime and ensure security for the community, thereby instilling a sense of community. This policing process is based on mutual communication, crime prevention, accountability of policing functions, and ensuring a peaceful and secure environment in the community (Uddin & Mozumder, 2019). The community policing model has proven beneficial for monitoring and surveillance against violent crimes. However, it necessitates building trust between police and community members, the flow of information through community alert mechanisms, proactive participation by youth, and training in the community policing process (Biswas, 2017).

Good Community Governance: In a community, it is important for its members to have access to justice. The governance structure and methods should be transparent, and authority should be accountable to community members. Good governance is essential so that humans are protected from all abuse. In these aspects, the community members have a critical role in monitoring security policies and their

implementation. The vision of inclusive security and development can only be achieved when equality and dignity for all are established in the community (UNDP, n.d.).

Community Cohesion: Community cohesion is very important to deter any danger, crime, or problems. It also promotes collective action, inclusivity, bonding, and unity among all community members. However, this entails mutual respect, tolerance, resilience, and trust in the system. Community cohesion is all about building a community where people feel safe, confident, and comfortable interacting with each other despite diverse faiths (Local Government Association, 2004). Thus, community cohesion is crucial for establishing inclusive security and instilling a sense of community.

4.4.2 Inclusive Development

Community Social Work: Community social work is an approach to building bonds that makes community members integrated and empowered (CASW ACTS, n.d.). Community social work emphasizes inter-relationship and both formal and informal interactions (Leskošek, 2009). It is a service that cares for community well-being, improves security, supports development, and makes positive changes. The professionals may contribute according to their interest in inclusive community development. Each community member is valued for whatever he/she can do for the community. Community social work may occur in community engagement, policy development, neighborhood management, etc. This work may sometimes be voluntary or get paid based on the work (VCU, 2023).

Community Harmony Development: The term ‘Community Harmony’ refers to a process of valuing, expressing, and fostering love, trust, admiration, peace, harmony, respect, generosity, and equity towards all people in the community regardless of their national origin, ethnicity, weight, marital status, color, gender, race, age, and occupation, or any other characteristic (Sharma, 2015). Community harmony means cooperation, mutual respect, understanding, and peace among the community members. Community development is not possible without establishing rules of law, accountability, values, and ethos. Community harmony is the complete package of it. Both community harmony and development complement each other (Tapiawala, 2019).

Community Partnerships: Community partnership is the relationship between an organization and a community working on a common subject matter for mutual benefit. This collaboration may be with the government, organizations, Non-Government Organizations, and private companies, with their expertise and resources positively impacting and improving the community’s well-being. However, this partnership can only be achieved through mutual respect, willingness, effective communication, and shared goals. Successful collaboration with resources and expertise can resolve many complex crises in the community (Quora, 2024).

Education: Education plays an important role in empowering individuals and communities. It is the main pillar of progress and development in a community and individual. There is no denying that it is the cornerstone upon which an individual's future depends. Access to quality education is not limited to the classroom but to every aspect of life. Education is the fundamental aspect of community development, growth, and prosperity. It is also critical in promoting community cohesion and harmony (Patil, 2023).

Community Well-being: Community well-being is the combination of social, economic, cultural, environmental, and political conditions identified by individuals and their communities as cardinal for them to flourish and fulfill their potential (Wiseman & Brasher, 2008). Community well-being connects people, offers support, trust, and harmony, and empowers members. It is about infrastructure supporting livability, offering housing, transportation, safety, access to education and cultural activities, and healthcare. Community well-being sometimes refers to equitable environments, including diversity, justice, and fairness, where all should have access to basic needs (Delagran, n.d.).

5. Conclusion

Though community is about people with common interests within a geographic area, a sense of community is more important than staying within it. People in the community must own it with their participation and

need to strive hard to make it a peaceful place. The elements for the sense of community must be fulfilled to contribute positively to security and development. Developing a sense of community can only be possible once a secure environment prevails within the community. With sustained security, community development will continue to flourish. Therefore, security and development play a vital role in fostering a sense of community. However, there is prevailing economic inequality, limited resources, lack of infrastructure, corruption, lack of cohesion, and so on in the community.

Despite all these challenges, inclusive security and development are instrumental in instilling and fostering a sense of community. A secure community can be achieved by establishing rules of law, good governance, community policing, etc. On the other hand, community development is a participatory issue that involves conducting community work, maintaining harmony, and ensuring education and well-being. Above all, it is the community members whose interests, shared responsibility, trust, values, initiative, etc., are important for the community to flourish and, consequently, emerge as an ideal place to live in.

6. Limitations and Direction for Future Research

This qualitative descriptive study has sufficient scope for further research and exploration. One limitation of this study is its reliance solely on secondary data, which may not fully capture the dynamic aspects of inclusive security and development. Additionally, the findings are not generalizable due to the lack of primary data collection. Future research initiatives could employ empirical approaches with primary data collection and quantitative analysis to provide more in-depth insights into the problems and prospects of inclusive security and development in enhancing a sense of community, particularly from specific country or regional perspectives.

Authors' Contributions: Md. Humaoun Kabir led the research, focusing on the conceptual framework of inclusive security and community development. He conducted an extensive review of literature from diverse secondary sources and synthesized key insights, shaping the study's main arguments and recommendations. Helal Uddin supported the study by organizing and interpreting secondary data, as well as contributing to the overall analysis of how inclusive approaches impact community cohesion and resilience. Together, they refined the findings and recommendations to enhance the study's contribution to the field.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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