

Summary of Speech at Batkhela Tehsil

November 10, 2015

By: Shoaib Sultan Khan

Shoaib Sultan Khan (SSK) recalled his first taste of Pakhtuns hospitality, when in 1953 on his way to Saidu Sharif for interview with Wali Sahib of Swat, he found himself stranded at Batkhela, as the Government Bus could not go beyond and there was no alternative transport available. Out the of blue an elderly gentleman approached SSK and asked if he could be of any help and arranged for his night stay and a tonga at 5.00 am next morning to take him to Saidu. SSK reached for his interview on time after changing tonga at Barikot. SSK could never forget this hospitality extended to him at Batkhela.

SSK appreciated the presence of the Malakand District Nazim alongwith Tehsil and Union Nazims and underscored the importance of collaboration with the elected bodies as they constitute the Political Pillar of the State alongwith the Administrative Pillar which comprises the government functionaries and all the departments, whose job is services and supplies for the people.

When it comes to serving the people especially the rural poor, the Political and Administrative Pillars, with the resources of the State, are unable to reach each and every household especially of the poor and vulnerable because poverty is at the household, without this outreach, the poor especially the rural poor are deprived of the services and supplies allocated and provided for them by government.

It is for creating an outreach of Political and Administrative Pillars to the rural poor and the needy that SRSP fosters a framework of grassroots institutions comprising COs/VOs/LSOs. The presentation by the LSO Totakan clearly demonstrated the practical shape of the Social Pillar to complement the Political and Administrative Pillars. Out of 3318 households, the Social Pillar of the UC has created an outreach to

2520, that is 76% of the households through organisation of 13 VOs and 206 male and female COs.

SSK clarified to the elected leaders that the Social Pillar is not in competition and is there to facilitate their outreach to the people. To organise poor households, SRSP needs resources because it approaches the households with the offer that it would help each household to unleash its potential to get out of poverty but to identify their potential and to help them unleash it by identifying the obstacles in their way, it is not possible for SRSP to reach them individually. Unless they organise, SRSP cannot form the development partnership with them. Thus the success of this approach is on rural poor's willingness to organise and fulfill the obligations of the organisation such as regular meetings and savings.

The willingness of the community to organise has to be followed by identifying honest and competent leaders who will take the organisation forward. When these two conditions of organisation and leadership are fulfilled, SRSP helps the organisation to prepare a micro investment plan (MIP) which is a collection of the potential of each household along with obstacles stopping the household from unleashing it. From SSK's experience, the obstacles are usually lack of capital and sometimes skills. It is SRSP's objective to help organisations to overcome these obstacles and it is for this reason that SRSP approaches government and donors for resources. Fortunately EU helped SRSP but it was enough only for ten UCs in Malakand district.

SSK urged on District Nazim that EU is not a substitute for government which has all the resources and he would do his best to persuade government to provide resources for the 18 UCs of the district but if elected bodies also urge government to provide resources, it will have much greater effect.

SSK concluded that the success of this approach is dependent on willingness of the communities to organise and presence of honest and competent leaders. He was happy to note that LSO Totakan has fulfilled both these conditions and described these

leaders as the Social Capital of the community called CRPs without whom, this approach cannot succeed. What they needed was a dedicated and committed organisation to support them and SRSP Swat under the leadership of Zahid Khan has set an excellent example of service. SSK wished all success to the LSO and profusely thanked the District, Tehsil and Union Nazims for finding the time to attend the oath taking ceremony of the LSO.