

National Rural Support Programme, Pakistan

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Editors Note

The **HRD Communiqué** is completing a year with this last issue of 2000. This entire series was thematic and the idea was to reflect upon certain key issues in the development arena. As it is, advocacy is not only emphasizing on one's work and ideas but also contribute, as whole, to the very cause that one is working for. As development practitioners, it becomes all the more indispensable for us to positively bring forth the concerns for better future evolutionary strategies.

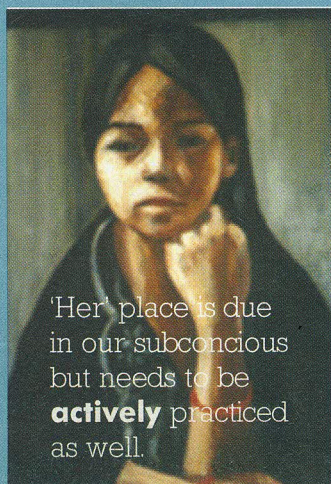
I would like to pay my gratitude to all individuals and organizations, who have played an important role in conceptualizing, contributing and offering other support to the **HRD Communiqué** and made it possible for it to successfully complete a year with yet, another high note for the next year to follow. In particular, for the cooperation of various development organizations for the section on 'development news fillers'. This section escalates a feeling of mutual networking among organizations, enables to provide relevant information on the work of other development organizations and adds to the self sufficiency of the newsletter, which according to various past examples scattered around is an important factor.

We humbly hope that the interest of our readers in the **HRD Communiqué** discovers new and honest peaks in the coming year and as always we welcome your comments, suggestions, and material for the newsletter.

With best wishes.

Devouring time, without a dime;
I am a woman, that is a crime.
Enslaved in coarse fetters; but my steps are sound.
I have been reared to be in the background
"Toil, toil away you weakling"
The life will end; but the misery is never ending.

Shahida Ahmed



Do you recognize me?

Painting Courtesy: World Wide Web

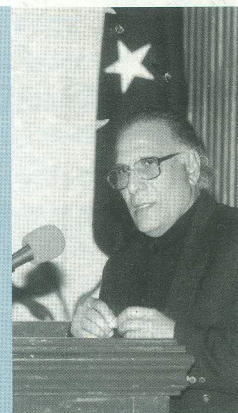
Women Empowerment

'Her' place is due in our subconscious but needs to be **actively** practiced as well.

THE VISION 2000

An Interview with Shoaib Sultan Khan (Part-II)

As to how I manage to do as many things. I don't do all this myself, "A good manager does nothing himself but leaves nothing undone".



Q When NRSP started initially it was considered to help government Schemes in implementation through the grassroots organization but it did not exactly happen that way, how do you feel about that?

A That is the ultimate objective and I don't think any government in South Asia is as liberal as the government of Pakistan as they gave us a billion rupees just to set up these two organizations that's quite a commitment. Then of course, for Sarhad Rural Support Cooperation I would have preferred an endowment but then that has a project approach but still RS 7-800 million of government money passed through it; Rs 100 million was given for Gazi Barotha Taraqati Idara.

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Ghias Mohammad Khan, Aqeela Tahir, Rehan
Chazanfar

continued ...

Well, we have not got all that we wanted from the government but it still shows quite a bit of interest from them. We all know that the government takes time, the process is not all that fast unless you are able to demonstrate it is not convinced and then of course you have to show them concrete results or impact before you can expect anything at all.

(The chairman of most RSPs in Pakistan and a successful implementor of participatory development model in South Asia had the truth and logic all laid out on the table. It was difficult for him to miss out anything at all. This detailed analytical semblance of truth about the government interest in development came across as the real strength of Shoaib Sahib)

Q It's the new millennium now do you think there is a need to reshape the approach with all these new players coming in to fulfill the criteria of the present scenario?

A The concept has stood the test of time as you have rightly mentioned. If you want the exact date it is 1849 when Raifeissen thought of the model and it has over the years stood the test of time and the organization of communities. This approach came across strongly in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea. What are the things, which are important? It is the people's willingness to help themselves to improve their situation if people are not willing you can not reach out to them. It is not possible. There is the need for sincere and genuine leadership to organize the people and to take them forward. This guidance and conviction has to come from amongst the people themselves and their leader should be able to guide them as the social capital, which is our collateral as well as the key to success. If there is no genuine person and no social capital then that community will go stale and of course, someone can exploit them. The third option is to bring all these to a fusion, how do you sensitize the communities and the people that you have this potential and that if you organize then you can unleash the potential existing in them. For sensitization there is need for support organizations, which fulfilled by the RSPs — you need to find genuine leader ship and for that you need the RSP's or the people who are dedicated who believe in it; people like you. So weather it's the millennium or anytime-these three things are the key ingredients and how you find them is another story all

The concept has stood the test of time. This approach came across strongly in Japan, Taiwan and south Korea. It is the people's willingness to help themselves to improve their situation. If people are not willing you can not reach out to them.

together. Although the program Package is always changing, the northern areas needed 1000 irrigation channels for betterment of the situation of the poor, other areas need something else; may be they need to concentrate on credit oriented activities that doesn't mean that the infrastructure is not needed but it is a question of how much of a certain intervention is needed and all we need is a holistic approach.

(The feeling encapsulating the atmosphere became all the more assuring in the presence of this inspiring personality. One tends to realize about the importance of a strong sense of direction given by the right guide and with the exact choice of path one is bound to progress in the right direction. Although one can not help but wonder, about the continuous circumstantial testing and taxing of a leader and how almost always their moral fiber is put to test. Perhaps it is all about patience, clarity, Perseverance and the right path because the rest is not in one's own hand)

We must not forget the basic tenets and we will take this idea forward I have always maintained that this approach is not something which can be expanded it is replicable so if AKRSP was successful it was not possible for AKRSP to expand all the way in another area. We need independent, autonomous organizations for geographical units such is in every district or every 2-3 districts. We are trying to do this in Punjab. So you know these are the changes coming about, You see AKRSP, NRSP and PRSP such are independent autonomous organizations of course you provide back up with HRD and Monitoring which are centralized. So you were asking about the millennium approach and this is the new approach. The background of it is that the Human Resource Development and the monitoring Assessment and Planning are all-important components and all need to be there and can be centralized with local autonomous grassroots organizations.

Q We have moved from a process-oriented approach for capacity building to a target oriented approach of poverty alleviation what should be the role of HRD in this. What are the guidelines and the vision for HRD?

So you were asking about the millennium approach and this is the new approach. The background of it is that the human resource development and the monitoring assessment and planning are all-important components and all need to be there and can be centralized with local autonomous grassroots organizations.



A HRD is the core of the process because all that we are doing is training the people, which are important and HRD trains a large cadre, who also need refreshers. HRD is there in the entire process from the beginning to the end; from sensitization to social mobilization to leadership training and then finally technology transfer to all. We need to remember that it is there from the beginning to the end that other things also come in like the vocational training programme, which is a good approach for unemployment and then we find that a lot of demand from outside organizations is also there for training. (Ultimately, this whole thing is subsumed at HRD because you find that your management and even field staff become the trainers. Thus, the whole thing is HRD and it is the focal point and closely interconnected with all the rest of the working sections).



(Shoaib Sahib's persuasive voice complemented his point further by driving the point home. His emphasis seemed focused and his idea on capacity building and human resource added optimism to the fulfilling role of HRD. He himself was empathic when talking about the availability of unharnessed human potential and that slight quiver of overwhelming emotions in his expression was more powerful than any other means to put that message across effectively. This puts HRD's role into a very broad perspective, which is very demanding)

Q How can we meet the growing demands occurring in our portfolio constantly?

A If we want to do more things then we need to find more resources — (His witty remark was short and crisp and perhaps said it all)

Actually, I am hoping that each RSP will have to build their own capacity at the field level and then of course all regions will have to go towards that duration and then HRD-NRSP will be there for support and expertise, guiding them along the way — Ultimately, I am hoping for the establishment of an HRD institute or an institute of rural management.

Q What is your plan for the RSP's on the whole and where do you see them 40 years from now?

(One could sense the smile at the edge of Shoaib Sahib's face as if he was a proud father talking about his children and he was being cajoled by questions about their striving and Progress trying to pit one against the other to get a pat on the back by their mentor)

A Of course, the ultimate objective is how do we have a countrywide frame work of grassroots organization so there is a need for a support mechanism — call them RSP's or what ever. In that context as was done in the case of GBTI by NRSP support will be needed to help setting up of RSP's. NRSP and HRD NRSP have an important role to play because if they deviate then they will end up else where like Baluchistan Rural Support Programme.

PRSP and NRSP have their own endowment as seed money upon which they can build for expansion and developing linkages to achieve more. NRSP has done quite well I see this to be the best

approach, to have an endowment and then let the organization grow build itself up. They need to work all the time, be competitive and cost effective all the time. I think the greatest tragedy would be if NRSP

becomes like a government organization then it will lose all its value that's what each Programme has to understand and be conscious of and I think

they already are.

(This indeed was proving to be an overwhelming experience. Once one realized Shoaib Sahib's perfectly carved out middle way to development, which supports the government and the private organizations and yet enjoys the efficiency of a competitive organization while having the credibility of a government one and yet, avoiding the shortcomings of both. These are the few men with substance who are 'creators of islands' not 'revolutionaries, since the islands remain and develop while the revolutions are only remembered for their death statistics).

Q You are busy travelling and working all the time, juggling your family life with the work and the fitness must be quite demanding. How do you do it?

A Without the support of my family I could have done nothing. They have always been very understanding. As to how I manage to do as many things. I don't do all this myself, "A good manager does nothing himself but leaves nothing undone". However, if you look at my responsibilities it is supervising a dozen people who then get the work done from the top downwards - that's what impressed the World Bank people that from the top management to the drivers all speak the same language. This is what is impressive and I don't do that; it is all these professionals who do it. It is they who run the show — Besides, the people are the real force who can guide, they can truthfully tell you if you are on the right track and if you are doing the right thing; they are the real arbitrators. As for my health yes I get up at five and make it a point to go up trail 3, it is not easy to keep fit.

(This last note of the interview left more curiosity behind, enveloped in just a little information, that we could gather about this man who is truly larger than life. His source of life seemed to be drawn from the deep-rooted belief in his work and his experiential learning from the people, which has further strengthened his conviction in wholesome goodness of the people, universally)

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News Highlights

Escalating Micro Finance Training demands

There has been a continuous increase for the demand of the Micro finance training. This trend has not only been set with in the non government organizations but welcomed specifically by banks at all levels.

Recently, a tailor-made Micro finance training was organized for the Muslim Commercial Bank in which their mid-level professionals as well as the high level professionals from all over Pakistan, attended this training. Their Zonal head was also present for the closing of the training, in which there was a highly satisfied feed back received from all the participants. There was a speech, delivered by a representative from the bank emphasizing on the role of NRSP and future prospects of collaboration. This is a very encouraging note for micro finance training programme.

In order to strengthen the potentials at the regional levels there was a Micro Finance training conducted in Hyderabad. This was conducted to strengthen the staff capacity at the grassroots level for far reaching effects.

Write shop? Quite right!

Looking at the popular demand of the development sector, a training called the 'Write Shop' was arranged. This included all aspects of writing required while working in this sector. The response of the people to the training and the contents was positive but they strongly felt that the duration of the training needs to be extended for ultimate results. This was a learning experience for the institute of Rural Management as well.

Gender policy; a cross cutting focus

An eminent name, as a gender specialist, Kamla Bhasin was invited from Delhi based on past positive experiences in order to hold a workshop for all the RSP's to lay down the foundations of formulating a gender policy.

These workshops included all the management of the addressed organizations. There were extensive brainstorming sessions held which further facilitated in clarifications of various concepts and queries.

As a result of these efforts it was decided that by the end of the first quarter of 2001, a gender policy for every RSP has to be finalized. All of them now at least have to work for this deadline and in the mean time focus on various gender issues.

First All Members Meeting of HRD Network

All voluntary efforts are very taxing and this was understood consciously by every founder member of the network. Their diligent efforts finally paid off with an international perspective of the network with the First All Members Meeting arranged.

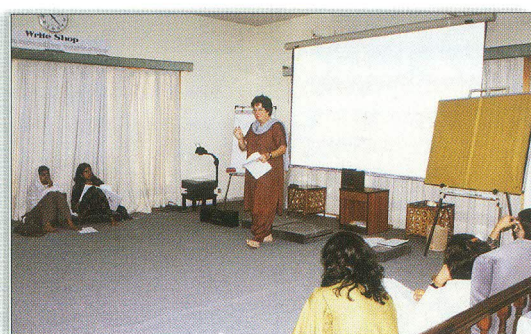
This meeting was a two-day event and was inaugurated by the Minister of development, Mr. Omer Asgher Khan. The event also entailed an exhibition of the local community produce from all over Pakistan. This meeting was to chalk out the future of the network in cognizance of the members participating from all over. There was also a musical evening programme arranged with dinner for the members to get to know each other.

International Study Visits to NRSP

● Dr. Samdani, Director training from BRAC visited NRSP for future collaboration and Networking. Initially, he had only planned to float his Global partnership Diploma Programme through LUMS, who then established contact for this purpose with NRSP.

Thus, NRSP organized a general meeting at their head office for NGO's, donors and other government organizations. There were also personal appointments arranged for the guest to meet the management of various NGO's for networking purposes.

● A team of International Fund for Agricultural Development visited NRSP from Kaulalumpur to study the Barani Village Development project and the planning and the inception work



in the identified tehsils. They seemed positive and enthusiastic about their experience of NRSP.

● An LfL team was over to study the prospects of endowment for the community schools and Ms. Felicity Hill was very keen on this prospect, which is at its planning and review stage. She visited community schools in the Islamabad Capital Territory.

Productive linkages

President of the Habib Bank Limited visited NRSP, Badin for orientation of NRSP philosophy and exposure of its work. This could be instrumental in further strengthening future prospects.

Visit by Finance Minister to RSP in SRSC-Mansehra

There was a visit arranged for the finance minister to Mansehra for his orientation of the general RSP philosophy and their work. The Minister in person spoke to the community people to be able to see the direct impact of their work. The feed back of this informal talk was very encouraging.

Expansion of NRSP and its scope

Yet another leap for NRSP is counted as a partner for the Barani Village development Project. The component of community mobilization, community development and micro credit lies with NRSP. At the moment NRSP is responsible for 6 new tehsils as well as consolidating this work in its existing programme area falling in the vicinity. There are various other partners from the line departments and research institutes in the field.

NRSP targeting Health and Sanitation

A team of CIDA officials visited the Lodhran region and were specifically impressed by the sanitation project of Jugoowala village. They lauded the NRSP's staff commitment and the community's enthusiastic participation in implementing the activities.

Thus they expressed their willingness to sponsor the replication of the Jugoowala village with 50,000 Canadian dollars. The proposal submitted to CIDA is for Rs 3.95 million.

The youngest RSP catching up!

Launching Ceremony of Phase II of the Integrated Rural-Urban Development Programme in Lahore facilitated by PRSP

After a successful completion of Phase-I of the project, work has been initiated in an other six villages. Separate development plans have been chalked out for each village.

TOM is here for the community schools!

Training of Monitors (TOM) was conducted in September and has been designed specifically to cater for the training of the

Village Education Committees and define specific outlines for these monitors so that they can carry out their work with more efficiency.

This training had a very positive response and it seems that the long term aims of the school monitoring can be fulfilled if this training is conducted regularly. Needless to say that it would help in activating the Village Education Committees and increase the performance of the community schools.

Collaboration of NRSP and Khushhali Bank

The Khushhali Bank has specifically chalked out its objectives which have a very strong element of working for the development of the masses. In this respect the success of NRSP in Micro Credit has motivated both Khushhali Bank and NRSP to collaborate in various interventions in DG Khan. These interventions are:

- Social mobilization
- Human resource development
- Micro credit and enterprise development
- Physical infrastructure and technical development

Looking at the progress of work in this regard there is a concrete plan of opening up six more similar projects in six different regions. These interventions will be taken up in complete cognizance to NRSP philosophy at the grassroots level through participatory development approach.

From the entire team of IRM to all the readers of
HRD Communiqué
"Eid Mubarak" and a
Happy New Year !



Case Studies

CMST

The Dera Gul Jehan Tanzeem was formed in February 1998 in the Pindi region. There were 16 members in the CO. Haji Nadir Khan is a resident of Whar which is 4 km away from Dera Gul Jehan. Haji Nadir had gotten a loan through the community organization and he is giving his installments regularly.

He was selected to receive the Community Management Skills Training in mid November 1999. So far the training has enhanced his management skills as he has succeeded in motivating the people in four villages: Waher, Pindi Mehrwal, Pindi Korewali and Hafizabad. He has managed to make several contacts with the cooperation of the Social Organizer. He has further decided that he will motivate people in other three villages as well. As the manager of the CO, he will be able to manage the CO very well and activists like him are the agents of change.

Orientation Training Workshop-OTVV-XXI

22nd May To 31 May, 2000

Muhammad Riaz | Intern-MAP Rwk Region

After the initial interview for internship in NRSP, the successful candidates were called for OTW. 23 candidates were there in the above mentioned OTW. The coordinator and deputy coordinator of the training were Mr. Atiq Mirza SPO Staff Training and Sajjad Ahmad PO-HRD respectively.

After the introduction of all participants, we were asked to write our expectation and fears about the training and all of us wrote them on cards. These cards were displayed on the board and discussed by the resource persons.

The objectives of the training were to familiarize the newly inducted staff about the objective, methodology and philosophy of NRSP. Each sector of NRSP was thoroughly explained by the

resource persons of respective sectors followed by questions from the participants. The main focus during the training was on to know the methods of participatory approach in the development of the rural community. This has really broadened the horizon of our knowledge of which personally I was ignorant in the past. Thanks to God that NRSP is gifted with professionals who are well versed in their field and generous enough to impart and share their knowledge and experience with interns.

The most important part of the training was the practice of review of the previous day by participants in form of group or individual presentation. In this way, it provided a chance to all participants to share each other ideas and freed them of hesitation while presenting.



Secondly, the exposure visit to community organizations prepared the new staff for challenges they have to face. During that visit to Kotli, we saw that it requires a lot of struggle and hard work to mobilize the rural community and one should be ready for any sort of situation in the field.

In the end, there is little to suggest for improving the OTW training, but one thing I would like to mention here that during the training the participants are treated in an ideal situation which totally turns to be reverse in the field. In the field most of the interns are treated like mobile credit officers who are faced with real challenges. So it would be better to orient the new intern with the situation like this where it is not a classroom environment. The interns have to be provided with such tips during the OTW through which they can easily approach the situation as to its need while they are new in the field.

Vocational Training Work has helped improve Mahmood's family fortunes: Welding

With middle level education, Mahmood Ahmed, an 18-year-old boy from CO Lower Kotera had been trying in vain for four years to find a job. He has a large family comprising of nine people whose needs could not be met with the Rs.2500 income that his brother brought home. He was nominated for welding training by his CO and attended a one-month training course in Islamabad in November 1998.

On getting back home he started work as an apprentice and is currently earning Rs.1500/month that makes up 37% of the family's gross income. The major chunk of Mahmood's earnings go towards meeting the family's household needs.

From Trainee to Trainer: Shazia's Story

Shazia Wazir, a 21 year old lady from CO Moja Gali Chota Galla,

Rawalakot has 5 sisters and a brother and all of them go to school. Their father passed away a year ago leaving behind a truck which until recently was the only source of income bringing the family a meager Rs. 3000/month and that too only occasionally. Without a male breadwinner it became difficult to keep things going for the large family of 7 members.

Shazia received one month of tailoring training arranged by the NRSP back in Sept 1998. With enhanced tailoring skills coupled with a Secondary Education background, Shazia found a job at the Bhooja Gali Tailoring School earning a monthly salary of 800 Rupees. In the last 6 months she has imparted tailoring skills to 34 girls of the area teaching them cutting and sewing techniques that cater to the latest fashion and design trends of the market. Besides teaching at the school, Shazia also makes time to stitch a few suits, making a sum of Rs. 1200 per month- 30% of her total household income. She feels more confident and sure of herself.

Natural Resource Management Programme – Vehari - A collective study!

Various Natural Resource Management Training have been conducted for Vehari. First training of NRM 'livestock curative and preventive management' had 19 participants of various COs at Kheri Murat. Then later in the year 23 and 42 members of various CO's were trained respectively.

Members who received training there made their own Committee and conducted their monthly meetings regularly. This work was beneficial for poor farmers in creating awareness amongst people about livestock curative methods and how to get better production from them. The Regional Programme Officer (RPO) Vehari Mr. Ayaz Khan said that he will fully cooperate in this matter.

The RPO presided over their first meeting and he introduced local livestock experts with the people. The members brought along their progress report in meeting and besides this they also provided free guidance to their CO members. Farmers' day at CO level are also being organized with complete support and cooperation of this forum. Objective of is to vaccinate livestock and provide them accurate food tips.

NRSP cooperates with them for vaccination of the livestock. In October 1999 animals were vaccinated for various disease. As a result of these efforts people have become more aware at the domestic level. One CO member Mr. Sarfaraz of Chak No. 499-EB Field Unit Burewala, region Vehari, produced accurate food at the dogmatic level. He received the training and now animals are very healthy after eating this food. Now he produces this food at a commercial level and this has helped in increasing his income. Besides this another three members have their income source from production of green food. Sarfaraz also vaccinates animals in the nearby villages.

This is a slight reflection of NRM activities in Vehari which is gladly, showing a sense of ownership in the people towards these training benefiting them.

Teachers Training It Will Be A Beacon House

I am a native of Basti Dur Muhammad. This is a small village

comprising of 27 households. It falls in the barani area of the district DG Khan and thus irrigated agriculture is beyond the question. Lack of water coupled with the unavailability of basic necessities makes the life very difficult. The sense of deprivation is even intensified by the absence of educational institutions.

So in this particular context, when NRSP staff approached our village and explained their motive, it was sensational. This is because; all of us had a strong desire to do something different to minimize our ever-increasing problems. But we lacked the sense of awareness, self-confidence and proper guideline. This was provided by NRSP.

Thus a community organization (CO) naming 'Basti Dur Muhammad' was launched on August 29, 1997. We pooled up our resources and contributed in the saving. Now our CO has saved Rs. 157,000. Since our economy primarily depends on the livestock trading, we availed small credit from NRSP and have fully repaid it.

Besides the other areas of interest in which NRSP has extended its hand of cooperation the most important and timely taken decision was the establishment of a community model school. Our village as well and the nearby hamlets are completely devoid of schools. This was partially due to our weak financial condition and partially due to the distant schools.

The members got convinced and decided to form a community model school with the collaboration of NRSP. Since I am the only matriculate in the village, Village Education Committee (VEC) unanimously selected me the teacher of the school. So after only six months of CO formation, our school started functioning in February 1998. I have gained two more teacher's training and a refresher course organized and conducted by NRSP. These training have reduced my initial shyness and abled me to create a friendly atmosphere in the school to make the children confident students.

Initially 24 students (7 girls and 17 boys) were enrolled in nursery class. Now the strength of school is 67 (28 girls and 44 boys). This is not a nominal achievement in such a backward area, which was deprived of education for a number of decades. Above all the most important achievement is the social change, which has been brought by the courtesy of NRSP. In the earlier days after the establishment of community schools, majority men were rigid and reluctant to send their daughters in the schools due to the age-old particular social and cultural tradition of the area. But gradually, flexibility was seen in their attitude. This can be assessed from the initial ratio of girls to boys (29:71) at the time of school formation compared with the prevailing ratio of 42:58 for girls and boys respectively. This is a notable change and will go a long way in the development of the area and the most deprived females.

According to the words of Haji Muhammad, teacher of community school, "I am completely satisfied the way the school has performed. Parents of the students and Village Education Committee cooperate with me. This has made my task even easier. NRSP has mobilized the deprived and we have capitalized on our own will to self-help at the twilight of the 20th century. This is just the beginning of an unknown school. It will be a beacon house. Inshallah."

Empowerment of Women in NRSP

By:
Masood-ul-Mulk

Development Practitioners talk of their commitment to Women Empowerment. It means different things to different people. What does Women's Empowerment mean in the context of the work of NRSP? How far does the concept permeate our work and how far are we successful in implementing the concept?

Empowerment is about Power, which is the control over physical, human, intellectual and financial resources and control over ideology. Those who have power are the ones who control material and knowledge resources and the ideology as well, which controls both public and private life, and are thus in a position to make decisions, which are beneficial for them. This control confers decision making power, which is used to increase access to and control over resources.

According to this definition, it is clear that women in general and poor women in particular are relatively powerless because they do not have control over resources and hence have little or no decision making power. Yet the decisions made by others affect their lives every day.

Women have not always been totally powerless. From their gendered positions as mothers, wives and daughters they have tried to influence their immediate environment.

Thus the process of gaining control over the self, over ideology and the resources which determine power may be termed as empowerment.

The term empowerment refers to a range of activities from individual self assertion to collective resistance, protest and mobilization that challenge basic power relations. For individuals and groups where class, caste, ethnicity and gender determine their access to resources and power, their empowerment being when they not only recognize the systemic forces that oppress them, but act to change existing power relationships. Empowerment is therefore a process aimed at changing the nature and direction of systemic forces which marginalize women and other disadvantaged sections in a given context.

Women's empowerment is seen as something concerning the poor as a mass, rather than just men or women. Women's empowerment is seen as something necessary to eradicate the specific forms of poverty and injustice which poor women face. Enabling women to gain access to resources will not only improve

their status materially but also bring about increased self esteem and self confidence. Moreover by improving women's health and nutrition, reducing their drudgery and work burden time and energy is released for them to participate in self development and community life. Women will thus be able to assert themselves in decision making processes both within and outside the family.

NRSP's Strategy for Women Empowerment

NRSP does not specifically implement any gender focussed activities but rather the gender focus cross-cuts all its activities.

In the NRSP strategy for women's empowerment, women's low status is ascribed to their lack of education, low economic status, lack of access to resources and low decision making power expressed by many as having "no voice". Strengthening women's economic status, and thus raising their status in the family and community is seen as an important component of empowerment, but not the only one. Lack of education, poor health and nutrition, high fertility, low levels of skills and knowledge are considered equally important as also lack of basic survival needs and services such as water, fuel, fodder, credit, child care and health. In this sense poverty alleviation is primary objective of empowerment.

NRSP seeks to attain its objectives by doing the following:

- Forming collective community organisations for women which will help them plan and implement their activities; build awareness and give them a voice.
- Building up the capacities of these organisations, and their leadership through training.
- Economic development activities like credit, vocational training, marketing support, skill upgradation.
- Provision of development programmes and services to women: such as Health Care, Agriculture Extension, Water Supply etc.
- Education inputs
- Formation of Clusters of Organisations to bring the grassroot organisations together and give them a voice.

Raising quality of life through Collective Management: Profile of an Activist

My name is Khurshida Begum. Before becoming a WO member, I had already been participating in the Community Infrastructure Project (CIP) which worked on various welfare programmes in my village, Tazagram located in Mardan.

Tazagram has lush green and fertile land irrigated by Upper Swat Canal which means that agriculture is the primary source of livelihoods for its inhabitants. For years our farmers could not resolve their dispute regarding distribution of irrigation water for agriculture. While NRSP's team implemented their Water Users Programme they organised the women at the same time. I was approached by the NRSP's female social organisers and had a very productive meeting with them. Initially fourteen members attended this gathering and as a result, a Women Organisation was formed on November 25th 1998. Because of past experience in CIP, I was selected as the President of the new organisation. Since then, I have tried my best to help solve the

problems faced by the women's community.

Before NRSP my life was quite impoverished. As a housewife, I was looking after my seven children and a husband who worked on daily wages. My conscience always motivated me to work for the improvement of the poor standard of living of my family and of my fellow villagers. I did not know that one day my dream of making a difference in our lives would be realised through NRSP.

I took income generating training such as squash making, poultry management, fruit drying that helped the wellbeing of my family.

Besides that I have formed seven Women Organisations in my village after acquiring Community Management Skills Training which developed my personal contacts. The members in my organisations are well disciplined and are involved in diversified activities. I have selected maximum number of members for all those trainings that were beneficial and would bring maximum earnings.

In my WO I have also focused on internal lending. Uptil now the net savings without collateral stands at Rs 23,923.

Holding to my pakhtun roots I have managed to have my three daughters get education and encourage other female members to ensure that their daughters and sisters get education. Presently I am the Chairman of the Parents Teachers Association which is responsible for women education. The association also disburses Zakat to the needy students.

I believe we can attain a great deal with collective efforts.

Activism and Empowerment

While some activists have the advantage of higher level education, others must rely on their own charisma and plain hard work. Naseem Akhtar is sixty eight years old and lives with her husband and her son his wife and children. There are eight community organizations in Jabbi Village which has three thousand inhabitants.

How we benefit?

Naseem Akhtar is the President of one CO (Jabbi Female-I) and the honorary member of another (Jabbi Female-II). The CO's have 28 and 16 members respectively. Naseem has been an activist for the last two and a half years and through her hardwork and leadership the two COs

have a savings of Rs 60,000. The COs have taken a loan of Rs 800,000. Naseem Akhtar herself received a loan of Rs 10,000 with which she opened a Kariana shop selling household products. Before opening this shop she had no source of income, but now she receives a revenue of Rs 1,200 per day with a profit of about Rs 300. Other CO members have received tailoring training and poultry units which have generated an income for the CO. Two women have taken tailoring and are now earning Rs 1,500 and Rs 2,000 per month. The 500 poultry units provided to the CO have also been highly profitable as Rs 30 was earned per chick sold.

The Impact

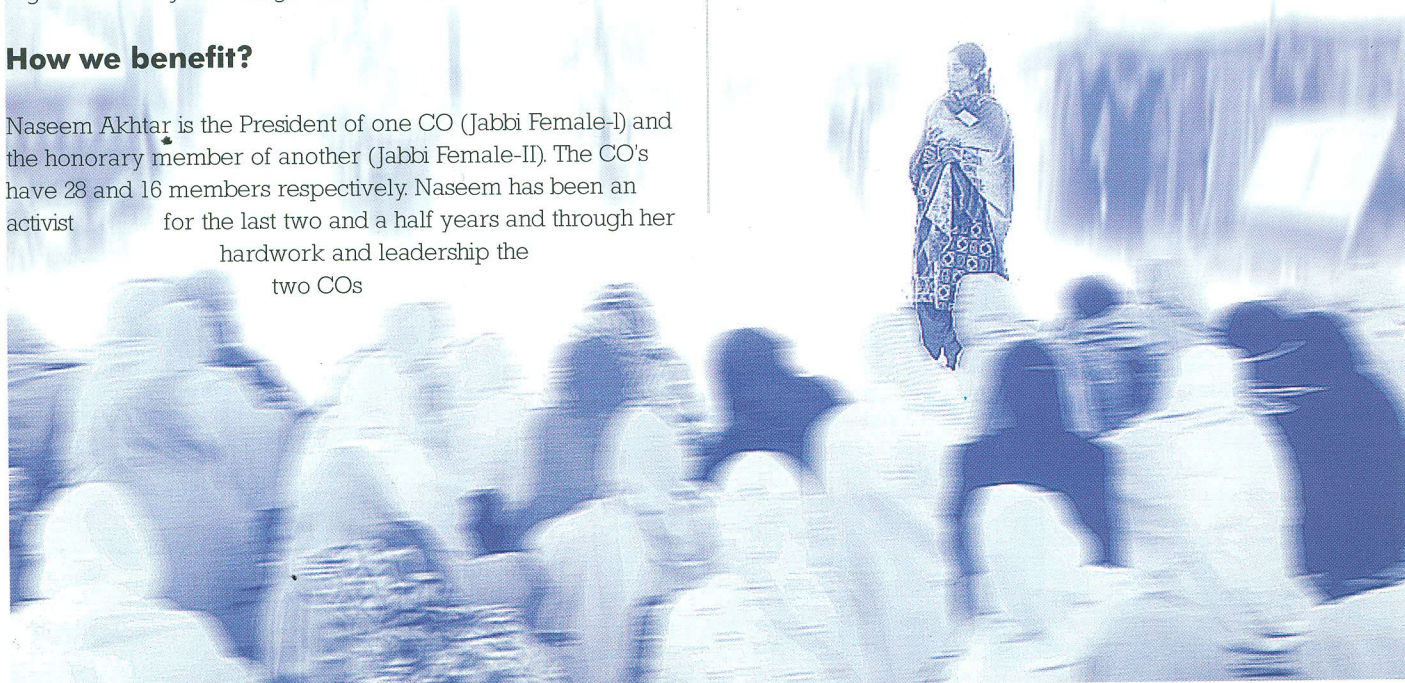
For Naseem Akhtar and the other women of the CO this was the first time that they had taken part in income generating activities for themselves. She is also extremely proud of her achievements stating that "I may be illiterate, but I can do the same things as someone with a masters degree.

The case of Naseem Akhtar is an example to both men and women that empowerment is both a possible and desirable achievement.

Issues and Future Direction Identified at RSPs Gender Workshop in 1999

NRSP and all RSPs have actively participated in chalking out a gender policy for their respective organizations. This clearly reflects the importance of the issue and positively so its realization.

Empowering women is directly related to an empowered community, alleviating poverty, well on its way to development. This stands relevant for any community urban or rural. NRSP makes no tall claims on this issue but strongly maintains its realization and observation for commitment to women in all its activities.



Development News



VISION
A world without poverty in which every person can exercise their right to a life of dignity.

Empowering women & men through political education

ActionAid has embedded its development philosophy on 'rights', which is an evolution of its earlier development approach of 'giving people choices' through service delivery programmes and projects. The new philosophy motivates us in 'fighting poverty together', whereby disadvantaged women and men are socially organised and mobilised to be able to articulate, assert and demand their rights. This is in consonance with ActionAid's global strategy that emphasises a shift towards advocacy and rights based work. This challenges us to work for changing positions rather than conditions of vulnerable groups of women and men.

ACTIONAID PAKISTAN Who We Are !

ActionAid is an International NGO working towards the goal of poverty alleviation especially in under-developed countries where there is a concentration of the poor and marginalised women and men. Currently, it is working in more than thirty countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. ActionAid started functioning in Pakistan in 1992 after signing an agreement with the Government of Pakistan. Kalinger (Haripur) was the first Development Area (DA) of ActionAid Pakistan (AAPk).

A second DA was established at Bahawalnagar in 1996 and a third one at DI Khan in 1998. During years 1999 and 2000, the organisation expanded both geographically as well as operationally, and DAs were started in Kasur, Turbat, Rajanpur, Tharparkar, Khipro, and Johi. This expansion is ongoing and several potential DAs are under consideration.

Overtime, AAPk's role has shifted from direct implementers to partnership with local initiatives in order to achieve sustainability and enhanced capacity to work with more people. AAPk plans to open about 8 new partnership DAs in the next 3 years.

AAPk has so far encompassed a variety of sectors through direct and joint development efforts, such as education, health, water, livestock, natural resource management, child rights, food security, income generation, emergencies, social mobilisation, and rights based endeavours: with Gender being a priority, cross-cutting theme in all these areas. ActionAid works closely with the government agencies and line departments in realising its development efforts.

Geographically, ActionAid Pakistan is present in the remotest and the most marginalised areas of Pakistan. Some of our long-term partnerships are with community based organisations in Bahawalnagar (Punjab), Kulachi (DIKhan - NWFP), Sehjra (Kasur - Punjab), Pidark (Turbat - Balochistan), Wah Lashari (Rajanpur - Punjab), Mithrio Bhatti (Tharparkar - Sindh), Kamal Hingoro (Sanghar - Sindh), Johi (Dadu - Sindh). Our short-term partners are located in Dir, Swabi, Mardan (NWFP); Azad Kashmir; Khairpur, Karachi, Hyderabad (Sindh); Quetta (Balochistan); Toba Tek Singh, Narowal, Rahim Yar Khan, Mianwali, Muzaffargarh, and Multan (Punjab).

Our allies and partners also represent an expansive array of civil society initiatives. They include NRSP, SUNGI, SDPI, SPO, IDSP, CRCP, IWWA, PATTAN, LHRLA, IRC, SEHER, IKK, SOS, TRDP, SGA, and VSA, etc.

ActionAid's strategic objectives arise from community-based, participatory approach to development. They are: empowering poor and marginalised people, promoting their basic rights, building alliances and coalitions in civil society, linking north and south, influencing official donors and multilateral institutions in favour of poor women and men, promoting responsible private investment, strengthening local strategies for gender empowerment and advocating gender equity, and promoting local knowledge and skills.

CORE VALUES

Mutual respect, equity and justice, honesty and transparency, solidarity with poor and marginalised, courage of conviction, humility.

MISSION

To work with poor and marginalised people to eradicate poverty by overcoming the injustice and inequity that cause it.

It is not easy though to shift focus away from apolitical service delivery; however, if the shift is deliberate, gradual and promises a balance between essential service delivery to build capacity of the community to organise and mobilise itself, it is very likely to be acceptable. This has become more relevant and a preferred social intervention in a country like Pakistan, where participation of the marginalised and disadvantaged people, particularly women, have not been institutionalised due to a host of factors. Regular military interventions, the domination of the military, bureaucratic, landed and religious elite in politics, deliberate under-investments for social development by the state, culture of patriarchy and absence of participatory democratic structures, traditions and processes are some of these.

With this background, ActionAid has deliberated to empower women and men through political education, with conviction that one of the best corrective and curative courses under the given circumstances is helping set out democratic processes at local level that ensure peoples' participation in influencing decisions that effect their lives directly. The upcoming local government elections offer civil society actors a chance to promote irreversible change through the electoral process; particularly by ensuring that 33% seats allocated for women are properly utilised.

ActionAid has planned an extensive political education programme that includes both short-term interventions addressing local body elections as well as longer-term initiatives focusing on advocacy, mobilisation of communities, formation of alliances and coalitions, and working towards movements. The continued use and extension of REFLECT techniques to work towards the political literacy of partner communities will be a centrepiece of our approach in all the areas ActionAid plans to work in.

ActionAid's partners that have worked in political education offer examples of how to engage in such activities; and their experiences have informed our strategies focusing on voter education, candidate training, and election monitoring. These and other political education initiatives will particularly focus disadvantaged groups such as women, minorities, and peasants. In the post-election environment, there is scope to train and engage new elected representatives to ensure that the institutions of governance are responsive to people's needs and preferences.

The methods to make political education processes more effective, impeccable and irreversible would vary from direct training of candidates to interactive theatre, and distribution of informational materials. The candidates, particularly women, are being trained to design and run effective, local level, election campaigns. All of these efforts focus on effective empowerment of *politically aware but socially active* citizenry through awareness and re-politicisation in three steps: inform, organise, and reform. The third stage manifests a vibrant civil society, responsive state, responsible market, and empowered women and men.

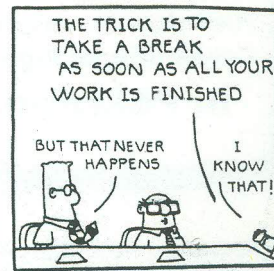
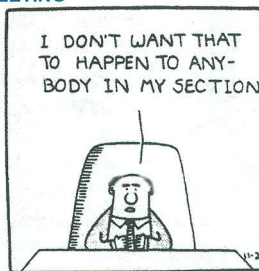
Food for thought

only

JOKES

are for giggles

PROGRAMME MANAGER IN MEETING



ADAPTATION OF A CLIP BY SCOTT ADAMS' 'THE DILBERT PRINCIPLE'

WORDS OF WISDOM HEARD BEFORE

- I've learned that either you control your attitude or it controls you.
- I've learned that you can do something in an instant that will give you heartache for life.
- I've learned that it's talking me a long time to become the person I want to be.
- I've learned that you should always leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.
- I've learned that you can keep going long after you can't.
- I've learned that we are responsible for what we do, no matter how we feel.
- I've learned that heroes are the people who do what has to be done when it needs to be done, regardless of the consequences.
- I've learned that money is a lousy way of keeping score.
- I've learned that my best friend and I can do anything or nothing and have the best.
- I've learned that sometimes the people you expect to kick you when you're down, will be the ones to help you get back up.
- I've learned that sometimes when I'm angry I have the right to be angry, but that doesn't give me the right to be cruel.
- I've learned that maturity has more to do with what types of experiences you've had and what you've learned from them and less to do with how many birthdays you've celebrated.
- I've learned that no matter how good a friend is, they're going to hurt you every once in a while and you must forgive them for that.
- I've learned that it isn't always enough to be forgiven by others. Sometimes you have to learn to forgive yourself.
- I've learned that our background and circumstances may have influenced who we are, but we are responsible for who we become.

Ref: Newspaper, 'The News'

THOUGHT PROVOKING PUNCH

THE LORDS OF POVERTY

Excuse me, friends, I must catch my jet
I'm off to join the Development Set:
My bags are packed, and I've had all my shots --
I have travelers cheques and pills for the trots.

The Development Set is bright and noble
Our thoughts are deep and our vision global
Although we move with the better classes
Our thoughts are always with the masses

In Sheraton hotels in scattered nations
We damn multinational corporations
Injustice seems so easy to protest
In such seeting hotbeds of social rest

We discuss malnutrition over steaks
And plan hunger talks during coffee breaks
Whether Asian Floods or African drought,
We face each issue with an open mouth

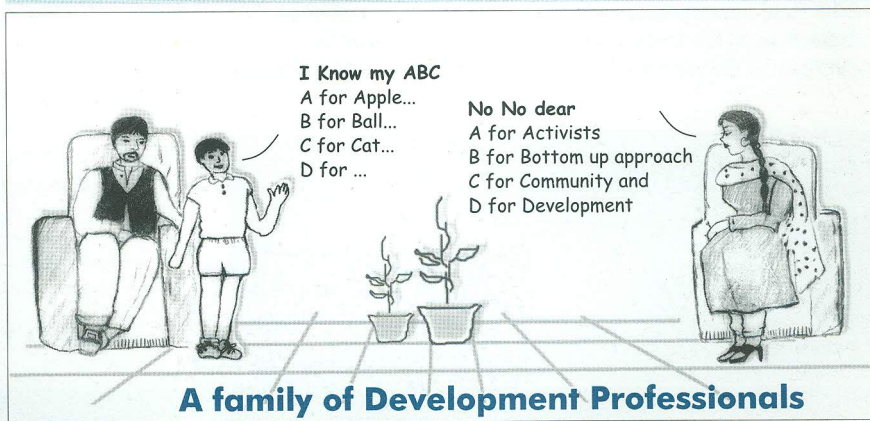
We bring in consultants whose circumlocution
Raises difficulties for every solution
Thus guaranteeing continued good eating
By showing the need for another meeting

The language of the Development Set
Stretches the English alphabet
We use swell words like "epigenetic"
"Micro", "macro" and "logarithmic."

Development Set homes are extremely chic
Full of carvings, curios, and draped in batik
Eye-level photographs subtly assure
That your host is at home with the rich and the poor

Enough of these verses -- on with the mission!
Our task is as broad as the human condition!
Just pray to God the biblical promise is true
The poor ye shall always have with you."

Graham Hancock, "Lords of Poverty"



A family of Development Professionals

Women's Historical Journey of Constitutional Rights in Pakistan

Post-Independence Period [1 947-1 958]:

The birth of Pakistan marked the end of an intense and traumatic period in the history of South Asian Muslims. During the nationalist movement (anti-British) many women had been mobilised and they actively

participated in every aspect of the freedom struggle. During the early period they worked with the fathers of Independence in the constitution making process. The first legislature of Pakistan had two women representatives, Begum Jahanara Shah Nawaaz and Begum Shaista Ikramullah. The very first test for these women legislature came when they found their men counterparts reluctant to approve the 'Islamic Personal Law of Shariat' which would've recognized women's right to inherit property in accordance with the Islamic law. The law also guaranteed all citizens, including women, equal pay for equal work, equality of status and equality of opportunity. After protests by women both inside and outside the legislature the bill was approved in 1948 and became effective in 1951 when Pakistan adopted its first constitution.

Ayub Period [1960-1970]:

Women who had become active during the freedom struggle remained active in the fifties and they continued to struggle and create opportunities. During this period no obstacles were placed in women's paths from exploring new fields of education and work.

It was during the regime of President Ayub Khan that the most progressive piece of legislation ever to be implemented in Pakistan was approved. The main aim of Family Law Ordinance (1961) was to discourage polygamy and to regulate divorce by prescribing procedure for both. The ordinance forces a man who wants to marry more than once to obtain the consent of the first wife. It prescribes a minimum age for marriage and takes away the right of declaring-by-repudiation divorce from husband and permits the wife the right to divorce. A very significant clause of the ordinance is the compulsory registration of all marriages and divorces, making it possible for the wife to seek enforcement through the courts.

Another equally significant event of the sixties was the candidature for president of Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah. Although she lost the election she symbolized the possibilities for Pakistani woman of the sixties.

Bhutto Period [1970-1977]:

The 1973 constitution building on the Family Law Ordinance gave more rights to women than any other constitution of Pakistan. Article 27 of the Fundamental Rights stipulated that there would be no discrimination on the basis of race, religion, caste or sex for appointment in the service of Pakistan. All citizens were guaranteed

equal access to and protection of the law.

A number of other initiatives were launched by the government to encourage women's participation in all spheres of life. A cell was set up in the Manpower division to evaluate the status of working women. A woman was appointed Governor of Sindh. Another was elected deputy speaker of the National Assembly. A massive induction into foreign service was made and District Management Group of Pakistan Civil Service was opened up to women for the first time.

1970s in Pakistan were marked by the rising level of political awareness in the country brought about by the universal suffrage guaranteed in 1973 constitution. Women from all classes of society joined women's wing of PPP. The most positive aspect of this was that it gave privileged urban women a chance to look first hand at the miserable condition of lower class women and created a new consciousness of women activism.

Zia Period [1 977-1 988]:

One of the most controversial pieces of legislation to be ever implemented, Hudood Ordinance was promulgated in 1979 with the announcement of more Islamic measures to come. The Hudood ordinance covers adultery, fornication, rape and prostitution (zina) and bearing false testimony (qazi). Not everyone fully understood the full implications of Hudood Ordinance until the courts started handing down verdicts based on it. The 1982 case (tens of similar cases were brought in courts throughout the 80s) of Safia Bibi was one of the earliest examples of the blunderous decisions awarded by courts based on Hudood Ordinances. Safia Bibi, a near blind domestic servant, having been raped by her landlord and his son registered a rape case against them after the birth of her illegitimate baby. The session judge awarded her the punishment of fifteen lashes, three years of imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1000 while finding her rapists not guilty under the Hudood Ordinance. While the punishment was not carried out in this case other women were not so lucky. Following closely after Safia Bibi case was Mai Lal's case (1983) who after being convicted under Zina Ordinance was given 15 lashes in public.

Ironically, it was Hudood Ordinance which did more to mobilize support for women's organizations such as Women Action Forum (WAF) than anything else and when, Qisas Diyat and Shahadat ordinances were proposed women were able to mass public resistance which resulted in shelving of Qisas and Diyat ordinances and in promulgation of a 'milder' variation of Shahadat (law of evidence). As implemented in 1984 law of evidence prescribed that, "In all matters pertaining to financial and future obligations providing these are reduced to writing the evidence of, two men, or one man and two women, would be required so that if one forgets the other may remind her."

The worst consequence of these laws was legitimacy to harassment of women and violence against women increased manifold.

Post-Martial Law Period (1988-)

After winning majority seats in the parliamentary elections of 1988, Benazir Bhutto formed a coalition with elements of Ulema. Her government's most celebrated achievements of establishing Women's Bank and Women's Police Force were proposed by Zia-ul-Haq to promote segregation of women.'

Contributed by: Ali Gondal

References: Rukhsana Ahmad (ed): "We Sinful women", The Women's Press, London, 1981. — Khawar Mumtaz and Fareeda Shaheed: "Women of Pakistan: two steps forward one step backward", Zed Press, London, 1987.

Readers' suggestions will be most welcome.

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