

September 18, 1984

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Subject: Visit of Mr. S.P. Bhandara, President's` Advisor on Minority Affairs.

Participants:

1.	Mr. S.P. Bhandara	President's Adviser
2.	Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan	General Manager
3.	Mr. Hussain Wali Khan	Programme Senior Engineer
4.	Mrs. Khalida Nasir	Cons. Social Organiser
5.	Mr. Mutabiat Shah	Programme Accountant
6.	Mr. Sultan Shahabuddin	Consultant Accountant
7.	Mr. Azmat Qadir	Project Economist
8.	Mr. Zafar Ahmad	Project Economist
9.	Mr. Izhar Ali Hunzai	Cons. Programme Officer

Before coming to Conference Room, the Adviser had a preliminary discussion with the General Manager.

Having viewed the film "Valleys in Transition", the Adviser appreciated AKRSP's efforts and accorded his recognition to its great successes in the Chitral and Gilgit districts.

The Adviser said that he knew how intelligently the programme had utilised its fund assuring a direct and immediate impact on the villagers' income. The Adviser held that he was impressed by the AKRSP's organisational concept and the powerful incentives for development it provided. The Adviser further said that he had been hearing a lot about the wonderful achievements of this programme and was looking forward to personally seeing them. He maintained "I know little about rural development, but still, I enjoyed talking to Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan on many interesting aspects of the programme". Addressing the MG he said "You are the pioneers of this noble task".

After these complimentary remarks, the Adviser questioned GM and other members of the MG on different aspects of the programme.

Adviser: As the film indicated, you seem to create a new social structure, what are you aiming at, or what is your ultimate goal?

GM: The vision of Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan the mentor of AKRSP - is to create strong, independent and productive rural cooperatives. The first task in this direction was to form viable village organisations. In our view, these organisations would not survive if they count on financial inputs from outside alone. Therefore, the idea is to generate capital from within the organisations, this would gradually reduce their dependence on capital inputs from without.

The Adviser was briefed on the mechanics of VO i.e. how the villagers organise, where and when they meet and how they generate their equity capital etc.

Adviser: What are the immediate problems that you face?

GM: We were facing financial constraints as regards the expansion of our programme, that is

why we have not undertaken any new PPIs since last March.

Adviser: Do you find the government institutions helpful or competitive?

GM: The fact is that no government institutions are working at this level except LB&RD through Union Councils. They are very good in planning and coordination but when it comes to rural development, the Union Councils are inadequate and helpless without the outreach capability of VOs.

Adviser: What are marketing procedures, what, where and how the VOs market?

GM: The VOs are provided with relevant training and information on marketing. They market their surplus produce, which is mainly fruit in down country and share the experience with other organisations.

The Adviser was informed about the progress achieved so far in the marketing sector. Individual cases were mentioned to highlight 'good' and 'bad' experiences. The Adviser was also acquainted with AKRSP's plans to establish a modern marketing system in the near future.

Adviser: What would be your real emphasis, going to new areas with PPI projects or pursuing the post - PPI developmental package in the first generation of villagers?

GM: Explaining the programme's policy in this regard said: "We are giving equal importance to both of them. We see the PPI as the entry point. All subsequent packages projected that whatever financial form, are included in the overall rural development planning that AKRSP has adopted as its strategy.

Adviser: Are you working in other areas as well, such as women in development, education, health etc?

GM: The social sector is included in our strategy. We believe that organisation serves as the basis for developing all aspects of life including social and economic sectors. Our experience shows that it is easier to organise people around their economic needs. Once organised, villagers can pursue other needs. This belief has proven to be true in many cases. Village organisations are now including schools and dispensaries in their village planning programmes. AKRSP is providing them with loans as they enter into this second phase of development.

The Adviser complimented AKRSP for what it has been able to achieve so far. He added, there are many other areas such as Diamer, Baltistan and many parts in Chitral to be taken along your way of progress. The Adviser particularly mentioned the Kalash and a deserving people in this regard.

The Adviser showed keen interest in marketing the local fruits. The Adviser further asked if any drinking water projects were undertaken by AKRSP. The Adviser was told that other agencies such as UNICEF were directly involved in that sector.

Concluding his remarks about AKRSP, the Adviser observed: "Let the other follow in the heels of your organisation because you are firm on the grass-roots".

The Adviser congratulated AKRSP on the remarkable progress it has achieved in such a brief period.

Lastly, copies of the quarterly reports and other literature on AKRSP's philosophy and work were presented to the honourable guest.

The Adviser received them with thanks. The Adviser thanked the GM for this briefing and extended his wholehearted support to the programme. GM too thanked the Adviser for his visit and appreciated his support for the AKRSP.

In a subsequent meeting at the Commissioner's house, attended by Commissioner, Dr.d Akhter Hameed Khan and GM AKRSP, Mr. Bhandara discussed the political and sectarian aspects of the programme and strongly suggested inclusion of the Commission Northern Areas, representatives of the three sects and some other Pakistani rural development specialists in the Board of Governors of the AKRSP. He also fully supported Commissioner's contention for extending the programme to Baltistan and Astore to prove its non-communal stance in the eyes of the general public.