

April 16, 1984

Subject: **A brain storming session on action plan for Women's Organisation (WO).**

Participants: General Manager (SSK)
Management Group (MG) (HWK, TH, MHH, KN)
AT & MZM

MHH began the discussion on walled gardens and emphasised two points:

- (i) Walled gardens are not necessarily tied with vegetables growing and can be utilised for growing fruit, fodder etc.
- (ii) The previous yardstick, that a women's programme should only generate income that would accrue to the women is irrelevant. Rather that the generated income should go into the household.

The above points were accepted by the group.

GM then set the motion of the session - "lets talk the basic issue, what are we trying to do with the women's programme". The yardstick-income generating activity. Lets then examine the means to get nearer to the objective. KN mentioned that seeds had been distributed and follow-up visits were needed to check the results. GM then brought the question whether there was a market for vegetables. AT mentioned on transportation subsidy etc., and made the point that it was difficult to market fresh vegetables down country. Also the fact the VOs are spread out geographically and Gilgit itself was a limited market. GM stated that vegetable growing could not generate income except for a few villages and would be successful only in a limited way. On district level, it held little potential because of the absence of a developed market structure. TH however, emphasised that it should at least be experimented at few villages. There was a possibility of developing tehsil-wise markets in some areas and also crop variations in response to markets.

POULTRY

GM asked MHH on what were the objectives of the poultry training course that was recently conducted for the women. MHH replied that it was strictly to provide know-how while the scale was left to them. MZM mentioned that in his recent visit to Sherqilla, he observed that the villagers were not very keen on the idea of remitting money for the services provided by the locally trained poultry specialist. The advantages and disadvantages of scavenging versus enclosed chickens was discussed. The fact realised that poultry keeping was also limited in terms of its applicability district wise. Two points were concluded on poultry:

1. Attempts must be made to cover all the women VOs despite logistical problems.
2. The frequency of training courses must be increased and course corrections made.

LIVESTOCK

HWK made the point that every household in Gilgit district had atleast some livestock. (Brig. Munir who had come to visit the GM, joined the session upon invitation). TH mentioned that areas with single crop had more livestock than double crop areas. The discussion then settled on the issue of how was livestock perceived, that is, in dairy terms or meat wise? Availability of fodder was seen as the major problem. Brig. Munir cited the problem of availability of meat for the army because of lack of fodder for livestock. MHH then mentioned about her discussions with Whiteman, the UNDP Agronomist, who is experimenting on a certain variety of fodder crop. The advantage of this particular variety being that it could be grown on high altitudes and also its adaptability to seasonal fluctuations. The only problem being that it needed to be protected in walled gardens or similar enclosures. One point noted regarding dairy production was T.B. in the Northern Areas was mostly

acquired through consumption of dairy products, since the livestock was diseased and afflicted with TB. The conclusions drawn were that dairy products had limited potentials, however, if a break-through could be made in mutton, it could be replicated district-wise. Gilgit for instance, was a net mutton importer and there was a frequent shortage of meat. A need was also realised for somebody, preferably a local person, to look into all possibilities and prepare a rough feasibility study. Dr. Sarwar for instance could be a possible person.

FOOD PROCESSING

Jams, vinegar etc. The point was that standardisation of products would have to be attained for commercial purposes - and this is something that could not be achieved at a village level. TH mentioned about the Shezan Report on the Northern Areas and it was decided that since now there were VOs, discussions should be opened with them as well as with Fauji Foundation who would be interested in vinegars. Brig. Munir explained the fruit drying technical process that he had observed in Kashghar China and HWK illustrated the basic technical process involved. Dr. Fazlur Rehman for instance had introduced fumigation and Balghari had some ideas about dehydration. Balghari was going to introduce the technic and explain the procedure to a few women in the VO.

HANDICRAFTS

Discussed as possible side activity and KN talked of her Nigerian experience on embroidery and handicrafts. According to the GM, there were already local shops in Hunza, Passu and Gilgit and we would end up competing if we entered the field. However, one area where we could play a role according to MHH, would be of intermediaries between shops (public/private) and the villages. In short, create accessibility but not enter the market ourselves.

JUMA BAZAR

The idea was not very appealing.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW CROPS

It was agreed that experiments should be conducted on small plots and results noted. However, the idea of introducing crop training together with the poultry course for the women, was rejected and MHH emphasised the fact that being students was absolutely a new experience to most of the women and it would be very taxing for them to undergo two courses simultaneously.

ON WATER AND STREET TAPS

It was suggested that KN have a talk with AD since the CBS programme was actively involved in this field. However, there was a possibility that AKRSP would invest in water tanks or ponies.

FISH PONDS

Once again, this could be something for some individual villages but not applicable on a broader scale.

Discussions once again settled on walled gardens and GM asked TH and MHH for their views on this matter. MHH made the point that it could open accessibility/cooperation with other NGOs. UNDP for instance was thinking along the same lines of walled gardens. The following issues regarding walled gardens were touched upon:

- (a) The amount of land to be walled per household and the expenses - ranging between Rs.2-3,000 per household i.e. Rs. 50 to 75 million for Gilgit district.
- (b) Subsidy per household would be too individualistic, thus changing our concept.

(c) Availability of female labour to work on individual walled plots and the various problems associated with a "collective" scheme.

(d) This was certainly not an entry point for organising like PPI.

GM concluded to go ahead in a few potential villages only on condition that (i) at least 8-10 women agree to have a walled garden, (ii) use the plot for growing fodder as the main crop and (iii) work out division of labour for tending the walled plot.