

**Subject: VILLAGE DIALOGUES**

**Households: 700**

**The Group: GM (SSK, DC Gilgit, TH, TS, SMS (SO), SG, Syed Yahya Shah, MNAC from Nagar, Haji Jan, Project Manager, LB&RD, Nagar.**

The group started at 0930 hours from Gilgit. SMS and Sher Ghazi were in one and the rest of the members of the group were in the jeep of GM. Our jeep went to filling station in Gilgit for diesel. We have our luggage in the jeep as we were required to establish our office in Aliabad (Hunza). When we reached there, SSK was speaking. The number of persons present was 225. They belonged to 10 villages around Chalt. The main villages represented were (1) Chalt Bala, (2) Chalt Paeen, (3) Sonikot, (4) Rahbat, (5) Mamosh Deding, (6) Chaprot, (7) Shutindas, (8) Bodalus, (9) Bar and (10) Torboto Das.

SSK: We have neither come here to listen to your demands nor we can fulfil them. We can't tell you a lie. When we can't do this, then why we have come here? I have come here along with my colleagues to sit with you and discuss your problems and then see how they can be solved. For example, if poverty is a disease, then who will diagnose it. Experience has shown that the village people can diagnose it. The Chalt people know their problems. If the village people can do the treatment, then why they don't? This is because they don't have the medicine. We will provide the required medicines. We will train you. If you so desire that we should work with you, then both of us have some duties and responsibilities.

Your first duty is to identify such problems of your area which will benefit majority of the people. To eradicate poverty income should increase. He enquired from Yahya Shah the number of households which he indicated as 700. To this SSK said that the scheme should be such that it should be beneficial for all the 700, if it is not then at least majority of the people should be benefitted. He further added that schemes like drinking water supply will not increase your income. For such schemes, there are other institutions like UNICEF and LB&RD. When you identify your problem then our duty starts. The Engineer Sher Ghazi and Social Organisation Expert Mutahir Shah are sitting here. In the formulation of a project, the people should participate. We know that the people can't make estimates and blue prints, and here you need for experts who will come to you and formulate the project. After formulation, it will be discussed with the people. The people will execute the scheme themselves as there will be no contractor. You should formulate such schemes which you can execute yourself. He further added that you cannot construct a bridge on Hunza river. NAWO can do that. This programme is to eradicate poverty. If we ask you for free labour, then it is against our programme. If we do this then how poverty can be eradicated. The labour will get his remuneration.

Your second duty is to form your organisation. This is a must because you will execute the project and there will be no contractor. We will provide the financial and technical help.

Your third duty starts after the completion of the project. Maintenance of the project after completion is your responsibility. We cannot do maintenance of 157 schemes. This is our approach. (1) identification of problems by you. (2) Your organisation to shoulder the responsibility of executing and completing the project. (3) The maintenance of the completed project.

If you accept these principles, then sit among yourself and hold discussion on your problems. The people said that the Chairman will present our problems.

S. Yahya Shah stood up and presented the following problems:

- (i) Kurkundas pipe line. He demanded a pipe line of 6" or 8" diameter and said that some 3,000

kanals of land will be brought under plough. Two crops can be grown on this land. Some 500 families will be benefitted.

- (ii) Ghasho Maling Das Channel. Here remodeling of the channel is required. 200 families and land of more than 3,000 kanals will be benefitted.
- (iii) Chaltt drainage: The excess water should be drained from the soil. The whole of Chalat will be benefitted from this scheme.
- (iv) Rahbat link road - half mile.
- (v) Sonikot link road - half mile.
- (vi) Chalt Payeen link road - 1-1/2 miles.
- (vii) Link road for Bar village. It is two miles.
- (viii) Dad Das Bar link road.
- (ix) A water reservoir for irrigation in Sonikot.
- (x) Chalt road - half mile.
- (xi) One thresher for Bar Das. There are 70 households.
- (xii) A water channel Broshky Chaprot - about 3 miles.
- (xiii) Gonar water channel from Rahbat to Chaprote.
- (xiv) A water channel Kannah Jee. It will irrigate 500 kanals of land.
- (xv) A water reservoir for irrigation in Shutin Das.
- (xvi) Thaley Bodalus channel.
- (xvii) A protection bund for Mamosh Deding.

SSK: The AKRSP will cooperate in all these projects but gradually. He quoted a Persian proverb which means that "catch hold of one but firmly". He further added that if we undertake schemes in Chalt only, the DC will oust us. This is not a project but a programme and will continue for an indefinite period. All problems will be solved but not at once. Just identify that project which will benefit majority of the people, if not all. There are ten villages in Chalt. The people of each village should consult amongst themselves and identify the most important projects. Mr. Ghazi and Mutahir Shah will make a programme with you and will see the scheme. Indicate the names of the ten villages with names of contact men. Projects will be formulated with your cooperation.

S. Yahya Shah asked for one common project but the people did not agree. The names of villages with contact men and schemes as given by the people were as under:

- (1) Qorgondas Water Channel: It will benefit about 6,000 kanals of land of Chalt Bala, Sonikot and Mamosh Deding. The contact man is Latif Anwar, Chairman, Union Council Chalt.
- (2) Ghashmaling water channel: It is about 3 miles. It will benefit 200 families with 3000 to 4000 kanals of land. The contact man is Mohammad Shafa, Vice Chairman, UC Chalt.

- (3) Link Road Rahbat: It is 2-1/2 miles long. The beneficiaries are 100 houses. The contact men are Sub. Safdar Khan and Aun Ali.
- (4) Bar to Dopas pony track: It is 3 miles. The contact man is Amir Haider, Member UC Chalt.
- (5) Torboto Das: There are 70 to 100 households. They need a thresher. The contact man is Amir Haider, Member UC Chalt.
- (6) Chaprot Utaimaling khul: It will benefit 300 families with 18,000 kanals of land. The contact men are Ghulam Rasool and Mohammad Khan. It is 6 miles long but 3 miles has already been constructed.
- (7) Dodo Das link road: It is one mile and will benefit 50 households. The contact man is Amir Haider, Member, UC Chalt.
- (8) Bodalus Khul: It is about four miles. It will benefit 300 to 4000 kanals of land belonging to 130 families. The contact men are Sarwar Khan and Mirza Ali.
- (9) Shutin Das water channel is 4 miles long. It needs widening. It will benefit 130 families. The contact man is Sarwar Khan.
- (10) Mamosh Deding Flood Protection Bund. It will benefit 70 families.

The main villages of the Chalt Union Council are:

- |                 |   |              |
|-----------------|---|--------------|
| - Chalt Bala    | - | Chalt Payeen |
| - Sonikot       | - | Rahbat       |
| - Mamosh Deding | - | Chaprot      |
| - Shutin Das    | - | Bodalus      |
| - Bar           | - | Torboto Das  |

SSK thanked the people especially S. Yahya Shah and Latif Anwar, Chairman, Union Council Chalt.

SMS prepared a tour programme with the representatives. Later on the team went to the site to see the proposed Qorqondas water channel scheme.

The team left for Sikanderabad and reached there at 1430 hours. 28 persons were present. They were from Sikanderabad, Jafarabad and Nilth. SSK asked TS to introduce the team. After that SSK asked Yahya Shah to say something about the programme. He introduced the programme in the local dialect. Then SSK thanked Yahya Shah and TS for the introduction of the programme and the team respectively. He further added that this is our weakness or shortcoming that we cannot fulfil your demands. There are many other institutions working here. Then what is the need of this programme. We have come here in extreme cold to make you understand the objectives and purposes of this programme. You first try to understand the purpose and objectives. We have to eradicate poverty. You know that KKH has had impact on the economy but it took long 20 years. You identify small schemes which have immediate impact to increase income. Under the AKRSP, we take such schemes which increase income. For school and drinking water supply, there are other agencies like UNICEF and LB&RD and other departments. We will help in such projects which increase income. Who will identify such projects. No body else except the villagers can best do it. The difficulties in Sikanderabad are best known to the residents of Sikanderabad.

Under the AKRSP we and you both have some duties. Your first duty is to identify such projects which will benefit majority of the families. When you identify the project, then our duty begins. We will sit with you to formulate the project. The Social Organization Team will be here. They will come again. The people will have

to assemble. There will be no contractor. You have to do the work yourself. The organisation will be told every week or every fortnight that how the expenditure was incurred. You have to cooperate in this field also.

Your third duty is the maintenance of the completed scheme. These are the three principles.

SSK then invited the villagers to identify suitable projects for their areas.

At this point, it would be useful to describe the physical setting of the meeting.

Villagers and visitors were positioned as above when the Chairman, UC Sikandarabad started reading from a prepared list. The first project he identified was an irrigation scheme that would help develop 5,000 kanals of barren land. At this point, some dissenting voices were heard from among the villagers present. A young man from Sikandarabad stepped up, snatched the list from his UC Chairman and stated emphatically that the proposed scheme was the business of Sikandarabad villagers since it benefitted them. An immediate sharp retort was issued by a Tongdas Hothead - to the effect that since the channel being proposed would draw water from Tongdas, which is located upstream of Sikandarabad, the scheme was a disputed one and would antagonize Tongdas residents. The Sikandarabad troops told the Tongdas Hothead, in no uncertain terms, to mind their own business. A temporarily successful attempt was made by the DC to quieten things down. The advantage of this calm was claimed by a Nilth Interceptor: tall and dark, with a beard like Salahuddin Ayubi's, a flowing white robe on his shoulders, a white cap perched at an angle on his head, this member of the House of Nagar stepped into the centre of the gathering and announced to all the world: "This channel will not be dug".

That did it!

General disorder prevailed as claims and counterclaims were flung across the gathering and insults traded liberally. Appeals for calm from the Pope (Syed Yahya) and the Caesar (Deputy Commissioner) went unheeded. The police Inspector and his men stepped up and positioned themselves around the GM and the DC. Haji Jan started laughing at the absurdity of the spectacle! Somehow, the GM managed to tell the villagers that AKRSP was in no hurry to start any projects and that villagers had to settle their disputes before presenting proposals to AKRSP. The DC advised the contending parties to make a reasonable settlement with each other, to which end he offered his services as mediator.

All of this was a vivid contrast to the orderly proceedings at Chalt earlier in the day. It was an instructive contrast, one that brought home in technicolor the rewards and hazards of life with AKRSP.