

Note for Record
March 12-14, 2012

By: Shoaib Sultan Khan
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Subject: Meeting with Chief Minister, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa & Field Visit

I am grateful to the Chairperson and CEO of Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) for arranging my meeting with the Chief Minister (CM) of KP, Amir Haider Khan Hoti at such a short notice. The CM had also invited Senior Minister Rahimdad Khan and Finance Minister Humayun Khan alongwith Additional Chief Secretary (Development) Attaullah Khan to the meeting.

All of them were of full praise for the way Bacha Khan Poverty Alleviation Programme (BKPAP) was being implemented by SRSP. CM and the Senior Minister had firsthand knowledge because the programme was being implemented in one of the districts to which both of them belonged. The CM observed that he was now receiving demands from all the districts for initiating BKPAP type programme in their area.

The CM also raised the issue of audit by the Accountant General of BKPAP and seemed to agree with the assessment that strangulating the programme with financial and accounting procedures followed in government departments, would result in the demise of the BKPAP, especially when, according to legal opinion, AGPR has no jurisdiction over the organisation set up under the Companies Ordinance which lays down audit of such companies by firm of chartered accountants of repute and SRSP has already got BKPAP audited by KPMG, a firm of international repute.

The other issue CM raised was the assurance given at the time of launching of BKPAP that it would attract donor funding. I submitted to CM that the promise was attracting donor funding for the people of KP not for the provincial government and SRSP has, as against one billion allocation of BKPAP, through AusAid, EU and other donors brought nearly five billion rupees commitments and flow of funds has begun. I submitted to CM to direct Minister of Finance to match this amount for future expansion of BKPAP which caused quite a bit of laughter in the meeting.

I submitted to CM the future vision for poverty reduction in KP through expansion of BKPAP. I suggested first priority the coverage of all the Union Councils (UCs) through BKPAP in the four districts where the programme was initiated in 2010 and has covered 40 UCs leaving a balance of 102 UCs still to be covered. I informed the CM that without full coverage of all the UCs in a district, poverty will not be reduced from the district except from pockets where the programme has been operational, for example, in the district of Mardan the BKPAP currently covers only 26% of the UCs. I gave him the example of Sindh where the Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah allocated resources for full coverage of two districts comprising 87 UCs and at the end of three years, according to impact study done by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) of Islamabad, 59% of the extremely poor, chronically poor and vulnerable poor households of the two districts had moved to the non-poor category, according to the Poverty Scorecard administered in the districts at the beginning of the programme Union Council Based Poverty Reduction Programme (UCBPRP) a replica of BKPAP.

As regards the remaining twenty two districts of KP comprising over 800 UCs, I submitted to the CM a similar programme like BKPAP. The total involvement per UC under BKPAP will be 25 million rupees, thus for the remaining 102 UCs, an allocation of two and half billion rupees is required and for the balance UCs in KP in the remaining district, an additional twenty billion rupees are required which could be staggered over 3 to 5 years depending on availability of resources with the Provincial Exchequer. KP with the current ADP pitched at 85 billion, can easily afford to allocate 20 to 25 billion rupees over 3 to 5 years to make a big dent in the poverty profile of the province. It will be less than 6% of the ADP, even if the ADP allocations remain static for the next five years, directly benefitting over one million poor households in the province.

I was most impressed by CM's youthful dynamism, humility and yearning to improve the lot of the poor of the province. I beseeched Amir Haider Khan to keep the abovementioned vision in view, if he wanted to help the poor of KP and earn a name for himself in posterity.

The CEO SRSP Masoodul Mulk, stated that there was tremendous interest in donors in supporting a programme like BKPAP in KP, if the provincial government seriously takes the matter of donor funding for poverty reduction through BKPAP approach. He was confident of a very positive response from donors.

The Chairperson SRSP Mrs. Munawar Humayun urged timely release of funds for BKPAP and made a strong plea against any disruption of the programme due to delay in approving the next phase of BKPAP in the existing four districts.

The CM, with full support of the Senior Minister and Finance Minister directed ACS (Dev) to give first priority to the coverage of the balance number of UCs in the existing four districts of BKPAP and also to initiate preparation of a plan for coverage of the remaining districts in KP by BKPAP.

I profusely thanked the CM for his kindness when he presented me with a KP province plaque and enquired if he feels BKPAP has lived upto the promise made three years ago when he approved the programme in principle. He responded he was fully satisfied by what BKPAP has achieved so far.

The two field visits took us to the districts of Charsadda, Peshawar and Mardan. At village Azizabad in UC Dheri Zardad of district Charsadda, nearly 200 members of the male community organisation formed in a male VO met us. The Assistant DCO Charsadda also attended the meeting. In a short period of less than two years, 138 households got organized in 6 MCOs and WCOs led by an amazing activist Abdul Wadud. He made a most polished presentation about the activities of the organisations which would have put even a most accomplished professional to shame. Even Ejaz Rahim, an ex-Cabinet Secretary of the Government of Pakistan and Col. Alamzeb, an ex-Commissioner and Secretary to the Government of KP, who heard Abdul wadud, greatly praised his performance. Such activists are indeed the mainstay of the COs. Another talented activist we met was Zahid, who had made a beautiful relief map of the village. The proceedings of the meeting were being conducted by Arshad. These individuals were the social capital of the village. I was told there were equally if not better activists amongst the women organisations. The MCO/WCOs had taken advantage of all the interventions offered under the AusAid project like training of all types community productive infrastructure and had saved Rs. 54,000. One of the unusual training was in the field of quail management.

It was in the field of governance that the VO had formed self help committees of members to take care of i) village cleanliness, ii) security arrangements, iii) construction of CPIs, iv) credit supervision and v) linkages, such as with UNHabitat, NADRA, Forest Department. Baitulmaal, Hissar Foundation, WAPDA etc. Ejaz Rahim congratulated them on linkages and urged them to sensitise government both politicians and administrators about grassroots development and secure as much resources as possible. He expressed his happiness at their efforts in making their

village an island of peace. Alamzeb emphasized the importance of the institutions of the people which they have formed and how important it was to make them viable for future sustainability.

The Chairperson SRSP provided me the following account of her meeting with the women VO:

While Shoaib Sahab met the male VO, I had the opportunity to meet the women`s VO at village Azizabad. The WVO has 9 Cos of whom 3 Cos were present at the meeting. It was a delight for Shandana, Shifa and myself to interact with such a large and communicative group. The presentation was made by 6 confident presidents and secretaries, each more enthusiastic than the other to tell of their achievements which included, SM, demo plots of kitchen gardening, their PI, vocational training and CIF. The greatest enthusiasm was for the vocational training and CIF, at a service charge of 11%, which according to them has been a perfect combination of activities. It has given the women a sense of achievement and confidence, due to their acquiring a skill and financial independence.

The only request was for classes in Adult Literacy.

A sanitation PI for the whole village, costing Rs. 2478800 has been identified, but will the village be any cleaner when this is done? Not unless a health and hygiene sensitization training, and organizing the village to do so.... is part of the PI. We discussed this at great length and the women understood the importance of keeping their environment clean.

There are 2 issues that need to be looked into, if we are to achieve total mobilization of village Azizabad

- 1) Only women with CNIC can join a CO.....WHY?
- 2) Only those with a score less than 24 on the PSC can join a CO.....WHY?

At Maira Kachori in Peshawar district, we were greeted by over 400 women. Nusrat Idris was the spirit behind this phenomenon. In 2002, 15 WOs were formed but in 2006, five became dormant and the remaining ten WOs started a village bank (VB) with a capital of two million rupees. Now with support from PPAF, RAHA, UNHCR and AusAid, the entire village has been organized and according to PSC, the 13 WOs comprise 36 extremely poor, 125 chronically poor, 115 poor and 53 non-poor households. In 2010 a VO was formed and now they desire to form an LSO. They plan to organize the other village in the Jhagra Maira Kachori UC through the LSO. They have paid staff of 4 professionals, out of the income of VB. Today was also the annual anniversary day of the VB and a black forest cake was produced to celebrate the occasion. The

VO is implementing all the packages available through SRSP from different donors, the most recent being AusAid.

In KP to find so many women assembling in a VO meeting was indeed an amazing development. I congratulated Nusrat Idris for collaborating with SRSP especially in making VB a success. Wasiq should justifiably feel proud of this achievement, as micro credit incharge of SRSP operations, he had worked very hard to make a success of the 13 VBs currently operating in SRSP districts. I urged the members to make their WCOs strong, as the success of VO and LSO entirely depends on the viability of the WCOs.

Dr. Shahida Jaffrey who had remained CEO of Baluchistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) lauded the women members on their achievements and comparing them to the conditions of women in Baluchistan who she said are in much deplorable condition. She was happy that the women in Maira Kachori have taken full advantage of the resources available and through self help efforts channeled through their WCO and VO, have improved their economic and social status.

On the field visit to BKPAP in district Mardan, we saw a Female Vocational Training Institute, met MVO and WVO members of Perkho Dheri UC and interacted with LSO office bearers.

The Vocational Institute is being run by an activist Imtiaz Ahmad since 2004. Under BKPAP, over 224 women were trained in different trades and 73% are claimed to be either self employed or earning wages. The centre has certification by Government of KP organisations SDC and TTK. The Institute seems to be imparting excellent training at a reasonable cost and the trainees we met seemed very happy and satisfied.

In the shadow of the Buddhist ruins is the Perkho Dheri UC, in Village Dhano we held dialogue with members of the VO. Besides making most effective use of the BKPAP development interventions, the VO forged linkages with many government departments and agencies including NADRA, Election Commission for voter registration, polio campaign with Health Department, BISP for ATM cards, livestock department, Education Department and others. Through Aurat Foundation, arranged workshops on inheritance rights of women. In addition, the VO ensured peace and harmony and reconciliation, as a result, no case was registered by the members of the VO at the Police Station.

Col. Alamzeb made a strong plea for spacing in births and everyone accepted his argument that according to Islamic injunctions, there should be at least a gap of three years between two births.

The WVO met Chairperson SRSP and Dr. Jaffrey separately and the account of that meeting written by Munawar Humayun is as below:

The VO has 5 Cos. The president of the VO accompanied by a few activists made an indepth and excellent presentation. This was a great change from last year when presentations were made by the CRPs and CEWs. It was a lively group and many participated in the discussion that followed, which was a delight. Again the highlight of the discussion was the vocational training and the CIF. About 5 women identified themselves having taken IGG and training, who had now taken credit and were returning it without a problem. Except 3 women, who were paying back but behind schedule, all the rest found paying back no problem..

Here too there was a request for Adult Literacy, when a smart young women identified herself as a trained, certified, teacher and supervisor of NCHD. Would it be possible to facilitate and organise her to take classes? Would BKPAP pay her or the interested individuals?

I would like to congratulate SRSP for what it has achieved in Charsadda in the space of 1 short year, after coping with the aftermath of the flood.... and its achievements and progress in BKPAP inspite of having to deliver a 3 year programme in 1 1/2 yrs. Due to red tape !! I feel particularly proud of the way you have designed the vocational training for the women. Not only is the training good and market oriented, but it is so frugally done that you can afford to give the women some equipment to start work immediately.

The visit to LSO Perkho Dheri representing 2592 households (hhs) out of 3,600 households, mainly comprising Extremely Poor (432 hhs), Chronically Poor (635 hhs) and Poor (742 hhs), have actively obtained from their local MPA, who is Senior Minister in the government, substantial resources in shape of a health dispensary, hand pumps, livestock development, sanitation projects, BISP cards for 300 hhs. NADRA 500 ID cards, voter registration, birth and death registration, medical camps, ambulance service, funds from Baitul Maal, women day organisation, 10-km road, 3 bridges by PWD, renovation of tube well etc. In short, LSO as an institution of the people, has been able to access all services and supplies meant for them.

In addition the LSO has been holding Peace Meetings with the police and helping police in checking crime. The LSO has also taken steps to eradicate evil social practices prevalent in the area.

My congratulations to CEO Masoodul Mulk and his dedicated staff, who in a most difficult environment, has succeeded in achieving so much and attracting substantial donor funding and full support of the provincial government. The Honorary Chairperson Munawar Humayun has been a great facilitator in supporting the management.