

## Case Study on Building Resilience of the Community

### **Sujawal Profile**

Sujawal District is situated in the southern side of Sindh. It is spread over 8312 square kilometres. The river Indus flows down through numerous creeks till delta Arabian Sea near Shahbunder. It has a population of 933618 on the basis of 2.6% annual rate. The Old Thatta district is now divided into Sujawal and Thatta districts. This district consists of 4 Talukas & 26 Union Councils. Sujawal got its name from its illustrious resident, Sujawal Khaskheli, who was known to be a loyal servant of the 19th century Sindh ruler Mir Fateh Ali Khan Talpur. Mostly people are engaged in fishing, agriculture, a few are government employees and labourers.

### **VDMC Janki Profile**

The Village Janki is located in Union Council Keenjhar, Tehsil and District Sajawal. The village comprises of 229 households with an estimated population of 1328 people. There are seven settlements in this revenue village. Majority of the population approximately 70% are engaged in agricultural activities, about 25% are labourers and 5% are government employees. There are three boys and two girls' schools in the village with 218 children attending and 387 are out of school. The approximate figure of poverty is 70%. Revenue village has fostered one Village Disaster Management Committee (VDMC) representing all households and settlements. In order to form a VDMC, a minimum of 10 members are grouped together including five women.

Given the geographical span, the diverse population of varying sizes and spatial constraints, reaching out to the communities would not have been feasible without a formal structure in place. Therefore, committees were formed at the village and Union Council levels, which would serve as a platform for interacting with communities and facilitating communication between stakeholders, community groups, RSPs, NGOs and government. The VDMC was set up by the cooperation of team members of Tahafuz II project who were assigned the task to form sixty five VDMCs in Sujawal and Thatta district. The social mobilizers also supported the teams in the formation. The VDMC was set up on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014 under Tahafuz II project.

### **Initiatives taken**

USAID funded Community Based Disaster Risk Management Project Tahafuz (CBDRM) is in its second phase which is managed by Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) and implemented by RSPN's partners, the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) in Thatta, Sajawal and Badin districts whereas Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) is implementing it in Umarkot and Tharparkar. The objective of the project is to build resilience of the local communities to resist hazards, bounce back

after a disaster occurs and be adaptive in order to recover effectively. Tahafuz has put people at the heart of decision making and implementing disaster risk management activities. Residents of drought, flood and cyclone prone areas were empowered through capacity building and small scale mitigation and management activities including the development of disaster risk management plans, construction of community critical infrastructures and provision of standardized emergency tool kits.

The case study focuses on one of the projects identified by VDMC members on the Rehabilitation of Two Culverts in VDMC Janki which was approved by majority of households, and then the demand was sent to the District Office in the form of resolution. Complete consensus was found in the members during the survey.

Prior to the identification of the project the VDMC members received training by NRSP on Participatory Disaster Risk Management and Planning covering areas of first-aid, Search and Rescue, Camp Management and Early Warning trainings. Then they prepared Disaster Risk Management Plan which entailed developing Hazard Maps, Seasonal Calendar, Resource Mapping and highlighting their deficient areas. The third step was the identification and prioritization of one Critical Community Infrastructure (CCI) which as a result of consensus came out to be the Rehabilitation of Two Culverts. Then the social, technical and financial feasibility was conducted. The total cost of the culverts was Rs. 252,884. Although there are 3-4 ways that link the revenue village to the city but all the passages had issues. But VDMC Janki is formed over seven settlements and is heavily populated due to which the residents highlighted the need for the rehabilitation of this particular culvert. The city is 15 kilometres far from the village. The sustainability of the project was ensured by constituting local body committees for early recovery, search and rescue and camp management at the village level. **Accordingly community resource persons were identified who were responsible for conducting orientation sessions with the communities to raise awareness of how to deal with shocks and become resilient to cope up with a disaster.**

The project consisted of the Rehabilitation of Two RCC Culverts of 2-ft span with 24-ft in length. In RCC culverts, the brick masonry abutment walls were constructed to serve as load bearing walls for supporting the 6" thick R.C.C. solid slab. Ten inches thick bed flooring was provided in the culverts to prevent the foundations of structural walls from expected erosion in the future. 1.5-ft high and 13.5" thick Brick Masonry Parapet wall was constructed for safety purpose. The VDMC members had formed a project committee whose responsibility was to look after the overall Implementation and Maintenance of the project. The project was completed in 3 months. The objective of the intervention was to meet the demand of community people for safer evacuation in the times of flood as well as easy and economical transport of agricultural products to the city.

The CCI was identified on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2014 and the implementation began in November 2014. It was completed in January 2015. The Implementation Committee in order to ensure transparency in procurement had initially received three quotations in response to the advertisement for procurement and selected the lowest bidder, the quality of the products were ensured, engineers were facilitated, labour was mobilized. However the job of the Maintenance Committee was to carry out surveys after the completion of the project and managed the expenses of wear and tear afterwards with their own savings.

## Human Impact by the Project Intervention

Miss. Mariam one of the members of VDMC said, “I extend my profound regards to USAID for implementing this project in our village. This is the first project of its kind being implemented here. Residents of our village had to face difficulties during a natural disaster and several people used to fall in the water course but the rehabilitation of the culverts have brought great sigh of relief in people’s lives who will have safer evacuation in the time of floods”.

Mr. Sharif another member of VDMC pointed out “This is the first time the community is empowered through capacity building, development of disaster risk management plans and not only identifying the community infrastructure but also getting involved in the construction of infrastructure benefitting the village.”

“We were trapped in our village with no escape route and kept on waiting for someone to come and help us out during 2010 floods” said Muhammad Deen, who is from Janki village. The first night of the flood which came in 2010 was very horrifying as we were not sure whether we will see the next day or not. “That was the most horrible night for me as I could see my entire life’s saving, house, livestock drowning in the flood; I could see fear in my children’s eyes and felt so helpless. Next morning I decided not to depend on anyone for help and become self-sufficient. When the NRSP team visited our village and briefed us about the components of Tahafuz project I took all the trainings conducted by them and also helped in the construction of the culvert. After the rehabilitation of the culvert I am confident that we are in a much better position to manage ourselves during any disaster as we have a safer evacuation and will not be waiting for others to come for our help”.

Earlier the communities were not organized but the formation of VDMC provided a mechanism for people to sit and talk out their issues and to come up with a solution. Every settlement formed Community Organization that federated into Village Organizations and later on into Local Support Organization. **“Before the VDMC, whenever there was a problem, people used to panic. But now after receiving the training we are fully prepared to cope up with a disaster and have the confidence to take care of anything that comes our way”** said Gulshan, one of the recipient of the trainings.



**The Earlier Condition of the Water Course at Settlement Sawan Khan Khoso, VDMC Janki**



**The Picture taken during the Rehabilitation of the Culvert at Settlement Sawan Khan Khoso**



**The Picture taken after the Rehabilitation of the Culvert at Settlement Sawan Khan Khoso**