

## Note for Record

**By: Shoaib Sultan Khan**  
**August 27, 2013**

**Subject: SRSP visit by Imran Khan alongwith Chief Minister, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa**

My friend Jahangir Khan Tareen (JKT) rang up to say that Imran Khan (IK) is going to visit Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) on August 26 in Kalam (Swat) and would like me to come with him. On Monday morning, when I reached JKT Islamabad residence, he drove me to IK's villa in Banigala. Promptly at 9.00 am, a 7-seater helicopter landed on the lawns of the Villa and IK, JKT alongwith Naeemul Haq (Head of IK's Secretariat) and myself got into the machine. I had done this journey to Swat many a time, on way to Chitral, on AKRSP helicopters, the 11-seat Bell 412.

At 1015 we landed in the idyllic green valley of Kalam surrounded by majestic Fir trees. We drove to the place of meeting and on way IK stopped to meet the local cricket team. IK was mobbed. There was confusion and chaos. Every youngster wanted to shake hands with IK, so much so that even when we got to the venue and IK went to bathroom, they crowded the door. It was indiscipline incarnate I wish IK would instill some discipline in the youth of his party.

Fortunately, the room where CEO SRSP Masoodul Mulk gave the briefing, was insulated against the onslaught of the youth. The Chief Minister, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KP) Pervez Khattak soon arrived alongwith his Ministers and officials including the Chief Secretary Arbab Shahzad. The Chief Minister's helicopter was delayed at Islamabad airport due to VIP movement. Probably the air space had been closed expecting arrival of President Karzai of Afghanistan.

Masood's briefing on SRSP and on the two micro hydels of 500 KW each benefitting 700 households was greatly appreciated by the audience and made a lasting impression on them of the professional expertise of SRSP and the dedication and commitment of the staff.

From the briefing, we moved to the venue of the meeting, witnessing the same indiscipline, mobbing and chaos as seen earlier. A big contrast was what we saw at the meeting of 700 members of 27 community organisations (COs) of Kalam, beneficiaries of the micro hydels, sitting in a most disciplined manner. Considering the COs had been organized only two months

back, once the implementation of the micro hydels was approved, was a reflection of the quality of social mobilisation. I was invited to speak.

In my speech, I thanked IK for bringing me to Kalam, which was coming to my place of domicile in Pakistan after I migrated from India in 1953. It was exactly 60 years ago, I told the CO members that I commenced my working life in Jahanzeb College, where the then Ruler of Swat, the Wali Sahib had appointed me as a Lecturer in English, on July 13, 1953 and on July 11, 2013 I attained the age of 82 years.

In 1954 I brought my college students Tutorial Group to Kalam. I told the CO members, as at that time there was no road beyond Bahrain, we walked the 30 km to Kalam. The area was lush green with forests and very few people. Today I found less number of trees but the area teeming with human beings. I exhorted the CO members to lessen the population and increase the trees for their own and their children's and future generations secure future.

I shared with CO members how 54 years ago in the then East Pakistan, I came across a visionary who had said goodbye to India's most prestigious service, the ICS and dedicated himself to finding solutions to rural poverty. He told me if I really wanted to improve the livelihood of the million people whose wellbeing I was responsible as Assistant Commissioner, Brahmanbaria Subdivision, I should not think that I knew the way to do it. His name was Akhter Hameed Khan (AHK), he advised me to look at the experience of the world, how countries which were poor have come out of poverty. He stressed that there is more than 15 decades of experience emanating from the world and taught me three fundamental principles of development, namely, organisation with an honest and competent leader from within the community, generation of capital by the organisation through a process of savings and willingness to upgrade their human skills like managerial, productive, cooperative etc.

I got my first opportunity to put these principles of development into practice when on leaving the post of Commissioner Karachi, I became Director, Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, Peshawar in 1972. The Academy initiated the Daudzai Project. AHK came away from Michigan State University to Peshawar to advise me how to implement Daudzai Project. Within a couple of years, it became very famous and even the Frontier Government decided to expand it to all the 110 Thanas of the province and allocated Rupees 50 million. For such Programmes to succeed, you need Champions and in Late Hayat Muhammad Sherpao, we found one. Unfortunately, he was killed in a bomb blast in early 1975. Within a few months, AHK and I were accused of subversion and conspiracy against the government and both of us were thrown

out of the Academy. Daudzai was Awami National Party area. AHK went back to Michigan and I left the country and found refuge in United Nations first in Japan UN Centre from where UNICEF took me to Sri Lanka.

As luck would have it, I was again invited in 1982 to come back and initiate the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in Gilgit, Baltistan and Chitral. When I asked His Highness the Aga Khan why he had chosen me as I was not one of his followers an Ismaili, he said he wanted the programme to improve the livelihood of everyone of the million people who inhabited the area, and he would like their incomes to be doubled in ten years. Aga Khan Foundation brought the World Bank to assess the progress of AKRSP every five years. At the end of ten years in their second evaluation of AKRSP, the World Bank came to the conclusion that in real terms the income of the million people had more than doubled.

The detractors against it attributed AKRSP success because of Ismaili population despite the fact that 70% of the population was of non-Ismailis.

I got a chance to disprove them when in 1994, UNDP asked me to initiate South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPAP) to take lessons of AKRSP to six other countries of South Asia. India being one of them, I wondered how a Pakistani will be accepted there. I was told that the matter went right up to the Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, who observed he is not a Pakistani, he is coming as a UN official and I was sent to PM's district Kurnool, which used to be part of old Hyderabad Deccan State. In AKRSP it took ten years to mobilize a million people, in Andhra Pradesh in ten years, 45 million were mobilized because of full State Government support.

In 1987 USAID Director Rocky Staples on a visit to AKRSP, asked me if any provincial government would be willing to implement an AKRSP type programme. If so, USAID would be willing to donate US\$ 5 million to initiate the programme. KP was my province and I knew people there and with the support of Chief Secretary Imtiaz Sahibzada and Additional Chief Secretary Azam Khan, late Hayat's younger brother Chief Minister Aftab Sherpao approved the establishment of Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) in 1989. However, the unreliable American walked away after a year because of the stoppage of American aid to Pakistan. SRSP was left to fend for itself till Masoodul Mulk took over as CEO and mobilized resources from different donors and put SRSP on a sustainable financial path. Chief Secretary Javed Iqbal persuaded Chief Minister Amir Haider Khan Hoti to allocate resources to SRSP to initiate a holistic social mobilisation programme in 40 Union Councils and Chief Minister also accepted

my request to give Rs. 500 million endowment to SRSP, like other provinces had given to their provincial RSPs. Three years is a very short period for such programmes, it needs a longer timeframe. Yet the results of independent evaluations of the BKPAP are most positive.

You are very lucky that IK, the Chief Minister with his team, JKT my friend and well wisher, they all have come to meet you this morning (Clapping by the CO members). IK is the only Chairman of a national political party, who about 7 years ago, personally came to my house seeking help to improve the livelihood of the households of his constituency and on my suggestion, took me to Mianwali to Swans Union Council to demonstrate how it should be done. He even gave NRSP two million rupees to initiate the programme. His money proved such a blessing for Swans that NRSP was able to mobilize many time more resources not only for one Union Council but many more in Mianwali.

Addressing IK, I said that there are 2.6 million rural households in KP and SRSP can mobilize 2.2 million households in next five years if the KP government makes the requisite resources amounting to no more than a net total of 4.4% of the 5 years Annual Development Plan of KP.

I further informed IK that like his proposal to establish Village Council as part of Local Government, in India it was done through 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment to the Indian Constitution. But it was from Andhra experience they learnt that it was not enough and to make Gram Parishads (Village Councils) effective, to reach all the household organizing communities, was essential.

To the CO members, I explained that SRSP's ultimate objective is fostering sustainable institutions of the people. Micro hydel was simply an investment in CO, so that in due course of time, they became the sustainable building block of the Institutions of the People i.e. CO, Village Organisation (VO) and Local Support Organisation (LSO). Hence it is imperative on them to keep their COs active and sustainable. If they don't do this, then SRSP will take the electricity back.

IK in his brief speech told the CO members that organizing the communities is most important and they must keep their COs active. He assured the audience of change and corruption free government which will dispense faster to everyone. The Chief Minister in his speech exhorted the CO members to send him complaints of corruption, if they come across any. He also promised doing everything possible to improve their livelihood and comfortable.

We landed back at the Villa at 6.00 pm. The weather had been building up in the evening and sometimes the visibility was not there but the pilot steered well and the flight remained smooth.

IK invited us, the Chief Minister had also joined us on return journey, to tea on the lawns of the Villa. Suddenly I espied while sipping tea, the stunning setting sun and I pointed it out to IK and recited the lament of the Urdu poet:

From behind the corner of the palace;  
The golden disc of the Setting Sun appeared;  
Like the gold threaded headgear of the priest;  
Like the youth of the penniless poor;  
Like the youth of the young widow;  
Oh the heartburn of mine what should I do;  
Oh my aching heart what should I do?