

Note for Record

**By: - Shoaib Sultan Khan
October 28, 2017**

Subject: - Meeting of Gilgit-Baltistan Rural Support Programme (GBRSP) on October 24, 2017 at 4:00 pm in Conference Hall, Chief Secretary, Office, Gilgit

The meeting was convened at the behest of the Chief Secretary and attended by three Secretaries to Government, four local Directors, IFAD and AKRSP programme's representatives and General Manager GBRSP.

Secretary Finance Mr. Yahya, who was also acting as CEO GBRSP explained the purpose of the meeting to elicit my views about strategy and approach of GBRSP as desired by Chief Secretary, who had to go Baltistan because of Prime Minister's visit there.

Mr. Yahaya gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation about vision, mission and methodology of GBRSP and the objectives it aims at achieving. It was very comprehensive and all embracing.

I submitted that AKRSP had only two objectives, namely, to double the income of the million people living in Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral dubbed NAC (Northern Areas and Chitral) and also if possible develop a replicable model of rural development of the South Asia Region with special emphasis on Pakistan. For ten years the programme concentrated on productive Sector to the exclusion of Social Sectors because increasing incomes was the core objective. The World Bank evaluated the programme every five years. In their first assessment the Bank observed that the first four years of AKRSP are the missed four years of all rural development projects including that of the Bank because they were following a blue print approach, whereas AKRSP adopted a process approach allowing the rural people to identify what will increase their incomes, which was within their capacity to achieve if the obstacles in their way to unleash their potential were removed by AKRSP.

To achieve this objective AKRSP adopted the time tested Social Mobilization approach of a development partnership with rural poor which entailed the rural poor fulfilling their objectives of partnership namely, organization, generation of capital through savings and unleashing their potential by coming up with a micro investment which benefited and increased the income of each household. At the end of ten years, when the Bank did the second evaluation it concluded that in real terms the incomes of the NAC households had more than doubled. In fact in their third evaluation in 2001, the Bank said the even between 1992 and 2002 the income had tripled.

Considering the current situation prevailing in GB, the GBRSP has to identify its niche where it does not unnecessarily trespass on the turf of the line departments of Govt. and also does not waste the resources on duplicating what has already been done. It should, in fact take full advantage of what is there on the ground and take maximum benefit from it to achieve its objectives.

I suggested that since AKRSP did not implement Social Sector interventions and concentrated on the productive sector but to achieve the objective it fostered a framework of grassroots institutions in the shape of WO/VO/LSO. These are not AKRSP organizations, these are villagers' organizations managed and operated by them, looking forward to linking up with line departments, NGOs, donors, and GBRSP.

As sustainable development Goals (SDGs) are of highest priority of Govt., GBRSP can exploit this niche to their great advantage. The first six Goals directly concern poverty, the next 7-11 Goals concentrate on economic development, the 12-16 goals aim to dealing with threat to poverty and Goal, 17 specifically deals with quality issues and urges Technical and Service agencies to make maximum use of social capital.

GBRSP by making SDGs its core objective will have niche of its own as AKRSP by concentrating on Social Mobilization did not trespass others turf. Success in achieving GBRSP will not only earn accolades for GBRSP, it will also be looked at by Govt. very positively, helping it achieve SDGs to which Govt. has made an international commitment.

I was delighted that Yahya took my advice in a most positive way and embraced it whole heartedly.

As RSPs value added in implementing SDGs in socially mobilized communities, demonstrated by National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) in 17 district union councils. I offered GBRSP to arrange an exposure visit of GBRSP Management to these Union Councils to learn how it is to be done.

In case of GB, AKRSP has mobilized communities in Gilgit, Baltistan and Astore including all the new districts but not in Diamir where AKRSP was not allowed by religious Leaders to operate in those days. I understand things have changed now however, I would suggest that in case Diamir GBRSP should do Social Mobilisation, as this would be a good learning experience for professionals of GBRSP. AKRSP is most willing to help GBRSP if required.

CC: Chief Secretary-Gilgit-Baltistan
CEO-GBRSP (Mr. Yahya)
GM-GBRSP
GM-AKRSP