



Field Visit Report
District Killa Abdullah, Balochistan
April 2018



Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment Programme (BRDCEP)

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For me, field visits have always been exciting and full of learning. This is time when one interacts with the real communities who have real experiences, exposures and encounters with the nature. Therefore, I am highly grateful to the Rural Support Programme Network (RSPN) for providing me this wonderful opportunity to visit Killa Abdullah; one of the remotest and poorest districts of Balochistan.

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Rahim Khetran
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Background and Introduction

Baluchistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment Programme (BRDCEP) is a five-year programme funded by the European Union. This programme is implemented by Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) and Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) in eight different districts of Balochistan i.e. Kech, Washuk, Khuzdar, Jhal Magsi, Killa Abdullah, Pishin, Loralai, and Zhob. Human Dynamics (an Australian Firm) is the technical advisor for BRDCEP which aims to motivate and enable the Government of Balochistan (GoB) to contribute in fostering an enabling environment for capacity building and augmenting the capabilities of local government/authorities to manage and getting communities involved in the statutory local public sector planning, financing, and implementation processes. BRDCEP will also support GoB in Public Finance Management (PFM) reforms.

The overall objective of the programme is;

‘to support the Government of Balochistan in its efforts to reduce the negative impact of economic deprivation, poverty and social inequality, environmental degradation and climate change, and to develop opportunities by building and empowering resilient communities to participate actively in identifying and implementing socio-economic development activities on a sustainable basis in partnership with local authorities.’

Key objectives of Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment Programme (BRDCEP) are mentioned below:

- 1) empower citizens and communities and provide them with means enabling them to implement community-driven socio-economic development interventions, and increased voice and capacity to influence public policy decision making through active engagement with local authorities for quality, inclusive, and equitable service delivery, and civic-oversight, and;
- 2) foster an enabling environment for creating and strengthening the capacities of local governments/authorities to manage and involve communities in the statutory processes of the local public sector planning, financing, and implementation process.

Under BRDCEP, 1.9 million Pakistani citizens of 300,000 poor rural households (HHs) in 249 union councils (UCs) will be mobilized and organized into a network of people’s own institutions: 19,129 Community Organizations (COs); 3,103 Village Organizations (VOs); 249 Local Support Organizations (LSOs) and 31 LSO Networks at tehsil level and eight at district level who will closely work with local authorities and other stakeholders for their development.

Introduction

Research Coordinator Rural Support Programme Network (RSPN) visited the following two villages in district Killa Abdullah from April 16-17, 2018;

- i. Village Dad Muhammad in Union Council Girdi Panaki, Tehsil Chaman
- ii. Village Nazim Abdul Malik, Union Council Daman Miralzai, Tehsil Chaman

The basic aim of visiting these BRDCEP areas was to meet the community members and know about the basic issues these communities are facing. As this is the start of programme implementation in the district, so the other intention was to gauge and document the nature and extent of prevailing issues as part of longitudinal study and compare the results after every six months over the period of five years. Where the researcher would be interested in the impact of rural support programme's famous and field tested three tiers of social mobilization on the lives of the communities living in these villages.

According to Khaleel Tetlay¹, Chief Operating Officer (COO) Rural Support Programme Network, 'poverty lies at household level,' and the philosophy of RSP's (Rural Support Programmes) approach is to get these households graduated in poverty from lower to upper poverty score cards² (PSC). Therefore, in the poverty stricken areas, a social pillar needs to be established parallel to political and administrative pillars which will bind communities together to mutually struggle against poverty.

The other purpose of the visit was to hold in-depth discussions with communities and gather information and evidences for the policy briefs which would help government of Balochistan to devise their policies in accordance with demands of the citizens. And hence, encouraging a bottom-top approach where the route is paved for the demand and supply chain and projects are not only designed in the closed offices but the voice of communities is taken serious.

District Profile

Killa Abdullah was notified as separate district on 14 June, 1993. Formerly the district was a part of District Pishin. The name originates from Killa which means a fort, which was built by Sardar Abdullah Khan Achakzai who was an influential figure and one of the great leaders of Afghanistan-rebellion, in the year 1841. During the same rebellion, British envoy died. The fort is situated at 38 km west of Pishin. The district headquarter is in "Chaman" town. The district is located in the north-east of Balochistan, sharing its northern and western boundaries with Afghanistan. Pishin District is in the east and Quetta District is in the south. Area-wise district Killa Abdullah ranks 6 smallest district in Balochistan and has an area of 3,293 square kilometers, Killa

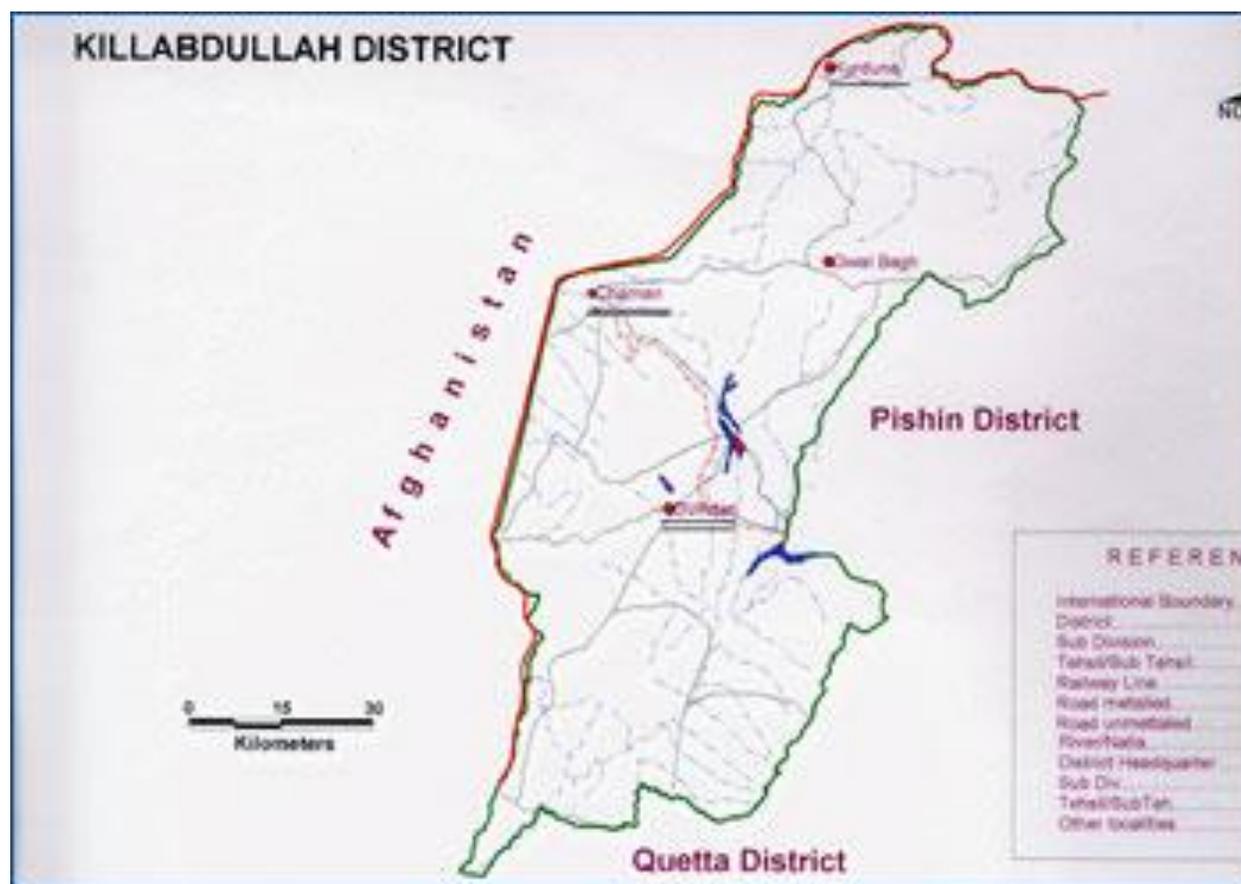
¹ Khaleel Ahmed Tetlay is the Chief Operating Officer of RSPN and has 27 years of experience of working with government, multilateral organization, Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) and international NGOs in Pakistan and Central Asia,

² The score range and categories in the poverty score card are; 0 -11 Extremely Poor/ Ultra Poor, 12 - 18 Chronically Poor, 19 – 23 Transitory Poor, 24 – 34 Transitory Vulnerable, 35 – 50 Transitory Non-poor and 51 – 100 Non-poor

Abdullah District lies between 66°14'23"-67°15'43" East longitudes and 30°05'7"-31°18'46" North latitudes consisting of 4 Tehsils and 25 Union Councils³.

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics Census 2017, the total population of district Killa Abdullah is 757,578 people living in 97,210 households⁴ where 75% of the population is rural.

Village Dad Muhammad has a population⁵ of 111 living in 18 households while there are 559 people housed in 63 households in Nazim Abdul Malik village.



Source: (http://www.balochistan.gov.pk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=803&Itemid=1089)

³ Killa Abdullah, District Development Profile 2011 prepared by Planning and Development Department Government of Balochistan in collaboration with UNICEF

⁴ http://www.pbscensus.gov.pk/sites/default/files/bwpsr/balochistan/KILLA%20ABDULLAH_SUMMARY.pdf

⁵ BRDCEP Poverty Score Card Survey 2018.

Prevailing Conditions in the Field

Research Coordinator visited two different villages in different union councils; one with the program intervention i.e. where social mobilization is being carried out in the form of community and village organizations, while in the other village, social mobilization is yet to be started. The comparative analysis of the two villages follows as under;

Major Issues

Poverty is the major issue of the district Killa Abdullah as a whole. According to UNDP⁶ 2017 report, Killa Abdullah is the poorest district in Pakistan with 96.9 MPI⁷ (Multidimensional Poverty Index). The recent BRDCEP Poverty Score Card Survey⁸ 2018 reveals that 67% of the population in Killa Abdullah is poor out of which 28% are extremely or ultra poor, 23% chronically poor while 16% are transitory poor.

Transit walk, observations, Poverty score cards and formal and informal discussions with the habitants of village Dad Muhammad and village Nazim Abdul Malik testify this argument. This poverty is not only related to income generation but this is multidimensional i.e. poor health with low nutrition and high child mortality, lack of access to education with high out of/without school population and people of the area are deprived of pure drinking water, toilet, electricity and proper and abundant cooking fuel.

According to the residents of village Dad Muhammad and Nazim Abdul Malik, their top most problems are;

i. Hospital/ Basic Health Unit

There is no basic health unit (BHU) in village Dad Muhammad. The nearest BHU is at a distance of 50 km in Chaman⁹ and it takes at least 3 hours to reach there because of the poor condition of roads and unavailability of proper transportation. During winters this road is closed most of the time due to snow fall. The general means of transportation is a Pickup Datsun which leaves the village early in the morning to Chaman or Gulistan (another small town) and returns in the evening. Because of the cultural and religious sensitivities, it is not possible for the women folk to travel along with men in such vehicle. 'We only take our women to hospital in Chaman in emergency cases or when they are about to die,' narrates a villager. The emergency cases according to the community members are severe illness where women fell unconscious or if there are any pregnancy complications. In such cases a pickup Datsun is specially hired to take the patient to the BHU and the round trip costs from

⁶ UNDP. (2017). Inclusive and Sustainable Development: Analytical Basis and Policy Framework.

⁷ The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was developed in 2010 by the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and the United Nations Development Programme. and uses Health, Education and Standard of Living to determine poverty beyond income-based lists.

⁸ BRDCEP Poverty Score Card Survey 2018 was carried out by Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) in 7 districts while by National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) in Kech. The survey is being carried out in the field in Killa Abdullah 82% survey has been completed.

⁹ Chamman is the district headquarter of Killa Abdullah.

3500 to 4000 rupees. One of the villagers recalls last year where one of the women died on the way because of gynecological issues. In other general women health issues, men buy the medicine for them from Chaman after telling the symptoms to the doctor. Self-medication is another trend observed frequent among the villagers. One BHU is under construction in the village since last year but it is yet to be completed.

While the residents of village Nazim Abdul Malik live close to the town and don't face issues related to access to BHU.

ii. Water

The second biggest problem in both the villages is that of water; for both domestic and agricultural purposes. Because of scarcity of water, there is no agricultural activity in both the villages. The women in village Dad Muhammad fetch water from a nearby water spring. But because of consistent and prolonged drought conditions due to low precipitation and snow fall, the quantity of water in the spring is decreasing day by day. The underground water table is also decreasing and now it is at a distance of 300 to 350 feet deep as compared to last year where it was at a distance of 250 to 300 feet. There was small water supply in the village few years ago, but all the water supplying pipes are damaged and closed now and not supplying water anymore.

In village Nazim Abdul Malik, the underground water is at a distance of 1100 feet which makes it difficult for the villagers to get water for their everyday use. The community members in both the villages demanded for water supply so that they are not forced to migrate to the city area and because of extreme poverty they won't be able to even migrate said a community member.

iii. Unemployment and Occupations/Subsistence patterns

Economically the households in village Dad Muhammad are more depressed. There are only one or two earning hands in every household while rest of the family members are dependent on them. These earning hands work on daily wages in other big cities like Quetta and Karachi where they mostly sell fruits and vegetables in handcarts. Therefore, these households become very vulnerable and have no savings or economic security at the time of crises especially when the earning hands get sick or there is some accident.

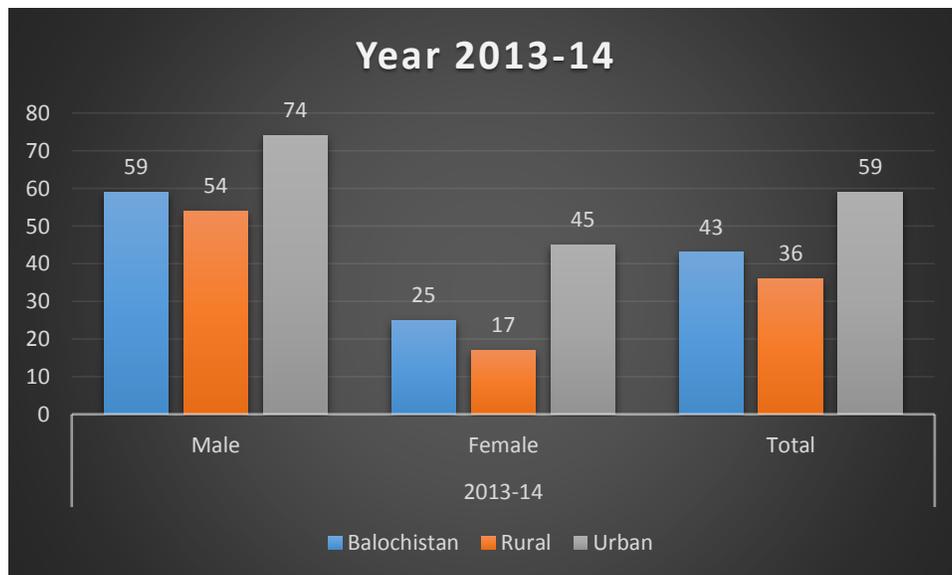
Village Nazim Abdul Malik is situated at a distance of 4km from the Afghanistan border and at a distance of 11 km from the entry gate to Afghanistan. This proximity to border has also influenced the subsistence patterns of the inhabitants of the village. As compared to village Dad Muhammad, here most of the male family members are engaged in smuggling small items in and out of the border locally known as '*laghartup*.'

An individual earns upto Rs. 250 to Rs. 300 daily. Extreme poverty and poor condition of education has forced the school going age children (boys) to get involved in *laghartup*. Just like above mentioned village, the residents of this village are also highly vulnerable economically as their earning activities are suspended whenever there is some tension at the border. Some of the people in the village are engaged in small businesses.

The economic activity in both the villages is highly fragile and needs the urgent attention of the authorities; both district and provincial and also the national and international organizations. This is not the case of only two villages but the whole district, rather all the rural areas of Balochistan present the same story. Introducing new livelihood schemes, imparting technical trainings and educating young girls and boys is the need of the hour.

iv. Education

Education works as change catalyst. It is the single most variable that can change the destiny of nations. West including Europe and North America evolved from savagery to civilization just because of the quality of education they managed to give to their citizens. But unfortunately, the situation of education is dismal in Pakistan in general and in Balochistan in particular. According to Pakistan Economic Survey¹⁰ 2017-18, the literacy rate in Balochistan is 41% as compared to 58% in Pakistan. Further, this literacy rate is not uniform within Balochistan rather there are huge differences with respect to gender and rural and urban locations. Like the total literacy rate in rural Balochistan is 33% where there are only 15% female literates as compared to 48% male. While in Urban Balochistan 44% female are literate as compared to 76% male. Now, if we compare the percentage of rural and urban population in Balochistan, we find that 72.45%¹¹ of our population is rural and has 33% literacy rate only.

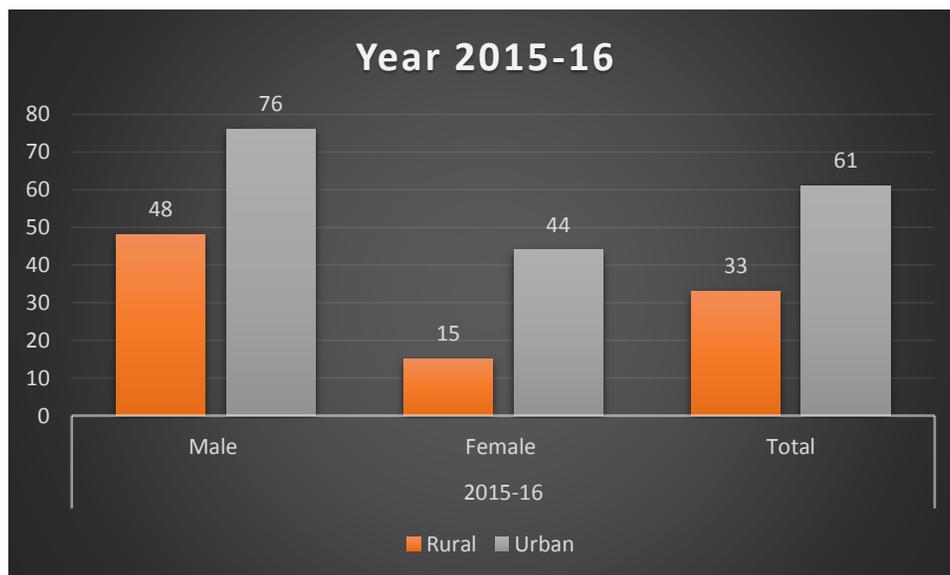


Source: PSLM Section, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

¹⁰ Finance Division, Government of Pakistan, (2017-18), Pakistan Economic Survey, p. 175

¹¹ Population Census 2017

Not only this, but this year¹² there is a significant decline in the literacy rate as compared to the previous year. The current year literacy rate (41%) has dropped 2% which was 43% last year. In a progressing world, this decay and decline is alarming and needs to be taken seriously.



Source: PSLM Section, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

Killa Abdullah being the poorest and marginalized district, bordering with Afghanistan, presents a bleak picture when it comes to education. It has been ranked at number 111 with an education score of 44.99 by Alif Ailaan¹³ in its ‘District Education Rankings 2017’.

In village Dad Muhammad, there are 42 children of school going age (5-16) but unfortunately they are devoid of their basic right stated in Article 25-A of the constitution of Pakistan and SDG 4 which ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all. None of these 42 children have access to education in their village because of unavailability of school.

“Initially there was one room primary school which remained open for four to five years and approximately 70 students passed primary. Then the only teacher got transferred and the school is closed for the last two years as the government has not appointed substitute teacher,” complains a villager. A new primary school building was completed last year but teachers are yet to be appointed by the education department. The community members under the platform of ‘Haiwad’ village organization have met and complained with district education officer for the appointment of school teachers. But they were given a strange reason that **none of the teachers is willing to join such a far flung area school**. According to the villagers there are roughly 500 children in nearby villages who don’t have access to school. “We will enroll our girls along with boys if the school starts working in the village,” enthusiastically told a community member. It seems like there are many such schools including the ghost schools in the rural remote areas of Balochistan which are closed. This is a huge

¹² According to Economic Survey, during 2017-18, PSLM survey was not conducted due to Population and Housing Census 2017, therefore, the figures for the year 2015-16 may be considered for the year 2017-18.

¹³ Alif Ailaan, (2017), Pakistan District Education Rankings

leakage; a) it is causing the wastage of resources and b) not serving the purpose rather causing a great national loss by not imparting education to the school going age children.



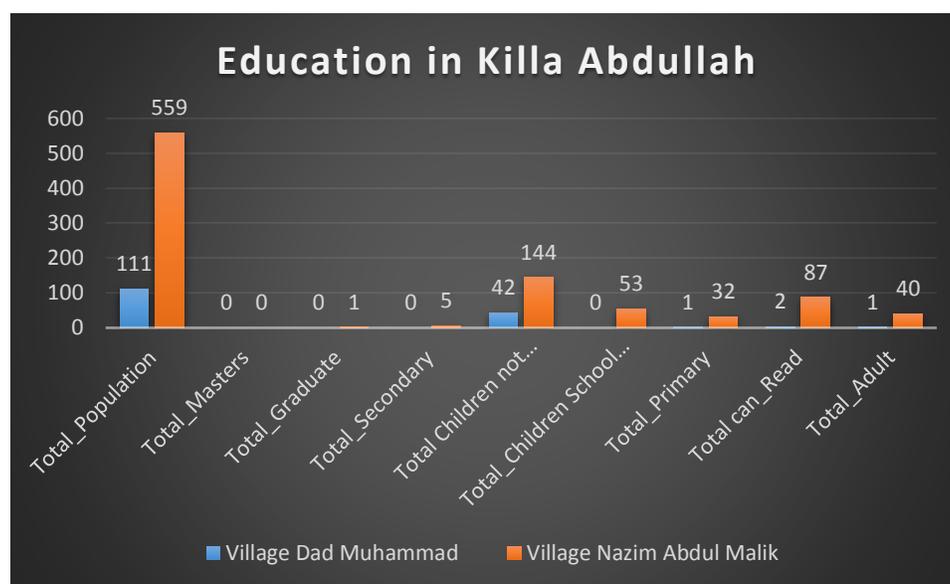
(Meeting with community members in Village Nazim Abdul Malik)

Village Nazim Abdul Malik depicts a different story. There is school for both boys and girls but even then out of 197 children aged 5-16, 144 (73%) are out of school. When discussed with the community members, they were very disappointed by the quality of education in the village school. “teachers are not competent and don’t teach the students in the school. They just come and go back after spending whole day in the school,” said one of the participants of discussion. Another respondent said that there are no facilities like toilet and water in the school. So, it is not possible for the children to remain without water and toilet the whole day. The teachers of the school were of the view that it is government’s mandate to provide such facilities in the schools.

In the absence of quality education in the government school, some of the community members have admitted their children in private schools. As the private schools are very expensive, only a few can afford the fees and other associated expenses of books, uniforms etc. One of the discussant showed the receipts of his child who is studying in a private school. The fee for the last three months was Rs. 6000 and the book expenses were Rs. 3200 which are beyond the bearing of most of the community members living in poverty.

This is another kind of leakage which should be dealt immediately. This issue of inefficiency points out to other further leakages, the system is abundant with. There is no on-job training culture in the government schools which hinders the potential of many teachers who could perform well. Secondly, there is no proper hiring and recruiting criteria for the teachers. Majority of the teachers are appointed on the orders and will of constituency MPA (Member of Provincial Assembly) or MNA (Member of National Assembly) and in many instances bribery is also involved in being recruited. This trend is not

only dangerous but a national threat, as it is very likely that an uneducated youth may easily be attracted to terrorist groups when compensated enough to make his both ends meet, keeping in view the extreme poverty in the region. In village Dad Muhammad and village Nazim Abdul Malik the education statistics are very poor and eye opening;



Source: BRDCEP Poverty Score Card Survey 2018

The Intervention: CV/VO/LSO

Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) specialize in the field of social mobilization and community driven development. Under Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment Programme (BRDCEP), the RSPs signature Three Tier Social Mobilization is being implemented in the eight districts of Balochistan including Killa Abdullah. The major aim of the social mobilization is to link community to the state and line departments and ensure a supply by generating demand by the communities for all the social and development projects in the area. This would establish a social pillar along with political and administrative pillar and hold the departments accountable for their delivery services.

The three tier social mobilization operates as;

- COs (Community Organizations) federating into
- VOs (Village Organizations) federating into
- LSO (Local Support Organizations at Union Council and above administrative levels)

Village Dad Muhammad has social mobilization component functional since 2015 when community organizations were established for 'Programme for Poverty Reduction (PPR) and these organizations would be continued in BRDCEP. While in Village Nazim Abdul Malik, the community organizations are to be established soon.



(Meeting with community members in Village Dad Muhammad)

The comparative analysis of the two villages shows that village Dad Muhammad is economically weaker, situated in remote and marginalized area bordering with Afghanistan and with no or little number of literates. While Village Abdul Malik is comparatively less poor, near to the district headquarters and has few educated persons. Though Village Dad Muhammad has community and village organizations and the community has conducted few meetings but still more work needs to be done. Their biggest fear is their illiteracy which they explicitly opined during their discussions. ‘We are uneducated and cannot talk to authorities,’ were the constant responses for most of the issues. They are operating at a very low self-esteem as they think that they are not able to have or convey their say being uneducated though one of the village organization is named as ‘Khapal Aval’ which means confident or independent in Pashto. So, more work needs to be done for their motivation and confidence building. Although a female community organization is recorded in the village Dad Muhammad under the name ‘Afghani’ but it is just in papers and in actual it is not functioning. In such a rigid tribal, traditional and culturally closed society non-functionality of women organization is not surprising. Entry point in such societies could be more work on masculinities and creating opportunities linked with financial gains. There is potential for women entrepreneurship in the field of hand embellished fabrics as all the women are housewives, spend time at home and are engaged with embroidery in their leisure time.

Social Mobilization is yet to be started in Village Nazim Abdul Malik. During the visit, the community members seemed more enthusiastic and excited to get united for their mutual issues. They are confident and want to play their role for the development of their village. It can be anticipated that, the community and village organizations here would be more dynamic and linked with the line departments and the constituency representatives.

Way Forward

- Pakistan has plenty of resources and these can mend the miseries of communities to a great extent if utilized wisely keeping in view their demands and taking fool proof measures to ensure systematic check and balance and control corruption and leakages.
- Both on and pre-job trained is the key to comprehensive pedagogy. Periodic trainings and refresher courses will not only help teachers acquire the latest updated pedagogical methods but also boost their energies, increase their level of motivation and develop synergies among parents, teachers and students.
- Centralization of examination can be a miracle though difficult logistically and expensive in managing. A central unbiased examination authority can club different schools in a district and takes the examinations of different classes starting from class one. Oral viva could be taken in the same schools while written papers should be shifted to a centralized confidential headquarter for the assessment by trained and non-partisan teachers. A coding mechanism can be developed to ensure anonymity of the examinee.
Then as the next step, the results of the students/schools should be linked to the performance of teachers and a punishment and reward policy should be adopted. Best teachers should be acknowledged while deduction in salaries may be suggested for the teachers who under perform.
- Ghost schools and teachers should be closed immediately while people and government officials behind this heinous crime should be dealt according to law.
- A strict check and balance and watchdog policy should be adopted to ensure the attendance of school staff and students, proper utilization of resources and overall quality of education. The number of teachers should be proportionate to the number of students.
- In order to encourage girls' enrolment, all the primary schools should be declared as co-education schools and there should be at least 50 % female teachers in all the primary schools.
- CO/VO/LSOs and other civil society institutions are the trained organizations and can best be utilized to ensure overall quality of education in Balochistan.
- All the schools should be provided basic amenities like pure drinking water, washrooms for girls and boys, basic furniture and boundary walls of schools. There should be adequate and separate seating arrangements for different classes.
- Postings of teachers to the remote and hard areas should be on periodic basis so that one particular teachers is not suffered.
- This is the right time that technology should be introduced into the schools. Provision of tabs, laptops and desktops would be helpful in bringing the rural schools closer to the mainstream schools and will mitigate the gap between urban and rural school students where the former are equipped with technology.

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