BRACE Advocacy Workshop on Poverty Dynamics, Inclusive Development and Women's Empowerment in Balochistan

September 22, 2020 | Quetta, Pakistan
OBJECTIVE OF THE WORKSHOP

In order to generate evidence-based policy solutions and recommendations that can serve as a tool for advocacy with relevant stakeholders, a number of research studies have been planned in BRACE Programme. To disseminate the findings and recommendations of the study, Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) in coordination with the EU Technical Assistance, Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) and National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) organized a provincial level Advocacy Workshop on Poverty Dynamics, Inclusive Development and Women Empowerment in Balochistan on 22 September, 2020 in Serena Hotel, Quetta. More than 136 participants (28 women and 107 men) from civil society, academia, development organisations, leader of political parties, religious scholars, media and the officials from Government of Balochistan deliberated upon the findings and recommendations of the study.

PARTICIPANTS

The workshop was attended by different stakeholders, including representatives from Federal Governor Probbial ovenamrt MNA & MPS, people from Ptovinival aseemliea nd and national aseesibles, represetmtatives from other politick partices, people from civila society and develikpment ragzizartions and media.

OVERVIEW OF BRACE PROGRAMME

Mr. Qaiser Jamali, presented the overall BRACE objectives, implementing partners and their respective roles, main components, Programme’s expected outputs and outcomes. Explaining the strategic role of BRACE Programme, Qaiser Jamali said that the EU Technical Assistance (TA) component is working closely with the Government of Balochistan to develop a Local Development Policy Framework and its implementation mechanisms, based on community driven development approaches.

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH ON DYNAMICS OF HOUSEHOLD POVERTY AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN BALOCHISTAN WITH FOCUS ON WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT - MOMENTUM VENTURES, EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS

Mr. Ghulam Shabbir (Chief Operating Officer at Momentum Ventures) presented the study that assessed Poverty Dynamics, Inclusive Development and Women Empowerment in Balochistan.

FINDINGS ON DYNAMICS OF HOUSEHOLD POVERTY IN BALOCHISTAN

Poverty Push Factors:

Unemployment, high dependency ratio, higher inflation, illiteracy and lack of employable skills, health shocks, loans for social and economic reasons, are the main poverty push factors across all the three districts. Natural disasters like droughts and floods lead to poverty as well. Lack of water/irrigation infrastructure, insufficiently resourced staff in government extension departments lead to agricultural losses and hence contribute to poverty. In terms of likelihood or probability of events to push a household into poverty, natural disasters (droughts, lack of water for agriculture use, earthquakes, etc.) have a 50% likelihood to be a poverty push factor. Death shocks and illiteracy are likely to be poverty push events, with a probability of 29% and 23%, respectively. There is a 22.5% chance that the household will fall into poverty due to unemployment as well as lesser income.

Poverty Pull Factors:

Human resource development/skill training, income generation from livestock, decreased dependency ratio, availability of water for agricultural production are the main pull factors. Similarly, social safety net (as mentioned by 4% of the respondents) provided by the government is another pull factor. Decrease in dependency ratio and increase in income from livestock have a likelihood of 17% to be poverty pull factor. Social safety net provided by the government has 14% probability to be a poverty pull event. Literacy and education have a likelihood of 9.3% for being a poverty pull determinant.

FINDINGS ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Only a few women are involved in mobility outside home for some household chores like livestock feeding, etc. in Baloch areas. Lack of women’s awareness about their importance, illiteracy, inaccessibility and non-availability of information sources, lack of access to markets, capital and patriarchal cultural pattern were found as key contributors to disempowerment of women. Women have negligible participation in household level decision making, with no participation in decisions regarding spending, savings and credits.
Only a few women cast vote, votes are casted on the will of husbands or other male influencers in the family and women’s rights are neither recognised nor given any importance.

FINDINGS ON INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Government needs to introduce consistent, conducive and inclusive policies for rural development, education, health, employment, agriculture, livestock, mining etc. Government service delivery is very weak in the areas of education, literacy, skill development, health, agriculture, water, disaster management, sanitation, etc. One key reason for the weaker service delivery of the government is non-inclusive policies for development programmes.

PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY ON DYNAMICS OF HOUSEHOLD POVERTY AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN BALOCHISTAN WITH FOCUS ON WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

The panelists were: Mr. Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi (Minister Finance), Mr. Malik Naeem Khan Bazai (Minister Excise and Taxation), Mr. Mir Akhtar Hussain Langove (MPA/Chairman Public Accounts Committee), Mr. Qadir Nayel (MPA), Moulana Kamal Uddin (MNA), Mr. Dostain Jamal Dini (Secretary Health Department), Mr. Ahmed Raza Khan (Secretary LG/RDD), Mr. George Sadiq (Ex. MNA), Maulana Noor-ul Haq Haqzani (Religious Scholar) and Dr. Atta-Ur-Rehman.

The following policy recommendations were suggested by the panel and the study:

- Introduce inclusive growth-based policies in Balochistan for poverty reduction
- Girl education, youth skill development and adult literacy programmes should be introduced and further strengthened
- Government departments should be strengthened through a consistent policy of inducting, retaining and competence development of human resource involved in service delivery for basic services (health, education, skill development, mining, agriculture & livestock, public health engineering etc)
- Assign a priority for continuously improving road and digital communications infrastructure within the province.
- Use existing road infrastructure recently developed under CPEC to leverage development for local industry.
- Conducive policies for market development (both local and international) should be introduced to help in selling the outputs in a value-added manner.
- Existing infrastructure of basic services (health, education, skill development, mining, agriculture & livestock, public health engineering etc) should be progressively strengthened

PRESENTATION ON ‘EMERGING OUTCOMES OF ADULT LITERACY AND NUMERACY SKILLS STUDY FROM KHUZDAR DISTRICT’

Ms. Savaila (Documentation and Reporting Officer) and Ms. Zahra Rao (M&E Officer) were a part of a diverse team (with members from BRSP and NRSP) which conducted a study on Emerging Outcomes of Adult Literacy Numeracy Skills (ALNS) training under BRACE Programme in March 2020. They presented that the integrated nature of BRACE Programme distinguishes the ALNS from other Adult education programmes as it is supported by embedded three-tiered social mobilisation structure and other integrated interventions. All learners in ALNS centers are members of Community Institutions and on completion of ALNS course, the learners are engaged in different activities in their respective community institutions.

The presentation was followed by a panel discussion. The panelists were Mr. Mitha Khan Kakar (MPA and Advisor to Chief Minister on Livestock and Dairy Development), Ms. Zeenat Shahwani (MPA), Ms. Shahina Mehtarzai (MPA), Ms. Shahida Jaffery (Director of RSPN Board), Ms. Shandana Khan (CEO RSPN) and Ms. Fatima (Member of National Commission for Status of Women in Balochistan)

DISTRIBUTION OF SHIELD AND VOTE OF THANKS

Chief Guest of the ceremony, Mr. Mitha Khan Kakar distributed shields among the notable participants and panelists. CEO BRSP, Mr. Nadir Gul paid a vote of thanks to the participants and concluded the event.
The RSPN’s Research component under the BRACE Programme is expected to generate knowledge through research and studies with the aim of providing evidence for fostering policy changes and contributing to increased public spending on rural development in Balochistan. The advocacy and communications activities of RSPN will strengthen stakeholders’ understanding and ownership of the programme, as well as provide evidence based recommendations to help support the GoB in the development of the provincial policy and budgetary framework, to support and sustain CDD initiatives throughout the province of Balochistan. In order to contribute in expected result three, RSPN has developed a research framework in consultation with the implementing RSPs, Local Government and Rural Development Department and the TA team. The research framework serves as a guiding document and calendar of research activities over the Programme life and describes in detail the logic and rationale of the research activities to be conducted. The Action Research Conceptual Framework encompasses all research activities planned in the BRACE Programme like Participatory Action Research, Thematic Studies, Advocacy Workshops, Regional Visits and Lesson Learning Visits and Workshops. A Research Advisory Committee (RAC) has been formulated with membership from LG&RRD GoB, RSPs, RSPN, the TA and Assistant Professor from Department of Anthropology Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad. RAC will serve as guiding and advisory committee for the research component of the BRACE Programme throughout the Programme implementation period. RAC serves as guiding and advisory committee for the overall research component of the BRACE Programme throughout its implementation period so that required evidence-based policy recommendations are generated and disseminated to inform the development of local development policy framework for Balochistan. The second RAC meeting convened in September 22, 2020 to discuss the PAR Study ‘Dynamics of Household Poverty and Inclusive Development in Balochistan with Focus on Women Empowerment’ first wave/phase report and the sectoral/thematic studies.

The Journey to Success

Women often face exclusion based on the socio-cultural norms of patriarchy that ultimately limit their access to development and empowerment. Being deprived of the basic rights of their participation in social and economic activities, restrictions on working outside the home, observance of purdah according to local norms, a lack of education and skills, domestic workload, and lack of awareness about the market make them dependent on their male counterparts. This leads to them being left out of the nation’s mainstream development process. As a result, though men in the rural area are able to avail opportunities around food, education, ownership and decision making, women are disproportionately disadvantaged. Pakistan ranked 151 out of 153 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index Report 2020 published by the World Economic Forum (WEF). Despite being engaged in numerous (household and otherwise) activities, Pakistani women are seldom paid or acknowledged for their labour. This omission from development plans has resulted in the loss of large productive potential.

This is story of Bibi Hanifa. Her husband was a ricksha driver, however a road accident a few years back left him crippled for life and unable to work. This incident left her family financially vulnerable with no productive asset and source of income. At that time feeding her eight young children and taking care of a sick husband became a challenging task for Bibi Hanifa. To support their family her two eldest sons, who were just 13 and 14- years old started working as daily wage labourers at construction sites. Meanwhile Bibi Hanifa started embroidery work to provide income for their sustenance and to contribute to the household economy.
She decided to be part of the women community organisation established in her mohallah with a hope to receive some aid to improve her family’s vulnerable situation. Her poverty scorecard shows she is very poor with a score of 11. While selecting poor community members for Income Generating Grant (IGG) the CI members considered her vulnerable condition and nominated her for the grant; she received two goats under Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme. After the nomination her son received a training on rearing goats and on the establishment of goat-rearing as an enterprise. A few months after receiving the goats her goats multiplied and delivered one offspring each; this contributed to the total household income greatly and provided livelihood security to the family. She was very happy with the outcome and sold one goat in the Eid season for PKR 9,000 and bought hay and fodder. She has three goats now, not only has this income generating activity made a significant difference in the household economic well-being and resilience, but her family has a sufficient supply of milk and butter for the first time in their life leading to nutritional wellness. Hanifa keeps her goats in a small barn beside her home, following the recommendation from the trainer in the enterprise development training she attended.

Further, with an improved confidence through asset building, Hanifa applied for a community investment fund (CIF) and received a loan of PKR 20,000 in May 2020. With the CIF loan, the family brought a cart and a supply of dry fruit to sell it on the road sides. Her husband, who according to her was “a source of headache staying idle at home”, has now became self-employed with this venture. She reveals that her husband sells dry fruit and earns PKR 500-800 daily. She said, “My husband keeps the loan receipt in his pocket as a reminder and he has paid the amount of PKR 4,000 in two instalments in last two months.”

Talking about the challenges she might have faced regarding her involvement with the community organisation (CO), she shared that as her husband permitted her to join the community institution (CI) because of the benefits. She happily shared that she has enrolled her youngest son in a private school and her daughter is attending a Madrassa.

Hanifa has plans to expand her business further. She has become an inspiration for her family and community members. Small interventions like these have not only helped Hanifa, but have also gradually helped improve many lives in her small village, Haji Ullah Noor. Women’s participation in economic activities upon receiving Income Generating Grants (IGG) and Community Investment Fund (CIF) through the platform of community organisations has impacted their lives in terms of decision-making power, empowerment in terms of expanding human rights, resources, and the ability to act independently in different social, political, and economic spheres.

The community organisations formed under the European Union funded BRACE Programme provides men and women a platform to get together, discuss challenges, pool resources, and initiate collective actions. Members of the community organisations are also provided with grants and loans depending on their degree of poverty through poverty score cards. Many women of the region believe that the community organisations and village organisations have improved their confidence to express their opinions, both within and outside their house.

**Reported by Savaila, Documentation and Reporting Officer BRACE Programme, RSPN**

**LSO Initiatives**

**Local Support Organisation Spin Nanak**

LSO Spin Nanak, from District Duki, was formed on July 18th, 2016 by 1,043 member households organised into 115 men and women COs and 58 men and women VOs. The leaders of LSO Spin Nanak are planning and implementing development activities both on a self-help basis as well as in collaboration with government agencies. The EU-funded BRACE Programme is empowering rural men and women in Balochistan through realising the power they gain from collective action. Organised men and women are now gaining awareness about their rights, making the service providers accountable, and also taking initiatives to improve their lives.

**Preparing of CNIC and Local Certificates**

Toady Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC) and Local Certificates play very important role in every field of life. CNIC is an essential document in the everyday life of a Pakistani. It is required when enrolling children in schools, getting treatment from health centres, opening a bank account, buying a bus, train and air ticket, booking a room in a hotel and casting vote in elections. Local Certificate is required for obtaining admission in colleges and universities and getting government jobs on quota basis. After getting organised in the form of CO, VO and LSO under the EU funded BRACE Programme, the community members brought up the issues they face when preparing CNIC and Local Certificates. The LSO leaders discussed the issues with NADRA official and offered their support in preparing the prerequisite documents for making CNIC and Local Certificates. As a result of this coordination, the LSO leaders were able to prepare 200 CNICs for 119 men and 81 women CO members and 50 local certificates for their members.

**Provision of Solar Panels and Solar Fans to Poor Members from the MPA**

The leaders of LSO Spin Nanak are working hard for the development and prosperity of UC Gharbi Thal. They have developed strong coordination with their Member Provincial Assembly (MPA), Local Government, Government Line Departments and other stakeholders. They are now accessing available resources and services to work towards the development of the region.

UC Gharbi Thal has a dearth of socio-economic facilities. Frequent load shedding of long hours, sometimes lasting several
Development Activities in Agriculture Sector in collaboration with Government Departments

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the residents of UC Gharbi Thal. However, people face different challenges in agriculture sector. After formation of the LSO, and establishment of development linkages with government line departments and political representatives, the LSO leaders have become able to resolve some of their agriculture sector issues. Examples are as given below.

Approval of 120 Tractor Hours for Land Leveling

Land levelling increases seed germination ratio and productivity of the farm fields up to 40%. It also reduces water use in the farm fields. The LSO contacted the local MPA and he got an approval of 120 tractor hours from the Agriculture Department to level farm lands of 25 families in village Malak Safar Khan. These families are now using the leveled lands for farming and getting maximum return on their investment.

Construction of Agriculture Water Channel

There is acute shortage of irrigation water in UC Gharbi Thal. The traditional unlined water channels cause a significant amount of water loss due to seepage. Construction of cemented water channel is an effective solution to water seepage. The LSO leaders met with the Director Agriculture and asked...
for his financial support in lining of the irrigation channel at village Malak Safar. The Director Agriculture approved a 3,000 ft. agriculture water channel for the village. The LSO constructed the irrigation channel and took the responsibility of its maintenance and management. The total cost of the lined channel is PKR 900,000, out of that, 25% was contributed by the beneficiary members of the LSO. The lined channel is now providing additional water to 30 farming families of the village; this has significantly improved their agricultural production and economic status.

Introduction of Tunnel Farming
The farmers of UC Gharbi Thal follow outdated, traditional farming practices which are inefficient and ineffective. The LSO leaders discussed this issue in their meeting and decided to meet the Government Agriculture Department for advice and support in introducing new agricultural technologies in the area. They met with the Director of Agriculture and discussed their issue with him. The Director Agriculture proposed to introduce tunnel farming technology in the area. In tunnel farming, use of water efficiency increases by 250-275% when farming vegetables like tomato, cucumber and bell-pepper. Moreover, tunnel farming is the only way to get off-season production of summer vegetables, which yields higher price for the agri-products. The LSO leaders requested for technical and financial assistance from the Agriculture Department in this regard; in response to which the Director Agriculture approved a tunnel farming project in UC Gharbi Thal. Currently, the Agriculture Department is constructing the tunnel farming project in village Khala Shahar. The total cost of the project is PKR 1 million. The beneficiary members contributed PKR 300,000 while PKR 700,000 was provided by the Agriculture Department. The project will benefit 25 households. Looking at the actual cost and benefits of the tunnel farming project, more people are expected to adopt the technology in future.

Installation of Drip Irrigation System
In a bid to resolve the shortage of irrigation water, the LSO leaders decided to meet the Head of Irrigation Department. After listening to their issue, the Head of Irrigation Department proposed to introduce drip irrigation system in the area to save water losses. Drip irrigation is known to be the most efficient irrigation method with 95-100% water use efficiency. He approved a drip irrigation project in village Khala Shahr for demonstration purpose. The Irrigation Department is implementing the project. It is expected that after seeing the benefits of the project, more people will adopt drip irrigation technology in the UC area. Total cost of the project is PKR 300,000. As part of their contribution, the beneficiary members carried out the land levelling work free of cost.

Drinking Water Supply Schemes Powered with Solar Energy
As mentioned earlier, availability of portable water is very rare in UC Gharbi Thal, which creates serious health and hygiene issues for the LSO members. The issue was discussed in an LSO meeting and the LSO leaders decided to seek the help of their MPA to resolve their problem. The LSO leaders met with the MPA and briefed him about the issue and requested his support in getting financial support for the installation of water supply projects powered by solar energy. After conducting several coordination meetings with the MPA, he approved water supply scheme with solar panels for the three villages of the UC, namely village Malak Safar Khan, village Yaro Shaher and village Malak Azam Khan. All three projects have been completed. The water supply projects are providing clean water to 380 households. The cost of the three projects is PKR 6.7 million. All three schemes were implemented by a Government Contractor.
Peerin Kapot Ramag Nabi (Adult women can’t learn)

National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) initiated adult literacy and numeracy skills trainings under EU funded Balochistan Rural Development and Empowerment Programme (BRACE) in district Kech. The illiterate women of different union councils are participating in this intervention enthusiastically. The adult literacy and numeracy skills (ALNS) training is not only literate women but it is also built self-confidence of the women. It was an innovative opportunity for the women to learn, meet and share their views with each other on daily basis for six months. Six books including Urdu, Math, English, financial literacy, income saving and life skills will bring positive changes in the women lives in terms of knowledge, attitude and skills.

According to women learners of ALNS Center Karki Singabad UC Sami and ALNS Center Hoshab Shumali UC Hoshab in district Kech, “before this BRACE programme we just dreamed to be literate and we were hopeless that we never be literate due to unavailability of education facility for us but suddenly we heard about NRSP-BRACE programme and a hope for every illiterate women to be literate. First time when we intended to enroll in adult literacy and numeracy skills training centers of BRACE Programme, community members used to make jokes on us that adult women can’t learn, read and write (It is a saying in Balochi “peerin kapot ramag nabi”), why you people waste your time? But now community members accepted that adult women can also learn, read and write and they appreciated our performance and learning. Besides the literacy and learning, adult literacy course also taught us about personal hygiene, importance of saving, health, nutrition, our rights and responsibilities, and many other good things. Before adult literacy, we were like blind persons, after adult literacy our eyes are opened and we can see everything of our lives”.

Mrs. Nasreen w/o Parvez, a 27 years old learner of Adult Literacy & Numeracy Skills Center Karki Singabad and a member of CO Jumma Bazar (F) UC Sami expressed her views by showing and reading her mathematic book that “It is very interesting to learn math, now I can read and understand the numbers easily from 1-100”. Further she said about the benefits of adult literacy that due to Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills, women can read and write their names, they can do their signatures, they can write and understand numbers, they can read and write amount of money especially savings, they can dial and write mobile numbers, they can read expiry date of medicines, they can do calculations and they can help their children for home works.”

Mrs. Shah Bibi w/o Noor Bux 38 years old learner of Adult literacy Center Hoshab Shumali UC Hoshab and member of CO Mian Mazar Bazar (F) expressed her views “Due to my adult literacy course I feel proud when I write my name and my husband name”.

Mrs. Lal Bibi w/o Jumma president of CO Jumma Bazar (F) UC Sami said “It is very joyful when I read something from my books because I hesitated and felt shy to read a book and learn something before adult literacy center due to people comments that old women can’t learn and can’t read and write.”

All the learners of adult literacy and numeracy centers thanked EU and NRSP for adult literacy and numeracy skills trainings under BRACE Programme.
CIF Case study of Mrs. Sabira w/o Mohammad Rahim

Sabira belongs to a poor household from village Kahireen UC Balnigore. Under the PSC survey conducted in the initial phase of BRACE Programme, Sabira scored 21. Once the BRACE Programme started its grass root level interventions, Sabira became part of CO Rind Kahareen female. Her husband runs a vehicle repair shop and also works as a part time news caster for a local radio station. Sabira and her husband have two daughters together aged four and six. Zahida who is the elder daughter is also enrolled in a local school.

Before CIF:

Sabira and her husband faced a lot of challenges due to low income for their HH. It was difficult for them to afford the basic facilities for their family. Her husband was earning around PKR 5,000 to PKR 7,000 in a month which was very less for the family of four.

After CIF:

Under the BRACE Programme, Sabira was given a CIF of PKR 30,000. Sabira used this amount to extend her husband’s work into a tuck shop linked with the local bazaar. With careful planning and hard work, together they have increased their monthly earnings to PKR 18,000. This additional amount has enabled them to look after their children in a much better way. Provide them with necessary material for their school as well as nutrition. They have also saved some money from this earning to install a small solar power system at their residence as well as a water connection. Sabira and her family are strong advocates of the philosophy of community driven development adopted under BRACE Programme and encourage their community members to use this opportunity to address the issues collectively. Sabira has not applied for a second cycle of CIF of PKR 50,000 to further increase her business.
Press Coverage Highlights (July - September 2020)
The European Union Funded

BRACE Programme

Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) programme is supported by the European Union (EU) and being implemented in close collaboration with the Local Government and Rural Development (LG&RD) Department of the Government of Balochistan (GoB). The Grant component of this five year (2017-2022) Programme is being implemented by Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) and Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) in nine districts of Balochistan. BRACE is working in Jhal Magsi, Kech, Khuzdar, Killa Abdullah, Loralai, Pishin, Duki, Washuk and Zhob. The programme is technically supported by Human Dynamics (HD), an Austrian company that will support Government of Balochistan in fostering an enabling environment for strengthening the capacities of local authorities to manage and involve communities in the statutory local public sector planning, financing and implementation processes.

"This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union."

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Design & Layout: Dot Advertising