



Advocacy Workshop on Poverty Dynamics, Inclusive Development and Women Empowerment in Balochistan, 2020



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Introduction

Incorporating evidence is fundamental to maintaining the general acceptance and efficiency in public policies. In Pakistan, different actors-local and global-strive to facilitate the development of evidence-informed policies. Policy development is a slow, non-linear process with variable room for incorporation of evidence. Evidence-based learning is critical to provide solid inputs for policy advocacy, improved programming, and also to promote a joint learning process among communities, the local government/authorities and the implementing partners of the European Union (EU) funded Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme.

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. The main focus of the research studies has been to provide an in-depth analysis of the household level poverty dynamics, inclusive development with a particular focus on women empowerment and the effectiveness of different Programme interventions. In the third year, BRACE Programme carried out the first wave of a longitudinal study on **Poverty Dynamics, Inclusive**

Development and Women Empowerment in Balochistan.

To disseminate the findings and recommendations of the study, Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) in coordination with the EU Technical Assistant, Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) and National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) organised a provincial level **Advocacy Workshop on Poverty Dynamics, Inclusive Development and Women Empowerment in Balochistan** on **22nd 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 officials from Government of Balochistan deliberated upon the findings and recommendations of the study.

Key stakeholders and policy makers such as Honourable Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Sardar Babar Khan Musakhel, Mr. Zahoor Buledi (Minister Finance), Mr. Malik Sikandar Khan (Advocate, Leader of the Opposition) Mr. Mitta Khan Kakar (Minister Livestock and Dairy Development), Mr. Malik Naeem Khan Bazai (Minister Excise & Taxation) Mr. Haji Muhammad Khan Tor (Minister for Industries), Mr. Mir Akhtar Hussain Langove (MPA/Chairman Public Accounts

committee), Maulana Kamal Uddin, (Member National Assembly), Mr. Abdul Rehman Buzdar (Additional Chief Secretary), Mr. Ghulam Farooq Marri (Secretary Planning and Development (P&D) Department, Government of Balochistan), Mr. Ahmed Raza (Secretary Local Government), Mr. Dostain Jamal Dini (Secretary Health), Mr. Rab Nawaz Khetran (Chief Foreign Aid), Mr. Tariq Laasi (Additional Secretary Finance), Ms. Zeenat Shahwani (MPA) and Ms. Shahina Mehtarzai, (MPA) appreciated the event for evidence based learning, championed recommendations from the study, and provided detailed feedback. Some of the notable female panellists included Ms. Zeenat Shahwani (MPA), Ms. Shahina Mehtarzai, (MPA) Ms. Shandana Khan, Chief Operating Officer, RSPN, and Ms. Shahida Jaffery, member Board of Directors at RSPN provided their valuable insights about inclusive development with special focus on women empowerment through BRACE Programme in Balochistan. These recommendations included integrating population management plans, capacity building and skill development of unproductive labourers, education, identifying ways to connect the rural communities with the market, and local development plans where needs are identified by the community institutions.

The advocacy event achieved its objectives by strengthening stakeholders' understanding and ownership of the Programme, and by providing evidence-based recommendations to help the federal and provincial governments' stakeholders including government officials, political parties and policy makers to get informed about the dynamics of poverty at household level, women empowerment situation in Balochistan. The event also provided evidence to scale-up community driven development approaches for poverty reduction. The Programme's Technical Assistance Partner, Development Alternatives on Inc. presented their progress on Local Development Policy Framework (LDPF) and advocated for LDPF. Local government officials, religious scholars, and political parties shared their experience and observations about RSPs work in Balochistan, in return RSPN and RSPs shared evidence based recommendations for poverty graduation. This dialogue urged international donors and senior government politicians to advocate for the much needed Local Development Policy Framework.

Proceedings

The workshop began with a recitation from the Holy Quran. The presentation sessions were moderated by Mr. Omer Farooq, Communications Officer at RSPN and panel discussions were moderated by Mr. Nadir Gul, CEO Balochistan Rural Support Programmes (BRSP).

Welcome Note and Brief on RSP's Community-driven Development Approaches for Poverty Reduction

Mr. Nadir Gul, CEO BRSP, welcomed the distinguished guests and participants to the Advocacy Workshop. He described RSPs approach of community driven development, by highlighting the importance of social mobilisation to unleash the innate potential of rural households to mobilise resources for their own development. Explaining community driven development, he said that poverty persists at the household level, and every household has the potential to overcome it. Therefore, when the households are organised in three-tiered community institutions (CO/VO/LSO), it provides them a platform to voice their needs through development plans at household, village, and union council level. The Balochistan Rural Development



and Community Empowerment Programme (BRACE) has three key components: 1) Community Empowerment through social mobilisation and social and productive assets creation, this is being implemented through three grants to civil society organisations (BRSP, NRSP and RSPN), . 2) Development and implementation of a community-led development policy framework, accompanied by technical and institutional capacity-building interventions is being done by Human Dynamics and 3) Public Finance Management (PFM) reform. Oxford Policy Management is providing support for PFM capacity building. The Research component under the BRACE is expected to generate knowledge through research and studies with the aim of fostering policy changes and contributing to increased public spending on rural development in Balochistan. The advocacy and communications activities under BRACE 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.

Overview of EU Funded BRACE Programme and Local Development Policy Development Support to GoB, Mr. Qaiser Jamali, Provincial Coordinator Human Dynamic EU, TA

Mr. Qaiser Jamali, presented the overall objectives of BRACE Programme, portfolio of implementing partners and their respective roles, main components of the Programme, Programme's expected outputs and outcomes. He said that empowered citizens lead to better citizenship which in turn helps with better governance. To empower communities, the RSPs are organising communities through the process of social mobilisation and building their capacity to effectively manage their own organisations and engage with local government and public institutions and participate in the development process.



Explaining the strategic role of BRACE Programme, Mr. 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. He also elaborated the subsidiarity principles, BRACE demand and supply drivers; and the various Sectoral Coordination Committees (SCC) of Government of Balochistan under Strategic Development Partners Forum (SDPF). This will complement the efforts of Strategic Policy Dialogue Committee (SPDC) during formulation of Community Development Local Government Strategic Policy and Fiscal framework and will eventually

contribute in envisioned GoB Poverty Reduction Strategy. The implementation of the policy will enable the Province in identifying the priority needs of the citizens through participatory bottom-up planning. It will also contribute towards improving the lives and livelihoods of the citizens by engaging them in development initiatives which are directly benefiting them.

Concluding his presentation, Mr. Qaiser Jamali welcomed RSPN's external consultants from Momentum Ventures to present the Participatory Action Research on Dynamics of Household Poverty and Inclusive Development in Balochistan with Focus on Women's Empowerment.



Presentation on Participatory Action Research on Dynamics of Household Poverty and Inclusive Development in Balochistan with Focus on Women's Empowerment by Momentum Ventures

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

Dynamics of Household Poverty in Balochistan

Assessment of Poverty Dynamics was achieved by examining all dimensions such as physical, social, human, financial and environmental dimension in order to identify the poverty related pull and push factors.

FINDINGS

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.

Women Empowerment

The study assessed three aspects of women's empowerment namely personal, relational and environmental. This was achieved by examining several qualitative indicators at three levels - Personal (power from within, power to), Relational (Power with, power over), and Environmental (political, legislative and economic).

FINDINGS

- ***Women's role and status - the preceding generation of women:*** Women's role within households is concentrated on handling of chores like cooking, cleaning, child rearing, caring for elderly people, etc. in both Pashtun and Baloch areas. Only a few women are involved in mobility outside home for some household chores like livestock feeding, etc. in Baloch areas.
- ***Personal dimension - power from within and power to:*** Women were found with very low level of self-esteem and self-confidence. Personal autonomy was found to be close to none. 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.

- ***Relational dimension - power with and power over:*** Highly restricted movement outside home puts a bar on participation of women in the activities related to socialisation. Only elder women have some liberty to attend social events like funerals and weddings etc. Women have negligible participation in household level decision making, with no participation in decisions regarding spending, savings and credits.
- ***Environmental dimension - power over:*** A very limited political participation depicted by the women, 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.

Women's education, literacy, skill training, social organisation and mobilisation can impart women empowerment. Women's empowerment and participation in household level economic activities can lead to poverty reduction. Organised and empowered women can influence government service delivery based on their awareness and mobilisation.

Inclusive Development

Inclusive Development, under this study, has been assessed on the four dimensions - Social inclusion (Exclusion and Participation), Poverty and distribution, Political inclusion and Environmental inclusion.

FINDINGS

- There is a lack of understanding on inclusive development and local governance among district level government officials. Generally, the policy and development programme design are done through a top down approach. 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. The situation gets even more concerning, when a huge proportion of the masses is illiterate, and they are not aware of their potential as well as their rights. Furthermore, local

bodies are not functioning. In this scenario, there is no visible co-ordination between general public or public representatives and the government departments at local levels (i.e. union council, tehsil and district), except in the BRACE Programme districts where Joint District Development Committees have been set up under the Deputy Commissioners.

- Social mobilisation improves social capital or social collateral formation, women's empowerment and agency. All these factors lead to social inclusion of marginal and deprived classes/groups in the socio-economic development process. Social mobilisation can empower women at all levels. Social mobilisation has the potential to eradicate the stigmatic connotations found in the local social and culture fabric for participation of women in various economic and socialisation related events.
- The government has to ensure that suitable policy frameworks are in place to provide public services as per its mandate. The communities have to be mobilised and organised to more actively engage with government. Such engagement can contribute to sustainable poverty reduction and women's empowerment in the province.

Impact of Social Mobilisations on women's empowerment

The assessment on impact of Social Mobilisations on women's empowerment, is achieved by examining indicators at four dimensions –

1. Social organisation and social collateral,
2. Community development,
3. Women's empowerment, participation and agency
4. Collectivism, awareness and commonality of purpose, across the community institutions formed under BRACE Programme.

FINDINGS

- The research has also indicated that social mobilisation can empower women at all levels. Social mobilisation has the potential to eradicate the stigmatic connotations found in our social and culture fabric for participation of women in various household level economic activities and socialisation related events. Improved women participation and awareness (through social mobilisation) can support the women in many ways, from improving their general awareness to ensuring their involvement in income generation activities.
- Social mobilisation improves the social capital within



a community at all levels. The organised community groups through Community, Village or Local Support Organisations, can initiate social capital formation process. The social capital can be translated into many pathways of development like improved access to capital/credit, skill attainment, increasing participation of various deprived community members in livelihood enhancement activities, etc. The improved social capital can also lead to initiation and improvement in bottom up planning of local schemes and programmes. Similarly, it positively impacts the on-going implementation and effective monitoring of the such programmes through the involvement of community. Hence social mobilisation is a significant strategy for inclusive development.

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

Mr. Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi, Minister Finance, appreciated the efforts of RSPs for providing evidence based recommendations to alleviate poverty in Balochistan. He stated that the study has rightly identified that women are lagging behind on all development indicators in Balochistan. To address this, the Government of Balochistan is working towards women empowerment, in particular for working women by introducing a fostering environment in the education sector. Furthermore, the Local Government Act passed in 2010 is being reviewed and more inclusive and bottom-up Community-Driven Initiatives are proposed. The government established National Incubation Centre (NIC) Quetta sponsored by the Ministry of Information Technology's Ignite, has recently started operations in the Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management. It is not only the space that boosts hope for the future, it is indeed the passion and commitment of entrepreneurs coming from many regions and professions in Balochistan, which is remarkable. Regarding education and health, the government has formalised a policy that children, both girls and boys will be studying in co-education and majority of their teachers will be



female. Highlighting the current government's commitment towards public-private partnership, the Provincial Charity Authority Bill has been approved by Provincial Assembly to channelise, provide patronage and facilitate the local and I/ NGOs, working in development sector across the province. He concluded, "participatory development is only possible if we make development plans at the grass-roots level."

Mr. Malik Naeem Khan Bazai, Minister Excise and Taxation, appreciated BRSP's hard work in Balochistan. He highlighted that women of Balochistan face numerous mobility limitations which prohibits them from accessing opportunities. To address this problem, he suggested that proposed interventions should be gender-sensitive. He recommended, "Keeping the local cultural constraints in consideration, women could be engaged in income generating activities such as embroidery and stitching to empower them socially and financially."

Mr. Mir Akhtar Hussain Langove, Minister Provincial Assembly/ Chairman Public Accounts Committee stressed upon the need of opportunities for skill development to alleviate poverty and women empowerment in Balochistan. He said, there is potential for women to explore opportunities in the livestock industry if they are given appropriate skills/trainings and literacy. Skill based trainings, such as computing, stitching with provision of tools such as sewing machines, will also help them improve their socio-economic status at household level. He said, "We have an abundance of unskilled labourers" she stressed, "We need to invest in our human resource otherwise investors will not be left with any choice but to get skilled labour from other parts of the country."

Mr. Qadir Nayel, Minister Provincial Assembly (MPA) said that it is important to understand the culture of a region before any development project is initiated. Urbanisation and

Globalisation has rendered many rural craftsmen unemployed. The government is focused on public private partnership to boost its agriculture industry. He stressed the need to link local products with the markets which would encourage small and medium enterprise development. Furthermore, he said women should be mainstreamed in socio-economic activities for an inclusive development.

Moulana Kamal Uddin, Member National Assembly, appreciated BRSP's efforts for poverty reduction in remote and poorest areas of Balochistan. He said that the province has suffered in terms of development however, with positive thinking, self-reflection and self-accountability improvements are possible in the region. He said, "Unfortunately, the government focuses on urban development and the rural areas tend to get neglected; however, the government needs to invest in rural development."

Mr. Dostain Jamal Dini, Secretary Health Department, Government of Balochistan, reiterated the importance of generating evidence based recommendations for the development of Local Development Policy Framework for sustainable development. He said, human resource, financial aid and evidence based policies are three important pillars of development. The Secretary Health said, "Our policies need to be informed based on-ground realities and thorough research." He appreciated the efforts of RSPN for initiating the

longitudinal study and suggested the research team narrow down the recommendations and align them with the findings. He said as “household size”, “higher dependency ratio”, “lack of education” and “unemployment” are believed to be poverty push factors, the policy recommendations must highlight the need for an effective population control programme, and skills development, etc.

Mr. Ahmed Raza Khan, Secretary LG/RDD, appreciated RSPN for the comprehensive research on poverty dynamics, women empowerment and inclusive development. He thanked the RSPs for the consultative workshop and for inviting the relevant stakeholders. Sharing his views about the findings, he suggested the RSPs to focus on girls’ skill development and to involve ulema in spreading awareness to control population. Further, he informed the participants regarding structural reforms that are in-process to ensure resource distribution at the grassroots level.

Mr. George Sadiq, Ex. Member National Assembly, appreciated BRSP’s efforts for rural development in Balochistan and described its impacts on the rural populace. He said, “I want to thank RSPN and BRSP for today’s comprehensive presentation on the research findings. This research will not be only helpful for the government of Balochistan for making informed decisions but it will also be beneficial for the federal

government.” Speaking about inclusive development he said, “Minorities are empowered and can practice their religion freely in our country.”

Concluding his remarks, Mr. George appreciated the workshop arranged by RSPN and said such platforms are very important to get latest development situation not only in their province but across Pakistan

Maulana Noor-ul Haq Haqqani, a Religious Scholar, emphasised the need for quality assurance, accountability and sustainability strategies in development activities. He said, “We have observed BRSP’s work in the form of physical infrastructure, and education which is appreciated. Provincial government should also allocate its resources in a productive manner.” Highlighting importance of gender equality he said, “keeping the religious matters aside, men and women must work together for social development.”

Dr. Atta-Ur- Rehman said the research study identified human capital as an asset for Balochistan but unfortunately we have not focused on its development. Government needs to focus on skill development of our human resource. BRSP has mainstreamed more than 6,000 boys and girls in madrasa education where formal education is provided, this is indeed a good achievement.” He urged the government to work closely with BRSP and allocate resources for sustained development.

Policy Recommendations

To further complement the discussion on dynamics of poverty, women empowerment and inclusive development, the following policy recommendations were suggested by the panel and the study:

- Introduce inclusive, growth-based policies in Balochistan for poverty reduction
- Government should adopt bottom up policy design approach
- Girls 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 and livestock, public health engineering)
- Prioritise continuous improvement of 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 sell 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
- Organizational reforms mechanism should be introduced as a policy level priority for bringing desirable changes in service delivery organisation so that they can effectively handle their respective caseloads
- Structural changes such as reinstatement of local bodies, capacity development of the local governance staff in the areas of community led development initiative planning, scheme design, scheme monitoring, social mobilisation etc., introducing transparent budgetary practices through accountability measures undertaken by local people, should be introduced in local governance system
- Enhance women's membership in existing and new CO/VO/LSOs especially in target districts
- Enhance planning at institutional level so that all households have MIP, all VOs have VDP and all LSOs have UCDP, and regularly update them



- Accelerate the pace of interventions in the 12 sample villages. If need be, allocate more resources for the 100% coverage of 0-23 households
- Facilitate intra-PAR LSO experience sharing so that they can learn from mutual experiences
- RSPN/RSPs should document more learnings from the PAR villages
- Strengthen capacity building of Community Institution members and Community Resource Persons(CRPs) by conducting trainings and refresher courses
- Strengthen linkages of CIs with local govt. philanthropists, other civil society organisations, private sector and RSPs' other projects
- Support LSOs to include more women as members of LSOs general bodies. Support women leaders of LSOs to attend Joint District Development Committees (JDDCs)
- Encourage district administration to visit PAR LSOs to see their work and identify possible support
- RSPs to map all public services in the PAR UCs, their functionality and gaps to advocate with local authorities
- Encourage CIs by highlighting their self-initiatives
- Conduct annual Institutional Maturity Index (IMI) assessment of all Community Institution in PAR villages and their LSOs

Presentation on 'Emerging Outcomes of Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills study from Khuzdar District'

Ms. Savaila, Documentation and Reporting Officer for BRACE Programme and Ms. Zahra Rao, M&E officer BRACE Programme at RSPN were a part of a diverse team (with members from BRSP Headquarters and Khuzdar District team, as well as RSPN) which conducted a study on Emerging Outcomes of Adult Literacy Numeracy Skills (ALNS) training under BRACE Programme in March 2020.

ALNS: Under the BRACE Programme, the RSPs have collaborated with the Government of Balochistan to implement the ALNS training Programme through the Community Institutions (CIs) fostered under BRACE Programme. The course comprises English, Urdu, Math and Life Skill Education. The district RSP staff along with the LSOs, gauge the willingness and need of the ALNS centre in the communities to set up the centre. After completing the six-month course, the learners are assessed. Upon securing passing marks in the assessment, they are given course completion certificates for literacy and numeracy level of a third grade student. The rationale of the study was to assess if and how ALNS has been beneficial so far; how did it contribute in empowering women; and what were the social



and economic outcomes of the training. The study informs the Programme's implementing partners, stakeholders and other organisations doing similar work in rural communities, of successes and challenges of the ALNS training so they can take appropriate follow-up action.

Ms. Zahra Rao presented the findings of the study through a comprehensive presentation.

FINDINGS

Findings of the study are reported as :

1. **Economic Outcomes:** This intervention is proving to be a possible gateway to achieving economic outcomes. The learners, with an improved confidence in their abilities as well as their improved literacy qualification are looking forward to partaking in income generating activities, while challenging stigmas in the community around women's education. While one respondent is thinking of teaching in a nearby school, others are aiming to use their literacy to set up a stitching business.
2. **Education and Learning:** Out of the three villages visited, the residents of one did not have a public school in their locality. The other two villages had gotten access to a public school only two to three years ago. 97% of the respondents have never attended school. This lack of access to formal education institutes has resulted in a large population of adult women and a growing population of young girls, who have not been able to get an education. The younger learners have a greater chance of reintegrating into mainstream education after receiving their grade three certification. The ALNS intervention by BRACE Programme has made education accessible to both groups, enhancing their future prospects.



- 3. Health Outcomes:** The respondents defined a healthy woman as one who has no “worries” in her life, one who feels “free” and has a smiling face. They self-reported an improved mental wellbeing which contributed to a harmonious home life thanks to the hours of socialisation and mental stimulation they get at the ALNS centre. They also shared that walking to the centre allows them a chance to exercise. They are using their reading skills to make note of, expiry dates of medicines and vaccination dates; this leads to an overall improved health standard for the entire household.
- 4. Social Outcomes:** The ALNS centres are acting as a powerful agents of socialisation. They have resulted in improved levels of trust within existing CIs and built new and reliable links with other groups of community. The learners rely on their teachers for direction and appreciate that they have someone from within their community for guidance. They have also established solidarity with fellow learners; the learners in Shoalabad held regular tea parties to celebrate their friendship and learning. 98% of the study participants were CI members; it was noticed that there was a two-way relationship between the learners and CIs. The learners who were also CI members reported that they are able to execute their duties for their respective CIs, in an improved manner. As of March 2020, 41 out of the 220 women, who had completed the course in nine centres of Khuzdar, were the leaders of CIs.
- 5. Empowerment:** The participants of the study exhibit empowerment in terms of decision making, economic independence and self-efficacy. Anecdotes of being able to speak up in public show improved confidence while the respondents’ experiences of convincing their family members to allow them to join the ALNS Programme highlights their ability to influence household decisions. Furthermore, they now have access to other support systems e.g. the centre in Tootak has an ongoing, self-initiated savings programme which helps them save money for their own use.
6. 63% of the male relatives interviewed were less than 35-years old and all but two informants had mother-son relationship with the learners. All male respondents said they were happy to see their relatives attending the training, multiple stated that they would want the training period to be extended to a year. Respondents said they had noticed a positive behavioural change in terms of improved self-confidence, punctuality, better habits around healthcare, improved childcare, new money saving habits etc. The male relatives contributed to the learners’ journey by making adjustments at home, dropping the learners to the centre, contributing the guest

room for the activities of the ALNS training etc. They said education was paramount to developing a community as well as for the province to progress.

Last but not the least, 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 centres are members of Community Institutions and completion of ALNS course, the learners are engaged in different activities in their respective community institutions. These institutions provide them a platform to discuss their household and community level constraints that inhibit their socio-economic development. Under BRACE Programme women are developing plans for their families' wellbeing; they are also planning for their settlement and village's development. At household level, deserving women are provided with Income Generating Grants (IGG), Community Investment Funds (CIF) and/or Technical Vocational and Educational Training (TVET). Basic literacy and numeracy skills acquired are utilised during TVET and also help the graduates use IGG and CIF efficiently. At the community level, women participate in local development plans; the members of Village Organisations develop plans to resolve common issues of the village and these plans are consolidated in Union Council Development Plans which are consolidated into district development plans and strategy.

Ms. Meher Khatoon, A community Activists and an ALNS Beneficiary

To corroborate and expand on the experiences of the beneficiaries highlighted in the study, "Emerging Outcomes of ALNS Training in Khuzdar District", Ms. Meher Khatoon, an ALNS graduate and a community activist from district Khuzdar shared her experiences. She said, "Earlier I could not read, now I can read the expiry dates on medicines and I have gained so much confidence through ALNS center, that now I am able to talk in front of so many people without hesitation. When I was a child education was not common. Taking advantage of this forum I request the government departments of health and education for establishment of basic health unit and schools in our district."

Recommendations

The study found that the learners would benefit from greater support from the male household members. To achieve this objective, it is important for the CIs to introduce gender sensitisation in their regular meetings. The women CI members should also visit the ALNS centres to improve linkages between the ALNS training and the CIs. It is also important for the RSP field staff to be cognizant



of lessons learnt from each cycle of the ALNS training to continuously improve the intervention as they go. Lastly, it is recommended that the graduation of each batch be celebrated to encourage the learners to continue with life-long learning.

The presentation was followed by a panel discussion.

Panel Discussion

Ms. Zeenat Shahwani, MPA said, “Balochistan is rich in natural resources but it is ironic that we are still the poorest province. Girls are not given quality education and boys are given preference and opportunities for education, growth and even food distribution at the household level. We have systemic flaws which are keeping women behind in all walks

of life. Gender inequality persists at the household levels.”

Speaking about women’s economic empowerment she said that women with indigenous skills in embroidery are not linked to the market. She stressed the need to design schemes for livestock development initiatives like capacity building of farmers, food processing and market linkages. Concluding her suggestions, she thanked RSPs for arranging the knowledgeable event.

Ms. Shahina Mehtarzai, MPA said, “one of the biggest issue in Balochistan is scarcity of safe drinking water, and she appreciated BRSPs efforts in establishing drinking water supply schemes in many districts.” She concluded her remarks with a suggestion, “I am happy to know about

the adult literacy training centres in Khuzdar and Loralai but ALNS and training centres should be established in all districts of Balochistan.

Ms. Shahida Jaffery, Member, Board of Directors, RSPN, shared her experience of working with RSPs. Talking about the achievement of AKRSP, she said, “when AKRSP started to work in the Northern Areas of Pakistan, we observed women’s eagerness to educate their children, today you will find women and men from that community in Harvard and other renowned institutions around the globe.” Upon her return to Balochistan, she led BRSP as the first female CEO. She observed lack of opportunities for women’s education in Balochistan and in order to remedy the situation, she supported the establishment of Sardar Bahadur Khan Women’s University in Quetta as first VC. She said she is proud that currently, 11,000 women are enrolled in Bachelors and Masters level education in 28 educational disciplines. She concluded, “Poverty is a major issue and women in all regions of Pakistan are vulnerable; however, we need to provide them with the right opportunities.”

Ms. Shandana Khan, CEO RSPN joined the event online through Zoom. She urged the government departments to effectively utilise the platform of community institutions for an effective and efficient service delivery mechanism at the grassroots level.



She stressed, “we need to look beyond BRACE project, the critical point of this project is that these institutions (CO/VO/LSOs) of people to be linked up with the government departments.

Chief Guest of the ceremony Mr. Mitta Khan Kakar- MPA and Advisor to Chief Minister on Livestock and Dairy Development appreciated BRSP’s activities in the hard to reach areas of the province in education and health sectors. He said that due to poor governance and corruption, governments’ substantial resources are being misused. The main reason for regression as nation is due to lack of accountability. He said, “If our nation aims to succeed in improving socio economic conditions, perseverance,

commitment and honesty are the basic values to adopt.” He concluded his remarks by highlighting the need for fair and responsible distribution of resources by the government.

Ms. Fatima, Member of National Commission for Status of Women Balochistan, appreciated the advocacy event and said that it is indeed a productive platform to discuss status of women and ways and means to empower them. She highlighted that “the gender policy for Balochistan approval from Cabinet is still awaited...” She requested the parliamentarians follow up the approval of Balochistan Gender Policy to ensure inclusion of the women in the provincial and national development by providing them equal opportunities in socio-political spheres.

Distribution of Shields

Chief Guest of the ceremony, Mr. Mitta Khan Kakar (MPA and Advisor to Chief Minister on Livestock and Dairy Development), distributed shields among the notable participants and panellists. Shields were presented to Ms. Zeenat Shahwani (MPA), Ms. Shahina Mehtarzai (MPA), Mr. George Sadiq (Ex. Member National Assembl), Mr. Khaleel Ahmed Tetlay (Chief Operating Officer RSPN), Dr. Yousuf (Regional General Manager of Programmes NRSP), Dr. Shahida Jaffery (member Board of Directors RSPN) and Mr. Nadir Gul (CEO BRSP).



Vote of Thanks

CEO BRSP, Mr. Nadir Gul paid a vote of thanks to the participants and concluded the event by saying that we have a long journey ahead, however it is important to keep revisiting the lessons learnt and sharing them with the government of Balochistan.

Conclusions

BRACE Programme's Advocacy Workshop on Poverty Dynamics, Women Empowerment and Inclusive Development to disseminate the findings of the first wave of Participatory Action Research has been attended and appreciated by provincial government officials, local government authorities and political representatives.

The support and need for evidence based policy formation was advocated to a broad set of stakeholders including government officials, academia, policy makers, civil society organisations and media personnel from across the country. Recommendations were also offered by these notable speakers/panellist to further improve the longitudinal study.

Media Coverage of the Event

The event helped RSPN communicate the objective of BRACE interventions and ensured European Union Visibility. Furthermore, it contributed to advocacy efforts with key stakeholders for local development policy reforms as the event was widely covered in both electronic and print media. The media greatly helped in disseminating the message

to the communities and other stakeholders. Following TV channels and Newspapers covered the research based policy advocacy event;

Newspapers

1. Daily Express
2. Daily Azadi
3. Daily Mashriq
4. Daily 92 News
5. Daily Intekhab
6. Daily Jang

TV Channels

1. Aaj News Quetta
2. Abb Takk News Quetta

URLs

Links to the media coverage are given below:

1. Daily Express Quetta

https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/Index.aspx?Issue=NP_QTA&Page=FRONT_PAGE&Date=20200923&PageNo=1

2. Daily Azadi

<https://dailyazadiquetta.com/dailyazadiquetta/epaper/m/177375/5f6ad34963d2a>

3. Daily Mashriq

<https://www.mashriq.com.pk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Mashriq-Quetta-23-Sep.pdf>

4. Daily 92 News

https://www.roznama92news.com/efrontend/web/index.php/index2?station_id=7&page_id=5&is_common=&n=1000&xdate=2020-9-23

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