

National Rural Support Programme, Pakistan, HRD COMMUNIQUE

NEWSLETTER 2000

ISSUE 3

JULY 2000

Editors Note

We have received various letters from our readers especially from small NGOs and other organizations who have offered suggestions as well comments. This growing acceptance of the **HRD Communiqué** by its readers at all levels is encouraging and HRD is thankful for all the cooperation and support extended by its field staff and the management.

We have started publishing small promotional clips mostly relative to the world of development and have decided to provide you with more information of other development organizations in our new column of "Development News Fillers". A reader's column is also in the pipeline and with your responses it will surely take off soon.

The queries about the general NRSP news and information being included in the HRD newsletter does seem to overwhelm the readers – this is all the more uplifting for us as it reflects the interest of the readers explicitly.

This edition includes a front page interview with Shoaib Sultan Khan; a distinctly respectful development personality well known for his work not only in South Asia but in other developed countries as well. This interview in itself is a direction for all the RSP's as well as all development professionals so that they can carve out further paths for the development of the rural masses.

We strongly feel about the fact that the info from the field is our strength and hope that the field staff will lend their full support in this regard. Please do send in your material and comments for the next newsletter by the end of August.

Consciously or unconsciously we all strive to make the kind of world we like — Oliver Wendell



Let us not look back in anger or forward in fear, but around in awareness.

James Thurber

Painting by: Ayesha Riaz

An Interview with Shoaib Sultan Khan

The world of development holds some prestigious names of real life heroes at the top of the paradigm. The Name of Shoaib Sultan Khan is a distinguishingly familiar feature of the development scene in South Asian countries, with a particular focal point being the Rural Support Programmes in Pakistan.

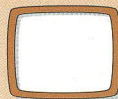
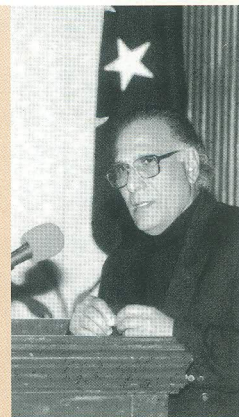
This eminent and graceful personality has inspired many and is himself an ardent follower of the late Akhter Hameed Khan—an institution in himself.

Shoaib Sultan Khan has not only brought the valuable and seasoned experience of his service in the district management group to this field; but has also concentrated on tangible visionary dimensions for the development process in relation to poverty alleviation in Pakistan.

Starting with Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, which has shown remarkable progress in the northern area of Pakistan, our great mentor has moved on further successfully with the replication of the Support Programmes from Sarhad Rural Support Corporation to National Rural Support Programme to Punjab Rural Support Programme.

An interview with the great Guru himself not only provided a thoughtful insight into his ideas but also reflected a sense of sensitivity and compassion for the people he is working for—the rural masses silhouetted in the backdrop of poverty.

continued inside . . .



What's Inside

- An Interview with **Shoaib Sultan Khan**
- Newshighlights
- Case Studies + a pictorial story **NEW**
- From Community Organization to Empowerment
- Development News Fillers **NEW**
- Food for thought
- Monitoring Assessment & Planning

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Shahida Tanveer Ahmed

Mohsin Jamal

Shoaib Sultan Khan, Dr. Rashid Bajwa, Roomi S. Hayat,

Aqeela Tahir, Malik Fateh Khan and

Dr. Riaz Ahmed Khan (CBTI)

This was an informal interview with Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan to basically derive his views about the development activities of NRSP and other RSPs as well as focus on the future perspectives. This interview was taken by Aqeela Tahir, Deputy Programme Manager (HRD) and Shahida Tanweer Ahmed, Editor.

Q Where do you see yourself after all these years of work? Do you think you have achieved what you set out to do and are you satisfied with it?

A "As we always say it is a process oriented approach not a target oriented approach. You can not say that in this time I have to reach here or do this because so many other things are related directly; everything is inter-dependent.

The objective has to be put foremost and the objective is to improve the overall situation in the village, to penetrate at the household level and attain maximum coverage in the village —of course we are not choosing or excluding people while doing this but generally our focus is the rural masses."

(He seemed fully focused and totally convinced with the utterance of his words. This created an aura of security and assurance and eased up the slightly formal atmosphere of the interview to an informative conversation; a dialogue)

"Now looking back" at the last 40 years let me see—I initiated the Aga Khan rural programme and you won't believe that there were no resources available and I was to set up Aga Khan Rural Support programme. When I went to the airport the flight was as usual delayed and I went back to the Agha Khan Foundation. There I saw a jeep standing and when I inquired about it they said that it had to go to Gilgit and the Loari Pass is closed so I told them to give it to me because the Loari pass was to open up 6 months later. — So that's how I drove up there, started work and managed to put together a team to start the Agha Khan Rural Support Programme.

Then if you see the booklet of the RSP's and see the map then you can imagine how should I feel?

(Well he did condense his achievements in a few words — 46 years of hard work down on the map is not at all trivial!)

"6 years ago I was asked by the UN to take the lessons I have learnt to South Asia and now I see these islands in Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka and India. There is satisfaction in my work but there is still a long way to go.

Of course we have not assaulted poverty and as I saw in the Northern Areas, **unless you have an 80-85% coverage of the households you are working in you can not really see an impact** or coverage even the World Bank report states that incomes have tripled in the AKRSP area but in other RSP's like in NRSP or PRSP they need to reach there in terms of coverage before we can talk of their impact. So we can not say much.

(He paused and bent over the table with a contemplative look over his face and then with an optimistic smile started off again with the idea of 'coverage' to be able to make a lasting impact)

Of course one believes that **if people really have to be empowered then they must be organized and the women have to be brought in to the main-stream of development through the countrywide network of grass roots institutions.** If this is not being achieved then you are not reaching the goal and that is what I am trying to do. So yes **I feel there is achievement but not complacency, the struggling and the striving still continues.**

(The serenity of the morning was filled in the room through the streaks of sunlight falling on the great mentor and further thickened the aura of wisdom around him. A man who believes in himself strongly was reciprocating and earthed his words with a solid magnitude of his vast experience both as a bureaucrat and a development professional)

Q Could you please share some of those experiences which are very dear to your heart and memory and when you still think about them you do tend to smile at its gravity, triviality or just humor?

A Of course Meeting Akhter Hameed Khan in 1959 for my current work was crucially important because I found a teacher and a guide.

Besides if I look at my government career there are many things that I feel proud of and then there are many things I feel not so proud of.

(The intensity of modesty echoed distinguishing in his voice)

Then there are things I feel I could have done better and vice versa and then there are moments of satisfaction that I would never barter for any thing and at other times I did not feel I could succumb to situations — **but then one's moral fiber is not put to test all the time its only once in the 99 % and if I wasn't right once so what it is all part of the important learning experience.**

There are many moments when the government wanted me to do something and I thought it was not possible due to certain principles.

As far as this work is concerned meeting **Akhter Hameed Khan** was really important for my conviction —as he put it beautifully and said that **you are not a reformer so don't try to reform. Just build your own islands and hope that these would multiply**—and this is what has happened. When I was in Peshawar in 72 we tried to establish Daudzai and in three years time we were all thrown out, but then again with AKRSP, NRSP, SRSC and PRSP how these islands have multiplied and one hopes that one day they will be all over the country.

Q There is a vacuum created with the parting of Akhter Hameed Khan, how do you feel about it?
(an almost spontaneous reply came out as if the answer was straight out of his heart)

A Well totally lost how else! — It was not that he would come and say that this is totally wrong or do this or that; but in fact he always used to say that my work is very difficult coming and guiding all of you — He would pick up any situation and show the way and in times of need when one felt that they have

reached a cul de sac, he would say 'no go on it happens you are on the right track'. These things happen. Now I don't think I can get that guidance from any body so I don't know—he used to say that the spectator always sees more of the game than the player. It is very difficult to say what he would come and say with respect to our present progress and what we are doing is definitely not perfect and we will only know when we will make mistakes. But then this learning obviously takes time—this is how the world is.

Q The government has announced about RS 21.2 billion for the poverty reduction programme in the coming year and 35 billion is allocated for current year—With a lot of other players talking about poverty where do you think the RSP's stand in the present scenario. What are going to be the key linkages and can poverty be reduced without forming community institutions?

A But that's where the RSP's come in — what the RSP's have learnt about organizing the people is the key because the experience shows that if the people are not empowered and able enough in decision making and identifying the need then the development is not sustainable. **Thus when implementing what needs to be done and what is most important then a partnership is required on the right cord with the agencies and the people where by the people take over their obligations with responsibility.**

(He took a thoughtful pause and one could draw energy from reflection of his involvement in the explanation)

That is where I have made it clear to the federal government or the local government that look **if you want to reduce poverty then you must involve the people, if they don't participate then it is a useless effort; the real reduction in poverty happens at the household level**

Yes it is a fact that more tangible and concrete things matter such as the water channels, schools and roads but then these things are not strong without the right foundations and will dis-integrate eventually. Still if you really want to improve the standard of living of the people especially those who are below the subsistence level then you have to increase their income. There are so many other things—and the approach is the participatory development its not that we go to the community and ask them of their demand and we will solve it but the difference is that we go to the

community without any preconceived package. Besides we ask them what they can do themselves and then they identify their own prioritized immediate needs—it is like identifying their potential—one has to convince them about their needs to be identified unless you ask them this and then ask them why they have so far not harnessed their potential they will not be able to move towards any progress.

This can not be done individually, these are the things that need to be fed in the system and the people have to associate themselves with this system, which is only possible if the people are a part of the entire process —

if you want to do poverty alleviation then you have 15 billion but please see — I was invited by the Corp Commander Multan to review the situation, to see how things are working.

I submitted to him that the major component of the area was the farm to market road at a cost of a million rupees —where is a million rupee going and lets see how its being put to use and then they also said that the earth work was to be provided by the contractor so basically the money was going to the contractor and not the poor. The poor do not have surpluses only those people who have these will use the farm to market road—you see they try to do that in Punjab of course the governor took a decision and they tried the RSP's way in Punjab but still they do not understand—poverty alleviation can not just be done by building infrastructure and schools and boundary walls—that in isolation can not achieve poverty alleviation and many of them do admit that it is nothing new, ADP is doing the same thing.

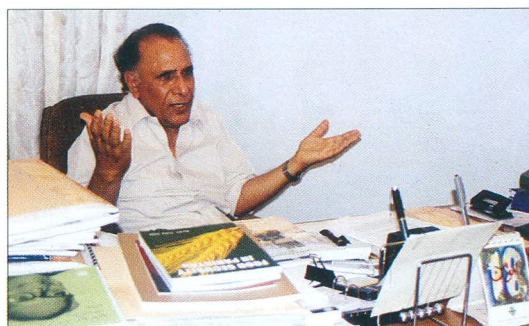
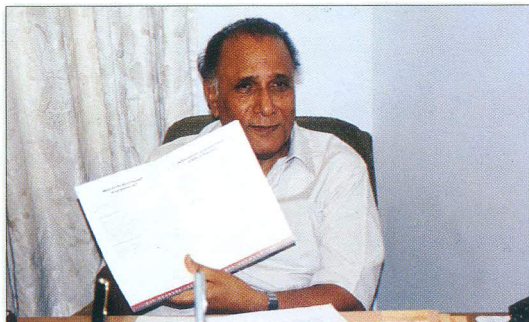
(It was explicit that this clear vision did not just come across as a mere philosophy because this discerning motivation can only stand out with a strong element of self-involvement and application)

(Reported by: Shahida Tanweer Ahmed)

**to be continued . . .
(in the coming newsletter)**

The theme for the forthcoming issue of **HRD Communiqué** is **Women Empowerment.**

Please send us your material on this theme.



News Highlights

Study and Exposure Visits to NRSP

NRSP has always promoted the experience sharing and learning with other organizations and has counted this as a real strength. A visit was arranged for the SUNGI development organization to the NRSP HRD for their exposure. The feedback has been very positive and we are optimistic for more exposure visits of the kind.

A visit for the Action Aid field staff was organized to witness the community empowerment and the social organization techniques in NRSP

Micro Finance cadre at an increase

There have been a number of training organized in the field of Micro Finance Programme.

Training on 'Managing future and credit, MIS and FIS' was arranged for the NRSP-PPAF staff. This training was considered specifically useful for the finance staff in the field and the Head Office.

Micro Finance training for the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme on 'Micro Credit Management' was organized. This training was tailor made according to their criteria and served to be helpful for them.

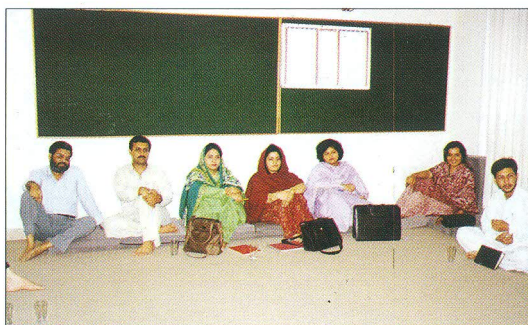
Another very useful training under this head was the 'Micro Credit Appraisal and Monitoring Techniques' training for the Micro Finance group.

The clientele cadre for the micro finance is growing larger and the HRD facility providing this specialized training is gaining more credibility and expertise.

PPAF Progress*

The work in the following areas is in progress; Gawadar, Matli, Umerkot, Hyderabad, Thatta, Lodhran, Mankera, Kalorkot, Rawalpindi, Gujarkhan, Malakand, Kotli and Abbaspur (AJK). This work has commenced with great speed and enthusiasm and we hope to reach our targets with in the given time.

Three Community Management Skills Training were held at Mankera, Malakand and Thatta in which 54 participants were trained. Eleven Vocational training were imparted in which 250 participants were trained. In the Natural Resource Management head 25 participants took part in a livestock and agriculture training. So far 29 training activities have taken place under this head.



The South Asian Poverty Alleviation Programme staff visited the HRD facility and the field in Murree and Rawalakot. They felt that it was very useful to them.

Productive Linkages

Dr. Rashid Bajwa, GM NRSP visited Dera Ghazi Khan with the President of Micro Credit Bank to analyze the quality of Loan Portfolio in order to carb out a partnership proposal of NRSP with the Micro Credit Bank.

The GM held a meeting in Lahore regarding the Integrated Rural and Urban Development Project (IRUDP) in seven districts of Punjab for the collaboration of NRSP

GM also visited Noorpur Thal and Quaidabad in Khushab region of NRSP for monitoring purposes as well as management issues.

International study visit to NRSP

▪ A study visit was arranged for the DACAAR organization of Afghanistan to Murree in the Pindi Region. The visit and the work was much appreciated by the visitors and they extended a formal invitation to the HRD-NRSP staff for a visit to their organization.

- A World Bank mission team visited NRSP-PPAF Project in Mankera, Khushab. They visited community structure schemes, held meetings with the COs and stayed with the community in Mankera. They also visited water courses and the 3.7 km road built by the community in Domail, District Attock. During this visit they also held a meeting with a women organization regarding interventions in small enterprise development. Overall this visit reflected positive feedback and encouragement to the NRSP field workers.
- A mission from the Asian Development Bank visited Fateh Jang regarding the possibilities of partnership with NRSP and Micro Finance Bank.