

Note for Record

By: Shoaib Sultan Khan

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Subject: SRSO & BRSP Board Meetings

On return from Kenya, I had to embark on a journey to Sukkur to chair the Board of Directors meeting of Sindh Rural Support Organisation. I took the opportunity to do a field visit prior to the meeting. The Province of Sindh is most advanced, compared to all other provinces, in fostering a framework of grassroots institutions (CO/VO/LSO) i.e. the Socio-economic Pillar to complement and access the services and supplies from the Administrative and Political Pillars of State. Shikarpur and Kashmore districts where Union Council Based Poverty Reduction Programme (UCBPRP) was launched in 2009 and phased out in 2013, the Socio-economic Pillar is vibrant and sustainable; it is actively complementing, collaborating and accessing services and supplies from the other pillars of State. We visited one of the LSOs in Shikarpur.

The LSO Jiyapo in Union Council Mirzapur of Shikarpur district comprises 126 COs and 39 VOs consisting of 2261 households out of total households of 2306. The glue which has made the CO/VO/LSO sustainable was the Rs. 7.9 million CIF which has revolved amongst 874 of the households below poverty line according to the Poverty Score Card and has been revolved in three cycles amounting to Rs. 23.4 million.

At the LSO meeting, the Administrative Pillar, Departments of Revenue, Family Planning, Social Welfare, Health, Education etc., were present along with District Council Chairman and UC Chairman with many councilors. The Divisional Commissioner also came to the meeting besides the district officers. All the representatives of the different pillars praised the Social Pillar as a means to provision of their services and supplies to the maximum number of households in the Union Council.

Thanks to the Provincial Chief Secretary who on the request of Dr. Rashid Bajwa issued a circular asking Deputy Commissioners to register COs/VOs as legal bodies. This has greatly facilitated opening of bank accounts and transfer of funds especially community investment fund (CIF) given by European Union under SUCCESS programme.

From Shikarpur district we travelled to Larkana, which now comprises two districts Larkana and Qambar Shahdadkot with a total of 99 UCs, 11 Talukas, 429 Revenue villages plus 3800 settlements having 267,823 households, of which, according to the Poverty Score Card done by SUCCESS team, 145352 households are below the poverty line (0-23), SUCCESS has already organised 88476 households, of which 64% fall below the poverty line, since inception of the programme a year ago.

The SUCCESS team of SRSO has achieved near 100% targets set in the project document organizing 4073 community organisations (COs), 263 village organisation (VOs) and less than 10% Local Support Organisations (LSOs) but this is understandable and praiseworthy because LSOs only come into existence once viable COs/VOs have been formed and attained a level of maturity.

The achievements of the team in human resource development has been quite commendable such as, community management skills training (CMST) 7793 – 98% of the target, leadership & management skills training (LMST) 353 – 65% of the target, Activists Workshops 28-84% of the target, Community Resource Persons (CRPs) 108 – 48% of the target. This has all been achieved without any programme intervention, as yet, such as CIF etc. The micro investment plans (MIPs) so far made by CO, show 8% in Agriculture, 28% in Enterprise, 63% in Livestock and others 1%. The COs have also identified 18 different fields for vocational training for 2357 individuals.

What impressed me most that wherever we went the representatives of the Administrative and Political Pillars, be it Shikarpur, Larkana or Qambar Shahdadkot including Commissioner and district officers, Chairmen District Councils and Councilors and Chairmen Union Councils

welcomed institutions of the people. This ownership of the UCBPRP and SUCCESS by them is SRSO's great achievement and CEO Kalhoro and his team deserve all praise.

At the meeting of LSO and VOs, after lunch at Rattodero, I was amazed at the quality of Activists and CRPs. Besides district officers and councilors, Faryal Brohi, of a major political party of Shahdadtal also fully participated in the meeting. The confidence and motivation with which over a dozen women spoke at the meeting was incredible. This was all before any programme intervention had taken place. It was the first time after remaining organized for a year that CIF was distributed to them through cheques. I greatly commended them on their interest in managing their organisations and assured them of great success if they kept this spirit alive. Faryal Brohi also spoke and greatly encouraged them.

In late February I had gone to Jamshoro and was most pleased to find that Deputy Commissioner Munawar Ali Mahesar came and attended the LSO meeting along with EDO. The Sindh Planning Department representative Pervaiz Chandio also came from Karachi. Nowhere I have seen this level of government participation in community organisation meetings. This augurs well for the success of SUCCESS programme. TRDP CEO Allah Nawaz and SUCCESS Manager Jai Prakash deserve credit for eliciting this level of government interest and participation in this programme.

From Jamshoro I drove to Karachi and next day flew to Quetta ostensibly to attend Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) Board meeting but mainly to attend farewell dinner organised by CEO Nadir Gul for the Chief Secretary Saifullah Chattha. For over two years, the approval of an endowment of Rs. 500 million to BRSP had been pending. In fact I had been meeting Chief Ministers and high government of Balochistan officials for the last many years to secure an endowment for BRSP like other provinces and federal government had done in case of RSPs. But all was futile. EU agreed to support a similar programme like SUCCESS in Province of Sindh, however, they desired government contribution in expanding the programme. Nadir Gul jumped at the idea of asking the provincial government to give an endowment and EU went with the proposal, although I initially felt Nadir was asking too little. Sindh government had agreed to take six additional districts to expand SUCCESS. However,

Nadir knew the local conditions better and even for the 500 million endowment, it was only personal intervention of Saifullah that it materialized. The cheque for the endowment was given to BRSP only a day before Saifullah was to relinquish his charge. I was happy that Nadir arranged a befitting farewell which was attended by the acting Governor besides high government officials.