



Celebrating the Successes of

Women Self Help Groups in Sindh

On the eve of International Women Day 2020

Organized by

Research and Development Foundation (RDF)

In collaboration with

Women Development Department Government of Sindh

Supported by

Kindernothilfe



1. About the Program and the Project

The profound work of the Self-Help Groups in Sindh was celebrated on the eve of International Women Day at Tando Allahyar on 10th March, 2020 by Research and Development Foundation and Kindernothilfe-KNH in collaboration with Women Development Department, Govt of Sindh. Around 500 women from different villages of Tando Allahyar, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Hyderabad and Jamshoro and different officials from various Government departments, elected representatives of local government, civil society and media representatives attended the event.

Ms. Syeda Shehla Raza, Minister for Women Development Department Government of Sindh was the Chief Guest of the event, who inaugurated the event and applauded the efforts of women Self Help Groups, RDF and KNH in making women lead a prosperous and dignified life. Chairman District Council Tando Allahyar, **Mr. Ali Mohammad Walhari** was the Guest of Honor, who appreciated RDF for celebrating the Women Day innovatively for the first time in Tando Allahyar.

The program was organized under S.H.A Program, being implemented by Research and Development Foundation (RDF) with the generous assistance of Kindernothilfe (KNH) and German Embassy for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Under the S.H.A program, 550 self-help groups (SHGs) of women are formed in Sanghar and Tando Allahyar districts, having around 9000 members, who are proactively pursuing their social, political and economic development goals.



SHG Members in the program

2. Proceedings of the Women Day

The event was inaugurated by the worthy Minister Women Development Department, Govt of Sindh, **Mrs. Syeda Shehla Raza** by cutting a ribbon together with other guests and the women SHG members. Later, a baby girl Samina from Allah Rakhio Pathan village recited verses from the Holy Quran.

Mrs. Syeda Shehla Raza

Minister for Women Development, Government of Sindh.

While talking to audience, Ms. Syeda Shehla Raza congratulated the RDF, KNH and women of self-help groups on success of S.H.A and highlighted the rural women's role in overall development of country's economy. She said,

I like the view of the hall as it is giving an inclusive picture of our society that women from minorities are sitting with us all around.

The minister visited the stalls that were set by members of self-help groups – SHA project and other project teams of RDF. She emphasized on political role of women and the importance of political role of women in overall development of the country.

She quickly reflected on the laws that her party has made and got passed and the women-centered projects. She shared the helpline 1094 with the women and said that **this helpline is supporting you through women development department**. She offered to RDF to come up with idea or proposal based on the self-help approach to



work for rural women and their empowerment and development. She will support this in a way to add up this proposal to the ADP of GoS for next year annual plan. This will be a collaboration of women development department and RDF aiming that women empowerment can result in some quantifiable progress. While speaking about different women-centered programs launched by government of Sindh, the minister said that Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) has ensured multi-sided freedom and empowerment of women. They now can move towards ATM and the males do not object, they use this income according to their own wish and needs and this program has enabled women to participate in decision making as financial support increases their importance. About women bank, the minister said that it is our vision to provide safe and healthy working environment to the women of our country so that they can play vital role in the economic development of the country. She added that it is our party who took the women to the parliament.

The Minister invited RDF, KNH and women's self-help groups to associate with women development department, government of Sindh, to capitalize on women power, women's skills and joint efforts undertaken under SHA project. She recognized the intent and tangible contributions made on the part of KNH. She shared the information with the participants that we (she and her party) are bringing an act that addresses and resolves the issues of those women who work in agri-fields. The minister of women development said that by collaborating with government the humanitarian organizations and self-help groups will have a support cover from the provincial government.



Speech by

Ms. Kiran Shahzadi

Country Coordinator of KNH in Pakistan

Ms. Kiran Shahzadi, Country Coordinator of Kindernothilfe – the organization that is supporting SHA project in Pakistan, spoke about the vision of KNH and the goals of SHA approach. She said that KNH was supporting the children initially but with the passage of time it was realized that until the mother, the woman, is not enabled enough to be empowered the children can not mark the sustainable success. She said: I am so glad to see this hall full of colors of diversity and co-existence. She gave a brief history of KNH work in Pakistan since 1975. She appreciated the progress made under self-help approach since 2005, as the approach was initiated in Pakistan in this year. She said SHA is not a project but it is an approach for development, sustainable. She quickly shared the statistics of SHA projects in Pakistan and discussed the important points of Sukkur region that how we are supporting the women working in dates-gardens and dates-markets in Sukkur and Khairpur Mirs.



Speech by

Mr. Ashfaq Soomro

Executive Director RDF

Mr. Ashfaq Ahmed Soomro spoke about the RDF's approach towards women empowerment. He concisely described the statistics and impacts of SHA project progress like the enterprises, the school admission campaign and number of students got admitted in schools, the extent of support provided to the women to get their CNICs and using ATMs. He referred to RDF's work on fuel-efficient stoves and its results. He said that fuel-efficient stoves was one of our sustainable approaches that won us the Energy Globe National Award, 2018. He said that RDF has enabled the rural women to to live with dignity and this what we envision.

He referred to other projects of RDF and shard the success of women that they have made like presenting women development agenda at President House, Islamabad.



Speech by

Mr. Ali Mohammad Walhari

Chairman District Council

Tando Allahyar

District Chairman said that women in our society work more than the men do. He added that it is woman who initiated agriculture because in pre-civilization era, the men used to go for hunting and back at home it was woman who take care of household, children and initiated agriculture. He referred to the example of Holy Prophet when He used to stand up on coming of her daughter Bibi Fatima. He quoted some events from the life of Holy Prophet in which the role, importance and respect of woman was depicted. He appreciated the work of RDF, said that self-help groups are marking real progress and their co-work magnify the magnitude of impact.

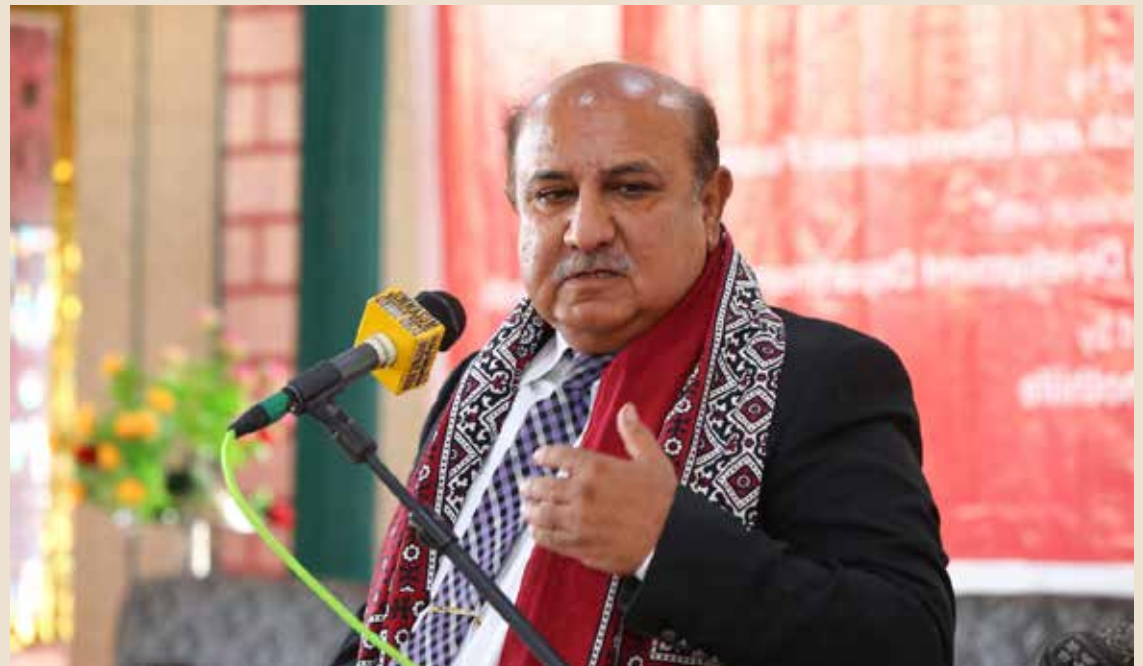


Speech by

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Ismail Kumbhar

Director Sindh Agriculture University Tando Jam

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Ismail Kumbhar said that women development is central component of social balance. He said that women's role in agriculture is of great importance. He said that the half of the population is comprised of women and 60% of our population comprises of youth and in this scenario the role of women in economic, agricultural and research become significantly important. He appreciated the collective efforts taken under SHA program.



3. Success Stories by SHGs

Two members of self-help groups (**Ms. Luqma** from village Shadman Jarwar, district Tando Allahyar and **Ms. Amrit Rani** from village Khuda Bux Mari, district Sanghar) shared their stories with all the guests and participants. Amrit Rani, one of the members said:

RDF and this SHA project has enabled scores of women to reclaim their lives who had lost hope in life because of they were widows, they were physically challenged, they were dependent on their males, they were financially weak, they were not skilled, they were not trained and they had no exposure.

Ms. Luqma, another member of self-help group shared her success story. She said:

we had a circle-based life, going into field and working at home. SHA project has trained and enabled us to work many other things like I have taken loan from the self-help group and have purchased a sewing machine that is earning me handsome amount. I am planning for my daughter and her education. SHA has been instrumental in our lives.



Ms. Luqma, from village Shadman presenting her story



Ms. Amrit Rani presenting her story

4. Round to the SHG Stalls

Different stalls were set by the women of self-help groups, selling a range of products like cultural dresses, handicrafts, ajrak and rillies. The visitors shown great interest in products made at homes, the women earned a good income by selling these products. These stalls promoted the culture and women empowerment.





5. Recommendations

- Speakers reiterated to ensure implementation of the laws about women empowerment and protection in Sindh, that is a shared responsibility.
- The minister suggested to RDF, KNH and women self-help groups to collaborate with women development department for further scale-up of projects and organizations.
- Humanitarian organizations should work on creating awareness and sharing information, of the laws about women's right to speech, right to movement and right to decide, among communities.
- Women should be trained to use the ATM because the agents are charging women extra money to get their amount withdrawn.
- Organic collaboration on the part of NGOs should be developed with National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) which is a statutory body established in July 2000.
- Support women and girls with motorcycles and cycles so that stereotype gender roles can be challenged.
- Training and facilitation about the PARA LEADERS COURSE should be provided the communities, particularly women.
- Self-help groups should collaborate with women development department to get home-based worker women connected with department. As the women development department is working with JAICA to support the home-based workers and a room for civil societies

is established at the women development department.

- CIVIL TASK FORCE should be formed on the part of government to work as parallel body for the successful implementation of all the acts and laws that they have been passed in Sindh Assembly.
- Women should be trained on marketing skills and value addition of the products to fetch to the growing market demand.



7. Pictures Gallery





For Further Details:

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