

Chapter 4

Balochistan Rural Support Programme

Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) was established in 1991 under the Companies' Ordinance as a non-profit organization dedicated to rural development in the province. Its aim is to improve the quality of life of the rural poor and make them active partners in development. As a catalyst for sustainable development, BRSP complements and supports government and non-government organizations in mobilising the self-help potential of rural people.

BRSP's conceptual and operational framework is based on soliciting people's participation. To attain this objective, BRSP supports the formation of self-sustaining organizations to identify people's specific needs. In response to an identified need, BRSP develops well-integrated programmes that are sensitive to Balochistan's cultural heritage and institutions and which have the potential for lasting impact.

The financial resources for the Balochistan Rural Support Programme were provided

by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Government of Balochistan; and the amount is Rs 48.00 million each.

1. Balochistan: A Brief Introduction

Balochistan Province is divided into northern uplands and a southern zone. It lies far South, at latitude 25 30'N, on the coast of the Arabian Sea, and towards the north it shares a border with Afghanistan at latitude 32 00'N. In the west, it shares a border with Iran, while its eastern border coincides with three other provinces (i.e., the Road Kohi region). The northern uplands cover about 132,300sq.km. and have a relatively higher rainfall than the other areas. In the northern uplands, pastoralism with its associated caravan trading was the mainstay of the economy until the last decade. Cultivation of fruit and vegetables (known as horticulture throughout South Asia) through irrigation is currently the main source of income, but nomadic pastoralism is still wide-

spread. According to the 1998 Population Census, Balochistan, with 6.5 million people, accounts for five per cent of the total population of the country. The intercensal statistics from 1981-1998 give an average annual growth rate of 2.42 per cent, which is slightly less than the national average. Around three quarters of the population live in rural areas.

A number of tribes inhabit the province, the *Pathan*, *Baluchi*, *Brahui*, and *Lasi* being the important ones among them. The *Pathan* are mostly found east of a line from Sibi to Chaman, while their nucleus area is around Takhti-I-Sulaiman. The *Baluchi* are to be found in the Marri and Bugti Hills and parts of the Karachi Plain. The mountain land between Quetta and Las Bela is held by the *Brahui*, while the *Lasi* are mostly found in Las Bela. In keeping with the racial and tribal diversity, a number of languages are spoken in the province. These include Pashtu, Baluchi, Brahui, and Lasi.

Balochistan is the least developed province in the country. Agriculture is handicapped by the limited amount of arable land, scanty rainfall, and lack of irrigation. Irrigation from surface flow is extremely limited and is mainly in the form of flood irrigation. In some parts of Balochistan, *karez* (underground channel irrigation system) is practised but methods to increase groundwater supplies await further investigation. Some pilot projects have been initiated. Development is in essence handicapped by

- a) difficult terrain,
- b) immense distances,
- c) lack of communications, and
- d) a sparse population located in isolated basins.

Balochistan is the least industrialised province of Pakistan. Factories are virtually non-existent, even though it has considerable mineral wealth. It has deposits of natural gas, chromite, lead, sulphur, and marble. Natural gas was discovered at Sui in Kashi District in 1952. The reserves are among the largest in the world. From Sui, gas is piped to Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Multan, Faisalabad, Lahore, and Rawalpindi and is used for industrial power as well as for domestic consumption. About two-thirds of the coal mined in Pakistan comes from Balochistan. Chromite is mined at Hindubagh, mostly for export. Other reserves have been located in the Chagai area. Good quality marble in beautiful shades is found in several places, particularly in Dalbandin and Chagai. Sulphur is found at Koh Sultan in Chagai.

The land area of Balochistan comprises some 40 per cent of Pakistan, but, due to its arid climate and lack of major water resources, it has the smallest irrigated area of all four provinces. Whilst some grain production is possible on rainfed and flood irrigated (*sailabi*) land in the province, yields are low. High-value agricultural production is only possible on the limited, perennially irrigated land. Water resources for this purpose are strictly limited and hence need to be used as efficiently as possible. This is particularly so in case of groundwater resources that are finite and which are drying up in many valleys.

Balochistan produces fruit and vegetables that have some of the highest values in the country. High elevation valleys (over 5,000 feet) in northern Balochistan are among the few areas in the region capable of producing delicious fruit such as apples, pears, plums, peaches, and grapes; and all of these command high prices. Medium elevation

valleys to the south and west of the above (at elevations of from 900 to 1,500masl are capable of producing vegetables out of the seasons that are normal in the rest of the country and, therefore, they command a premium price. It is only the lower elevation plains to the south and east of the province that directly compete with the main irrigated areas in the Punjab and Sindh, since they grow tropical and subtropical fruit varieties, vegetables, and grain crops of similar types to those grown in the major irrigated areas. Even in these lower elevation areas, however, some crops, such as coconuts, dates, and pineapples, are grown which are capable of providing good returns.

2. Organization and Programme of BRSP

BRSP has the following sections offering different programmes for village men and women.

2.1 Plant Production Section

This section helps to maximise crop production through efficient use of agro-inputs and provides training in improved production techniques. The disciplines covered are crop production, orchard management, and agroforestry.

2.2 Animal Production and Health Section

The livelihoods of rural people are mostly dependent on livestock with levels of productivity that are much lower than the potential. This section supports farmers by improving their skills through introduction of improved and productive techniques and by offering extension courses.

2.3 Marketing Section

This section helps to market the produce through formation of marketing and artisan associations. It also conducts training, organizes exposure tours, establishes linkages with markets, and arranges exhibitions.

2.4 The Artisans' Programme

BRSP supports village artists and artisans to not only preserve heritage but to provide them with direct market access for maximum return and recognition. These artisans are organized in craft guilds and trained to handle relations with suppliers and buyers, administer funds, and ensure quality control.

2.5 Rural Finance

This section is planning and implementing a credit delivery system for various income-generating projects. The main focus is on credit discipline, familiarising the borrowers with practices relating to the credit system, and improving their credit worthiness with a view to linking villagers to formal credit institutions.

2.6 Human Resource Development

This section is responsible for developing and strengthening the knowledge base, organizational and management capacities, and professional expertise of various people belonging to different trades. It offers workshops, seminars, and training courses.

2.7 Infrastructure

The engineering section is not involved directly in construction schemes but undertakes limited supervision and provides technical support. All schemes and surveys are

collaborative and demand-oriented. Their feasibility is established in terms of villagers' ability. The schemes include irrigation channels, flood diversion/protective works, drinking water wells, pipelines, storage reservoirs, and *karez* (underground water channels for irrigation).

2.8 Health Education

This section seeks to remedy the lack of proper health facilities and information through training and related activities. It attempts to deliver services such as hygiene, nutrition, family planning, clean drinking water, and sanitation through linkages with appropriate government departments and NGOs.

2.9 Formal and Informal Education

None of the programme packages can have a positive impact in the absence of functional literacy among village women. The long-term benefits of educating girls are sure to yield good results. Therefore, BRSP aims to develop the minds of people trapped by geography and ignored for centuries.

3. Achievements and Impact

Some highlights of BRSP's activities and achievements over the years are given below.

3.1 Village Organizations

The Balochistan Rural Support Programme's mission is to facilitate improvement in the quality of life of Balochistan's disadvantaged rural population, especially women, by organizing them at grass roots' level into village organizations to identify specific problems. During 1995/96, 27 village organizations, 28 women's organiza-

tions, and six village specialist associations were established. However, during that very year, BRSP ended its cooperation with 32 Self Help Organizations (SHO) because the activities in these organizations ceased. By the end of 1996 there were 473 village organizations linked with BRSP.

BRSP supported the villagers through training to impart skills, knowledge, and awareness and also served as an intermediate link between the village organizations and government and non-government agencies. Its role is complementary and supplementary to all other efforts being taken to further rural development in Balochistan. BRSP creates a demand for services to be offered by various agencies, motivates and organizes people to become aware of viable options, and helps to empower them to seek solutions for their needs and day to day problems. It encourages villagers to choose and plan how and where to use their own resources.

BRSP has offered two types of package to village organizations; a conceptual package and a programme package. Various programme packages were introduced to members of village organizations which were equally applicable to men and women.

3.2 Credit Programme

The purpose of the credit programme is to provide the rural population with access to capital. The total number of loans at the end of 1995-96 was 1,129 compared to 802 in the previous year. It may be noted that, at the end of the previous year, 65 per cent of the loans were for internal lending. By the end of 1995/96, this had decreased to 61 per cent. This was due to the fact that many self-help organizations in the villages were upgraded.

Around 71 per cent (amount wise) of the loans were obtained for agriculture and live-stock activities. There has been an increase in loans for other economic activities over the past year, indicating a shift towards diversification of economic activities in the programme area.

3.3 Technology

Identification of technology in the field was a difficult task. Since it was a new kind of assignment, the teams had a problem deciding what to consider a technology and what not. However, after assessing technologies according to the prescribed criteria and arriving at a consensus among the team members, different technologies for use of farm resources and natural resources have been identified. These include both indigenous and modern technologies. Technologies for income-generating activities, especially for women, have also been separately identified and documented.

Indigenous Technologies have been identified as those that have been available to and standardised by the local inhabitants over a long period of time. They have been developed with available resources and are found to suit harsh climatic and physiological conditions.

Modern Technologies include those technologies that have been delivered by national as well as international institutions to extension agents and which are being adopted by local farmers. Some were collected directly from national research institutes and were sitting there due to inefficient extension mechanisms. Some farmers combined modern technologies with indigenous ones and modified them according to their needs.

3.4 Human Resource Development

A number of training programmes was organized for male and female villagers to promote village development on a participatory basis. The current training concept of HRD focusses on mobilisation and training of human resource potentials at the village level, support to the institution building process, and fulfillment of the training needs of BRSP staff and other agencies. The main activities that are being carried out are as follow.

Villagers' Training

Emphasis here is on improving skills. Until June 1996, technical and managerial training had been provided to over 19,000 villagers, both men and women, in the programme area. Training includes non-formal methods of skill improvement and is organized in the villages. Farmers' Days and conventions are also organized. Villagers are also given opportunities to go on familiarisation tours.

Marketing Associations

BRSP encourages members of selected village organizations to form Marketing Associations after they have received training in marketing. Members of these associations become resource persons and change agents in their respective villages and village organizations and practice collective marketing. The associations become platforms for joint activities and also for providing solutions to their marketing problems. The associations also have access to credit from BRSP (Table 18). The objectives of establishing such marketing associations are as follow.

Table 18: Loan Disbursement by Purpose, Number, and Amount as of June 30, 1996

Purpose	No. Loans	Loan Amount in Rupees
Agricultural Input	228	8,803,515
Land Preparation	74	6,012,490
Land Purchase	7	3,995,600
Goats and Sheep	533	13,305,618
Village Shop	47	1,018,600
Medicines	44	693,122
Coal Trade	13	312,000
Others	183	11,123,355
Total 30-06-96	1129	45,264,300
Total 30-06-95	802	33,744,936

- To organize the members of different SHOs (Self Help Organizations) who are individually engaged in marketing their produce and can contribute towards an initial working capital to establish a joint business
- To reduce exploitation by traditional middlemen
- To link the association with potential markets and other institutions to procure better prices for their products
- To explore the possibilities of suitable post produce technologies (on farm and off farm) in the form of micro-enterprises
- To raise the income level of a community by providing marketing services to the SHO members and villagers

A notable example of such associations is 'Kisan Marketing Association' established under BRSP's self help philosophy in 1994. BRSP trained village specialists in Marketing and Enterprise skills and linked them with key traders in the major markets of Sindh and the Punjab. They were also provided with a loan of about Rs 300,000 to support their business activities. They collected their small amounts of sorghum, mung (lentils), mustard, sesame, and cori-

ander and transported truck loads collectively from the area direct to the main markets. The total transactions were for Rs 4,300,000 during 1995. A member of the association was engaged in the handicraft business and he traded in handicrafts worth Rs 300,000 during the year. The total annual profit earned by all the association members was Rs 150,000. The association members have separate bank accounts in which to deposit their monthly savings — which came to Rs 120,000 by the end of June, 1996. This is a big step towards sustainability, besides providing earnings for the members' day to day needs. The establishment of the Marketing Associations also led to higher profits for small rural producers, advances extended as emergency loans, and ensured and quick payments for their products in comparison to what the traditional middlemen paid them. Above all, they assisted rural producers in freeing themselves from the clutches of traditional moneylenders in the area; the interest rates of these moneylenders were as high as 120 per cent per annum. The 'Kissan' Marketing Association' has a programme for establishing micro-enterprises for which they will need technical as well as financial support from BRSP.

Self-help organizations have also been provided with general training in marketing through which they are taught the basics of marketing, colour schemes for embroidery and weaving, food preservation, and small enterprises such as spinning yarn, candle-making, detergent making, and jam making. Marketing demonstrations and ex-

periments have been conducted on preparation of pulses, fruit, animals, wool, and handicrafts with the target groups. BRSP has also organized several familiarisation tours in Balochistan.

demands, these improved technologies and inputs are tested in completely new social and ecological environments, and the results open doors for further dissemination in similar conditions. In BRSP's terminology, these are classified as experiments. Demonstrations and experiments carried out during 1995-96 are given in Table 19.

Table 19: Number of Demonstrations and Experiments Carried Out by SHOs (Region Wise)

Regions	Number of D/Es in 1995-96							
	Crop Prod.		Orchid Mgmt.		Agro-forestry		Total	
	VOs	WOs	VOs	WOs	VOs	WOs	VOs	WOs
Killa Safullah Pishin	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	-
Kalat	8	-	-	-	2	1	10	1
Quetta Mastung	6	3	-	-	3	2	9	5
Bar Khan Musa Khel	15	3	7	-	9	5	31	8
Bolan Jhal Magsi	24	1	-	-	3	-	27	1
Lasbela	9	1	1	1	-	-	10	2
Total	62	8	8	1	20	8	90	17

periments have been conducted on preparation of pulses, fruit, animals, wool, and handicrafts with the target groups. BRSP has also organized several familiarisation tours in Balochistan.

Demonstrations

To introduce improved methods or inputs and to teach rural communities the benefits of improved technology in a modern production system, attempts have been made to demonstrate the innovations practically right in the farmers' fields. Such demonstrations are performed on demand and are participatory in nature. All such demonstration activities are carried out by the self-help organization (SHO) members under the supervision of the BRSP staff, especially the Subject Matter Specialists. Sometimes, according to the needs and

3.5 Credit and Enterprises

The credit and enterprise development component of BRSP aims to encourage investment in off-farm activities, focussing on micro-enterprise development to increase production and income. In this context, micro-enterprise training in soap, jam, jelly, soft drink, and candle making was carried out for the WO (Women's Organization) members in the programme area. Although WO members showed an interest in taking up certain activities on a commercial scale, the lack of raw materials in the local market, the high cost of equipment, and problems encountered in marketing the products prevented them from pursuing these activities. The credit and enterprise development section is now in the process of addressing these issues by linking WOs to the market.

New markets were surveyed and information collected for the sale of cereal crops, fruit, pulses, wool, livestock, and handicrafts. This information was disseminated to small rural producers in the target areas in Balochistan. Similarly, contacts were developed with the FAO Quetta; Fruit and Vegetable Marketing Department, Government of Balochistan; Pakistan Council of Appropriate Technology (PCAT), Quetta Regional Office; Post Harvest Laboratories in Quetta, Shirkatgah and Karachi; and *Lok Virsa*, Islamabad for support to the target groups of BRSP.

The recovery of loans disbursed to Self-Help Organizations during the fourth year of BRSP (1995-96) was satisfactory in terms of use and discipline. Three hundred and twenty-seven loans were disbursed during 1995-96, and 258 were recovered. The overall recovery rate up to June 1996 was 86 per cent. The recovery rate declined from 95 to 86 per cent because of genuine climatic problems in a few areas and no visible wilful default was noted. The details of loans provided from internal and programme funds to village organizations, women's organizations, and Village Specialists' Associations are provided in Table 20.

Table 20: Loan Status by Type and Amount as of June 30, 1996

Self Help Organization	Internal Lending		Programme Loan (Individual)		Programme Loan (Collective)		Total	
	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount
VOs								
Recovered	526	8486796	105	6503791	83	12499225	714	27489812
Ongoing	38	778500	34	2083000	19	5169660	91	8031160
Overdue	79	1846044	7	665699	11	2143265	97	4655008
WOs								
Recovered	16	285456	75	1023246	2	433000	93	1741702
Ongoing	2	23778	57	605922			59	629700
Overdue	5	85416	18	121250			23	206666
VSA's								
Recovered	20	249195	12	743750	9	1167678	41	2160623
Ongoing	1	12964	1	20000	3	262000	5	294964
Over due	3	23415	3	31250			6	54665
Recovered	562	9021447	192	8270787	94	14099903	848	31392137
Ongoing	41	415242	92	2708922	22	5431660	155	8955824
Overdue	87	1954875	28	818199	11	2143265	126	4916339

VOs = Village Organizations

WOs = Women's Organizations

VSA's = Village Specialists' Associations