

SINDH IRRIGATION AND DRAINAGE AUTHORITY (SIDA)

Social Development Cell (Transition Wing)



*Report of One day Training Workshop on
“Role and Position of Women Farmers in Water Management”
29th August 2008*

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Training Workshop for Women Farmers Groups in Sanghar, Sindh

Introduction

On 30th August 2008, a Training Workshop was organized by SDC SIDA for Women Farmers Groups on the Role of women in Water Management. In the workshop 28 women farmers participated from four groups (Chotiyaroon, Rawtiani, Duthro, Santoor). Training sessions were conducted by Mr. Mustafa Ujjan, Ms. Shaheen Khan Gender Specialist PIAC and Ms. Shakeela Leghari Coordinator (GAD) SDC, SIDA were the resource person of training. Mr. Habib Ahmedani Training Coordinator SDC facilitated the event.

The training was organized with the cooperation of Field Team Sanghar. Ms. Zainab Balouch Water Management Officer (SM) AE&WM, Ms. Shahida Leghari Field Assistant SMG SDC and Ms. Shagufta Durrani Assistant to GS PIAC assisted the team and resource persons to conduct the training. Mr Muhammad Hashi Leghari MD SIDA and Mr. Nazeer Ahmed Memon, SDS SIDA specially attended the training programme and distributed the certificates at the end.

Proceedings

Mr. Mustafa Ujjan Group Leader Social mobilization Group (SMG) SDC-SIDA talked about the over all water availability position in the system and irrigation net work of Pakistan and Sindh in particular.

At the onset of his lecture Mr. Ujjan presented the over all availability position of water and share of fresh water in the water reservoirs of world. He further explained that out of total water available in the world we can hardly use 3 % of the water which is fresh, while rest is not fit for human consumption. Looking to the scarcity of fresh water resources and increasing population it is time to consider conservation of water resources what ever are available to us. In later part of his lecture Mr. Ujjan explained the sources of water available to us which includes rivers, streams, underground water resources, rainfalls, lakes and other things. All these resources are pooled together through an extensive net work of complex infrastructure which includes, dams, barrages, main canals, distributaries and minor canals and water courses.



Mr. Ujjan told that currently Pakistan have three major storages for water which includes Tarbela Dam , Mangla Dam and Chashma . Tarbela and Chashma are constructed across Indus River where as Mangla is built on Jahlum river. There is no off take channel emerging out from Dams but on Barrages main canals are taken out to carry water to the nock and corner of the country. There are total 19 barrages built across the rivers of the country. There are total 43 main canals and 12 inter river link canals in our system by which irrigation supplies are distributed

through a network of distributaries and minor canals. The total number of distributaries and minor canals is 4000. Water course or field level canals get their supplies from distributaries and minors to irrigate agricultural lands in the command area of the system and total number of water courses in the country is 107000. Mr. Ujjan then explained the irrigation net work available in Sindh province and he stated that there are 3 barrages (Guddu, Sukkar and Kotri), 14 main canals, 1460 distributaries and minors and about 45000 water courses. With this huge infrastructure and contiguous system it is the biggest irrigation network in the world. Though the information, and data shared by Mr. Ujjan was of macro level but participants found it informative and many questions were asked by them.



Ms. Shakeela conducting training session

Ms. Shakeela Leghari Coordinator (GAD) SDC, SIDA (also member of Gender and Water Alliance) delivered her lecture on role of Women and Men farmers in agriculture sector and importance of Women Farmers participation in Institutional Reforms. During her session it was pointed out that at the initial stage when different agencies were engaged in

FO formation, Women Farmers were totally neglected through out the whole process of mobilization and FO formation due to the traditional male dominated mindset of Pakistani Society. She informed that planners, policy makers and decision makers are men so they do not address the gender needs of development project especially water projects and the needs, priorities and concerns of women farmers remain unattended. She said that looking at the importance of participation of women farmers in FOs, SIDA initiated Gender mainstreaming through Identification, Membership and Women Farmer Group Formation in FOs. She informed that, these groups can be a tool to put pressure on policy makers to incorporate the interactive role of Women Farmers in Water Projects and policy documents.

Further more, these women groups will be categorize according the needs/ interests of Women Farmers, for instance women who have interest in livestock will be organized in live stock groups and in the same manner Micro credits groups, literacy groups. SIDA will help those groups to establish linkages with Govt. functionaries to support and strengthen the groups. She also highlighted that capacity building of women farmer is the main task of SIDA's Gender Based Action Plan. During the session women showed their concerns for not having access to subsidized rates of Fertilizers and Agriculture Extension Services for Women Farmers. They also demanded more discounted rates to women on account of being marginalized in the society. It was also demanded by the women farmers to provide micro credit for establishing Fish Farms.



Ms. Shaheen Khan, Gender Specialist (also member of Gender and Water Alliance) also presented on gender

Ms. Shaheen conducting training session

development and functions, roles & responsibilities of Women Farmers Groups. During her session she discussed the differences in sex and gender and involved participants through various exercises and icebreakers. She also talked about productive, reproductive and community roles played by men and women in society. She engaged participants through one of the group work exercises to introduce the concept of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). It helped participants to identify the various factors related to freshwater that have led to the call for a sustainability approach to water use and management and in recent years culminated in what has come to be called Integrated Water Resources Management or IWRM. While discussing the Gender and Freshwater Issues Map, participants were encouraged to relate it to their own experiences or any known situation. Groups prepared presentations on various water issue like population pressures, competition amongst sectors, un-coordinated development and management, ineffective and inadequate regulatory framework, poor governance, unequal access to freshwater, unequal spatial distribution, trans-boundary issues, non-sustainability of ecosystems, land-use changes, growing conflicts and discussed in length.

Evaluation

The participants of the training expressed their views regarding learning through training and major problems faced by them. They urged that more trainings on different subjects related to their problems in the villages may also be organized in future. The women farmers talked about drinking water problems in the area. They informed that meeting domestic water needs at household is particularly the responsibility of women, so lack of women's participation in decision making can affect the whole community adversely. They urged MD-SIDA must take action against those FOs, which are not properly maintaining channels and especially are responsible for growing pollution in channels. Most of the participants requested SIDA to develop comprehensive program for enhanced women's participation at all levels.

Certificate Awarding Ceremony

At the end of the training day, certificate awarding ceremony was held, that was presided by Mohammad Hashim Leghari MD-SIDA. Mr. Nazeer Memon Social Development Specialist SIDA ((also member of Gender and Water Alliance), who participated and attended the ceremony.



On left Mr. Nazeer Memon is addressing the event. On right Mr. Muhammad Hashim Leghari awarding the certificates to the participants.

Mr. Nazeer Memon while addressing the training participants appreciated them for getting involved in the reform program. He said that bringing women farmers at par with men is the biggest challenge for us and project resources and incentives should equally be available to women. He also suggested that the legal framework must be amended in order to create space for women and enhance the representation women in institutional set up and governance. He informed participants that women's participation is the toughest task in all activities that SIDA field teams are performing. He requested women farmers to help SIDA field Teams for mobilizing other potential women to get advantage of resources offered by the program. He also distributed the copies of Sindh Water Management Ordinance (SWMO-02) to the Chair Persons of each group for comments and identifying the gaps regarding women farmers' participation in reforms.

Mr. Muhammad Hashim Leghari MD SIDA, who specially came all the way from Hyderabad, urged women farmers to play active role in the reform program. He highlighted that women have much more to contribute for the water management. He informed participants that SIDA is well aware of all problems faced by communities (especially women related to water). He appreciated the efforts of Social Development Cell and its gender team members for organizing the event and mobilizing women farmers. He also assured to women that local women graduates will be given preference by SIDA for employment opportunities. He also announced that five positions especially for women have been created under SOFWM Project to strengthen gender mainstreaming efforts of Social Development Cell. At the end of the training MD SIDA distributed certificates and congratulated all participants on successful completion of the training.