



What are LSOs?

LSOs or Local Support Organisations are central to the 'Social Mobilisation' approach of the Rural Support Programmes (RSPs). In a bid to reduce poverty and empower marginalised people (especially women), the RSPs mobilise rural communities into a three-tiered structure, which consists of Community Organisations (COs)- neighbourhood level community groups, Village Organisations (VOs) - village level federations of COs, and LSOs - union council level federations of VOs. LSOs are able to carry out community-led development at a much greater level due to the advantage they gain from numbers. As the tertiary tier, LSOs are also uniquely able to develop linkages with government and non-government organisations, donor agencies and the private sector.

Women's Development

The LSO Sehnsa believes that no sustainable and equitable socio-economic development is possible without active participation of women. Analysis of the local socio-economic conditions reveals that lack of proper skills is a key impediment restricting women's active involvement in economic activities. Therefore, the LSO has been trying its best to impart skills training for the women.

The LSO has provided tailoring skills to 316 women, beautician skill to 16, tie and die skills to 26 and candle making skills to 56 entrepreneurial women to start homebased small businesses with financial and technical support of various donors. They have also provided 30 women a three-month extensive tailoring training using their own sources. The LSO has also provided financial and technical support to 6 poor women to start small tuck shops in their villages.

These initiatives of the LSO provided unique opportunities to the women for starting home-based micro-enterprises. The women are now supporting their families with the income earned from their micro-enterprises. Apart from economic benefits, these women report increased status in their

Date of Formation:
27 April, 2008

District:
Kotli

Union Council:
Sehnsa

Total Households in
Union Council:

4,001

Organised
Households:

2,905

Coverage:

73%

No. of Community
Organisations (COs):

155

71 women's

No. of Village
Organisations (VOs):

11

all mixed

No. of General
Body Members:

35

18 women

No. of Executive
Committee Members:

14

6 women

families and friends, increased self-confidence to scale up their micro enterprises and a boost in their empowerment, within their families, and also in the society.

A poor widow Begum Jan of CO Ratali said that after the death of her husband, she and her three children became extremely poor. The LSO helped and guided her to start a tuck shop, and now she runs it and meets the basic needs of her family from the income of the shop.

Management of Natural Resources

A large number of LSO members, especially the poor ones, still depend heavily on farm income. Therefore, agriculture, livestock and forest are important sectors of the local economy. Due mainly to centuries old farming practices, the net yield from the farming sector has been going down continuously. Therefore, the LSO has been trying to introduce new farming practices and efficient breeds of livestock in the area in collaboration with government departments and NGOs. The LSO has provided poultry rearing training to 110 families, vegetable cultivation training to 168 families. The LSO has provided six types of improved variety vegetable seeds to 118 progressive farmers. The farmers are producing vegetables for their household consumption, as well as selling the extra produce in the market.



Cultivation of vegetables for commercial purpose

Sericulture, the practice of breeding silkworms for the production of raw silk, has been under way for centuries in the AJK region. These days only few families are practicing sericulture. The LSO is trying to revive the industry and boost silk production in the area. A silkworm's preferred food is white mulberry leaves. Therefore, the LSO has provided training to interested families on modern sericulture practices and also supplied, two years ago, 40,000 plants of white mulberry to them for planting in their farms. After another two years, the mulberry trees will become mature and the interested families will start sericulture. Moreover, mulberry leaves are useful as fodder

for domestic animals and its twigs are used for making baskets which will be sold in the market.

The LSO, in collaboration with government Forest Department, has planted 10,000 rooted forest plants on common lands. This will increase the forest cover of the area leaving positive impacts on the local environment.

The LSO has organised veterinary camps two times in collaboration with the government Livestock Department with the aim of covering livestock diseases. The local breed of domestic animals is not efficient in terms of production. Therefore, the LSO provided improved breed of goats to 45 families and cows to 64 families with the financial support of government and donors.

Construction of Social and Economic Physical Infrastructure

Realising the long-term social and economic dividends of modern infrastructure, the LSO always tries to attract resources for their development in their area. The LSO has constructed two link roads, one culvert, and a dispensary building using donor funds, as well as a school building on self-help basis. The two link road projects facilitate 235 families and the culvert project facilitate 32 families in communication and transportation of goods. The school project facilitate education of 112 children from 80 families, while the dispensary buildings has increased access to health services to 150 families.

The LSO has recently completed construction of a culvert and soling of two link roads with the financial support of the European Union. The beneficiaries of the culvert project and two link road projects are 35 and 100, respectively. The local community contributed around 20% of the cost of the donor funded projects. Unlike the government projects, these projects are managed and maintained by the local community, therefore, they are sustainable in the long run.



Soling of a Link Road with EU support



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