



Report on

Visit of Chairperson NCHD to Gilgit Baltistan



September 30 – October 1, 2012

National Commission for Human Development
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Introduction

Chairperson NCHD Dr. Nafisa Shah arrived at Gilgit on 30th September on a 2-days visit to Gilgit Baltistan. Fruitful meetings and discussions were held with Chief Minister GB, elected representatives, government officials and NCHD provincial staff. In addition to these she attended the Certificate Distribution Ceremony of graduate learners of NCHD literacy program. Also, she paid a visit to an ALC in a village near Gilgit.

This report is aimed at highlighting the visit of Chairperson covering all the activities and interactions during the 2 days. Contents of the report are as follows:

1. Reception of Chairperson in Gilgit
2. Meetings with Chief Minister
3. Certificate distribution ceremony
& visit to Model (improvised) literacy center.
4. Briefing and meeting with NCHD provincial staff
5. Visit to Adult literacy center
6. Dinner with Chief Minister
and briefing on law & order situation in GB



1. Reception of Chairperson in Gilgit

On 30th September 2012 Madam Chairperson arrived at Gilgit airport in the morning. NCHD GB team lead by Senior GM welcomed and received the honorable guests. Ms Nasira and Ms Shahana presented bouquet to Chairperson and other accompanying guests. After that they were taken to

Serena Hotel in a motorcade with police security and protocol. The Chairperson held a brief discussion with NCHD staff at Serena and after a while she went to CM House Chinar Bagh for a meeting with Syed Mehdi Shah Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan.

2. Meetings with Chief Minister

During the visit Madam Chairperson accompanied by SGM GB attended two meetings with Chief Minister. Secretary Education Syed Hadi and DS to CM were present in both the meetings. The Chief Minister warmly welcomed Chairperson and thanked her for taking interest in education and development of GB. He also shared the background history that Honorable Chief Minister Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah was the first Minister for AJK & Northern Areas during Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government. Dr. Nafisa was very happy and thankful when Syed Mehdi Shah presented her a very precious and historical group photo of Syed Qaim Ali Shah taken in GB back in 1970s.

The major points discussed and agreed during the meetings are as follows:

1. GB is lagging other major provinces and areas of the country in terms of literacy and education. There is a need to work in GB with a more focused approach.
2. Also, there is discrepancy among districts regarding educational development and literacy rate due to different reasons. In particular, Diamer district has the lowest literacy rate owing to its tribal culture and conservative society.
3. NCHD's literacy program is a success and it is contributing in improvement of literacy in GB. As there is no separate institution for literacy in GB provincial setup, NCHD is helping to fulfill this gap.
4. There is a need to improve coordination between Education department and NCHD.
5. NCHD will establish 50 Feeder schools whereas government of GB will match with another 50 making the total as 100 Feeder schools. For this purpose NCHD will prepare a PC-1 in collaboration with Education department GB. Senior GM NCHD to coordinate with Secretary Education in this regard.
6. The Feeder schools will be opened in such backward and underserved areas/communities where there is no appropriate educational facility from government. These are aimed to

provide a support to government education department until it is able to establish formal schools.

7. The new Feeder schools will be an improved version of the existing ones. These will have two teachers and be equipped furniture, teaching/learning materials and other necessary resources.
8. Govt. of GB has planned to implement a “Home Schools” project in Diamer district. To avoid duplication it was agreed that Feeder schools will not be established in areas where Home schools will be operating.

3. Certificate Distribution Ceremony

On 30th September a grand certificate distribution ceremony was held in Serena Gilgit. Around 120 graduate learners of 1st phase (May-Oct 2010) of literacy program were invited to receive certificates. Honorable Chief Minister GB was the Chief Guest of the ceremony. Chairperson NCHD Dr. Nafisa Shah was the Host. Among the guests were engineer Muhammad Ismail, Minister Local Government, Members of Legislative Assembly and Gilgit Baltistan Council, National Commissioner PGGGA, Secretary Education, officials of education department and CSOs, women from different walks of life, Girl Guides, media persons etc.



Highlighting the Power of Pen

In his address as Chief Guest, honorable Syed Mehdi Shah welcomed Dr. Nafisa Shah in Gilgit on behalf of the people of Gilgit Baltistan. He thanked her for visiting GB and taking keen interest in educational development of the area. He said that Dr. Nafisa was promoting the vision of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto to develop women of the country particularly those belonging to backward areas.

He expressed his happiness on giving certificates to so many women of GB who had been illiterates earlier and to now that they have been educated. He underlined the importance of education and literacy by saying:

“If we had given book and pen to our children in GB from the very beginning they would not have guns in their hands now. We can cope with the prevailing situation only with the POWER of THE PEN”, he said.

The Chief Minister appreciated the efforts of NCHD for its contribution in improving the literacy of the province. He also promised to extend every possible support from GB government for this cause. Also, he asked NCHD to prepare a PC-1 (for 50 FS) to be approved by GB government so that NCHD could move forward.

Literacy for Nation Building

Addressing the gathering Dr. Nafisa Shah Chairperson NCHD thanked honorable Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah and other guests for taking time off for the ceremony and encouraging the newly literate women and NCHD Gilgit Baltistan. She congratulated the people of Gilgit Baltistan for gaining recognition, more political rights and self empowerment during the tenure of present federal government.

Highlighting the importance and need of literacy Dr. Nafisa said:

“At present, around 40% Pakistani adults - including men, women and the young, cannot read and write. If they are to be involved in nation building process and made active citizens we have to teach them how to read and write.”

Madam Chairperson underlined the need to implement the Universal Primary Education program fully in Gilgit Baltistan. She announced to establish 50 Feeder schools after a complete survey to identify the communities or areas which need this intervention. In this regard she sought encouragement from Honorable Chief Minister and remarked, “NCHD is your organization”.



No Age Limit for Learning

A graduate learner Ms Shamim Jahangir of Jutial Bala, Gilgit also spoke at the occasion and shared her experiences before and after being literate through NCHD literacy center in her village. She said that there was no age limit for learning. The audience impressed by her achievement encouraged her by cheerful clapping.

A Success Story ...

Member GB Legislative Assembly from Baltistan, Sheikh Nisar who has been fully involved in establishment and monitoring of Adult Literacy centers in Skardu, also spoke on the occasion. Expressing his views about NCHD literacy program he said,

“Thanks to NCHD - 60 (adult literacy) centers have been established in my area and I have inaugurated most of these as a community leader. Moreover, I use to monitor these centers myself time and again because I am a knowledge thirsty person and always remain in search of river (of knowledge). In one of these centers my daughter is teaching her illiterate mother (i.e. my wife). Now, after several months of learning my wife is able to assist me in sorting my files as she can, now, read and write”.

Adult Literacy – A Good Program

Secretary Education, Syed Hadi in his speech appreciated NCHD for graduating 20,000 learners by establishing 750 literacy centers. He said that NCHD literacy program was very good and that Department of Education GB would extend all kinds of support to NCHD. He was of the view that high dropout and low literacy rate in Diamer district and some other areas affected the overall literacy rate of the province.

NCHD – The Facts & Figures

The ceremony started with recitation from the holy Quran and Naat. After that Senior GM NCHD Syed Akbar welcomed the honorable guests and learners who had come from Gilgit city and surrounding villages. He highlighted the contributions of NCHD in Gilgit Baltistan so far to improve basic education and literacy. He said that NCHD had so far established 750 Adult Literacy centers in GB and by the end of October 2012 will be able to literate around 20,000 persons (mainly women). NCHD also contributed in 2010 disastrous floods in GB by establishing medical camps, providing food packages among affected families and establishing transitional schools for the affectees of Attabad lake disaster.

Senior GM NCHD opined that NCHD’s annual enrollment campaign in collaboration with Department of Education was instrumental in enhancing school enrollment and creating awareness among masses

During the ceremony 120 learners were given certificates of completion of basic literacy course. The graduate learners were very happy to receive certificates especially from Chief Minister of the province. At the end of certificates distribution Dr. Nafisa Shah presented a shield to the Chief Guest Syed Mehdi Shah.

Visit to Model Literacy Center in Serena

It was planned initially that Chief Minister GB along with Chairperson NCHD will visit a literacy center in Sultanabad. However it could not be materialized. Therefore, it was decided that the learning process of NCHD literacy program be shown to distinguished guests through an improvised literacy center in the premises of Serena Hotel.



Accordingly, at the end of certificate distribution ceremony, the Chief Minister along with other guests were taken to the model center where they observed the learning process and saw the books and supplementary reading materials (SRM) etc.

4. Briefing at Provincial Office & Meeting with Staff

On 1st October Chairperson visited NCHD provincial office. SGM GB gave a detailed presentation highlighting the profile of Gilgit Baltistan province and achievements of NCHD programs (Literacy & UPE) in GB so far. Issues & challenges faced by GB team were also discussed in detail and recommendations were considered. HOD Monitoring & Evaluation Mr. Hussain Bukhari and DGM Baltistan Mr. Muhammad Hussain were also present at the briefing.



The major comment points of Chairperson were as follows:

1. Latest PSLM data of Gilgit Baltistan should be obtained by HO.
2. One literacy officer(PC-L) and one UPE officer(PC-E) needs to be appointed in the provincial office.
3. A monitoring team including one manager and two officers(one each for Gilgit & Baltistan) should be placed in the province.
4. NCHD is a government organization and GB team should strengthen its coordination with Govt. education and other departments regarding both the programs of UPE and literacy.

5. NCHD should be in coordination with NAVTEC to utilize their skill development centers. Also, it is being considered that NCHD literacy graduates be certified by NAVTEC in future.
6. Model of ALCs may be reviewed by providing 2 sewing machines per center to reduce drop out and enhance income earning opportunities for the learners.
7. The detailed recommendations for resolving the issues in GB be sent to HO for consideration and necessary actions.
8. Regarding necessary office equipments Chairperson said, "You will get everything".

5. Visit to Adult Literacy Center

After meeting with provincial staff in PO and Chief Minister in CM office respectively Chairperson paid a detailed visit to ALC Sultanabad – a village on Karakoram Highway. She took keen interest in the learning attainment of female learners and interacted with them for half an hour. The learners of the center demanded of Chairperson to run a PLC for them which she accepted and instructed SGM GB to take necessary steps. Also, she announced that the center will be provided 5 sewing machines.

Later on, Chairperson left for Hunza along with Ms. Farhana Azeem and Tahira Ahmad of PGGGA. They were accompanied by Ms. Nasira and Ms. Shahana of NCHD as hosts. Secretary Education GB arranged lunch for the guests in Karimabad on behalf of Education department.

6. Dinner in CM House and Briefing on Law & Order situation

Honorable Syed Mehdi Shah invited Dr. Nafisa Shah on dinner at CM house in the evening of 1st October. She was accompanied by SGM NCHD and guests of PGGGA. Home Secretary GB and Deputy Commissioner Gilgit briefed Chairperson (who is also head of Human Rights committee of PPP), on the law & order situation in Gilgit region. They also answered different questions from Chairperson. After the dinner honorable Chief Minister bid farewell to Madam Nafisa very warmly and she reciprocated with thanks.

7. Media Coverage

Radio Pakistan, most of the TV channels and newspaper reporters were invited to cover the certificate distribution ceremony which was the main event during Chairperson's visit to GB. In this regard PTV, Geo News, ARY, Aaj and SUCH TV covered the function. Reporters of major Daily newspapers such as Jang, K-2, Baade Shimaal, Sada-e-Gilgit, which have wide circulation at local as well as national level also covered the proceedings. However, Press Information Department (PID) circulated the reports/news of the ceremony and meetings with Chief Minister to all newspapers and published accordingly.

Departure of Chairperson to Islamabad

In the morning of October 2, 2012 Chairperson left for Islamabad. At the airport she appreciated GB team for its hard work to make the visit a success.

I would like to thank every member of my GB team who showed team spirit in making all the events successful despite the other ongoing activities like ASER survey, inventory inspection and program monitoring being undertaken by Head Office teams during the same period.

The guidance and support extended by NCHD HO is also worth mentioning. In particular, respected DG made a telephone call the other day to say a few words of appreciation which really encouraged us a lot.

Syed Akbar Ali
SGM Gilgit Baltistan