

**NGOs and Environmental Sustainability:  
Issues and a Reserach Agenda**

Shahrukh Rafi Khan

Working Paper Series # 20  
1994

All rights reserved. No part of this paper may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or information storage and retrieval system, without prior written permission of the publisher.

A publication of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

The opinions expressed in the papers are solely those of the authors, and publishing them does not in any way constitute an endorsement of the opinion by the SDPI.

Sustainable Development Policy Institute is an independent, non-profit research institute on sustainable development.



WP- 020- 002- 060- 1994- 019

© 1994 by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute

Mailing Address: PO Box 2342, Islamabad, Pakistan.  
Telephone ++ (92-51) 278134, 278136, 277146, 270674-76  
Fax ++(92-51) 278135, URL:[www.sdpi.org](http://www.sdpi.org)

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	1
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Framework</b> .....	2
<b>Key Environmental Issues Facing NGOs in the Field</b> .....	3
<b>Successful NGO Experience in Pakistan</b> .....	4
<b>Research Agenda</b> .....	6
<b>Support NGO</b> .....	7
<b>Research Method</b> .....	10
<b>References</b> .....	11
<b>Annex</b> .....	13



The Sustainable Development Policy Institute is an independent, non-profit, non-government policy research institute, meant to provide expert advice to the government (at all levels), public interest and political organizations, and the mass media. It is administered by an independent Board of Governors.

### **Board of Governors:**

Mr V. A. Jafarey  
*Chairman of the Board*

Khalid Ahmed  
Editor, AAJ KAL

Syed Babar Ali  
Advisor, Packages Ltd.

Dr Tariq Banuri  
Executive Director, SDPI

Dr Parvez Hassan  
Senior Partner, Hassan & Hassan Advocates

Aban Marker Kabraji  
Country Representative, IUCN-Pakistan

Sohaib Sultan Khan  
Senior Advisor, NRSP

Dr G. M. Khattak  
Co-ordinator, Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy

Abdul Rahim Mahsud  
Regional Representative for West Asia, Nippon Gieken Associates

Dr Atta-ur-Rahman  
Director, HEJ Research Institute, Karachi University

Imtiaz Ahmed Sahibzada  
Secretary, Environment and Urban Affairs Division

Dr Arshad Zaman  
Former Chief Economist to the Government of Pakistan

Under the Working Paper Series, the SDPI publishes research papers written either by the regular staff of the Institute or affiliated researchers. These papers present preliminary research findings either directly related to sustainable development or connected with governance, policy-making and other social science issues which affect sustainable and just development. These tentative findings are meant to stimulate discussion and critical comment.



# NGOs and Environmental Sustainability: Issues and a Research Agenda<sup>1</sup>

Shahrukh Rafi Khan

## Abstract

*This paper argues that the key contribution of development NGOs is building community organizations or transforming community based organizations. In turn, these local institutions can utilize local knowledge and development NGO expertise for successful resource management. One of the major strengths of the participatory approach being employed by development NGOs is their close contact with communities and the accountability this leads to. The paper ends with proposing a research agenda and methods for pursuing it.*

## Introduction

The overarching and connecting research theme presented in this background paper is that it may make sense to build on what exists. At the top is government and the line departments, and rural support NGOs may do well in resource management and poverty alleviation by working with government, or alternatively by making government work. As catalysts and facilitators, they may be the missing link for development, or as Akhtar Hameed Khan puts it, the midwife. At the bottom (not in order of importance), are indigenous community organizations that evolved to serve local needs. Once again, it may make sense for rural support organizations to work with what exists, as the rural support NGO Sungi is doing.

It is important to bear this research theme in mind when reading what follows since it will be easy to get distracted by the details. This background paper has five sections. The first presents a conceptual framework and highlights the importance of the participatory approach in environmental management and poverty alleviation and the role of rural support NGOs in implementing such an approach. The second draws on the *National Conservation Strategy* (NCS) to identify the broad environmental research issues. The third section reviews successful rural support NGO experience in Pakistan. The fourth section then presents a specific research agenda. The proposed research plan will have two components. The first part will propose a research agenda concerned with the development of sustainable community organizations. Without these, implementing successful environmental programs is not possible and assuming that such organizations exist is dangerously truncating a crucial aspect of the overall research program. The second part of the research agenda will propose specific environmental issues. Finally, in section five, I propose a research method for implementing the research plan.

---

1. I owe a major debt to Dulan de Silva for several useful conversations. I have drawn on a joint report we wrote for the NGO Sungi. Many thanks are also due to Anis Dani, Najma Siddiqi, Tariq Banuri and particularly to the numerous relevant comments of the participants of the South Asia NGO Development Research Programme Planning Meeting in Dhaka. The remaining errors are my own.

## Framework

Here I draw on my reading of the literature to discuss why one should focus on NGOs when concerned with environmental issues. Participatory development depends on community or peoples' organizations and the success of all programs depends on their sustainability and vitality. If the latter goal is attained, then other goals such as resource management, conservation and sustainable agriculture should follow.<sup>2</sup> Rural support NGOs have a major role in engendering robust community organizations.

Why focus on NGOs? If they are advocacy NGOs, then the answer is that they can say what the government cannot.<sup>3</sup> If they are development NGOs, the answer is that they can do what the government cannot. Their orientation towards the community improves their chances of success. There is consensus in the literature on NGOs and development that the participatory or community development approach is most desirable in attaining sustainable development.<sup>4</sup> Why should this be the case?

Banuri and Holmberg (1992, pp. 41-42) suggest some reasons. First, environmental problems and their solutions are likely to be location specific, related to the local soil, topology and vegetation. Thus it is at the local level that relevant social knowledge, concern, involvement and the capacity to act exist. Second, people must "own" the process for the sustainability of an initiative. Others point to their greater accountability, cost-effectiveness, flexibility in their ability to build, strengthen and maintain common property like pastures and drains [Hussain, (1992)].<sup>5</sup> The 1992 *World Development Report* (1992, p. 95) cites evidence indicating that the participatory approach succeeded in cases where a more conventional top-down approach had failed and also cites a USAID study suggesting a high correlation between participation and project success.

The economic philosophy underlying participatory development stands traditional development thinking on its head.<sup>6</sup> While infrastructure was often the end in traditional development, in participatory development approaches it is often an "entry point" and hence a means to an end. The end is to help build and nourish community organizations and institutions, impart training, inculcate saving habits and hence engender village self-sufficiency and sustainable development.

This socio-economic philosophy can be formalized by prioritizing the objectives of participatory development as follows:

1. Institutional development.
2. Skill development and training.
3. Saving mobilization.
4. Infrastructure.

- 
2. Obviously sound community organizations only represent the existence of a potential for sound resource management. The reality of sound resource management pre-supposes knowing what the issues are and having the technical expertise to implement. Here the role of support NGOs is critical.
  3. Banuri (1992).
  4. There are different intellectual strands that appear to have converged on the concept of the participatory approach to development to attain various complementary objectives. These could be viewed as including the overlapping objectives of poverty alleviation, primary environment care (PEC), sustainable development and the provision of social sector services.
  5. The cost-effectiveness of NGOs is still viewed as a research hypothesis.
  6. I owe this interpretation to Tariq Banuri's interpretation of a lecture delivered by Shoaib Sultan Khan.

In contrast, the standard model views the development of infrastructure (capital accumulation) as fundamental to inducing growth. Savings and resource mobilization are seen as means to this end. Skill development is emphasized only in some versions that give priority to human resources as complements to physical capital in the growth process. Institutional development is often the totally neglected dimension in conventional analysis and somehow assumed to emerge spontaneously from economic growth.

In fact, it has been pointed out that in Pakistan the failure of common property management for example may have resulted due to an institutional vacuum [Hussain, (1992)].<sup>7</sup> Thus neglecting institutional development would appear to be very problematic, particularly if the concern was with resource conservation and management.

The concept of primary environment care (PEC) appears to be a particularly suitable one to use when support programs are working with village organizations.<sup>8</sup> It may be possible to get mileage from this concept due to the parallels with the way policy makers' perceptions were changed concerning health care. There was a change in focus from centralized, large hospitals focusing on curative medicine to decentralized small units focusing on prevention. In this case, policy makers would need to be persuaded about the desirability in many cases of focusing on equivalent environmental concepts encapsulated in the PEC concept.

## Key Environmental Issues Facing NGOs in the Field

For Pakistan at least, identifying these key issues appears to be the most straightforward part of this background paper because the Pakistan *National Conservation Strategy* (NCS) has already discussed these issues in great detail. I cite below the fourteen core areas identified by the NCS for priority implementation:

1. Maintaining soils in croplands.
2. Increasing irrigation efficiency.
3. Protecting watersheds.
4. Supporting forestry and plantations.
5. Restoring rangelands and improving livestock.
6. Protecting water bodies and sustaining fisheries.
7. Conserving bio-diversity.
8. Increasing energy efficiency.
9. Developing and deploying renewables.
10. Preventing/abating pollution.
11. Managing urban wastes.
12. Supporting institutions for common resources.
13. Integrating population and environment programs.
14. Preserving the cultural heritage.

Nine out of the fourteen program areas identified by the NCS partly rely on community organizations for implementation, while a tenth (supporting institutions for common resources) relies exclusively

---

7. Again this could be viewed as a testable hypothesis.

8. Borri ed. (1991). I owe the parallel to be drawn to John Clark.

on support NGOs and community organizations (p. xxviii). This is a fairly exhaustive list and would probably cover most of the environmental issues confronted by support NGOs.

## Successful NGO experience in Pakistan

The most widely accepted approach to participatory development in Pakistan is that popularized by the Agha Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP). I will briefly focus here on the experience of the AKRSP and the lessons derived from this approach to participatory development. A descriptive background paper on other Pakistani NGOs concerned with the environment is available.<sup>9</sup>

The AKRSP was introduced in the Himalayan region of Northern Pakistan in 1982. As a pre-condition for getting assistance for the construction of village productive physical infrastructure (PPI) - such as an irrigation embankment or link road, identified as a top priority by the village - the AKRSP asked for the establishment of a village organization (VO) in which decision-making was by consensus and for the formation of a saving society. AKRSP bore all expenses, i.e. technical assistance, capital and material input costs and labor costs. The village organization deposited about a fourth of the labor costs in the bank as collective savings and was responsible for the maintenance and operation of the infrastructure created.

It was mandatory that all members save something on a weekly basis, no matter how little. The objectives were to inculcate saving habits and to build up necessary village capital for collateral for collective loans. The VO was the medium via which training for social forestry, poultry and livestock care could be provided. Separate women's VOs were formed to address the special concerns brought up in the women and development literature.

Prior to the formation of the AKRSP, there were many examples of government infrastructure provision attempts in the Northern Areas, but field reports suggest that the funds were often misappropriated, projects were never completed or, if completed, not maintained properly. The AKRSP is not without its critics, but many believe it to have followed an integrated approach that makes possible the attainment of sustainable development.<sup>10</sup>

Based on the two World Bank interim evaluations, the following lessons stand out:

1. The sovereignty of the VO and non-interference in the internal affairs of the village are essential.
2. Senior management must place a great deal of emphasis on field contact.
3. Staff responsibilities must be defined clearly to enable smooth team work to take place.
4. A learning environment with an emphasis on innovation and flexibility must be engendered by the support NGO.
5. It is important to work closely with the government, particularly with regard to agricultural extension.

Some notes of caution were also sounded:

---

9. Also see Smillie (1992).

10. While the two World Bank interim evaluations (1987, 1990) point out some weaknesses and make suggestions for improvement, they acknowledge the success of the basic model. Mumtaz (1991), using an anthropological approach, is a harsh critic.

1. Displaying AKRSP markers on completed PPIs (productive physical infrastructure) may infringe on the community's ownership.
2. There is also a need to focus on the household because an exclusive focus on the village tended to predominantly stress activities performed by males.
3. There is a need to shy away from collective productive projects since for the most part they failed in that the "free-rider" problem muted individual incentives.
4. There is a need to restructure information systems to collect the right kind of information, including benchmark data, to assist monitoring and evaluation.

On balance, both evaluations were positive and emphasized that the basic approach to community development that evolved was a success and that, with some qualifications, had the potential for replication.

Based on the AKRSP experience, there has been much new thinking.<sup>11</sup> Consider the following issues:

### ***The Village Organization***

In conversation, Akhtar Hameed Khan suggested that concentrating on first forming a VO could even become an obstacle in doing successful community work. For example, he suggested that forming VOs may not be the best way of forming community primary schools. Instead, he suggested that it may be best to first identify a teacher (preferably female) and a room, and the school committee of interested parents (the beneficiary group) can subsequently be converted into a community organization (CO). The fact that the beneficiary group could be a sub-set of the village appears to have induced a change in terminology to community organization from village organization.

### ***The PPI***

Another example of a change in operating philosophy is that a PPI is no longer being considered as the only entry point.<sup>12</sup> It is acknowledged that a social sector project or political action may be equally valid entry points. In fact, for the NRSP (National Rural Support Program), the entry point is a needs assessment and the community is encouraged to organize for technical support and contribute towards any project that might be mutually agreed upon.

### ***Common resource management vs. private incentive***

The distinction between what can and should be collectively managed and what really lies in the domain of private enterprise is now clearly recognized.<sup>13</sup> Thus attempting common production is now very unlikely. Similarly, the fact that group saving schemes often discourage private savings was recognized and responded to. It was noticed that VO members were reluctant to pay a fee for services provided by individuals nominated for training by the VO in the AKRSP. BRSP has sought to avoid this situation by encouraging the formation of a "guild" of trained personnel (Self -Help Organizations) to have a separate identity from the VO.

---

11. I am particularly indebted to Anis Dani in writing this section.

12. Siddiqi and Dani (1993, p. 14) and Qazi Azmat Isa's message in BRSP (1992, p. iv).

13. Khan (1993, p. xiii).

## **Working with government**

The AKRSP did work with the government, but this appears not to have been a conscious policy decision as such. For example, the AKRSP, not having an explosives license, worked through the local bodies and rural development department of Baltistan to procure explosives (1982, p. 29). Again, AKRSP provided a training center, but mostly used government expertise for extension courses.

The National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), however, has stated that it intends to take full advantage of its status as a government-funded NGO to mobilize the expertise available at the line departments for training its own staff and to service the NGOs.<sup>14</sup> For example, for providing transportation to a government veterinarian and paying the travel and duration allowance. This policy has enabled the NRSP to maintain about one third the staff strength of the AKRSP. The SRSC (Sarhad Rural Support Corporation, 1992, p. 17) used government District Health Officers and nurses to provide VOs with immunizations and the BRSP (1992, p. 14) has explicitly stated its intention of working with line departments when possible.

Recently the AKRSP has entered its first formal partnership with the government in a primary school project. A PC-1 (Planning Commission - 1) specified an endowment for 100 primary schools. The endowment will pay for the school recurring expenditures and all expenses and operations are to be monitored by the AKRSP village organizations. Another recent breakthrough is funds channelled via the Orangi Pilot Project for twenty drinking water schemes.<sup>15</sup>

Shoab Sultan Khan (1993, p. xiii) captured this view well in saying that the "idea is not to substitute for government services but to organize the poor to make government services accessible to them." Akhtar Hameed Khan (NRSP 1993, pp 31-39) also states, in no uncertain terms, the importance of working with what he refers to as the "department". In a nutshell, he describes the role of the RSP as one of organizing for solicitation and removing bottlenecks. Thus the community organizations (COs) that an RSP helps establish could more effectively solicit state services than small farmers could on their own. In addition, the RSP could more effectively enable the delivery of such service by removing critical bottlenecks such as transportation. Thus instead of creating jealousies, by enabling more efficient delivery, the RSP would cultivate allies that would result in a productive and sustainable development endeavor.

## **Research Agenda**

### **Part A: Community organizations**

#### **Evolution of thought on community participation**

The above points are some examples of the new thinking in participatory development in Pakistan and this thinking will continue to evolve based on experience in the field. There is a need to document the evolution of such thinking, and those in leadership positions in development NGOs are best suited to do this.

---

14. Siddiqi and Dani (1993, p. 13).

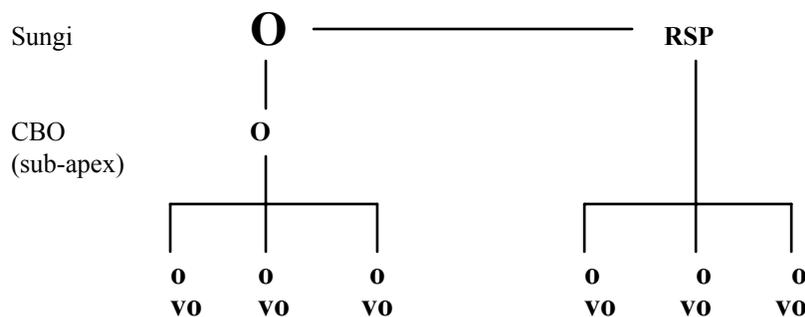
15. Information made available by Najma Siddiqi.

## CBOs and VOs

This research topic suggested itself from a review of Sangi's activities.<sup>16</sup> Sangi's operating philosophy is to build on the existing strengths of the community. Thus it has so far almost exclusively relied on working with existing community based organizations (CBOs) rather than concentrating on building VOs from scratch, as has been the focus of the rural support program (RSP) approach. Most of these CBOs are welfare or youth organizations (also with a welfare focus), and most of these have initiated branch organizations in other villages (sometimes as beneficiary groups revolving around a project).<sup>17</sup> The branch organizations can have representation in the parent (sub-apex) organization, the CBO, and this helps in coordinating projects spanning several villages and in mediating conflicts that could arise during project selection. Sangi as the apex support organization works through the CBO rather than with the VOs as in the RSP approach.

The two alternative approaches (Sangi and RSP) can be conceptualized with the aid of the following diagram.

### Support NGO (apex)



As part of the process of working with such organizations, Sangi works towards changing their focus from an exclusively welfare orientation to a developmental one and one concerned with resource management. It also works towards strengthening these organizations by instituting democratic practices, proper book-keeping and accounts auditing and regular meetings. While the CBOs identify projects, Sangi has often worked on repairing, restoring or rebuilding developmental projects that the community itself had initiated.

There are several very important conceptual and research issues here.

- a. *Institutional vacuum?* The spontaneous mushrooming of community level organization that frequently register with the District Welfare Office calls into question a stated observation that there is an institutional vacuum at the local level.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the issue is not so much one of an institutional vacuum but one of the right kind of institutions. The CBOs we observed sprang up voluntarily and

16. Sangi is a development NGO that has been operating since 1989. It was particularly active in rehabilitative work after the 1992 floods. It built on the grassroots work done during the floods by initiating developmental work. A recent grant from the Trust for Voluntary Organizations has enabled an expansion of its activities.

17. These organizations seem to resemble the description of "Tons" in Africa described by Borrini (1991, p. 122).

18. Based on his experience of working for the AKRSP, Dani (1988) suggested that some of the most successful VOs in the AKRSP were ones where there was a pre-existing history of community organization that was built on.

had initiated welfare and rudimentary development work.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, when working with Sungi, they often provided voluntary labor which is suggestive of an advanced level of community and social consciousness. Recall that even labor costs were paid for by the AKRSP.

- b. *Sustainability of CBOs/VOs.* The research issue here is whether VOs created by intervening NGOs, or grassroots CBOs, which are given direction and guidance, are more sustainable. The second World Bank interim evaluation of the AKRSP indicated that as the cohesive effect of early large PPIs dissipated, membership in VOs declined sharply (1990, p. 46).<sup>20</sup>

The positive aspect of working with CBOs is that, having emerged spontaneously from the indigenous environment, they are well-rooted. In many cases, they already show positive signs of sustainability and advanced consciousness in that they lobby and pressure governments for social services and mediate conflicts in the community. The negative aspect of working with them is that they are not broad-based in that they normally constitute an association of middle-class businessmen, professionals, students, educated unemployed or the better-off farmers concerned about the poor or about their community more generally. Since decision-making is viewed as the prerogative of the founding members (a charismatic leader with associates or a dynamic group of youthful leaders deferring to elders in the community when called for), educating them to decision by consensus may be more difficult than in the case of a fresh VO. The implicit assumption is that decision by consensus is preferable although this could be viewed as a testable hypothesis.

#### NGO-state cooperation

Another research issue is to explore the potential of NGO-state cooperation via district welfare offices. Given more state resources and given that the continuity of state institutions is not dependent on donor funding, some support NGOs might do well by using their experience to rationalize the role of district welfare organizations. This would entail working with them to reorient registered CBOs towards sustainable development.

Some NGO-government linkages have been referred to above by way of example. Many linkages probably exist and more are likely to emerge. Documenting such examples would help RSP institutions learn from each other via the Rural Support Program Network (RSPN - next sub-section) or otherwise, and also help others in South Asia or beyond learn about the RSP approach. Frustrated attempts at working with line departments also have much to teach.

#### RSPN: Replicating the AKRSP Approach

The RSPN is a network of 14 rural support organizations, which, as of September 1993, had "intervened" in about 3,520 villages constituting over 7 percent of the total villages in Pakistan.<sup>21</sup> The largest and most critical of these NGOs is the National Rural Support Program (NRSP). With a team of like-minded professionals, and the encouragement of Shoaib Sultan Khan, Commander Naseem hoped that the successful experience of the AKRSP could be replicated by forming the NRSP with a small amount of seed money in 1991. Perhaps the most impressive achievement of Shoaib Sultan Khan and the AKRSP has been that of persuading the Government of Pakistan that its participatory approach to rural development is worth

---

19. Smith et. al. (1993, p. 6) report that there may be as many as 4,000 such CBOs in NWFP alone. This far exceeds the estimate of 3,000 CBOs identified by a UNDP survey (1991).

20. Anis Dani pointed out that the fall in membership may be due to VOs splitting up after the completion of the PPI into more cohesive COs. The steady increase in the numbers of VOs reported by the AKRSP suggests this may well be the case.

21. Najma Siddiqi of the NRSP thought of setting up the RSPN.

replicating. The government decided to fund NRSP and accepted the condition that NRSP will have the status of an independent NGO with no ex-officio members on its Board of Governors.<sup>22</sup>

NRSP had been entrusted with the task of replicating AKRSP's success by establishing VOs throughout the country. Other organizations also part of this endeavor include the Sarhad Rural Support Corporation (SRSC) and the Balochistan Rural Support Program (BRSP).<sup>23</sup> In less than a year, NRSP has instituted programs in 484 villages and anticipated instituting 15,350 VOs within five years.<sup>24</sup>

The governments support for NRSP was by no means a token one. It provided half a billion rupees which was wisely converted by the management into an endowment. In addition, Rs 206 billion are earmarked for the five year Social Action Program, and the government is looking to NRSP as an important implementing organization. This government support and its strong endorsement of the concept of replication of the AKRSP approach represent a truly novel undertaking in the area of community based development initiatives.

NRSP and the other NGOs in RSPN potentially represent a positive development in participatory development. While the management staff of NGOs are themselves overwhelmed by the operational details of the enormous task they have been entrusted with, there is a role for well-meaning researchers to provide honest and insightful progress reports. In reviewing this social experiment at replicating a community development approach to date, the role of the RSPN may be vital. Some questions come to mind:

- a. What role does RSPN play?
- b. What else could it do?
- c. Has it reached an optimum size or can it expand further to incorporate other important players?

On a broader level, the experience of the participating members of the RSPN could be drawn on to address the following issues:

- d. Does government funding or working with government in service delivery affect the nature and functioning of NGOs?
- e. Are there commonalities in successful participatory development endeavours?
- f. What are the major constraints in engendering participatory development?
- g. What mechanisms and institutions could help relax these constraints?

### **Part B: Environmental issues for support NGOs**

1. How to manage situations where survival strategies of the poor conflict with environmental conservation? For example, over-harvesting non-timber forest products could lead to resource

---

22. In thus defending its independence, NRSP effectively avoided becoming the kind of GONGO (governmental NGO) Korten (1990) characterises. In Korten's terminology, NRSP and the other RSPN NGOs come closest to representing third generation sustainable development NGOs. Of late, NRSP is under pressure from the new government which has asked for the return of the grant awarded by the previous government. It is too soon to tell whether this is the act of a government desperate for funds from any source, irresponsible undoing of the last government's actions or a bureaucratic power play. None of these represent rosy scenarios.

23. The Sarhad and Balochistan represent two of four provinces in Pakistan. They have much smaller populations than Punjab and Sind and are in many ways less developed.

24. These statistics were taken from an internal RSPN catalogue of its members and their coverage and from the NRSP *First Quarterly Report*, respectively.

exhaustion.<sup>25</sup> Are there successful examples of such natural resource management?<sup>26</sup> Look at pricing policies and property regimes as strategies of dealing with this issue.

2. Are there examples of support NGOs using traditional knowledge for resource management and conservation or more generally promoting sound practices? Exploring examples of the use of eco-development in India may be useful. Documenting negative examples may be instructive as well.
3. Documenting how support NGOs have worked with women's organizations on environmental issues. Women may be more immediately concerned with such issues and therefore more knowledgeable about them. Are women being adequately consulted by research NGOs?
4. Documenting examples of linkages between urban based environmental NGOs with technical expertise and rural support NGOs.
5. How effectively can "conditionalities" be used in attaining environmental goals. For example, both AKRSP [IUCN,(1992, p. 3)] and SRSC (1992a) require that a certain portion of newly developed land be set aside for environmental purposes to qualify for land development loans.

### **Part II B: Environmental issues for advocacy groups**

6. Document examples of successful NGO advocacy. Research could focus particularly on recycling, marine environment, emissions and trade policy reforms that have a harmful effect such as in the case of enhanced logging.
7. There may be examples of progressive legislation that is not being implemented. Are there examples of successful NGO advocacy engendering implementation of such legislation?
8. Document examples where legislation can be harmful to survival strategies of the poor. For example, in harvesting non-timber forest products the government may be the sole procurer and yet limit the number of procurement days. A more detached research module is included as an annex.

## **Research Method**

Four key research areas have been identified pertaining to Part I of the research agenda. These are:

1. The evolution of thought on participatory development.
2. CBO and VO sustainability.
3. NGO-state relations.
4. RSPN and replicating participatory development.

Senior management in field-based NGOs with knowledge of several of the NGOs would be best suited to tackle 1. Perhaps when procedures get slightly more established (I wonder if this is ever possible), they may take a sabbatical for writing.<sup>27</sup> Alternatively, since RSP documentation is good, experienced external reviewers might be able to use such documentation and field experience to write an adequate report. Once again, I think senior management would be best suited to address 1, 3 and 4.

The importance of baseline surveys may be somewhat overrated since they focus attention on output rather than process. Also, even if baseline surveys exist, disentangling the socio-economic impact of interventions

---

25. Sanjay Sinha pointed to a fascinating example where an increase in price resulted in a reduction in supply as a smaller harvest met subsistence needs.

26. Here one could look at efforts of turning Amazonian tropical forests into a resource that yields a rich and sustainable harvest as a strategy to avert deforestation.

27. Generous support for this from donor agencies may prove to be most productive.

is by no means trivial, even with the most sophisticated data analysis techniques, since it is virtually impossible to include all the relevant social information or to control for other interventions that accompany the development process.<sup>28</sup> This does not mean baseline surveys should be ignored, but that one should be modest about expectations and careful in interpreting results.

Given that one of the central research themes being suggested concerns the relative strengths and weaknesses of VOs and CBOs, a suitable method of getting at this may be via an organizational maturity index. AKRSP (1993, p. 6) has developed such an index and has already started evaluating its VOs and refining this index.<sup>29</sup>

Since lists of CBOs and VOs (associated with particular NGOs) are accessible, I would recommend random selection (with some common sense stratification) of the VOs and CBOs that are chosen for investigation. I would also recommend long visits, perhaps lasting several days, to villages housing the selected community organizations in order to get accurate information via the focus group and PRA/RRA methods.<sup>30</sup>

Most of the issues in Part II are of the nature of documentation rather than hypothesis testing. Thus extensive literature searches are recommended which need not be confined to South Asia. Obviously, Northern researchers with access to better libraries and computer networks will have a comparative advantage in doing such research.

To sum up, the heart and soul of participatory development are the community organizations which engender it. Thus one main focus of this research is on assessing the strength and vitality of community organizations themselves. A strong community organization is a process and an end in and of itself as well as a means to the end of sustainable development (or related concepts of people-centred development or primary environmental care).

## References

- AKRSP. 1992. *Tenth Annual Review*. Gilgit.
- AKRSP. 1993. *Eleventh Annual Review*. Gilgit.
- Agha Khan Rural Support Programme. 1983. *First Annual Review, Gilgit*.
- Banuri, Tariq. 1992. *Decision Making on Sustainable Development in Asia* Islamabad: SDPI.
- Banuri, Tariq, and Johan Holmberg. 1992. *Governance for Sustainable Development*. London: International Institute of Environment and Development.
- Balochistan Rural Support Program. 1992. *Annual Report, April 1992-March 1993*. Quetta.
- Borrini, Grazia, ed. 1991. *Lessons Learned in Community Based Environmental Management*. In proceedings of the *1990 PEC Workshop* (Rome: International Course for Primary Health Care Managers at District Level in Developing Countries).
- Dani, Anis. 1988. *Peripheral Societies in a Nation State: A Comparative Analysis of Mediating Structures in Development Processes*. Ph. D diss., University of Pennsylvania.
- Dulan, de Silva and Shahrukh R. Khan. 1994. *Sangi Development Foundation: A Programme Planning Assessment, January 1994*.
- Government of Pakistan Environment and Urban Affairs Division in collaboration with IUCN. 1991. *The Pakistan National Conservation Strategy*. Islamabad

28. The Karakorum Highway is a case in point when assessing the impact of AKRSP interventions.

29. A similar maturity index is proposed in Dulan and Khan (1994). Also see AKRSP (1993, p 9) for comments on the limitation of such a maturity index.

30. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Relaxed Rural Appraisal (RRA).

- Husain, Tariq. 1992. *Community Participation: The First Principle*. A Pakistan National Conservation Strategy Sector Paper 1, IUCN and Government of Pakistan Environment and Urban Affairs Division, Karachi.
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature. 1992. *Sustainable Forestry Development in AKRSP*. Karachi.
- Khan, Shoaib Sultan. 1993. Poverty Alleviation Through Rural Development. In *AKRSP Tenth Annual Review*. Gilgit.
- Korten, David. 1990. *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. Connecticut: Kumarian Press.
- Mumtaz, Soofia. 1991. *Development and the Local Context: A Case Study of the Chalt-Chaprote Community in the Nagar Valley of Northern Pakistan*. PIDE. mimeo.
- National Rural Support Programme. 1993. *First Quarterly Report*. Islamabad.
- Sarhad Rural Support Corporation. 1992. *Communities Reach Goals When Villagers Take Charge*. Peshawar.
- Sarhad Rural Support Corporation. 1992a. *SRSC: An Environmental Review*. Peshawar.
- Siddiqi, Najma and Anis Dani. 1993. Institution Building at the Grassroots Level. In *First Quarterly Report*. National Rural Support Program, Islamabad.
- Smillie, Ian. 1992. *NGOs and Pakistan's National Conservation Strategy*. Karachi: IUCN.
- Smith, David, Ismat Shahjehan and Moin Afzal. 1993. *NGO Policy Study*. USAID Report. Islamabad.
- United Nations Development Program. 1993. *Human Development Report 1993*. New York.
- United Nations Development Program. 1991. *NGOs Working for Others: Contribution to Human Development*. Islamabad.
- World Bank. 1990. *AKRSP: Second Interim Evaluation*. Operations Evaluation Department. Washington D. C.
- World Bank. 1987. *AKRSP: Interim Evaluation*. Operations Evaluation Department Washington D. C.
- World Bank. 1992. *World Development Report 1992*. Washington D. C.

## Annex

### Environmental Research Module

1. Identification of village common properties (via PRA/RRA)
2. If there is deterioration of commons, what or who is responsible?
  - a. Forests.
    - i. felling by elites
    - ii. over cutting by community
    - iii. cutting by government
    - iv. population pressure
    - v. felling by outsiders (timber merchants) in conjunction with elites
  - b. rangelands.
    - i. over grazing
    - ii. too much grass cutting
    - iii. population pressure
3. With regards to common property identification of the exact nature of use rights.
  - a. Forests. (code details later)
    - i. firewood,
    - ii. timber
    - iii. grass cutting
    - iv. grazing
  - b. Rangelands.
    - i. grazing
    - ii. grass cutting
4. Are there mechanisms for preventing overuse?
  - a. fines
  - b. social boycott
  - c. hiring a watchman
5.
  - a. Have there been any tensions with regards to the more prosperous community members or politicians with regards to commons use rights?
  - b. If yes, explain what happened/current situation.
6. Is the CO/CBO taking responsibility for the commons in any way?
7. Investigation of changes in distances of forests from villages?
8. Investigation of whether there are government afforestation / range protection programmes?
9. Is support NGO helping with resource management via
  - a. training?
  - b. material resources?
10.
  - a. Area covered by the forest before the formation of CO/CBO

- b. Area covered by forest after the formation of CO/CBO
  - c. Is commercial logging being carried out in the area?
  - d. Has the CBO done anything to discourage it?
  - f. Has deforestation caused soil erosion in the area?
  - g. Did soil erosion have an effect in terms of
    - i. lower yield
    - ii. increase in acreage of barren land
11. a. Does water logging and salinity exist in the area?
- b. What is the cause water logging and salinity?
    - i. mis-management of the water resources
    - ii. over tillage
12. Is CBO/CO helping in land reclamation?