

***AZAD GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF
JAMMU & KASHMIR***



Training Report

Fostering Rural Leader & Saemaul Movement (Pakistan)

***Organized & Hosted by Korean International
Co-operation Agency (KOICA***

(06-19 September 2015)

Local Government & Rural Development Department

INTRODUCTION TO SEAMAUL UNDONG

Seamaul Undong (the New Community/Village Movement), was a political initiative launched in April 1970 by South Korean late President Park Chung Hee to bridge the income gap between urban and rural population and to modernize the rural South Korean economy. The idea was based on the rules for self-governance and cooperation in communities. **Diligence, Self-help** and **Collaboration** were the slogans to encourage community members to participate in the development process with the spirit “**We Can Do It**”. The initiative did much to improve infrastructure in rural areas and to modernize facilities such as irrigation systems, water supplies, bridges, roads and reforestation. The Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement) was a key factor for comprehensive, radical and generally peaceful redistribution of wealth in Korea and successfully rectified the growing disparity of living standard between the urban centres, which were rapidly industrializing, and the small villages, which continued to be mired in poverty. The movement improved the well-being of communities through:

- Empowerment of local communities and amassing of social capital;
- Revitalization of community leadership by permitting younger people to assume leadership roles, traditionally held by senior members of society and creation of a status free social context within the traditional rural village setting.
- Promotion of collective savings at community level for microeconomic activities and local development.
- Providing improved access to basic infrastructure services such as provision of water, sanitation, health services improvement/promotion of mechanized farming, electrification, improvement in the quality of housing etc.
- Acceptance/promotion of roles for women in of overall social participation, management of household budgets, and part time employment.

The New Village Movement has been accepted by the United Nations as one of the efficient rural development models in the world. Korean Government is now looking to internationalize the concept/movement as Global Semaul Undong under the umbrella of Korean International Co-operation Agency (KOICA) for development of rural areas in the world and achievement of Global Sustainable Development Goals. Till now the Movement has been exported to more than 70 countries particularly in Asia & Africa.

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF TRAINING COURSE

KOICA is contributing for poverty reduction in developing countries by promoting/localizing the Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement) concept. This was the 2nd event of a 14 days country specific training program specially designed for Pakistan. Objectives of the training program were to:

- Share Korea's development experiences with invited government officials.
- Expose participants to the methodology adopted, best practices and examples of effective community mobilization, local leadership development, engagement of population in development programs, governance programming that interfaces with local population & management;
- Identify potential areas/sectors for possible participatory initiatives in Pakistan; and
- Establish institutional collaboration thereafter.

3.0 LEARNING & ANALYSIS

It was a comprehensive country specific training program (14 days) including overview of the Korean history, culture, traditions, governance system, development achievements and Korean Policy for International Cooperation and Official Development Assistance (ODA) following the details of Saemaul Undong concept, history, policies, implementation mechanism, achievements, lessons learned and future planning. Training program was comprising of class work lectures/presentations, group discussions, field visits, country report (Pakistan) preparation/presentation and finally preparation and presentation of country specific action plan according the learning during the training program.

The training revealed that beside many other initiatives of Korean government, Saemaul Ungong was the prime factor which took Korea from 2nd poorest country to top 15 economies in the World within a short period of time. Actually Saemaul Undong was not only a rural community development program but also a modernization and spiritual reforms movement.

At the start of the movement its objectives were limited to increase agriculture yield to combat seasonal hunger problem and to improve rural housing, but with the passage of

time keeping in view the interest and participation of communities, the program, changed into a movement and later on into an approach.

Saemaul Undong introduced a new kind of community-based leadership, which was different from that of the traditional village chiefs who had been appointed and paid by the Government. Saemaul Undong leaders were elected by the villagers usually among relatively young people who served without any compensation. Saemaul Undong remained successful to formulate common interest groups at community level, to identify their common issues and to address the issues using participatory approach.

Saemaul Undong was an amalgam of top-down and bottom-up approaches where the central Government was leading and coordinating the nationwide movement/program and villagers at the other side took responsibility for tailoring and implementation of the program as per their needs and circumstances. More importantly with this movement, the traditional role of local governments changed from being an instrument of the central Government to a rural development agent who was assisting, coordinating and guiding the rural communities and also channelled their needs/voice to the central Government.

3.1 Factors for the Success of Saemaul Undong:

Although a number of factors can be attributed to the achievements of Saemaul Undong, however, the most important are i) the context-specific circumstances which created a favourable environment ii) political commitment and continuity of central government policies/strategies iii) effective design of the program and iv) management of the program.

i) Context specific circumstances:

Rural communities in Korea had some distinct features such as close relationships/kinship, single race, ethnic homogeneity and customs for cooperation. These features coupled with extreme poverty and hunger in rural community was a driving force for community participation which led to the success of Saemaul Undong.

ii) Political Commitment & Continuity of Central Government Policies/Strategies

It has been argued that no policies or programmes can be successfully implemented without commitment of the Government, and Saemaul Undong was no exception. Strong commitment and leadership from the very top

level played a crucial role in its success. It was President Park, with his strong will and commitment, who initiated this movement and provided continuous support for almost 20 years. During this period the central government consistently followed the policies for rural development.

iii) Effective Program Design

Saemaul Undong was designed using holistic approach by combining capacity-building and institution-building with physical development activities based on the needs of communities. The programme started with relatively small projects that could bring distinctive changes in the village but be accomplished easily so that the villagers could realize their capacity and build confidence in themselves. At the same time, it provided training to villagers so that they can manage their activities with acquired knowledge. Incentive and competition based selective approach was adopted by the Government which acted as stimulator for strong motivation for the people to be actively involved. Later, the Government classified all the rural villages into three categories and selectively provided villages with assistance, favouring those advancing towards a “self-sustainable community” while spurring the lagging villages to catch up with others. The Government also provided successful villages and their leaders with rewards and they were regarded as national heroes. Mass media was widely used for disseminating information on, drawing more attention to, and participation in Saemaul Undong.

iv) Program Management

Government constituted an effective committee for horizontal coordination among different ministries. Saemaul Undong effectively created vertical integration linking villages, local governments and the central Government. Each level of government managed programmes under its control and reported to the higher level authority. The central Government provided general guidelines and directions and coordinated the overall management of the plan. The local governments acted as pipeline conveying the voices from the villages to the top and transferring directions from the top to the village. Local governments were permitted to modify the action plans at their own discretion under their jurisdiction to some extent reflecting local conditions and the opinions of the villagers. Each level of

local government was also accountable for monitoring and coordinating the activities of the lower level governments. From the central Government to the villages, government officials and villagers were linked vertically, which made effective communication and cooperation possible.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS:

In 1963, Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world but today it is 13th largest economy of the world and 4th of Asia. The Saemaul Undong has been credited for this transformation and has become a national brand of Korea which has now been formally introduced in United Nations jointly by the Secretary General UN and President of Republic of Korea on 26 September, 2015 just one day after the adaptation of Sustainable Development Goals. Presently Korea is promoting Saemaul Undong in 130 countries in the World through KOICA. Koreans have the Saemaul experience & spirit as well as resources and are ready to share these. Korea can provide assistance in planning and development of programs for accelerating rural development, and establishment/creation of rural development training centres in coordination with KOICA, Saemaul Undong Centre and other ODA programs.

Azad Jammu & Kashmir has many common features with Korea such as manageable geographical area & population, large forest area, higher proportion of rural population, close relationships/kinship, comparatively better literacy rate and above all the huge potential for microeconomic initiatives, hence, Saemaul Undong can be adopted in the state for rural development and socio-economic uplift of the rural masses with some modifications. Following are some of the recommendations to adopt Saemaul Undong and to develop institutional collaboration with KOICA.

- i) Concept note and action plan would be prepared, approved and shared with KOICA for cooperation/assistance.
- ii) KOICA-Pakistan office may be approached for training/orientation of top management in AJ&K on Saemaul Undong.
- iii) A separate budget head may be created in the Annual Development Program of LG&RDD to finance/promote the concept with the consent of Planning & Development Department.
- iv) A cell in LG&RDD may be established within available resources to complete ground-work for adaptation of Saemaul Undong in the State.

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