



SULLA PROJECT
Annual Activity Report
1978

BANGLADESH RURAL
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
DACCA

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1972 the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee has been operating a rural development project in Sulla. During this period BRAC's strategy of development has undergone change. Phase I from February to October of 1972 concentrated mainly on relief and rehabilitation activities followed by Phase II. This Phase lasted from November 1972 until December 1975 in which BRAC undertook integrated rural development activities in eight sectors: agriculture, fisheries, functional education, community centre development, health care and family planning, and vocational and other training.

Phase III activities, which were planned to last for three years upto the end of 1978, were divided into four categories (i) Capacity Building and Institutional Development; (ii) Health Care, Preventive Medicine and Family Planning Services; (iii) Economic Support Programmes for Disadvantaged and Exploited Groups, and (iv) Agriculture including Animal Husbandry.

During this phase a meeting of senior BRAC workers was held in November 1977 to review the achievements, failures, approach and direction of BRAC's activities. As a result of the three day deliberation two far reaching policy emphasis emerged, namely, the decision to work only with the landless and near landless (who sell their labour for survival) and to work with them not on an individual basis but as a homogenous group. Consequently 1978 was mainly devoted to translating this new policy guideline into action.

This 3rd Annual Report on Phase III records the progress made in 1978.

1. CAPACITY BUILDING AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

With the shift in emphasis from community development to group development, efforts were mostly directed towards identifying, organising and supporting groups of homogenous disadvantaged people.

The first step was to define clearly the target group to which BRAC was going to address all its efforts.

The following criteria was decided upon:

- a) Landless peasants without significant assets
- b) Peasants with meagre amount of land who sell their manual labour
- c) Small fishermen who do not possess fishing equipment
- d) Members of other artisan groups not possessing equipment or capital to practice their trade
- e) Female members of the above group

Based on this criteria, most of the initial efforts of 1978 were devoted to identifying and organising groups of disadvantaged people. In all, 1975 group meetings were held to identify homogenous groups. Through such meetings and individual contact, 204 groups were identified and formed. In addition to such individual contact and group meetings between the people and BRAC workers, two other very important forums are used to help villagers discuss their problems. Over the years, BRAC has developed its own approach and materials for adult Functional Education which provides a desired forum for 15 to 25 adults to meet and discuss the problems and issues pertinent to their lives. However, this involves 60 lesson days and takes 3 to 4 months to complete.

The other, a much shorter and more universal forum, called group workshop, is used to bring as many target group people as possible into a conscientisation process where the need to unite, organise and cooperate is discussed and stressed. In 1978, 269 such group workshops were held. Further, to diffuse and exchange ideas and experiences and also to create linkages between different groups under the same camp, 14 camp workshops were conducted.

Functional Education Programme was started in 207 centres where problems were discussed with a view to creating the groups awareness about their situation. 252 Functional Education teachers, 155 male and 97 female, were trained of whom 206 are at present working. Total enrolment of learners to these courses was 3311 of whom 270 have graduated while others are in progress. In order to run and supervise these courses more effectively 40 staff members were trained in Functional Education methodology.

2. AGRICULTURE

On the agricultural side, in addition to vastly increased credit assistance, 100 farmers were trained in improved methods of cultivation including improved irrigation, seed preservation, fertilizer application and harvesting techniques. The training was conducted by three members of BRAC staff, who had earlier been trained at the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute near Dacca. They also trained 23 fellow staff members to conduct farmers training programme in the entire project area. Nine other previously trained members were given refresher courses. They are now supervising group activities in this sector. Total farmers workshops held

during the year was twenty four. Farmers groups were found to be in need of persons with knowledge and skill in running power pumps and power tillers. To satisfy this need one member from each of the groups were trained in power pump and power tiller operation and maintenance. Two BRAC staff members were also trained in veterinary science at the Savar Dairy Farm during 1978.

12 groups were formed for livestock development. Fifteen members of these groups were given training in duck raising for two weeks and another sevety five for one week. BRAC is maintaining a hatchery in the project area in which eggs are hatched and ducklings distributed to different groups. The Duck programme is envisaged as a supplementary source of income in which women can be engaged in large numbers. Total number of ducklings raised during the year was 1039 of which 195 were sold to individuals, 90 to a self-starter group and 176 given to ten women's groups for training of group members.

Seed Multiplication and Plant Distribution

One of the most acute problems faced by the farmers groups is the short supply of quality seeds in time. Seeds preserved after each harvest are usually consumed to meet the food deficit. Thus, at the time of sowing, they are compelled to buy seeds from other sources at a considerably higher price, often diminishing the funds advanced to them under BRAC's credit programme. BRAC has, therefore, felt it necessary to maintain a demonstration farm of its own and seeds are preserved from this farm. In 1978, BRAC distributed 166 maunds of HYV seeds of BR3 BR7 and IR8 to different

groups for seed multiplication. Originally it was planned to bring back the multiplied seeds and store them centrally in a pusa bin or similiar structure. However, after some considerations and looking at other agencies experience with pusa bin and centralised storage it was decided to let the groups store most of the seeds in their homes and also explore ways of helping them to improve their storage ability. As a first step two workshops were arranged, one for representatives of women's groups and one for men's groups, to review existing methods of storage, discuss problems and possible solutions and make recommendations for better storage.

3. HEALTH CARE, PREVENTIVE MEDICINE AND FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

In keeping with the new policy decision, efforts in the health sector were mostly concentrated on insuring the group members in the Health Insurance Scheme. However, health being primarily a community problem in the rural areas, BRAC had to keep options open for other members of the community to join the Health Insurance Scheme but were required to pay double the premium rate. In both cases, all members of the family had to be insured. Services were also made available to those who did not join the health insurance on payment of necessary fees. For the Insurance year 1978/79, 97 groups were insured covering a population of 9,254.

The health programme was initially dependent on a hierarchy of trained para-professionals, both male and female, supervised by a few qualified medical graduates. Since it was not possible for the groups to maintain such an elaborate system, efforts were made to improve the quality of the village level healthworkers, the Shasthya Shebok/

Shebika, so that they could cover the most common diseases with paramedics looking after the referrals. One Shasthya Shebok/Shebika was chosen from each group, initially trained in the 5 most common diseases (more to be added as they acquire proficiency) and made responsible for their group. Training, supervision and referrals were handled by the paramedic who holds a weekly clinic in every insured village.

Health Committees were formed with the intention of transferring the management of health programme to them when BRAC withdraws. In 1978, 30 such Committees were formed. The Health Committees are the inter-mediaries between the group members and the Shasthya Shebok/Shebikas, (SS) the SS and BRAC and the SS and the villagers. They are responsible for making policies regarding the health delivery system. It was decided that 50% of the premium paid for health insurance would be handed over to these committees.

Different types of trainings were conducted with different levels of health workers during 1978. The SS training was conducted over a period of two months followed by an examination. 75 qualified who were apprenticed to PM's for two months after which they were provided medicines by BRAC (which was bought from group fund) and were required to operate independently.

1 PM refresher and 1 SS refresher course was conducted every month. Moreover, 63 Dais (delivery attendants) were trained and 23 trained Dais received refresher courses.

More emphasis was laid on preventive care. A total of 1190 health education and women's club meetings were held using BRAC's health education charts.

BCG injections were given to 4489 children under 15 years of age and Tetanus Toxoid shots were given to 4150 pregnant women.

Family Planning:

The government family planning programme has been intensified at the village level and as such BRAC has started transferring its clients to them. This is being done with a view to avoid duplication of efforts and also, having done the ground work, to gradually phase out of Sulla by transferring as many responsibilities to line departments as possible. Moreover, government has a system of giving incentives which is not in conformity with BRAC's method of operation. Thus, instead of running a parallel system, BRAC has decided to provide family planning services only to its group members. Non-group members who were being covered by BRAC's family planning workers (LFPO's) are gradually being transferred to the government Family Planning Assistants. BRAC workers take the responsibility of personally introducing the client to the FPA's and also keep in close touch with them to ensure regularity of supplies and proper follow-up. Each time a client is transferred, the government's union and thana level family planning officers are notified. BRAC also makes available to the government, on request, the services of its doctors for conducting vasectomies and tubectomies.

At the end of the year, a total of 1466 acceptors were still enrolled with BRAC accounting for nearly 20% of the fertile couples registered by us. This, and our experience of past years, have again reaffirmed our belief that without major socio-economic upliftment people will not significantly change their attitude towards family life planning.

4. ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Groups emerging from BRAC's conscientization process organise themselves collectively for both economic and social action. On the economic side, BRAC's support programme consists of credit financing, training and providing logistical support to these groups in mostly agricultural and some non-agricultural activities. Group members avail of BRAC loans to cultivate land leased either from government or private land owners. BRAC helps these groups to get lease of government Khas land which is given to them either as permanent settlement or on yearly lease. The private lands are mostly rented for one season. The government land is settled against individuals but BRAC sees to it, that, it is collectively owned and cultivated by the groups. Loans are advanced to the groups after doing a thorough cost benefit analysis of each scheme with them.

On the non-agricultural side loans were given to groups for activities such as paddy husking, fishing, dry fish processing, poultry (particularly duck rearing) and small tradings in old clothes and bamboo. In fishing, the group members either take sub-lease from non-fisherman who lease it from government or are contracted by such non-fishermen to do the fishing and share a percentage of the income.

New loans given in 1978 amounted to Tk.1,409,575 involving 3713 members on 173 projects. Of this Tk.8,50,832 remained outstanding at the end of 1978. Most of these outstanding amounts are payable after Boro harvest in June 1979.

Services rendered to facilitate these economic activities were in the form of skills training (in agriculture, veterinary, power pump and power tiller maintenance, duck rearing etc.) poultry distribution and immunisation, paddy seed multiplication and distribution of plant saplings.

Studies of four randomly selected groups engaged in BRAC supported economic activities is given in the recent report entitled "INITIATING DEVELOPMENT BRAC's Economic Support Programme in Sulla: Some Case Studies"

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

Sulla project phase III was planned to last for 3 years upto December 1978. A number of factors, particularly the floods of 1977, hampered the planned activities of the project. The area being a mono crop area, the loss of the main bore crop brought great hardship to the people and BRAC activities had to be diverted to short term relief measures.

Although the Sulla project was planned to be focused on disadvantaged and exploited groups such as the landless, marginal farmers and women the actual implementation during the first year and a half of phase III was not in strict consonance with the plan. Therefore, the project focus was redefined in September 1977 and efforts concentrated on integrated development of the target groups. The organisation of the landless, the marginal farmers and the women are already becoming quite strong and close attention is given to developing these groups to a self-reliant stage. Many of the groups are now in a position to ensure survival without BRAC support.

BRAC staff strength will gradually be reduced over the

next two years. During this period more attention will be given to upgrading the groups ability to carry on the activities without BRAC support. The process of linking up village level groups in support of each others needs has already started. This will be intensified over the next two years to build up the strength and power of the disadvantaged people.

Although the Phase III is extended for a further period of two years, additional fund is unlikely to be needed to finance the increasingly reduced commitment during the two year withdrawal period. The unspent balance at the end of December 1978 together with loans outstanding with landless groups and committed fund not yet received from donors amounting to approximately to Tk.1,600,000 is expected to cover the programme costs for the two year extended period.

SULLA PROJECT (PHASE III)
 Receipts & Payments Statement
 From 1st January, 1976 to 31st December, 1978

<u>RECEIPTS:</u>	Tk.	Tk.
Fund from Phase II		2,01,915
Donation Received from:		
* OXFAM - Canada	15,36,100	
OXFAM - Oxford	16,56,250	
Community Aid Abroad- Australia	3,94,912	
Bread for the World	17,59,250	
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		<hr/> <hr/>
		55,48,427
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 <u>PAYMENTS:</u>		
<u>CAPACITY BUILDING & INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT</u>		
Functional Education	1,72,957	
Training	1,12,766	
Village Workshop	12,041	
Staff Salaries	3,41,369	
Travelling & Transportation	64,290	
	<hr/>	7,03,423
 <u>HEALTH & FAMILY PLANNING:</u>		
Training & Refresher's Courses	51,290	
Medicine & Curative Service	1,50,529	
Store House(Construction)	1,02,375	
Other Supplies	22,040	
Salaries and Expenses	5,96,501	
Travelling & Transport	94,217	
Public Health-Tubewell	5,964	
	<hr/>	10,22,916
 <u>DISADVANTAGED GROUP:</u>		
Grants for land levelling & Development	1,01,394	
Loan to landless and disadvantaged group	8,50,832	
Women's group- Grants	2,865	
Travelling & Transport	47,660	
Staff Salaries	3,42,166	
	<hr/>	13,44,917
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Balance c/o		30,71,256
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Balance b/f 30,71,256

AGRICULTURE:

Seeds Multiplication	10,504	
Horticulture	19,948	
Veterinary Service	8,336	
Agricultural Equipment	1,754	
Supervision staff salaries	2,35,760	
Travelling & Transportation	48,217	3,24,519

ADMINISTRATION:

Field Administration	6,14,177	
Field Establishment	3,09,846	
Head Office Support	5,02,578	
Organisational Requirements	35,696	
Stocks & Prepayments	1,22,118	15,84,415

Balance in hand 5,68,237

Tk. 55,48,427

*Inadvertently we reported Donation Received from OXFAM-Canada in the statement of Accounts covering period 1st January, 1976 to 30th June, 1978 Tk.18,36,101 instead of Tk.15,36,100. Please correct your records accordingly.