

Visit of Chairperson NCHD to Gilgit Baltistan and Meetings with Chief Minister

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.



Staff receiving Chairperson at airport

Meeting with staff in PO Gilgit

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 Zulfiqar 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.



Meeting with Chief Minister GB, Syed Mehdi Shah

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. 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.

Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan and Chairperson NCHD attends Certificate Distribution Ceremony in Gilgit

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.



CM Gilgit Baltistan and Chairperson NCHD addressing the Ceremony

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.

**Visit of Chairperson NCHD
to Adult Literacy Center Sultanabad, Gilgit**

During her visit to Gilgit Baltistan in October 2012, Chairperson NCHD 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 had arranged some local foods for the distinguished guests. They 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 PGGA. 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.

A Success Story from Skardu

Illiterate wife of Member GB Assembly now helping her husband in file works

After graduating from NCHD Literacy Center

Shiekh Nisar is a Member of GB Legislative Assembly from Baltistan, hails from a backward village Shigribala, near Skardu. His wife was an illiterate woman. Being an enlightened religious scholar he was well aware of the importance of education and literacy but there was no opportunity to literate his

aged wife in the village. When NCHD opened a literacy center in the village and adjacent areas he warmly welcomed the initiative and extended all his support as an elected representative and influential person. His wife was also enrolled in one of the centers.



Sheikh Nisar, Member GB Assembly speaking at the Ceremony

Sheikh Nisar who has been fully involved in establishment and monitoring of Adult Literacy centers in Skardu, also spoke on the occasion of provincial Certificate Distribution Ceremony in Gilgit. 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”.