

= Akhtar Hameed Khan =

Akhtar Hameed Khan ( Urdu : اَکھتار ہامید خان , pronounced [ ʌkʰtʰ ʔ ʔr ʔʔʔmiʔd ʔ ʔxaʔn ] ; 15 July 1914 ? 9 October 1999 ) was a Pakistani development practitioner and social scientist . He promoted participatory rural development in Pakistan and other developing countries , and widely advocated community participation in development . His particular contribution was the establishment of a comprehensive project for rural development , the Comilla Model ( 1959 ) . It earned him the Ramon Magsaysay Award from the Philippines and an honorary Doctorate of law from Michigan State University .

In the 1980s he started a Bottom Up community development initiative of Orangi Pilot Project , based in the outskirts of Karachi , which became a model of participatory development initiatives . He also directed many programmes , from microcredit to self @-@ finance and from housing provision to family planning , for rural communities and urban slums . It earned him international recognition and high honours in Pakistan . Khan was fluent in at least seven languages and dialects . Apart from many scholarly books and articles , he also published a collection of poems and travelogues in Urdu .

= = Early life = =

Khan was born on 15 July 1914 in Agra . He was among the four sons and three daughters of Khansaahib Ameer Ahmed Khan and Mehmoodah Begum . His father , a police inspector , was inspired by the reformist thinking of Syed Ahmed Khan . In his early age , Khan 's mother introduced him to the poetry of Maulana Hali and Muhammad Iqbal , the sermons of Abul Kalam Azad , and the Sufist philosophy of Rumi . This upbringing influenced his interest in historical as well as contemporary social , economic , and political affairs .

Khan attended Government High School at Jalam ( Uttar Pradesh ) , and completed his education in 1930 at Agra College where he studied English literature and history . He read English literature , history , and philosophy for a Bachelor of Arts degree at Meerut College in 1932 . At that point , his mother was diagnosed with tuberculosis . She died in the same year at the age of 36 . Khan continued his studies and was awarded a Master of Arts in English Literature from Agra University in 1934 . He worked as a lecturer at Meerut College before joining the Indian Civil Service ( ICS ) in 1936 . As part of the ICS training , he was sent to read literature and history at Magdalene College , Cambridge , England . During the stay , he developed a close friendship with Choudhary Rahmat Ali .

Khan married Hameedah Begum ( the eldest daughter of Allama Mashriqi ) in 1940 . Together , they had three daughters ( Mariam , Amina , and Rasheeda ) and a son ( Akbar ) . After Hameedah Begum 's death in 1966 , he married Shafiq Khan and had one daughter , Ayesha . During his ICS career , Khan worked as collector of revenue , a position that brought him into regular contact with living conditions in rural areas of East Bengal . The Bengal famine of 1943 and subsequent inadequate handling of the situation by the colonial rulers led him to resign from the Indian Civil Service in 1945 . He wrote , " I realised that if I did not escape while I was young and vigorous , I will forever remain in the trap , and terminate as a bureaucratic big wig . " During this period , he was influenced by the philosophy of Nietzsche and Mashriqi , and joined the Khaksar Movement . This attachment was brief . He quit the movement and turned to Sufism . According to Khan , " I had a profound personal concern ; I wanted to live a life free from fear and anxiety , a calm and serene life , without turmoil and conflict . [ ... ] when I followed the advice of old Sufis and sages , and tried to curb my greed , my pride and aggression , fears , anxieties and conflict diminished . "

For the next two years , Khan worked in Mamoola village near Aligarh as a labourer and locksmith , an experience that provided him with firsthand knowledge of the problems and issues of rural communities . In 1947 , he took up a teaching position at the Jamia Millia , Delhi , where he worked for three years . In 1950 , Khan migrated to Pakistan to teach at Islamia College , Karachi . In the same year , he was invited by the Government of Pakistan to take charge as Principal of Comilla Victoria College in East Pakistan , a position he held until 1958 . During this time ( 1950 ? 58 ) he

also served as President of the East Pakistan Non Government Teachers ' Association .

= = Rural development initiatives = =

During his tenure as principal of Comilla Victoria College , Khan developed a special interest in grassroots actions . Between 1954 and 1955 , he took a break to work as director of the Village Agricultural and Industrial Development ( V @-@ AID ) Programme . However , he was not satisfied with the development approach adopted in the programme that was limited to the training of villagers . In 1958 , he went to Michigan State University to acquire education and training in rural development . Returning in 1959 , he established the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development ( PARD ) at Comilla on 27 May 1959 and was appointed as its founding director . He also laid foundations for the Comilla Cooperative Pilot Project in 1959 . In 1963 , he received a Ramon Magsaysay Award from the Government of the Philippines for his services in rural development . Khan became Vice @-@ chairman of the board of Governors of PARD in 1964 , and in the same year , was awarded an honorary Doctorate of law by Michigan State University . In 1969 , he delivered a series of lectures at Woodrow Wilson School , Princeton University , based on his experience with rural cooperatives . During the visit , he established collaborative links with Arthur Lewis .

On his return to East Pakistan , Khan remained attached to the Comilla Project until 1971 when East Pakistan became Bangladesh . Eventually , Khan moved to Pakistan . PARD was renamed as Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development ( BARD ) .

= = Advisory roles = =

Following his move to Pakistan , Khan was asked to implement the Comilla Model in rural settlements of North @-@ West Frontier Province ( now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ) , Punjab , and Sindh . He declined the offer on the grounds that the proposals were predominantly motivated by political interests rather than the common well @-@ being . However , he continued to advise the authorities on various aspects of rural development , such as participatory irrigation management . He worked as a research fellow at the University of Agriculture , Faisalabad from 1971 to 1972 , and as Director of Rural Economics Research Project at Karachi University from 1972 to 1973 . Khan went to Michigan State University as a visiting professor in 1973 and remained there until 1979 . During this time , he carried on advising the Rural Development Academy at Bogra in northern Bangladesh , and the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development , Peshawar , on the Daudzai Integrated Rural Development Programme . He also traveled extensively during this period in the capacities of speaker , advisor , or consultant on rural development programmes across the world . In 1974 , he was appointed as a World Bank consultant to survey rural development situations in Java , Indonesia . He also briefly worked as a visiting professor at Lund University , Harvard University , and Oxford University .

In 1980 , Khan moved to Karachi and started working on the improvement of sanitary conditions in Karachi suburbs . He laid the foundations of the Orangi Pilot Project for the largest squatter community of Orangi in the city . He remained associated with this project until his death in 1999 . Meanwhile , he maintained his support for rural communities around Karachi , and also helped to develop the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme . OPP became a model for participatory bottom @-@ up development initiatives .

= = Major development programmes = =

= = = Comilla Cooperative Pilot Project = = =

The Comilla Model ( 1959 ) was Khan 's initiative in response to the failure of a Village Agricultural and Industrial Development ( V @-@ AID ) programme that was launched in 1953 in East and West

Pakistan with technical assistance from the US government . V @-@ AID remained a government @-@ level attempt to promote citizen participation in the sphere of rural development . Khan launched the project in 1959 on his return from Michigan , and developed a methodology of implementation in the areas of agricultural and rural development on the principle of grassroots @-@ level participation . Initially , the aim was to provide a development model of programmes and institutions that could be replicated across the country . Advisory support in this respect was provided by experts from Harvard and Michigan State Universities , the Ford Foundation , and USAID . Practical help was also sought from Japan to improve the local farming techniques .

Comilla Model simultaneously addressed the problems that were caused by the inadequacy of both local infrastructure and institutions through a range of integrated programmes . The initiatives included the establishment of : a training and development centre ; a road @-@ drainage embankment works programme ; a decentralized , small scale irrigation programme ; and , a two @-@ tiered cooperative system with primary cooperatives operating in the villages , and federations operating at sub @-@ district level .

After Khan 's departure from Comilla , the cooperative 's model failed in independent Bangladesh because only a few occupational groups managed to achieve the desired success . By 1979 , only 61 of the 400 cooperatives were functioning . The model actually fell prey to the ineffective internal and external controls , stagnation , and diversion of funds . This prompted the subsequent scholars and practitioners in microfinance , such as Muhammad Yunus of Grameen Bank and Fazle Hasan Abed of BRAC , to abandon the cooperative approach in favour of more centralised control and service delivery structures . The new strategy targeted the poorest villagers , while excluding the ' less poor ' . However , Khan 's leadership skills during the course of his association with the project remained a source of inspiration for these leaders , as well as other participatory development initiatives in the country .

= = = Orangi Pilot Project = = =

The Orangi poverty alleviation project ( known as the Orangi Pilot Project , or OPP ) was initiated by Khan as an NGO in 1980 . Orangi is located on the northwest periphery of Karachi . At that time , it was the largest of the city 's approximately 650 low @-@ income squatter settlements ( known as katchi abadi ) . The locality was first developed in 1963 as a government township of 5 square kilometres ( 1 @, @ 236 acres ) . The influx of migrants after the creation of Bangladesh swelled the settlement to about one million people crowded over an area of more than 32 square kilometres ( 7 @, @ 907 acres ) . The working class multi @-@ ethnic population was predominantly composed of day labourers , skilled workers , artisans , small shopkeepers , peddlers and low @-@ income white collar workers . The project proved an impetus to the socio @-@ economic development of the population of the area . As the project director , Khan proved to be a dynamic and innovative leader . The project initially focused on creating a system of underground sewers , using local materials and labour , and succeeded in laying hundreds of kilometres of drainage pipes along with auxiliary facilities . Within a decade of the initiative , local residents had established schools , health clinics , women 's work centres , cooperative stores and a credit organisation to finance enterprise projects . By 1993 , OPP had managed to provide low @-@ cost sewers to more than 72 @, @ 000 houses . The project subsequently diversified into a number of programmes , including a people 's financed and managed low @-@ cost sanitation programme ; a housing programme ; a basic health and family planning programme ; a programme of supervised credit for small family enterprise units ; an education programme ; and a rural development programme in the nearby villages .

Comparing the OPP with Comilla project , Akhtar Hameed Khan once commented :

The Orangi Pilot Project was very different from the Comilla Academy . OPP was a private body , dependent for its small fixed budget on another NGO . The vast resources and support of the government , Harvard advisors , MSU , and Ford Foundation was missing . OPP possessed no authority , no sanctions . It may observe and investigate but it could only advise , not enforce .

The successful OPP model became an inspiration for other municipalities around the country . In 1999 , Khan helped to create Lodhran Pilot Project ( LPP ) to collaborate with Lodhran municipal

committee . Learning from past experiences , the project extended its scope to the whole town instead of concentrating on low @-@ income settlements only . The municipal partnership was itself a new initiative that ensured wider civic co @-@ operation .

The success of OPP did come at a cost for Dr Khan as his liberal views and self @-@ help initiatives were questioned and criticized by certain interest groups . At two occasions , he was accused of blasphemy . However , all allegations against him were acquitted by the courts of law and cleared by independent religious scholars .

= = Death and legacy = =

In 1999 , Khan was visiting his family in the United States when he suffered from kidney failure . He died of myocardial infarction on 9 October in Indianapolis at the age of 85 . His body was flown to Karachi on 15 October , where he was buried on the grounds of the OPP office compound .

Khan 's ideology and leadership skills were a source of inspiration for his students and colleagues , and continue to serve as guiding principles even after his death . Edgar Owens , who became an admirer of Khan 's ideology while working at USAID 's Asia Bureau , co @-@ authored a book with Robert Shaw as a result of observations and discussions with Khan at Comilla Academy . A later study of various rural development experiences from South Asia , edited by Uphoff and Cambell ( 1983 ) was jointly dedicated to Khan and Owens .

Soon after Khan 's death , on 10 April 2000 , the Government of Pakistan renamed the National Centre for Rural Development the Akhtar Hameed Khan National Centre for Rural Development and Municipal Administration . In the same year , the Akhtar Hameed Khan Resource Centre was established in Islamabad , under the auspices of the Institute of Rural Management , as a repository of published and digital resources on rural development . Later in 2005 , the Council of Social Sciences , Pakistan , in collaboration with the National Rural Support Programme and other institutions , announced the Akhtar Hameed Khan Memorial Award . The annual cash award is given on Khan 's birthday to a Pakistani author for a book on issues related to rural and urban development , peace , poverty alleviation , or gender discrimination . At the occasion of the award ceremony in 2006 , a documentary film about the life and times of Akhtar Hameed Khan was premiered . The film includes archival footage and interviews with family members , colleagues , and contributors and beneficiaries of the Comilla and OPP projects .

= = Awards and honours = =

Khan received the following civil awards :

Jinnah Award ( Posthumous , 2004 ) for services to people as founder of the Orangi Pilot Project .

Nishan @-@ e @-@ Imtiaz ( Posthumous , 2001 ) for services to the community .

Ramon Magsaysay Award ( 31 August 1963 , Manila , Philippines ) for services to rural development .

Sitara @-@ e @-@ Pakistan ( 1961 ) for pioneering work in rural development .

= = Publications = =

Khan was fluent in Arabic , Bengali , English , Hindi , Pali , Persian , and Urdu . He wrote several reports and monographs , mostly relating to rural development in general or his various successful and model initiatives in particular . He also published collections of poems and travelogues in Urdu .

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