

# FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH ASIA

RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES



**SANG-E-MEEL PUBLICATIONS**

*LAHORE — PAKISTAN*

---



**SDPI**

Sustainable Development Policy Institute

338.927 Ayesha Salman, S. S. Aneel, U. T. Haroon  
Fostering Sustainable Development in  
South Asia: Responding to Challenges/  
Anthology editors: Ayesha Salman, Sarah  
S. Aneel, Uzma, T. Haroon.-Lahore: Sang-e-  
Meel Publications, 2011.  
xviii, 336pp.  
1. South Asia - Development Economics.  
I. Title.

© SDPI & Sang-e-Meel Publications

All rights reserved. No Part of this Publications may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, digital, electronic, mechanical, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Publisher.

**2011**

Published by:

**Niaz Ahmad**

Sang-e-Meel Publications,  
Lahore.

**Anthology editors:**

Ayesha Salman

Sarah S. Aneel

Uzma T. Haroon

**Cover design by:**

Nasir Khan

**Disclaimer**

The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this anthology are entirely those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Sustainable Development Policy Institute or Sang-e-Meel Publications. Any text that has not been referenced or cited as per the authors' guidelines is the sole responsibility of the author/s.

*ISBN-10: 969-35-2381-4*

*ISBN-13: 978-969-35-2381-2*

**Sang-e-Meel Publications**

Phones: 37220100-37228143 Fax: 37245101

<http://www.sang-e-meel.com> e-mail: [smp@sang-e-meel.com](mailto:smp@sang-e-meel.com)

25 Shahrah-e-Pakistan (Lower Mall), Lahore-54000 PAKISTAN

&

**Sustainable Development Policy Institute**

38 Embassy Road, G-6/3, Islamabad

Tel: (92-51) 2278134, 2278136 Fax: 2278135

## CONTENTS

### Section I: The Politics of Policy Research in Developing Countries

Research in difficult settings: Reflections on Pakistan 3

*Saba Gul Khattak*

Flower, queens and goons: Unruly women in rural Pakistan 45

*Lubna N. Chaudhry*

Discourse, donors and development: The conundrum of policy research in Pakistan 83

*Raza Ahmad and Ammar Rashid*

### Section II: Food Insecurity and Political/ Military Conflict Nexus

Food security and governance nexus in Pakistan 115

*Roshan Malik*

Food insecurity and conflict in Nepal 141

*Bishnu Upreti, Safal Ghimire and Yamuna Ghale*

**Section III: Sustainable Access to Safe Drinking Water**

Assessing sustainable access to safe drinking water in Sindh,  
Pakistan 173

*F. H. Mughal*

Partnership for safe water initiative for the promotion of  
Household Water Treatment (HWT) options in Nepal 185

*Padmaja Shrestha, Bhushan Tuladhar, Biju Dangol, Roshan Raj  
Shrestha and Bipin Dangol*

**Section IV: Civil-Military Unrest in South Asia: Reflections**

Civil-military relations and political transition in Nepal 203

*Bishnu Upreti*

Civil-military relations in India: Emerging trends 227

*Asha Gupta*

**Section V: Social and Environmental Issues in Pakistan**

Climate change impacts and adaptation in Pakistan: case of Shigar  
Valley 253

*Aneel Salman*

**Section VI: ICTs and Women Empowerment**

The Gender digital divide in rural Pakistan: How wide is it and  
how to bridge it? 295

*Karin Astrid Siegmann*

Annexure: Conference Programme 319



## PREFACE

This year's anthology covers a diverse range of topics that analyze, in depth, the possible solutions and reasons for the six "Fs" crisis that face the South Asian region today. I am referring to the "six Fs", food, fuel, fiscal and frontiers crises, as well as functional democracy and fragility of climate. I would like to emphasize that independent research is considered vital and it is imperative that the government considers supporting research and public policy organizations so that they can help policy makers and leaders listen to the independent voices of communities through research based projects and case studies as reflected in the current anthology. This anthology focuses on possible mechanisms that will serve as catalysts for positive change with regard to pro-poor governance and human and food security. The diverse range of topics covered in the anthology include the energy crisis, food security, climate change and the difficulties researchers encounter when trying to carry out independent research. The relationship between food security, conflict and governance is explored as is the impact of climate change with the plethora of natural disasters that South Asia has faced in the last few years. It is crucial to identify these links and relationships in order to get to the root of the reasons for the most urgent issues that need to be addressed, such as food insecurity and conflict management. With the current wave of religious, ethnic, provincial conflict, and a huge energy deficiency clustered within a general civil unrest we need to look at peace and sustainable development in more complex terms rather than simply using a one sided approach.

This volume contains selected papers (after a thorough peer review and editing process), presented during the Twelfth Sustainable Development Conference

(2009) of the SDPI. It covers a range of topics that pertain to the issues discussed above. The anthology unmasks the many layers of the multifaceted problems that tap into the heart of what the possibilities for positive change are, paving the way for policy discourse on these important topics. The topics covered include the politics of policy research, the various setbacks faced by researchers and research communities due to various reasons including the indubitable effect of the different slants of research in various circumstances and by various stakeholder communities that can sometimes taint policy making or skew it in different directions. The relationship between governance and food security is looked at in depth enforcing the argument that lack of food security and poor governance are interlinked and that ultimately poor governance and food insecurity culminate in serious security threats and end in an increase in conflict and poverty. Coupled with this is the interaction between civil society and the military: the role of the military is explored vis a vis the government and political parties and various perspective based on historical facts are adopted on the importance of this relationship and its impact on the politics of Nepal and India in particular. The devastating consequences of drastic changes in climate in the form of the depletion of natural resources are looked at with suggestions on how governments must adopt policies that have a bottom-up approach to alleviate this pressing concern. Lack of safe drinking water and the serious affects on the health of individuals resulting in millions of deaths every year are also prioritized with suggestions on various tried and tested methods of providing safe drinking water to the poorer populations who do not have access to it.

I invite our readers to take this important journey with us in trying to decipher the causes of conflict in the endeavour to attain peace and security through

sustainable development. Perhaps together we can secure a brighter and safer future for South Asia.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Abid Qaiyum Suleri'. There is a horizontal line drawn below the signature.

Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri  
Executive Director  
Sustainable Development Policy Institute  
38 Embassy Road, G-6/3  
Islamabad, Pakistan



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

### **Acknowledgements to the Donors**

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) acknowledges the financial support of the following institutions for the Twelfth Sustainable Development Conference and for helping to bring out this publication: The Swiss Development Corporation (SDC), Royal Norwegian Embassy, Canadian International Development Agency, Oxfam GB, Actionaid Pakistan, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, and the Boston University Frederick S. Pardee Center.

### **Acknowledgements to the Referees**

In publishing this anthology and the valuable feedback/review provided in each of the chapters that form part of it, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute is indebted to distinguished referees who generously spared their time in the publication process of this book. A brief introduction of each referee is given below:

- Mr. Abrar Ahmad graduated from University of Engineering and Technology Lahore (Taxila Campus). He has done his Bachelors in Mechanical Engineering with MS in Engineering Management. He has expertise in the energy sector, technology audit and project management.

- Dr. Aneel Salman is a Fulbright Scholar, who has done his doctorate in Ecological Economics from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, New York, USA. He is also a Research Fellow at the Centre for Public Policy and Governance, Forman Christian University, Pakistan.
- Dr. Anita Gurumurthy is a founding member and Executive Director of IT for Change (ITfC), an India-based NGO engaged in policy research and advocacy on Information and Communication Technologies for Development. Her academic work has been in the areas of gender, public health, globalisation and the information society.
- Dr. Anupama Saxena is presently working as an Associate Professor of Political Science and In-charge-Director of Women's Studies and Development Centre at the Guru Ghasidas University, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, India.
- Dr. Asha Gupta is a political economist working as a Director at the Directorate of Hindi Medium Implementation, University of Delhi. She is a recipient of UGC Career Award in Humanities, Shastri Indo-Canadian, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Norwegian and Salzburg Seminar Fellowships.
- Dr. Avanish Kumar is an Associate Professor and Area Chair, Public Policy Management, Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, India.

- Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti, Ph.D., is the Regional Coordinator of South Asia Coordination Office of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South. Author of dozens of books on conflict, he has worked with various international organisations and is a research fellow at Nepali and European universities
- Dr. Chaitali Sinha is a Programme Officer working with Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Ottawa, Canada. She holds a graduate degree in International Development Studies from the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs. She has published original and peer-reviewed contributions to the field of information and communications technology for development.
- Dr. Emma Varley is a Medical Anthropologist whose research examines the impacts of sectarian conflict in northern Pakistan for women's reproductive and maternal health, as well as their uptake and use of clinical and traditional therapeutic systems. She graduated in 2008 with a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Toronto.
- Dr. Jahangir Mirza is a senior scientist at the Research Institute of Hydro-Québec, Montreal, Canada. He is author and co-author of 120 publications and scientific reports and is a recipient of 16 national and international awards/prizes/honours from Canada, Pakistan, U.K. and United States of America.

- Dr. John M. Gowdy is Rittenhouse Professor of Humanities and Social Science, Department of Economics, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. He is the author of over 150 published articles and 10 books. His most recent book is *Microeconomic Theory Old and New: A Students Guide*, Stanford University Press 2010.
- Dr. Linda Smith, a geologist, is the founder and Director of Filters for Families (FFF). Her NGO, works mainly on arsenic mitigation and research in Nepal and United States of America Indian reservations.
- Dr. Lubna Chaudhry is Associate Professor at the State University of New York, Binghamton, United States of America, where she teaches Human Development, Women's Studies, and Asian & Asian Diaspora Studies. She is also a Visiting Fellow at SDPI. She received her Ph.D. from the University of California at Davis and her scholarship focuses on the impact of structural and direct violence on women, children, and disenfranchised groups in general.
- Mr. Mian Suleman Gul, Coordinator, Energy Efficient Brick Production Programme holds a Masters degree in Human Nutrition and has been involved with multi-sectoral development cooperation projects over the past nine years. Presently, he is the Project Coordinator of EEBP Programme, Pakistan.
- Ms Padmaja Shrestha is Senior Programme Manager, involved in the promotion of household water treatment options since 2006 and

coordinates the partnership programme for safe water in urban areas of Nepal. At present, she also works in the Research and Development laboratory as a Senior Chemist.

- Dr. Saba Gul Khattak is presently Member Social Sector, Planning Commission of Pakistan; and Visiting Research Fellow at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan. She was formerly the Executive Director, of this institute.
- Ms Sarah S. Aneel, a Chevening Fellow, is currently a Visiting Associate and Chair of the English Editorial Board (EEB) at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan. Apart from academic research editorship and publications, her areas of interest include environmental governance, leadership, human security, gender and child sexual abuse.
- Dr. Talat Mahmood is working as a Senior Fellow at the European think tank WZB (Social Science Research Centre Berlin). He received his first Ph.D. from the Technical University, Berlin in Industrial Engineering and the second in Industrial Economics from both the Technical and the Humboldt Universities. He has taught as an Industrial Economist at several universities and has published papers in international journals.
- Dr. Urs Geiser is a Senior Researcher at the Department of Geography, University of Zurich, Switzerland, and a Visiting Fellow at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan. He

is the editor of the 2009 “Decentralisation meets local complexity: Local struggles, state decentralisation and access to natural resources in South Asia and Latin America”. Bern: Geographica Bernensia, Vol. 4.

- Mr. Zubair Faisal Abbasi is Executive Director and Development Consultant with the Institute for Development Initiatives (IDI). He is also a Visiting Research Associate with the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad and visiting faculty for Iqra University and SZABIST, Islamabad where he teaches Development Economics, Human Development and Capability Approach, and Industrialisation and Industrial Competitiveness.

### **Acknowledgements to the Editors**

The SDPI acknowledges the support of the following colleagues who assisted in the editing of this anthology.

Ms Ayesha Salman, SDC Unit, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan

Ms Sarah S. Aneel, Editorial Consultant and Chair of the English Editorial Board, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan

Ms Uzma T. Haroon, SDC Coordinator and Editor English Publication Unit, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan

## **ABOUT SDPI**

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) is an independent, public interest think tank that provides advice to public, private, voluntary organisations, students, farmers, journalists and so on based on policy-oriented research and advocacy.

SDPI, founded in August 1992 on the recommendation of the Pakistan National Conservation Strategy (NCS), also called *Pakistan's Agenda 21*, is registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860. The NCS outlined the need for an independent non-profit organisation to serve as a source of expertise for policy analysis and development, policy intervention, and policy program advisory services in support of sustainable development issues in the country.

### **Mission**

To catalyze the transition towards sustainable development defined as the enhancement of peace, social justice and well being, within and across generations.

### **Vision**

Be the centre of excellence on sustainable development policy research, capacity building and advocacy in Pakistan.

## **Mandate**

To

- conduct policy oriented research, policy advice, and advocacy from a broad multi-disciplinary perspective;
- promote the implementation of policies, programme, laws and regulations on sustainable development;
- strengthen civil society through collaboration with other organisations and activist networks and facilitate civil society-government interaction;
- disseminate research findings and public education through the media, conferences, seminars, lectures, trainings and publications;
- contribute to building national research capacity and infrastructure;
- contribute towards improving global governance in collaboration with regional and international civil society networks.



## Section I

### **The Politics of Policy Research in Developing Countries**

- Research in difficult settings: Reflections on Pakistan
- Flowers, queens and goons: Unruly women in rural Pakistan
- Discourse, donors and development: The conundrum of policy research in Pakistan



# Research in Difficult Settings: Reflections on Pakistan and Afghanistan<sup>1</sup>

*Saba Gul Khattak\**

## Abstract

This paper examines the challenges of research and research communities in difficult settings, specifically looking at Afghanistan and Pakistan- two countries that share similar kinds of political developments and violence along their border, yet are immensely different in the scale of their problems and their development. Both countries are unenviable for their research capacities. Thirty years of conflict in Afghanistan decimated the education sector so it had to be built from scratch post 2002. In Pakistan, the support for the Afghan Jihad and domestic questions about religion and the state strengthened militarization and “Islamization.” In both countries, political instability and severe human resource constraints stalk progress despite heavy investments in higher education.

Priorities that promote hard sciences and business and management studies have all but destroyed rigorous social science. There are few links between academia and the development sector. The three categories of research: research as theory building, action research and policy research are conducted and funded by different types of stakeholders. Research supporting organisations fund all three categories, while development donors prefer to fund policy research, narrowly defined. This becomes problematic when the bulk of available funding goes into short-term projects that require quick solutions. Longer-term research initiatives that allow time for reflection and learning also need to be supported.

Afghanistan and Pakistan confront not only lack of research capacity and lack of proper data, but also lack of time among policy makers to read research reports. Policy makers are always in haste, responding to immediate crisis. Under such circumstances innovative initiatives combining research advocacy through mass media, especially radio and television have yielded positive results.

The paper begins with a brief introduction and explains the methodology, while section two is a description of the political realities within which the research environment has developed

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on a study conducted by the author for the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and can be viewed in detail at <<http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/40067/1/128737.pdf>>

\* Dr. Saba Gul Khattak is currently working as Member, Social Sector, Planning Commission of Pakistan. She holds a Ph.D. in Political Science. Dr. Khattak specializes in comparative politics and her research interests revolve around the political economy of development, and feminist and political theory. She writes on gender issues, public policies, governance, militarization, and human security. She is also the former Executive Director of SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan.

over the last three decades. This is followed by section three on an examination of *eroding research capacities* in social science and public sector attempts at building or neglecting these in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Section four and five discuss the different *categories of research* and current trends in government, donors' and NGO *priorities* for development policy and practice. The final section is a list of reflections and recommendations on the discussions in the paper with the broad conclusion that there is no single solution; multiple, complementary efforts are needed to strengthen the research environment. This paper primarily relies upon the author's experience, and secondary research, as well as extensive qualitative interviews with research and policy professionals in the two countries.

## Foreword

I introduce this paper with a personal note to demonstrate not just the physical difficulties of research in difficult settings, but also the intensity of the experience of violence in the midst of 'normal routine' life. Pakistan witnessed 3-5 suicide attacks every month between July-December 2008. A total of 725 people were killed, an average of 61 per month due to 63 suicide attacks in 2008. With military operations (including for carpet bombing) and a constant flow of displaced people, the targeting and destruction of development infrastructure, the Government began to lose effective control over parts of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP)<sup>2</sup>, the border province between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In Kabul, the stark landscape testifies to the intensity of violence across three decades: bullet marks on the walls of houses, neighbourhood after neighbourhood, the caved in roofs of former government buildings, the Soviet era tanks still adorning the roadside from the airport to the city. Reconstruction and new construction reflects the strong resilience of the people who emphasize the urgency for peace as they tire of the conflict and related human and material losses.

The intensity of violence is overwhelming in both settings even for those of us who have researched violence and security for years. The suicide bombings have successfully ungrounded us, while the extensive pre-existing structural violence continues unchallenged. In the midst of overwhelming odds, when state institutions are fraying or collapsing, and basic security deteriorates, it becomes difficult to analyse and theorize.

---

<sup>2</sup> Editor's Note: NWFP was renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in April 2010. For the sake of formality, NWFP is used in the anthology.

## Introduction

Pakistan and Afghanistan are poised amidst political and social crises of varying intensities, and as in other countries in difficult situations, research capacities, discourse and spaces for theoretical reflection are impacted, compromised and overwhelmed.

This paper looks at the problems of research and research communities and the challenges involved in supporting research in such settings. These challenges are: a) policy communities are overwhelmed or distracted; b) there is limited mobility of researchers and limited freedom to publish critical findings; c) existing institutions of higher learning and research have been eroded; d) and trained researchers and intellectuals have relocated from the country.

Pakistan and Afghanistan have been examined in this paper together, as neighbouring countries with intersecting political developments and contexts of difficult situations and commonality of issues. Yet the paper also makes the imperative recognition that there is an immense difference in the scale of problems and their junctures of economic, social and political development. Almost thirty years of perpetual warfare and exodus of population from Afghanistan have not just destroyed physical infrastructure in near totality, but also left only a notional civil society and intelligentsia. In contrast, Pakistan has not experienced the physical destruction of its educational institutions as Afghanistan has; although its education system has suffered under militarization, political tensions and a spillover of the Afghan jihad in terms of campus violence.

The methodology of the paper consists of secondary literature and a heavy reliance upon qualitative interviews in line with the broad themes identified. Qualitative data was gathered through open-ended and semi-structured interviews with different categories of stakeholders: individual researchers, research-based NGOs, donors, and government. The open-ended interviews captured the complexities on the ground. Where it was not possible to conduct interviews in person, I relied upon email communication/interviews followed by telephonic interviews. In addition, my own observations and experience of being associated with the research field for 15 years in Pakistan have been incorporated into this paper. This paper is, thus, based on a combination of stakeholder views, literature from other developing countries contexts' as well as the Pakistan Afghanistan context and my own reading of the situation.

### **Political and Social Context**

Pakistan and Afghanistan have been in the limelight due to the Afghan Jihad (1979-1996), the Taliban regime (1996-2001) and the War on Terror (2001-present). Pakistan is characterised by military rule and authoritarianism, while Afghanistan is known for its prolonged conflict.

The differences between the two countries lie in their experience of colonisation (Afghanistan did not experience colonisation, while the areas that constitute Pakistan came under British colonisation) that led to different types of state and colonial intervention and consequently different levels of political, social and economic development. The first university in the areas that are Pakistan was set up in 1882, called the University of the Punjab in Lahore, while the first university in Afghanistan was set up in 1932. There are over 70 public sector universities in Pakistan, whereas there are 23 universities in Afghanistan, seven of which are new, established after 2002. While the education system was destroyed in Afghanistan after 1992, it has been comparatively stable in Pakistan. These facts alone set the two countries apart in terms of the development of social sciences.

Afghanistan, a monarchy till 1973, is also a multiethnic society. It escaped formal colonization, but was maintained as a buffer between the British and Czarist Empire. Instability over the last thirty-five years is perceived to have begun when President Daud Khan ousted King Zahir Shah in 1973. Following President Daud's killing in 1978, two pro-communist coups took place culminating in the entry of Soviet troops into Kabul in December 1979. Afghanistan plunged into a protracted conflict in which its neighbours, regional and international powers have been actively involved financially and physically. Uninterrupted conflict completely destroyed Afghanistan's governance systems, including education, and health, and infrastructure. Many experts have questioned the basis of the modern Afghan state whether under Soviet influenced rule (1978-1992), Mujahideen rule (1992-1996), Taliban rule (1996-2001), or the present Karzai regime (2002-present) accompanied by the presence of Allied forces.

Pakistan, created in 1947 when India was partitioned, is often dubbed as a failed state. It has experienced extreme inequalities. These inequalities led to the break-up of the country in 1971 (when Bangladesh was formed) and manifest themselves in the form of intra-state conflicts to

this day. Pakistan's human development ranking has been consistently low, with the bulk of the budget going to the military rather than social sector development.<sup>3</sup> Investments in the military were primarily due to a hostile relationship with India (with the unresolved Kashmir issue being central to mutual antagonism), and Pakistan's role in the Cold War as well as the military's predominance in political power equations. This led to frequent military authoritarian rule that cemented economic and social inequalities along with creating intolerant attitudes toward the weak, whether religious and ethnic minorities or other disempowered groups such as women and children.

In Pakistan, the politics of the Afghan Jihad helped strengthen and prolong two military dictatorships (1977-88 and 1999-2008) interspersed by ten years of shaky democracy (1989-1999). It also brought the 'Kalashnikov culture' into universities, and augmented anti-women, anti-minorities legislation and policies to Pakistan. Conflict in Afghanistan, and militarization accompanied by International Monetary Fund/World Bank inspired economic policies in Pakistan, have added to pre-existing poverty in the two countries.

In Afghanistan, war and violence systematically destroyed the education system as education infrastructure (school, college and university buildings) and resources were completely decimated.<sup>4</sup> Afghanistan had to virtually start from scratch in 2002. In Pakistan, the education system fared better than in Afghanistan. According to Tahir (2005, p. 460) there has been significant quantitative growth in social sciences since 1947: social science departments increased from less than half a dozen to 149 by 2003; the number of social scientists was calculated at 17,300 including many who were trained abroad. He states further that, "by 2001, the scene was dominated by disciplines with greater perceived job prospects: Education, Economics, Public/Business Administration, Mass Communication, Library Science, Home Economics, Social Work and Geography" while disciplines that study state and society such as Political Science and History met a decline (Ibid, p.464). Alongside these developments, the curricula were infused with increasing doses of orthodox interpretations of Islam and Islamic

---

<sup>3</sup> Pakistan's defence spending has been shrouded in mystery. The 2009-2010 budget allocated Rs. 342 billion to the military and Rs. 636 to public sector development projects. However, this is misleading as the defence budget does not include foreign military assistance estimated at USD 3 billion alone from the USA.

<sup>4</sup> Various interviews held in Kabul with intellectuals and academics from 16-19 March 2009.

texts even in subjects not directly concerned with the teaching of religion.<sup>5</sup> During Zia-ul-Haq's regime (1980s onwards), the more conservative groups received state patronage and actively recruited students while enforcing their brand of morality through political, physical and religious intimidation.<sup>6</sup>

### Eroding Research Capacities

The consistent deterioration of the education system has not taken place in a vacuum. While the conflict in Afghanistan denuded it of its intellectuals and researchers, the low premium on education as a field/career in Pakistan has meant that the best minds opt for other fields that are either more prestigious and/or lucrative.

#### *Afghanistan*

The thirty year war in Afghanistan robbed it of most of its intellectuals and the university system was completely destroyed after the Soviet forces withdrew. Universities had to be built from scratch.<sup>7</sup> As one respondent said, "we had to start from minus zero" after 2001. After 2001, the most prestigious university in Afghanistan, Kabul University re-opened along with 17 other universities; seven new universities were established 2004 onwards. Despite these goals, challenges remain as the university system continues to be plagued by the slow pace of curricula development, low student enrollment, and lack of trained faculty who can impart quality education to students.<sup>8</sup>

Both the university system and civil bureaucracy face the issue of the 'missing generation' when no one was inducted into public sector employment between 1992-2002 due to the conflict. Some who returned with foreign degrees feel isolated as "no one understands what they are saying" (Interview notes, February 2009). The missing generation could have been an

---

<sup>5</sup> For systematic documentation, see SDPI 2002, *The subtle subversion: The state of curricula and textbooks in Pakistan*. This report conducts a content analysis of the curricula for Social Studies, English, Urdu and History and points out school and college level texts that incite students for *jihad* (religious war).

<sup>6</sup> For example, there was heated debate about various texts as being obscene. Alexander Pope's *The rape of the lock*, was deemed too vulgar to be taught at the Department of English, University of the Punjab. For details see *The Guardian*.

<sup>7</sup> The administrative staff had to allocate time to advertise bids for architects, coordinate the selection of designs for the universities, ensure quality building structures, and hire staff and faculty.

<sup>8</sup> For example, there are 23 universities listed with the Higher Education Ministry; the total number of teaching faculty is 2367 for 48150 students. Only 137 teachers have a Ph.D. degree, a majority of who are at Kabul University (59) and Polytechnic University (36), while the remaining universities have a maximum of eight Ph.D.s or none at all on their faculty.

important link for bridging communication gaps between the two generations that currently staff government ministries and universities.

Along side frequent transfers in key ranks of the government which results in inconsistency in policy implementation, the question of the curriculum and whether it would be allowed to change remains. However, an even more fundamental issue is the near absence of textbooks in Pushtu and Dari. The easy availability and affordability of Persian textbooks from Iran has raised apprehensions about Iranian cultural hegemony. Experts are concerned about the demise of Pushtu and Dari as languages of education and knowledge. They explain that junior faculty, more familiar with Persian than English,<sup>9</sup> is entirely dependant upon these books. In the present situation, a transition from Pushtu and Dari to Persian as the language of knowledge is resented, while junior faculty needs capacity and training in their fields in order to improve the quality of education. Existing capacity is under-utilized.

Social science education at the university is not necessarily perceived to provide opportunities and solid training for a successful career path. Young Afghans prefer to join international organisations that pay well rather than the teaching profession where government salaries are extremely low.<sup>10</sup> The few private institutions that grant degrees, such as the American University of Kabul, are extremely expensive.<sup>11</sup> The personnel at these organisations also complain about the quality of local teaching faculty and students. Both need intensive training in teaching methods and analytical thinking to be at par with international standards.

**Setting up Independent Research Centres** — Aside from research staff at government ministries, almost a dozen independent research centres for policy advice have been established and linked to Kabul University.<sup>12</sup> These centres focus upon specific issues. For example, the Centre for Strategic Studies is set up to provide policy advice to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Afghanistan Institute for Rural Development (AIRD) revived in 2003

---

<sup>9</sup> The English language was not commonly taught in Afghanistan; therefore, younger faculty cannot access web material and translate it into Dari and Pushtu easily.

<sup>10</sup> Many respondents told me that a university teacher's starting salary is between USD 50-60 per month and a full professor's salary is around USD 250 per month. On the other hand, drivers employed by the United Nations receive around USD 200-250 per month and Afghans employed at higher positions are paid between USD 1000-3000 per month.

<sup>11</sup> For example, the American University of Kabul charges between USD 5000-7500 for a term making it very exclusive in terms of access by the common Afghan.

<sup>12</sup> A list of research centres, half of which have emerged over the last one year or less can be seen at <[www.areu.org.af](http://www.areu.org.af)> under the heading 'research links' (viewed on 20 March 2009).

conducts training, policy research and dissemination in broadly defined issues of rural development (including peace building). The National Centre for Policy Research, the National Legal Training Centre and the Centre for Policy and Human Development also produce policy research aligned with donor priorities.

**NGOs and Policy Research** — NGOs have played an important service delivery role since the Russian invasion in 1979; many were operating from neighbouring countries, with a majority based in Pakistan. Several Afghan NGOs are working on peace building, human rights and advocacy, governance and women's issues. "The small research institutes set up by Afghans who had returned from abroad could not compete with these dubious outfits which had ex-army, businessmen, and marketing types in them" (Interview notes, February 2009). This led to a process of scrutiny resulting in the re-registration of around 1600 NGOs with the government.<sup>13</sup>

International NGOs dominate the service delivery scene. The need to conduct grounded research for informing development interventions is recognized, but difficult to accomplish due to insecure conditions in many areas especially the inaccessible remote areas. Thus, for example, the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) to conduct field research into issues and geographic areas where the AKF plans its work.

Many international NGOs and donors demand monitoring and evaluation of their projects. "A market for research, evaluation and monitoring has developed, and the demand is considerable. The sector supplying expertise is, however, quite small. Only a handful of organisations have significant research capacity" (Suhrke et al. 2008, p.7). Their surveys have not enhanced local research capabilities though they may have produced good enumerators who double up as interpreters and guides for their foreign team leaders.

More recently, there has been growth in Afghan non-government organisations' research capacity and credibility. "Several independent organisations with a policy research function have emerged or been reinvigorated in the post-Taliban period. With a few exceptions, they

---

<sup>13</sup> For more details, see the Chr. Michelsen Institute website: viewed on 21 March 2009, <<http://www.cmi.no/afghanistan/?id=127&Civil-Society>>.

are led and staffed by Afghans, many with university degrees from abroad. Almost all receive funding from international donors with a mixture of core and project based funding” (Ibid. p.4).

A total dependence upon donors make NGOs vulnerable to conducting research (including surveys that pass for research) only on donor priorities. As one respondent who heads an NGO put it, “if the international donor community leaves Afghanistan, we will disappear also.” It was also pointed out that the NGO salaries scales make NGOs unsustainable.

The fluid security situation imposes severe constraints upon local and international NGOs. Many conduct fieldwork accompanied by armed escorts that only serve to simultaneously intimidate respondents as well as raise their expectations for tangible rewards. Whether or not to compensate community members for their time continues to be an unresolved debate—one that needs to be tackled with sensitivity. In addition, the research conducted may not have a shelf life as conflict situations change quickly and drastically.

There are also occasions when fieldworkers and researchers may be at risk due to the security situation. The steps to ensure security range from providing health and life insurance, cell phones, liaison with police or civil administration, sensitivity to local cultural norms (e.g. male and female researchers in the field do not stay in one place), local language skills, sensitivity to ethnic and other identities, and reliance upon the field workers’ instinct about potential dangers.<sup>14</sup>

The research environment is steadily improving with Afghans returning to take lead roles. The demand for policy research is primarily donor driven. Building research communities require a stable political milieu, sustained funding and long gestation. Despite the availability of funding, building a critical mass of Afghan policy research capacities requires time before it can effectively influence the direction of policy debates, policy interventions and implementation.

---

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed discussion of these issues, see also Omidian 2009; and Huggins, ‘Introductory notes on conducting fieldwork in challenging environments.’

Thus, the existing environment presents challenges ranging from issues of language and curriculum development, appropriate academic qualification for teaching staff, to issues of research ethics and expertise. Some of these gaps are bridged through short and long-term training made available within and outside Afghanistan to the small cadre of professionals working in these areas. While Afghanistan has made significant improvements over the last few years, it still has a long way to go in view of uncertain political realities and severely limited human resources.

### *Pakistan*

Unlike Afghanistan, Pakistan has not undergone foreign intervention or protracted civil war. The Afghan Jihad, nonetheless, affected Pak-Afghan border areas in tangible ways and Pakistan's political fabric in intangible ways. For example, it affected the universities by bringing in violent student politics through conservative religious political parties backed by the state with arms and funds and pushing intolerant curricula. With curbs on what could be taught, and Vice Chancellors belonging to or sympathizing with religious political parties, a majority of the progressive faculty was driven out of public sector universities in the 1980s. Some went into exile, while others formed or joined NGOs in Pakistan.<sup>15</sup> With few competent teachers left, social science research became the main casualty on university campuses.

According to Inayatullah (2006, p.11), even at the time of Pakistan's birth in 1947, social science consisted only of three departments at the University of Punjab—Economics, Political Science and History while the skeletal stock of books and libraries further depleted due to Partition violence. The culture of research was weak to begin with. For example, there were only six associations of social scientists in the 1950s and 1960s and of these two (Pakistan Political Science Association and Pakistan Economics Associations) became inactive in 1973 and 1986 respectively, while few new associations were formed from 1980s onwards. Inayatullah (2006) asserts that the development of these associations has been weak and

---

<sup>15</sup> Many good teachers left universities in the 1980s because they could not condone the open cheating during examinations or ignore the flouting of other university regulations (e.g. class attendance) under threat from political parties' student wings. The university administration often sided with the students in their pursuit of passing exams through unfair means in the name of maintaining law and order. This was the time when there were fierce gun battles on campuses between different student wings. An environment of inquiry and research could hardly be nurtured under such circumstances. This note is based on my own personal experience and observation.

uneven, marked by infrequent meetings, insufficient funds and power struggles that resulted in splinter groups and factions reflecting a weak and “utilitarian academic culture”.

The absence of a strong academic culture has many causes. According to Inayatullah et al. (2005, p.471) although there has been a five-fold increase in the number of teachers of social sciences from 210 in 1963 to 1168 in 2001, “this quantitative increase has not translated into a vibrant academic environment reverberating with debate and development of new ideas and theories.” The lack of interest in the development of their own disciplines and lack of interest in theory building among academics did not produce any capacity for critical thinking. This has, in turn, impacted local capacities for development work and research. This situation is compounded by local preferences for fields such as Business Studies, Computer Sciences, Management Sciences, Engineering or Medicine that are termed ‘employment generating’ disciplines.

The decline of public sector education is circumvented by the emergence of a tiny private sector university system. Initially, these universities catered to disciplines that had a market, such as the Aga Khan University of Medical Sciences, the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) and the Lahore School of Economics (LSE). After September 2001, when Pakistani students faced difficulties obtaining visas, the Beaconhouse University was established to cater for social science subjects including Media Studies, while LUMS also added a social sciences wing. Students graduating from these universities successfully compete internationally for employment and scholarships abroad.

A class distinction is visible amongst the different student bodies of public and private universities. Those with the means send their children to English-language private schools and universities where foreign trained faculty is available. Public sector universities have fewer teachers trained abroad; the student body is also from predominantly Urdu-language government schools. To bring public sector universities at par with international standards, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) initiated several programmes of sending teachers and students abroad (though 80 percent of these were in Natural Sciences, Engineering and Economics) for higher education as well as attempting to attract foreign faculty at internationally competitive salaries. It also created the tenure track system within universities, providing incentives to faculty for publication and making faculty salaries competitive with

private sector universities. Some of the established colleges were also given the mandate to become universities. While the HEC initiatives remain to be evaluated, few foreign faculty were interested in relocating to a country mired in political instability and violence. Thus, the overall situation of public sector higher education, especially in social sciences remains bleak.<sup>16</sup>

The Pakistani state has consistently focused on higher education, however, in terms of overall allocations for the education sector, the budget has remained below two percent of GDP for the last five years, the lowest in South Asia. Generally, UNESCO recommends 4 – 5 percent of GDP allocations for education. The literacy rate for Pakistanis aged 15 years and above is only 49 percent. Below is a brief account of the Pakistani government attempts to build research institutes and specialized centres linked to the university system for policy advice:

*Policy advice* — The Government established different institutes to provide policy advice. A simple Google search on research institutes in Pakistan yielded a partial list of around 80 research institutes ranging in focus from Chemistry to Islamic law to environmental protection. With regard to development issues, the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) affiliated with the Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad and Applied Economics Research Centre (AERC) affiliated with Karachi University were among the first to be established for economic and social development research. The Institute for Regional Studies and Institute for Strategic Studies provide input to the foreign policy establishment.<sup>17</sup> Staff at these state-funded institutes is governed by government rules and regulations.

Over the years, various hierarchies have manifested themselves including those of seniority/grade and age, making these places more like government offices than vibrant institutions with researchers debating different positions and their implications for policy. Commenting on the declining standards of public sector institutions, Zaidi (2002, p.3646) writes “Institutions in the public sector no longer provide a base for social scientists to congregate as they once did three decades ago; there is no academic or intellectual community.”

---

<sup>16</sup> For details, see Tahir 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Other scientific institutes were also established such as Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR), Institute of Radiotherapy and Nuclear Medicine (IRNUM), Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), but these are outside the purview of this paper. See <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Research\\_Institutes\\_in\\_Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Research_Institutes_in_Pakistan) for details (viewed on 15 December 2008)

By the late 1980s, Western donor support for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) became available, leading to the proliferation of NGOs. The NGOs that were formed as a result are mostly donor driven. According to Khan (2001, p.276), “It was during the Afghan War in the 1980s that there was a rapid increase in foreign-funded NGOs involved in cross-border relief operations. The proliferation of NGOs also extended to religious *madrassahs* (seminaries/schools) in the 1980s when funding to religious educational institutions increased substantially from both the Pakistan state and from foreign sources, mainly from the Arab states and Iran.” Two types of NGOs were born—one deriving their mission from religious frameworks and the other based in secular development thinking perceived to be inspired by Western values.

The religion inspired or faith-based organisations (FBOs) that spawned in the aftermath of the Afghan Jihad were mostly religious political party sponsored *madrassahs* that were sites of basic schooling for poor children, not sources of development policy debate. Many of the *madrassah*-educated children were used for fighting the war in Afghanistan. Only one think tank, the Institute for Policy Studies, Islamabad, headed by a member of the Jamat-e-Islami, (a religious-based political party), and considered to be close to the political party, produces position papers for parliamentarians and bureaucrats. This think-tank does not engage with NGOs or other civil society groups seen to be shaped or influenced by Western thinking and funding.

The development NGOs —that view development as a right rather than charity— have been present in Pakistan since the 1950s. As mentioned earlier, they proliferated during the late 1980s and 1990s. They were designed as mirror images of Western institutions to carry out work where the state had either failed or was unable to deliver. Experimentation with different models of development, accompanied by advocacy and training became the norm with many such organisations. These organisations received a boost from the different world conferences and conventions on development. In Pakistan, NGOs received support for research and advocacy for the follow-up actions marked at the different UN conferences as well as development-related work specific to Pakistan. In addition, international NGOs also undertook research for designing their long-term programmes and interventions. Thus, a number of NGOs became active in participatory action research, training and rights-based

advocacy.<sup>18</sup> By the late 1990s almost every district of Pakistan had an NGO coordinator, and provinces had their NGO forums that came together to form the Pakistan NGO Federation. In Pakistan, NGOs can be categorized in the following manner vis-à-vis development issues and policy advocacy:

**Development Experiments** — Some NGOs were formed to follow and experiment with particular models of development. For example, the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) in Karachi follows a participatory approach in which local communities empower themselves on a self-help basis rather than wait for the state institutions to reach them. This model also demonstrated to the government that it is more cost-effective than government interventions. The OPP model, derived from earlier experimentation in rural development, has been replicated at the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) and subsequently other rural support programmes with government support throughout the country.

The Zia ul Haq government took a number of anti-people steps, for example, it rendered women and religious minorities unequal citizens through discriminatory legislation; it exercised tight censorship and control over media, culture and the arts; it purged universities of progressive faculty, and 'Islamized' curricula. In reaction, many activists and intellectuals joined advocacy-based civil society groups that had emerged by the late 1980s (Khan, 2001, p. 276). The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) —modeled along most such commissions internationally— has been a torchbearer for flagging violations of and campaigning for human rights, especially the rights of women and religious minorities. HRCP was among the lead organisations to systematically expose the impacts of the Zia regime's anti-women and anti-minority legislation. HRCP produces an annual report on the *State of Human Rights in Pakistan*, which is based on verified information published in the newspapers and elsewhere. Other leading women's organisations have also worked closely with HRCP to advocate for women's equal rights whether in the economic, social or political contexts.

---

<sup>18</sup> For example, Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre, Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER), Applied Social Research (ASR), Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Social Policy Development Centre (SPDC). Other NGOs that commission research include the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), Aurat Foundation, Patan, and South Asia Partnership Pakistan (SAP Pk). International NGOs that commission research are Action Aid Pakistan and Oxfam.

Some NGOs undertake large surveys, opinion polls, project evaluations and monitoring, especially of donor funded projects in partnership with the government. Others produce project or situation reports specific to a project deliverable. These reports come with information, analysis and recommendations. Such reports also provide valuable documentation and data, but the data is often a one-off effort that does not provide a consistent picture across time.

**Questioning Development Frameworks** — Reports that engage with theoretical issues in development are few and are produced by those who have studied abroad and been exposed to a particular academic milieu. Some questioning of donor assumptions and challenges to their approaches were produced at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on the issue of environment and South-South collaborative research. The Social Policy Development Centre (SPDC) and SDPI project reports and monographs have questioned World Bank concepts of implementing development. Many of these have been published in the SPDC Annual Report series and the SDPI annual conference anthologies. Feminist organisations such as ASR and Shirkat Gah have similarly questioned patriarchal frameworks and pushed for the inclusion of women's strategic needs in development policy and projects. There are also critiques of Western development practice by faith-based organisations, especially political parties and their think tanks.

SDPI and SPDC, the two leading research-based NGOs, prefer hiring foreign qualified researchers at senior positions; however, research priorities have been dictated by the availability of project funding. In the absence of endowments, senior researchers and directors are under pressure to generate funding, while donor funding priorities keep shifting and the project cycles shrink. Donor projects come with their own set of conditions that restrict the researchers to narrow ways of conducting policy work. Projects constitute a temporary lease on life for NGOs; they are not designed to lead to sustainability. At SDPI, we often talked about 'death through projectization' as researchers were not free to reflect upon and theorize about issues emerging from project work. However, despite these odds, SDPI succeeded in conducting research on decentralization, World Trade Organisation (WTO) and its implications for vulnerable groups, women, conflict and security as well as trade and sustainable development. It also conducted advocacy campaigns, conducted trainings and organised a weekly seminar on public interest themes.

While there is a clear distinction between the non-government research institutes and public sector research institutes, both face constraints. The public sector institutes suffer under the weight of governmental salary scales, rules, hierarchies and low incentives for researchers to engage with the latest research. The private sector institutes lack assured funding, hence research priorities respond to the availability of project funding. In addition, they face institutional development challenges such as the absence of appropriate human resource strategies and financial systems.

Given the above, there are few research institutes that produce quality work on social and economic development issues and even fewer have measurable impact in the short- and medium-term. There are a few individuals, termed ‘public intellectuals’<sup>19</sup> who are critical of research produced by the state institutions as well as NGOs. They engage with public interest issues that people face without being straitjacketed by institutional curbs.<sup>20</sup> For example, Rubina Saigol questioned the slants in the global human rights movement. She breaks the inevitable connection between poor countries and human rights violations by pointing out that *Nazism* was produced in one of the most ‘rationalized’ and ‘advanced’ countries in Europe. She also argued that free market economic policies and ideologies were leading to massive labour and women's rights violations yet these policies were being imposed by WB and IMF, not backward poor countries. The NGO that had requested her to write the piece chose not to publish it and eventually she had it published herself.<sup>21</sup>

Public intellectuals also dislike working with government institutions where they find grade hierarchies and associated rules and regulations stifling. Those working at public sector research institutes, called ‘state intellectuals’ by Itty Abraham, are non-threatening toward the state and in fact, are generally supportive of state policies, in whose support they write. The main dilemma for such intellectuals is the lack of any physical and discursive space for debate and the lack of assured institutional protection if any opposing group is threatened by their

---

<sup>19</sup> Itty Abraham draws a distinction between Public intellectuals, state intellectuals and science intellectuals. He shared his ideas in his presentation entitled, “Policy intellectuals and public intellectuals” in the panel on Ir/relevance of Social Sciences in South Asia at the SDPI Annual Conference on Sustainable Development, held 11-13 December 2003. Reported in the SDPI Research and News Bulletin 2003.

<sup>20</sup> See the writings of Akbar S. Zaidi, Rubina Saigol, Ayesha Siddiqā, Akmal Hussain, Mubarak Ali, Aifya Shehr Bano Zia and Nazish Brohi who are not affiliated with any institution but write extensively on subjects of public interest.

<sup>21</sup> See Saigol 1998.

research. For example, Ayesha Siddiqa's book, *Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy* (2007) questioned military commercial and business investments in corporate projects. The intelligence agencies harassed her by pressuring the staff at the venue of her book launching ceremony to cancel the event.

### Categories of Research

Research has multiple uses ranging from knowledge production through contribution to theory, policy and awareness.<sup>22</sup> In developing countries, research as contributing to shifts in theory is viewed as useless, while action research and policy research are emphasised for being 'useful' either to people or to the government or both. However, there are inevitably overlaps among the three broad categories as each contributes to the other.

The discussion that follows contains greater details about Pakistan than Afghanistan. This is because research as a field of independent inquiry has to be revived from its ashes in Afghanistan. The thirty year conflict destroyed what little institutional support existed for independent research. Setting up research institutions and producing a body of work to build on in virtually every field is a daunting task in the face of inadequate local capacities. According to the Christian Michelson Institute:

"The composition and dynamics of Afghan civil society have been influenced by more than two decades of war. Research and analysis of the changes that have taken place, however, is lagging behind. With the influx of foreign ideas and organisations, what could be characterized as indigenous Afghan organisations are changing, and it is likely that Afghan civil society - and perceptions of what civil society is - will be colored by the current environment for some time before a genuinely Afghan civil society is in a position to recoup the space and functions of the 'third sector'."<sup>23</sup>

### *Theory Building*

When research brings about shifts in theoretical constructs, it is considered to contribute to knowledge production. Much of this research is also considered 'ivory tower' discourse,

---

<sup>22</sup> I have taken this categorization from Wheeler, 'Creating spaces for engagement: Understanding research and social change.'

<sup>23</sup> See CMI website, viewed on 21 March 2009, <<http://www.cmi.no/afghanistan/?id=127&Civil-Society>>

intellectual exercise that is not in touch with 'ground reality.' Some thinkers believe that the sole purpose of research should be raising questions and issues rather than providing answers. According to Zaidi (Interview notes, October 2008) "Research is about identifying issues, explaining the theory behind what is taking place. It should not be descriptive or prescriptive." He emphasized that there needs to be more of academic research and less of problem solving through policy work.

According to one respondent, the "demise of the university" (Interview notes, August 2008) has led to 'zero progress' in the humanities and social sciences. She explained that, "...even in our time, we were 10-12 of us but now there is nothing. For example, our material on peasant movements and peasant struggles was not used inside universities in Pakistan but used by outsiders. Inside universities, the teachers are not interested in research." This is also borne out by the detailed assessments of different social science disciplines initiated by Inayatullah in 2005 and referred to earlier.

Over the past decade, there have been attempts at strengthening social sciences across the region and provide opportunities for collaborative research through the Sephis Fellowships, SSRC Fellowships and the Ford Foundation Fellowships. The Sephis Fellowships are a South-South exchange programme for research on the history of development.<sup>24</sup> The main objective is to make critical reassessments of development trajectories, their origins, course and effects. In this way, the Sephis Programme expects to contribute to the search for new concepts with which to explain the social transformations currently taking place. The SSRC's South Asia Regional Fellowships enabled junior scholars to take time off from teaching to complete research on a particular topic in social sciences, humanities and related fields. It was also open to providing scholars with opportunities to attend international conferences and produce peer-reviewed publications. Unfortunately, it became difficult to award fellowships as the criteria of a Ph.D. had to be waived and gradually it was discovered that there were few applicants whose proposal quality met with the minimum standards required. The selection committee (of which the author was a member) constantly debated 'lowering the bar' to

---

<sup>24</sup> For details, see, <http://www.iias.nl/iiasn/iiasn4/gennews/2sepbro.txt>. Funded by the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation in 1994, the main focus is to historicize modernity and development and to promote a network of researchers in the South to exchange ideas on comparative historical research on long term processes of change. The Programme provides for doctoral, post-doctoral research grants and lecture tours. For more details on Sephis fellowships, see [www.sephis.org](http://www.sephis.org).

include researchers from countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh as there were occasions when none of the applicants were selected. The Ford Foundation's International Fellowship Programme, awarded in almost all regions of the world, focuses on community development; knowledge, creativity and freedom; and peace and justice. It also supports language study, training in research and computer skills.<sup>25</sup> In South Asia, the focus was to encourage young researchers to conduct inter-country and inter-regional research. However, like the SSRC fellowships, the selection committee (of which the author was a member) had difficulty selecting good applicants after the first two years. The same experience has been repeated with regard to the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship where one fellowship is dedicated for Pakistanis.

Although there are opportunities for contributing to theory building and knowledge production, the main source of researchers, primarily universities, lack trained staff who can push for theory building. In fact, many at such institutions reproduce the dominant paradigm followed by the state and international organisations such as the World Bank. The demise of the university is almost complete in terms of contribution to knowledge production and theoretical shifts. There are neither incentives nor any tangible rewards for such contributions. The researchers and institutions with some understanding of such issues are constrained by the lack of funding and lack of interest by stakeholders in theory building. Overall, one can conclude that with few exceptions, there is lack of interest in theory building and lack of knowledge about its importance. This is augmented by a dismissive attitude at the local level that term such engagements '*kitaabi*' (bookish, out of touch with ground realities). Theory building is, thus, difficult not only due to lack of financial support, but also because all stakeholders whether the state, donors, universities or local communities do not value it.

### *Action Research*

While all research necessarily implies change, action research is directly concerned with positively impacting social processes to empower communities. Its purpose is to generate knowledge and theory on the one hand and effect change in people's lives on the other hand. Separating theory and practice is considered a false dichotomy.

---

<sup>25</sup> For details, see Ford Foundation International Fellowship Programme at <<http://www.cominit.com/en/node/147050/306>>

Action research is in vogue with NGOs. Researchers work together with communities to generate knowledge together. While this knowledge has policy implications, its primary focus is not to inform policy but to impact people's lives. NGO approaches are also found to be problematic as often there is a concentration on participatory methods, but NGOs fail to connect the results with theoretical paradigms. In the context of Pakistan, action research has been conducted by service delivery organisations (e.g. OPP—the Orangi Pilot Project later replicated by the Rural Support Programmes with government support) as well as organisations that consciously claim to conduct action research: Applied Socio-Economic Research Centre (ASR), Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER) and Shirkat Gah among others. The category of participatory research is also covered under action research.

While impact for positive social change in people's lives is a primary goal of action research, it also contributes to theoretical positions and contributes to change in policy discourses. The OPP interventions, based on the theory that social mobilization of communities is key for self-help, and that people rather than governments know what is best for them was proven through the success of OPP work in slums and peri-urban areas. The impact of OPP was so powerful that the government and UN agencies funded the RSPs who emulated the model in Pakistan and elsewhere in South Asia.<sup>26</sup> OPP has also been studied in academia as an influential model for community development and empowerment. It has, thus, exerted influence directly upon people's lives and by working together the researchers and practitioners learnt from the community, while the process contributed to building on theory and policy. The two-way relationship between researchers, practitioners and the community is considered important from a methodological perspective.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> The Rural Support Programmes are a good example where the organisations work with the communities. However, their research side is weak as the emphasis is on community mobilization rather than engaging with theory or academia. Nonetheless, they often engage with critique and self-reflection vis a vis women's empowerment issues as they model their projects on a women in development (WID) approach while claiming to follow an empowerment approach within gender and development (GAD).

<sup>27</sup> The emphasis on action research led PILER to initiate a project with the football industry in Sialkot, Pakistan, where NIKE was pulling out due to issues of child labour. PILER was able to convince NIKE, owners and workers at the factory to work together to rid themselves of child labour as this was in the best interests of the community. Not an easy task, PILER workers succeeded after building a long-term relationship with the community.

In Afghanistan, the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) has worked along similar lines as the RSP model in Pakistan.<sup>28</sup> According to Henri Suter<sup>29</sup> at AKF, poppy cultivation and opium production led to widespread addiction in the villages where 60 percent villagers were said to be addicted. This led to increasing impoverishment, loss of assets (especially land), livelihoods, food insecurity and associated issues of malnutrition and addiction among children, high maternal and child mortality rates. The research in the northeastern districts indicated that addiction was rising due to poverty; people took more opium to calm hunger pangs and gave it to small children to keep them quiet. Consistent and multifaceted work over a four-year period finally yielded results through ensuring food distribution, implementing health and education interventions, poppy free trading, building roads for access to remote areas. The reasons for growing addiction could only be tackled effectively through the identification of the correct causal link. Later, the National Solidarity Programme of the Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation also designed its interventions along the same framework as the AKF work.

A unique initiative combining research, advocacy and media results from the need to communicate with the public about the conflict that continues to haunt and impact people's lives in Afghanistan. The media is also beginning to play a role in impacting policy debate. More recently, non-commercial independent media has been established to "educate and inspire in an effort to give the public the intellectual tools they need to recover after three decades of war and turmoil." An important programme on radio is "Afghanistan in the last four decades" that aims to produce a public record of Afghanistan's recent history through interviews with survivors and perpetrators of the conflict spanning forty years. Journalists had to be trained in qualitative research interview techniques so programmes can keep the principal theme of violence and its impacts at the centre, while respecting the views and experiences of the survivors. There have been protests against airing the programme as powerful political figures are implicated. These programmes will be compiled into CDs and multi-volume books in all major languages and made available nationally and internationally.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> The Aga Khan Foundation's Rural Support Programmes (AKRSP) in Pakistan's Northern Areas was the first to emulate the OPP model in Pakistan; the AKF initiative in North Eastern Afghanistan has obvious links and underlying assumptions with the AKRSP.

<sup>29</sup> Henri Suter, Rural Development Programmes Coordinator at AKF in Kabul, was involved in the research project entitled, "Research in Alternative Livelihoods Fund (RALF)" that aimed to eradicate poppy production in Afghanistan's northeast.

<sup>30</sup> The Killid Group website.

### *Policy Research*

Policy advice is considered by many to be the primary task of research in terms of justifying the money spent on research. The legitimacy and validity of research has come to be viewed by its usefulness to the state. Thus, policy research is considered to be the *raison d'être* for any research in developing countries. Some researchers question whether advice to the government is the only form of policy research. They assert that effecting change in policy through informed civil society activism also constitutes policy research, as the government is not the only actor involved in policy making. There are also issues of ethics where social science research may contribute to militarized development in active conflict zones.

Those who provide policy advice in Pakistan and Afghanistan have little or no interest in influencing or making inroads into academia. The outcome is that students at universities continue to study outdated syllabi without exposure to the debates within the policy realm and after graduation few are qualified for employment at policy research institutes. In the words of a researcher (equally applicable to both Afghanistan and Pakistan), “There is no academic research at universities. Undergraduates are never asked to write papers or essays during their tenure at the university. There is no training in research or even mention of it. Final year students have to write a monograph in order to graduate. But this tends to be pages copied out of old books and journals” (Interview notes, February 2009).

Policy research needs a conducive environment where researchers observe basic principles. Plagiarism haunts Pakistani universities and there are instances where faculty defended their colleagues' plagiarism against possible dismissal according to HEC rules.<sup>31</sup> In Pakistan, a combination of campus violence (especially in the 1980s), lack of incentives and capacity for research in a non-existent research environment for debate and the introduction of the civil service grade system (primarily based on years of service) for faculty was the death-knell of academia's contribution to policy research. In Afghanistan, universities have reopened after 2002 with a few research policy centres (affiliated with the universities) attempting to impact policy in specific areas like law, economic and social development.

---

<sup>31</sup> The incident at the University of the Punjab received wide coverage in leading newspapers. Other instances of plagiarism have also been brought up at Karachi University and University of Jamshoro. Though plagiarism is considered academic death, some faculty believe that it should not lead to dismissal as there are few qualified teachers available and fewer still are aware of the unacceptability of plagiarism. For details of such debates, see Education-Zine of The News, 20 April 2007.

The challenge in Afghanistan for policy research is deepened by the lack of social sector statistics. Donors and government demand that the line of policy reasoning be proven with numbers rather than high-quality qualitative research. The legitimacy of any research finding is dictated by percentages and in the absence of reliable national level data, it is difficult to convince policymakers to make policy change (Interview notes, Paula Kantor, AREU, November 2008). To fill statistical gaps, massive surveys were contracted out to large survey firms who hired and trained Afghans for data collection. Some researchers critique these practices that they do not consider 'real academic research' (Interview notes, February 2009).

Academically informed policy research is difficult to pursue in Afghanistan where trained researchers often accept employment with donor agencies, private companies or opt for consulting work. In Pakistan, the situation is similar. Economists, considered to be the primary source of policy advice, had little incentive to stay with the government's research organisations like the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) and the Applied Economics Research Centre (AERC). Many left these institutions for the IMF, Asian Development Bank (ADB) or employment abroad,<sup>32</sup> while others joined the consulting market.<sup>33</sup>

Researchers-turned-consultants have produced high-quality reports. Development consulting could constitute a potentially rich source of policy research that influences policy debate and policy reform. However, this body of work is unavailable in the public domain for inclusion in any sustained debate about solution-oriented research. There are other limitations also: consulting assignments are not designed to produce public debate about the underlying theoretical assumptions that inform the conceptualization of a project. Many assignments have limited scope, e.g. project specific monitoring and evaluation missions or designing a donor's country strategy that end at the funding institution's desk. Thus, most consulting assignments are conducted in isolation, and their impact upon policy is unmeasured and unknown.

---

<sup>32</sup> For details, see Zaidi 2002.

<sup>33</sup> For example, Dr Tariq Hussain, Haris Gazdar, Dr Asad Sayeed are well-respected economists, with degrees from Columbia, London School of Economics and Cambridge respectively, who have joined the consulting world.

Policy advice can be problematic when it mixes military and development work in conflict zones. Omidian (2009) writes about the Human Terrain System (HTS), introduced by the US government in Afghanistan and Iraq that is beginning to find its way into Pakistan's conflict areas. In HTS, social scientists work for the military or its associated contractors and ostensibly "the goal is to help the military understand local communities and reduce the number of deaths." Militarized development in Afghanistan's eastern provinces under the PRTs (provincial reconstruction teams) and in Pakistan with the creation of Economic Opportunity Zones along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border results in a dangerous blend, one in which the researcher and the researched can be at risk. Research that can be used for counter-insurgency policy advice poses ethical and political dilemmas besides physical risks for the researcher.

We can conclude that policy research is useful if policy-makers are receptive and if researchers can produce it quickly according to need. They also need to use innovative methods for disseminating their standpoint as few policy makers are likely to have the time to read the work or engage with it. There are gaps that the policy research community faces ranging from the lack of links with universities (that are plagued by severe problems) to the lack of well-qualified and trained researchers. Further, much advice that could be in the public realm is restricted to the funding institution, thereby limiting questions about development project assumptions, impact and spending. Finally, there are ethical dilemmas in connection with policy advice developed for civil-military development interventions in active conflict zones where researchers produce work that may be used for counterinsurgency or military objectives. Pakistani and Afghan researchers and survey workers are generally unaware that when they become a part of such initiatives in active conflict zones, they may be leading to militarized research rather than policy advice that is assumed to benefit everyone.

### **Government, Donor and NGO Priorities**

The Pakistan Government, having created various research institutes for policy input such as PIDE and AERC, is uninterested in receiving policy advice. According to Assad and Khurshid (2002), "The government is simply 'not interested in knowledge production, either in its own right or as put forward by people's needs as one participant pointed out. The drive for selecting a particular research theme is the amount of funds that it can generate, which ultimately results in following the donors' agenda. For research institutes, lack of funding has

been termed as a major obstacle in carrying out more research. This further underscores the influence exerted by donors in the whole process of knowledge production.”

According to one respondent, “The Government veers from crisis to crisis and as such is unable to follow any medium or even short-term policy. Both bureaucrats and politicians through sheer dint of experience have learned to respond to the crisis.” He elaborated, “The Government is generally in haste. And in our type of countries, it does not follow any long-term vision and not even a plan. Even if the vision or plan is written, no one follows it. Policy is in response to immediate developments e.g. price hike. Policymakers have to take a decision at that moment, they can’t start researching the issue; most policymakers who facilitate or take decisions have enough experience to quickly say something. They don’t need research... they think policymaking is problem solving. The papers that go for decisions are actually called summaries and are summaries”.<sup>34</sup> (Interview notes, December 2008)

The case of Afghanistan is somewhat different. The Government in tandem with international organisations and foreign embassies has reopened and rebuilt, and launched universities and research centres. According to an academic, the Afghan Government capacity to identify research questions is negligible; donors set and fund policy for the government. There is little understanding of the role of research in policy making with few connections between policy makers, implementers and the research community. The main interest of the Government revolves around obtaining and controlling donor funds while the latter “push through development, with all its attached conditions and flawed planning” (Interview notes, February 2009). A critical issue in Afghanistan is also the lack of time with policy makers to read research reports even if these are available in Pushto and Dari (dominant national languages). Communication strategies of research institutions are often dependant upon personal relationships with policymakers; if a minister or bureaucrat is inclined to ‘listen’ to research advice, it is incorporated into policy but if the key person does not prioritize such advice, it remains unnoticed (Interview notes, January 2009).

---

<sup>34</sup> One respondent related an attempt to build a library at one of the wings of the Environment Ministry. A powerful Federal Secretary occupied it and made it his office after another Ministry was burnt by religious zealots of the Red Mosque in Islamabad in 2007. This person also noted that although the Planning Commission has research sections, there are no researchers there. Staff in these sections only award consultancies (Interview notes, December 2008).

Although independent research institutes have challenged some of the economic policy paradigms such as market-based frameworks within which poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) are framed, donors and government ignore these challenges both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In fact, strong evidence of the failure of structural adjustment policies provided by NGOs has not persuaded donors or the Pakistan Government to review or change the course of the PRSPs.

While some research is ignored or dismissed, some research is deemed sensitive and triggers a negative response. For example, in Pakistan the findings of UNDP/Women's Ministry initiated survey on domestic violence were suppressed because it had questions about marital rape. In Afghanistan, some research can elicit threatening responses from parliamentarians and other public representatives or people in power (warlords for instance). Questioning Pakistan's nuclearization was not appreciated by the Government and related policy advice not welcomed. SDPI's report on curriculum reform was debated and condemned in the Parliament, while the donor who had funded it was concerned about the impact of the debate upon its relationship with the Government.

The issue is not only one of 'hearing' what has been researched and advocated, but also pertains to the subject at hand. The effectiveness of research is related not only to its quality, but to the willingness of the external environment to accept, ignore or discard the findings.

### *Donors*

In Pakistan and Afghanistan, foreign donors fund policy research primarily in the area of social development while the two governments are donors for their own think tanks which provide advice on politically sensitive foreign policy issues. This section addresses the issues faced by foreign donors in an uncertain political and security environment. It segregates donors into two types: those that fund specific research reports as background documents for their policy interventions and, those that are primarily research funding organisations.

**Development assistance donors** — Most bi- and multilateral donors commission research on particular topics within their own pre-existing priority areas. While they usually do not directly dictate the content or tilt of the work, the overall approach to the problem and its

subsequent solutions are contained in the manner in which the terms of reference (TORs) are drafted.

Some of the powerful international finance institutions (IFIs) in Pakistan set the parameters for what is to be researched. Usually the World Bank coordinates its investment in a country with bilateral donors and conducts research (assessments) that focus on their priority areas. The following quote is telling:

“The World Bank, on the other hand claimed that its research agenda was ‘client- driven’, the client in this case being the Government of Pakistan. The Bank had an overarching theme of ‘poverty reduction’, however, and everything had to fit under that theme. The Bank also started carrying out a CAS (country assessment strategy), which enables them to find out more about the issues, which demanded research. The Bank could initiate its own research anytime it wanted, so that it was ready to deal with any issue that the Government might bring in. One example was that of the study on drought in Pakistan that was carried out prior to the request of the Government to initiate it. So sometimes the research was done even before the ‘client’ expressed an interest in it. *Evidently, client needs also seem to be anticipated.*” [emphasis added] (Assad and Khurshid, 2002).

The picture in Afghanistan is more acute in terms of the dominant role of donors. According to one respondent, “Foreigners wish to ‘rebuild quickly and get out’. They face the urgency of getting documents ready for international commitments. So, policy development is done by foreign consultants” (Interview notes, March 2009). So much so, that one respondent stated that, “...because of the lack of capacity within government and state institutions, it is difficult to have critical interventions. Also, today’s priority in Afghanistan is security. When it comes to policy decisions, which concerns people’s life in the next 5 to 10 years, there is less interest from the greater public. The best example is Afghanistan’s National Development Strategy (ANDS), which is a thick document and not even translated into local languages.”

**Research supporting organizations** — Research supporting organisations and other organisations that have specific funds earmarked for research, provide opportunities to local researchers for original and pioneering work. Many such organisations are physically located in their countries of origin (e.g. the Social Sciences Research Council, the MacArthur

Foundation) either because they are small or because their programmes for developing countries are small. Others maintain regional offices (e.g. Ford Foundation, IDRC, United States Institute for Peace). There are many challenges that such organisations face when they wish to work regionally as strained relations between two countries (as in the case of India and Pakistan) make cross-border projects difficult under hostile visa regimes and restrictions on funds transfers.

Even with the difficulties of funding research in hostile countries, such organisations are a boon for local research organisations as they recognise the importance of research in difficult settings. Their programmes are designed to address the multiple challenges involved in research, whether capacity, access to library resources, or publishing. Research institutions in developing countries benefit from these organisations in particular. For example, approximately 65 percent of SDPI research funding came from such donors in Europe and the North America, while 35 percent came from mainstream development donors discussed in the preceding subsection.<sup>35</sup>

The role of key decision-making personnel in such organisations is critical. A particular programme officer or director may be willing to take risks and fund innovative programmes, while others may follow institutional guidelines in an inflexible fashion. For example, programme officers at IDRC and Ford Foundation sympathetic to the need for researching topics deemed outside the traditional 'development' milieu exhibited flexibility and funded research that other mainstream development donors were unwilling to fund.

A project begun in 1999, brought Afghan and Pakistani women's voices and experience of conflict to the centre. It may not have had a direct impact upon policy, but it certainly reinforced the issue of women's needs and concerns especially after 11 September 2001, when violence in the two countries escalated. Similarly, SDPI's immersion course on Peace, Violence and Development led to positive interventions by many participants who were able to put knowledge acquired through the course into action in favour of the more vulnerable among the internally displaced persons (IDPs) when conflict engulfed one province of the country.

---

<sup>35</sup> For details, see various Annual Reports of the Institute, <[www.sdpi.org](http://www.sdpi.org)>.

We can conclude that several types of support are needed for development research. Two ends of the spectrum are represented by narrowly defined interventions: At one end, development is seen as a simple uncontested good in need of appropriate management tools. At the other end, development is represented by voices that insist upon incorporating issues of violence, politics and history that are generally perceived to be outside the domain of policy discourse.

**Inability to fund research on sensitive issues** — Donors, especially those that represent their governments, act under two types of constraints: they are constrained by their relations with the host government, on the one hand and they are constrained by their own government's domestic policies, on the other hand. For example, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) does not provide research funds for abortion rights.

Donors avoid funding issues that may embarrass the host government or strain their relations. Until the government recognises a problem, donors are reluctant to fund research related to it. Politically sensitive issues whether at the global, national or local level are difficult if not impossible to fund. For example, though there are many donor-funded reports about Afghan refugees offering piecemeal solutions, there are hardly any reports about the reasons behind the emergence and expanding numbers of Afghan refugees. Policy research on internal conflict and development has been neglected because the Pakistan Government views any donor funding for conflict related issues as 'foreign interference.' For example, the Pakistani Federal Government placed restrictions upon access to Balochistan province for humanitarian assistance following devastating floods in 2007 where an insurgency-like situation existed.

The dilemma of any kind of development work in districts where government control barely exists is a challenge for donors. Travel advisories often prevent foreign nationals from visiting vulnerable areas; therefore, they can neither commit funds to an area where they have little or no direct access nor can they send staff for any capacity building to such areas. Many are concerned about accountability issues in such areas. For example, some areas in northern Afghanistan are 14-16 days donkey ride away and after snow sets in, the areas are totally cut off. In Southern Afghanistan, donors desperately look for partners as commanders block access to local population in need of help.

More recently, due to the controversial US policy of drone attacks in Pakistan's border areas and the resultant resentment, USAID commitment of 750 million for five years to develop Pakistan's border areas can only operate through the Government and third party contracts to NGOs. Independent researchers have little or no access not only due to the life-threatening risks, but also because the Government does not want independent researchers to enter the area as it suspects that they may have other agendas.<sup>36</sup>

Aside from security issues, development donors often do not have specific pool of funds for policy research. Such research is funded from other programmes. Additionally, donors are driven by the need to show results in short frames. There is institutional bias against taking time—something that research requires (Interview notes, Kabul, March 2009). Associated with this is the issue of quick changes in staff; donors send in staff for short durations—sometimes only a year, during which time the staff spend the initial four to six months familiarizing themselves with the issues and the remaining time to prepare for the next assignment.

**Demands of taxpayers at home** — Very little research funding is available for debate on such dilemmas as most development agencies prioritise development funding with service delivery. Donors explain that they cannot justify supporting research to their taxpayers as better quality research is conducted and abundantly available in their own countries. They need to show their taxpayer what they have achieved on the ground. This is best demonstrated by funding a school, a forestry project or a community water supply scheme where pictures can tell a tangible story. Research cannot do this as effectively.

Sometimes the pressure to demonstrate improvements lead to questionable manipulation of research instruments. For example, a survey report by a leading American University indicating that child mortality had been reduced drastically has been questioned in Afghanistan. One respondent explained that the inflated improvement was impossible to achieve and was only constructed to show that the aid to the Government in Kabul was being effectively used. The issue of improved indices in Afghanistan was traced to questions of aid effectiveness being raised in donor countries.

---

<sup>36</sup> See The News, 2009, 'Three female NGO workers, driver shot dead in Manshehra.'

### *NGOs*

**The limits of questioning** — Topics that can be researched and raised with the help of donor funding also exhibit a dual pattern. For example, when to raise gender issues and when to be silent and complicit with patriarchy is an important way of rewarding and punishing. Local researchers' critique of donor gender practice is not well received. Hence, when the UN Development Program (UNDP) in Pakistan invited Sarwar Khan (complicit in the high profile honour killing of his daughter) for a three-year future planning meeting in 2003, women's rights activists were politely reprimanded for demanding an apology. Perhaps incidental, but many of the organisations that we represented have not been invited or involved in any deliberations concerning gender issues at UNDP subsequently.

Patriarchy is not the only discourse that may be selectively questioned. Opposition to the celebration of Pakistan's nuclearization resulted in threats from the 'father of the nuclear bomb' who said that any organisation opposing nuclearization would risk its assets and funds frozen. Although this did not happen, the public threat and the possibility of closure was a daunting prospect.

**Limits upon research capacities** — The division of intellectual labour whereby locals conduct field research and foreign consultants author the analytical part of a report partially results from local conditions. There are few senior and good researchers available, while unemployed university graduates are abundantly available and usually assigned to fieldwork due to their knowledge of local languages and conditions. This is helpful for the foreign consultants who lack the local expertise. Due to dearth of local capacity, donors offer available researchers with foreign qualification high salaries in return for managerial work. The members of the research community who could contribute to research are utilized for fairly routine day-to-day administrative and supervisory types of work.

### **Reflections and Recommendations**

The main question, how is research used for development in difficult settings, has no easy answers. The broad message is that there is no single solution, but multiple, complementary efforts are needed to strengthen the research environment.

The non-availability of discursive spaces in such settings is a key area to address. The idea that social scientists are free to pursue research that is relevant is straitjacketed by preset agendas. The **freedom to pursue topics** that are important for the local community is lacking. Most NGO researchers feel isolated and have little incentive for theory building derived from their lived experience. Research proposals are funded in accordance with donor priorities, not a research institution's priorities. With time, development research institutions that lack endowments or other institutional support, become so responsive to donor priorities that they forget their own. A key area for intervention is providing opportunities to researchers and practitioners to learn from and reflect upon their experience and ground realities to form their own priorities. This freedom can also come through the provision of well-thought out institutional support or opportunities for short-term or year-long fellowships in their own countries or at other universities.

There are few instances of debate and critique among intellectuals and development professionals. There are parallel streams of researchers and intellectual ideas that seldom meet in a dynamic fashion. Donor driven project research is considered policy research. This **research is seldom available in the public domain** for debate. Private consultants and state intellectuals (who work at state run research institutions) have no incentive to bring their research to public scrutiny or debate. Their policy advice and conclusions can often be predicted in accordance with the paradigm in which their project work is conceptualized. This makes the non-availability of intellectual spaces more pronounced.

Despite the above, the impetus for intellectual debate exists in these settings where people desperately wish to **understand the fluid and rapidly changing environment** around them. Individual researchers grapple with critical issues for development policy, e.g., the manner in which their contexts are presented, represented and stereotyped to make spaces and justify particular types of policy interventions. They wish to challenge such constructs. Across the region, a critical mass of independent minded public intellectuals share some common features: they lack a physical space to come together for debate and discussion beyond short workshops and seminars.

One critical space that has appeared over the last few years is the quick expansion of the electronic media, especially the emergence of independent radio, television and newspapers.

Programmes for entertainment are costlier than discussions on current issues; thus all channels provide news coverage and analysis. Active participation by intellectuals and researchers influences **how people think about issues**. There have been preliminary discussions among NGOs in Pakistan about buying television time for projecting issues of research and advocacy. To bring environmental issues or labour issues to the attention of viewer, it is important for NGOs to come together and plan out programmes and discussion on these issues via television and FM radio. In Afghanistan, Afghan NGOs assert that aside from talking directly to policy makers and providing consultations for MPs, their staff participates in televised debates, using the media to convey and promote their viewpoint. This is their comparative advantage over foreign organisations that do not have the same access in terms of language and communication with the people.

Although a researcher may not be physically present in an active conflict zone, yet the impacts of the violence are felt throughout a country and sometimes the region. Thus, difficult settings are not necessarily restricted to active conflict zones; in fact, even within active conflict zones there are usually safe pockets while the so-called peace zones are not necessarily secure. Conditions of security and political stability are fluid, making it **risky to conduct research** in some areas. The fluidity also provides opportunities to quickly enter an area when violence has ceased to conduct quick research. Thus, within a single country, there can be different and shifting settings of difficulty and each setting may need a different approach, not a one-size-fits-all approach.

Projectization, in general, obstructs researchers from publishing books and writing articles for leading journals regionally and internationally. Such writings, possibly critiquing or reinforcing development policy premises on the basis of developing country experience, may significantly impact development debates at leading universities and development think tanks in the West. Professors at these universities provide input into development policy frameworks of the international development aid departments/ministries of their countries. Interventions, therefore, from researchers in developing countries that could influence the debate at Western forums would be critical policy intervention. To be able to do so, researchers in developing country contexts need to be equipped not only with the necessary academic training, but also the **ability to think beyond project deliverables**.

In addition to the need to theorize, the need to build **skills for basic data collection** is needed. There are complementarities between quantitative and qualitative research. Usually enumerators receive on-the-job training to conduct a particular survey but they lack knowledge about the issues involved in quantitative methods. Further, institutions should be gauged on the basis of good practice: whether mentoring is available, whether there are opportunities for other trainings, forums for discussion and longer term advanced academic training including going abroad for a Masters or Ph.D. programme should be part of opportunities institutions offer their teams. This would prevent the creation of a hierarchy of **local enumerators and outside researchers**.

To make research attractive and create a sense of intellectual community, I argue for a combination of different types of research support for building capacity over the longer term. This does not imply that projects for survey and band-aid type problem solving over the short-term lack utility. However, research support is comparatively easily available for those kinds of activities from service delivery donors. Research supporting organisations can consider longer-term research projects that can **promote a culture of research and inquiry**. This can be achieved through different strategies ranging from direct research support to encouraging independent research centres to form consortiums for joint long-term research. Public sector research organisations usually have access to funds from the government for projects and research related activities, therefore, they may not be the ideal candidates for such funding.

The following specific recommendations are proposed:

1. *Create flexible pools for funding research:* This means that some allocations should be available from a common pool to established researchers and institutions on a priority basis who may apply at any time of the year. These applications can go through a process of peer review and improvement. Donors could work with/fund individual researchers where working through an organisation may be a security risk.
2. *Train researchers on an ongoing basis* at the national and regional level. Different types of training need to be pitched at different levels (for beginners and advanced level participants). Such training can cover an array of areas in need of capacity building, for example:

- participatory fieldwork (including awareness of community-level conflict);
  - quantitative and qualitative methods of field work and research;
  - conceptual clarity and in-depth knowledge of development approaches;
  - proposal and report writing.
3. *Build research capacity into development projects:* Development projects usually include training on field research protocols for enumerators. However, this approach creates a hierarchy between fieldworkers and researchers. Donors can, thus, emphasize that building and enhancing research capacities should be intrinsic to project design whether it pertains to governance, gender or security.
  4. *Provide long-term sustained support* to research as opposed to short-term project support. Short-term project specific funding for measurable results is relatively freely available, but donors are unwilling to provide long-term support for issues that may not be measurable but nevertheless whose impact can be felt. Due to results-based matrices and log frames, complex social phenomena are reduced to tables and formats within which researchers are constrained to work. These methods do have utility for development interventions but lack the cumulative impact of long-term support. This strengthens the argument for continued investments in development research on a longer-term basis.
  5. *Endowments and/or lifeline support:* Having resources to conduct their own research provides institutions with tremendous freedom to pursue their goals and agendas. This enables institutions and scholars to conduct research even on sensitive topics, such as justice and war crimes. If providing endowments are not within the mandate of a donor, long-term institutional support can also help research institutions through lean periods when financial constraints can lead to staff retrenchment and institutional weaknesses. It would also help avoid 'death through projectization.' However, many researchers fear that endowments and assured support may result in 'dead' organisations as these would have little incentive for producing high quality work.

6. *Ethical and methodological issues:* Donors need to ensure that issues about security of research teams and respondents be intrinsic parts of project proposals. These include ensuring the physical safety of all involved, the confidentiality of data, that respondents know what to expect, and that security related delays—even inordinate ones—may take place. Flexibility for alternative fieldwork sites may also be built into projects. Protocols about the dos and don'ts of fieldwork have to be developed in advance including watching out for ethnic and religious tensions. Such generic issues are endemic to fieldwork but new issues of ethics have also arisen.
7. *Promote regional contacts for existing institutions* where individual researchers from the region can be visiting scholars for a limited time. Such opportunities would not only increase interaction among researchers, but researchers can also utilize library resources (especially gray literature unavailable elsewhere). For example, a research institution like SDPI could house researchers from the region for 3-9 months. Internships could also be offered on the same lines so youth from the region could develop a better understanding of issues.
8. *Promote regional networks:* These allow researchers from the region to come together to produce joint work. This does not mean the creation of regional institutions but support to common intellectual endeavours and loose coalitions. South Asian development professionals and intellectuals could come together to push for issues of mutual interest. Such initiatives came out of the Colombo-based Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) where a winter course on security and a spring course on non-traditional security were held each year for young professionals from South Asia and China. These courses and other workshops spawned networks among alumni and triggered joint research and edited volumes.
9. *Facilitate staff in funding organisations to adapt to the challenges of supporting research in difficult settings:* Just as there are differences amongst researchers, there are also differences amongst personnel in grant-making organisations. The two types of research donors —mainstream development organisations and research support organisations— employ different type of personnel to manage their programmes. At the latter, staff usually have university degrees, often doctorates. They are

comparatively more sympathetic to supporting innovative research in difficult settings. Much too often mainstream development donors' staff who have little exposure to a culture of research treat research projects as managerial tasks; they exhibit little understanding of delays or changes that crop up unexpectedly. This results in fairly mechanical work that parrots other project reports with no innovative or path-breaking work taking place.

10. *Supporting researchers to use mass media:* TV and radio are effective tools for policy debate in a setting where few people read. Concerns that those who fund the media also control it can be circumvented through buying time on television and radio for programmes and documentaries on development policy issues. This has been debated among think tanks that focus on specific areas such as environmental protection. Researchers often lack the skills of effective communication via radio and television as they are often occupied with writing for a specialized audience. They require skills to communicate their research results and recommendations into effective messages for a general audience. Persons in the media are generally weary of 'academic' slants as they fear their audience is actively uninterested in such discussions. A key intervention could be media 'cells' where trained professionals can translate messages based on in-depth research into an easily comprehensible and popular programming format.
11. *Study-abroad fellowships for researchers at risk:* Such fellowships can be restricted in number and need-based rather than being a regular feature of the research landscape. The fellowships would have to be managed by a high-level panel of experts who also have a strong influence within government circles. This would ensure that the researcher is allowed to proceed abroad and is protected from harassment abroad.
12. *Create a South Asian University:* This idea was originally proposed in the 1990s by a group of South Asian intellectuals. Given the long-standing interstate disputes, this university was envisioned with campuses in different countries where students and young professionals would have the opportunity to study together. This would provide the kind of exposure and intellectual space where experience sharing and mutual learning could take place. Such a university could focus on peace and security,

justice, democracy and equality, natural resources, and the intellectual history of development. In short, it could address the three important aspects of research: theory building, action research and policy research. It would create an intellectual space for engagement. The conferences, meetings and training workshops that are held regularly inside the region as well as outside are one-off occasions. A South Asian University, whose blue print exists, would be a sustainable solution to a region that is rife with tensions among neighbours. The University could act as a confidence building measure among the people of the region.

13. *Encourage Government to invest more in education:* To produce good researchers, governments will have to commit more funds to higher education. Undertaking short-term training, as is currently the case with many NGOs will only produce an army of fieldworkers. Governments will need to introduce radical shifts in their rules and regulations and revisit the purposes for establishing and running masters and Ph.D. programmes at public sector universities.

## Bibliography

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), *The A to Z guide to Afghanistan Assistance 2009*, Seventh Edition, AREU, Kabul.

Assad, Nadia and Khurshid, Ayesha, 2002, 'Sustainable development drivers', unpublished SDPI background report written to feed into a briefing paper prepared by the Regional and International Networking Group—RING and presented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development at Johannesburg.

Inayatullah (ed.), 2006, *Associations of social scientists: An analytical study*, Council of Social Sciences (COSS), Islamabad.

Inayatullah, Saigol, Rubina and Tahir, P. (eds.), 2005, *Social sciences in Pakistan: A profile*, Council of Social Sciences (COSS), Islamabad.

Khan, Omar Asghar, 2001, 'Critical engagements: NGOs and the state' Anita M. Weiss, and S. Zulfiqar Gilani, (eds.) *Power and civil society in Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, Karachi.

Omidian, Patricia A. 2009, 'Living and working in a war zone: An applied anthropologist in Afghanistan,' *Practicing Anthropology*, vol. 31, no.2, Spring, pp. 4-11.

Saigol, Rubina and Ihsan, Fatima, 2009, 'Religions and development: Values and beliefs and their relationship with key development concepts,' report prepared for University of Birmingham/LUMS Project entitled, *Religions and development*.

Saigol, Rubina, 1998, *Insaani Huqooq ki Tehreek: Aik Tanqeedi Jaiza* (The movement for human rights: A critical review), Fiction House, Lahore.

Suhrke, Astri, Wimpelmann, T.C., Harpviken, K.B., Sarwari, A. and Strand, A. 2008, 'Applied social science research in Afghanistan: An overview of the institutional landscape', CMI Report, International Peace Research Institute (PRIO) and Chr. Michelsen Institute, viewed in July 2010, available at:

<<http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/3158-applied-social-science-research-in-afghanistan.pdf>>

Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2002, 'The subtle subversion: The state of curricula and textbooks in Pakistan', SDPI, Islamabad, updated 2006.

Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2003, *SDPI Research and News*, 6<sup>th</sup> SDC Special Bulletin, vol. 10, no. 6, November-December, SDPI, Islamabad.

Sustainable Development Policy Institute, *Annual Report 2005-06 and 2006-07*, SDPI, Islamabad.

Tahir, P. 2005, 'Quantitative development of social sciences', in Inayatullah, R. Saigol, and P. Tahir, (eds.), *Social sciences in Pakistan: A profile*, Council of Social Sciences, (COSS), Islamabad, pp. 459-470.

Zaidi, S. Akbar, 2002, 'The dismal state of social sciences in Pakistan', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Social Science Research in South Asia, vol.37, no.35, 31 August-6 September, pp.3644-3661.

#### Web Articles:

DailyTimes, viewed on 21 April, 2009,

<[http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C12%5C31%5Cstory\\_31-12-2008\\_pg\\_7\\_27](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C12%5C31%5Cstory_31-12-2008_pg_7_27)>.

Huggins, Chris 'Introductory notes on conducting fieldwork in challenging environments—some security, ethical and methodological issues,' viewed in June 2009,

<<http://community.eldis.org/ChrisHuggins/Blog/Introductory-Notes-on-Conducting-Fieldwork-in-Challenging-Environments-u-Some-Security-Ethical-and-Methodological-Issues>>.

Ford Foundation International Fellowship Programme at

<<http://www.comminit.com/en/node/147050/306>>

Sephis <[www.sephis.org](http://www.sephis.org) and, <http://www.iias.nl/iiasn/iiasn4/gennews/2sepbro.txt>>

The CMI website, viewed on 21 March 2009,

<<http://www.cmi.no/afghanistan/?id=127&Civil-Society>>

The Killid Group website, viewed on 3 April 2008,

<[http://www.thekillidgroup.com/c/highlights/highlights\\_four\\_decades.htm](http://www.thekillidgroup.com/c/highlights/highlights_four_decades.htm)>

*The Guardian*, viewed on 19 July 2009,

<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/jul/10/highereducation.pakistan>>

The News, *Education-Zine*, 20 April 2007, viewed on 7 April 2009,

<<http://www.jang.com.pk/thenews/apr2007-weekly/education-20-04-2007/> >

The News, 6 April 2009, '*Three female NGO workers, driver shot dead in Mansehra*,' viewed on

12 April 2009, <[http://thenews.com.pk/top\\_story\\_detail.asp?Id=21371](http://thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=21371)>

Wheeler, Joanna '*Creating spaces for engagement: Understanding research and social change*,'

viewed in September 2008, <[www.drc-citizenship.org](http://www.drc-citizenship.org)>

Wikipedia, 'List of research institutes in Pakistan,' viewed on 15 December 2008,

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Research\\_Institutes\\_in\\_Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Research_Institutes_in_Pakistan)>



# Flowers, Queens, and Goons<sup>1</sup>: Unruly Women in Rural Pakistan<sup>2</sup>

*Lubna N. Chaudhry\**

## Abstract

This paper focuses on girls and women perceived as deviant, difficult, or different by their communities in rural Punjab, even as it pluralizes and historicizes performances of rebellious, unruly selves. Specifically, the paper uses fieldwork interactions with girls who enjoyed wandering in out-of-bound spaces, women who claimed positions of authority as headmistresses in village schools, and women who troubled the social imaginary through their acts of intimidation and involvement in local politics in order to examine defiance of gendered norms within the context of material, structural, and discursive realities framing individual lives. The analysis illustrates how regional differences among various parts of Punjab, and hierarchies based on class, kinship, and religion within regions, demarcated the contours, scope, and consequences of women's deviance and unruliness. While the research participants' agency remained constrained by the violence in and around their lives as well as, in certain cases, their own complicity with hierarchical relations and masculinist discourses, the accounts and performances of deviance highlight the heterogeneity of rural Punjabi women's experiences, debunking the myth of passive Muslim women, and asserting the imperative for nuanced, in-depth understandings of women's negotiations of power relations.

---

<sup>1</sup> The categorization of my research participants as flowers, queens, or goons represents more of a creative organizational move rather than one of fundamental analytic import. The two girls I write about were referred to as "flowers" within our fieldwork, and the term "goon" also relates back to the research interactions. My use of "queens" to speak of the three teachers in this paper is meant to echo Memissi's (1997) title for her historical treatise on powerful women in Islamic history.

<sup>2</sup> A version of this paper was published in the *Journal of International Women's Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, November 2009.

\* Dr. Lubna N. Chaudhry is Associate Professor at the State University of New York, Binghamton, USA, where she teaches Human Development, Women's Studies, and Asian & Asian Diaspora Studies. She is also a Visiting Fellow at SDPI, Islamabad. She received her Ph.D. from the University of California at Davis and her scholarship focuses on the impact of structural and direct violence on women, children, and disenfranchised groups in general.

### Framing the Project

“She just keeps coming back<sup>3</sup>. We take her back to her in-laws’ home, but she does not let her husband touch her. I wake up in the morning, and who is sleeping in the courtyard outside? *Maharani jee*<sup>4</sup>. She acts like a delicate flower, but look at her.” The members of the research team, including myself, followed the direction of Salma’s<sup>5</sup> accusatory finger. The subject of the tirade, a very thin young woman most likely in her late teens, appeared oblivious to our gaze and to Salma’s words. She was lying on a cot, her eyes closed, and her neck supported by newspaper rolled into a pillow. Her *dopatta*, the long scarf usually worn across their chests or on their heads by women in Punjab, lay on her side.

Salma spoke again, so our eyes moved back to her face. This time, however, Salma looked helpless rather than angry, the expression in her eyes softer, even affectionate.

“I just don’t know what to do with her. She really is harmless, you know. She is not an *awaara*<sup>6</sup> or *badmaash*<sup>7</sup>, only stubborn and very attached to our two children. She works hard during harvest time. Sometimes I wish she was really insane, and we could lock her up. I raised her after my mother-in-law died ten years ago ... God, God, why did you make her so hard to control? What bad things did I do to get this shameless girl on my hands? What, God, what?”

Since my diligent research assistants, Nadia and Almas, now seemed to be bursting at their seams, trying to hold back their laughter, I interrupted Salma’s laments, politely pointing out that we needed to finish the interview. In a few minutes, however, we found ourselves taking leave of Salma, who had become focused on getting Neelam off the cot to help her cook for lunch. Although Salma promised that she would talk to us later in the week, we were not able to coordinate our schedules to talk to her or other members of her household before we left

---

<sup>3</sup> The dialogue and conversations in this paper have been reconstructed from my field-notes and notes taken by research assistants. The original conversations took place in various regional varieties of Punjabi and Seraiki. In this paper I have retained some Punjabi and Seraiki words if I felt the translations did not capture the connotations. English equivalents are provided mostly in the endnotes when the Punjabi or Seraiki words and phrases appear for the first time in this paper, although in some cases I insert them in the text within parentheses.

<sup>4</sup> Literal meaning “respected queen”. Of course, Salma was being sarcastic.

<sup>5</sup> The names of the research participants and their villages have been changed, but the actual name of the district, the larger administrative unit in which the village is embedded, as well as its geographical location has been retained.

<sup>6</sup> Literally meaning “wanderer” or “wayward”, but is also used to imply promiscuous or immoral sexual behaviour.

<sup>7</sup> Literally meaning “of bad character” or “one who does bad things for a living”; in common parlance can refer to promiscuity.

their village in District Hafizabad, one of the two sites in Central Punjab for the qualitative component of the 2001 Pakistan Poverty Assessment<sup>8</sup>. A few other people in the village did talk about Salma's family: some were sympathetic towards their plight; others merely mocked Neelam's odd behaviour, as well as the inability of her family and husband to curb her rebellion.

This paper focuses on "hard to control" women and girls I came across during fieldwork in rural Pakistan in the context of the 2001 World Bank funded study<sup>9</sup>. More specifically, I write about five women and two girls deemed as difficult to discipline, disorderly, or deviant in some sense, by communities I visited in rural parts of Punjab, the largest province in Pakistan in terms of population and land size<sup>10</sup>. My "data" on Neelam remains scant -- I never saw her with her eyes open, yet this piece on uncontrollable girls and women in rural Punjab owes its genesis to the brief fieldwork encounter described above.

My particular project here spilled out of a research endeavour that centered heavily on economics, even though our ethnographic orientation contextualised household income and expenditure within stratified rural communities. It was perhaps the very emphasis on defining the normative, including the imperative to locate gender norms, which vividly brought to light the women and girls who did defy those norms in one way or the other. During the course of our study, women in general in rural Pakistan set their own boundaries within field interactions; most of them, like Salma, were not easily disciplined by our interview protocols<sup>11</sup>. Our subsequent adjustment to rural women's work schedules, their conversational styles, and the distractions posed by neighbours and extended family members freely walking in and out

---

<sup>8</sup> Although eventually cited as World Bank, 2002, the qualitative component of the 2001 Pakistan Poverty Assessment was a joint venture undertaken by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute and the World Bank. I was one of two Senior Researchers for the study. Using multiple instruments and protocols to grasp household, kinship, neighbourhood, and village level dynamics, the study aimed at understanding the experiences of the poor and the powerless with reference to livelihoods, public services, the rule of law, electoral processes, collective action, conflicts, and disasters. Chaudhry (2009) details the findings of the study with respect to rural women.

<sup>9</sup> We visited two villages in Punjab in the pilot stage, and four Punjabi villages in the formal data collection stage with a team of eight researchers, four of them women. While this configuration remained constant throughout the fieldwork for the study, the research assistants did change as we moved from site to site since we wanted to include at least one member in the team who spoke the particular language variety of the region.

We spent approximately a week in each site.

<sup>10</sup> Punjab has also been the province that has dominated politics in post-independence Pakistan. In 1947, 80 percent of the region historically seen as Punjab came to Pakistan, and 20 percent went to India.

<sup>11</sup> See Chaudhry (2009) for details.

of the interview context was what created the space for the emergence of the material for this paper<sup>12</sup>.

The conception of agency underpinning my analysis of unruliness and transgression draws from poststructuralist feminist notions of gendered identity as “enforced cultural performance, compelled by compulsory heterosexuality” (Jagger 2008, pp. 20-21), and of subjectivity, the experience of being a self, as discontinuous, dynamic, and relational, contingent on the impact of multi-levelled power relations in a context (see, Davies and Davies, 2007). From such a perspective, the sustained enactment of gender is vulnerable to interruption or disruption, carrying within itself the potential for its failure, and the potential for an agency whereby norms are defied or resisted, generating spaces where possibilities arise to challenge the oppression and violence generated by compulsory heterosexuality.

Building on Mahmood (2005, p. 123)’s concern with the interiority of the subject, about how “norms are not only consolidated and/or subverted, but also, performed, inhabited, and experienced,” I also explore the relationship between desires and performance as it unfolded within the research situation. Embodied behaviour, for instance, the use of the *dopatta* in specific ways (covering the head, draping the shoulders, or as in Neelam’s story above, just thrown on the side), or, the refusal to stay within sanctioned spaces and roles, is vital to the discussion in the paper. Nevertheless, the interviews and conversations also represent spaces of reflection, introspection, and negotiation, what Besio (2005) sees as auto-ethnographic exercises, whereby research participants examined, albeit incompletely, their own motivations and desires even as they located themselves in particular fields of power. Of course, my presence as a researcher associated with the development industry, a “modern”<sup>13</sup> woman visiting from the “government” city, Islamabad, mediated the performances as rebellious, deviant selves as well as the knowledge production about deviance.

The opening vignette exemplifies my methodological and representational approach in this particular piece of writing. As I primarily write about and from within key field encounters, eschewing a neat summing-up of women’s lived realities, I seek simultaneously to convey the

---

<sup>12</sup> Van Vleet (2003) writes of the importance of gossip in the collection of evidence and the retelling of stories about other people in the context of ethnographic research.

<sup>13</sup> The words in quotes in this sentence are direct quotes from research participants.

vitality and complexity of the women at the heart of this paper, and the impossibility of ever capturing the multi-layeredness of their lives and agency through our research. In this post 9/11 era, where images of Muslim women as veiled and secluded, at the mercy of their barbaric and primitive cultures, have superseded most other kinds of narratives (Zine 2002), this paper, at one level, in the radical feminist vein of celebrating women's defiance, is frankly recuperative in its project.

Writings on Pakistani women in general<sup>14</sup>, feminist and otherwise, in academic and advocacy quarters, have tended to delineate the impact of anti-women laws and development policies (for instance, Chaudhry 2009; Khan 2006; Mumtaz 2009). While these studies have been timely and compelling, rural Pakistani women in particular are cast as disadvantaged, backward, and marginalised, striving to continually meet basic needs in spaces characterised by totalising feudal structures and religious discourses (see Chaudhry 2008a for further discussion; see Rouse 1983; Zubair 2001 and 2004 for attempts to provide alternative context-based conceptualisations). The present study aims to implode these monolithic representations by attending to the heterogeneity and contradictions of women's desires, experiences, and performances of selves within the specificity of their life circumstances and social locations. Women's words and performances illustrate how their agency is constrained *and* enabled through identities made available through religion, kinship/caste,<sup>15</sup> and other markers of difference, including socioeconomic class<sup>16</sup>, and household means of livelihood (see also Chaudhry 2004, 2008a; Chaudhry and Bertram 2009). In accordance with Narayan's (1997) call for the move from tradition and culture to history and politics in the study of Third World societies, a crucial aspect of the analysis here is to point to how village-level hierarchies and patriarchies circumscribing agency and identities are dynamic configurations, shaped through intersections with contemporary and historical regional, national, and global level forces and discourses.

---

<sup>14</sup> In addition to this interdisciplinary issue-based body of literature, we also find a few studies conducted from disciplinary perspectives, (for example, Ahmad 2006) and interview-based writings that are basically about foregrounding women's voices in an Islamic society for a non-academic audience (for example, Kovarik 2005).

<sup>15</sup> Caste refers to the kinship collectivity with which a household identifies. Research participants tended to use the term "zaat" meaning caste, interchangeably with "biradri" meaning kinship group.

<sup>16</sup> Class refers to socioeconomic status that is a consequence of the possession or lack of assets and resources, including land and opportunities for employment.

In writing of women and girls in rural Punjab who engage not only in “small acts” of resistance<sup>17</sup> (Scott 1992, p. 192), but in flagrant defiance of norms, I borrow from the tradition of US women of colour writing and speaking of women’s everyday resistance and resilience in order to foreground subjectivities and experiences devalued or rendered invisible by contemporary and historical relations of domination and subjugation (see, for instance, Aldama and Quinonez 2002). Also, in keeping with this tradition, and unlike the universalising radical feminist construction of the deviant woman (see Sempruch 2004), I complicate the celebration of individual women’s unruliness by grounding my accounts within material and discursive realities distinctive to the spaces and times in which their lives unfold. I am particularly concerned with how post-coloniality - the persistence of colonial violence and structures into the present and the collusion of nation-building agendas with neo-colonial processes - is embodied, manifested, and contested, within gendered contexts of specific geographies and relationships. Place, including women’s physical, residential, and socio-economic locations in their villages, and the particular location of their villages within Punjab, emerges as a salient theme in this investigation of the nature and scope of agency as well as attempts to order or govern unruly bodies.<sup>18</sup>

Historically, Southern, Central, and Northern Punjab have had different kinds of relationships to colonial, neo-colonial, and post-independence national centres of power.<sup>19</sup> This has translated into different paths to modernisation and development for these regions with profound implications for women’s relationships to space, their economic status, and their access to healthcare, education, and the rule of law.<sup>20</sup>

During the British colonial rule, Punjab as a whole was a vital site of political support, land revenue, and military recruitment (Ali 1988). Colonial policies in Punjab, in general terms, resulted in the consolidation of feudal structures; an entrenchment of village-level caste and kinship-based hierarchies; the splintering of rural economies based on the bartering of goods and services; a proclivity to deprive women of their right to inherit agricultural land and other

---

<sup>17</sup> Scott’s (1992) focus is on the subtle transgressions and hidden subversive moves of members of subordinate groups. The women and girls I write about did at times comply with the demands of power relations, but at the same time all of them acted in ways that openly defied or troubled the gendered social imaginary.

<sup>18</sup> I owe the seeds of my analysis with respect to place and women in rural Punjab to the work of feminist geographers. See, for instance, Katz 2001; and Mohanram 1999.

<sup>19</sup> Here I draw on analyses by Alavi 1983,1989; Ali 1988; Arif and Ahmad 2001; Gardezi 1983; and Jalal 1994.

<sup>20</sup> The introduction to Sangari and Vaid’s (1989) edited volume provides an instructive overview of the impact of British colonialism on women’s lives through various policies in the Indian sub-continent.

assets;<sup>21</sup> and the removal of justice apparatuses to far-flung urban centres, outside the reach of women and economically challenged populations. Central Punjab, however, became key to the commercialisation of Indian agriculture. Reshaped by the development of the canal-based irrigation system, and accompanying canal colonies in the nineteenth century, villages built for and by people relocated from other parts of Punjab, and locked into an extensive road and railway network, it became home to increasingly affluent politically active landlords and progressively poorer sharecroppers and small peasants.

Post-independence Central Punjab has continued to be at the centre of Pakistani electoral politics, paradoxically characterised both by a fragmentation of local community structures intensified through post-Partition population transfer, and an acute sense of caste-based loyalties, mostly a consequence of the push towards kinship-based politics in the 1980s (Jalal 1994). Despite the persistence of socioeconomic disparities, compared to both Southern and Northern Punjab, it is more “developed” with better roads, more functional schools, and more accessible basic healthcare (Chaudhry 2009). Interestingly, however, it is the rain-fed Northern Punjab, where peoples’ livelihoods are not mostly dependent on agriculture, and perhaps therefore relatively free of feudal constraints, where poverty indicators seem to be the lowest (Arif and Ahmad 2001). Southern Punjab, on the other hand, remains the least developed part of Punjab, where the power configurations exemplify the continuation of a colonial mode of control that predates the commercialisation of agriculture in the 1800s: the landlords in Southern Punjab receive state patronage in exchange for keeping the masses in check (Chaudhry 2008a).

The narratives and analysis in the main section of this paper illustrate how these regional differences among various parts of Punjab, and the caste and class based hierarchies within the regions, demarcate the contours, scope, and consequences of women’s deviance and unruliness. The sub-section titles, “Flowers,” “Queens,” and “Goons” are organisational strategies to juxtapose and examine comparable vignettes from the field rather than categories of analysis. The final section shares some parting ruminations.

---

<sup>21</sup> Khan (1995) traces the establishment of colonial structures and their impact on class and gender relations as well as the manner in which they have persisted into the present in the context of Pakistan. The discussion includes specific analysis of how the British move towards privatization of property and the implementation of inheritance laws (which excluded everyone but the oldest son of a family) had an impact on Muslim women.

## Unruly Girls and Women in Rural Punjab

### *Flowers*

“The old women in the village say she is *allablok*<sup>22</sup>, and so sensitive. Really, this child is like a lotus growing in a swamp. How do I protect her?” Farzana’s mother sighed as she showed Nadia, my research assistant, and I the array of objects her daughter had made out of date-palm leaves and water-reeds. “She was sick a few months ago with a fever that would not go away. She worries about her father’s TB. She made herself get well so she can continue to go and collect the reeds from the riverbank. Without her, he would not have the money to buy his Paracetamol.”<sup>23</sup>

“We do the best we can,” Farzana’s sister-in-law, her brother’s wife, sounded defensive as she cut off the older woman, “We cannot keep on doing X-rays. It is a simple matter of priorities. My father-in-law is old, and my children are young. This household has only one real earning member, my husband. The little land we have does not give us enough. He (the husband) works as a labourer, he helps carpenters, and he sprays pesticides on peoples’ lands. You tell us what we should do, nurture the young, or save the old? Anyway, Farzana should not be wandering around like this by herself. She is not a child anymore. People talk and her brother is embarrassed by this waywardness.”

Quite unperturbed by her sister-in-law’s callous analysis of her father’s failing health, and the attack on her behaviour, Farzana Channa gave us as a gift a hand-fan she had made. She told us that since the village had no electricity, she sold a lot of hand-fans in the summer and autumn. She then invited Nadia and I to take a walk with her along the River Chenab, so we could see the spots where she went to be alone. This path also led to a shortcut to her father’s plot of land: we could list the vegetables grown and consumed in the village, and we could see what pesticides<sup>24</sup> were used in the fields as well.

---

<sup>22</sup> Literally meaning “God’s people.” Refers to a sense of unworldliness or piety.

<sup>23</sup> An analgesic.

<sup>24</sup> Our research team had found a high incidence of pulmonary disease in the village, including tuberculosis, and we wanted to find out if the pesticides might be responsible for it. (We did find out they sprayed DDT, a highly poisonous pesticide banned in Western countries, on the cotton crops.)

As we walked on the riverbank and through the fields, Farzana regaled us with stories about her village, Tibba Channa, and its inhabitants, including her own family and kin. She was the first one among the female population in the village to talk to us openly about the rape<sup>25</sup> of Balochi<sup>26</sup> women by the sons of a local influential, Farzana's cousins. Although as larger kinship groups the Balochis and Farzana's clan were not in any hierarchical relationship, within the immediate context of the village, the Balochis were not as powerful, in terms of political connections and land holdings, as the Channa landlords addressed honourifically as Jams. The Balochi women had been allegedly brought over to the Jam's sons by their male relatives in exchange for some favours from the Jam clan. No one had informed the police, although some Baloch men had protested, which led to a conflict among the Jams. We found out from other women that the police never came into the village without permission from the Jams, and the quarrel among the Jams over the Balochi women got resolved because the Jams needed each other during the local body elections that year. For Farzana and her peers the implications of the rapes outlasted this resolution:

"Ever since the *zabardasti*<sup>27</sup>, I am more careful about going to the river. Especially when it is getting dark. All the girls in the *basti*<sup>28</sup> (residential cluster) also stay away from my cousins now. I am not very friendly with many girls. They do not like going out like I do. I don't like talking with them, you know, unkind stuff about other people, and I do like to keep to myself. But now we sometimes talk about the bad thing my cousins did. We talk about the dangers of having a woman's body."

Neither her mother's representation of her as innocent nor her sister-in-law's depiction of her as rather irresponsible (attitudes echoed by other women in Tibba Channa in various conversations) completely resonated with our impression of the articulate, deep-thinking, and clear-sighted girl we got to know over our time in her village in Southern Punjab. The youngest of seven children, Farzana had turned 15 just before our visit. She had attended school only intermittently, and did not consider herself literate: the villages she had lived in

<sup>25</sup> Chaudhry (2008a) provides a more comprehensive account of our research team's experiences and encounters in Tibba Channa.

<sup>26</sup> Baloch tribes, who migrated from Balochistan around 500 years ago, are scattered across Sindh and Southern Punjab. For their history in the colonial period see Cheesman (1997) and Roseberry (1987).

<sup>27</sup> *Zabardasti* refers to rape. In literal terms it translates to "done with force; imposition; coercion."

<sup>28</sup> Literally means "where we live." In this context, a *basti* is a residential cluster, houses built together in a distinct space seen as one unit. Tibba Channa had six key *bastis*. In rural Southern Punjab, it is customary to see *bastis* and smaller group of houses spread out far away from each other, separated by fields, tracks, and paths.

did not have functional schools, and only a few girls from the wealthier Jam households had attended school in the closest towns. Her family had moved into the village a few years ago to be near their relatives. Although her father, Sabir Channa, had very little land, Farzana's four older sisters were married into affluent Jam households in the village, since by all accounts (and we did meet two of them) they were very beautiful. Farzana (who was quite pretty herself) and her parents lived with her older brother's family in a house with a small courtyard and one bedroom adjoining the bigger houses of her father's kinsmen in the central *basti* of Tibba Channa. Her brother had taken over the cultivation and control of the land when Sabir, who was 60 at the time of the fieldwork, became too unwell to work. Evidently, the wealthy relatives had helped out with Sabir's treatment when he was first diagnosed with tuberculosis, but then that support petered out.

Farzana, however, was not willing to give up on Sabir. "My father is the tree that gives me the shade I need to survive in the heat," she said poignantly. The frail Sabir did not let anyone get away with badmouthing his daughter, and commanded enough respect for people to back off. Also, when Farzana fell ill, Sabir, who could not secure funds for his own cure, collected enough grain to pay for his daughter's treatment by the dispenser (there were no qualified doctors within and near the village) at the Basic Health Unit (BHU) in the adjacent village. Farzana appeared to be a warm, open, and generous person, but we realized quite early in our interactions that her taking on the role of a de facto guide for our research team was motivated as much by a forlorn hope that we could somehow help with her father's health problems as her sense of hospitality towards the educated women from Islamabad. Her last words to me were, "Don't forget<sup>29</sup> my father, *Baji*<sup>30</sup>."

Earlier in our fieldwork, during the pilot stage in the village Dhamyal in District Attock, Northern Punjab, we had spent time with another 15-year old referred to as a "flower." In that case, though, the metaphor had connotations of sexual attractiveness and readiness, rather than the purity and fragility ascribed to Farzana by her mother and other women. We met Saadia, while we were interviewing her maternal grandmother, Amna Begum, a woman of 60 or so, cited as one of the poorest in that village, a widow from a *Kammi Kameen* caste, a server

---

<sup>29</sup> I did not forget Farzana's father, but I could help only through money, not some institutional miracle whereby a cure was possible for his tuberculosis in its advanced stage.

<sup>30</sup> Translates into older sister.

caste<sup>31</sup>, who had possibly been living with unconfirmed tuberculosis for some years. Saadia was Amna Begum's oldest grandchild. Her father had abandoned his wife and children a few years ago, so they had moved in with Amna Begum. Amna Begum's sons who lived in Rawalpindi, the cantonment city bordering Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, had their own shoe shop, and did pitch in to take care of their sister's children financially and emotionally, but they also had their nuclear families to support. Amna Begum's fears with respect to being responsible for her daughter's family, especially Saadia, were not confined to the economics of the situation, although that was a pressing concern. "When a garden is blooming, there are sure to be trespassers. How can a weak old woman like me stop anyone from plucking a beautiful flower like this one here?"

Nadia and I were also struck by Saadia's vibrance, charm, and intelligence. She was quite well dressed compared to the other young women, from both server and landed castes, living in the village. Although simple and quite worn out, the clothes were well-cut, and highlighted her lovely figure. Later, we found out that Saadia altered her clothes and the manner in which she braided her long hair every few months in accordance with the latest trends: she made regular visits to her maternal uncles in Rawalpindi, and also persuaded them to send her fashion magazines when she could not visit herself. Saadia told us that she was technically in school, but she had been unable to pass the eighth standard examination for the last three years. She told us that it got difficult to study around the time of the examinations, because they were so near to the harvest period, the period when she got to work in the fields. She had worked in the fields since she was eight. She complained that her fellow villagers were always criticizing her for moving around too freely within and outside the village. Her grandmother, mother, and uncles had allowed her a good deal of "*azaadi*"<sup>32</sup> and she had grown up without any "*pabandi*"<sup>33</sup>. Still, she avoided going out alone as much as possible, since she felt harassed.

Saadia and her grandmother proved to be extremely helpful in providing us details about service caste livelihoods, the health and educational services available to them, and general village dynamics, especially with respect to electoral processes, collective action, and conflicts. In the midst of this all, much to her grandmother's dismay, Saadia told us about a murder that

---

<sup>31</sup> Literally meaning the lowly ones, who work and serve. *Kammi Kameen* refers to a group of non-agricultural castes or kinship groups designated as lower castes in rural areas in Punjab.

<sup>32</sup> Freedom.

<sup>33</sup> Restrictions.

took place roughly two years before our fieldwork: a young woman from the key landlord family in the village was killed by her brother-in-law, her sister's husband<sup>34</sup>. In Saadia and Amna Begum's opinion (Amna Begum could not resist being pulled into the conversation, in spite of her initial misgivings), the young woman was murdered because of a land issue, and not because she was having an affair with a man from a *Kammi Kameen* background, although that was the reason given by the murdered woman's family. The police came in to investigate the matter, but did not make any arrests. Saadia was especially vehement in her defence of the murdered young woman's virtue, although when I asked her if she had known the woman well, she shook her head.

When it was time for us to leave, Saadia offered to walk us over to the landlord neighbourhood bordering the *Kammi Kameen* locality. Amna Begum frowned, and muttered something to the effect that she needed to be careful. Partially in deference to the old woman's wishes, and partially because after the story of the murdered young woman, I had started to become afraid for Saadia myself, I asked the younger children playing in the room to accompany us. Nadia and I saw Saadia on and off during the rest of our stay in Dhamyal, sometimes from afar and at others closely enough to hold a conversation. Despite her earlier protestations to the contrary, we mostly met her outside her neighbourhood within the village or near the fields on the periphery of the residential part of the village, her gait reflecting the same vitality and poise as her speech.

Farzana and Saadia, then, stand out in my notes and memory as 15- year olds who go where they are not supposed to go. They both narrated forbidden tales<sup>35</sup>, even as they literally walked on paths deemed as out of bounds by norms meant to govern their behaviour. It was also noteworthy that both of them identified with the women in the stories they narrated, especially as in both cases the women were strangers and belonged to "other" kinship groups living in out of bound spaces. The frankness, self-confidence, and boldness exhibited by Farzana and Saadia were probably an outcome of the roles and responsibilities assigned to them by their mothers as well as a consequence of their favoured status in their families: Farzana was the youngest child, adored by her parents; and Saadia was the oldest, indulged by

---

<sup>34</sup> I write about the murder of the young woman in Dhamyal in more detail in an earlier publication (Chaudhry, 2008b).

<sup>35</sup> These tales were later corroborated in different variations in other interviews and conversations.

her city-dwelling maternal uncles. Of course, their performance as defiant young women who bravely shared the truth in the research context was also mediated by their obvious aspirations towards the kind of modern womanhood I represented - the kind they glimpsed on television and during visits to the city - as well as in the hope inspired by a team from Islamabad with their air-conditioned car.

While Farzana was aware of her “difference” from other girls her age, Saadia appeared to be more analytical of the reasons behind her independent mindset and behaviour. Her self-reflexivity, her capacity to engage with the why and how of her construction as the transgressive flower by her grandmother and others, was in part due to her comfort level and knowledge about what was expected as a research participant and as an interlocutor with urban educated women. She probably was familiar with the script for the interaction because she had more exposure than Farzana to city life and people, and she had access to both reading materials and television. Although Saadia’s own dwelling had no electricity, her village in general was electrified, and at least every other household owned a small television. There was no electricity in Farzana’s village at all: women told us they listened to the radio using batteries stolen from rich men’s tractors. Unlike Farzana’s village, Saadia’s village had a private middle school and separate government primary schools for boys and girls that were functional, and it was connected to bigger cities through an easily accessible highway. In other words, Saadia’s life and her words were more squarely embedded within the trappings of modernity, although Farzana with her faith in the research team from the country’s capital definitely interpellated herself as a modern citizen-subject with demands from the state.

Saadia’s privileges as the resident of a relatively more developed village in Northern Punjab, nonetheless, were undercut by her gender, economic and caste positioning. Even though the law enforcing authorities put in an appearance at the murder of the young woman in Dharmyal, the crime did not warrant an arrest: the chances of justice in cases involving women appeared to be equally remote in Northern Punjab and Southern Punjab. Saadia’s grandmother’s lung disease, just like Sabir Channa’s tuberculosis, remained untreated due to lack of funds despite their village’s relative proximity to a range of healthcare facilities. As girls, Saadia and Farzana were under surveillance and under discussion by family members and other people around them: their bodies and movements were continually scrutinized. Still, Saadia’s deviance got marked differently than Farzana’s, and became a matter of fear for her

grandmother as compared to the mixture of indulgence and slight exasperation shown by Farzana's family members. Many women in Dhanyal spoke of the negative and un-Islamic influences of television and city-life on girls, specially those from lower caste households, who were forgetting their place, and using "fashion" and "stylish talk" to lead men astray: Saadia was most probably included in that group of sinful girls.

As a *Kammi Kameen*, Saadia's body was paradoxically under stricter vigilance and seen as more available. Saadia's relatively unrestricted upbringing could not solely be ascribed to her family's urban outlook; in the larger study (Chaudhry 2009) we found that most women from *Kammi Kameen* families, including younger unmarried women and girls, in all parts of rural Punjab enjoyed greater mobility than their counterparts in land-owning families, mainly because codes of respect tied to the control of women's bodies were relaxed when household economies relied on women's work outside the home. This mobility, however, came at its own risks, as *Kammi Kameen* women were more likely to face sexual harassment.

While the bodies of women from landed groups were repositories of honour and worthy of protection, the bodies of poor, lower caste women became the territory on which power could be violently inscribed. Farzana was chastised for roaming freely as a girl, but her relationship to the Jam families afforded her a certain security, albeit a tenuous one based on continued acceptance of her father's status in the landlord *basti*. The *zabardasti* Farzana talked about was an extreme example of the sexual violence that beset her village – server caste and poorer Baluchi women's lives were mired in a sexual economy where exploitation and harassment were norms<sup>36</sup> – yet most young women and girls from Channa households, the "daughters" of the *basti*,<sup>37</sup> felt safe enough to walk around without bothering to drape themselves with their *dopattas* within the neighbourhoods and outside in the fields, even if they did not venture as far as Farzana. Saadia kept her hair covered with her *dopatta* whenever we saw her, yet for her grandmother, her virtue and perhaps even her life remained threatened, her loveliness and her sense of style merely serving to amplify that threat.

So, on the one hand, there was Farzana, the mystical "lotus" flower, with an aura of other-worldliness and a preference for solitude, and on the other hand, there was Saadia, the

---

<sup>36</sup> See Chaudhry (2008a) for details.

<sup>37</sup> Young women who were married into the *basti* did not share that privilege.

enticing “flower”, whose aesthetic presentation of self and assertive demeanour set her apart from other girls and young women in her surroundings. Both displayed a clear sense of entitlement towards their right to mobility and movement: they did not give up their excursions despite a professed cognisance of the risks. For their mobility and movements, perceived by many as disruptive of the accepted order, could be seen as jeopardizing their security. In both cases, what Joseph (1993, p. 452) calls “patriarchal connectivity” underwrote risky moves; Farzana had the backing of her father, and Saadia was supported by her uncles in the city, although Sabir, despite his feebleness and poverty, was more of a patriarch, due to his active presence in the village and his status as a landed peasant. Ironically, Farzana and Saadia’s alleged out-of-placeness was partly a consequence of their desires to demarcate their place within their communities. Farzana continued her walks along the river-bank to collect reeds in spite of the heightened sense of insecurity in the wake of the rapes of the unknown Balochi women because she knew her father’s health and presence, which she saw as being dependent on the analgesics she purchased, was crucial to her well-being. Saadia’s identity as the girl with urban connections, who enjoyed better clothes and more freedom than others in her village, could be seen, to a certain extent, as a strategy to transcend the dinginess inherent in her accorded status as the fatherless daughter living in the *Kammi Kameen* part of the village. Caste and class, therefore, inflect the “flowers” transgressions as much as the responses to these transgressions in postcolonial contexts of gendered violence where paradoxical myths of development as peril and as promise work in tandem with injunctions attributed to Islam and colonial legacies of structures and stratification.

### *Queens*

“Swishhh!” Almas deftly caught the hand wielding the long stick just before it hit Nasreen. “*Nabeen* (no) *Zehra Baji*,<sup>38</sup> *Nabeen!*” I exclaimed in horror. The other two members of the team present, Nadia and Shahida looked shocked as well, but focused on their attempt to cover up the inappropriateness of my practically screaming at a research participant by firing questions at the group of seven women assembled there.

I had restrained myself in the last hour or so of our time in the courtyard of the Government Girls’ Primary School in Akalipur, District Faisalabad, from interfering with the headmistress

---

<sup>38</sup> Literally meaning “older sister.” Used to indicate respect.

Zehra Khatoon's habit of striking her students with her stick and hands: she hit them if they talked too loudly or if their white uniform *dopattas* slipped off their heads (it was quite a hot autumn, and all the classrooms in the school did not have fans, so some of the classes were being held outdoors; two teachers were in the midst of instructing these classes). The sight of a grown woman in her late twenties or so, especially one who was there to participate in a focus group organised by the headmistress Zehra for the benefit of our research team, at the receiving end of the branch being used for corporal punishment was too much. Nasreen, a divorcee, had incurred her former teacher's wrath by telling the research team about the money she made through sewing and embroidery.

In the course of the morning, it became apparent that Zehra had brought together all of her former students whom she thought needy and worthy of receiving some kind of assistance from the "people from Islamabad": she had clearly instructed them to *not* talk about any viable means of livelihood or economic support. (On an earlier visit to the school two days before, I had requested her help in getting together a group of women from representative sub-communities<sup>39</sup> in the village, but she apparently had not believed my preamble that emphasized the exclusively research-based nature of our project.) Eventually, as the headmistress kept on speaking for the other women, Almas took Zehra aside and conducted a fruitful, in-depth interview focused on the personal and professional underpinnings of Zehra's history as an educator. Meanwhile, we did get some information about larger village dynamics, the sub-communities in the village, and women's individual and familial experiences, but the session went down in our records as one of the most "low energy" focus groups of our fieldwork for the Poverty Assessment. The headmistress, even when she was otherwise occupied, retained her capacity to terrify.

Zehra Khatoon in Akalipur, District Faisalabad; Majida Syeda in Dhamyal, District Attock; and Sardar Begum in Raheema, District Attock: these were the "queens" of our field story. Majida ran her own private co-education middle school, while Sardar Begum like Zehra was the headmistress of a government primary school for girls; only her school had fewer students.

---

<sup>39</sup> By sub-communities we meant groups within the village who saw themselves as distinctive collectivities. Akalipur was the only site during our field-work where there was a religion-based collectivity as well. The village had a visible Christian minority in addition to kinship and caste-based collectivities. Mostly the salient divisions in our sites were kinship-based (some Christians in Akalipur said their caste was Christianity), although in Central and Southern Punjab we found that sect-based divisions, that is peoples' identities as belonging to different Muslim sects, like the Shiite and Sunni sects, became salient at particular times as well.

Neither Majida nor Sardar were as dramatic as Zehra in the brandishing of their power, although Majida came close with her occasionally sharp tongue and propensity to consign children to corners, especially little girls whose *dopattas* were not in place. Sardar Begum's authority seemed quite absolute; her students were very quiet and orderly and she did not need to raise her voice. Majida was the oldest of the three, in her mid to late fifties, with a grown son, who along with his wife also taught in the school. Zehra and Sardar were around 40 with school-age children.

During our fieldwork besides studying both government and private schools as examples of service-based institutions, we used schools as strategic entry points into communities. In addition, right from the pilot stage of the project, the women running some of the schools and their relationships to the communities from which they drew their pupils fascinated me, and I began, with the help of my capable research assistants, to collect their life-histories as well. Although there were women teachers who commuted from nearby towns or lived in the village quite detached from the lives around them, the women who seized my research imagination were those whose lives were firmly embedded within the soil of the village everyday, even as they somehow retained a certain aloofness mostly derived from a sense of superiority or "specialness." This sense of exceptionality was fostered by their families and other residents of the village and was tied to their eminence as educated women in a context where there were few formally educated men or women, but was also a consequence of a complex intermeshing with other symbols of status such as caste and/or economic standing in the village. In fact, caste or kinship and class in addition to gender emerged as salient features in these women's constructions of themselves and their life experiences. Of course, for each woman the intersections of gender, class, and caste were manifested within specific contours of local and regional power relations and societal features. It is noteworthy that all three "queens" were in Central and Northern Punjab where overall literacy rates as well as literacy rates for females are higher than Southern Punjab.<sup>40</sup>

Zehra, Majida, and Sardar all spoke of their struggle as girls and young women and the battles they fought in order to finish high school, and then acquiring a college education. They spoke

---

<sup>40</sup> According to the census data for our study, Akalipur had the highest literacy rate at 53.6 percent and Tibba Channa in Southern Punjab, the lowest at 11.5 percent. Our sites in northern Punjab averaged at 43.1 percent. See Zubair, 2004, for further discussion of gendered literacies in Punjab with special reference to Southern Punjab.

of hunger strikes at key junctures in their educational trajectories, of teaching children who needed after-school assistance to help with their schooling expenses despite the prosperity of their families, and of collusions with mothers and siblings to elude the wrath of patriarchs and at times watchful matriarchs as well. For Zehra and Sardar, the primary motivation had been the desire to escape the lives of the women around them. Zehra put it this way, “I did not want to be stuck with fighting other women over *chulla haandi*.<sup>41</sup>” Sardar, in whose affluent landlord family the women did nothing but supervise servants, said she wanted to feel she was making a larger contribution to her country.

Both Zehra and Sardar had brothers who did not do as well as they did in school, but went on to college with the complete financial and emotional support of their families behind them. For Zehra and Sardar the injustice and unfairness they perceived in the situation further fuelled their resistance against norms that sought to prevent their educational advancement. Majida’s case was slightly different: her father firmly believed in the dictum credited to the Holy Prophet that all Muslim men and women should get educated even if it meant going to China. Also, Majida grew up in Rawalpindi, one of the larger cities in Pakistan (she moved to Dhanyal, District Attock, after her marriage), and so her family had access to tutors who would come to their home and instruct Majida. Majida’s first hunger strike paved the way for her to go outside her home to an educational institution when she was 14.

Zehra and Majida belonged to Syed families, that is, they traced their lineage to Holy Prophet Mohammed’s daughter Fatima and her husband, who was also the Prophet’s paternal cousin, Ali. The status of Syed families in Punjab in general, and rural areas in particular, was bound up with their identities as the direct descendants of the Holy Prophet, and predicated on the espousal of particular religious beliefs and a strict adherence to practices tied to those beliefs. While mostly revered and respected, we found that in villages across the different regions Syed women were especially expected to observe *pardab* norms. Even among affluent Syeds, and most of them were well-off since they were historically well-supported by local landlords<sup>42</sup>, and some Syed families had over the years saved enough to buy land, while girls were expected to stay home as soon they hit their prepubescent years. For instance, we interviewed the girls

---

<sup>41</sup> Literally meaning “stove, clay pot.”

<sup>42</sup> Landlords provided grain, cloth, and cash sometimes in return for religious and healing services, but also as a sign of reverence for the Holy Prophet’s descendants.

from one Syed family in Mannki, District Hafizabad, who said, “We are quite fed up with our caste,” much to the horror of their mother. These girls were not allowed to go to school or visit other girls in the neighbourhood in a context where girls and young women in the village roamed around quite freely.

From such a perspective, Zehra and Majida’s success in attaining their education was a monumental achievement. It probably helped that Majida was raised in Rawalpindi, and Zehra in a Central Punjab village that was relatively developed and not far from a major industrial city, Faisalabad. When Zehra was growing up in Akalipur, a few girls and young women from well-off families among other kinship groups, such as the Dogars who controlled the thriving industrial goods transportation industry, and the Arains, who combined agricultural livelihoods with jobs requiring higher educational degrees, were even going off to Lahore, the provincial capital, to attend college. Zehra spoke of how the stories about these girls and women helped to strengthen her resolve much in the manner that her example helped to break the barriers for younger Syed girls in her area.

The motif of resistance in the life-stories of the three headmistresses persisted in their representations of their lives as educators. Zehra Khatoon started to teach when she was single. There was again significant resistance from family members, in particular her father, but by that time Akalipur had its own girls’ school and community members had pressed her father to cave in, since they preferred that a “*Syedzaadi*,” the daughter of a Syed teach their children. After her marriage Zehra continued to teach, and she was somewhat bitter that her husband, her maternal uncle’s son, had never seriously pursued a vocation himself, since she brought in money regularly. When asked if she would quit her job if her husband were a more reliable provider, she reflectively answered that she would probably not, since she had fought so hard for it, and it had become her life, but she just resented the fact that her husband did not take enough responsibility.

In Majida’s case as well her being a Syed helped establish her career in the village; however, she seemed to enjoy more privileges than Zehra in part because of an effusive and warm side to her personality, but also because her in-law’s family was the only Syed family in the village. Additionally, Dhamyal was a more rooted and cohesive community than Akalipur. Whereas a large per cent of the population in Akalipur had settled there in the post-1947 partition years,

and the community structures appeared more fragmented and somewhat urbanised, people in Dhamyal retained more respect for feudal and religion-based hierarchies. The *Kammi Kameen* in Dhamyal, for instance, offered Majida their services, at times of their volition, and sometimes at the behest of the landlords, for free on a regular basis: they brought her water when her pump was out of order; cleaned her house, gathered vegetables for her from the fields, slaughtered her chickens, and assisted in the cooking of meals. Zehra had to use her authority as the headmistress to get her students and their families to do her similar favours, and in doing so faced criticism, and even confrontations with members of her community (see next section). While the theme of Zehra exploiting her student and their families dominated peoples' discussions of the schools in Akalipur, we found only very little objection to Majida's modus operandi in Dhamyal and generally high praise for her efforts as a teacher in the past in the government school and as the headmistress of the private school.

The young Majida's initiative to set up the first government elementary school in the village, a short while after her move to Dhamyal had received popular and ardent support. A few landlords did oppose the move and tried to block the opening of the school, but Majida, with the help of her father, used her city connections to lobby against that opposition and succeeded in her ambition. Eventually, after 25 years of running the school, she retired and with money her husband earned through his religious healing practice in the Middle East she started her own school for boys and girls. She even had a few scholarships specifically for the education of *Kammi Kameen* girls, and again a few landlords in the village did not approve of this scheme. Once more, Majida's status as a Syed, and her savvy negotiation style which, in her words, combined a bit of flattery with defiance, helped her to continue in her own way. As a Syed, her family received their yearly provision of staple grains from local landed families – Majida told us that their family never had to purchase wheat or corn – and even the landlords who disagreed with her philosophy of promoting education for the poor and the lower castes continued to send in their share.

Sardar Begum, like Zehra, began teaching when she was unmarried and still living with her parents. As the daughter of an influential landlord in the region, however, she set up a school in the courtyard of her house. After she got married, her husband was quite supportive of her desire to continue teaching, but her husband's father saw this as a violation of his respectable family's code of honour. When there was a vacancy in the local government school, Sardar

applied for the position and got it. From then on a power struggle between Sardar and her father-in-law was set into motion that had lasted 15 years since she started teaching. Initially, as the “head of household” he attempted to persuade his son to stop his wife from working in the school, but Sardar’s husband refused to co-operate. Giving up direct intervention as the reigning patriarch, Sardar’s father-in-law, an influential landlord himself, with linkages to many public officers in the city, had then over the years embarked on a series of initiatives to either close down the girls’ school in the village or get Sardar transferred. (The rationale for the latter was that if Sardar got a job away from the village she would have to resign). Sardar with the help of connections she had through her father and brothers managed to block each attempt to sabotage her teaching career. She told us laughingly that the entire Punjab Education Department had become her ally. Ironically, her father-in-law’s interference had actually served to consolidate her status.

The three teachers therefore, displayed, a remarkable perseverance; they attained their goals and maintained their lifestyles, despite various degrees of opposition, and even outright conflict, in their lives. They also seemed to be committed to the education of their students: Sardar, like Majida, encouraged *Kammi Kameen* girls to continue their education, raising funds through community-based initiatives for their books and uniform. Zehra Begum’s commitment to her students appeared to extend beyond their schooling to their general well-being even as adults: her act of bringing together her relatively poorer students for our focus group was primarily a well-intentioned act. Also, the very presence of these women in their contexts shaped other peoples’ conceptions of women’s education and place. Our survey showed that villages with functional government schools for girls, especially when the teachers were active members of their communities, yielded more positive perspectives on girls’ formal education, even if there were gripes against those teachers or disapproval of gendered transgressions (see Chaudhry 2009). The women’s determined pursuit of their ambitions thus had definite reverberations that went beyond their individual lives. Their resistance to gendered norms pertaining to formal education and women’s employment could not be dismissed as inconsequential or “peripheral” to the communities they inhabited (Nagar 2000, p. 583).

Yet, despite the multi-layered impact of the three women’s interruptions and re-inscriptions of gendered codes, their performance as women striving for and achieving status in their

communities in ways that had been deemed as exceptional or deviant for women has to be situated within the kinship, class, and religion based hierarchies framing their lives. Their perceived difference from other women cannot be merely interpreted as individual triumphs, since this difference very visibly intersected with other relations of domination and subjugation in their particular communities as well as larger rural Punjab in general. Even if their status because of their gender remained “ambiguously hegemonic” (DuPlessis 1990, p. 7), the performance of their difference or “specialness” was predicated not just upon their affiliation with affluent, relatively well-educated families with strong kinship-based networks or highly respected caste backgrounds, but on actively utilizing classist and religious discourses and norms to perpetuate unequal power relations.

This was more obvious in the case of the two Syed teachers, Zehra and Majida, who used their status as teachers to extract favours from their students and their families, and to disseminate a punitive gendered brand of Islam among their students with their fixation on the correct placement of *dopattas*. Majida, especially, shocked members of the research team with her enthusiastic endorsement of the murder of the young woman from the landlord family who was supposed to be having an affair with a man from a *Kammi Kameen* family (see section on “Flowers;” see also Chaudhry 2008b, for an in-depth treatment of that specific interaction with Majida). There were also glaring contradictions between the egalitarian and philanthropic views espoused by Sardar and Zehra, and their actual behaviour towards their students and families. We did not see Sardar administer corporal punishment, but she did not allow women from *Kammi Kameen* backgrounds to sit on the chairs next to us. The *Kammi Kameen* families in Sardar’s village Raheema spoke of her discriminatory treatment towards their children in a vein similar to the Christian families in Zehra’s village, Akalipur, who pulled their daughters out of the government school because the headmistress segregated them from Muslim children.

The “queens”, hence, asserted their power over the children in their jurisdiction in a manner that was reminiscent of the way in which the Pakistani state and other multi-levelled patriarchies structuring life in Pakistan, especially since the 1980s, have attempted to monitor and control the bodies of women and others seen as minorities, especially Christians, through the usage of discourses attributed to Islam or traceable to feudal constructs of honour and respect (see Jalal 1994; Khattak 1994; Rouse 1998). While their resistance cannot be

summarily dismissed, it has to be read in conjunction with the contradictions engendered by their social positioning and their complicity with relations of domination and subjugation in their locales and the larger context of postcolonial rural Punjab.

*Goons*

“So how is this survey going to help us? Is this just *likhat purbat*<sup>43</sup> or can we expect some results?” The old woman who had asked us to call her Mai Dahay proceeded to answer her own question, while the family members who lived with her, an assortment of grandchildren, children, and the children’s spouses, giggled or snickered. “Of course there will be no results. I am not foolish, but you must be foolish if you think our kind can be helped with surveys. As long as there are the landlords, the poor will not have enough to eat. Even during the floods, they swallow up all the aid.”

Mai Dahay’s son and the son-in-law sitting across us on a cot nodded their heads and uttered grunts of agreement. Nadia and I were sitting on a cot next to Mai. We had just finished household and community level questionnaires with this *Kammi Kameen* family who lived on the periphery of the most peripheral *basti* in Tibba Channa. Mai Dahay earned her living primarily as a birth attendant, while her son and sons-in-law transported bricks from kilns to construction sites on their donkey carts. The men had worked in Karachi for a while as labourers, but the armed violence there had driven them back to Southern Punjab. The younger women in the household had small children, so they only worked outside the home during the cotton and wheat harvests, but they tended the animals the family owned or raised for other people. Mai Dahay seemed to rule the household with an iron hand: everyone’s earnings were handed over to her. She completely dominated the conversation with us; others only interjected occasionally.

As we took our leave, Mai and her son-in-law told us about the unfortunate television license inspector who had visited them just a few weeks before our field-work (the Dahay family owned a small battery-run television, a present from a landlord in a nearby village whose son Mai delivered). Mai had set her dogs on him. We were told that we were spared because we

---

<sup>43</sup> Literally meaning “writing reading,” the phrase is meant to convey a dismissal of the value and impact of paperwork.

seemed harmless and likeable, even though the exercise we were putting people through, that is, our research project, was ultimately futile.

Later, as we conducted interviews in other households in the *Kammi Kameen* neighbourhood, feeling quite relieved at escaping the fate of the license inspector, Nadia and I found out that people in her neighbourhood regarded Mai Dahay with a mixture of awe and trepidation. She had a reputation for effortlessly delivering babies and miraculously saving mothers' lives in the face of great odds. She was also admired for the way she ran her family; even though she controlled the household finances, and her son continued to be the apple of her eye, she ensured that the younger women, including her daughter-in-law, had decision-making power in the family. She was a role model for at least the aspiring matriarchs, younger women who cited her example to their mothers-in-law. The unease she evoked in her neighbours was born out of her too blunt, even abrasive manner, her acute sense of territoriality (any chickens who wandered into her courtyard became the family's dinner), and her easy, even friendly terms with the local powers-that-be, the landlord Channa families in the central *basti* in Tibba Channa. Some of the younger men in the neighbourhood, especially, referred to her as merely "the landlords' dog." These vocal young people, critical of feudal authority, had been prevented by the Jams from voting in the local body elections held a short while before our fieldwork; their national identity cards, which were essential to the voting process, had been snatched from them (the research team found similar stories of identity cards being taken away before the elections by the Jams and the local Baloch influentials in the Baloch *bastis* in Tibba Channa if they suspected people were not going to vote for candidates they supported).

Even during the interview with us, Mai Dahay and her family had said mostly positive things about their landlord benefactors. One of the landlords had given them the land to build the house they lived in after their earlier house in the nearby small town had been swallowed up by the River Chenab when it changed course (later we found out when we saw the records of the village that the Dahay house was in actuality built on government land; we could not ascertain whether the landlords purposefully lied to the *Kammi Kameen* families, or just failed to dispel a prevalent misperception about the ownership of the land). The Dahay family also clearly stated that they had supported the Jams during the elections. Only towards the very end, after I had put my pen away, did Mai bring up the issue of the outcome of our study and her observations about landlord power.

Through accounts we gathered from the Dahay family as well as their neighbours, the Dahay household had created a space for themselves in Tibba Channa by forging a server provider relationship with the rich Jams. The few initial years in the village were quite difficult as the household explored various livelihood opportunities. Although at that time the “male head of the household” was alive, the children gave credit to their mother for keeping them together. Over the years, in addition to delivering babies and bricks from the kiln, the Dahay family, mostly Mai, had started to deliver messages from the Jams to other residents in the *Kammi Kameen* lane: the “landlords’s dog” was known to threaten dissidents with her dogs. Still, even her greatest critics grudgingly admitted that Mai offered her services at births in their neighbourhood free of charge, and was very tender towards newborns and their mothers.

Our fieldwork afforded only one other opportunity to get a multi-perspectivist look at another woman who appeared to be terrorizing people around her, although we did hear about a “widow” in Maanki, District Hafizabad, who was rumoured to be a ruthless money-lender and complicit with landlords who used bonded labourers on their fields and brick-kilns. Tahira Jatti<sup>44</sup> in Akalipur, District Faisalabad, was a self-proclaimed *gunda* (goon), who had occupied a piece of public land on the periphery of the village to raise her animals, store her grain, and house any offspring who was out of favour. The village had won the court case against Tahira, but she somehow continued to come up with stay orders against her evacuation. Tahira told us that she was well-connected with court officials as well as district management bureaucrats. Other women in the village, mostly poor women from lower caste and Christian families whose dwellings bordered the land Tahira had illegally occupied, called her a *badmaash*<sup>45</sup>, who used her police connections to harass them and even extract money. Tahira’s youngest daughter Yasmin had joined the police academy as a trainee a few months before our visit, and this had further alarmed Tahira’s persecuted neighbours.

Nadia and I were in the midst of interviewing Kausar, a serious woman in her thirties or so, and her brother, Razak, who was a few years younger, who were Jat by caste, on what we later found out was the infamous plot of land, when a tall woman of indeterminate age with a

---

<sup>44</sup> Jat is a Punjabi kinship group or caste. Jatti represents a feminization of the caste name. Tahira used Jatti as a last name for herself.

<sup>45</sup> In this context the word means “miscreant.”

rather regal bearing entered through the makeshift gate ushering four goats in front of her. The newcomer smiled at us and announced, “I am Tahira Jatti.” She extended a hand to each of us, so we shook hands and introduced ourselves, quite enthralled by the warmth and energy exuding from the woman. Kausar, who appeared rather despondent in comparison, murmured that Tahira was her mother.

Tahira joined the conversation. She sat on the cot next to us, while Kausar and Razak continued to sit in front of us on the ground. While earlier we had been mostly talking about village dynamics and institutions in our bid to get a “Jat perspective”, Tahira also filled us in on how her personal history and how the history of her family fit into larger village happenings. She told us that her family had migrated during the 1947 partition. She had been married off to another Jat when she was quite young, because in those uncertain days after independence her brothers did not want to take the responsibility for her security. Her husband had recently died of meningitis. Yes, she agreed with everyone that the doctors around were inept, but then it was God’s will that the man had to leave this world. She told us that of all her children – she had three sons and five daughters – only the youngest one Yasmin had finished school. Both Kausar and Razak cringed when she told us that they had dropped out of school, despite her best intentions as a poverty-stricken mother. Kausar and her children lived with Tahira because her husband was seriously sick and could not work.

When we asked her if she had any reservations about her daughter Yasmin working for the police, Tahira embarked on an impassioned, yet studied monologue. She said that the people in the village did not approve of her daughter working in the police department and called it a “*gunda*” department, because there were a lot of unsavoury characters, all men, working in that department. Her response to these people was that she herself was a man and a *gunda*, because everything depended on what you were internally in your thoughts and your *nayyat* (intentions) and how you regarded yourself. “Look at you girls,” pointing to Nadia and I, “you go around interviewing people, but your *izzat* (respect) is in your eyes. If you had a lot of make-up or put *surma* (kohl) in your eyes, men would follow you around. But you do not seem to be that way.”

Nadia and I spent most of that day with Tahira Jatti. She took us through the village to her “legal” home near the central square. Although we refused the mid-day meal (we tried not to

put our research participants out) we graciously accepted the tea Kausar made for us. Tahira was the one who talked the most, but over the afternoon neighbourhood young men, two Syed and others from Jat backgrounds, who seemed to adore Tahira, dropped by and contributed to the discussion. The young men also evidenced a deep regard and respect for their Yasmin *Baji*, their adopted older sister, whom they said was “different,” like a “sufi.”

Throughout that afternoon light-hearted banter co-existed with serious analyses of village politics and events with nuggets such “men can never be good”, “these boys play cricket all day, but it’s not their fault there are no jobs for them”, and, “we need to control the population” offered by Tahira generously sprinkled through it all. Tahira gave her succinct views on how so-called higher standards of living were responsible for the increase in poverty: employment opportunities had not kept pace with the perceived need for more money. “People now use *ghee*, ginger, tomatoes in simple everyday *bandi*<sup>46</sup>. They want dozen clothes. There want fans, TVs, fridges.” Their village had been completely electrified ten years ago, only a few *Kammi Kameen* and Christian households still lacked electricity. With the advent of the light bulb, according to Tahira, had come the intimation of scarcity.

Tahira and her young friends also talked gleefully about their coup d’état during the recent local bodies elections. Shaukat *lumberdar*,<sup>47</sup> one of the village level revenue officials, had contested the elections, and because of Tahira’s interventions he had lost the election to his young opponent from a Syed family. Shaukat, also a Jat, had offended Tahira when he had sided with the in-laws of one of her daughters: the in-laws had sent the police after Tahira’s daughter. The Syeds had helped Tahira in her campaign against Shaukat, which resulted in a splitting of Jat votes. Tahira declared as the young men cheered her on that only her lack of formal education had kept her back, otherwise she would have occupied the DIG’s (District Inspector General of police) office.

We had to terminate the gaiety quite reluctantly when a relatively older Syed man showed up and tried to flirt with us in English. Averting our eyes in the proper modest manner, while

---

<sup>46</sup> Technically a baked clay pot used for cooking, but is also used to refer to a meal.

<sup>47</sup> A variation of the title “numberdar” which literally means one who keeps numbers. This post is a residue of the colonial past. Numberdars are basically liaisons between the village and administrative officials. They keep records in the village and assist in tax collection. Larger villages have more than one numberdar. See Whitworth (1885).

Tahira watched approvingly, we took our leave, promising to keep in touch. Tahira, despite her claim to manhood, evidenced a strong belief in the modesty of womanhood.

Tahira continued to be very friendly and available to our research team throughout our time in Akalipur, even as we continued to hear how she terrorized mostly the weak in the village, although she had also caused some disturbance in more powerful quarters. The staff at the Basic Health Unit in the village, for example, swore that they would never let her come into their premises again as well as the government school for girls. We, therefore, remained wary of her offer of “protection:” we were told to come to her if someone tried to bother us in the village. Still, team members greeted her on the street or dropped by to ask for directions or clarification. Nadia and another research assistant also went back to her home for a follow-up interview to further probe issues brought up during our first interaction. Her youngest daughter Yasmin was present during that interview as well. In addition to hearing about Tahira’s plans for Yasmin’s future in the local *thana* (police building) the research team got to know about Tahira and Yasmin’s experiences with the local policemen, the private and government medical providers, and the local schools. Among other riveting stories, Tahira narrated how she took on the quack, *lumberdar’s* brother who ran a private dispensary, for selling expired drugs, and the headmistress in the government girls’ school for making students, including Yasmin, clean her house.

Tahira Jatti’s performance as “goon,” then, appeared to encompass a broader range of issues and contexts than Mai Dahay services for the Jam and protection of her family’s interests, although both women were strikingly similar in their expansive presence, sense of humour, and keen intelligence. They both thoroughly enjoyed sharing their views and critiques with us, and were among the most critically analytical thinkers among the research participants we encountered, regardless of their gender, during our fieldwork. While both women enacted a type of intimidation and undertook practices as troublemakers that are generally linked to masculine subject positions, Mai Dahay’s targeted chiefly the poor, and, despite her subtle critiques, was overtly co-operative with the ruling segment of her village. This key difference in the two women’s range of their performances as masculinised terrorising selves can be mainly attributed to differences between the nature and contours of patriarchal authority and relations of ruling in rural Southern and Central Punjab.

Tibba Channa's rigid feudal structure and the almost absolute power the Jams exercised over the bodies of the poor and the landless in the village allowed little possibility for challenging the relations of domination and subjugation. Mai Dahay's deviance from gender norms, and her attempt at negotiating power relations, thus remained restricted to taking on a role associated with men only in contexts where she had the support of the feudal powers. On the other hand, the more fragmented community basis and loose nature of authority structures in Akalipur provided Tahira Jatti more rein for her coercion and subversion. The very fact that her village itself was electrified and had paved streets, and was connected to district headquarters and other key towns in the region through easily accessible roads and transportation allowed for a broader scope of her activities. Tahira Jatti's espousal of norms for proper maidenly conduct did at first appear at odds with the relatively "modern" context of her life as well as her deviance from gender norms. However, both her stance towards the playing down of women's sexuality and her sense of entitlement towards her self-chosen role as corrupt transgressor and trespasser were curiously reflective of discourses associated with the relations of ruling in the postcolonial nation-state (Khattak 1994), relations that remain characterized by the domination of Central Punjab (Jalal 1994; Rouse 1998). The taking on and taking up of power for Tahira Jatti involved controlling land, money, and women's bodies, even as she championed the cause of greater mobility and livelihood opportunities for women.

### *Concluding Remarks*

This paper centres on the constructions and experiences of girls and women who defy gender norms and are perceived as deviant, difficult, or different by their communities in rural Punjab in order to challenge the stereotype of the passive Pakistani rural woman, even as it pluralizes and historicizes these performances of rebellious, unruly selves by attending to the locations of these girls and women within multi-layered relations of domination and subjugation. Motivated by critiques of imperialist research paradigms<sup>48</sup> and suggestions for alternatives to these drawn primarily from feminist anthropology (for instance, Behar 1993; Villenas 1996; Visweswaran 1994), and feminist geography (for instance, Besio 2005; Katz 2001; Nagar

---

<sup>48</sup> The ongoing feminist project of destabilizing imperialist epistemological and methodological approaches involves reframing knowledge-production exercises at different levels, from the conceptualizing of the research project to its writing-up and finally its dissemination and application (see, Lather 1991). Broadly speaking, feminist researchers in different quarters have stressed the need for relational methodologies and representation strategies that make explicit this relational underpinning, plus the imperative to provide textured, in-depth, accounts of women's lives that highlight how women's experiences are shaped by multi-leveled power relations ranging from the local to the global (Katz 2001).

2000), I eschew sweeping generalisations about women's defiance of norms, and situate my field-based insights squarely within specific interactions and conversations generating the analysis, sharing with the reader the particular threads and contours that help develop the argument tentatively put forth in this paper. Although eventually it is my voice, the voice of a "senior researcher" in the project that gets privileged in this write-up, the intent is to represent research participants as co-constructors of knowledge, including knowledge of their own and other peoples' agency, and its manifestations in various temporal and spatial contexts. This knowledge, like mine, remains partial; incomplete, fragmented, and even contradictory<sup>49</sup>, embedded within gendered discourses of proper conduct, appropriate "place", and respect, mediated by village level class and caste-based hierarchies, and configurations of identity and difference, which are in their turn shaped by more macro relations of power.

Even as the girls and women at the centre of this paper remain the "outsiders within" (Rouse 1998, p. 660) in the postcolonial nation-state<sup>50</sup> as well as their own communities, their efforts at actualising their desires, whether for more freedom, economic independence, creative expression, or simply power, are circumscribed by their class, caste, religious, and regional geographic positioning. The contours and scope of their agency, including its limitations, its contradictions, and its absence in certain contexts, are therefore facilitated by material realities created by the particular power relations framing their everyday lives. Following Abu-Lughod (1990; pp.41-55), accounts and performances of resistance can be used as "diagnostics of power," entry points to an understanding of the multiple forms of violence, structural<sup>51</sup> and direct, that framed the deviance as well as the norms upholding the status quo in various parts of postcolonial rural Punjab.

The two "flowers", girls who wandered into out-of-bound spaces, and spoke of taboo topics, risked different kinds of consequences when they defied boundaries. Farzana's membership in the ruling kinship group afforded her some protection, although that security remained contingent on the presence of her father. The vivacious Saadia's *Kammi Kameen* background made her more vulnerable to direct physical threats. For the sensitive Farzana, her residence in

---

<sup>49</sup> See Jackson (2008) for an illuminating discussion of the interview as a space where truth-telling, reflection, desire, and performance are all entangled.

<sup>50</sup> For broader analyses of women's relationship to citizenship and masculinist nation-state discourses, see Yuval-Davis (1997).

<sup>51</sup> Structural violence refers to the systemic "everyday forms of violence that become normalized and naturalized" (Chaudhry, 2004, p. 260).

a remote village in Southern Punjab made neglect a more likely outcome, represented, for instance, by moves on the part of household members to withdraw financial support for healthcare, as they did in the case of her tuberculosis stricken father. As young unmarried women/girls from poorer families, their courage, competence, and creativity notwithstanding, they were representatives of the most vulnerable segment of the rural female population, both in terms of the risk of direct physical harm and the slower but also potentially fatal structural abandonment (see Chaudhry 2009).

The “queens” rise to power as headmistresses denote their years of struggle against gender norms that seek to restrict women’s mobility and their vocation in life to domestic spaces. Yet their individual sagas of resistance and their initiatives to extend the educational horizons of their students, including those from poor and *Kammi Kameen* families, remains qualified by their enmeshment within postcolonial webs of powers. Not only was their agency, including their rebellion, made possible through the class and caste positioning of their families in Northern and Central Punjab, but they themselves subscribed to hierarchical modes of thought, replicating religion, class, caste, and gender-based discriminatory practices, which could be classified as violence, within their classrooms and in their interactions with other villagers.

The two “goons”, definitely more critically reflexive about their stances and conduct than the three headmistresses, nevertheless acquired their status as powerful women in their contexts, through strategic alliances with the ruling classes, and the harassment of the least powerful strata in their regions. Their critical understanding of oppressive structures and their own place and relationship with respect to these led them to carve out niches for themselves within systems of inequality generated by those structures. By virtue of her positioning in Central Punjab, with its more dispersed multiple power bases, Tahira Jatti’s performance of unwomanly conduct as an aggressive troublemaker exhibited a wider scope: she organised to challenge the ascendancy of a local influential and took over public property in addition to terrorising women from *Kammi Kameen* and Christian households. However, for Tahira, and for Mai Dahay, who did display some solidarity with the lower classes and other women through her compassion and assistance towards women giving birth in her neighbourhood, dominance was maintained by adhering to the corrupt and violent norms and practices of the masculinist, patriarchal cultures in which their lives were embedded.

Ultimately, the challenges to gendered norms enacted by my research participants did not fundamentally subvert the status quo or radically overhaul the heterosexual contract in their contexts. Possibilities of justice and egalitarian change were overwhelmed by postcolonial realities: the collusion of multi-levelled power relations, from the local to the national to the global, ensure that Third World women's bodies remain restricted to their proper place. The girls' success at generating spaces of relative freedom in the midst of intense gendered violence continued to be precarious, while the women's entanglement with hegemonic norms and discourses in their communities, including norms that justified harm to the weak and discourses attributed to Islam that sought to control female bodies, forestalled the potential of sustained, more widespread transformation of gender norms. The disruption or interruption of gender norms in these cases, then, were either overshadowed by the threat of violence, or co-opted by the imposition of others vector of identities, such as caste, class, or affiliation with repressive state apparatuses, such as the police, in Tahira Jatti's case, that further reinforced relations of domination and subjugation.

Still, keeping in mind Sarkar's (2004, p. 318) caution against "looking for feminism," the imposition of *our* norms on our research participants, I want to conclude this paper by reiterating the significance of attempting to understand rural Punjabi women's deviance, regardless of its perceived efficaciousness, within the specificity of their life circumstances, and their social and geographical locations. The focus on resistance and transgression helps to debunk myths of the passive rural Muslim woman: the strength and capacity for critical consciousness of the girls and women represented in this discussion remains unquestionable. In addition, the contextualisation of that resistance within postcolonial relations of power, shows how the violence in and around their lives constrains women's agency, but also constitutes them as subjects who derive their agency as members of a particular caste, class, village, and region. What is, in fact, highlighted is the imperative for feminist scholarly and advocacy enterprises to work with notions of empowerment that interpellate women simultaneously as unique, thinking individuals, and experiencing members of particular stratified communities framed by larger national and global histories, in order to challenge structural impediments to women's agency in particular contexts. In the global post 9/11 anti-Muslim scenarios, where as Brohi (2008) points out, Pakistani women's voices, cast as either expressing oppression or agency, are reduced to fodder for the propping up of Orientalist

discourses, it is even more pressing that our accounts and theorizing be based on nuanced, detailed accounts that resist the “mundane othering of so-called terrorist parts of the world” (Chaudhry and Bertram, 2009, p. 309).

## References

Abu-Lughod, L. 1990, 'The romance of resistance: Tracing transformations of power through Bedouin women', *American Ethnologist*, vol.17, no. 1, pp. 41-55.

Ahmad, A. 2006, *Sorrow and joy among Muslim women: The Pukhtuns of Northern Pakistan*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Alavi, H. 1989, 'Formation of the social structure of South Asia under the impact of colonialism', in H. Alavi and J. Harris (eds.), *South Asia: Sociology of developing societies*, Monthly Review Press, New York.

Alavi, H. 1983, 'Elite farmer strategy and regional disparities in agricultural development', in H. Gardezi & J. Rashid (eds.), *Pakistan: The roots of dictatorship*, Zed Press, London.

Aldama, A. J. and Quinonez, N. 2002, *Decolonial voices: Chicana and chicano cultural Studies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Indiana University Press, Indiana, Bloomington.

Ali, I. 1988, *The Punjab under imperialism, 1885-1947*, Princeton University Press, NJ Princeton.

Arif, G.M. and Ahmad, M. 2001, 'Poverty across the agro-ecological zones in rural Pakistan', in I. Hussain and E. Biltonen (eds.), *Irrigation against rural poverty: An overview of issues and pro-poor intervention strategies in irrigated agriculture in Asia*, International Water Management Institute, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Behar, Ruth 1993, *Translated woman: Crossing the border with Esperanza's story*, Beacon Press, Boston.

Besio, K. 2005, 'Telling stories to hear auto-ethnography: Researching women's lives in Northern Pakistan', *Gender, Place, and Culture*, vol.12, no. 3, pp. 317-331.

Brohi, N. 2008, 'At the altar of subalternity: The quest for Muslim women in the War on Terror', *Cultural Dynamics*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp.133-147.

- Chaudhry, L. N. 2009, 'Women and poverty: Salient findings from a gendered analysis of a quasi-anthropological study in rural Sindh and Punjab', in S. Ahmad, (ed.), *Pakistani women: Multiple locations and competing narratives*, Oxford University Press, Karachi.
- Chaudhry, L. N. 2008a, 'Mapping women's agency: On violence, difference, and silence in a village in Southern Punjab, Pakistan', in R. Coomaraswamy and N. Rajasingham (eds.), *Constellations of violence: Feminist intervention in South Asia*, International Centre for Ethnic Studies and Women Unlimited, Colombo and New Delhi.
- Chaudhry, L. N. 2008b, 'Forays into the mist: Violences, voices, vignettes', in A. Jackson and L. Mazzei (eds.), *Voice in qualitative inquiry: Challenging conventional, interpretive, and critical conceptions in qualitative research*, Routledge, London and New York.
- Chaudhry, L.N. 2004, 'Reconstituting selves in the Karachi conflict: Mohajir women survivors and structural violence', *Cultural Dynamics*, vol.16, nos.2/3, pp. 259-290.
- Chaudhry, L.N. & Bertram, C. 2009, 'Narrating trauma and reconstruction in post-conflict Karachi: Feminist liberation psychology and the contours of agency in the margins', *Feminism and Psychology*, vol.19, no. 3, pp. 298-312.
- Cheesman, D. 1997, *Landlord power and rural indebtedness in colonial Sindh: 1865-1901*, Curzon Press, Richmond, UK.
- Davies, B. & Davies, C. 2007, 'Having, and being had by, "experience" Or, "experience" in the Social Sciences after the discursive/poststructuralist turn', *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol.13, no. 8, pp. 1139-1159.
- DuPlessis, R. 1990, *The pink guitar: writing as feminist practice*, Routledge, London.
- Gardezi, H. N. 1983, 'Feudal and capitalist relations in Pakistan', in H. Gardezi and J. Rashid (eds.), *Pakistan: The roots of dictatorship*, Zed Press, London.
- Jackson, A. Y. 2008, "'What am I doing when I speak of this present?": Voice, power, and desire in truth-telling', in A. Jackson and L. Mazzei (eds.), *Voice in Qualitative Inquiry*:

*Challenging conventional, interpretive, and critical conceptions in qualitative research*, Routledge, London and New York.

Jagger, G. 2008, *Judith Butler: Sexual politics, social change, and the power of the performative*, Routledge, London and New York.

Jalal, A. 1994, 'The state and political privilege in Pakistan', in M. Weiner and A. Banuazizi (eds.), *The politics of social transformation in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan*, pp. 152-183, Syracuse University Press, New York.

Joseph, S. 1993, 'Connectivity and patriarchy among urban working-class Arab families in Lebanon', *Ethos*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 452-484.

Katz, C. 2001, 'On the grounds of globalisation: a topography for feminist political Engagement', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 1213-1235.

Khan, N. S. 1995, 'The political economy of Pakistan: An overview', in N. S. Khan and A.S. Zia (eds.), *Unveiling the issues: pakistani women's perspectives on social, political, and ideological issues*, ASR Publications, Lahore.

Khan, S. 2006, *Zina, transnational feminism, and the moral regulation of Pakistani women*, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, Canada.

Khattak, S. G. 1994, 'A reinterpretation of the state and statist discourse in Pakistan', in S. Khan, R. Saigol and A.S. Zia (eds.), *Locating the self: Perspectives on women and multiple identities*, ASR Publications, Lahore, Pakistan.

Kovarik, C.A. 2005, *Interviews with Muslim women of Pakistan*, Syren Book Company, Minneapolis.

Lather. P. 1991, *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*, Routledge, New York.

- Mahmood, S. 2005, 'Feminist theory, agency, and the liberatory subject,' in F. Nourie-Simone (ed.), *On shifting ground: Muslim women in the global era*, Feminist Press, City University of New York, New York.
- Mernissi, F. 1997, *The forgotten queens of Islam*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN.
- Mohanram, R. 1999, *Black body: women, colonialism, and space*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN.
- Mumtaz, Z. 2009, 'Understanding gendered influences on women's reproductive health in Pakistan: Moving beyond the autonomy paradigm', *Social Science and Medicine*, vol. 68, pp.1349-1356.
- Nagar, R. 2000, 'I'd rather be rude than ruled: Gender, place, and communal politics among South Asian communities in Dar Es Salaam', *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol.23, no. 5, pp. 571-585.
- Narayan, U. 1997, *Dislocating cultures: Identities, traditions, and third World feminism*, Routledge, New York and London.
- Roseberry, J. R. 1987, *Imperial rule in Punjab: 1818-1881*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi.
- Rouse, S. 1998, 'The outsider(s) within: Sovereignty and citizenship in Pakistan', in P. Jeffrey and A. Basu (eds.), *Appropriating gender: Women's activism and politicized gender in South Asia*, , Routledge, New York.
- Rouse, S. 1983, 'Systemic injustices and inequalities: Maliki and Raiya in a Punjab village', in H. Gardezi and J. Rashid (eds.), *Pakistan: The roots of dictatorship*, Zed Press, London.
- Sangari, K. and Vaid, S. 1989, (eds.) *Recasting women: Essays in colonial history*, Kali for Women, New Delhi.
- Sarkar, M. 2004, 'Looking for feminism', *Gender and History*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 318-333.

- Sempruch, J. 2004, 'Feminist constructions of the "witch" as a fantasmatic other', *Body and Society*, vol.10, no. 4, pp. 113-133.
- Scott, J. 1992, *Domination and the arts of resistance: Hidden transcripts*, Yale University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Van Vleet, K. 2003, 'Partial theories: On gossip, envy and ethnography in the Andes', *Ethnography*, vol. 4, no.4, pp. 491-519.
- Whitworth, J. C. 1885, *An Anglo-Indian dictionary: A glossary*, Kegan Paul, London.
- Villenas, S. 1996, 'The colonizer/colonized Chicana ethnographer: Identity, marginalization, and co-optation in the field', *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 66, no. 4, pp. 711-731.
- Viswesweran, K. 1994, *Fictions of feminist ethnography*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- World Bank 2002, *Pakistan qualitative poverty survey, 2001*, World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- Yuval-Davis, N. 1997, *Gender and Nation*, Sage Publications, London.
- Zine, J. 2002, 'Muslim women and the politics of representation', *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, vol.19, no. 4, pp. 1-22.
- Zubair, S. 2004, 'Qualitative methods in researching women's literacy: A case study,' in A. Robinson-Pant (ed.), *Women, literacy, and development: Alternative perspectives*, Routledge, London.
- Zubair, S. 2001, 'Literacies, gender, and power in rural Pakistan', in B.V. Street (ed.), *Literacy and development: Ethnographic perspectives*, Routledge, London.

# Discourse, Donors and Development: The Policy Conundrum in Pakistan

*Raza Ahmad and Ammar Rashid\**

## Abstract

*“At a recent meeting with a recent Finance Minister of Pakistan, some of our best economists came up with the refrain that ‘Research and inquiry is not necessary, we know it all. We need to act and not think.’ Alternatively, ‘we know it all.’ (Haque 2010)*

The issues relating to development discourse constructed by individuals and institutions of the North are well known. The public policy process in Pakistan, not unlike several developing countries, is now a contested arena dominated by international donors, especially the international finance institutions (IFIs). At the heart of the matter remains the moribund and depleted capacity within the state to support evidence-based policymaking processes. This has rendered the policy process and allied policy dialogue trapped in the neo-liberal discursive framework where citizens are consumers of global finance, users or customers based on the research frameworks employed. The lack of representative and responsive policymaking results in the disempowerment of the citizens undermining their entitlements. The continued absence or dysfunction of elected institutions compounds this trend. This paper undertakes a brief assessment of the complexity of the public policy process at the national and provincial levels in Pakistan to set the context and argues that the use of conditionality and donor prescriptions distorts policy making. Not unlike other developing countries, a nexus between academics, consultants and the mighty executive often is an area of inquiry that has been hitherto left unexplored in the context of Pakistan. The top-down, non-participatory and executive oriented developmentalism ends up retaining the status quo and, further undermines the national capacity to undertake research and set participatory policy priorities. At the end, the paper presents a set of options for the policy makers to consider if the entrenched information and knowledge asymmetries are to be rectified.

---

\* Raza Ahmad is a development practitioner and researcher based in Lahore. Raza has worked with the Asian Development Bank, United Nations and the Government of Pakistan. He is also a journalist and writes under the name de plume Raza Rumi.

Raza Ahmad is on long leave from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The views expressed in this paper are the views of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of ADB, or its Board of Governors, or the governments they represent. ADB does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this paper and accepts no responsibility for any consequence of their use. The countries listed in this paper do not imply any view on ADB's part as to sovereignty or independent status or necessarily conform to ADB's terminology.

\*\* Ammar Rashid is a Research Associate at the Development Policy Research Centre, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). Ammar Rashid provided valuable contributions and feedback during the writing of this paper.

## Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AERC	Applied Economics Research Centre
ASPL	Agriculture Sector Programme Loan
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COSS	Council of Social Sciences
CREB	Centre for Research in Economics and Business
CSSR	Collective for Social Science Research
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LEAD	Leadership for Environment and Development
LSE	Lahore School of Economics
LUMS	Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)
NRB	National Reconstruction Bureau
PERI	Punjab Economic Research Institute
PIDE	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics
PSDP	Public Sector Development Programme
SDPI	Sustainable Development Policy Institute
SPDC	Social Policy Development Centre
TA	Technical Assistance
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme-United Nations

## **Part I            Introduction**

Given the multitude of development challenges that Pakistan faces, the need for substantive evidence-based policymaking in the country is especially dire. However, policy research in Pakistan is hampered by a number of structural factors, which have prevented the construction of meaningful policy solutions in the country for decades. The reasons for this predicament are complex and manifold and cannot meaningfully be addressed in their entirety within the scope of one paper; however, the seriousness of the situation warrants a basic academic inquiry that is cognizant of the theoretical and practical elements underpinning the matter.

This paper will attempt to analyse the predicament of development policy research in Pakistan through an analysis of its discursive elements, as theoretically articulated in academic and policymaking circles, as well as a review of the nature of development practice in the country.

### **The Discourse of Development**

Several researchers have viewed the articulation of power and development discourse as intertwined realities. “As practiced today, the development encounter ... amounts to an act of cognitive and social domination ... functioning as a mechanism of power for the production and management of the Third World” (Escobar (1991), quoted in Herath 2009, p. 1460).

It has been iterated by many that development discourse, in its Eurocentric origins, is a mere extension of the colonial relationships that existed between the capitalist core and the peripheral colonies, where exploitative economic extraction went hand in hand with notions of ‘civilising’ the natives in the image of the colonisers. To elaborate what development discourse entails and its impact on the policymaking process with respect to Pakistan, it may be necessary to undertake a brief historical analysis of its origins and development.

### **Development Practice**

Though many argue the concept has been in use since the Enlightenment era in Europe, the term was never applied in the context of the postcolonial, non-industrialised countries till the end of the Second World War. The origin of the notion of ‘development’ can be found in US President Harry S. Truman’s inaugural address to Congress in which he spoke of the

'underdevelopment' of the Third World and highlighted the need for advanced countries to combat this menace (Herath 2009, p. 1460). With the subsequent re-ordering of the international financial system along Keynesian lines, the reconstruction of Europe through the Marshall Plan, and the commencement of the Cold War, the development of the 'Third World' turned into a policy priority for the industrialised world. The execution of these policy priorities, strongly influenced by 'modernisation theory'<sup>1</sup> was carried out through the Washington Consensus and its key institutions, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.<sup>2</sup>

The management of both the institutions responsible for the development of the Third World, continues to be dominated by the industrialised economies. Over time, the two institutions have considerably increased their influence and involvement in developing economies, even as their roles have evolved over time. The IMF, through the conditionalities it attaches to its 'financing packages' for recipient countries and the World Bank, through its 'structural adjustment' programmes, have managed to exercise inordinate influence over the development processes of the Third World, far beyond even their own institutional financial capacity. In most cases, this has led to cuts in government services, rising unemployment, falling real wages, and elimination of essential subsidies in developing countries.

The discourse sustaining the role of these international financial institutions in developing countries was initially derived from the Harrod-Domar model of economic growth, which endorsed 'authoritative intervention' in the developing world on the part of developed economies. This model, an exposition on the ideal conditions for equilibrium between savings and investment, which it viewed as a pre-requisite for growth, upheld the 'modernisation' paradigm (Herath 2009, p. 1451). According to Herath 2009, such models subsequently came under criticism in the latter part of the century (the 1960s and 1970s) by institutionalists, who argued for a stronger role for the state in developing economies to foster the institutional and social reform necessary for economic growth. However, the orthodox growth theories gained strength following the 'neoliberal' counter-revolution in the 1980s. Neoliberalism, buttressed

---

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps best articulated by Rostow in 'The stages of economic growth: A non-communist manifesto' (1960), which laid out the developmental patterns that all developing economies 'must' follow.

<sup>2</sup> The sister institutions were structured to perform distinct roles; the IMF to stabilise the international system and finance balance of payment deficits, and the World Bank to undertake the reconstruction and development of member countries, particularly those of the developing world.

by the political might of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, espoused widespread economic deregulation, the opening of markets for foreign investment, reductions in government services and subsidies and large-scale privatisation of public assets. More importantly, this era heralded the wholesale depoliticisation of the development process, creating a fundamental disconnection and accountability gap between the makers and recipients of policy (Ibid).

The IFIs assumed the lead role in articulating and implementing neoliberal policies in the Third World. The results, for many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America unable to resist the policy advice of the powerful institutions, were often disastrous, with widespread debt crises, spikes in unemployment, and declines in income and living standards (Ibid., p. 1454). The cases of Argentina and the East Asian crisis of 1997 are especially relevant in this regard.

### **The Re-emergence of the State in Development Discourse**

Widespread disillusionment with the neoliberal paradigm following its disastrous consequences in the Third World as well as the failed 'shock therapy' offered to post-Soviet republics, led to the re-emergence of the state in development discourse during the 1990s. Increasing evidence especially from Asia indicated that a well-functioning state was a prerequisite for successful economic reform. Thus, the notion of 'good governance' as a precondition for socio-economic development now gained currency. Allowing donors to circumvent their erstwhile strictly non-political mandates, 'good governance' was rapidly adopted under an expanded donor agenda that now included participatory institutions, democratisation and human rights. The underlying bases of this newfound 'good governance' agenda, however, were the assumptions of the supremacy of market-based economic activity and western models of statehood (Debiel and Lambach 2008, p. 3).

In this new paradigm, the 'performance' of developing country governments, with respect to adherence to the appropriate policy prescriptions, economic reforms and structural adjustments, now became a criteria for the delivery of development assistance. Aid was now redirected towards countries that fulfilled or sought to fulfil the new performativity criteria and away from unstable and failing states (Ibid). This developmental disengagement from 'failing states' changed, however, following the 9/11 attacks, which refocused global attention

on such states. Development agencies throughout the Western world issued declarations on how development aid could be used to alleviate the supposed root causes of terrorism, such as fragile state institutions, poverty, or marginalisation (Ibid., p.4). This was followed by huge inflows of development assistance towards such cases.<sup>3</sup>

However, as pointed out, at the time of the modernisation theory paradigm, the assumption was that state-building was a natural process that would occur organically following decolonisation, whereas the new understanding ostensibly necessitated external intervention from the ‘international community’, albeit tempered with vague notions of ‘local ownership’ (Debiel and Lambach 2008, p.5). The exactitude of the meaning of this term has not yet reached fruition, but “in projects devised by donors and international development agencies, for example, some component of ‘community participation’ and ‘civil society participation’ has become a prerequisite for loans to be disbursed” (Zaidi 2005, p. 7). The merits of this approach will be looked at in some detail later in the paper.

Hence, the historical discourse and practical trajectory of development can be perceived to be one that is based on the imperatives of the North, undergoing subtle modifications as their requirements change, but retaining the same exploitative characteristics. This developmental relationship, however, would not be possible without the collusion of developing states, in need of financial sustenance without structural changes, and the local academia playing their respective roles. A common pattern in several developing countries is the weak and fledgling state of domestic policy research and above all the underfunded social science research. The next section takes the case of Pakistan – the focus of this paper – and shows how the gaps created by the collapsing state of public sector policy research have prepared the ground for appropriation of research agenda by the IFIs.

### **The State of Policy Research in Pakistan**

Any discussion on public policy would merit a brief comment on the fundamental problem that exists in most developing countries, including Pakistan; one of weak states dominated by local, often unaccountable, elites. In developing countries, “the political economy of state-

---

<sup>3</sup> A study by the IEG-MIGA (2006) reported that World Bank lending to LICUS (Low Income Countries under Stress) in the period between 2003 and 2005 had risen by 64 percent compared to the period 2000-02.

building is mainly shaped by the reproduction modes and legitimisation strategies of local elites which use the appropriation of material and immaterial (e.g. reputation) resources not only for enriching themselves but also for securing legitimacy from relevant segments of the population. Such elites may include actors of violence, revitalised traditional and religious authorities, - remnants of the former state administration, party officials, local businessmen, influential intellectuals, repatriates from the diaspora etc.” (Debiel and Lambach 2008, p. 1). By positioning themselves as alternative providers of public goods, these elites pose as equivalents of the state in a functional sense, with the aim of redirecting external assistance in the furtherance of their own political and economic interests (Ibid. p.1).

Policy research in Pakistan faces a conundrum similar to many other developing countries, in that the national capacity for policy research is weak and dwindled over the decades. For the large part of Pakistan’s history, there has been an absence of a credible evidence-based policymaking process. At present, the statistical agencies in Pakistan, at the federal and provincial levels, lack the capacity to generate timely, credible and holistic data capturing public perceptions, concerns and inputs to inform policy. The insufficient in-house research capacity in public institutions responsible for planning and regulation leaves them with little options but to rely on donors and private research organisations. The latter are more often than not funded by the external development agencies thereby making them client oriented and project-specific.

The weakening of representative institutions in Pakistan, due to decades of truncated democratisation, interspersed with military coups, further adds to the quagmire, with elected representatives largely excluded, willingly and otherwise, from the process of formulating development policy. Thus the policy making is confined within the closed doors of a powerful executive, testifying to the overdeveloped state thesis developed by Hamza Alavi. According to Leys (1976, p.39), “Alavi argued that the original base of the state apparatus inherited by a 'post-colonial society' lay in the metropole, whose task was to subordinate all the indigenous classes in the colony (i.e. it did not rest on the support of any of them); and hence it was 'over-developed' in relation to the ex-colonial society. Specifically, it inherits a strong military-administrative apparatus.”

An instructive account of Pakistani policymaking process has been presented by Nadeem ul Haque (2009). The latter also headed one of the premier policy research institutions – Pakistan Institute for Development Economics (PIDE). Therefore, his reflections come as those of an analyst as well as a practitioner with an insider’s insight. The national policymakers and planners should have noted Haque’s critique, “Donors define projects, policies and programs based on their own lending needs and the whims of their bureaucracies. They then hire consultants (cheap local academics and bureaucrats, led by high priced foreign consulting firms or Technical Assistance Advisors) to develop projects, policies and programs. The project is always accepted by the government because of the associated inflow and diplomatic goodwill. When accepted in most cases, a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) is set up with some civil servant in charge and some foreign consultants. The PIU has funds to spend and gives several civil servants special allowances. Special evaluation procedures are set up and a large number of consultants are employed to continuously evaluate the project. In this entire process, domestic research and debate have no serious role” (Haque 2009, p. 14).

Haque (2009) further laments on the state of local research capacity when he notes that think tanks and professional organisations are “seriously undeveloped”. Aid-giving institutions have replaced that essential function, but their officials often display “little vision”. Perhaps the strongest of his statements is as follows: “Whatever public policy debate takes place is conducted in the relatively closed groups comprising mainly of these aid institutions, their professionals and consultants. In such discussions, the only group that has a marginal participation is the government – marginal because the government has neither the capacity nor often the political time to concern itself with longer-term implications of public policy” (Ibid., p. 15).

With weak institutional arrangements for local policy research, local researchers, academics and consultants are inevitably drawn towards the donors, leading to the cultivation of discursive, ideological and practical linkages between local intellectual capital and the foreign institutions. A cursory view at the composition of Pakistan’s leading private research and academic institutions reveals a glut of affiliations between individual researchers and donors/financial institutions. This symbiosis between the local research community and international donors further strengthens the hegemonic apparatus of developmental practitioners.

Zaidi (2002, p.13) further reinforces this perspective when he writes: “With a considerable and sharply growing donor influence in Pakistan since the 1990s, much of the research agenda is now determined, if not dominated, by donors, NGOs and by international themes and issues, not all of which are relevant to Pakistan. Not just economists, but political scientists, sociologists and others, have increasingly been working on themes propagated by the International Financial Institutions and other donors, themes such as governance, decentralisation, local government reform, and the like. NGO’s and other donors fund projects with a specific angle and projects which are far more applied and problem-solving oriented than those which have academic or intellectual ambitions.” According to him, this situation is exacerbated by the fact that the public sector is extremely short on funds, while the donors “have the money to pay for whatever research they want done” (Ibid. 2002).

We now turn to the existing policy research outfits in Pakistan and take a quick look at the kind of areas they work on and sources of funding that finances research and/or policy work. Table 1 provides a brief snapshot of the type of policy research in social and economic development ostensibly policy-oriented.

Table 1 – An Overview of Selected Research Institutions in Pakistan<sup>4</sup>

Research Institutes/Think Tanks	Areas/Outputs	Capacity and outreach	Affiliations/Partners
PIDE < <a href="http://www.pide.org.pk">http://www.pide.org.pk</a> >	Development, agriculture, finance, population studies, industrial organisation	High volume of staff, quality uncertain	Ford Foundation, World Bank, IMF
PERI (Punjab) < <a href="http://www.pndpunjab.gov.pk">www.pndpunjab.gov.pk</a> >	Economic policy, sporadic research inputs for government's policies, evaluations	Working under-capacity; 60% of posts are vacant	Govt of Punjab, UNICEF
SDPI < <a href="http://www.sdpi.org">www.sdpi.org</a> >	Governance, environment, globalisation, rural development, human development, information/communication	Relatively well-staffed, high turnover	CIDA, UNDP, UNEP
LEAD < <a href="http://www.lead.org.pk">http://www.lead.org.pk</a> >	Education, governance, environment, health, CSR, poverty alleviation	A small research unit	Imperial College London (Home Office), Rockefeller Foundation
Development Policy Research Centre at LUMS < <a href="http://www.lums.edu.pk">www.lums.edu.pk</a> >	Poverty, growth, institutions, governance, environment, regionalism, democracy	Newly established	USAID, World Bank, DFID, LSE-Oxford
Centre for Research in Economics and Business (CREB) at the LSE < <a href="http://www.lahoreschoolofeconomics.edu.pk">www.lahoreschoolofeconomics.edu.pk</a> >	Public policy, governance, macroeconomics	Newly established	USAID, World Bank, DFID
Institute of Public Policy at the Beaconhouse National University < <a href="http://www.bnu.edu.pk">www.bnu.edu.pk</a> >	Social sciences, public policy	Newly established	None listed
SPDC < <a href="http://www.spdc.org.pk">http://www.spdc.org.pk</a> >	Gender, governance, trade, poverty, finance	Small team of part-time researchers	World Bank, IMF, WFP
AERC < <a href="http://www.aerc.edu.pk">http://www.aerc.edu.pk</a> >	Urban and regional economics, agriculture, human resource development, poverty, health, public finance, nutrition and environment and women's issues	Small team of full time researchers	Govt of Sindh
Council of Social Sciences < <a href="http://cospak.org">http://cospak.org</a> >	Social sciences	Small team of full-time researchers	None listed
Collective for Social Science Research < <a href="http://www.researchcollective.org">www.researchcollective.org</a> >	Social sciences	A small team of full time researchers	Governments, donors and academia

<sup>4</sup> Based on review of the websites, interviews and discussions with key policy practitioners. This is not an exhaustive list but a snapshot of the entire spectrum.

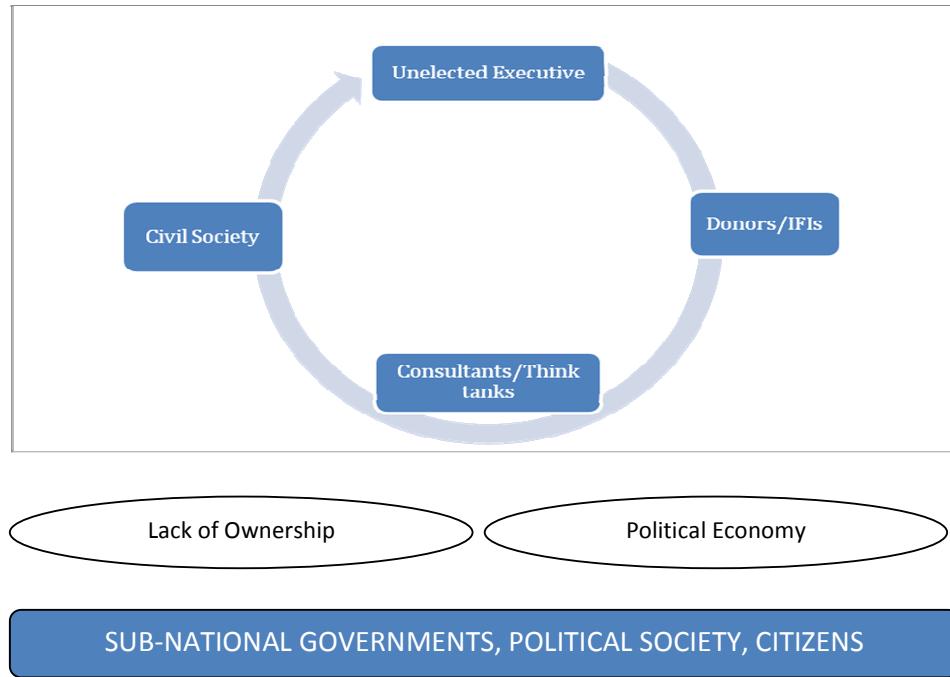
While there is a need for a quantitative assessment and detailed research, one can intuitively assert that most of the research outputs are donor-assisted or in response to the requirements of bilateral and multilateral agencies. A cyclical relationship, mutually reinforcing and beneficial, has emerged between 'think tanks' or individual experts, donors and governments. The problem with this arrangement is that the unelected executive represents government, bypassing the legislature and the citizenry, with a large number of civil society organisations acting as a rubber stamp for the 'legitimation' demanded by the donor community.

The largely undemocratic history of Pakistani civil society is well researched. As Akbar Zaidi states in his paper on 'The Political Economy of Decentralisation in Pakistan', while there have been failures of state and governance in Pakistan, there has also been a noticeable failure of Pakistan's civil society (Zaidi 2005). For Zaidi, when the groups that are seen as constituting civil society become apologists for government and military rule, as well as becoming partners in military governments, their credentials as a representative civil society need to be questioned (Ibid). According to him, "Pakistani civil society has had a key role in strengthening and supporting military government in Pakistan at the cost of democracy. Members of the intelligentsia and academics in Pakistan have done no better and have had no qualms in supporting military rule in preference to Pakistani style dysfunctional democracy. By co-opting members of the 'liberal' sections of civil society and giving them lucrative handouts, those who benefit from this system also become its greatest protectors and they have a great stake in its continuity. Unlike many other countries, in Pakistan, civil society actors and groups have, for the most part, and most certainly since 1999, become collaborationists, not confrontationists, working with and for military governments, not against them" (Ibid., p. 49).

Given the non-confrontational and unrepresentative state of civil society in the country, its position as a legitimate formal representative of the citizenry in the donor-led policymaking process in Pakistan has to be severely questioned. The symbiotic, mutually-beneficial relationships that exist between civil society, international financial institutions and the non-representative functionaries of the state (the army and bureaucracy) necessitate a re-evaluation of the role of the main stakeholders in the policymaking process in Pakistan. Diagram 1 attempts to present the contours of a complex relationship mentioned above. The relationship as depicted shows the reality and not the way Pakistan's constitution and its parliamentary democratic framework envisages public decision making (which articulates the ascendancy of

popular will represented by the federal and provincial cabinets). In practice, a small group of actors determine and set the policy agenda and that too in furtherance of a donor programme or handout.

Diagram 1 – The *de facto* policymaking cycle in Pakistan<sup>5</sup>:



The diagram above indicates how the *de facto* policy cycle works. The clear omissions are the elected representatives, the cabinet who represent the people. In Pakistan, the governance culture has been defined by long spells of military rule. From its very inception, the civil-military bureaucracy has appropriated the policy process. Brief interludes of democratic rule have not been able to change this pattern.

International donors cognizant of such trends and the repeated failure of such policies shifted towards concepts such as inclusive decision-making, participation and increased emphasis on

<sup>5</sup> Devised by the authors.

good governance. Hence, the use of “civil society as a proxy for the citizen” (Fox and Helweg 1997, p.14). Using the local think tanks and NGOs, donors substitute local capacities for research and knowledge production and achieve the internalisation of a discourse that eventually suits their programmes and agendas for poor countries. Pakistan is no exception to this. Broadly speaking, the steps shown in the cycle are overlapping and not mutually exclusive. The key stages of the policy process are<sup>6</sup>:

- **Discourse:** Setting the discourse whereby understanding national development is viewed through the lens of that discourse which also establishes the development agenda and priorities. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers across ‘poor’ countries (including Pakistan) is an illustration of this trend whereby international donors assist host governments in making the PRSPs to assess the aid inflow required. Such papers are largely written by consultants who use the standard diagnoses of underdevelopment and get an ex-post facto validation from the national governments. The framing of development issues and gaps is based on how the North views the South and not necessarily on how the national stakeholders view themselves.
- **Policy:** Supporting policy research and advice in a manner that attempts at quick policy transfers from the North to the South.
- **Legitimacy:** The various shades of the dominant discourse require legitimation at the local level. Thus, a ‘civil society’ that in part functions with donor support, mostly facilitates policy research, endorses or provides inputs for the donor-assisted research.
- **Executive** shortcuts where the national policymaking processes are fast-tracked through engagement with the unelected executive.
- **Capacity substitution** for the domestic governments’ dwindled research and analysis functions. This is why little donor support is extended to public sector research institutions and when it is, it is again linked to the achievement of a broader development or sectoral agenda.

After this brief discussion on the larger policy setting process, we now turn to two case studies that will elaborate some of the afore-stated processes.

---

<sup>6</sup> These stages represent the views of development practice as understood by the authors.

## Part II      Case Studies

### Devolution in Pakistan – A Case Study in Unrepresentative Policymaking

The sweeping reform of the local governments and the Police during 2000-2002 was a brainchild of the military government. After the 1999 coup, General (ret'd.) Musharraf vowed to reform the delivery of services, justice and policing as a measure to introduce 'genuine' democracy in the country. Not unsurprisingly, the international multilateral and bilateral institutions jumped into the fray by providing unprecedented support to the governance reform planned by the military junta. A centralised institution at the federal level, the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB), led the process of empowering the local governments. However, an essential feature of this was the top-down approach that reforms employed almost bypassing the provinces that are responsible for local government system and administration according to the Constitution.

A host of donors assisted the Government in undertaking policy research to find out the best options for fiscal, administrative and political decentralisation. A rough overview of donor support to the pre-devolution process is given in Table 2. It shows the readiness of the donor community to support a top down reform process.

Table 2: Donors' Support to Devolution Policy under General (retd.)  
Musharraf

Sectors	Donors	Scope / Focus
<b>Policy Support</b>		
Support to Good Governance Group -G3	UNDP and others	NRB Policy formulation
Support to local ordinance drafting	DFID	NRB
Social communication	CIDA	NRB
Supporting government restructuring and reform	ADB	NRB 2001 (inter- governmental reforms)
Support to constitutional reform options	DFID	Support to NRB
Grant to assist the NRB's preparation of the Devolution Support Plan	IBRD	Support to NRB
Support to democratic electoral process in Pakistan	UNDP	Capacity building of the Election Commission
<b>Fiscal Decentralisation &amp; Financial Mgt.</b>		
TA. Fiscal decentralisation (2001-02)	ADB DFID	NRB manuals: Budget, revenue mobilisation, auditing; accounting; fiscal transfers; design of systems, regulations, and procedures
Devolution and fiscal federalism in Pakistan	CIDA	Federal- NRB
Punjab Public Sector Resource Management Programme	ADB	Public sector restructuring
Devolution Support Programme: Programme loan; TA loan local govt performance enhancement; TA loan gender and governance mainstreaming	ADB (from 2002)	Four provinces: implementation and deepening of devolution reforms
Project for improvement in financial reporting and auditing	IBRD	Reform of the accounting and audit systems
Project for strengthening accountability and reporting	IBRD	Auditor General and Controller General of Accounts

Source: Adapted from various donor programme documents.

The problem with such policy assistance has been indicated above. The cases of local government reform in Pakistan during the periods of General Ayub (1959), General Zia (1979) and General (retd.) Musharraf (2001) provide succinct examples of the impact of the

policymaking arrangements that result from the practical enactment of mainstream development discourse through collaboration between IFI's, non-representative state institutions and civil society in Pakistan.

The discourse, therefore, being constructed in 2000 onwards was largely ahistorical and apolitical. Most of the studies and assessments undertaken responded to the central military diktat to implement devolution reforms with a big bang. A quick review of several such studies, often not in the public domain, also highlight how the consultants and the local think tanks ignored and bypassed politics.

Zaidi (2005, p.44) has described such studies as "apolitical and technocratic", which "specifically stay away from the political issues" arising from the devolution scheme. Such a process of policy advice and research that underpins it, he says, "undermines the worth of their analysis.... The real issues in public issues (that of devolution, for instance) are always about *power*, and are therefore, *political*" (Ibid, p. 44).

Cheema et al. (2006, p. 407) argue that, in Pakistan, "local governments have historically been enacted by non-representative regimes to legitimise their control over the state. Legitimacy has been sought by creating a localised patronage structure that produces a class of 'collaborative politicians' who act as a conduit between local level constituencies and the non-representative centre. This is as true of the British period as it is of the post-independence period." Musharraf's local government reforms of 2001 can be seen to be a continuation of this historical tendency, i.e., "reform driven by the military's need for legitimisation of state control." This was supplemented by multilateral pressure for decentralisation, which had existed in Pakistan since the mid-nineties (Ibid. p. 408). As pointed out earlier, 'community participation' and 'local ownership' had then become guiding prerequisites for loan disbursement on the part of the major donor agencies; Musharraf's devolution plan thus became an obvious target of multilateral assistance. Bilateral and multilateral donors like ADB, CIDA, DFID, USAID and UNDP each contributed hundreds of millions of dollars in support of various decentralisation initiatives.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> <<http://www.pakdevolution.com/donors/donor.htm>>

The reforms themselves involved the devolution of administrative and expenditure responsibilities to local governments and the institution of changes in administrative decision-making, accountability of authorities and fiscal resource availability (Ibid. p. 395). In addition, party politics were removed from the electoral equation, with local government elections being organised on non-party bases. The obvious objective of this appears to be the removal of political parties from local government political arenas and the provision of a conduit between the unelected central authority (in this case, the military) and local citizenry, thus bypassing the provincial and federal legislatures. Devolution was also accompanied by selective intervention, in terms of accountability enforcement and disqualification, against certain politicians and political parties, the institution of an educational criterion for electoral candidacy and the creation of a pliant, military-friendly political party (Ibid. p. 409).

Independent evaluations of local government reforms by various groups, academics and researchers have painted a starkly undemocratic picture of the local government reforms. In the International Crisis Group's March 2004 report on 'Devolution in Pakistan', it is stated: "While the ostensible aim of Musharraf's devolution scheme may be the transfer of administrative, political and financial authority to the lower tiers of Government, the reality is starkly different. Local governments, in fact, exercise only nominal authority with respect to administrative and financial matters in their respective jurisdictions" (International Crisis Group 2004, pp. 1-2). In addition, the report stated: "If Pakistan's chequered political history is any barometer, the question of devolution cannot be addressed in isolation from the larger issue of political autonomy ... Pakistan's civil-military ruling elite ... has often used the administrative and coercive powers at its disposal to extend the centre's control over the provinces. Since military-inspired devolution is directed to local levels, it enhances tensions between the centre and the provinces" (Ibid. p. 2). Other evaluations, such as those of Akbar Zaidi (2005) and Cheema, et al. (2006) have produced similar conclusions.

However, in line with the apolitical perspectives adopted by the evaluation bodies of donor agencies, a World Bank/DFID/ADB multi-volume study on the devolution initiative, found "modestly optimistic trends" in the new local government structures, in spite of "huge dependencies on higher tiers of Government" as well as the "limited autonomy of local governments" in budgetary matters (Zaidi 2005, p. 44). In consonance with mainstream

development discourse, however, the donor evaluation does not take into account the political dimension, resulting in discursively biased evaluations.

Ten years later, the entire reform effort and all the investments made by multilaterals in the devolution process, have come to a naught. All four provinces are set to enact new laws that undo the increased powers and functions of the local governments and the return to pre-2000 magistracy system that is a colonial relic. A similar fate has been experienced by the Police Reforms whereby the provinces are all set to amend the Police Order 2002 and replace it with a new set of regulations, which will essentially represent the interests and priorities of provincial elites to control and use the police force as an executive instrument. The difference, however, is that the current spate of reform, cited as a reversal by some analysts, is a political process and owned by the stakeholders in governance.

The examples of devolution and local government reform, thus, illustrate the policymaking failures that result from the application of mainstream development discourse through collaborative arrangements between non-representative state institutions and IFT's, duly supported by the local intelligentsia or what may be called civil society.

In the final analysis, the lack of ownership by subnational, provincial governments was the biggest gap of the devolution policy of the military regime. The decentralisation reforms of 2001 were carried out on the assumption that there would be devolution of powers from the federal to the provincial levels. This never happened due to the centralised nature of military regimes and the lack of political consensus on the changes in federal-provincial relations. The political elites of Pakistan in 2010 have recently developed that consensus and have agreed to abolish the concurrent list that was a major hurdle in empowering the provincial governments with sufficient mandates and resources to strengthen local service delivery and governance. Therefore, primacy of politics and the political process is central to the achievement of any reform agenda. The issues related to provincial and local capacities have come to the forefront as the elected provincial governments undertake the onerous task of realigning the central and local functions.

### *Agriculture sector policy reforms*

In this case study, we move to another vital sector for public policy, i.e. agriculture. We will take stock of the sector and its constraints in the Pakistani context and demonstrate how donor-led programmes have often ignored key issues related to land and agriculture. We will present a quick review of the discourse set in by a recently completed ADB programme that was noticeable for its lack of success in achieving some vital reforms that it suggested and supported with a huge loan.

In Pakistan, the contribution of the agricultural sector to the GDP has declined gradually since Pakistan came into existence, from over 50 percent in 1949-50 to 21.8 percent in 2008-9. However, the agricultural sector continues to be one of the major sources of growth in the national economy (ADB 2005, p.1). The Economic Survey 2008-9 shows that the agricultural sector employs 44.7 percent of labour force, contributes 21.8 percent to GDP and has grown 4.1 percent per annum on average since 2002-3. Agriculture provides, in addition to food commodities, “raw material to agro-based industry and foreign exchange, through the export of both raw and finished goods” (Ibid). The growth rate for the sector has been erratic, fluctuating between 1.1 percent and 6.5 percent since 2002-3 for a number of factors, including “inclement weather, pest attacks, water shortage, structural imbalances and institutional constraints. Increased farm productivity (achieved by judicious use of natural resources and other inputs) and diversification of production from low-value to high-value products are essential requirements” (Ibid).

Pakistan’s Government is following a comprehensive strategy that is articulated in official but donor-sponsored documents such as the Agriculture Policy, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), and National Medium Term Policy Framework (NMTPF) 2007-10. Agricultural incomes are largely exempt from income tax under the present laws in Pakistan, a tradition that started as early as 1886 (Nasim 1994). Farm incomes, however, have been subjected to other forms, albeit weak, of taxation, both direct and indirect. At present, “agriculture gives no more than 1 percent in Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) tax revenue, although it contributes about one fifth of GDP” (World Bank 2009, p. 146). Under the 1973 Constitution, taxation of agricultural incomes is a provincial subject. But the powerful landlords in Punjab, most of who are also members of the provincial assembly, have consistently and effectively been

resistant to any attempt to introduce such a tax. However, in 1997, under increasing pressure from the IMF, the provincial governments in Pakistan passed laws to tax agricultural incomes, such as the Punjab Agricultural Income Tax Act 1997 (Bokhari 2008). Under these laws, agricultural holdings measuring more than 12.5 acres are subject to income tax<sup>8</sup> which takes about 85 percent of all properties outside the tax base (World Bank 2009, p. 145). Even though the law provides for assessment on the basis of land area as well as agricultural income, it is the former method that is mostly used in practice (Ibid., p. 146). This is why collection remains poor and the large landowners due to their embedded political power in the local state manage to get favourable assessments done. Although the relevant laws are provincial, the Federal Board of Revenue collects taxes on agriculture (Ibid., p. 148). “Agricultural income tax is mainly collected from the Punjab, with insignificant collection in Sindh and barely any recovery from Balochistan and NWFP”<sup>9</sup> (Dawn 2010). The feudal politicians of Punjab and Sindh have time and again opposed increasing the tax net, purportedly on behalf of poor smallholders.

From a citizen’s perspective, dispute resolution generally, and property disputes in particular, are notorious for lingering for decades in the extremely slow court processes in Pakistan. Though the Specific Relief Act 1877 provides for recovery of possession of immovable property within six months of the dispossession (except against the owner), most property disputes take anywhere from ten years to a couple of generations. This leads to loss of income as well as limits the potential of the sector.

The agricultural policy variables in Pakistan are pitted against the small farmers, tenants and sharecroppers. Though a number of land reform initiatives have been undertaken in the past, land continues to be concentrated in a few hands and large farmers continue to retain their power over small farmers and tenants. Land records are poorly managed and often incomplete, allowing revenue officials excessive discretion in decision making. Tenancy continues on a large scale, with one-third of farmers in Pakistan and one-half of farmers in Sindh being tenants who typically give almost 50 percent of their produce to landlords. Fragmented holdings also remain widespread (Blood 1994, p. 179). A situation in which large landlords exercise significant political influence, it becomes virtually impossible for smallholders and

---

<sup>8</sup> <<http://punjablaws.gov.pk/laws/398.html>>

<sup>9</sup> Editor’s note: NWFP was renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in April 2010. For the sake of familiarity, NWFP has been used in the anthology.

tenants to safeguard their interests. The situation is very complex in that the landlord-tenant relationship in Pakistan has multiple facets. The landlord not only gives land for farming, but also has relationships of labour, credit, welfare and loyalty with the tenants.

Weak rule of law, absence of any effective farmers' organisations representing smallholders and tenants and social and political exclusions of tenants, labourers and other vulnerable groups from the political and development process contribute toward sustaining the status quo to the detriment of national economy. Skewed land ownership has led to landowners almost exclusively appropriating the benefits of irrigation infrastructure and rehabilitation. According to Kamal (2009, p.40), "unless the tenancy position of the sharecropping farmers is improved through reforms in Pakistan's tenancy laws, landowners are likely to continue to receive the lion's share of the benefit of low water charges and infrastructure improvement, a substantial part of which is subsidised by the Government." Whilst there is a legal framework for water pricing and cost recovery to ensure effective and efficient water management, its implementation is poor. Land ownership, as a result, serves as a "proxy" for water rights, with the result that the water rights of landless people, farmers and women in particular, are ill-defined. The near-complete authority accorded to irrigation officials for water entitlements also results in a great number of corruption opportunities (Ibid, p. 96). Large landholders influence the working of local irrigation officials to get water in excess of their entitlements.

Policymaking and implementation capacity within the public sector continues to be weak and fragmented with little institutionalised input or oversight from stakeholders. At the federal level, linkages between the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Science and Technology are weak, something that, in part, contributes to the agricultural sector not switching over to modernised practices. Similarly, coordination problems between the federal institutions involved in R&D for the agricultural sector is a well established fact. As per the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, agriculture is a provincial subject since it is neither in the federal legislative list nor in the concurrent legislative list. A cursory review of the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2007-08 reveals that the Federal Government approved and executed 66 development projects in the agricultural sector having a capital outlay of \$1.5 billion. The Federal Government's excessive involvement in the agricultural sector gives rise to duplication and overlaps as provinces also spend heavily in the sector. Moreover, donors have also been keen on strengthening this sector. This can be seen from the

fact more than 76 development projects are under implementation in the areas of food security, crop diversification, market development, productivity enhancement of cotton and import substitution. The total cost of these projects is roughly \$468 million (Rs 37.5 billion) (EAD 2009).

A preliminary review of the PSDP 2007-08 also shows that the Government and donors have been spending significant amounts in the agriculture sector. However, fragmentation, overlapping, discontinuous and sometimes contradictory interventions have come in the way of such assistance. This is also partly explained by weak administrative and coordination capacity within agricultural institutions. The neoliberal discourse remained ascendant ignoring the country's political economy, political and federal relationships.

We take an example of a substantial external intervention, the Agriculture Sector Programme Loan (ASPL II) that was approved in 2001 for \$350 million. Loan tranches were contingent on fulfillment of actions by the Government's Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MINFAL) and the provincial governments for full compliance to be achieved. However, from its very start the provinces did not own this programme as they viewed the project as an imposition from above. MINFAL took long time to set up implementation arrangements and the provincial governments rarely took heed of the policy framework.

The first Agriculture Policy Loan (APL-I), worth \$200 million, was designed in the 1990s and it was rated by ADB as partly or less than successful (Greer and Husaini 2006). The purpose of APL-I (1990) was to address constraints in the agriculture sector through "economic restructuring and structural adjustment". The key aims of this Programme were to "increase agricultural production and productivity and enhance domestic resources for productive investment in the agriculture sector" (Ibid. p. 61). The internal review held that reforms supported under APL-I were neither comprehensive nor adequate, and implementation snags resulted in half-finished business (Ibid). Almost a decade later, another package of support was designed that ostensibly addressed the issues, but as we discuss below ended up with not so different results.

ASPL II was aimed to address key policy and institutional constraints that led to: "(i) inefficiencies and distortions in the markets for major commodities (cotton, rice, sugarcane,

and wheat) and key inputs (fertilisers, pesticides, and seeds); (ii) poor delivery of research and extension services to farmers; and (iii) lack of effective quality control for inputs and commodities” (ADB 2007, p. 3). Classic neoliberal thinking defined the outcomes of ASPL II. First, it was envisaged that restrictions on the movement of agricultural commodities would be undone, commodity price supports and subsidies would be phased out, state-owned enterprises or public agencies competing with the private sector would be closed or restructured and so on (ADB 2007).

For ASPL-II, the use of conditionalities or policy actions (32 in number) was meant to spur policy reform in the sector. However, international experience suggests that conditionality has proved to be largely ineffective; and the use of policy conditions cannot deliver unless domestic stakeholders widely support reforms (Quibria 2004). In the case of ASPL II, the provinces were meant to carry out most of the actions, but their ownership through the life of the Programme was unclear. During the loan period, most of the conditions were fulfilled through executive short cuts, the typical manner in which the IFI and executive compacts work. However, the impact of the ASPL II on policy was unclear. The Bank notes the successful large-scale liberalisation of the rice and fertiliser markets, as well as the steps taken to reduce Government interference in the cotton, sugar and seed markets. The pervasiveness of public sector intervention in the wheat market prior to the implementation of ASPL II and the role of the ASPL II in the reformation of wheat policy in the country are both highlighted. In all, the Bank’s 2007 report take a highly optimistic view of the ASPL II (ADB 2007). Under ASPL II, several studies were also initiated to influence policy process. The areas included wheat policy reform, and institutional reorganisation of research and extension among others. It is unclear if the research carried out under ASPL II had any linkage with the policymaking and organisational structures. The fundamental issues of underfunded, overlapping and weak research and extension institutions, remains unchanged.

It is instructive to note that right after this report was written and the third tranche of the loan was released Pakistan faced one of the worst food crises; and the provincial governments once again clamped down on the free movement of wheat. The Government continued to provide subsidised wheat from its storage spaces to flour mills, owned and managed by politically powerful actors. The flourmill operators enjoyed high profits while the average farmer received less than half of what the Government ended up paying to foreign farmers by importing large

quantities of wheat. The endemic issues of the local state led to an efficient smuggling regime through the collusion between middlemen, provincial food departments, the flourmills, and border security forces. Ordinary consumers of wheat paid double the price while the farmer received half of that price. Thus, the policy incentives and frameworks remain unchanged due to the political economy factors. The local and provincial state institutions and the politics of agriculture policy, pricing and marketing prevail. The technocratic design of the ASPL II ignored these vital constraints. Most importantly the vital issues of agriculture income tax did not feature into the policy reform agenda. Even the issues related to extension and support to small and medium farmers were not directly and wholly addressed.

According to Kardar (2010), despite the liberalisation mantra, the role of the state remains pervasive in terms of the wheat market and the support pricing mechanism is still intact. Politics is germane to the way sector policy had unfolded. While the Government has taken some measures, heavy subsidies continue. Across Pakistan, the subsidy on wheat flour continues to subsidise rich farmers and not the consumers. In terms of the sugar market, Pakistan's sugar cane remains overpriced. Farmers are still encouraged by the prices to grow a crop whose yield is inefficient and one that consumes a lot of water, and grown in lieu of other crops such as cotton, fodder, maize, daal and oilseeds which are internationally and domestically in demand. "Merger or closure of 80-odd inefficient sugar mills with small capacities" (Ibid.) is still required. The sugar industry created a national crisis in 2009 as it has acted as a cartel and the state to enable fair operation of markets by enforcing competition. The powerful political owners ensure that the industry also remains heavily protected (Ibid).

The purpose of highlighting some of the key policy issues is that the research and advice on policy in the agricultural sector is devoid of political nuance and responds to the mutual needs of the executive and the donors. This is why the future and outcomes of substantial investments is so uncertain. From purely an efficiency point of view, the improper allocation and use of scarce resources, is facilitated in equal measure, by an unaccountable executive and its counterpart donor partner (s).

## Conclusion and Policy Lessons

Through this paper, we have attempted to undertake an analysis of development discourse, as it originated in the industrialised economies of the North and the impact of its application on the development policymaking process in countries like Pakistan. Further, we have looked at the composition of the active stakeholders in the policymaking process in the country with a view to understanding the nature of the process and its relevance to Pakistan's many crises of development.

Development as a discourse has historically been articulated and practiced to serve the interests and economic requirements of the North, from the Post-WWII 'modernisation theories' to the 'neoliberal' developmentalism of the 1980s to the 'mandatory state-building' interventionism of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. This discursive domination has occurred in the absence of alternative theoretical paradigms in the Third World, which has long lacked the capacity for independent indigenous research. The practice of this developmental discourse has occurred with the active collusion of local state and academic elites, who seek to preserve their own positions of privilege in developing societies, such as Pakistan's. The picture that emerges upon undertaking this analysis is one of a destructive symbiosis between IFI's, unelected state institutions and civil society, supplanted by a discourse that is beneficial for all these stakeholders, while being clearly destructive for the majority of the citizenry, which remains without a stake in the entire process.

Reinforced by and further strengthening the capture of the state by a civil-military elite, this process has further led to the weakening of the capacity of the state to produce evidence-based policy that is apprised of the actual concerns of the citizenry rather than a discursive exercise fuelled solely by the mandates of donors and the political interests of unelected representatives.

The time is ripe for a re-evaluation of this process in favour of a more inclusive policymaking arrangement that moves beyond cursory notions of 'local ownership' to a large-scale participatory approach in policy formulation. The cases of developing countries in Latin America such as innovations undertaken in Porto Alegre, Brazil and the states such as Kerala in India are indicative of successful experiments in participatory policymaking and governance. For this, there is required, first of all, an analytical untangling of the mutually reinforcing web

of incentives between donors and state institutions through a focus on the structural nature of power in the country.

Strengthening of public policy research capacity within the state also requires immediate attention. Whilst there is a slow growth of such capacity in the private sector there is no alternative to technical and institutional capability within the federal and provincial governments. Examples from India, Malaysia, China and other high growth countries are instructive. The national and provincial institutions need to be restructured with independent management and competitive terms and conditions to make them viable. If they need to be closed down their substitutes need to be identified and mobilised. The 'policy advice' outputs prepared with external support need to be (i) made public, (ii) subjected to a rigorous local peer review, and (iii) opened for public feedback.

A key lesson for the policy makers and international donors is that they need to engage with the political economy variables that influence the policy process. Most importantly, the complex federalism of Pakistan has to be factored in while designing interventions. Sub-national levels are where policy rolls out and gets feedback, public response and faces implementation challenges. Therefore, top-down policies (e.g. devolution and agriculture reform) require more intensive discussions and political ownership rather than easy-to-do bureaucratic agreements.

This also implies that governments and the donor bureaucracy need to rethink their approach for policy based assistance. This is why unpacking mutually reinforcing, debilitating web of incentives between donors, researchers and governments is essential. Donors' disbursement-centric policy work needs a thorough review and alternatives need to be explored which help poor countries, as well as augment donor accountability mechanisms for quick disbursements that are aligned to development results and impact. Freedom of information laws and institutions are required to reclaim public interest and to ensure transparency. This would also address ill thought out 'policy transfers' supported by international donors. Finally, more research is required, independent of the consultancy imperative to delve deeper into the *de facto* policy processes.

## References

ADB 2007, 'Progress report on tranche release, Pakistan: Agriculture Sector Programme Loan II', Asian Development Bank, Manila, viewed on 23 Nov 2010,  
< <http://www.adb.org/documents/tranche-releases/pak/33173-pak-prtr.pdf> >

ADB 2005, 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan: National agriculture sector strategy', Asian Development Bank, Manila, viewed on 23 Nov 2010,  
< <http://www.adb.org/Documents/OED/Working-Papers/pak-evaluation-final.pdf>>  
Blood, Peter 1994, 'Pakistan: A country study', GPO for the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Bokhari, A. 2008, 'No new move to tax farm income', *Dawn Economic and Business Section*, viewed on 9 February 2010, < <http://news.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/in-paper-magazine/economic-and-business/no+new+move+to+tax+farm+income>>

Cheema, A., Khwaja, A., and Qadir, A. 2006, 'Decentralisation in Pakistan: Context, content and causes' in *Decentralisation in developing countries: A comparative perspective*, P. Bardhan and D. Mookherjee (eds.) MIT Press, Massachusetts.

Dawn (2010), 'Editorial: Taxing agriculture', 14 Feb 2010, *Dawn Newspaper*, viewed on 23 Nov. 2010,  
<<http://news.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/editorial/12-taxing-agriculture-420--bi-02>>

Debiel, T. and Lambach, D. 2008, 'Missing 'the real thing': How the development discourse neglects the dynamics of local state-building', 49<sup>th</sup> International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Francisco.

Economic Affairs Division (EAD 2009), 'Debt management and financial analysis status (DMFAS) report July 08-June 09', Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

Fox, Leslie M. and Helweg, Priya 1997, 'Advocacy strategies for civil society: A conceptual framework and practitioner's guide', World Learning Inc. and Associates in Rural Development, p.14, viewed on 23 Nov. 2010, <[http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNACN907.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACN907.pdf)>

Greer, Raymond, and Husaini, S.A.J. 2006, 'Evaluation of the agriculture and natural resources management sector', Asian Development Bank, Manila, viewed on 23 Nov. 2010, <<http://www.adb.org/Documents/OED/Working-Papers/pak-evaluation-final.pdf>>

Haque, N. 2009, 'Rethinking Competitiveness and Growth Strategy in Pakistan', Proceedings of Roundtable on *Building effective institutions for taxation, competitiveness, welfare, national security and democratic governance*, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore.

Haque, N. 2010, 'Design vs Implementation', *Development 2.0*, viewed on 30 March 2010, <<http://development20.blogspot.com>>.

Hasan, R., Quibria, M.G., 2004, 'Industry matters for poverty: A critique of agricultural fundamentalism', *Kyklos*, vol. 57, no.2, pp.253-264.

Herath, D. 2009, 'The discourse of development: Has it reached maturity?' *Third World Quarterly*, vol.30, no.8, pp. 1449-1464.

Independent Evaluation Group (IEG-MIGA) 2006, 'Independent Evaluation Report (MIGA) 2006 Annual Report', <[http://www.miga.org/documents/ieg\\_2006\\_annual\\_report.pdf](http://www.miga.org/documents/ieg_2006_annual_report.pdf)>

International Crisis Group, 2004, 'Devolution in Pakistan: Reform or regression?' ICG Asia Report N77, Islamabad/Brussels.

Kamal, Simi, 2009, 'Pakistan's water challenges: Entitlement, access, efficiency and equity', in 'Running on empty: Pakistan's water crisis', Kugelman (ed.) Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, viewed on 23 Nov. 2010, <[http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/ASIA\\_090422\\_Running%20on%20Empty\\_web.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/ASIA_090422_Running%20on%20Empty_web.pdf)>

Leys, C. 1976, 'The *overdeveloped* post colonial state: A re-evaluation', *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 5, pp. 39- 48.

Nasim, A. 1994, 'Revenue estimates from land revenue in Pakistan', *CMER Working Paper Series*, no. 94-05, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore.

Quibria, M.G. 2004, 'Development effectiveness: What does recent research tell us?' ADB/OED Working Paper 1, Asian Development Bank, Manila, viewed on 23 Nov 2010, <<http://www.adb.org/documents/OED/Working-Papers/oct01-oed-working-paper.pdf>>

Rostow, W.W. 1960, *The stages of economic growth: A non-communist manifesto*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

The Punjab Agricultural Income Tax Act 1997 (Punjab Assembly), viewed on 23 Nov. 2010, <<http://punjablaws.gov.pk/laws/398.html>>

World Bank, 2009, 'Pakistan tax policy report: Tapping tax bases for development', report no. 50078-PK, vol. II: Full report, viewed in September 2009, <[http://aysp.gsu.edu/is/\[images/pakpolicy2.pdf](http://aysp.gsu.edu/is/[images/pakpolicy2.pdf)>

Zaidi, A.S. 2002, 'The dismal state of the social science in Pakistan', Council of Social Sciences Pakistan, Islamabad.

Zaidi, A.S. 2005, 'The political economy of decentralisation in Pakistan', Transversal Theme 'Decentralisation and social movements', Working Paper No. 1, Swiss National Centre for Competence in Research, Zurich.



## **Section II**

### **Food Insecurity and Political/ Military Conflict Nexus**

- Food security and governance nexus in Pakistan
- Food insecurity, and conflict in Nepal



# Food security and Governance Nexus in Pakistan<sup>1</sup>

*Roshan Malik\*\**

## Abstract

The era of cheap food seems to be over, but its long-term impacts are melting developing countries' governance structure and rapidly incrementing their fiscal deficit. The current rise in global food prices and the shortage of necessary edible commodities in various parts of the world have exacerbated food insecurity and augmented poverty. This "silent tsunami" in a brief period of time is feared to compound another hundred million people into the global pool of 825 million malnourished and hungry populations (World Bank 2008). Food riots have been reported in more than twenty countries and social unrest may arise in many others if immediate and effective assistance is not provided (The Guardian 2008).

Pakistan has been depicted as a case study in this paper since the country has not only faced a high incidence of violence in which almost nineteen thousand people including innocent civilians, security personnel and insurgents lost their lives during 2009 (Lanche 2009), the people in the country have also been facing severe food shortages and a rise in prices in the country. Recently, fourteen women and children died in a stampede when free food was being distributed in Karachi metropolitan (BBC 2009). Research shows that extremism and violence in Pakistan has been more prevalent in the areas that have a higher level of food insecurity (WFP and SDPI 2003).

This paper identifies five propositions of Food Insecurity, Governance, and Human Development. First, we are facing a significant global food crisis, which is likely to persist, and some of the poorest countries are at the greatest risk. Secondly, it expounds that countries experiencing severe food crisis also suffer from poor governance indicators and those facing chronic food insecurity are likely to have even worse governance. Thirdly, it shows that countries experiencing extreme governance stress also tend to face significant food shortages. Fourthly, food-related social unrest is beginning to place new burdens on already weak or borderline governance systems in many countries; persistent food insecurities are likely to make these worse. Finally, a number of the most vulnerable countries in the world are facing a triple threat – very low human development, chronic food insecurity, and dangerously high mal-governance. The first section in each proposition looks into the global scenario and then a case study of Pakistan is discussed in detail.

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper is a part of Najam, Adil and Maik, Roshan (forthcoming), 'food insecurity, governance, and human development: Five propositions', The Frederick S. Pardee Centre for the Study of the Longer-Range Future, Boston University, Boston MA.

\*\* Roshan Malik is a Ph.D. student, Rural Sociology, Iowa State University, Ames, IA. U.S.A.

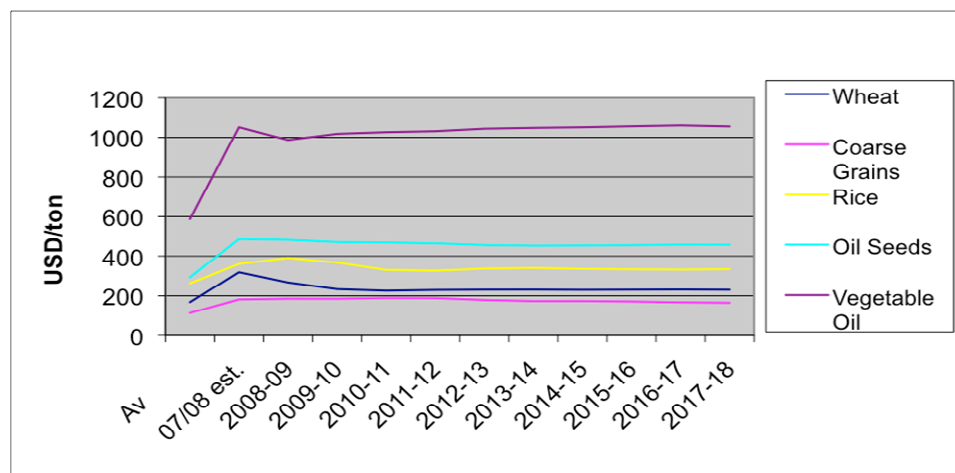
### Proposition #1

*We are facing a significant global food crisis, which is likely to persist, and some of the poorest countries are at the greatest risk.*

Experts have identified numerous market forces such as high oil/energy prices, sky rocketing prices of fertilisers, recession in U.S. economy, bio-fuels, growing food demand in China and India, as well ecological factors like harsh weather conditions (in some countries), stagnation and erosion in the agriculture resource base, rapid urbanisation behind this crisis. Subsequently, the price of wheat increased by 198 percent, rice 98 percent and corn by 38 percent within a period of one year (ADB 2008). Global grain stocks in 2007 have also receded to the level of 55 days consumption (EPI 2008).

The Food and Agriculture (FAO)- Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have projected that prices of major food and feed commodities will stay the same with a slight change by the year 2017-18 as shown in Figure 1; moreover, 2.5 billion new consumers will be added by 2050 (UNFPA 2008).

Figure 1: Projection of World Food Prices

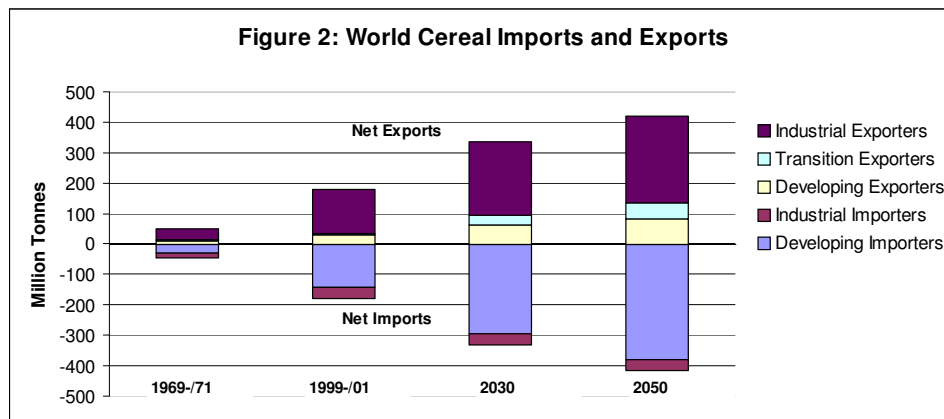


Source: FAO and OECD 2008.

Vulnerable populations, particularly in developing countries, who spend a substantial amount of their income on food suffer the most. People from high-income countries only spend 10 percent of their income on food, while people from low-income food deficit countries (LIFDCs) spend 50 percent of their income. If staple food prices soar by 50 percent, their impact on the price increase for high income groups is only 0.6 percent, while for LIFDCs it adds another 10 percent to their food spending (USDA 2008). The global food imports bill this year is likely to climb by \$ 215 billions and is projected to enter into a \$1.035 trillion territory (FAO 2008). Soaring global food prices as estimated by FAO will increase cereal bills of the world's poorest countries by 56 percent and for low income food deficit countries (LIFDCs) in Africa by 74 percent (FAO 2008a). If food prices are going to stay high in the long term, it may have a reverse effect for grappling economies and thriving democracies to sustain their economic growth and garner public support.

One fourth of Pakistan's 160 million people are already living below the poverty line and food inflation reached 30 percent in 2007. The Asian Development Bank (2008) presents three different food price inflation scenarios, as the inflation goes up by 10 percent, 20 percent and 30 percent the number of poor people in Pakistan will increase by 7.05 million, 14.67 million, and 21.96 million respectively.

Developing countries' cereal imports, which were 144 million tonnes in 1999-2001, as shown in Figure 2, will jump to 295 and 380 million tonnes by year 2030 and 2050 respectively (FAO 2006).



Source: FAO 2006.

Key:

a All developing countries minus developing exporters (Argentina, Thailand, Vietnam).

b North America, Australia, EU16

International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) 2007 estimates that global warming will decrease agriculture GDP by 16 percent by the year 2020 and developing countries will suffer more as their agriculture productivity will decline by 20 percent as compared to 6 percent in developed countries. Population estimates suggest that another three billion people will be added to the developing countries' pool bringing it to 9.2 billion people by 2050 (UNFPA 2008). The incremental demand of cereals and high food prices may cause a serious governance crisis for many developing countries in the future.

Wheat is a staple food in Pakistan and plays an important role in measuring food security at the individual, household and national level. Pakistan's per capita wheat consumption for an average 128 kg for the last 18 years is quite close to the international standards of per capita consumption (126 kg). As shown in Table 1, Pakistan's wheat has been increasing according to the population growth, but long term population projections indicate that wheat requirements would be hard to meet with national production. Pakistan's current 170 million wheat consumers will increase to 335 million with an annual requirement of 42.23 (mmt) wheat.

Table 1: Wheat Production, Consumption and Population in Pakistan

Year	Population (Millions)	Wheat Requirement (mmt) as of consumption per capita@ 126kg	Wheat Production (mmt)	Surplus/Shortfall (mmt)
1990-91	112.61	14.19	14.57	(0.38)
2000-01	142.86	18.00	19.02	(1.02)
2007-08	163.49	20.60	20.96	(0.36)
2010	184.75	23.28	--	--
2025	246.28	31.03	--	--
2050	335.19	42.23	--	--

Source: UN 2008; and Ahmad 2009.

### Proposition #2

*Countries experiencing transitory food insecurity tend to also suffer from poor governance indicators; those facing the most chronic food insecurity tend to have even worse governance indicators.*

Food insecurity is defined as “a situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active, healthy life. It may be caused by the unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power or the inappropriate distribution or inadequate use of food at the household level. Food insecurity, poor conditions of health and sanitation and inappropriate care and feeding practices are the major causes of poor nutritional status. Food insecurity may be chronic, seasonal or transitory” (FAO 2001, p. 49).

A country is chronically food insecure if it faces successive food crisis for three years; whereas continuous insufficient food intake to meet dietary energy requirements leads to undernourishment (FAO 2003). Transitory food insecurity, on the other hand, occurs during a “variation in international food prices, foreign exchange earnings, domestic food production and household incomes. These are often related. Temporary sharp reductions in a population’s ability to produce or purchase food and other essentials undermine long term development and cause loss of human capital from which it takes years to recover” (FAO 2003a, p.32).

The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project reports aggregate and individual governance indicators for 212 countries and defines governance as consisting “of the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them” (World Bank 2009). Six indicators are used to measure the governance of a country which includes voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption. The countries are ranked between 1-100 percentiles and the lower percentile represents poor governance, while high percentile represents good governance within the above mentioned indicators.

The FAO regularly publishes the list of countries facing food crisis and requiring external assistance to overcome their food shortages (FAO 2008b). Fifteen reports have been published since June 2005 to July 2008 which covers the period of three years to determine the countries which have chronic food insecurity or transitory food insecurity. First part of Table 2 shows the list of twenty one countries having chronic food insecurity as they have been facing food crisis and need external assistance for the last three years. The second part of the Table roughly measures those fifteen countries which have transitory food insecurity as they have either been facing seasonal food crisis for the last three years or have an increasing trend of food shortages over the last two years.

Countries facing chronic food insecurity are likely to have worse governance indicators, while those with transitory food insecurity are on the borderline.

Table 2: Food Insecurity and Governance Nexus

Countries	Governance Indicators (2007)					
	Percentile Rank (0-100)					
	Accountability <sup>j</sup>	Political Stability <sup>ii</sup>	Government Effectiveness <sup>iii</sup>	Regulatory Quality <sup>iv</sup>	Rule of Law <sup>v</sup>	Control of Corruption <sup>vi</sup>
Voice & Accountability						
Countries with chronic food insecurity (June-05 to July-08)						
Afghanistan	13.9	1.4	8.1	2.9	0.5	1
Burundi	25.5	9.1	6.6	10.7	9.5	8.7
Central African Republic	21.6	6.7	4.7	9.7	2.9	17.9
Chad	9.1	6.3	4.3	12.1	5.3	5.3
Congo, Democratic Republic of	8.7	2.4	1.4	8.3	1.4	3.9
Congo, Republic of	15.4	19.7	7.1	11.2	8.1	10.6
Côte d'Ivoire	11.1	3.4	5.2	18	2.4	7.2
Eritrea	1	17.3	8.5	2.4	11.9	34.8
Ethiopia	13.5	7.2	37.4	18.9	38.1	27.5
Guinea	12.5	5.3	3.8	13.1	3.8	2.9
Iraq	9.6	0.5	1.9	7.3	1	1.9
Korea, Dem. People's Rep. of	0	56.7	0.5	0.5	15.2	0.5
Liberia	37.5	14.4	10.4	9.2	14.3	45.9
Mauritania	26.4	31.7	27	39.8	33.3	38.2
Sierra Leone	38	33.2	11.8	16	11	11.6
Somalia	3.4	0	0	0	0	0
Sri Lanka	35.6	5.8	47.4	51.5	55.7	57.5
Sudan	5.3	1.9	10.9	8.7	4.3	4.8
Swaziland	16.3	47.6	25.6	26.2	25.7	41.5
Uganda	33.2	13.9	42.7	48.5	37.6	24.6
Zimbabwe	7.7	11.5	2.8	1	1.9	4.3
Countries with transitory food insecurity (June-05 to July-08)						
Bangladesh	28.8	8.7	22.3	20.9	24.8	9.7
Bolivia	49.5	18.3	19.9	11.7	17.6	38.6
<i>Dominican Republic</i>	55.3	49	37	50	37.1	31.9
Ghana	62	53.4	55	53.9	52.4	56
Guinea-Bissau	32.7	29.8	10	14.1	6.2	6.8
Haiti	26	10.6	7.6	20.4	4.8	3.4
<i>Indonesia (Aceh Province 2)</i>	42.8	14.9	41.7	43.7	27.1	27.1
Kenya	46.2	15.9	30.3	47.1	15.7	15.5
Lesotho	52.4	44.7	39.8	24.8	47.1	54.6
Moldova	36.5	36.1	19.4	42.7	29.5	29.5
Nepal	22.6	2.9	21.8	26.7	31	30.4
Nicaragua	44.7	35.6	15.2	36.9	22.4	23.2
Pakistan	18.8	1	28.4	28.6	19.5	21.3
<i>Russian Federation (Chechnya)</i>	20.2	23.1	42.2	35	16.7	16.4
Timor-Leste	44.2	16.3	15.6	4.4	7.6	16.9

In case of **Pakistan**, data for governance indicators is not available at the district level, but issues related to rule of law, government effectiveness, political stability may be found from media reports at regional or provincial level. In 2003, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) published a research report on 'Food insecurity in rural Pakistan.' The report provides an analysis of food insecurity at the district level. Out of 120 districts in the country, 38 districts as shown in (**Annex I**) have been identified as extremely food insecure. More than half of the food insecure districts do not have government effectiveness, rule of law and political stability.

All the seven districts of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) are identified as extremely food insecure. There has hardly been any control of government, rule of law and political stability in the region. Taliban militants, before the recent military operation, have controlled most of these districts. Violence has been enacted by non-state actors (extremists) not only in the area, but also sponsored by actors in other parts of the country.

Eleven districts of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP)<sup>2</sup> identified as extremely food insecure in the report are also ridden with militant conflict in one way or the other. Three of those extremely food insecure districts including Swat were completely controlled by Taliban militants before the Military operation started in the summer of 2009. Five districts have a strong presence of Taliban and remaining three extremely food insecure districts in the NWFP<sup>2</sup> are facing the outfall of violence from neighbouring districts.

In Balochistan, 13 out of its 26 districts are extremely food insecure. Four districts among the extremely food insecure are also facing violence and one district is hosting refugees of those conflicts.

---

<sup>2</sup> Editor's Note: NWFP was renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in April 2010. For the sake of formality, NWFP is used in the anthology.

**Proposition #3**

*Countries experiencing extreme governance stress also tend to face significant food stress.*

The Foreign Policy (2008) magazine annually publishes failed states index and identifies the states which have weak governing structure, poor law and order, violation of human rights, demographic pressures, refugees and displaced persons. In 2008, sixty countries were identified as failed states. Those have been divided (by the author) into top thirty failed states and the bottom thirty failed states. **Table 3** shows the list of food insecure countries which are also included in the failed states index.

**Table 3: Correlation between Failed States<sup>vii</sup> and Food Insecurity<sup>viii</sup>**

	Transitory Food Insecurity	Chronic Food Insecurity	
	Haiti (14)	Afghanistan (7)	
	Nepal (23)	Burundi (24)	
	Timor Leste or East Timor (25)	Central African Republic-CAR (10)	
	Pakistan (9)	Chad (4)	
	Bangladesh (12)	Cong. D. R. (6)	
	Kenya (26)	Congo Rep (26)	
<b>Top Thirty Failed States</b>		Côte d'Ivoire (8)	<b>Top Thirty Failed States</b>
		Ethiopia (16)	
		Guinea (11)	
		Iraq (5)	
		Korea. Dem.R ( 15)	
		Somalia (1)	
		Sudan (2)	
		Uganda (16)	
		Zimbabwe (3)	
		Sri Lanka (20)	
<b>Bottom Thirty Failed States</b>	Guinea Bissau (32)	Eritrea (44)	<b>Bottom Thirty Failed States</b>
	Bolivia (55)	Mauritania (47)	
	Indonesia (60)	Sierra Leone (31)	
	Moldova (49)	Liberia (34)	
	<b>Transitory Food Insecurity</b>	<b>Chronic Food Insecurity</b>	

Source: Foreign Policy 2008; FAO 2008b.

Thirty out of the thirty six food insecure countries are included in the failed states index. In other words, half of the failed states have been facing food insecurity for the last three years. Among the top thirty failed states, sixteen are facing chronic food insecurity, while all the chronic food insecure states are in the failed states index with an exception of Swaziland. Ten out of fifteen countries, which have been facing transitory food insecurity for the last three years are included in the failed states index.

The above Table shows that countries which have been facing challenging law and order situations, facing violence and conflicts and have melting governance structures are more likely to have a food crisis. Somalia, which ranked highest in the failed state index, has long been suffering from civil strife and food shortages due to adverse weather conditions. The humanitarian agencies are occluded from providing food and relief services to the poor and malnourished population groups in conflicting areas. Recently, three people were killed, when humanitarian workers were distributing food in a Somalian refugee camp. The WFP now needs escorts for their food supply vessels as pirates hijack the vessels (BBC 2008).

**Pakistan** is currently going through the toughest time of its history as violence, suicide bombings, kidnappings have become widespread. More than 19,165 people have been killed since 2003, out of which one third have been innocent civilians (Lanche 2009). The data about conflicts at the district level is not available in Pakistan. However, in 2009, BBC Urdu Service conducted a research in restive areas of NWFP districts and FATA agencies and published a conflict map of the region as shown in (Annex II).

The next sections examine the conflict region covered by the BBC Urdu Service and corresponds it to the food insecurity situation in the restive region. The BBC reviewed news reports of the last eighteen months (December 2007- May 2009) in the region. It is a period before the Pakistani military started its operation (June 2009) in the Swat Valley to eradicate extremists in the area.

**Taliban stronghold** in the research are those districts and tribal agencies where the Government completely lost its writ as the local law and order administration ceased to exist. Taliban established their *Sharia Courts* and their commanders had complete authority over the

area. **Taliban presence** are those districts and agencies where Taliban militants have permanent presence in certain pockets and these are no go areas for the local administration. In those areas, the extremists attacked the schools, music shops and government buildings. The Government does not have effectiveness and control over those areas. **Government control** are the areas where government machinery is functioning, but it does not mean that the Taliban do not have capacity to challenge the law and order situation of the area by kidnapping local people.

Out of twenty four districts and seven tribal agencies in the region, only nine are under government control. The following Table 4 shows that the Taliban Stronghold areas are also extremely food insecure. Out of the twenty two conflict districts and agencies, 15 are extremely food insecure. Out of the nine government control districts, only two are extremely food insecure.

Table 4: Relationship between Taliban Strongholds and Food Insecurity in Pakistan

	Taliban Stronghold	Taliban Presence	Government Controlled
Extremely Food Insecure	North Waziristan (3)* Shangla (6)* South Waziristan (8)* Orakzai (20)* Bajaur (23)* Swat (25) )* Buner (34)* Lower Dir (36)*	Hangu (10)* Upper Dir (12)* Khyber (13)* Kurram (14)* Mohmand (16)* Bannu (29)* Tank (32)*	Kohistan (7)* Battagram (18)*
Very Food Insecure		Lakki Marwat (51)*	Chitral (33)* Karak (44)* Mansehra (47)* Nowshera (49)*
Less Food Insecure		Mardan (57)* Kohat (59)* D. I. Khan (60)* Swabi (61)* Malakand (68)*	Charsadda (63)*
Moderately Food Secure		Peshawar (83)*	Haripur (95)*
Reasonably Food Secure			Abbotabad (116)*

Source: BBC 2009a; WFP and SDPI 2003.

Key: \* Food Insecurity Ranking

**Proposition #4**

*Food-related social unrest is beginning to place new burdens on the already weak or borderline governance systems in many countries; chronic food insecurities are likely to make these worse.*

The recent hike in food prices caused an impetus of social unrest and food riots in many countries which have not been reported as transitory or chronically food insecure for the last three years. The Earth Policy Institute published a list of twenty countries where food price unrest has been reported in one way or the other as reflected in Table 5. Eleven out of twenty countries where food related unrest have been reported are not in our list of transitory or chronic food insecurity as mentioned earlier in Table 1.

Table 5: Countries facing food riots and social unrest

Countries	Failed State Ranking	Human Development Index (2007-08)		Political Stability	Governance Indicators (2007) <i>Percentile Rank (0-100)</i>			
		HDI Rank	Voice & Accountability		Government Effectiveness	Regulatory Quality	Rule of Law	Control of Corruption
Afghanistan	7		13.9	1.4	8.1	2.9	0.5	1
Burkina Faso	36	176	38.5	46.2	19	40.8	41	46.9
<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>28.8</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>9.7</b>
Cameron	33	144	21.2	31.3	17.1	24.3	12.9	15.9
China		21	5.8	32.2	61.1	45.6	42.4	30.9
Côte d'Ivoire	8	166	11.1	3.4	5.2	18	2.4	7.2
Egypt	40	112	11.5	21.6	38.9	43.2	51.9	35.7
Ethiopia	16	169	13.5	7.2	37.4	18.9	38.1	27.5
Haiti	14	146	26	10.6	7.6	20.4	4.8	3.4
Indonesia	60	107	42.8	14.9	41.7	43.7	27.1	27.1
Morocco		126	29.3	27.4	54.5	51	51	52.7
Mauritania	47	137	26.4	31.7	27	39.8	33.3	38.2
Pakistan	9	136	18.8	1	28.4	28.6	19.5	21.3
Philippines	59	90	43.3	10.1	56.4	50.5	33.8	22.2
Senegal		156	48.1	37.5	45	40.3	45.2	37.7
Thailand		78	29.8	16.8	61.6	56.3	52.9	44
Trinidad and Tobago		59	65.9	44.2	66.4	71.4	49	55.1
United Arab Emirates		39	23.1	72.6	79.1	71.8	69.5	81.6
Uzbekistan	26	113	2.9	9.6	24.6	5.8	13.3	14.5
Yemen	21	153	17.3	17.3	13.3	23.8	18.1	33.3

Source: EPI 2008a; Foreign Policy 2008; UNDP 2007; Kaufmann et al. 2008.

A careful analysis of governance indicators of the states mentioned in the above list shows that states with the worst governance indicators are likely to have chronic food insecurity. However, those states which have weak governance structures were also the worst hit by the immediate rise in food prices. Fourteen out of the twenty countries where food riots have been reported are included in the Failed States Index and also have Human Development Indicators lower than one hundred.

States such as Cameroon witnessed the worst crisis as 24 people were killed and 1500 people were arrested due to the rise in fuel and food prices. Demonstrations and riots have been reported from Yemen killing more than 12 people. Six people died in Egypt as price of bread doubled within a few months. While three people died in a stampede in China to grab cooking oil bottles at discount price. Three hundred people were arrested in Burkina Faso, 34 in Morocco, several dozens in Senegal and Uzbekistan demonstrating against the rising prices of food. Thailand had to depute its army in the rice fields as the people had started stealing rice from the fields as the commodity has become so expensive in the market. Robbers in Trinidad and Tobago looted two vans carrying food and dairy products (Foreign Policy 2008). Haiti, which repeatedly faced a food crisis, also has very poor governance indicators. More than five people, including a UN peacekeeper, were killed in Haiti and 200 injured in food riots in 2008 (Ibid). Continued conflicts and violence consequently brought half of its population to less than \$ 1 a day income and it stands 146<sup>th</sup> in the HDI ranking. This price hike in food prices has put a stress on the governance structure of those states which are on the borderline of weak governance. Governance indicators are feared to deteriorate in these countries if they face recurrent food crisis in the future.

**Pakistan** like many countries has also suffered during the global food crisis. There was a shortage of wheat during 2007-08 and people have been demonstrating against the higher food prices. Inflation in food items spiked to 30 percent in 2007. Poverty is a growing concern in the country as the recent food crisis has further brought millions of people into poverty and hunger. Recently, fourteen women and children died in a stampede when free food was being distributed in the Karachi metropolitan before the Eid Festival. Currently, the country is facing a severe shortage of sugar, leading to extreme rise in its price in the market. The patience of people is depleting very quickly which may trigger full-scale food riots. This would be very hard for a country which is already fighting a war against extremism.

**Proposition #5**

*A number of the most vulnerable countries in the world are facing a triple threat – very low human development, very high food insecurity, and dangerously high mal-governance.*

Countries clustered with low Human Development in the Human Development Report (UNDP 2007) are more vulnerable and susceptible to food insecurity and melting governance structures. Geographically, all these countries in the low HDI are from the African region as shown in Table 6. The author chose two governance indicators, government effectiveness and rule of law, as they are both closely related to human development. Ten out of twenty low HDI countries have been highly food insecure though Afghanistan, Iraq, Korea, Liberia, Somalia are chronically food insecure and highly ranked in failed states, but their HDI ranking has not been reported. Table 6 shows that countries having low HDI are vulnerable to food stresses as food riots have been reported in four countries such as Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso.

Table 6: List of Low Human Development Countries and its Correlation with Failed States and Food Insecurity

HDI Ranking	Low HD Countries	Failed States Index	Food Insecurity	Governance Indicators (2007) Percentile Rank (0-100)		
				Govt effectiveness	Rule of Law	
156	Senegal		Food riots	45	45.2	
157	Eritrea	44	Chronic	8.5	11.9	
158	Nigeria	18		14.7	8.6	
159	Tanzania			39.3	41.9	
160	Guinea	11	Chronic	3.8	3.8	
161	Rwanda	42		43.6	30.5	
162	Angola	56		11.4	6.7	
163	Benin			33.6	36.2	
164	Malawi	29		30.8	44.8	
165	Zambia			31.3	31.4	
166	Côte d'Ivoire	8	Chronic	Food riots	5.2	2.4
167	Burundi	24	Chronic		6.6	9.5
168	Congo. Dem. Rep.	6	Chronic		1.4	1.4
169	Ethiopia	16	Chronic	Food riots	37.4	38.1
170	Chad	4	Chronic		4.3	5.3
171	Central African Republic	10	Chronic		4.7	2.9
172	Mozambique				40.3	29
173	Mali				34.6	45.7
174	Niger	22			17.5	20
175	Guinea-Bissau	32	Transitory		10	6.2
176	Burkina Faso	36	Food riots		19	41
177	Sierra Leone	31	Chronic		11.8	11

Source: FAO 2008b; Foreign Policy 2008; UNDP 2007; Kaufmann et al. 2008.

Interestingly, sixteen out of the twenty countries in low HDI cluster are failed states, while ten of them are ranked among the top thirty failed states. It shows that countries with low HDI are also susceptible and experiencing stress on their governance. Tanzania, Benin, Zambia, Mozambique, Mali and Niger whose government effectiveness and rule of law (governance

indicators) are already on the borderline and any stress on food supplies or hike in price may worsen their governance structures as they already have very low HDI.

The Human Development Report 2009 (UNDP 2009) shows that Pakistan ranks 141<sup>st</sup> in the 158 countries. Human Development Indicators of Pakistan have improved since 1980, but their pace is very slow as compared to South Asia's overall performance. However, the findings in the data from the HDI Pakistan (Hussain 2003) at the district level shows that the districts which have been facing low HDI are also likely to be extremely food insecure. Though data about HDI is not available for the seven agencies of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), six out of the thirteen districts, which have the lowest HDI are either Taliban stronghold or under military siege to restore government writ.

Table 7: Pakistan: Low HDI districts and its correlation with Food Insecurity and Conflict

Cities	HDI Ranking	HDI	FI Ranking	Conflict
Dera Bugti	91	0.285	2	Military action
Shangla	90	0.332	6	Taliban stronghold
Kohistan	89	0.332	7	Government controlled
Tharparkar	88	0.343	1	
Jhalmagsi	87	0.345	27	Refugees
Kharan	86	0.346	5	Refugees
Kohlu	85	0.348	19	Military action
Bolan	84	0.346	11	
Batgram	83	0.363	18	Borderline
Upper Dir	82	0.369	12	Taliban presence
Awaran	81	0.381	24	Military action
Tank	80	0.384	32	Taliban presence
Killa Abdullah	79	0.387	26	
Gwadar	78	0.392	58	
Jacobabad	77	0.393	46	

Source: Hussain 2003; WFP and SDPI 2003; BBC 2009a.

## Way Forward

We are facing a significant global national food crisis, which is likely to persist, and some of the poorest countries and food deficit districts in Pakistan are at the greatest risk. With high food prices estimated to stay, the future and magnitude of food insecurity is very serious and if not handled immediately with a holistic approach, will turn into a political tipping point beyond the control of global, national and local leadership.

Countries experiencing transitory food insecurity tend to also suffer from poor governance indicators; those facing the most chronic food insecurity tend to have even worse governance indicators. Similarly, districts with chronic food insecurity in Pakistan are more likely to have violence and extremism as shown in Table 4. As a short term solution, elimination of violence, of course, is necessary for restoring peace in lawless territories of the country. However, the long term solution is to eliminate chronic food insecurity from those regions.

Countries experiencing extreme governance stress also tend to face significant food stress. Majority of the top failed states are also chronically food insecure. Similarly, the districts in Pakistan that are Taliban strongholds or have Taliban presence are also facing chronic food insecurity. Both violence and food insecurity perpetuate each other, and need to be dealt with simultaneously. Global policy perspectives have been looking at all these issues separately, but they have a strong correlation with each other and need to be dealt with together.

Food-related social unrest is beginning to place new burdens on the already weak or borderline governance systems in many countries; chronic food insecurities are likely to make these worse. It has been observed that global food crisis perpetuated social rest in many countries that have weak governance indicators. If food insecurity persists for a long period of time, the probability of worsening governance increases.

Food security, historically, has not been adequately reflected in the national policy discourse of Pakistan. It has always been looked at as a production process only. The policy thrust is more towards enhancing production to fulfill the national demand, but it has hardly been seen as an access issue. Article 38 of the Constitution of Pakistan explicitly states that ‘The State shall: (d) provide basic necessities of life, such as **food**, clothing, housing, education and medical relief, for all such citizens, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race--’ (GoP 2004). The social

dimensions of food insecurity have been neglected by the successive governments which brought dire consequences for human development and governance. There is an urgent need to integrate food security, governance and human development into the policy making process. Collective efforts on warlike footing need to be inserted without traditional platitudes and rhetoric. Otherwise as famously said by the author Pearl S. Buck “A hungry man can’t see right or wrong. He just sees food.”

## References

ADB 2008, 'Soaring food prices response to the crisis', Figure 2, Asian Development Bank, viewed in April 2008, <<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Papers/soaring-food-prices/soaring-food-prices.pdf>>

Ahmad, F. 2009, 'Food security in Pakistan', *Pakistan Journal for Agriculture Science*, vol.46, no.2, pp. 83-89.

BBC 2008, 'Somalis shot as they hand out aid,' BBC News Service, British Broadcasting Corporation, 18 July 2008, viewed in August 2008, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7513970.stm>>

BBC 2009, 'Pakistan food stampede kills many', BBC News Service, British Broadcasting Corporation, 14 September 2009, viewed in September 2009, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8254669.stm>>

BBC 2009a, 'Pakistan conflict map', BBC News Service, British Broadcasting Corporation, viewed in July 2009 <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/8046577.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8046577.stm)>

EPI 2008, 'World grain consumption and stocks 1960-2007', Data, Earth Policy Institute, viewed on 9 April 2008, <[http://www.earth-policy.org/Updates/2008/Update72\\_data.htm#table5](http://www.earth-policy.org/Updates/2008/Update72_data.htm#table5)>

EPI 2008a, 'Food price unrest around the world', September 2007- April 2008, compiled by Frances C. Moore, Earth Policy Institute, 16 April 2008, <[http://www.earth-policy.org/Updates/2008/Update72\\_data.htm#table1](http://www.earth-policy.org/Updates/2008/Update72_data.htm#table1)>

FAO and OECD 2008, 'Soaring food prices: Facts, perspectives, impacts and actions required,' High-level conference on food security: The challenges of climate change and bioenergy, Food and Agriculture Organisation and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Rome, 3-5 June 2008, Figure 6, viewed in July 2008, <[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/foodclimate/HLCdocs/HLC08-inf-1-E.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/foodclimate/HLCdocs/HLC08-inf-1-E.pdf)>

FAO 2001, 'The state of food insecurity in the world 2001', Food and Agriculture Organisation, Italy, Rome, p. 49, viewed in August 2008, <<http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/y1500e/y1500e00.htm>>

FAO 2003, 'Measurement and assessment of food deprivation and under-nutrition', *Proceedings international scientific symposium*, Rome, 26-28 June 2002, FIVIMS-an inter-agency initiative to promote information and mapping systems on food insecurity and vulnerability, viewed in August 2008, <<http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y4249e/y4249e00.HTM>>

FAO 2003a, 'Food security: Concepts and measurement', in 'Trade reforms and food insecurity-Conceptualizing the linkages', Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome, p.32, viewed in August 2008, <<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/005/y4671e/y4671e00.pdf>>

FAO 2006, 'Prospects for food, nutrition, agriculture and major commodity groups- World agriculture towards 2030-2050: Interim report', Global Perspectives Study Unit, Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome viewed in April 2008, <<http://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/009/a0607e/a0607e00.pdf>>

FAO 2008, 'Food analysis-Global market analysis', Food and Agriculture Organisation, viewed in April 2008, <[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2008.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/EGUA-7H8MMS-full\\_report.pdf/\\$File/full\\_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2008.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/EGUA-7H8MMS-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf)>

FAO 2008a, 'Crop prospects and food situation-Countries in crisis requiring external assistance', no.2, Food and Agriculture Organisation, Italy, Rome, viewed in April 2008, <<http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/ai465e/ai465e02.htm>>

FAO 2008b, 'Crop prospects and food situation', *Quarterly Digest*, June 2005-July 2008, Food and Agriculture Organisation, Italy, Rome, viewed in August 2008, <<http://www.fao.org/Giews/english/cpfs/index.htm>>

Foreign Policy 2008, 'The failed states index', viewed in July 2010,  
<[http://www.redri.org/new/images/archivos/failed\\_states\\_2008.pdf](http://www.redri.org/new/images/archivos/failed_states_2008.pdf) >

GoP 2004, 'The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan', National Assembly of Pakistan, Government of Pakistan, viewed in November 2009,  
<<http://www.mofa.gov.pk/Publications/constitution.pdf> >

Hussain, Akmal 2003, 'Pakistan National Development Report: Poverty, growth and governance', United Nation Development Programme-Pakistan.

IFPRI 2007, 'The world food situation: New driving forces and required actions', International Food Policy Research Institute, viewed in April 2008,  
<[http://assets.mediaglobal.org/documents/World\\_Food\\_Situation\\_New\\_Driving\\_Forces\\_and\\_Required\\_Action\\_Released\\_by\\_the\\_International\\_Food\\_Policy\\_Institute.pdf](http://assets.mediaglobal.org/documents/World_Food_Situation_New_Driving_Forces_and_Required_Action_Released_by_the_International_Food_Policy_Institute.pdf) >

Kaufmann, Daniel, Kraay, A. and Mastruzzi, M. 2008, 'Governance matters VII, Aggregate and individual governance indicators 1996-2007', The World Bank, viewed July 2010,  
<<http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/pdf/GovernanceMattersVII.pdf>>

Lanche, J. 2009, 'Suicide terrorism in Pakistan: An assessment', Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, viewed on 4 November 2009,  
<[http://www.ipcs.org/pdf\\_file/issue/SR84-Jeremie-Suicideterrorism.pdf](http://www.ipcs.org/pdf_file/issue/SR84-Jeremie-Suicideterrorism.pdf)>

The Guardian (U.K) 2008, 'Food riots fear after rice price hits a high', The Observer, 6 April, viewed on 16 April 2008,  
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/apr/06/food.foodanddrink>>

UNDP 2007, 'Human Development Report 2007/2008, Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world', United Nations Development Programme, viewed in August 2008, <<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2007-2008/>>

UNDP 2009, 'Human Development Report 2009 Pakistan', Human Development Reports, United Nations Development Programme, viewed in November 2009, <[http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_PAK.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_PAK.html)>

UNFPA 2008, 'Linking population, poverty and development-Population trends: Rapid growth in less developed regions', United Nations Population Fund, viewed in April 2008, < <http://www.unfpa.org/pds/trends.htm>>

USDA 2008, 'Global agricultural supply and demand: Factors contributing to the recent increase in food commodity prices', United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service/USDA 2008, WRS-0801.

UN 2008, 'World population prospects: The 2008 revision', Population Database, United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, viewed 14 Nov. 2009, <<http://esa.un.org/unpp>>

WFP and SDPI 2003, 'Food security in rural Pakistan', World Food Programme and Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan, viewed on 14 November 2009, <[http://www.sdpi.org/whats\\_new/recent\\_publications/fsareport/table1a.htm](http://www.sdpi.org/whats_new/recent_publications/fsareport/table1a.htm)>

World Bank 2008, 'Food price crisis imperils 100 million in poor countries', *World Bank News and Broadcast*, viewed on 14 April 2008, <<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21729143~pagePK:64257043~piPK:437376~theSitePK:4607,00.html>>

World Bank 2009, 'Press release-What is governance?' Governance Matters 2009, Worldwide Governance Indicators 1996-2008, viewed in November 2009, <<http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp>>

## ANNEX I:

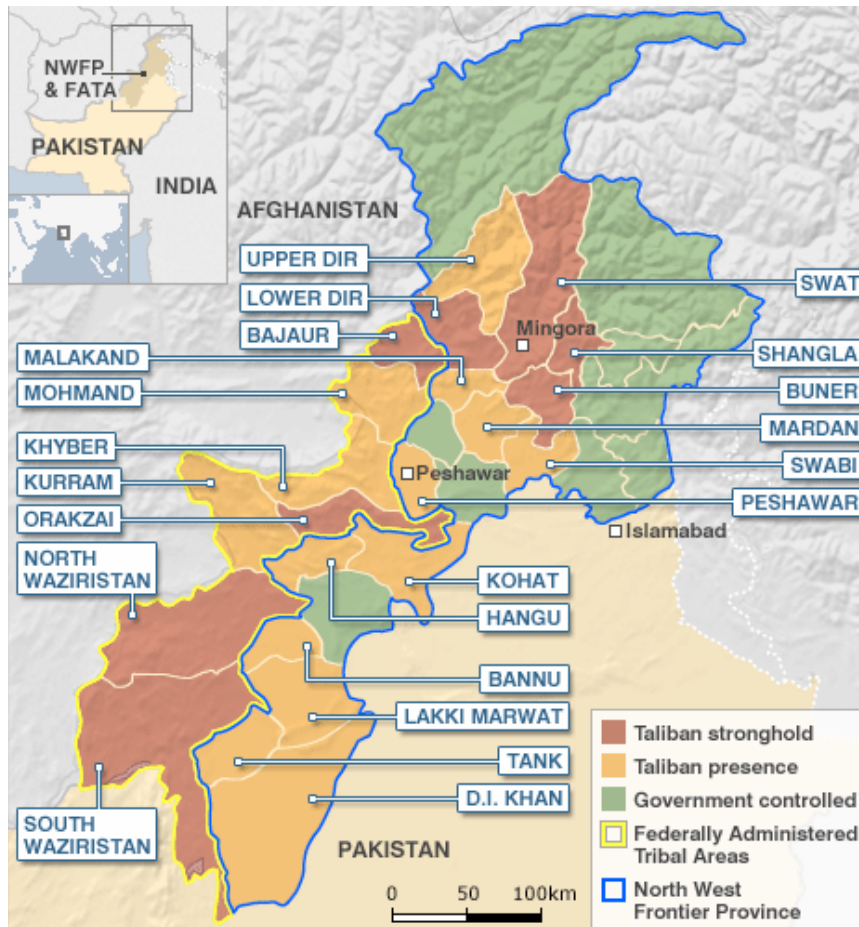
## Food Insecurity in Rural Pakistan 2003

FSA 2003											TABLE 6.4	
FOOD INSECURITY IN RURAL PAKISTAN												
Provincial Code	District	National Ranking	Provincial Ranking	Provincial Code	District	National Ranking	Provincial Ranking	Provincial Code	District	National Ranking	Provincial Ranking	
E X T R E M E L Y I N S E C U R E												
S	Tharparkar	1	1	F	Kurram	14	4	B	Jhal Magsi	27	10	
B	Dera Bugti	2	1	NA	Skardu	15	2	B	Barkhan	28	11	
F	N.Waziristan	3	1	F	Mohmand	16	5	N	Bannu	29	7	
B	Musa Khel	4	2	NA	Ghanche	17	3	NA	Ghizer	30	4	
B	Kharan	5	3	N	Battagram	18	5	P	Rajanpur	31	1	
N	Shangla	6	1	B	Kohlu	19	5	N	Tank	32	8	
N	Kohistan	7	2	F	Orakzai	20	6	N	Chitral	33	9	
F	S.Waziristan	8	2	B	Zhob	21	6	N	Buner	34	10	
NA	Diامر	9	1	B	Khuzdar	22	7	B	Killa Saifullah	35	12	
N	Hangu	10	3	F	Bajour	23	7	N	Lower Dir	36	11	
B	Bolan	11	4	B	Awaran	24	8	P	Muzaffargarh	37	2	
N	Upper Dir	12	4	N	Swat	25	6	B	Kalat	38	13	
F	Khyber	13	3	B	Killa Abdullah	26	9					



ANNEX II:

Pakistan Conflict Map



Source: BBC 2009a.

---

<sup>i</sup> “Measuring perceptions of the extent to which a country’s citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media” (Kaufmann et al. 2008, p.7).

<sup>ii</sup> “Measuring perception of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically-motivated violence and terrorism” (Kaufmann et al. 2008, p.7).

<sup>iii</sup> “Measuring perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of civil services and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation and the credibility of the government’s commitment to such policies” (Kaufmann et al. 2008, p.7).

<sup>iv</sup> “Measuring the perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development” (Kaufmann et al. 2008, p.7).

<sup>v</sup> “Measuring the perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence” (Kaufmann et al. 2008, p.7).

<sup>vi</sup> “Measuring the perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as “capture” of the state by elites and private interests” (Kaufmann et al. 2008, p.8).

<sup>vii</sup> Failed states but not food deficit: Angola, Belarus, Bhutan, Bosnia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Georgia, Iran, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Malawi, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, Syria, Tajikistan, Togo, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Yemen.

<sup>viii</sup> Food insecure countries but not failed states: Swaziland, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Lesotho, Nicaragua and Russian Federation.

# Food Insecurity and Conflict in Nepal

*Bishnu Raj Upreti,\* Yamuna Ghale,\*\* and Safal Ghimire\*\*\**

## Abstract

The food security issue is becoming a major socio-political issue in Nepal. Food insecurity has created huge social tension in Nepal and is one of the major sources of armed conflict. It also led to armed conflict in the most food insecure far western districts of Nepal in 1996. Consequently, it became a highly politicised issue. Regrettably, it is widely ignored by the Government in terms of addressing food insecurity in practice. Hence, this paper examines the relationship between food insecurity, social tension and political conflict in Nepal. Based on primary and secondary data, this paper highlights the effects of food insecurity on social relations and its link with the armed conflict waged by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists). Based on supporting evidence, we argue that hunger and food insecurity pose a serious security threat and serve as a structural source of armed insurgency, civil unrest and cause a division in society.

## The context

The statistics on food security at a global level are not encouraging. The target of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to reduce the number of people affected by hunger to half by 2015 from the base year of 1995 seems to be an unrealistic goal. According to the estimate of United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), 1.02 billion people were suffering from hunger and malnutrition in 2009 and the number is increasing at an alarming rate (FAO 2009). This is a clear indication of the fact that securing food for all has not received enough attention at both national and international levels. Nation states and support systems must fulfil minimum conditions to reach a common goal for reducing hunger. The political commitment of all stakeholders is vital to ensure harmonised approaches, equitable resources allocation, and targeting of programmes in the correct manner. It is also important to address immediate needs including social protection and safety net measures. Moreover, these measures should take place without compromising the need to invest on

---

\* Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti is the Regional Coordinator of South Asia Coordination Office of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South. Author of dozens of books on conflict, he has worked with various international organisations and is research fellow at Nepali and European Universities.

\*\* Yamuna Ghale is the Senior Programme Officer at Swiss Development Cooperation, Nepal. She is an author, a trade analyst and gender activist having expertise on agriculture, biodiversity, and natural resource management.

\*\*\* Safal Ghimire is the Research Officer at South Asia Coordination Office of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South. Besides, he writes about issues of conflict.

long-term viability of local production along with need-based and equitable supply mechanisms, which are becoming a major rhetoric in contemporary discourses.

Hunger is largely a political phenomenon and therefore it is not just the result of technical failure. The socio-political aspects of hunger, techno-fix components and resource politics should be looked into in greater depth as well. Likewise, there are different types of responses to different forms of hunger. Chronic hunger is a widely recognised form of hunger on the basis of calorie intake and therefore provokes a response, provided, of course the political will exists. This form of hunger is generally a manifestation of systematic denial of access to productive resources and weak purchasing power. This form of hunger can cause permanent damage due to sustained uncertainty of access to productive resources and other means of livelihoods.

If these kinds of situations are persistently ignored, they can take the form of acute hunger, and have a direct impact on the physiological condition of the people and the immediate access to food and production resources that can then lead to famine in a certain locality at a particular time period and cause endemic situations such as influenza and diarrhoea. The other form of hunger is hidden hunger, which is even more complex and cannot be addressed by a simple measure in many instances. It is generally triggered by macro level economic alignment and structural adjustment processes. In the long run, such economic processes systematically undermine the leverage and space of developing nation states to challenge the prevalence of negative implications of macro economic reforms. The influence in the production system, changes in food habit and food basket composition, capture of food supply chain by the corporate companies and commoditisation and privatisation of productive resources ultimately help the process of corporate control. It can, therefore, create dependency and paralyse the purchasing capacity of people, which in turn poses a threat to national sovereignty. Finally, people lose their autonomy to decide what to grow, what to cook and finally what to eat.

The Government of Nepal is a signatory to different international human rights declarations on food security. These declarations are meant to demonstrate the Government's commitment towards establishing the rule of law, respecting human rights and promoting equitable development and growth as well as long lasting peace. Yet poverty and the manifestation of hunger remain a common phenomenon in under-developed countries such as Nepal. Despite

the fact that Nepal has signed different international human rights conventions, human rights violations continue to take place especially in relation to marginalised groups (women, *dalits*, and minority groups). This is underpinned by socio-cultural, economic and political processes: the failure of the Government to adhere to the tenants of human rights conventions and translate them into positive action.

The situation has also been exacerbated by the decade-long armed conflict of 1996 to 2006, which has led to exclusion, denial and under-representation of the poorer sections of society. Consequently, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed and it included provisions for addressing the problem of exclusion, denial of poor people in decision-making processes and their under-representation in various political and social platforms.

Pre-dominantly an agricultural country and with a diverse ethnic composition, Nepal requires a unique approach to develop its competence in responding to the needs and aspirations of different groups of people. In this scenario, the Government of Nepal, being a signatory of the MDGs, is trying to move forward to fulfil its commitments and partnerships with private sectors and civil society at large.

The experiences of Nepal clearly indicate that food insecurity is not only aggravated by domestic causes such as armed conflict, weak policies and institutional arrangements and food governance, but also by external factors such as the interest of developed countries in developing ones in terms of use of resources, development investment and trade regulations. For example, donors put down several conditions to give financial assistance (Panday 2009).

Nepal is in transition after the decade long armed conflict waged by the Unified<sup>1</sup> Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) [here after referred as UCPN (M)]. Several studies (Adhikari and Bohle 1999; Upreti 2004a, 2006b and 2009; Seddon and Adhikari 2003) have confirmed that livelihoods insecurity (of which food insecurity constitutes an important part) was one of the main structural causes of the armed conflict. The most food insecure mid-western hill districts (Upreti and Muller-Boecker 2010; Karki and Bhattarai 2003), being an epicentre of the armed

---

<sup>1</sup> In January 2009, CPN (M) and Unity Centre (another communist party) united together and the name of CPN (M) was changed to Unified Communist Party of Nepal [UCPN (Maoist)]. The name CPN (M) was prevalent during the armed conflict time and all the documents referred at that time contain CPN (M) instead of UCPN (M).

conflict, has shown a clear link between structural denials, food insecurity, and armed conflict. Currently, 40 districts out of 75 are food insecure and far and mid-western regions in particular are more vulnerable (MoAC, WFP and FAO 2009). On the other side, the decade long conflict has destroyed the local coping and delivery capacity of state institutions to deal with the food insecurity situation. The situation ultimately became fertile ground for the persistent social tensions, livelihoods insecurity and politicisation in Nepal. Further, the global food crisis has also negatively affected Nepal's food security.

The main objective of this paper is to assess the food security situation in Nepal and examine the relationship between social tension and political conflict. Studying food security as a socio-political issue within the context of a broader socio-political transformation process is complex and has a large scope. This paper has a more limited scope and studies the food security situation and its relationship with conflict.

Food in this paper covers eight groups of food items: cereals/tubers; pulses; meat; milk and dairy products; vegetables; fruits, oils, fats and sugar. These items are used by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, World Food Programme and Food and Agriculture Organisation in the food security assessment in Nepal (MoAC, WFP and FAO 2009).

State plans and policies of Nepal have provisions that direct the Government to provide food to all people. Clause (h) of Article 33 under fundamental rights (responsibilities of the state) of part 4 'Responsibilities, Directive Principles and Policies of the State' of the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 talks about food sovereignty, "... to pursue a policy of establishing the rights of all citizens to education, health, housing, employment and food sovereignty." Of course, defining food security and sovereignty gives us an opposite perspective. The World Bank report, *Poverty and Hunger*, in 1986, defined food security as "access of all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life" (FAO 2003, p.27). In recent times, it has become more common for other UN agencies and FAO to use a slightly different definition of food security, which focuses on the situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO 2001, p.50). An overall understanding of food security, looked at within a comprehensive conceptual framework is given in the following section.

### Understanding Food Security: Conceptual Framework

The concept of the right to food was first coined by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1941 under the broader framework of 'Freedom from Want'. Since then right to food has been the topic of discussion in different forums. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 1948 explicitly endorsed the Right to Food as one of the fundamental rights along with safe housing and clothing. Among others, further emphasis was given through the United Nations (UN) Convention on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights. 'Freedom from hunger' is a basic human right listed in the declaration of World Food Summit (WFS) - 1996 of which Nepal is a signatory country.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the World Food Summit has emerged as a crucial platform to bring this issue to the forefront. It had to do with making various stakeholders accountable for securing food for all as a basic human right. As part of this process, the guideline prepared by FAO in supporting the implementation of those provisions has become highly useful in propagating the right to food. The guideline has explicitly highlighted three kinds of functions of the nation states to respect, protect, and fulfil the provisions that support the right to food.

The four founding pillars of food security are availability, access, affordability and utilisation. These are briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

Availability of food is one of the main pillars of food security. Food is made available either through domestic production or through regulating the market, which entails transport, processing and distribution from market mechanisms. Till the World Food Summit (WFS-1996), the world was given to understand that production is always the major problem in food security. However in 1996 Fidel Castro spoke at the Summit at Rome about the availability of grain to feed the world's population, which has only been hindered by factors relating to distribution and affordability. It was made clear that availability is only one component of food security and it is important to maintain a sufficient food supply for the population through domestic production, imports and a combination of both thorough proper policies on production, distribution, processing and marketing of food (Adhikari 2010).

Access is another fundamental pillar of food security. Access entails economic capability of individuals and households to acquire available food. Proper infrastructure, marketing

---

<sup>2</sup> The details can be retrieved via <<http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/x0262e/x0262e18.htm>>

information, price regulation mechanisms, equitable distribution mechanisms and provision of safety nets are some of the important components of availability of food. Sen (1991) argues that the availability of food in the market does not necessarily ensure people's access to food. People have to have the capability to access it, and afford it. Access and affordability can be ensured by endowments (on land, capital, technology, skills, stocks and income) and expanded entitlements (social networks, kin relations etc.) of individuals and households.

Affordability is equally important to ensure food security. To have access to available food especially in the market, people should have purchasing capacity to pay for essential food items. For this, ensuring employment, fixing minimum wage rates and enhancing access are some of the key aspects.

One of the important components of food security is utilisation, which refers to proper utilisation of available food, maintaining appropriate food habits, safety of food and access to culturally acceptable food. Hence, utilisation mainly focuses on nutritional aspects (conversion of food intake into nutrition and physical functions), and 'complementary factors' like safe drinking water, hygiene etc.

Further, food security should be looked at from a broader perspective of agrarian reform, which entails resource tenure, production potentials, and market regulations to govern the entire food chain.

The recent trend of control of food chains i.e., production, distribution, processing, marketing, and consumption by transnational companies, changes in food consumption behaviour, disappearance of indigenous knowledge, and gender dimensions in food security are other important issues to be dealt by governments and societies.

## **Methodology**

This study has used research methods such as a) content analysis of documents (related laws and policies, reports); b) expert consultations (different experts, stakeholders and related agencies were consulted to ascertain their opinions, knowledge and information to enrich, verify and substantiate the review and analysis); c) a series of focus group discussions were held

with related stakeholders, experts and agencies); d) field studies took place in Rolpa, Rukum, Dadeldhura and Achham districts to obtain preliminary information. These districts were selected mainly because they were some of the most food insecure districts. Methods and techniques of the field study were key informant and in-depth interviews, time-line and historical sketches, observation, focus group discussions and triangulation. This research is part of a broader ongoing study and information collected from the study is used in this paper.

## **Factors Affecting Food Insecurity**

### *Impacts of global food crisis in Nepal's food security*

According to MoAC, WFP and FAO (2009), Nepal experienced steep food price inflation in 2007-2008 and because of year-on-year food price inflation, 3.7 million people became financially vulnerable and could not afford basic food items leading to their inability to maintain acceptable levels of nutrition.

Those people who are living below the line of absolute poverty are in considerable number in Nepal. Figures show over 25 percent of the country's total population has been either landless or land poor (CBS 2001). They are also below the poverty line.

These people, with the majority of *dalits*, ethnic groups and women (most of them illiterate), solely rely on farming for sustenance. They are often tenants and cultivating on other peoples' land. About 4.8 percent (0.2 million) of the total 4.2 million families do not own a single piece of land, even to build a shelter (Ibid).

Globalisation has widened the gap between rich and poor. As shown in the Human Development Report 2004 (UNDP 2004), a total of 5 percent of rich people own 37 percent of arable land in Nepal. A sharp mismatch is seen where 47 percent of tillers own only 15 percent of land. The existing situation shows that often poor people are engaged only as tillers on the land, but rarely own it. Contrary to that, the more affluent sections of society do not farm themselves, but control a substantial chunk of land resources.

### *Impacts of natural calamities*

Food security was heavily impacted by natural calamities in Nepal that included a prolonged drought, severe flooding, frequent landslides and occasional hail storms. Rice was one of the more severely affected crops from the long drought and a late monsoon. The crop and food security assessment report of MoAC, WFP and FAO (2009) and highlights from the ICIMOD satellite data on the incidences of forest fires (1500 fire locations) observed in March 2009 that long droughts and strong winds have a direct link with forest fires and consequently affect the production process.

### *Impacts of armed conflict*

Rapid population growth has increased the demand for food (See Table 1) and has caused food deficiency. Lack of availability, access, affordability and utilisation (they also rely on production, processing, transportation, storage) further exacerbated the situation.

Similarly, because of the conflict, a large outflow of people (mainly male) to India and an increased number of internal displacements caused scarcity of labour force in remote agricultural areas and ultimately affected food production (Upreti 2009).

The remittances obtained from out migration were mostly retained in urban centres and towns for construction of buildings and other unproductive expenses, while remote and rural areas were deprived of investments.

Because of the conflict, banks were also not willing to invest in high-risk areas such as remote rural areas and where agriculture based livelihoods existed (as rebels were declaring that they would not pay bank loans and they were destroying bank documents, etc.). A small survey conducted in the Rolpa, Rukum, Dadeldhura and Achham districts shows that supply was affected by the conflict.

Table 1 Respondents feeling food insecurity in the study districts<sup>3</sup>

No	Feeling of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
1	Highly insecure	13	17.56
2	Insecure	20	27.02
3	Relatively insecure	26	35.13
4	Secure	10	13.51
5	Highly secure	5	6.75
	Total	74	100.0

Source: Field survey data 2007.

Table 1 indicates the how acutely local people felt food insecure. More than 40 percent of the respondents felt food insecure.

Trade unions, political parties, ethnic groups such as Tharu, Madeshi, Janajati, and interest groups have frequently organised general strikes, *bands* (closures) and restricted transport of food items that have severely affected food supply and created huge food scarcity. The armed conflict had a severe impact on the food grain marketing in remote districts because of the damage to infrastructures (Table 2).

Table 2 Impact of conflict in grain marketing in study districts because of damage of infrastructures

People's response on extent of damage	Total	
	F	Percentage
No	26	33.76
Little	20	25.97
Severe	31	40.25
Total	77	100.0

Source: Field survey data 2007.

The study of Seddon and Hussein (2002) reveals that security forces were restricting people from carrying more than one day's food supply at a time to deny food supply to Maoists, as

<sup>3</sup> There was no specific categorisation of respondents, but the places where they were interviewed is written in the methodology section. Respondents were randomly selected from the study district and the intention of this Table is to give the overview of food insecurity.

against the general practice of people to carry a few months supply from the food available areas.

In rural areas, people had to walk up to three to four days to reach the nearest market. Traditional livelihoods opportunities of local poor were jeopardised by the conflict, as they were not allowed to go to the forests by the security forces to collect forest based means of livelihoods (mushrooms, young sprouts of plants, medicinal herbs, non-timber forest products, fire-woods, etc.).

An individual did in fact venture to go to the forest they would be suspected by the security forces as a Maoist. Because of all these problems, there have been frequent famines in the Karnali region (Ibid, p. 29) and other high-conflict areas.

Upreti (2005) shows that the well-established local *Haat-bazaar*<sup>4</sup> system that existed in the eastern hills of Nepal has now been severely affected. The frequency, total hours of transaction, number of buyers and sellers, and diversity of agricultural items have been reduced drastically and they have therefore, negatively affected people with low purchasing power. There was a massive reduction in bartering and the exchange of goods, as well as selling of commodities. The same was the case for purchasing of the required food and non-food items from the money earned from personal sales in such *haat-bazaars*. During the height of the conflict, this system was disturbed in rural areas because of the security risks and security forces' restriction imposed on local people that prevented them from forming groups. Security forces had spread the common perception that insurgents could benefit strategically from such gatherings by targeting them. This spread fear among the people and often prevented them from leaving their homes.

The UCPN (M) highlighted the importance of agriculture in their 75 points Common Minimum Policy and Programme. The 31<sup>st</sup> point of this states, "...Special attention shall be paid to the development of agricultural industries and proper arrangements shall be made for the agricultural markets..." (Upreti 2004a, p.409). Section V, point 31 of the same programme

---

<sup>4</sup> In Nepali society, Haat-bazaar refers to a common place of informal marketing of goods and services. In many rural settings, people gather at one place on a weekly or monthly basis to sell and buy goods and/or offer or receive services.

(the Maoist government) states, that “Fertiliser, seeds, pesticides, agricultural tools shall be made available to the peasants at cheap rates and with ease. Special attention shall be paid to the development of agricultural industries and proper arrangements shall be made for agricultural markets. Balance shall be maintained in the prices of industrial and agricultural products.” Point 45 of the same documents state,

“Appropriate customs policy shall be pursued to provide support to the indigenous goods. Special measures shall be taken to avail consumer goods at cheap prices in remote areas” (Upreti 2006a; 2006b).

However, they were not able to fully implement their policies, nor were they ready to allow the unhindered continuity of the existing agricultural production and marketing systems.

The seizures and confiscation of land were the declared policies of the UCPN (M). Wrongly or rightly, it distorted the production system as well as the ownership of the land. Section IV, point 26 of the states:

“... the agrarian revolution is the basic foundation of the New Democratic People’s Revolution. Therefore, the main policy of agrarian revolution shall be to abolish the feudal, semi-feudal and bureaucratic capitalist production relations in the land and develop national capitalist relations, of which ‘land to the tiller’ shall be the main policy tenet. In other words, the lands owned by feudal, bureaucratic capitalists and various *Guthis* (a type of feudal ownership by social and religious institutions), in the places where the old reactionary power structure have been destroyed, shall be seized without any compensation and distributed to landless and poor peasants, and the tillers shall be made the owners of the land. In case of rich and medium level peasants, their lands shall not be seized but a ceiling shall be imposed on them keeping in mind the ratio of availability of land and population. In places where old state structures have not been totally destroyed or the people’s state power has not been established as yet, only reformative measures shall be taken in the initial stage, according to which ceilings on lands shall be implemented, tenurial rights of tenants shall be guaranteed, the rate of land rent shall be reduced and made one-third,

interest rate of credits shall be reduced, *Guthi* lands shall be turned into '*Raikar*', i.e. governmental lands etc" (Upreti 2004a, p.408).

Hence, agricultural production is still suffering.

### *Impacts of Migration, Mobility and Food Insecurity*

Conflict, due to large-scale migration, directly or indirectly, deteriorates the condition of food security. In the case of Nepal, many youths abandoned their villages and even their cities and migrated to other countries or cities. There was a high exodus of people to adjacent Indian states from the western districts of Nepal. Such a phenomenon resulted in the absence of able-bodied populations ultimately influencing the mechanism and magnitude of food production. This allowed larger areas of cultivable land to fallow every year, it reduced the Labour-intensive agricultural business, the backbone of agricultural economies around the world and aggravated the production of crops and grains.

In many conflict situations, political powerlessness or poverty prevents households or individuals from accessing food even where it is available. In some cases, combatants may deliberately strip civilians of their assets to gain resources and power to fuel insurgency (Keen 1994 as cited in Cohen 2009). Describing the situation of the 1950s people's revolution in Nepal, Jagadish Ghimire in his soliloquy *Antarmannko Yatra* has detailed how food was extorted by the rebels from the villagers. He recalls the memories:

"They would find and take whatever they could get in the villagers' homes. Grains, buffaloes, goats, ghee- they used to take all the things without any resistance. People could not have been able to hide those assets. They used to take such goods only because they were well-armed with guns and knives" (Ghimire 2008, p.15).

Such extortions took place in the name of 'contribution' for a 'great' purpose which was "revolution". It was the same situation when Nepal was trapped at the height of armed conflict at the very beginning of the twenty first century. In remote mid-western villages, most people led a hand-to-mouth existence because they had to provide food and shelter to rebels (Seddon and Adhikari 2003). People were compelled to feed the insurgents every week in such remote villages where per capita production of food was as little as 1018 calorie/day.<sup>5</sup> To their

---

<sup>5</sup> This was cited in the development indicator of Humla district in Nepal, the in a publication of ICIMOD et al. (2003) as cited in Adhikari (2008).

misfortune, the people also faced tight security checks that made their movements highly restricted and confined (Upreti 2009).

During the conflict period of Nepal, the supply of food was affected in three ways. First, restrictions in carrying food by the state army; second, destruction of bridges by the insurgents; third, restriction in food being carried to the headquarters by the insurgents worsening the supply of food (Upreti 2006a). Besides, there had been numerous restrictions on food distribution, reported both by government agencies (such as the National Food Corporation) and by some of the foreign development agencies. Even the World Food Programme's food stores had reportedly been looted. Seddon and Adhikari (2003, p.85) have written that owing to the security situation, WFP had stopped flying subsidized food to remote village depots in Mugu in 2001.

### **Relationship Between Food Insecurity and Conflict**

The question is why is food insecurity the root cause of conflict. As Cohen (2009) opines, conflict leads to hunger, reduces food production, and impedes economic growth in developing and transition countries. Reciprocally, food and economic insecurity results in natural resource scarcities fuelling the possibility of violence. In the same regard, the present portion of this paper fills in the gap among multiple connections between conflict and food insecurity. It highlights the cost of conflict and its effect on people's survival economy while examining mitigation options along with the way to improve the existing scenario.

It is a most contentious topic, whether conflict has escalated food insecurity or vice versa. Seddon and Adhikari (2003, p.136) opine that "... there is evidence to suggest that there have been high levels of conflict in those areas where poverty and deprivation are prevalent, rather than that the conflict has created these disadvantages." Whatever the case it is clear that conflict has diverse effects on agro-economy. Conflict disrupts domestic commerce. It forces internally displaced persons out resulting in them spilling across borders. These people require food, water, land, and fuels and sometimes they have to sell all the assets they have. Ultimately, this situation jeopardises the local and regional economy. The same was the case in Nepal. Food was often diverted to the insurgents and their supporters. The destruction of

food stocks, livestock, and other assets in food-producing and fertile regions, blockades of food supplies, and donor policies directed to withhold food aid was common during war-time.

Around the globe, the prevalence of chronic hunger and consecutive crises of foods and grains have given rise to disasters, food needs crises, and conflict in recent years. FAO estimates that, much of the increase in chronic hunger has been attributed to high food prices. In a 2008 FAO estimate, like other regions in the world, the Asia and Pacific region shows a mixed picture of success and setbacks in hunger reduction. Asia is also the hardest hit region in terms of food insecurity especially Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Pakistan etc. Coupled with this by virtue of their size and influence in Asia, China and India jointly account for 42 percent of the chronically hungry people in the developing world (FAO 2008, p.15).

A study by Effe (1999 as cited in Federici 2002) had shown that there were 75 countries experiencing some form of war in 1999. Upreti et al. (2009) discuss that between 1989 and 2000, not less than 111 armed conflicts took place in 74 different locations around the globe. Of these, only seven were between states and all others were state specific. One argument can be placed that the intra-country wars are often caused by internal problems that are directly related with people's livelihood choices and survival economy. No doubt, food is one of them. Conflict also arises as much from perceptions of unfairness as from absolute shortages. In the case of Nepal too, it is worth quoting that one of the reasons for the commencement and rapid expansion of the Maoist insurgency first in the Mid-Western Development Region (Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan and Jajarkot) was its geographical isolation and the state's neglect of these areas (Upreti et al. 2009). Homer-Dixon (1991 as cited in Cohen 2009) notes that opposing forces in conflict rarely act alone, but are accompanied with other factors that perpetuate violence. Violence also occurs when a dominant group denies resources and causes scarcities for economically or culturally marginalised people. Inaccessibility to development infrastructures like transport, communication, electricity and other facilities and food of course, have severely affected remote villages of Nepal. It also fuelled the insurgency.

According to FAO (2008), 15 percent of the people of Nepal are undernourished of a total population of 26.6 million people, which has now grown to 27 million.<sup>6</sup> WFP (2008) depicts the current estimation of the number of food insecure people in Nepal as being equal to 3.4

---

<sup>6</sup> Visit <[www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76992#](http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76992#)> for additional information.

million people in need of assistance. Analyzing this data, about 7.94 percent of Nepalese are now under acute food insecurity needing immediate assistance, which is apart from the figure of undernourished people. Further, most of these people live in the mid and far west, many live scattered in small, isolated communities outside of these areas making food assistance interventions difficult. The Nepal Human Development Report 2009 states, “Human poverty is much more than income poverty. People are poor not only because of low income, but also because of their low access to opportunities or their participation in them. Human poverty is higher in rural areas and the mountain belt” (UNDP 2009, p. 41). Inarguably, and as discussed above, the same rural areas and the mountain belt, trapped in a circle of food insecurity, became the epicentre of the decade long insurgency in Nepal.

Table 3: Food Production Balances 2008-2009

Districts	Projected population	Net edible prod. (Mt)	Requirement (Mt)	Balance (+, -)	Balance (%)
Mountain	1914652	296510	365701	- 69191	-18.92
Hill	12071464	2080755	2426366	- 355611	-14.24
Terai	13819051	2783135	2501249	281888	11.27
Nepal total	27805166	5160400	5293316	-132914	-2.51
Particular food deficit regions					
Central hills	4462507	510460	896964	-386504	-43.09
Western mountain	30616	2178	5848	-3670	-62.76
Mid-west mountain	354880	31647	67783	-36136	-53.31
Far-west mountain	458228	37788	87522	-49734	-56.82
Far-west hills	918082	78880	184535	-105655	-57.25

Source: MoAC, WFP and FAO (2009, p.14)

Table 3 shows that more than 30 percent food deficit exists in mainly hilly and mountainous districts and western mountain districts. Central and western development regions are comparatively better in terms of food security than the mid and far western regions. Because of food insecurity, people are opting for coping mechanisms that are irreparably harmful, (e.g., sale of productive assets such as land, livestock, jewelry, production tools) and even resort to criminal activities (such as looting, extortion and robbery) when their traditional coping mechanisms (e.g., migration, wage labor, selling of non-productive assets and consumption of uncultivated food, etc.) could not sustain their daily needs.

In 2004 and 2005, the Government spent Rs 140.6 million and Nepali Rs 152.4 million, respectively, on food-aid to Karnali alone (Adhikari 2008, p.2), which is one of the hardest-hit

food insecure districts. Taking that amount into account, the condition of the people there has not improved as expected. Shortages of food and ubiquitous hunger is not new in Karnali. The problem existed there even before the emergence of Maoist insurgency. Karnali, where the decade-long civil war in Nepal originated always had poor figures in development indices. The far western region of Nepal, of which Karnali constitutes a large part, has the highest score (39.0) in Human Poverty Index ranking (UNDP 2009). The following table shows the situation of Karnali at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Table 4: Development Indicators for the Five Karnali Districts

	Kalikot	Mugu	Jumla	Dolpa	Humla
Per capita income (US \$) (Nepal=240)	142	203	203	235	186
Rank based on Poverty Deprivation Index	71	75	67	69	73
Livestock per farm households (rank)	5.91 (43)	11.19 (6)	11.20 (5)	16.79 (3)	12.76 (4)
Per capita production of food (calorie/day) (rank)	1445 (72)	1127 (74)	2004 (64)	2781 (47)	1018 (75)

Source: ICIMOD et al. (2003) as cited in Adhikari (2008, p.10)

The table shows that even the average per capita income of the country is \$ 240; the situation of Karnali districts, the hardest hit northwest area, is in the last row.

The recent study of the MoAC, WFP and FAO (2009) highlights the impact of crop losses and consequent high food prices as heavily affecting households. It reports that 66 percent of households are experiencing food shortages, 43 percent of households are skipping or reducing meals; 30 percent of households in hilly and mountainous districts affected by drought were forced to consume seed stock; 23 percent of households took children out of school to work; 73 percent of households in mountain districts affected by drought had a family member migrating (MoAC, WFP and FAO 2009, p.20). In the following paragraphs the different cause and effects of conflict on food security are discussed.

### *Impacts of conflict on land and production*

The negative effects of conflict had different results ranging from reduced access to land, reduced ability to apply inputs, reduced availability of labor, to reduced ability to implement the necessary agricultural processes like ploughing, weeding, harvesting, etc (Seddon and Adhikari 2003, p.79). Confiscation of land and other physical assets were practiced widely

after which the insurgents began community farming in certain areas. This changed the production system in those areas and resulted in displacement and increased poverty as well as a greater dependency between people to earn a living.

Land related policies in Nepal are either dysfunctional or considered extremely weak and improper land use (for example, construction of building in highly productive land, lack of proper town planning, highly productive land kept fallow by real-estate companies, landlords and absentee landlordism) has been directly affecting food insecurity in Nepal. First, there is slow economic growth (less than 4 percent as discussed above) and stagnation of agriculture and cereal production leading to high food prices. Second, the low purchasing power of people of remote and rural areas leads to the market not being able to function properly (monopoly, cartelling and supply not meeting demand). In addition political tension related obstructions such as general strikes, closure and padlocking of offices were rampantly practiced. The inefficiency of land related policies were also responsible for low production to some extent.

It is not only that food production declined during the conflict but also income-earning opportunities that would have otherwise helped in purchasing food (Adhikari 2008, p.3) declined. Many opportunities such as selling fruits, dairy products and vegetables were almost nil during the conflict period (1996-2006).

Dixit and Sharma (2003 as cited in Seddon and Adhikari 2003) have specifically addressed the 'Impact of conflict on agricultural production and small landowners in Nepal'. This study shows that the majority of displaced persons by armed conflict in Nepal were landowners and wealthier peasants, but many were not members of the rural elites. Whether the reason for their displacement was their class status or anything else is not yet explored. Cohen (2009) discusses that as farming populations flee, decline, or stop farming out of fear, production falls. This spreads food crisis over larger areas. War related activities such as land-mining and poisoning wells have long-term effects on food production and other economic activities. He further asserts "Conflict-linked food shortages set the stage for years of food emergencies, even after fighting ceases" (Ibid., p.4).

Taxation by the CPN (M) on local agricultural goods and transportation has influenced agricultural marketing dynamics and hampered agricultural production. The CPN (M) has

introduced a levy on transportation of food items and agricultural product exports from the local areas to external markets. The CPN (M) charges tax to transporters for the transportation of goods to hill areas from the Terai region. During November–December 2004, they taxed transporters fetching goods to many hill districts<sup>7</sup>. For example, they charge rupees 800 per month per mule, which generally fetches 80 kg of food per trip from Sanfebagar to Dolpa. Darchula, Achham, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Dadeldhura and Doti districts of far western region and Dailekh, Dolpa, Humla, Jajarkot, Jumla, Kalikot, Mugu, Pyuthan, Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan and Surkhet from Mid Western region have frequently suffered from the tax-related market obstructions. WFP (2005, p. 4) reports that “in most part of Bajura and some of Doti and Achham, the CPN (M) collects compulsory donation of 2 kg of cereals or other crops per household every season. For example, in Jupu VDC (Achham) alone, the CPN (M) reportedly collected 4.5 MT of paddy in this reporting cycle. In addition, households report that they were required to feed one of two CPN (M) cadres on a daily basis.” Such interventions consequently caused household food insecurity. The WFP Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (VAM) report indicates that feeding one or two extra members adds a 17 to 35 per cent food burden to a family of 5.7 members. Taxes on road transportation by the CPN (M) combined with the price hike in Terai source markets caused rice prices to increase by one to four rupees in Salyan and Pyuthan during November–December 2004.

The study of Seddon and Adhikari (2003) has detailed the farmers' predicament in a far-western setting of Nepal. The massive use of bombs and related chemicals had made the land unproductive. Similarly, movements of insurgents in the fields had also damaged crops. There was difficulty in attaining wage employment, as it was difficult to move from one place to another. Because of high checking and restricted movement from one village to another, food transportation was affected. Insurgents used to demand time and physical help from the villages in their various programmes. In addition to insurgency, inaccessibility to irrigation fuelled the problems of rural villages. It seems that conflict itself had not resulted in food scarcity. But its tertiary effects such as restriction in income opportunities and exodus of able-bodied people seems to have severely affected food security.

---

<sup>7</sup> See WFP Nepal Food Security Bulletin No 7 for details.

The Maoist slogan 'land to the tillers' had gained the sympathy from the tenants, poor farmers and marginalised people during the conflict period. But the existing production relations in rural areas was severely disrupted. It gradually reduced food production. In a study (Upreti 2005), the key informants<sup>8</sup> explained that most of the big landholdings in the insurgents' stronghold areas were either directly regulated by Maoists, or were exerting pressure over tenants to stop paying contractual payments to landlords. The Maoists did ask to pay the landlords' share to them. Such practices of collecting the landlords' share from the tenants are increasing. This situation has not only created huge uncertainties for farmers and tenants, but also had negative impacts on production and productivity because those productive lands were either uncultivated or under-cultivated or cultivated with no or low investment. They further explained that some of the commercial farmers (e.g., tea growers in Ilam and Panchthar) were facing continuous pressure to pay a huge amount of money regularly to the insurgents.

In some of their areas, CPN (M) evicted local landlords and village elites from their village and captured their lands. Hence, local landlords were not able to cultivate their lands and consequently scarce land resources were under-utilised. Most of the confiscated lands were left fallow and some were distributed to the poor people. However, in most cases the poor people were not able to utilise it due to fear of security forces.

### *Food Prices and Hunger*

Around the globe, a hike in food prices not only creates threats to food security, it also invites many economic, social, political and environmental challenges. Richard Ragan, the country director of WFP Nepal, is quoted on a website saying "The extremely poor have no cash reserves and therefore will find it increasingly difficult to cope with increased food prices."<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the conflict had impeded an emergency response to the food crisis when there was an emergency.

The key messages of *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2008* (FAO 2008) had also incorporated increasing world hunger and high food prices as sharing much of the blame for food insecurity.

---

<sup>8</sup> The respondents were ordinary farmers; small growers; traders and marketers as well as rural landlords and local elites who left their villages due to insecurity and were staying in Kathmandu.

<sup>9</sup> See <<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76992#>>, viewed 5 October 2009, for Ragan's quote.

In Nepal the most food insecure areas are mostly in the northwest. Because of low crop yield, especially rice, people face numerous difficulties while trying to sustain themselves. These villages were also under the siege in the conflict period. The decade long insurgency reduced the villagers' ability to undertake normal farming activities and led to involuntary migration turning them from producers into consumers of food items.

### *Infrastructure Destruction and Food Insecurity*

During the conflict investment in the agriculture sector by the Agriculture Development Bank (ADB) and other financial institutions was severely disturbed. It had become extremely difficult for ADB staff to visit the field, as the insurgents were extremely negative towards the loan provided by ADB and they damaged several branches of the Bank and destroyed documents in the past. For example, all branches of ADB in Chitwan were moved from rural areas to the district headquarters.

Both farmers and the staff of the ADB had shared that many farmers were not able to pay bank loans due to losses in their businesses (e.g., according to the Chitwan Poultry Association, nearly 75 percent of small poultry farmers of Chitwan had closed their businesses). Big farmers and entrepreneurs were hardly surviving, but they were highly uncertain about the high risk in investing in agriculture due to the political crisis. In some cases, farmers were not collecting money even after the Bank had approved the loan (Upreti 2005). Senior officers from the regional office of ADB in Biratnagar explained that only small projects (costing 0.5 to 1 million rupees) in the eastern development region were operating but medium to big projects were worst hit by the conflict. The office buildings of agriculture (e.g., the Regional Agriculture Directorate in Biratnagar<sup>10</sup>, Agriculture Development Office in Dhankuta, agriculture offices in Khotang<sup>11</sup>, etc.) were damaged by bomb-blasts by the insurgents.

### **Conclusions**

To conclude, food insecurity is one of the causes of conflict and conflict is one of the causes that negatively affects food security. Conflict directly impacts the food chain, viz., investment,

---

<sup>10</sup> The incident happened in 23 Baishakh 2061 BS (5 May 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Maoists attacked district headquarters of Khotang on 21 June 2005 (11 Ashad 2062) where 11 government offices were damaged (Nepal Weekly, Year 5, No 64, 19 Ashad 2062 (3 July 2005)).

production, supply, storage, distribution and marketing. Market distortion and fluctuations, security and operational conditions have exacerbated food insecurity in Nepal. The diversion of scarce resources to unproductive use (e.g., military expenditure, ceremonies and welcomes, etc.) have also severely weakened the essential food service delivery mechanisms in Nepal.

Black marketing, artificial shortage of goods and services, physical damage of goods and food stuff, obstruction of production, processing, transportation and trading of agricultural commodities, damage of market infrastructures, variation or rise in market prices due to taxation, donation and transport strikes, blockades and bands, restriction of people's access to forests for means of food (such as mushrooms, medical herbs, non-timber forest products, yams, etc.), disturbance of local *Haatbazaar* (informal agricultural marketing mechanism), land confiscation, harvest looting, attacks on land owners during the time of heightened armed conflict, lack of motivation for farmers to produce food, increasing number of internally displaced persons, feeling of insecurity and fear are all common contributors to the food crisis in the country. The political tension and conflict has reduced market opportunities and employment opportunities, as well as decreased production and productivity.

Land, one of the main sources of production, has always remained a source of social and political power. In Nepal, the skewed pattern of land distribution and inequity became one of the fuelling factors of armed conflict. The recent global move of land grabbing by corporate companies worldwide has potential risks for Nepal since the poor and small holders may lose land rights which may further fuel resource conflict.

Qualitative responses confirm that mass migration of farmers to different parts of Nepal and India had had negative effects on agricultural production.<sup>12</sup> Previous studies (Ghale and Upreti 2005; Gersony 2003; Seddon and Hussein 2002; Upreti 2002, 2004a and b; Adhikari 2008; Pokharel 2004; UNDP 2004) have also shown that conflict has several negative effects on food security.

During heightened times of armed conflict, many of the service delivery institutions were attacked or dismantled. Public service holders were physically assaulted by warring parties that

---

<sup>12</sup> Though considerable remittances are earned, it is not a preferred option for people to leave the country due to insecurity and conflict.

led to inaccessibility to available services for production and distribution of food. The Government operated food depots were removed from remote areas during the conflict. It made people's lives more difficult in the remote and conflict affected districts. The army forced rural households to feed their cadres, which not only put those poor households at the threat of further investigation by state authorities, but also negatively affected their household food balance.

The tight security provisions during the conflict period restricted mobility, which confined peoples' search for livelihood options. Imposition of unnecessary investigations and allegations also bound to remain under their villages without any option for employment, income and investment on food security. The restriction over transport of food to remote areas in the name of facilitating food access to rebels has also negatively hampered many rural households in terms of access to food.

During the conflict period the CPN (M) demanded that healthy individuals join them. This made rural households send their young children out of the village for livelihoods, and they were forced to take them out of school. This also drastically impacted production spheres and supply chains.

Poverty and food insecurity hit women and children the hardest. Similarly, the wage labourers engaged in agriculture, women headed households, religious minorities and *dalits* were others affected by food insecurity. Likewise, the epicentre districts of armed conflict and other districts in the mid and far west were more severely affected by food insecurity even after the conflict.

### **The Way Forward**

Strengthening small-holders agriculture is one of the pragmatic approaches of addressing food insecurity in remote rural areas. Increasing investment in agriculture, giving subsidies in irrigation, seed and fertilisers, providing storage facilities, fixing minimum farm rate prices, and providing technical services required for production, processing and marketing of agricultural products are essential factors in ensuring food security. Improved access to the

markets; enhanced community-based seed production and an efficient distribution mechanism provides more room for food production and supply ultimately leading to food security.

Protection of the right to food constitutionally, legally and operationally is crucially important to minimise the effects of the conflict. Continuous monitoring of market prices and market supply is vital. Further, crop diversification and commercialisation, increased investment in research (for market, drought resistance varieties, etc.), development of road networks and connecting with markets are other important elements of achieving food security.

Every dimension of the food policy and development planning should chalk out ways to avoid conflict, respond to conflict should it occur, and re-establish natural and human resources after conflict has destroyed them. This is vital because conflict-induced food scarcity and lack of health care facilities as well as the psychic traumas of displacement kill many more than the actual war does.

As suggested by Cohen (2009), humanitarian food aid is one of the measures to mitigate conflict. Such an aid is associated with the creation of employment, providing impetus to transport infrastructure, and supporting commercial farming through local or regional purchase in non-conflict areas. Further, instant food assistance to vulnerable people is necessary. That can be done by 'food for work' and 'cash for work' packages, distribution of food stuff in the case of severe famine and starvation.

Apart from this, women and children, the most vulnerable group need additional micronutrients that are usually not part of the aid package. Such ignorance further aggravates their condition. Hence, the policy and strategy of food security have to ensure all components such as accessibility, affordability, availability and quality.

In certain cases, such as Bosnia and Sri Lanka, food aid has helped large populations maintain relative food security amidst crises. In Sudanese refugee areas and in Uganda in the early 1980s, households were able to grow enough food to sell vegetables, seeds, and root crops. Services were readily available and traded with specialisation and reorientation of economies (Cohen 1995). The replication of such cases can lead to less vulnerability in countries like Nepal.

Peace-sensitive policies, investments, and socio-economic assistance accompanied by food security and survival options would profoundly do better because, inarguably, war is costly. The economic benefits that can be harvested once we avoid war should be aptly assessed and calculated. Its return in development policies and aid are also beneficial.

Policy actions and government/non-government responses should concentrate on reducing poverty, vulnerability and marginality of the people left off the map of development. Prior to it, context-specific problems are to be identified to coherently address the root causes. Similarly a task force is urgently needed to go beyond the food balance approach to investigate in detail the issue of food security in remote districts. This is important because, in Nepal, the majority of mountain districts in the extreme northwest and in the northeast, with a few other distinctive districts in the hills, are the largest 'hotspots' of food insecurity. They mostly fall in the Karnali Zone (Adhikari 2008).

Mechanisms for food distribution in crisis-ridden settings is also an issue. People in such areas report that they have to walk about 18 km to the food depot to get just 10 kg of food a month (Adhikari 2008). This is frustrating for the villagers and may arouse them further turning them against the state systems and centralised bureaucracy, which in turn translates into a rebellion against the system.

66 percent of people in Nepal are still engaged in agriculture, which contributes only 33 percent to the GDP. This country has been a net food importer country since the 1980s. A potential country for diversity in its production and tapping niche based market, Nepal is still practising subsistence agriculture which has limited income opportunities and cannot support food security in the long run. Therefore, the majority of the people in agriculture have to find other employment opportunities in off-farm sectors as well.

Food prices are still spiralling in conflict affected areas. Land use policy, resource distribution mechanisms, regulatory frameworks for food supply chain and its implementation, preparatory work to align itself with global processes are some of the major areas the Government of Nepal has still to think of. A signatory country of many multilateral instruments and also of human rights provisions, Nepal can ensure food security by following the principle of respect,

fulfilment and protection to its citizens. Therefore, the Government of Nepal should focus on food security within the framework of food sovereignty as mentioned in the Interim Constitution of Nepal. Otherwise, food can become a political weapon at the cost of poverty and lead to social tension and further conflict. Last but not the least, even though the decade long civil war is said to have 'ceased', but the causes that began this war are yet to be addressed.

“More positive scenarios for food, agriculture, and the environment in the twenty-first century are possible if peace can be protected where conflict is imminent, achieved where conflict is active, and sustained where conflict has ceased.” (Cohen 2009, p.19).

## References

- Adhikari, J. 2010, 'Food insecurity, conflict and livelihood threats in Nepal,' in B. R. Upreti, and U. Mueller-Boeker (eds.) *Livelihood insecurity and social conflict in Nepal*, South Asia Regional Coordination Office of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (North-South), Kathmandu, pp.73-130.
- Adhikari, J. 2008, *Food crisis in Karnali: A historical and politico-economic perspective*, Martin Chautari, Kathmandu.
- Adhikari, J. and Bohle, H. G. 1999, *Food crisis in Nepal. How mountain farmers cope*, Adroit Publications, New Delhi.
- CBS 2001, 'Pocketbook of statistics', Central Bureau of Statistics, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Cohen, M. J. 2009, 'Food security and conflict', *Social Research*, viewed 5 October 2009, <[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m2267/is\\_1\\_66/ai\\_54668884/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2267/is_1_66/ai_54668884/)>
- Cohen, M. J. (ed.) 1995, *Causes of hunger: Hunger 1995*, Bread for the World Institute, Silver Spring, MD.
- FAO 2009, 'The state of food insecurity in the world 2009: Economic crises, impacts and lessons learned', Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome.
- FAO 2008, 'The state of food insecurity in the world 2008', Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome.
- FAO 2003, 'Trade reforms and food security', Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome.
- FAO 2001, 'The state of food insecurity in the world 2001', Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome.

- Federici, S. 2002, 'War, globalisation, and reproduction', *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, vol. 1, no. 4, viewed 4 January 2010, <[www.alternativesjournal.net/volume1/number4/federici.htm](http://www.alternativesjournal.net/volume1/number4/federici.htm)>
- Gersony, R. 2003, 'Sowing the wind: History and dynamics of the Maoist revolt in Nepal's Rapti Hills', United States Assistance for International Development [USAID]/Mercy Corps International, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Ghale, Y.G. and Upreti, B. R. 2005, 'Impact of armed conflict on environment and human life: A gender perspective', *Seventh Asia-Pacific NGO's Environmental Conference*, 4-6 November 2005, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Ghimire, J. 2008, *Antarmanko Yatra* (Fifth edition), Jagadish Ghimire Pratisthaan, Manthali, Nepal.
- Karki, A. and Bhattarai, B. 2003, *Whose war*, NGO Federation, Nepal.
- MoAC, WFP and FAO 2009, '*Crop and food security assessment: 2008/09 Winter drought in Nepal-Joint assessment report*', Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MoAC), World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Kathmandu.
- Panday, D.R, 2009, 'Nepal's failed development: Reflections on the mission and the melodies', Nepal South Asia Centre, Kathmandu.
- Pokharel, B. 2004, 'Cost of conflict in Nepal', *Seminar on cost of conflict in Nepal*, Nepal Foundation for Advanced Studies, 9 June 2004, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Seddon, D. and Adhikari, J. 2003, 'A preliminary analysis of conflict and food security in Nepal', Rural Reconstruction Nepal, Kathmandu.
- Seddon, D. and Hussein, K. 2002, 'The consequence of conflict: Livelihoods and development in Nepal', ODI Working Paper 185, Overseas Development Institute, London.

Sen, A.K. 1981, *Poverty and famine: An essay on entitlement and deprivation*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

UNDP 2009, 'Nepal Human Development Report 2009: State transformation and human development', United Nations Development Programme, Kathmandu, Nepal.

UNDP 2004, 'Nepal Human Development Report 2004: Empowerment and poverty reduction', United Nations Development Programme, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Upreti, B.R. 2009, *Nepal from war to peace: Legacies of the past and hopes for the future*, Adroit Publishers, New Delhi.

Upreti, B. R. 2006a, 'One state, two regimes: Policy and institutional challenges for managing natural resources in Nepal', *Institutions for Sustainable Resource Management and Livelihood Security in Asia*, ESSP OSC, 9-12 November 2006, Beijing, China.

Upreti, B.R. 2006b, *Armed conflict and peace process in Nepal: The Maoist insurgency, past negotiation and opportunities for conflict transformation*, Adroit Publishers, New Delhi.

Upreti, B. R. 2005, 'Working on conflict: Peace and conflict impact assessment of commercial agriculture development project in Eastern Nepal: Final report', Asian Development Bank, Manila.

Upreti, B. R. 2004a, *The price of neglect: From resource conflict to the Maoists insurgency in the Himalayan Kingdom*, Bhrikuti Academic Publications, Kathmandu.

Upreti, B. R. 2004b, 'Resource conflicts and their resolution practices in Nepal', *Mountain Research and Development Journal*, vol. 24, no.1, pp. 60-66.

Upreti, B. R. 2004c, 'Land conflict in Nepal: Peasants' struggle to change unequal agrarian social relations', *Journal of Community, Work and Family*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 371-394.

Upreti, B. R. 2002, *Management of social and natural resource conflict in Nepal: Realities and alternatives*, Adroit Publishers, New Delhi.

Upreti, B. R. and Mueller-Boeker, U. (eds.) 2010, '*Livelihood insecurity and social conflict in Nepal*', South Asia Regional Coordination Office of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (North-South), Kathmandu.

Upreti, B.R., Töpperwien, N. and Heiniger, M. 2009, '*Peace process and federalism in Nepal: Experiences, reflections and learning*', South Asia Regional Coordination Office of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (North-South), Kathmandu.

WFP 2005, *Food Security Bulletins* (Issues 6), Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping, World Food Programme, Kathmandu.

WFP 2005, *Food Security Bulletins* (Issues 7), Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping, World Food Programme, Kathmandu.

WFP 2004-2005, *Food Security Bulletins* (Issues 1- 10), Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping, World Food Programme, Kathmandu.

WFP 2008, *Food Security Bulletin-24, August 2008*, World Food Programme, Food Security Monitoring System.



### **Section III**

#### **Sustainable Access to Safe Drinking Water**

- Assessing sustainable access to safe drinking water in Sindh, Pakistan
- 'Partnership for Safe Water' initiative for the promotion of Household Water Treatment (HWT) options in Nepal



# Assessing Sustainable Access to Safe Drinking Water in Sindh, Pakistan

*F. H. Mughal*<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

This paper reviews the water treatment facilities in Sindh. The review is based on site visits conducted by the writer to a number of towns of Sindh. The objective of the study was to critically evaluate the water treatment systems presently available in those towns. Evaluation is based on visits to the waterworks, discussions with town officials and assessment of replies given to the questionnaire developed. Water treatment systems do not provide benefits to the people, as they are technically deficient and incomplete. The study leads to a number of important findings: technical incompetence on the part of the towns' concerned staff; the absence of environmental health and hygiene aspects; lack of provision of adequate operation and maintenance costs; lack of initiative on the part of staff to acquire adequate technical knowledge; and the absence of community participation. The paper suggests a strategic framework highlighting a realistic future roadmap.

---

<sup>1</sup> F. H. Mughal received his Masters in Environmental Engineering from AIT, Bangkok, in 1975.

## Introduction

Pakistan with a current population of 165 million, and land area of 0.8 million square kilometers is divided into four provinces: North West Frontier Province (NWFP<sup>1</sup>), Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan. Sindh is one of the major provinces with a population of 30 million. About 52 percent of the population of Sindh lives in rural areas.

Historically, in Sindh, for the last 60 years, the Public Health Engineering Department, headquartered in Hyderabad, Sindh, has been developing Water and Sanitation (W&S) facilities. It continues to do so under the Sindh Local Government Ordinance, 2001, in some towns. Minor projects (costing less than Rs. 50 million, typically) are handled by the town municipal administration.

The definition of “town” in the context of this paper, is taken in a broad sense and, means a town with rural and peri-urban populations, in the range of 0.5 to 1.5 million. For the purpose of this paper, the towns visited can be classified, on average, as peri-urban towns.

W&S interventions in Sindh have been inappropriately developed over the years resulting in poor service delivery. The treated water quality continues to be poor in all towns of Sindh. High incidence of waterborne diseases is a common occurrence. One news item in a local newspaper (*Dawn 2009*) contained the news that a person died and over 750 people fell sick after they consumed contaminated water in Karachi, which is the major city of Sindh. Around the middle of 2009, 31 percent of the drinking-water samples in Karachi were found to be unfit for consumption. Hence 40 percent of beds in any hospital in rural areas are occupied by patients suffering from waterborne diseases. Sewage is often discharged without proper sanitation system causing pollution of water bodies.

## The Process

An in-depth, six-month study was conducted to assess the causes of low effectiveness of W&S facilities in Sindh. This paper focuses on the water side of the study, though there are some references to sanitation, since sanitation cannot be completely separated from water supply. A

---

<sup>1</sup> Editor's Note: NWFP was renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in April 2010. For the sake of formality, NWFP is used in the anthology.

two-pronged strategy was developed. One was an informal discussion with the staff of the service providers; and, the other a visit to the sites. Asking questions in a straightforward fashion carried the risk of offending the staff. As was expected, during initial contact, it was found that asking straightforward questions from the staff made them feel they were being investigated. The format of discussion was, therefore, changed to more of an interactive exchange. This strategy worked well and during the discussion with the participants, an assessment was made of their skills. The second approach dealt with actual site visits to 12 towns in Sindh. These towns included Tando Adam, Hala, Nawabshah, Badin, Shaheed Fazil Rahu, Jacobabad, Sukkur, Latifabad, Thatta, Tando Muhammad Khan, Mirpurkhas and Hyderabad. The visits gave first-hand information of the water treatment technologies being used. Their technical assessment showed why they have been ineffective in providing the intended service.

The assessment gave a clear-cut insight into the causes of the ineffectiveness of water supply interventions. The assessment methodology can be used by other developing countries when trying to decipher the causes of failures of water (and sanitation) projects.

### **Evaluation**

The basis of the development of water treatment projects was largely based on the preferences of the field engineers of the concerned department. The needs of the people were not ascertained. The overseers and sub-divisional officers or assistant engineers (the junior officers) develop water supply projects on their own. Projects are forwarded to the senior officers for approval. The projects are approved by the department and finally by the Government (the Planning and Development Department). In other words, the projects are prepared by the overseers and then approved in subsequent stages. The technical design of the project was left to the understanding of the overseers.

The educational qualification of overseers is a diploma-related course, which does not qualify them to design a water or sanitation project. The next stage of officers with a Bachelors in Engineering typically do not check the technical aspects of the project. At the government level, where the project is finally approved, no one is qualified to assess the technical aspects of

the project. It is a bureaucratic setup at the government level. The projects, thus, prepared are not technically sound.

On the sanitation side, the officers (even the senior officers) do not have the understanding of providing the level of service that corresponds to the socio-economic status of a town. For example, a peri-urban town would normally require wastewater treatment. However, this was found to be absent in a number of towns. The officers do not understand the difference between a sanitation project and a drainage project. As a result, the sanitation in Sindh is poor. Site visits revealed a poor state of sanitation technologies. On the water treatment side, a typical project's characteristics are described below.

The project would consist of pumping raw water from a surface water body (usually a canal, with turbidity as high as 200 nephelometric turbidity unit (ntu) to large earthen ponds. According to the officers, the ponds serve as settling tanks. Water was then taken to a clear-water well from where it was pumped to the distribution system. The quality of water of the clear-water well was found to be below acceptable standards. A plastic bag containing a disinfectant was seen near the clear-water well at some places. However, disinfection was rarely practised. However, disinfection is ineffective when the water is turbid (greater than 10 ntu).

The pumps were found to be pumping water directly from the canal, without any protection on its intake side. Canal water quality, as expected, was found to be very poor. Floating materials (small wooden plants, sticks, plastic bags, breakaway parts of plants, etc.) were found on the canal water surface. Floating material is a serious threat to the impellers of the pumps. It is an established practice in water engineering to construct an intake chamber, which consists of bar screens, which screens out the floating material.

No thrust blocks were found on the "bends" on the delivery side of the pumps. Normally, thrust blocks are placed on the bends of the delivery side of the pumps, when the horsepower of the pump is 25 and higher. This helps to prevent dislocation in the bends, as the water pressure is high on the delivery side and its impact increases on the bends, where the direction of flow of water changes.

The concept of sedimentation tank is to provide quiescent conditions, where water movement is sluggish, to enable settling of the settleable solids. The inlet of the sedimentation tank is designed in such a way that no eddies are caused in the sedimentation tank on account of the inflow of water in the tank. Rational water engineering practice provides for the establishment of an inlet channel, with ports at quick intervals, for even distribution of water across the width of the sedimentation tank. Outlet weirs are provided at the outlet end for the water to flow out of the tank without causing water disturbances.

No such thing was found at water treatment plant locations. The water from the inlet pumps was discharged in the pond, causing eddies and disturbances. The large surface area of the ponds allowed developments of water currents and waves (just like in a lake), which would make it impossible for the relatively larger particles to settle down.

The location of interconnecting pipes connecting two ponds was such that it caused short-circuiting of water. The water discharged in the first cell travelled directly to the outlet pipe causing short-circuiting of water. Since the process of sedimentation was not at work, the water quality at the final end as expected was poor. The water treatment system provided was inadequate and deficient. A proper water treatment system has to be in place if safe water is desired.

The sanitation facilities were in a deplorable condition. Sanitation systems, typically found in towns, consist of the provision of open drains [30 centimeter (cm) x 30 cm] that convey sewage from houses to depressions or vacant land. Unhygienic conditions, mosquitoes breeding and water pollution were synonymous with this system. Where no depressions were available, raw sewage was pumped into the canal. In one town, some ponds were seen, which the service provider's staff referred to as oxidation ponds. Excessive growth of weed and a rotten egg-like smell of hydrogen sulfide (indicative of anaerobic conditions) was the hallmark of the system provided.

## **Discussion**

In Sindh, the technological side of water interventions is weak. Water treatment facilities are handled by the government agencies, which typically lacks a thorough understanding of the

principles of water engineering. The final approval of water supply projects is accorded by the administrative department of the Government, which normally has a bureaucratic setup with no staff qualified in the field of water engineering.

All water projects have a design question that asks about the number of people that will benefit from the project. The number is conveyed to the provincial government and on to the Federal Government. Reports generated at the Federal Government's level are conveyed to international agencies giving incorrect population figures that have access to water supply facilities. In practice, not even half of the population reported by the Federal Government have access to safe water.

For example, according to the Pakistan Government's household survey report (2004), access to "improved" water in Pakistan increased from 83 percent in 1990 to 91 percent in 2004, while "improved" sanitation coverage increased from 37 percent to 59 percent during the same period. The percentage of coverage is not accurate if the actual benefits to people are considered. Urban and rural coverage of water and sanitation for the year 2004 is given in the Table 1 while Table 2 gives the similar coverage for a number of years. Both the Tables show a high percentage of coverage.

Table 1: Access to Water and Sanitation in Pakistan (2004)

		Urban,%*	Rural,%**	Total
Water	Overall	96	89	91
	House connections	49	15	27
Sanitation	Overall	92	41	59
	Sewerage system	40	6	18

\*34% of the population

\*\*66% of the population

Source: Pakistan Household Survey, 2004, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

Table 2: Population with Access to Improved Water and Sanitation –  
Pakistan, %

	Rural				Urban				Total			
	1990	1995	2000	2006	1990	1995	2000	2006	1990	1995	2000	2006
Water	81	83	85	87	96	96	95	95	86	87	88	90
Sanitation	14	22	30	40	76	80	85	90	33	40	48	58

Source: Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific, 2008, UN ESCAP, Bangkok, 2008.

According to a newspaper report (*Dawn 2009*), raw water from the Indus River is supplied to the people in Sukkur which is the third largest city of Sindh, after Karachi and Hyderabad and has a population of nearly one million. The low level of technical know-how can be judged from the statement reported in the paper. It said: “According to TMA (*town municipal administration*) sources, it is due to unavailability of alum, used to filter water, that river water is being directly supplied to the people.”

Alum is used to agglomerate the turbid particles, to enable proper settlement in the sedimentation tank. Filtration is achieved through filters. The newspaper also reported the spreading of hepatitis B and C and, gastroenteritis diseases through water. According to the Medical Superintendent of Civil Hospital, Sukkur, over 13 patients suffering from gastroenteritis and stomach diseases are admitted to the hospital every day.

In addition to the technically incomplete water projects, the site visits also found lack of proper maintenance of those facilities that were available.. For example, at many places it was found that pieces of wood, bits of foliage and other debris blocked the entrance of intake pipes. These were not taken care of by the staff. Debris and weed growth were found in the storage ponds as well. Chlorination facilities were out of order. The maintenance staff lacked initiative on the operation and maintenance of the facilities.

Pakistan’s National Drinking Water Policy stresses that drinking water should meet the World Health Organisation (WHO) drinking water standards, but does not explain the methodology the government department has to adopt to provide safe water. Even if the water supply facilities are properly designed and operated, full benefits will not accrue, unless aspects of environmental health and hygiene (both, personal and community hygiene) are taken

into account. Environmental health engineering seeks to modify the human environment in such a way to prevent or reduce the transmission of infectious diseases (Cairncross and Feachem 1993).

The technical competence of the staff was evaluated on the basis of a questionnaire. The questionnaire seeks to acquire water (and sanitation) information; and, asks a few simple questions designed to assess the level of competence of the concerned staff. The technical competence, as assessed, was found to be low (below average). Most of the staff could not answer the questions correctly. In addition, discussions with the staff also gave an indication of inadequate technical knowledge.

In view of the unsatisfactory level of water (and sanitation) facilities, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has initiated a project: Sindh Basic Urban Services, which aims to improve the quality, coverage and reliability of water supply and sanitation and solid waste management services in clusters of secondary towns in Sindh (Sukkur, New Sukkur, Rohri, Khairpur, Shikarpur and Larkana). The fact that ADB has initiated the project aimed at improvements in water supply field, among others, tends to support the findings of the present study. While various international bodies (UN, WHO) emphasise the right to water, it was felt during site visits that the line departments do not consider access to water and good sanitation facilities as a human right.

## **Roadmap**

In the case of reports of improper output and service of water supply facilities, the technical aspects should be examined first to see whether the facilities have been properly designed. In case of its positive assessment, attention should be given to the operation and maintenance of the facilities.

The third assessment option would be ensuring that funds are available for the sustained operation of the facilities. Site visits revealed significant constraints of availability of adequate funds for the operation and maintenance of the facilities. Assessment should cover the treatment facilities and the distribution system (for water) and collection systems (for sewerage).

There is an urgent need for the capacity building of the line departments so that they are aware of sound engineering principles. Technical strengthening should also extend to the administrative departments of the government that have the powers to give a final approval to the projects.

It is essential to sensitise the people, civil society, community-based organisations, and non-governmental organisations of the consequences of poor water treatment facilities and conversely the benefits of safe water. Impacts in financial terms (for example, medical bills, and lost productive hours due to illness) can be easily seen and realised by the people.

In rural areas, it is the women who fetch water and often handle water for practical purposes. However, they are never consulted by service providers when it comes to water issues. Efforts are required to eliminate the gender bias and mainstream the role of women in water issues.

No evidence of community participation in water supply facilities was found in the study. As such, there was no ownership of the projects, which were viewed by the people as government entities. For sustainable operation and maintenance of the projects, the communities must be involved from stage one.

## **Conclusion**

The root-cause of the ineffectiveness of the water supply facilities in Sindh is the lack of an appropriate level of knowledge in the field of water engineering, in all tiers of the government functionaries, ranging from the line departments to the decision-making bureaucrats at the government's administrative level.

A responsible attitude of government functionaries towards the water quality problems is conspicuously missing. Even when problems are reported, no action is taken by the Government. The political will of the Government in solving water quality problems is lacking.

Pakistan National Drinking Water Policy does not give proper directions to the government departments to provide safe water. Because of loopholes in policies, the line departments are absolved from designing improper water supply schemes.

There seems to be no pressure groups for pressurising the Government for providing safe water. Because of the absence of such pressure groups, the Government reacts only to sporadic complaints of poor water quality. More surprisingly, it seems people have, more or less, reconciled to the existing poor state of water interventions, as there is no informed reaction to poor water supply facilities.

Even though the pressure of adopting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for water is there, the real-time benefits to people of water supply facilities have not been provided, barring the erroneous reporting of the coverage of the population. Additionally, there is no check on figures on actual benefits for the people by the international agencies.

## References

Cairncross, S. and Feachem, R. 1993, *Environmental Health Engineering in the Tropics*, 2nd edn., John Wiley & Sons, London.

Ngai, T. Dangol, B. Murcott, S. Shrestha, R.R. 2005, *Kanchan Arsenic Filter*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Environment and Public Health Organisation (ENPHO), Kathmandu, Nepal.

Pakistan Household Survey, 2004, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

## Bibliography

ADB, 2009, TA-4534 PAK 'Sindh Basic Urban Services', TA-4534PAK, Personal communique.

ADB, UNDP et al. 2006, 'Asia water watch 2015, are countries in Asia on track to meet Target 10 of the Millennium Development Goals?', Manila.

Asian Development Outlook Update, 2008, Manila.

CDC 2005, 'Safe water system and hand washing curriculum for training health care workers', ed. 4, CDC, Washington, DC

GOP 2007, 'Pakistan national drinking water policy', Govt of Pakistan, Islamabad.

MOE 2006, 'Pakistan National Sanitation Policy', Ministry of Environment, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

Planning Commission, 2004, 'Pakistan Millennium Development Goals Report', Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, UN and Centre for Research on Poverty Red., Islamabad.

UN Economic and Social Council 2002. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, E/C.12/2002/11, 29<sup>th</sup> Session, 2002, General Comment # 15 - The right to water.

UNICEF, WHO 2008, 'Progress on drinking water and sanitation, Special focus on sanitation', UNICEF, WHO, Geneva.

United Nations ESCAP, *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific* 2008, Bangkok.

WHO 2003, 'The right to water', Health and Human Right Pub. No. 3, World Health Organisation, Geneva.

WHO 2008, 'UN water global annual assessment of sanitation and drinking-water (GLAAS)', Pilot Report, World Health Organisation, Geneva.

World Bank 2006, 'Pakistan strategic country environmental assessment' vol. I: Main Report, Report No. 36946-PK, World Bank, Washington, D.C.

# 'Partnership for Safe Water' Initiative for the Promotion of Household Water Treatment (HWT) Options in Nepal

*Padmaja Shrestha\**

*Bhushan Tuladhar\*\**

*Biju Dangol\*\*\**

*Roshan Raj Shrestha\*\*\*\**

*Bipin Dangol\*\*\*\*\**

## Abstract

On average, 13,000 children under the age of five die every year as a result of unsafe water supply and poor sanitation in Nepal. With the understanding that safe drinking water can reduce the incidence of diarrhoea by 39 percent, the Government of Nepal took the initiative to promote Household Water Treatment Options (HWT) in the country.

To contribute to this effort, the Environment and Public Health Organisation (ENPHO) launched a two-year 'Partnership for Safe Water' initiative, in collaboration with the Government of Nepal, UN-HABITAT, Coca-Cola Company and various local stakeholders from November 2007 to October 2009 to raise awareness on safe water, hygiene and sanitation practices.

A public-private partnership (PPP) approach was adopted for the project, involving a variety of actors: local media for mass promotion; 'Point of Use' (PoU) system manufacturers for hardware availability; local government and community-based organisations for software activities; and local partners for monitoring and sustainability mechanisms.

---

\*Padmaja Shrestha is a Senior Programme Manager, involved in promotion of household water treatment options since 2006. At present, she is coordinating a partnership programme in urban areas of Nepal.

\*\*Bhushan Tuladhar is an Environmental Engineer and the Executive Director of ENPHO since 2005. This project was implemented under his guidance and supervision.

\*\*\*Biju Dangol is working at the Environment and Public Health Organisation (ENPHO) as a Programme Officer in Water and Sanitation Programme. She is mainly involved in the research, promotion and implementation activities related to water, health and sanitation at community and school level.

\*\*\*\*Roshan Raj Shrestha is a Chief Technical Adviser for South East Asia at UN HABITAT water for Asian Cities Programme. This project was implemented under his technical guidance and supervision.

\*\*\*\*\*Bipin Dangol is an Environmental Engineer and consultant of UN HABITAT. He coordinated this project through UN HABITAT.

Awareness of safe drinking water and hygiene practices improved to a considerable extent and people began to make use of HWT options in the project areas. It is anticipated that this will contribute in the reduction of waterborne diseases.

## Background

Water quality is poor in Nepal: water, including the piped water supply, is found to be contaminated by feces. Unsafe drinking water is a major cause of morbidity and mortality, particularly among young children in Nepal. Every year, about 13,000 children under the age of five die as a result of waterborne diseases, indicating the need for improvements in drinking water quality at the 'Point of Use' (PoU).

In this context, the Environment and Public Health Organisation (ENPHO), in collaboration with other stakeholders, including UNICEF, the Department of Water Supply and Sewerage (DWSS), the Academy for Educational Development (AED), and UN-HABITAT, has been promoting various simple and effective PoU water treatment technologies such as Solar Water Disinfection (SODIS), chlorination, filtration (colloidal silver filters, bio-sand filters) and boiling. More recently, ENPHO, with support from UN-HABITAT and Coca-Cola India, and in collaboration with Bottlers' Nepal Ltd. (the Coca-Cola Company in Nepal), the respective municipalities, the DWSS and community-based organisations, took the initiative to promote household water treatment (HWT) technologies, safe storage, good hygiene and improved sanitation practices by applying a public private partnership (PPP) approach. This initiative demonstrated and established a unique partnership between the public and private sector to provide safe water at the household level, especially in urban and peri-urban communities.

## Objectives

The main objective of this project was to reduce the incidence of waterborne diseases through the effective promotion of WHO-approved HWT options and improved hygiene. The specific objectives were:

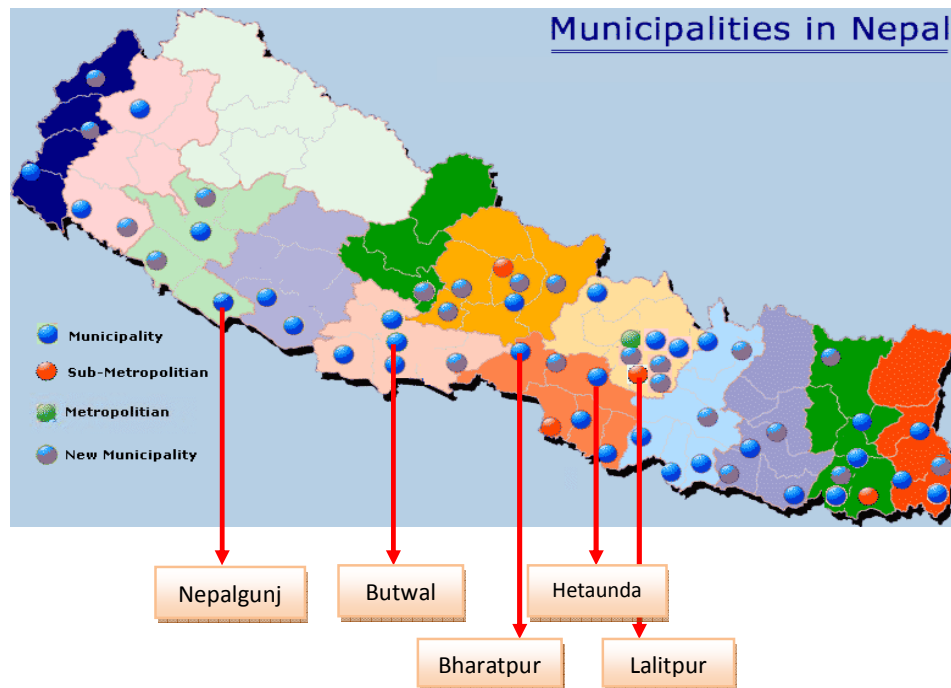
- To create awareness on safe water, hygiene and sanitation practices at various levels of urban and peri-urban areas;
- To educate people on the use of WHO-approved PoU HWT options;

- To build the capacity of local manufacturers of PoU technologies with regards to both technical and marketing aspects;
- To assist the PoU manufacturers in training local entrepreneurs at the district level so as to create a sustainable supply chain;
- To establish a multi-stakeholder partnership for providing safe drinking water.

### Project Areas

The project concentrated on urban and peri-urban communities in five select municipalities of Nepal, where the incidence of waterborne diseases was high, and where UN-HABITAT and Coca-Cola had already established a strong network. The selected five municipalities were Bharatpur, Hetaunda, Butwal, Nepalgunj and Lalitpur municipalities located in the central, western and mid-western development regions.

Figure 1: Map of Nepal showing the Five Project Areas



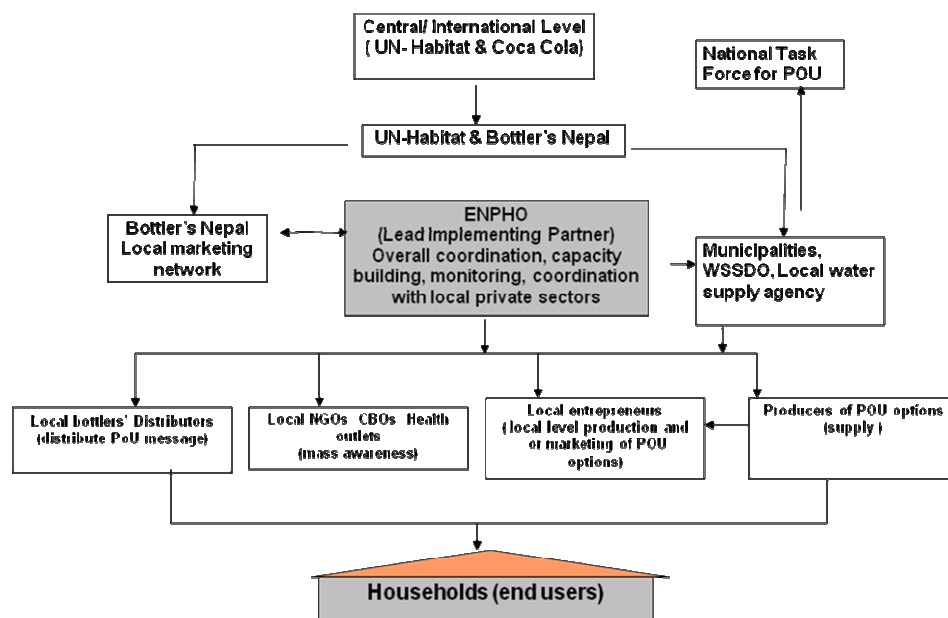
### Technical Approach

The project included hardware and software components, together with the use of appropriate communications tools. The hardware component, i.e. HWT options, was made available by the manufacturers of the technologies, whereas the software component, or the activity promotion, was conducted by the local government and community-based organisations. These activities were scaled-up by incorporating the media in intensive interpersonal communications efforts and through other communications activities.

### Project Implementation Diagram

The project diagram was developed so as to visually depict the relationships between key players in the water and sanitation sector directly linked to the implementation, capacity building and availability of safe water options in the five selected municipalities. The project was implemented by ENPHO as the lead partner, in partnership with UH-HABITAT, Coca-Cola Company, the respective municipalities, stakeholders, community based organisations (CBOs), PoU manufacturers, etc (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Project Implementation Diagram



## **Project Activities**

The activities undertaken in this project are summarised below.

### **Launch of the ‘Partnership for Safe Water’ Initiative**

The project was launched at the central level as well as at the local level. Almost 100 participants attended the central level launch, representing the Government, non-government organisations and the private sector. Here, the need for a ‘Partnership for Safe Water’ initiative by means of a public private approach was highlighted. Several PoU manufacturers and entrepreneurs demonstrated their products at the PoU exhibition session. Similarly, the project was also launched at the local level by mobilising school students. School-level song competitions and essay writing competitions were organised, and the winners were awarded with HWT options, including related information, education and communication (IEC) materials. Various PoU options and related IEC materials were displayed; an audio-visual documentary on safe drinking water and sanitation was run; a stage drama and songs were performed on safe water and sanitation to spread the message to participants. In total, about 200 representatives from the government, non-government organisations, the respective municipalities, Coca-Cola Company, local schools and journalists were present.

### **Initial assessment of water quality**

Water quality testing using samples randomly collected from different locations (source, reservoir and tap) was conducted in the five project areas. A total of 96 water samples (24 sources, 11 reservoirs and 61 taps) were collected. Most of the tested samples, similar to previous assessments, were found to be contaminated with faeces (Table 1), indicating the need for treatment at the household level prior to consumption.

Table 1: Percentage of Water Samples Contaminated with Faeces in each Tested Municipality

Municipality	Source	Reservoir	Tap
Lalitpur	80	0	57
Nepalgunj	100	0	41
Butwal	83.3	0	50
Bharatpur	100	100	67
Hetaunda	80	60	82

### *Baseline survey*

A baseline survey was conducted at the five project areas in 499 households to understand the knowledge, attitude, perception and practices regarding drinking water treatment in the five project areas. The baseline study's main focus was to measure the level of awareness within each community regarding the importance of safe drinking water, water treatment practices, as well as to gauge their ability and willingness to apply such practices. Young mothers and caretakers with children below the age of five were particularly targeted, assuming that they would have more knowledge on water and hygiene issues.

### *Preparation of social marketing and behaviour change strategy*

A social marketing plan was prepared to promote various PoU water treatment options in the five selected urban centres based on an initial assessment of the target population. Their current knowledge and practices, roles of existing market players and strategic gaps in ongoing PoU promotion schemes were analysed. Also included in the strategic plan was a behaviour change and communication strategy, roles for various stakeholders, key issues, gaps in knowledge on water quality and recommendations for the promotion of PoU options at urban centres. The strategy paid specific attention to interpersonal communication approaches so as to reach out to the various market segments with target messages, appropriate means of communication and well-designed and pre-tested promotional materials. The strategic plan emphasised in its awareness generation campaign the need to highlight the possibility of contamination in the following ways:

- the current source of water could be contaminated due to various reasons;

- risk of contamination exists throughout the year and not only during the monsoon season;
- even water attained from deep boring and stone spouts is prone to contamination.
- a source considered safe yesterday could be contaminated today. Moreover, secondary contamination is equally dangerous. Hence, it is important to be equally careful about the storage and handling process.

### *Selection of local partners*

A series of consultation meetings and interactions were organised with the respective municipalities, the DWSS and local water supply providers considering their key role as implementing partners in the project. A mechanism was developed to work with these institutions during the initial assessment period. It was inferred that partnership with these local networks would help in project sustainability due to their already established roles within the communities and their continued presence, even after the conclusion of the project. Aside from these partners, other local partners included primary health care centres, health posts, youth groups and mothers groups. Priority was given to groups that could reach out to women, as women are primarily responsible for household level water management. A comprehensive list of the local partners involved in the project is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: List of Selected Project Partners

Municipality	Selected partners
Lalitpur	Urban Environment and Management Society (UEMS)/Lalitpur Municipality office
Hetaunda	Hetaunda Municipality office
Bharatpur	Water Supply and Sanitation Division office
Butwal	Butwal Municipality office
Nepalgunj	Nepalgunj Municipality office

### *Selection of local manufacturers/entrepreneurs*

Major local manufacturers/entrepreneurs producing and promoting PoU options in Nepal were identified. Regular coordination was maintained with them for availability of PoU options at selected project areas. A list of the five identified local manufacturers/entrepreneurs is detailed in Table 3.

Table 3: List of Identified PoU Manufacturers/Entrepreneurs and their Products

Manufacturers/entrepreneurs	PoU option products
PSI Nepal	WaterGuard, Chlorine Solution
ENPHO/CRS company	PIYUSH, Chlorine Solution
Madhyapur Thimi Clays and Craft P. Ltd. and its district level partners	Colloidal Silver Filter
Thapa Mold and Dyes	Colloidal Silver Filter
Lumbini Filter Udyog, Butwal	Biosand Filter

### *Designing training and educational materials*

At the outset, existing IEC materials related to PoU awareness produced during a national PoU campaign were collected and thoroughly reviewed. Following a number of discussions between the project partners – UN-HABITAT, DWSS, AED and Bottlers' Nepal Ltd., certain IEC materials were identified for reproduction and modification, and new material was also developed.

Recommendations made in the social marketing strategy and the behaviour change study report were incorporated into the new IEC materials produced specifically for this project. Messages in the IEC material addressed certain perceptions amongst the target group that had previously deterred them from adopting PoU water treatment methods.

In total, 13 types of IEC and training materials were produced in varying quantities, including brochures, monthly planners, caps, health and hygiene kits, partnership stickers, flexes, posters and pillar posters, so as to target different audiences in each location. Innovative and novel slogans to promote safe drinking water were printed on the material.

### *Capacity building activities*

Training was provided to different groups working on water in the project areas, so as to enhance their capacity. A brief description of targeted groups for participation in training sessions is provided below:

### *Training for local authorities*

The Water Supply and Sanitation District Offices (WSSDO), the respective municipalities, the Nepal Water Supply Corporation and user groups are the primary organisations responsible for water supply, sanitation and urban environmental management. These stakeholders were, therefore, trained on water quality, health and sanitation as well as on the types of household water treatment technologies available. The training established and improved coordination among local stakeholders to promote PoU options at the local level. During the training sessions, 'Safe water bags' were distributed to each of the 150 participants comprised of local officials from the five project areas. The token bags included informational material on PoU and safe water, PIYUSH/WaterGuard and hygiene items such as soap, towels, nail cutters, brushes, tooth paste and combs.

### **Training for Trainers**

Select local partners were trained on 'Point of Use' water treatment options and behaviour change techniques so as to reach out to local change agents, i.e. teachers, community leaders, local government officials, city volunteers and health volunteers, and individual households. Altogether 182 individuals in the five project areas were trained and mobilised to conduct further training sessions in the respective communities.

### **Training for health professionals**

A total of 261 health professionals, including community health workers (i.e. female community health volunteers), and medical doctors were trained on safe water and HWT options. These health professionals were considered an effective medium for conveying the project's key message and convincing the general public to change their sanitation behaviour.

### **Training for women and youth groups**

Active community-based organisations such as mothers groups, youth groups, *tole*-led organisations (TLO) that work closely with the communities were identified through regular meetings and community events. The identified groups were then trained on water quality, health/sanitation, household water treatment technologies, and storage and handling practices. Because of the significant role this diverse group of community organisers play in community level awareness-raising and behavioural change, they were considered a crucial

partner in maintaining the sustainability of safe water techniques within communities. A summary of the training sessions conducted at the community level is provided in table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Training Sessions

Municipality	No. of CBOs	No. of training sessions	Number of participants		
			Female	Male	Total
Bharatpur	138	49	1205	1004	2209
Lalitpur	119	86	2495	986	3481
Hetaunda	54	56	1619	165	1784
Butwal	250	73	2625	323	2948
Nepalgunj	215	96	1498	550	2048
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>9442</b>	<b>3028</b>	<b>12470</b>

#### Training for journalists

In total, 100 local journalists from the five project areas were trained on water quality matters, PoU water treatment and reporting on environmental issues, with the aim of supporting an intensive mass education campaign and generating quality news coverage of project activities and PoU water treatment options.

#### Training for entrepreneurs

An interpersonal communication strategy rather than a one-day training course was decided on in training the five identified local PoU manufacturers and entrepreneurs. The strategy included regular communication, coordination, interaction and continuous follow-up mechanisms. It also helped to identify and monitor actual gaps in PoU supply, thereby helping to strengthen supply where necessary.

#### *School programmes on water quality and HWT options*

Children are central behavioural change agents at the household level. With this knowledge, the project designed school programmes to target the youth through several key activities, including training and orientation for students and teachers, demonstrative installations of HWT options, inter-school competitions (i.e. songs and art), cultural shows and testing of drinking water quality. Several coordination and consultation meetings were organised with

principals and relevant teachers to conduct activities at the school level that promote HWT and proper handling practices. Altogether 55 schools were selected based on consultative visits and meetings with local partners in the respective municipalities. The activities reached out to a total of 3669 students from the 55 participating schools.

### *Media campaign*

A media campaign was envisaged to generate mass awareness on water quality issues and 'Point of Use' water treatment options. The project coordinated with local FM stations, television stations and newspaper publishing houses. Local communication methods were also employed, such as street dramas



Image 1

and puppet shows performed in market areas and community recreation spaces for greater impact.

Coca-Cola's extensive media networks were taken advantage of for this portion of the project. This included the use of Coca-Cola distribution trucks to advertise and promote safe water and HWT options - a flex was hung at the rear of trucks. (Image 1)

### *Promotional activities*

Several promotional and awareness activities were organised by mobilizing students, communities and entrepreneurs. A summary of these activities is listed below:

#### **Establishment of a 'Safe Water Zone'**

A 'Safe Water Zone' is defined as a community, in which each and every household uses at least one type of Household Water Treatment (HWT) option, be it boiling, filtration, chlorination and/or SODIS. Communities and active groups were trained and intensely mobilised to relay messages on safe water and HWT options and to declare their community a 'Safe Water Zone'.

**Establishment of franchise outlets for safe water**

Franchise outlets were established to strengthen the supply chain for centrally-manufactured PoU options and to allow for a continuous supply of POU options even after the completion of the project. Thus, local demand would be fulfilled and HWT options would become more easily accessible. The outlets were furnished with PoU messages to catch the eye of passerbys.

**Celebration of applicable and overarching international days**

International days in 2009, such as World Water Day, World Environment Day, and Global Handwashing Day were celebrated by organising various events, rallies, exhibitions, trainings, workshops and campaigns on safe water, HWT technology, health and hygiene. Government organisations were actively involved at many such occasions, integrating their internal activities with the project's plans to mobilise students, teachers, city volunteers, local communities and project partners.

***Monitoring and evaluation***

Changing ingrained behaviour and promoting PoU water disinfection techniques is a difficult task. This project focused on engaging local partners in intensive promotion, instruction and follow-up to ensure the use of these methods in a self-sustaining manner and on a large scale. The project developed a mechanism together with local partners to monitor these activities. Local partners would periodically report back to the project coordinators on the number of families reached and the number of families that had tested and adopted safe water practices through the use of PoU options and other hygiene techniques. The project team conducted periodic visits to monitor reported progress and to provide follow-up training to partners.

In addition to monitoring through local partners, the project also carried out household surveys at the start and the end of the project to determine the percentage of families in the target areas that had heard of PoU water treatment, their attitudes towards it, and the number of households using these methods.

**Achievements**

- 150 local officials from the five project areas were educated on safe water and HWT options.

- 182 volunteers were trained to mobilise communities in the five project areas.
- 261 health workers from the five project areas were trained on safe water and HWT options.
- 100 local journalists were trained on water quality issues, PoU and reporting on environmental issues to ensure the generation of quality news coverage on project activities and household water treatment options.
- 12470 individuals (75 percent women participants) from 776 CBOs were trained on safe water and hygiene through 360 training sessions.
- 3669 students and teachers of the five municipalities were trained through over 50 training sessions held on different dates.
- 55 active schools were selected based on consultative visits and meetings with local partners at respective municipalities to make model schools of them, in terms of maintenance of safe water and good hygiene practices.
- Information from hospitals and ward clinics indicate a reduction of waterborne diseases in the project areas.
- Trained groups have been actively promoting HWT options through their regular programmes and channels and have also been supporting local partners in monitoring and supervision.
- Of the 13 clusters in the five municipalities (Lalitpur-4, Butwal-2, Nepalgunj-2, Bharatpur-4, Hetauda-1), 847 communities of households have been declared 'Safe Water Zones'.
- Two HWT franchise outlets advertising HWT options have been established at Lalitpur and Bharatpur municipalities to make PoU options easily accessible to local communities.
- In total, more than 50 news articles highlighting safe water options and the current PPP approach to promoting safe water were published in local/national newspapers, and more than 10 interviews/programmes focusing on the project were broadcast on radio and television channels.
- The project was successfully accomplished using a public and private partnership approach, which can be replicated in other areas.

## Challenges

Challenges faced during the project implementation period are listed below:

- Communities' demands to be provided with PoU options free of cost;
- Difficulties in establishing a sustainable marketing network so as to make PoU products more readily available;
- Maintaining effective coordination with the private sector;
- Changing the traditional beliefs of people;
- Supplying the products according to the demand;
- Integrating the project with local partners' existing programmes.

The majority of the above-mentioned problems were resolved during the project implementation phase through a series of discussions with the associated groups.

## Immediate Impact of the Project

- **Impact on the sale of HWT options:** After PoU promotional activities were initiated in the project areas, the demand for HWT options significantly increased, as claimed by the local manufacturers and entrepreneurs. Sales of CS filters increased by 10 percent and sales of Piyush (chlorine solution) went up by more than 30 percent.
- **Impact on health:** The incidence of diarrhoea in 2009 compared to 2008, among children below the age of six, reduced by 5 percent in the project areas.
- **Impact on safe water users:** According to the monitoring and follow-up survey carried out in 9743 households in all the municipalities involved, 70.4 percent of households (6862) are now drinking safe water.
- **Impact on institutionalisation:** Some project partners have allocated a budget in their upcoming annual budget to promote safe drinking water and proper hygiene practices at the community level. Other partners have committed to integrating awareness and promotion activities in their regular programmes. 'Safe Water Zone' communities have committed to integrating awareness activities in their regular monthly meetings.

## Conclusion

The project has been successfully implemented using a public and private partnership approach. All the capacity building activities were successfully conducted involving an

acceptable number of participants. The trained groups were successfully mobilised to perform training and orientation sessions within local communities. These groups were able to successfully motivate communities to use HWT options, and as a result increased the number of households using HWT options post project intervention. Several promotional activities including follow up visits, awareness generation activities and a mass media campaign also aided in convincing people to use HWT options.

### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank UN- HABITAT and Coca-Cola India for providing us with the funds for such an important project. Special thanks would be given to UN-HABITAT Nepal for selecting us as the implementing agency and for providing us with concrete technical guidelines for project implementation. It has been our pleasure to work with a business organisation like Bottlers' Nepal limited, the Coca-Cola Company in Nepal. We would like to thank them for their coordination and for their support in mobilising the media.

We are thankful to all our local partners for their enthusiastic efforts in effective and successful implementation of activities in the local areas.

We are grateful to all of the manufacturers, entrepreneurs and other line agencies that provided backup support to make the implementation a success.

Last but not least, we would like to thank the people living in the communities, without whom this project could not have been accomplished.

## References

NGO Forum 2007, *FRC Test Result*, Viewed May 2007, [www.ngoforum.org](http://www.ngoforum.org).

JICA/ENPHO September 2004, *Arsenic Vulnerability in Groundwater Resources in Kathmandu Valley*, Kathmandu, Nepal.

JICA/ENPHO, September 2005, *Arsenic vulnerability in groundwater resources in Kathmandu Valley*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

UNICEF 2006, 'Guidelines on School led total sanitation', Department of Water Supply and Sewerage and UNICEF, Kathmandu, Nepal.

UNICEF/ENPHO October 2007, 'Final report on water quality testing in Udayapur, Achham and Panchthar districts', Kathmandu, Nepal.

## **Section IV**

### **Civil-Military Unrest in South Asia: Reflections**

- Civil-military relations and political transition in Nepal
- Civil-military relations in India: Emerging trends



# Civil-Military Relations and Political Transition in Nepal

*Bishnu Raj Upreti\**

## Abstract

Nepal is at a crucial stage of political transition, shifting from a monarchical to republican, unitary to federal, centralised to decentralised state after ten years of armed insurgency and the popular people's movement of April 2006. Civil-military tension was one of the major factors that emerged from the political change. The United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) had waged the armed insurgency, but became the largest political party after the election of 2008. The Maoists then won the elections, ran the government and their leader became the Prime Minister, who stepped down in May 2009 due to tensions with the military. The Maoist party publicly claimed that Nepal's Army was obstructing political change and the consolidation of democracy, which is why the Maoist claimed to fight for civilian control over military.

The main objective of this paper is to examine the civil-military relationship with a focus on the relationship between the government-political parties and the Army of Nepal. The paper examines the role of the military post 1990, political change and the democratic process and its relationship with political parties and civil society. While analysing the civil military relationship, this paper also examines the public perception and response towards the role of the military during the process of political change. As Nepal drafts a new constitution, the issue of civilian supremacy over the armed forces is being given the highest priority by the Constituent Assembly, civil society and the political parties. Hence, the paper will also discuss the process of how civil-military issues have been tackled by the Constituent Assembly and it will attempt to bring to the fore the major issues of contention between civil-military relations and insights about the content and process of the Constituent Assembly to address this issue in the new constitution.

The sources used to develop this paper are empirical data collected from policy documents submitted to the Constituent Assembly, newspaper reports, discussions with people concerned and engaged with this issue and a review of theoretical literature.

---

\* Dr Bishnu Raj Upreti, Ph.D., is the Regional Coordinator of South Asia Coordination Office of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South. Author of dozens of books on conflict, he has worked with various international organisations and collaborated with different American and European universities.

## The Context

In this paper, civil-military relations are largely focused on the relationship between the Nepal Army (NA) and the civilian government and therefore other security structures such as the Nepal Police, Armed Police Force, National Investigation Department and non state actors like the ex-combatants of the United Communist Party of Nepal<sup>1</sup> (Maoist) [UCPN (M)] are not the focus of analysis.

Nepal is in a critical transition as it is just emerging from a decade long armed conflict. However, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed by the Government of Nepal and UCPN (M) is largely ignored by the concerned actors, such as the government, political parties, bureaucracy and security forces. The main reason for such disregard for the CPA is the quest for power.

The CPA, interim constitution and other peace related documents have explicitly or implicitly addressed issues related to civil-military relations. However, instruments of civil-military relations such as strengthening oversight bodies (parliamentary, judicial and human rights) are not a priority of the Government. The CPA, the Agreement on Monitoring of Management of Arms and Armies (AMMAA) and the Interim Constitution have laid the basis for civil-military relations in the post-conflict situation. The clause 4.7 of Section Four of the CPA states:

“The Council of Ministers shall control, mobilise and manage the Nepal Army in accordance with the new Military Act. The Interim Council of Ministers shall prepare and implement the detailed action plan for the democratisation of the Nepali Army on the basis of political consensus and the suggestions of the committee concerned of the Interim Legislature. This includes, among other things, right-sizing, democratic restructuring reflecting the national and inclusive character and imparting training to the Nepal Army on the values of democracy and human rights.”

---

<sup>1</sup> In January 2009, CPN (M) and Unity Center (another communist party) united together and the name of the CPN (M) was changed to the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (UCPN) (Maoist). Hence, UCPN (M) is used in the entire paper.

Similarly, article 4.4 of the CPA states, “The interim cabinet shall form a special committee to carry out monitoring, adjustment and rehabilitation of the Maoist combatants.” These provisions are elaborated in detail in the Agreement on Monitoring of Management of Arms and Armies (AMMAA).

Article 144 (3 and 4) of the Interim Constitution states similar provisions for the democratisation of the Nepal Army listed as the determination of the appropriate number, its democratic structures and inclusive character. A post-peace agreement context has clearly envisioned the need for restructuring the existing Army structures that includes civil-military relations, developing a new national security policy (based on a long term vision, combining international relations, defence policy and economic policy; and establishing a National Security Council), reforming the intelligence services, restructuring the Army, police and other security providers and institutions and a strong parliamentary and civil society oversight and democratic control of the security sector. However, these provisions are largely ignored or differently interpreted by major political actors as mistrust increases.

The integration and rehabilitation of the UCPN (M) ex-combatants is becoming a highly controversial factor regarding civil-military relations because this issue is not taken up easily by the Nepal Army. The intention behind this is, therefore, frequently under question by some political parties. The Government has created an Army Integration Special Committee (AISC), under the Chairpersonship of the Prime Minister representing the four main political parties, to deal with integration and rehabilitation of the UCPN (M) ex-combatants. But the members of the AISC have a very strong position (guided by their party) because they are nominated by political parties and therefore take positions of their nominating parties.

The Government has also created an Army Integration Technical Committee (AITC) to work out modalities and options. However, both the committees are not able to function properly because of the contested opinion of the major political parties regarding the strained relationship between the UCPN (M) and the Nepal Army. The composition of the AITC was based on political nomination, which gave the people a chance to be nominated. As a consequence, the credibility of the AITC is low and political decision makers view committee members, other than those nominated by their parties, with suspicion and expect members

nominated by their party to work for the interests of their party. Hence, AITC is not able to perform well.

The Joint Monitoring Coordination Committee (JMCC) chaired by the UNMIN (United Nations Mission in Nepal) with membership of UCPN (M) ex-combatants and Nepal Army staff was set up in the aftermath of the AMMAA to monitor, report and coordinate the implementation of the agreement. The JMCC is still, in the present day, monitoring the barracks and cantonments and is engaged in resolving problems and complications that arise during the UCPN (M) ex-combatants verification process, which was concluded in December 2007. But none of these committees were able to build mutual trust between the Nepal Army and UCPN (M). This has been a major obstacle for smooth civil-military relations and the restructuring of the Nepal Army.

Table 1: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Nepal Army

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discipline and sincere in work</li> <li>• Professional</li> <li>• Good reputation in UN peace keeping operations in different parts of the world</li> <li>• No visible ambition shown to rule the country militarily</li> <li>• No visible resistance to the change process after 2006</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legacies of monarchical orientation</li> <li>• Less inclusive (not reflecting the nation's population composition)</li> <li>• Inadequate civil-military relations</li> <li>• Violation of human rights during the armed conflict</li> <li>• Lack of transparency on some issues (ration, welfare fund, etc.)</li> <li>• Closed environment, isolated from society</li> <li>• Not under civilian control</li> </ul>

Source: Upreti (2009).

Once the Nepal Army was mobilised in November 2001 to fight with UCPN (M) during the conflict period, the Army fell into wider controversy leading to the erosion of trust over it. The trust further eroded once the Army was found to have been engaged in the suppression of the successful people's movement of April 2006. During that time, the Nepal Army was seen by the citizens and political parties as the Army of the king instead of the Army of the people. This further aggravated the tense civil-military relations. For example, the text of the keynote speech of the Chief of Army Staff (CoAS) on 14 May 2004 states:

“The Crown is the symbol of our identity and the kingship is the progenitor and guardian of the Royal Nepal Army along with the unalterable symbol of Nepali nationalism and national unity. The faith, devotion and the trust of the people towards the Crown have remained the essence of Nepali nationalism since time immemorial. All Nepalese should, therefore, be united to work towards preserving the symbol of our identity along with the fundamentals of our national interests.”<sup>2</sup>

An assessment of the Nepal Army by Kumar and Sharma (2005, p.46) points towards the intention of Army. They wrote:

“The Army believes (that) popular forces (are) being intrusive to the political landscape of the country causing instabilities and discords (*sic*), hence (the) threat to the status quo that has preserved peace, independence and sovereign integrity of the state. ... Monarchy as integral to the integrity of the state has, thus, become the ‘acquired value’, which should be the primacy of national security and political stability. Therefore, the Army has always been cautious about identifying itself with the democratic government rather than monarchy.”<sup>3</sup>

INSEC (2004), ICG (2005) and other international human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch extensively reported human rights violations by the Nepal Army in Nepal.

After the CPA was signed and the promulgation of the Interim Constitution took place, the Nepal Army started engaging in a wider debate so that civil-military relations could regain credibility. After the declaration of the Republic, the relations of the Army with the palace ended formally. Hence, the Nepal Army formally started a debate on restructuring the security sector including civil-military relations.

The rift in confidence and mistrust between the UCPN (M) and the Army widened after the appointment of the former commander of Maoist combatants as Defence Minister in the

---

<sup>2</sup> See the Statement of Chief of Army Staff delivered at the 11<sup>th</sup> Command and Staff Convocation Ceremony of the Military Academy, 14 May 2004. He said, “The motto of the Army has been ‘Rajbhakti, Hamro Shakti’ i.e. the loyalty to the king is the power of the Army.”

<sup>3</sup> See Kumar and Sharma 2005 for the detail impression of NA.

coalition Government led by UCPN (M). This was the start of a rapidly deepening conflict between the UCPN (M) and the Nepal Army, which finally resulted in the resignation of the Government on 4 May 2009. Consequently, the UCPN (M) raised concerns of civilian control over the military. Severe tension between major political parties and Nepal Army, on the one hand, and the UCPN (M), on the other, mounted on the issue of civilian control. Several incidents took place, such as the recruitment of new soldiers in the beginning of 2009 (which UNMIN said was a breach of CPA), the refusal of the Minister of Defence to extend the service contracts of eight military generals (who were finally allowed to stay by the decision of the Supreme Court) and finally the firing of the CoAS by the Prime Minister, and the decision of the President (who was a central member of the Congress Party earlier) to reinstate the CoAS. With the Nepal Army disobeying the instructions of the legitimate UCPN (M) government, tensions mounted, culminating in the resignation of the UCPN (M) Prime Minister in 2009.

In the beginning of 2009, the Nepal Army recruited some 2,800 people arguing that they were allowed to maintain their size at the time that they signed the CPA. According to UCPN (M), this should not have been allowed. This position was also supported by the former head of the UNMIN (Special Representative of the Security General) Ian Martin, who said:

“... any new recruitment by the Nepal Army or the Maoist Army would be a breach of the Ceasefire Code of Conduct, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Agreement on Monitoring the Management of Arms and Armies.”<sup>4</sup>

The Agreement on Monitoring of Management of Arms and Armies states:

“Continuity will be given to functions of the Nepal Army including border security, security of the conservation areas, protected areas, banks, airports, power houses, telephone towers, central secretariat and security of VIPs.”

The Agreement permits routine military activities, but prohibits carrying arms or displaying them, to use intimidation or any type of violence. The issue became a source of tension when

---

<sup>4</sup> See UNMIN Press Statement 23 December 2008 for detail, viewed 20 July 2010.  
<<http://www.unmin.org.np/downloads/pressreleases/2008-12-23-UNMIN.Press.Release.ENG.pdf>>

other political parties criticised the UCPN (M) for taking arms out of the cantonments, an issue not proved by UNMIN monitors. According to peace agreements, the Maoist ex-combatants have the right to take out a limited amount of weapons for self-protection. The main problem, however, was whether the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement were still able to enforce a balance between the military power of the Army and the Maoist ex-combatants after the Army engaged in new recruitments.

### **Understanding Civil-Military relations in Nepal: Some Reflections**

Conceptually, the civil-military relations paradigm was developed and advocated in the Western world and gradually entered into other countries (Huntington 1957). In war-torn countries, this topic was treated as part of the broader security sector restructuring (SSR). Once military institutions claim complete independence from civilian actors and stop interacting with them (politicians, bureaucracy, civil society, ordinary people) and at times, given the opportunity, even act against them, a chasm is created between the two.

Traditionally, an Army's theoretical role was limited to protecting the territory of the state and its relationship with the public was typically tenuous. Gradually, autocrats and dictators used the military as a means for fulfilling their vested interests and achieving political goals. But over time, the notion of the military has changed and it is viewed as an effective institution to enforce and maintain political stability and engage in multidimensional activities. That is, when the need for stronger civil-military relations became more prominent.

The history of the Nepal Army is largely shaped by a centralised and exclusionary monarchical regime. Until the existence of the royal regime, it was mainly an isolated (not connected with people) institution, serving the will of the king (for example, brutally suppressing the people's movement of April 2006). There was no control of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) over the NA. Hence, civil-military relations were poorly understood and selectively applied in Nepal. The weak record of civil-military relations has strong roots in history. The loyalty of the military was always with the king and when relations of the palace with its people became strained, the Army stood firmly in favour of the king and consequently against the popular will of the general public.

The Army's action in the royal coup of 15 December 1960,<sup>5</sup> Army suppression of the 1990s people's movement,<sup>6</sup> the pressure of the military on the interim Prime Minister in 1990 to retain the "sovereignty" of the king while making the constitution, the Army's involvement in the 1 February 2005 royal coup and the brutal suppression of the popular movement of April 2006 reflect negatively on it as far as the general public are concerned.

Kumar and Sharma (2005) argue that for the Army, the king remained "the sole personification of the state". Citing Rishikesh Shah and B. P. Koirala they state, "... to the Army it appears there is no such thing as loyalty to the state and people as distinct from loyalty to the king as a person" (Shah 1982, p. 109). Former Prime Minister B. P. Koirala, noted in his diary that the "most ominous blunder committed by us was the neglect of the Army... We never tried to democratise the Army... nor had we thought about any alternative option" (Koirala 1997, pp. 141 and 156). It used to be called the "Nepal Army". King Mahendra changed its name to the "Royal Nepal Army" in 1965.

Further, the decade long armed conflict entirely overshadowed these issues once the military came into the battlefield. The critical approach of powerful countries like the United States has also seriously undermined the scope for negotiation. In March 2004, during the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, influential donors seriously criticised the Army for human rights violations. The annual country report of the U. S. Department of State released on 25 February 2004 stated, "The RNA (Royal Nepal Army) has continued to kill civilians.... The RNA was [also] responsible for a number of killings, including deaths in custody in which torture was credibly alleged." It was noted that the security forces had used "arbitrary and unlawful lethal force" and claimed all those killed were Maoists. The report concluded that the "Government's human rights record remains poor, and it continues to commit numerous serious abuses" (Kumar and Sharma 2005, p.46).

Kumar (2004) argues that the civil administration in Nepal during the time of the armed conflict was completely subservient to military power. Kumar and Sharma (2005) further argue that throughout the political history of Nepal, the country has been directly ruled either

---

<sup>5</sup> On 15 December 1960, the democratic system was suspended in Nepal and the first ever elected Prime Minister B. P. Koirala was jailed by using military force by the then king Mahendra.

<sup>6</sup> The Army officials guarding the Royal Palace shot at the people during the popular people's movement of 1990.

by the monarchy or by the Rana oligarchy; there was never a precedent for maintaining civilian supremacy over the armed forces. From the Royal takeover of 1 February 2005, the Army fell into great controversy and seriously lost its credibility domestically and internationally.

### **Contextual Factors Affecting Civil-Military Relations in Political Transition**

Nepal is now in a crucial stage of political transition, moving from monarchical to republican, unitary to federal and a centralised to a decentralised state after ten years of armed insurgency. In such a situation, the role of the security sector is very crucial in conflict transformation. Ball (2002) has placed great emphasis on governance and accountability of the security sector to perform its institutional and functional role in any nation and society. The seven contexts (political, psychological, normative, institutional, societal, economic and geopolitical) as indicated by Ball (2002) are used here to analyse civil-military relations in Nepal. At present, Nepal's civil-military relations have been shaped by the following contextual factors:

1. *The political context* is characterised by competition, fear, mistrust, suspicion and opportunism among the key political powers (political parties, security institutions, civil society actors, business community, diplomatic and international community). Deep conflict within the major political parties (intra-party tension) and their influential leaders leads to everyone presenting themselves as a patron of the military and their opponents are considered destroyers of the Nepal Army. Some of the parties project themselves as true supporters of the military and their opponents as a force trying to weaken it. Since political actors are divided in this way, civil society and the business community have also started taking one side or the other. Once a political divide was observed on the transformation of the military, it provided a stronghold for the military to shape a future course of action according to their position. On the pretext of a political divide about the military issue (some were of the opinion that the military was doing well and the restructuring debate was deliberately orchestrated to weaken it), issues became more blurred. Consequently, resistance to implement provisions pertaining to the military mentioned in the CPA mounted and no action was taken. There was also blatant competition among the big political parties [UCPN (M), CPN (UML) and Nepali congress] to use the Ministry of Defence as a tool in

their power sharing negotiation. Before the CA election of April 2008, the NC was heading the MoD and did not do anything to improve security sector governance and civil-military relations. Once UCPN (M) came into power in 2008 and took control over the MoD, it started treating the military with disdain and relations soured. The CPN (UML) led the coalition government and the Defence Minister stood firmly against security sector reform. These partisan political dynamics consequently weakened civil authorities and they were unable to exercise oversight and control over the military and democratic accountability of security was also weakened; they provided scope for the military to continue what they were doing earlier i.e. resist change; centralisation of power of military generals and a few ruling elites again emerged; there was selective interpretation of rules of law; and there was domination of the military in political decisions related to military affairs.

2. *Psychosocial context:* A socio-political psyche is very much shaped by the fluctuating relationship amongst political actors and their links (in favour of or against) with the military, civil society leaders and society at large. The atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion between UCPN (M) and the Nepal Army obstructed constructive engagement. This relationship was used by other political parties for their vested political interests. Further, the psyche of UCPN (M) is largely shaped by individual egos and supremacy (as their agenda of republic, election to the constituent assembly, and federal structure were prevailing in politics and they emerged as the largest political force from the elections to the Constituent Assembly) and ensured that all other political forces had to follow their agenda. Political parties were weak in handling this ego-centric behaviour and they took the support of the military to deal with such complex relations.
3. *Normative context:* Nepal is in critical transition and the government and the existing constitution is interim and the ex-combatants of UCPN (M) are in the cantonment and the legal basis of their integration and rehabilitation is contested and politicised. The NA has been strongly opposed to the UCPN (M) and is struggling to find a balance between the political desires of its reform and maintaining its status quo and legacies of the past. The UCPN (M) ex-combatants still have a war mentality. In addition, they are more political because of their ideological indoctrination.

Integration of these two seemingly opposite institutions, as per CPA, is becoming not only extremely difficult, but also hugely politically contested.

4. *Institutional context:* The State is in transition and therefore severely weak in exercising the rule of law, following standard governance principles and norms while managing state affairs. Transitional security and criminal justice system and financial management systems are not functioning well. All these factors are affecting the civil-military system.
5. *Societal context* is characterised by an unwillingness of decision makers to use the local knowledge (Nepali experts) available in the country and relying on external sources for security-related issues, politicised and donor-influenced (and even commanded) civil society, lack of awareness of the public about security, governance and public acceptance of political interference in the security sector.
6. *Economic context:* The security sector (including UCPN (M) ex-combatants) is enjoying almost 20 percent of the total national budget, mainly pulling funds from the social sector. On the other side, the security organisations (NA, Armed Police Force, and Nepal Police) say they have inadequate financial resources to perform their objectives. Further, there are frequent criticisms that the misuse of state resources is frequent in security organisations.
7. *Geopolitical context:* It is characterised by different security and political interests of two giant neighbouring countries, India and China. Security challenges arise from open borders with India and associated challenges of the trans-border crimes (such as money laundering, human trafficking; smuggling of small arms etc.). Indian overt or covert interference in the internal affairs of Nepal is affecting civil-military relations. Similarly, interests of the UK, USA, China and other European countries are also adding problems to the already complicated transitional dynamics.

The political perception of civil-military relations is largely shaped by vested interests of political parties and therefore civilian control of the military and the civil supremacy debate is fragmented, contested, biased and consequently becoming counterproductive. In the past, the

military did not accept political parties by heart. It was heavily engaged in fulfilling interests of autocratic monarchical regime. Political parties were suppressed by the palace with the backing of the military. Hence, the military was not owned by political parties.

Officially, the Ministry of Defence is the authority that ensures effective civil-military relations, but it was under the shadow of military in the past and served only as a messenger between Army headquarters and the palace. Hence, it had no role at all. It is still unable to perform its function because of its weak capacity.

Parliamentary committees are also not able to ensure effective oversights and they have vested interests. Though the revived Parliament in 2007 revised the NA Act and changed a few provisions, it has not been enough to develop robust civil-military relations as the Act is too conservative. There is no comprehensive national security policy and therefore a cosmetic change in the law alone cannot serve the purpose.

The Government doubled the strength of the Army from 47,411 in total<sup>7</sup> to combat the insurgency and it reached 95,753 at the time of the signing of the CPA in November 2006. This doubling of the strength of NA was specifically aimed at fighting with the UCPN(M) rebels.

Kumar and Sharma (2005) highlighted the conflicts between the judiciary and the Army observed during war time regarding the investigation on *habeas corpus* cases. The denial of entry of the investigation team inside the barracks to search for an illegally held person was interpreted as contempt of court. The tension between the Army and the Supreme Court was observed in the failure of the Army to respect the Supreme Court's orders relating to an inquiry into military affairs (e.g., submission of the audit report of NA, income and expenses from peacekeeping missions abroad, etc.). According to Kumar and Sharma (2005), the Supreme Court had repeatedly asked the Army HQ to submit their audit report following a writ petition filed by the chairperson of the Nepal National ex-Army Commission along with some former Army personnel invoking Article 16 of the 1990 Constitution on rights to

---

<sup>7</sup> According to the report of a daily newspaper 'Rajdhani' on 2 November 2001, the Government presented this figure of total strength of Army to the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the then House of Representatives before the declaration of national emergency in 2001.

information.<sup>8</sup> Regarding the order of Supreme Court, the NA maintained its position that cases within the jurisdiction of the military court conferred by the Military Act 1959 cannot be reviewed or investigated by the Supreme Court (ibid).

### **Civil-Military Tensions in Post 2006 Political Change**

Civil-military relations in transition were highly affected by the legacy of the war, i.e., mistrust, suspicion and revenge instead of collaboration, mutual trust and collective response. Further, the debate over civil-military relations was entirely dominated by the strained relationship between the UCPN (M) and NA and consequent polarisation of politics between these two forces.

A retired senior military officer, Dilip Rayamajhi (2008) discussed the DDR and SSR resisting SSR:

“...These abbreviations or acronyms may sound very effective in making peace but they have not been as successful as projected in their literatures. In most cases, the failure is linked to the imposition of Western standard processes without proper understanding of the culture, traditions and socio-political environment of the conflict-torn area...In the case of Nepal, it seems that the UN and other Western institutions want an early unconditional integration of CPN (M) combatants with the NA as an easy way out without due consideration of future consequences.”

His conclusion was that the integration of UCPN (M) ex-combatants into NA was a political gambit to weaken the National Army in the name of peace with potentially serious consequences. He further wrote,

“It is time for us to unite for peace and not to waste our energies in the pursuit of an outdated ideology to fulfil one’s political ambition.”

Rayamajhi represents one school of thought in Nepal about integration and rehabilitation of UCPN (M) ex-combatants into the Army as well as issues of implementation of SSR in Nepal.

The tension between UCPN (M) and NA revolved around the NA Chief Rookmangud Katawal even before UCPN (M) led the coalition Government. In 2008, Prime Minister

---

<sup>8</sup> The Rajdhani National Daily newspaper of 16 March 2004 reported this in detail.

Prachanda remarked in a large public meeting, '*Ko Ho Tyo Katawal, Ko Ho Tyo?*' (Who's Katawal to dare so? Who's he?). Though UCPN (M) tried to single out Katawal, NA in general and Katawal in particular felt that UCPN (M) did not recognise the positive role of the NA in the peaceful promulgation of the republican agenda. The Army had not stood for the ousted king. Similarly, UCPN (M) felt that the NA leadership under General Katawal was a major force of resistance to transformation of NA and that Katawal wanted to continue NA's role as a traditional force.

When the tension between NA and the elected Government led by UCPN (M) mounted, General Katawal started politically motivated speeches and gestures that were contradictory with the democratic principles of an Army working under civilian control. General Katawal refused to accept the order of the Ministry of Defence to stop fresh recruitments arguing that it is not against the CPA and also that the Government had allowed it. But the argument of General Katawal was not accepted by the Ministry of Defence as well as UNMIN. Once the NA started fresh recruitments, one NGO filed a petition to stop it citing the violation of provisions of CPA. In response to this, on 22 February 2009, the Supreme Court (SC) issued an interim order to the Ministry of Defence and the Nepal Army to halt the recruitment process. Later, on 13 March 2009, the Supreme Court gave a final verdict not to take on new recruitments in the future, but allowed the continuation of the already recruited 3,000 soldiers because the recruitment procedure was completed before the registration of the writ petition and therefore it could not be invalidated.

Once the dispute between the Ministry of Defence and the Chief of the NA mounted, the Ministry asked for a clarification within twenty four hours from General Katawal over allegations that he ignored Government orders on recruitments and ordered the dismissal of eight senior Army generals. The intention was to force him to resign or to dismiss him before his retirement in four months. In response, he gave an explanation within the twenty four hour deadline. Despite his clarification, the UCPN (M) led government dismissed Rookmangud Katawal<sup>9</sup> on 3 May 2009 from the post of Chief of Army Staff and appointed second-in-command Kul Bahadur Khadka<sup>10</sup> as the acting CoAS. However, some of the

---

<sup>9</sup> There was press coverage that General Katawal had planned a 'soft coup' on the model of a Bangladesh-inspired Presidential rule backed by India.

<sup>10</sup> He was said to be flexible in integrating ex-combatants into the NA, even those in senior ranks.

ministers from coalition partners such as CPN (UML), CPN (united) and Sadbhawana party disagreed on the dismissal of CoAS Katawal and boycotted the cabinet meeting. On 4 May 2009, President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the Nepali Army, annulled the cabinet decision of dismissing CoAS Katawal and wrote to the Army headquarters instructing Katawal to be re-instated. Consequently, Prime Minister Prachanda resigned and the coalition Government of nine months collapsed. Prachanda termed the President's interference as 'unconstitutional' and propagating of parallel power centres.<sup>11</sup>

The media reported that the Nepal Army was severely divided in the case of General Katawal. To counter media attention, on 29 April 2009, the top three generals of the Nepal Army refuted media reports that there is a rift amongst the Army elite. The CoAS Rookmangud Katawal with his deputies Lt. General Kul Bahadur Khadka (second-in-line) and Lt. General Chhatraman Gurung (third-in-line) appeared on television and collectively expressed their commitment to the democratic process and the Chain-of-Command in Army affairs. However, media coverage continued on the ongoing tension in the Army and the public was privy to it.

Once the UCPN (M) was ousted from power on the issue of the dismissal of CoAS, it began a protest against the action of the President to reinstate the CoAS. All leaders of UCPN (M) became highly aggressive in their speeches towards the President and General Katawal (who retired in August 2009) and political parties began supporting the move of the President. As part of the protest, the chief of the UCPN (M) and former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal alias Prachanda, addressing a mass meet in Biratnagar on 7 September 2009, said, "... unless and until weapons of the Nepal Army are brought under the ambit of the people, establishing peoples' supremacy is impossible. To establish people's sovereignty and peoples' supremacy, the weapons must come under the control of the people." <sup>12</sup>

Other political parties were concerned about the intentions of the UCPN (M); they thought perhaps it was constantly working towards establishing a people's republic, using CPA, Interim Constitution and CA as a tactic to achieve their mission. They observed that COAS

---

<sup>11</sup> See <<http://drdivas.wordpress.com/2009/01/28/maoist-prachanda-gen-katawal-nepal-Army-controversycall-beijing-delhi-for-military-intervention/>> for details.

<sup>12</sup> See <[http://www.telegraphnepal.com/news\\_det.php?news\\_id=6218](http://www.telegraphnepal.com/news_det.php?news_id=6218)> for details.

Katawal was the central resistance force to UCPN's (M) attempt to capture state power and therefore they firmly stood behind him.

While resigning from the post of Prime Minister, in a televised address to the nation, Prachanda said he stepped down against the “unconstitutional and undemocratic” act of the President to stop the elected Maoist Government from sacking the Army chief. But at the same day a video record of Prachanda speaking to the Maoist ex-combatants at Saktikhor Cantonment in Chitwan on 2 January 2008 was released anonymously to the media where he said that signing the CPA and UCPN (M) commitment to multiparty democracy were temporary tactics to capture state power. He also revealed how UCPN (M) was able to manipulate the verification process led by UNMIN on the registration of their fighters revealing that their real strength was only 7,000 -8000, but that they succeeded to register nearly 35,000 and managed to verify 20,000 since this would help at a later stage to secure more numbers while integrating their fighting force with the Nepal Army that would ultimately help to capture state power. Even the Young Communist League (YCL) was formed to accommodate fighting cadres and therefore had not felt the party's militant structure. He said that they would make different provisions for integration instead of using the UNMIN verification once they won the election. The emphasis was that their combatants were ideologically equipped to control the National Army even if only small numbers were integrated. He stressed that this was the reason the Army chief Katawal publicly spoke against integration.<sup>13</sup> This video scandal severely discredited the commitment of UCPN (M) on multiparty democracy despite the numerous clarifications from Prachanda and other leaders of his party saying that this was just to calm the frustrated fighting force because of the repeated postponement of the CA election. Consequently, other political parties reconfirmed their suspicion about the intention of UCPN (M) and firmly stood behind the Nepal Army when the dispute between Nepal Army and UCPN (M) took place.

CoAS Katawal had repeatedly said in public that NA should not be politicised in the name of integration, institutionalisation and inclusiveness. In his farewell, organised by the Nepal Army Headquarter in September 2009 he said, “Only a democratically elected government formed after the endorsement of the new constitution has the right to make structural changes in the Nepal Army. There should not be politics in the name of integration.” Often UCPN

---

<sup>13</sup> See 5 May 2009 posting of the <[www.eKantipur.com](http://www.eKantipur.com)> for details.

(M) leaders were saying Nepal Army leaders are feudal and reactionary forces blocking the political change. Responding to such remarks of UCPN (M) leaders, the outgoing COAS said, “If NA becomes feudal and counter-reactionary for following the law, regulations and tradition, what should we call those who loot, hack, beat up, abduct, intimidate and extort people?”<sup>14</sup> These verbal exchanges in public also created a difficult relationship between the Nepal Army and UCPN (M).

### **Reengineering Civil-Military Relations in a Changing Context**

The process of political change in Nepal is severely constrained by the tensions between the UCPN (M) and Nepal Army as it has divided the whole country into two lines (supporting the UCPN (M) and opposing them in support of Nepal Army and the President. This has also created sour relations between security institutions and the civilians. At a time when the nation has to be united for successfully managing a transition, the nation is divided on a very sensitive issue (i.e., military). Hence, it is crucial to create a consensus for a democratic framework of civil-military relations in a changing political context that ensures long-term peace and the establishment of democratic values.

The state of civil-military relations is an indicator of democratisation of the state (Schnabel and Ehrhart 2005). Hence, in this changing context, Nepal needs to adopt a holistic approach of security governance in dealing with civil-military relations that are based on certain principles such as a “people-centred approach, locally-owned and based on democratic norms and human rights principles and the rule of law, seeking to provide freedom from fear” (OECD 2004, p.4). It is essential to realise the paradigm shift in the notion of security that gives priority to the people (human security) instead of only focusing on state security using a conventional approach.

The Ministry of Defence in Nepal is under the shadow of the Nepal Army with no capacity to coordinate and monitor security related issues. It is heavily understaffed, narrowly mandated, poorly administered and therefore almost dysfunctional. Hence, capacity building of this ministry is a prime condition for better civil-military relations.

---

<sup>14</sup> See <[www.nepalnews.com](http://www.nepalnews.com)> of 5 September 2009 for details.

The National Defence Council (NDC) is not properly functioning so far. It has to be strengthened by refining and expanding its mandate to promote civil-military relations. So far it is constitutionally limited to certain issues of the Nepal Army (e.g., recommend council of ministers for Army mobilisation). NDC mandate needs expansion to cover comprehensive national security and defence issues. Its composition also has to be changed including independent experts, academics and senior researchers.

The following components have to be considered in civil-military relations as a part of the comprehensive security policy of Nepal (Upreti 2009):

- Human security approach
  - Social security: health education, drinking water
  - Economic security: employment and poverty
  - Food security
  
- National security
  - Army
  - Police
  - Intelligence
  
- Non conventional security issues
  - Environmental security
  - Energy security
  - Information security

The fundamental principle of civil-military relations is civilian control and parliamentary oversight of security apparatus. Parliamentary oversight is an integral part of modern operations and management of security systems. The widely accepted definition of parliamentary oversight is, "...the legislature exercises parliamentary oversight by passing laws that define and regulate the security services and their powers and by adopting the corresponding budgetary appropriations. Such control may also include establishing a parliamentary ombudsman or a commission that may launch investigations into complaints by

the public” (DCAF and IPU 2003, p.22). DCAF and IPU have identified the following important oversight functions of the Parliament:

1. Approve, reject or propose amendments to security policies and defence related laws
  - a. Initiation of parliamentary debate
  - b. Seek explanation from the Government
  - c. National consultation of security issues
  - d. Research
2. Adopt and oversee budgetary provisions related to security
3. Authorise or end state of emergencies
4. Approve or reject Government proposals on important issues such as international treaties, alliances and sending security forces abroad; appointment of high level security personnel; procurement of major arms and so on.
5. Monitor and evaluate national defence and security policies and programmes through parliamentary hearing or inquiry; independent performance assessments, and establish audit mechanisms.

As part of parliamentary oversight of security systems, a range of actors collaborate with parliamentarians, political parties, civil society, researchers and parliamentary ombudsperson. Apart from this, Nepal needs modernisation and professionalisation of security forces, a legal framework for respecting the rule of law, development of mutual trust as the other important elements. They have to be incorporated in the new constitution going to be drafted by the Constituent Assembly by May 2010.

A more homogenous civil-military relationship is only possible by restructuring the security sector of Nepal (Upreti 2003; 2007). Security sector restructuring has to address policy, legislative, international relations; structural and oversight issues set within standard democratic principles and values. Good civil-military relations also include a good governance framework, fiscal and development policy of the state.

As discussed earlier, only a holistic approach of the security sector restructuring ensures civil-military relations in Nepal (Upreti 2009). That means:

- Developing new national security policy (defence and international relations)

- Redefining National Defence Council (NDC), the existing arrangement of NDC is too narrow
- Restructuring of Ministry of Defence
- Restructuring of a) Nepal Army; b) Civilian police and c) Armed police
- Redefining state intelligence (both security and civilian structures)
- Redefining and strengthening oversight bodies (parliamentary, judicial and human rights bodies)
- Integration of qualified Maoist ex-combatants into appropriate security organisations ( Nepal Army, APF, Nepal Police, or creating other security structures such as industrial security forces, border security forces, protected areas patrolling forces, etc.), and,
- Successful implementation of reconciliation and reintegration of security forces from both sides [state and CPN (M)] in modernised and transformed security structures of the state.

## Conclusion

During the past few months the relationship between UCPN (M) and the Nepal Army has been tense. Moreover, political polarisation (all major parliamentary parties on the side of Nepal Army and UCPN (M) and some regional parties on the other side) is obstructing civil-military relations. The objection of the UCPN (M) led Government on the new recruitment by the Nepal Army, the issue of the letter being sent to retired generals by Army headquarters without consulting the concerned ministry after the stay order of the Supreme Court and numerous other issues between them have cumulatively caused setbacks to a more peaceful civil-military relationship.

An increasing number of conflicts between the UCPN (M) and the Nepal Army backed by other political parties in the past and later the resignation of the UCPN (M) led Government, once the President intervened against the decision of the government on COAS termination, clearly undermined the enhancement of civil-military relations in Nepal.

Strengthening civil-military relations requires a holistic approach to security sector reform at both the political and military levels. It is essential to develop a new national security policy (combining defence and international relation), based on a long-term (socio-economic) vision

for Nepal. Some issues are crucial for this to take place. These are: redefining the NDC, restructuring the Ministry of Defence, transforming the Nepal Army; redefining both security and civilian state intelligence structures; redefining and strengthening oversight bodies (parliamentary, judicial and human rights bodies), integrating qualified UCPN (M) ex-combatants in national security structures, and successfully implementing a process of reconciliation and reintegration of the security forces from both sides [state and CPN (M)].

## References

Ball, N. 2002, 'Enhancing security sector governance: A conceptual framework for UNDP', viewed 20 January 2010. < [www.undp.org/bcpr/jssr/docs/UNDP\\_SSR\\_Concept\\_Paper\\_9](http://www.undp.org/bcpr/jssr/docs/UNDP_SSR_Concept_Paper_9), October >

DCAF and IPU 2003, 'Parliament oversight of the security sector: Principles, mechanisms and practices', Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF) and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Geneva.

Huntington, S. P. 1957, *The soldier and the state: The theory and politics of civil-military relations*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, London.

INSEC 2004, 'Human rights yearbook 2004', Informal Sector Service Centre, Kathmandu.

ICG 2005, 'Nepal: Responding to the royal coup,' Asia Briefing No. 36, 24 February 2005, International Crisis Group.

Koirala, B. P. 1997, *Jail Journal*, Jagadamba Prakashan, Lalitpur.

Kumar, D. and Sharma, H. 2005, 'Security sector reform in Nepal: Challenges and opportunities', Friends for Peace, Kathmandu.

Kumar, D. 2004, 'Emergency, militarisation and the question of democratic recovery', paper presented at the national seminar on '*Participatory Democracy in Nepal*' organised by Nepal Centre for Contemporary Studies, Kathmandu, 2-3 January.

OECD 2004, 'Security system reform and governance: Policy and good practice', viewed 6 January 2010. <<http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict>>

Rayamajhi, D. 2008, 'Military issues,' *News Front*, 11-17 August.

Schnabel, A. and Ehrhart H-G (eds.) 2005, '*Security sector reform and post conflict peace building*', United Nations University Press, New York, Tokyo and Paris.

Shah, R. 1982, *Essays in the practice of government in Nepal*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi.

Upreti, B. R. 2007, 'Restructuring Nepal Army: Conflict transformation perspective', *Nepal Journal of Contemporary Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 69-94; and Upreti, B. R. 2007, 'Security sector transformation in the changing political context: Special reference to Nepalese Army', a discussion paper presented at the seminar on '*Democratic Transition and Nepalese Army Reforms*' organised by Nepalese Army Command and Staff College, at Army Headquarters on 23-24 August 2007, Kathmandu.

Upreti, B.R. 2009, *Nepal from war to peace*, Adroit Publishers, New Delhi.



# Civil-Military Relations in India

*Asha Gupta\**

## Abstract

The purpose of my paper is to trace the patterns of civil-military interaction since independence to the point at which India attained the status of a nuclear power in 2008. Soon after independence in 1947, politicians began to view the Indian Army with suspicion as the last supporters of the British Raj. Due to this view of the Army, they tried to isolate the military from influencing decisions and policies in India.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, and V. K. Krishna Menon, his Defence Minister (1957-62) laid the foundations for civilian control over the military. This was reflected during the war with China in 1962. Only operational matters were handled by the Army. The politicians' decision to remain largely uninvolved with the Army resulted in a lack of coordination amongst the three wings. Whereas we find some instances of military personnel complaining of civilian interference in matters pertaining to their domain, we also find instances of politicians blaming the military leadership for not being able to resist improper orders.

India is now facing a dilemma about whether to involve the military with nuclear command and control. Unlike Pakistan, the military in India was not associated with the earlier decision-making process regarding India's desire to become a nuclear power. It was primarily a civilian decision and the Indian armed forces were deliberately kept at bay with regard to this. Though India is still governed by the policy of civilian control over the military, it has become imperative to associate the higher ranking officers in important strategic decision-making issues that are related to safety, security and management of nuclear devices.

Though India has signed no first use treaty, it has to involve the military with the National Command Authority (NCA) to ensure complete safety. This is bound to affect civil-military relations in India in due course. For instance, India's nuclear deal with the US in 2008 can further widen the chasm between civil-military relations in India.

Besides highlighting emerging trends in civil-military relations in India, an attempt is made in this paper to focus on some of the issues: why does the military operate under civilian control in India and not in Pakistan? What is the role of civic society in influencing the role of the

---

\* Dr. Asha Gupta, a former principal of one of the colleges affiliated to the University of Delhi is currently engaged in post-doctoral research on 'Vocationalisation, Internationalisation and Privatisation of Higher Education in India'. She is a recipient of the Shastri Indo-Canadian and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Senior Research Fellowship.

military within the state and in establishing an external relationship with the outside world? What can we 'learn' and 'unlearn' from the experiences of civil-military relations in India and Pakistan? The methodology adopted is analytical, comparative and empirical.

### **Why focus on Civil-Military Relations?**

Civil-military relations occupy an important place in domestic and international politics. These reflect domestic, political, cultural and socio-economic forces, on the one hand, and adjustment of militaries to domestic and international threats, on the other. Civil-military relations in India and Pakistan pose important challenges to the prevalent theories of military intervention in politics. It is generally believed that external threats serve as a deterrent to military intervention into politics, whereas domestic threats to security can provoke the military to intervene into politics at the earliest opportunity. To Desch (1999, p. 13), "a state facing high external threats and low internal threats should have the most stable civil-military relations." To him, the involvement of military in internal security matters leads to political decision-making undermining the civilian control of society. Whereas, Finer believes that external threats can generate praetorianism, Huntington believes that domestic threats are more likely to provoke military intervention into politics (Finer 1962, pp. 20-21). Surprisingly, civil-military relations in India and Pakistan defy these theories. The military has played an active role in Pakistan's politics despite the external threats, whereas the military in India has abstained from intervening in politics despite threats to domestic security. In order to understand these complexities, it is important to study civil-military relations in a given country in the context of domestic and/or international security threats faced by it, the legitimacy enjoyed by civil authorities and the prevailing political culture (whether the military obeys, defies or supplants civilian political actors).

Whereas in the United States, Great Britain and former Soviet Union, the militaries obeyed the civilian leaders and remained aloof from political matters in general, in North Africa, South East Asia and Latin America, the militaries have been playing a proactive role in politics. The militaries have acted as supporters of existing regimes in China, Egypt, Iraq and Syria. They have served as potential adversaries of civilian rule in the case of Indonesia and Turkey. They have served as actual rulers in Myanmar, Pakistan and Thailand. Despite the end of the Cold War, we do not find that the military has stopped interventions in politics. Rather, in the last three decades, the military has been playing key roles in nation-building,

political decision-making, maintaining law and order and ensuring national security in many countries despite the “third wave of democratisation” (Staniland 2008, p.324). We may find various combinations and permutations based upon the degree of external or internal threat, high or low degree of legitimacy and high or low degree of institutionalisation. We may find strong civilian control in states with high institutionalisation and high legitimisation or we may find militaries playing a very active role in those states where civilian control is weak due to low institutionalisation and low legitimacy (Ibid, p.339). In fact, many “exogenous” and “indigenous” factors affect civil-military relations in a given polity (Feaver and Kohn 2001; Cooney, Segal and Falk 2003; Segal and Ender 2008).

Of late, we find serious repercussions on civil-military relations due to the nuclear option taken by a few more states outside the Western hegemony. India, China and Pakistan have already emerged as strong military powers in South Asia, causing a lot of apprehension in the developed world, especially in the USA, UK, Russia, etc. We must realise that so far the threat of nuclear war has served as a deterrent and a nuclear world is considered “far more acceptable with its deterrent message than having various states at war” (Sagan and Waltz 1995, p. 7). Similarly, war is seen as a “continuance of politics” by other means. It is also seen as “a political strategy to divert attention away” from other pressing issues.

Sometimes we find militaries engaged in “wars without enemies” in the name of human/inclusive security - a task well-suited for the police. In fact, too much indulgence by the military with internal security, law and order can affect peaceful civilian working adversely. To Huntington (1957), “civilian respect for military autonomy is necessary for military effectiveness.” For instance, it was the fear of military usurpation of democratic authority that prevented the Indian government from the deployment of nuclear weapons. It purposefully kept the military away from nuclear decision-making (Cohen 2001, pp. 127-130). Even during the colonial period, the politicians were always afraid of military upsurge. That’s why they always gave the military personnel the best possible pay packages. It helped in keeping them pacified and preventing the prospects of an armed revolt. Generally, only those candidates were selected into the armies who were more likely to comply with the orders from the high command, including the civilians.

It resulted in the “reduction of effective military power” in Indian politics and “lack of coordination” among the three armed forces. The military in Pakistan, on the other hand, enjoyed far greater say in matters pertaining to foreign policy, defence issues, internal security and nuclear policy. It even enjoyed veto power on crucial matters. Unlike India, even the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) remains under military control and serves as its instrument in Pakistan. Studies on the civil-military relations help grasp such wide differences. In fact, besides historical, geographical, political, economic, socio-cultural, religious, environmental and demographic factors, one’s beliefs and attitudes towards power, politics and civic-society can also affect civil-military relations in a given polity. Since both India and Pakistan shared apolitical and secular traditions of the British Indian Army, we need to find out the causes of vast differences in civil-military relations in the two countries pertaining to internal law and order situations, Army’s role in terms of aid to civil power, political culture, senior officers’ perceptions and their attitudinal patterns, etc. (Bhimaya 2001, p.76).

### **Role of Beliefs**

To Kowert and Legro (1996), “norms are attached to real physical environments preferences.” They furnish powerful logic for political actions and are promoted by real human agents. They do not exist in institutional or structural vacuum, but have to be seen “as prior to and shaping actors’ conceptions of their interests and behaviour” and hence they provide powerful logic, “casually prior to”, political behaviour. To Aqil Shah’s thesis, “configurative causation” or “historically conditioned conjuncture of contingency, institutions and strategic choices in initiating political developments” also play their due role. Though soldiers are as much affected by socio-cultural and political norms, they cannot be just like civilians. They ‘wear uniforms’, they ‘parade’ and they ‘fight for a living’. Their professional specialisation separates them from civilians and gives them a separate identity, skills, experiences and orientations ‘radically different’ from civilians, politicians and bureaucrats. Nor should we forget that a military is primarily concerned with its external mission of warfare and usually it does not enjoy any prerogatives in non-military areas of decision-making (Shah 2009, p. 4).

Whenever we find the civilian control weak or porous, usually the military gets an opportunity to intervene into civilian and political matters. It justifies it as its “duty” or “prerogative” to make authoritative political decisions (Stepan 1988). It explains the role of norms and beliefs, in general, and in the case of India and Pakistan, in particular. We can say that despite

inheriting identical colonial state institutions, including a constitutional framework, civil service, military and judiciary, civil-military relations in India and Pakistan are poles apart. They help in understanding why those armed with guns should/should not obey those without them. Their strength lies in military beliefs. In most democratic societies, the principle of supremacy of civil control is the norm but sometimes we find deviances. Like all political behaviour, military political behaviour is also shaped both by the external environment as well as internal processes (Finer 1962, p.20).

Long ago Huntington (1968, p.194) expressed it beautifully:

“The most important causes of military intervention are not military but political and reflect ..... the political and institutional structure of society.”

All modern states need to control organised violence. To Max Weber (1919), there is no empirically conceivable modern state without a “legitimate monopoly over the means of coercion in a given territory.” To him, “no coercion, no state” and “no civilian control, no democracy.” To Tilly (1985, p.192), “from a democratic point of view, in order to sustain a legitimate democratic government, it is necessary for the elected officials to subordinate the specialists in violence to the rule of law.” Though, with the surge of democratisation, militaries have globally withdrawn to barracks in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Southern Europe, we still find instances in terms of military coups in Turkey in 1997, Pakistan in 1999, Venezuela in 2002, Thailand in 2006 and Bangladesh in 2007. It still remains an enigma to many why the military has never intervened in politics in India so far, despite being surrounded by weak civilian states as neighbours. Perhaps it was due to norms supporting civilian control that got “constitutionally codified” and “attitudinally internalised” both by the military and the civilians and “behaviourally expressed” in civil-military interactions (Janowitz 1960, p. 79).

There is no dearth of scholars who argue in favour of an alternative/convergence model which rejects the civil-military distinction as “empirically and theoretically flawed” for being “historically and culturally” derived from the American experience. For instance, the renowned historian from Pakistan, Ayesha Jalal, has argued that civil-military distinction is inappropriate for a country like Pakistan where the two spheres are not properly demarcated/differentiated from each other. In some instances, we find that civilian control can

exist without democracy, as it did under one party communist dictatorship in the former USSR and Eastern Europe. Hence, we can see the norms as “social prescriptions” or “shared expectations” about the proper behaviour of actors in a group. They can be constitutive as well as regulative. Liberal democratic norms do stand for a clear division of labour between the civilians and military elites. To such norms, “the military fights and the civilians rule.” Even the militaries justify their intervention into politics in the name of democracy, thereby respecting the demarcation of civil-military role. However, it is not easy to answer why some militaries accept certain norms while others don’t. Nor can we say whether such norms are the outcome of natural/historical growth or political/socio-cultural construct.

To many scholars and experts on civil military relations, both external and internal factors play an important role. Whereas India’s foreign policy of non-alignment during the Cold War helped in reducing the military’s dependence on super powers, Pakistan’s alignment with the United States inhibited democratic development. Similarly, due to constant threats from China, Pakistan and external forces in the North East, political leadership in India became wary of the military coup. That’s why they never involved the elite from the military in decision-making. In India, the Cabinet Committee of Defence became the top forum of policymaking pertaining to defence and national security as early as 1948. In 1955, the post of Commander-in-Chief was abolished. Quite surprisingly, strategic/external threats faced by India enhanced civilian control by relegating domestic issues to the background and uniting the civil-military elites against common enemies. It helped in keeping the armed forces at bay. On the other hand, in the case of Pakistan, the internal threats did just the opposite. They divided the elites and espoused the military to intervene in politics, but it cannot be taken as a rule. For instance, we find India deploying military extensively in Kashmir in order to deal with insurgency at the local level, whereas even the external threat from India led to “praetorian consequences” in Pakistan.

### **The Legacy**

The Indian military inherited the British legacy in terms of civil-military relations. The British tradition was based on “separate spheres for civil and military” (Cohen 1990, p. 29). Even during the colonial era, we find strategic interactions between British authorities and national liberation leaders. It helped in laying sound foundations of democracy in India (Varshney 1998, p.38). The Indian National Congress, the chief agency for national liberation

movement, also served as an umbrella organisation by giving representation to all sections of society – rich and poor, educated and uneducated, urban and rural, Hindus and Muslims, men and women. It played a major role under the non-violent leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in linking and mediating in politics at the central, provincial and local levels. After independence, it successfully converted itself from a nationalist movement to a “coherent, flexible, complex and autonomous” political party at the national level under the leadership of charismatic Prime Minister, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru (Wiener 1968). It succeeded in maintaining its dominance till 1967. Unlike Pakistan, society in India did not make the issue of national security a constant threat, maybe because of its faith in democracy and a military larger in size and strength. Moreover, the military in India is respected as an apolitical institution ever since independence despite the army/non-democratic rule in neighbouring China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan and Afghanistan.

The Indian politicians have so far succeeded in institutionalising civilian supremacy over the military apparatus. Immediately after independence, the post of Commander-in-Chief, the top military adviser to the government, was abolished and the civilian-led Ministry of Defence was strengthened. Gradually, the principle of civilian control of the military became embedded in the political culture of India, implying very little role for the military in decision-making pertaining to national security and other related matters. However, we do find many instances of civil-military clashes. For instance, the first major civil-military clash occurred in 1959 when B. K. Thimayya, the then Chief of Army bypassed V. K. Krishna Menon, the then Minister of Defence. Thimayya dared to approach Nehru directly and complained of interference by Menon in the administration of armed forces. He used the due process to challenge his civilian superior. The civil-military feud became more obvious during the China war in 1962. Both Nehru and Menon directly supervised the placement of individual brigades during this war.

In fact, the Defence Minister, Menon (1957-62) tried to politicise the Indian Army by favouring certain junior officers and appointing them in key commanding posts at the cost of operational military autonomy. We also find some instances of “simmering discontent in the Army, especially among the middle level officer corps” (Pradhan 1999, p. 21). Surprisingly, despite many occasions when military modernisation was neglected, military budgets and salaries were reduced, the military’s strength was reduced from 280,000 to 200,000 in 1991,

the military's perceived official status was lowered, official protocol was not followed or paramilitaries were employed to counter its functional monopoly in domestic politics, the military did not intervene in politics. We should realise that military coups do not just happen due to political/structural opportunities every now and then. In fact, militaries, as autonomous institutions, too, have the capacity to "enact" or "resist" political change (Horowitz 1980, p.8).

We should not forget that politically salient military actions are taken by men and women trained in management of organised violence against domestic or foreign enemies. To Nordlinger (1977, p. 63), the coup d'état is generally "consciously conceived" and "purposefully executed." Those involved in it usually have a fair idea about the formulated goals, possible costs and risks involved. It was definitely not in the corporate interest of the military in India to intervene in politics despite several opportunities, such as, the split in the Congress Party in 1969, declaration of internal emergency in 1976, assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992, etc. It may be because despite a huge population, the military personnel comprise only about 1.2 percent. Also because it is not easy for the military to rule a country as big as India and as divided/united in terms of ethnic, religious, linguistic, regional, socio-economic and cultural diversities. Usually, shared norms of subordination to civilian supremacy as social prescriptions for military behaviour can be seen as the root cause for abstaining from military intervention in India. India's policy of non-alignment also helped "in reducing the probability of military appropriation of state power" (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987).

Despite having parliamentary democracy, the political leadership in India always had a "lurking fear of a military coup" (Cordozo 2005, p. 81). India suffered a humiliating defeat in the war with China in 1962 and the then Defence Minister Menon had to resign. It became clear both to the civilians and the military that purely operational matters should be best left to the military. Indira Gandhi showed a lot of political maturity and sagacity when she heeded to the advice of General Manekshaw who refused to move the forces to war due to their ill-preparedness in March 1971. The Indian Army played a glorious role during the war with Pakistan in late 1971. But it was also blamed that the Indian military under the leadership of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi played a proactive role in the emergence of Bangladesh, whereas her father Jawaharlal Nehru, is said to have confessed of "his lingering fear of military praetorianism" in a letter to Bertrand Russell (Ibid).

However, despite the fragmentation of the mass base of the Congress Party, politicisation of administration and criminalisation of politics in late 1970s, the military in India chose not to exploit this situation in terms of civil-military relations. Even during the crisis of governability, the Indian Army had a firm conviction that it must bid for its civilian power holders, however distasteful it might be (Tanham 1996). But after the debacle in 1962, the top brass became more creative in thinking about operational and strategic defense issues resulting in India's pursuit of nuclear weapons as a serious choice. In 1983, all the three Chiefs of the Indian Armed Forces wrote to Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, to enhance India's nuclear capability.

General K. Sundarji was the first one to bring up the viability of nuclear weapons. He became the Head of a secret inter-services committee that examined the nuclear option for India (Cohen 1990, p.176). Though he launched the Operation Brasstacks in 1986 successfully, he could not dictate policy with regard to nuclear weapons to the Government of India. India's nuclear weapon programme continued without any meaningful involvement of the armed forces. It was primarily a civilian decision to go nuclear in 1998. Immediately after conducting the nuclear test in May 1985, the Indian Government enunciated its nuclear doctrine. It decided to adopt a no-first-use (NFU) policy and it also made it clear that it would never use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear state and continue striving for universal nuclear disarmament. India's nuclear doctrine was drafted by the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB), a part of the National Security Council established in 1998. It remained in public domain since August 1999, but remained a draft till January 2003. In January 2003, the Government not only adopted the essence of this draft as the official policy, but also announced a formal nuclear command structure under civilian control (Pant 2005, p. 1).

The continuous strategic competition with Pakistan and China compelled India to go nuclear. Since its "peaceful nuclear explosion" in 1974, heated debate continued among the strategic and political elite in India and abroad about India's nuclear programme. India had declared itself a nuclear weapon state as early as 1998 in defiance of the international community, but its implications for civil-military relations were not studied in depth. Strategic imperatives and political pressures have pulled India's nuclear policy in the opposite direction. Whereas the management of nuclear weapons remains under civilian control, it has become imperative to

draw the Indian military into the decision-making and nuclear realm now. India's defensive nuclear posture implies that some alternative measures need to be worked out in case deterrence fails. Though the Cabinet Committee on Security has approved some alternative chain of command in order to conduct a retaliatory strike, it has been kept secret. But if the military is kept out of decision-making, it can adversely affect its effectiveness when it is most needed. Moreover, it amounts to lack of confidence in its military by the civilian leadership as far as nuclear weapons are concerned (Rosen 1996, pp.250-53).

In fact, the "fear of military usurpation of democratic political authority" has been the prime factor responsible for preventing India in the deployment of nuclear weapons (Perkovich 2002, p. 450). Though India has always been interested in peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as is evident from the Indo-US nuclear deal in February 2008. India already enjoyed the reputation of a *de facto* nuclear power with an impeccable record of non-proliferation and no-first-use (NFU) stand on nuclear weaponry (Vombatkere 2008). But political India can no longer ignore the ground realities. India has yet to pursue reforms in the wake of the Kargil War. It still needs a Chief of Defence Staff and adequate integration between the Ministry of Defence and Army Headquarters. Everywhere else we find officials in uniform sharing desk space with civilians, bureaucrats and politicians in modern defence systems.

Those who are in favour of associating the top brass with issues pertaining to national security, including the security of nuclear arsenal, argue that it has become imperative in the wake of recent threats. For instance, the current commentary on Chinese military presence in Tibet has prompted that India needs to take appropriate military steps ranging from "building roads in Arunachal" to "operationalizing its strategic deterrent" (Ahmed 2009). Continuing security challenges, terrorist threats and nuclear threats have made it imperative to have an integrated approach to national security. Such an approach can help in overcoming current inadequacies in civil-military relations in India. It is no longer advisable to keep the military marginalised in core security decision-making structures and processes.

Those who argue in support of maintaining the *status quo* and civilian ascendancy argue that it is better to keep a check on inadvertent militarisation. At present, military education and training in India is not adequate for policy and decision-making in sensitive matters. Therefore, the association of the military in decision-making can result in a conflict of roles by

the military and the bureaucrats. Too much reliance on the armed forces to achieve national security and other goals can make India deviate from its commitment to “growth with equity.” It is feared that the association of military in decision-making can deviate India from the developmental goal. It is not politically desirable to distract from economic growth and human developmental indices if India wants to achieve the status of a world power in the next few decades. It is possible only through “prosperity through peace.” India’s nuclear doctrine and command structure have brought the issue of civil-military relations to the forefront.

In fact, a failure of command and control system can imply a failure of nuclear deterrence. Though the new states acquiring the status of nuclear states have every incentive to take good care of their weapons (Sagan and Waltz 1995, p.21), casualties cannot be ruled out despite the small size of their nuclear arsenal (Feaver 1992-93, p. 167). Nuclear weaponisation can be defined as “the process of developing, testing and integrating warhead components into militarily useable weapon systems” (Joeck 2000). India remains the first among the new/emerging nuclear states that has come out with an explicit nuclear doctrine and command structure. The cardinal principles of Indian nuclear doctrine<sup>1</sup> are:

- Building and maintaining a credible minimum deterrent;
- A posture of no-first-use (NFU);
- Retaliatory attacks only to be authorised by the civilian political leadership through the Nuclear Command Authority (NCA);
- Non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states;
- India to retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons in the event of a major attack against India or Indian forces anywhere, by biological or chemical weapons;
- A continuance of controls on export of nuclear and missile related materials and technologies, participation in the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) negotiations, observance of the moratorium on nuclear tests, and working towards the goal on universal nuclear disarmament.

---

<sup>1</sup> See <<http://meaindia.nic.in/prhome.htm>>.

### The Central Debate

Now the biggest question before India is how to ensure the safety of nuclear weapons. Should it be left in the hands of the civilian or should the military top brass be also associated? Would it not result in “civilian militarism” instead of “civilianizing the military”? Would the proactive role by the military not affect the developmental route taken by India so far? Can India still wait for the much needed defence reforms in order to maintain the status quo and/or using national interests as a continual pretext? We cannot ignore the hard fact that bureaucracy is still playing a predominant role between the Army and the politicians in India. As of today, the Prime Minister remains the sole authority to issue orders for the release of nuclear weapons in the event of a nuclear war. Whereas the National Security Adviser is responsible for executing the directives of the political council, the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) remains NCA’s operational arm.

The enigma before India is how to ensure the safety of the nuclear arsenal and yet ensure its foolproof functionality. It is difficult to maintain centralised control over the nuclear weapons and yet ensure greater autonomy of the military. In case India adopts a first-use policy, it has no other option but to go in for decentralisation of nuclear control to the commanders in the armed forces. It is difficult to continue with tight civilian control even today and, therefore, it has become imperative to give greater operational control to the military. The Indian state needs to ensure that nuclear arsenal always works efficiently in case it is required. It also has to ensure that they never go off when their use is not authorised by the established command. The greater the assurance of “always”, the less is the assurance of “never” and *vice versa*. As such, India is facing the dilemma of ‘always/never’ syndrome (Pant 2005, p. 20). So far, the small size of India’s nuclear arsenal has helped in resolving this dilemma for the time being, but as and when it undergoes qualitative and quantitative transformation in the coming years, it would need an improved policy to secure its nuclear arsenal (Singh 2003).

India’s civil-military relations are beset with a large number of problems ahead. The evolution of nuclear options in India has been characterised by extreme secrecy and non-involvement of the armed forces. It is the outcome of military training and education that helped in embedding the culture of civilian control over the military as necessary and desirable in a democracy. No wonder, the Indian military remained apolitical even during the political crisis and external threats. But it resulted in the absence of proper coordination among the three

wings of the armed forces as far as the issue of control of nuclear assets, budgetary support and core competence is concerned. Though India has already set up the SFC to work out plans and targets in the event of a nuclear attack, it has yet to gain possession of weapon delivery systems, adequate manpower and a permanent headquarter. India still lacks the necessary infrastructure in terms of communication and control for effective aerial command. It is not clear who will take charge in case the Prime Minister is not available or unable to work for one reason or another. It has serious implications for civil-military relations (Pant 2005).

### **A Comparison between India and Pakistan**

It remains unclear why India and Pakistan have taken different routes despite their common historical background, colonial institutional origins, civil service, military, judiciary, professional ethos and British legacy. The two polities have taken strikingly divergent trajectories since their independence from British colonialism on the night of 14 August, 1947. India evolved into a parliamentary democracy with firm civilian control over military. Pakistan faced an authoritarian regime with no/very little civilian control over its military. It is because both the countries developed different institutions and rules governing civil military relations in the formative years of independence. In fact, the contingent events and variations in elitist strategies of state-making resulted into two entirely different institutional orders for controlling coercion. It resulted in the subordination of the military to civilian control in India but autonomy in the case of Pakistan. But it is also true that the views formed about the organisational norms and democratic authority guided the military in both the cases.

We must realise that India is almost eight times bigger than Pakistan in terms of population and resources yet Pakistan has had to compete with India since its inception. It also perceived constant security threats from India and always kept the Kashmir issue alive in order to divert attention from other pressing needs in terms of socio-economic development. Whereas India employs only 1.2 percent of its 1.2 billion population in the armed forces and intelligence services, Pakistan has employed 700,000 personnel in its armed forces, approximately 6-7 percent of its populace (Haniffa 2009). That is the reason why Pakistan had to establish its separate identity for having broken away from a larger territory of combined India and it had limited resources in terms of leadership, institutions and human capital. Whereas India was lucky to have an organised political party under the charismatic leadership of Jawaharlal

Nehru, the Muslim League could not convert itself from a national liberation movement to a sound political party. Its leader, M. A. Jinnah, died in 1948 and its solid base was left behind in the United Provinces. Whereas the Nuclear Security Council in India remains under the control of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Defence, External Affairs, Finance and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, it remains under the control of the military dominated Nuclear Command Authority in Pakistan (Indian Express, 2003).

In India, the Prime Minister has the sole authority to issue orders for the release of nuclear weapons in the case of a nuclear war, it is the responsibility of the National Security Adviser to execute the directives of the political council headed by the Prime Minister. A tri-service command known as the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) serves as an operational arm of the NCA, having its own Commander-in-Chief. Under the leadership of the COC, the Indian Army succeeded in transferring the 150-250 km short range missile *Pritbvi* and 250 km range missile *Agni-II* to the nucleus of the new SFC (Norris and Kristensen 2005, pp.73-75). India has already started the production of *Agni-I* (700 km medium range ballistic missile) and has plans for the testing of 3500 km *Agni-III*. The Government has also approved alternative chains of command when retaliatory nuclear strikes become necessary. Nevertheless, “maximum restraint in the use of nuclear forces”, “absolute political control over decision-making” and “an attempt to evolve interface between civil and military leaders” remain the cardinal principles of India’s nuclear weapons policy (Pant 2005, p.12).

Though India’s nuclear option is marked by extreme secrecy and non-involvement of the armed forces, it has now become imperative to integrate the military in decision-making and functional operationality. India has yet to establish the post of a Chief of Defense Staff who could provide military advice to the government. It has resulted in the lack of centralised institutional arrangement for strategic decision-making pertaining to national security and defense matters. Meanwhile, India is trying to achieve aerial, naval and land based nuclear deterrent capability by acquiring Green Pine Radar System in cooperation with Israel and Embraer Jets (protected against air-borne or ground-based missile attacks) from Brazil. In case India decides in favour of nuclear weapons being used to win a war, it has no other alternative but to bring the armed forces in decision-making loop, implying relinquishment of some of the civilian control in favour of the military (Palit 1999, p.21).

India has dealt with this dilemma so far smoothly because the size of its nuclear weapons has been very small, but complications in civil-military relations cannot be ruled out with the quantitative and qualitative increase of its nuclear arsenal, implying greater decentralisation, delegation and autonomy for military (Tellis 2001). It would also need a sophisticated and reliable early warning system as the flight time of missiles and bombers could be just a few minutes, giving very little time to react and launch a counter attack. The nuclear proliferation in China and Pakistan can also create new problems. The political leadership in India can no longer ignore the emerging trends and ground realities. As such, India cannot refrain from delegating significant authority to the military in the realm of nuclear arsenal, affecting civil-military relations in a big way. It will affect not only the stability in India but also regional stability in South Asia.

Some recent studies have already challenged the notion that the military should refrain from decision-making and political interventions. Rather, military officers are encouraged to resist improper orders (Dalvi 1969, pp. 397-446). The politicians in India also realised their mistakes in terms of interference in operational matters during the war with China in 1962. Unlike the military leadership in Pakistan, Krishna Menon and Nehru did not have any military experience yet they supervised the placement of individual brigades and platoons, resulting in bitterness amongst the Army (Kundu 1998, pp. 100-21). Though the civilians took no part in operational planning in the war with Pakistan in 1965, it too had "deleterious consequences." It resulted in lack of an inspiring plan prepared by the general staff, on the one hand, and lack of coordination among the services, on the other (Raghavan 2009, p.151). India had to suffer a great deal when logistics were not worked out by the armed forces and no calculations were made about the likely dangers from the impending war with China. Menon had to resign after the debacle and India lost Nehru in 1964.

However, both the politicians and the military learnt their lessons. It became obvious that the higher direction of war was out of touch with reality and it was not necessary to confront those politicians who unnecessarily intruded in professional matters. The civilians, too, started endorsing the view that the military must be given a free hand. Gradually the convention became that civilians should not intervene in operational matters. Usually, in such matters, the advice of the chiefs is automatically accepted by the political leadership (Chari 1977, p.13). As such, there cannot be any hard and fast rules about civil-military relations. They keep

changing and evolving in the wake of domestic, regional and global changes in international relations. It will not, therefore, be a surprise that in the future we may find armies fighting a war simply for a “just cause”. One may talk about “we *versus* they” without ever being able to identify who constitutes the two. This applies to humanitarian interventions by the military in far off places.

### Looking beyond the Nation State

The recent emphasis on diversity and multi-culturalism in armies worldwide can be seen as an outcome of the culture of globalisation in all walks of life. It strives for de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation of political and economic power. It is no longer possible to imagine the world as a collection of autonomous states. Nor can we confine culture to a definite and/or determinate state. Rather a globalised world implies “culture without space” (Szeman, 1997).

The globalists today challenge the very idea of shared political identity on the following grounds:

- (1) The concept of the ‘shared political identity’ was the outcome of sustained efforts towards deliberate construction, and not a natural growth. It is evident from the fact that many civil wars and conflicts surfaced in the name of ethnic cleansing as soon as the communist system collapsed in most of the East European states.
- (2) The forced concept of nation state failed to appreciate the existence of prevailing diversities and nationalities within its territorial jurisdiction. Today we find pluralisation of political commitments and allegiances, surpassing national culture or boundaries (Parekh 2000).
- (3) Earlier, the states enjoyed sovereignty and had control over economic and political policies. Today they are required to adjust their domestic policies to suit international interests. We find economic politics dominating the political markets.

- (4) In a highly interconnected and interdependent world, no state, however powerful, is in a position to dominate in world affairs. Similarly, decisions taken by a particular state, even if it happens to be not so strong economically or militarily, can have far reaching ramifications across borders, “reshaping the entire political terrain.”
- (5) The principles of public good and egalitarian justice can now be pursued through a plethora of local, national and global non-state organisations. For instance, we find many women groups actively working with the help of latest technologies as ‘peace-makers’, ‘peace-keepers’ and ‘peace-brokers’ at the global level.
- (6) Many claim themselves to be ‘world citizens’ and cosmopolitan and neither traditionalists nor globalists. They disregard cultural/political nationalism. They believe that today it is possible to have not only multiple but also shifting identities.

On the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we find the compression of the world and intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole without implying ‘global consensus’ (Robertson 1992, p.8). In a compressed world, diverse world views are likely to produce new cultural conflicts and fragmentation. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the concepts of citizenship and nation state came in handy to contain the prevailing socio-cultural, ethnic or economic inequities in a given society. With the growth of democracy, all citizens shared certain political, legal and social rights as entitlements. It also helped in debarring those who were not accorded the title of full citizenship. Since the governments cannot contain hyper-mobility and diversities, they have started celebrating them. The concept of globalisation is being used in the same way as the idea of citizenship and nation state was used in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and that of religion in earlier times to “make people behave” in a desired way (Gupta 2008, p. 12).

It is possible to have dual or multiple citizenship, denizen rights, supranational interests, transnational identities, etc. The neo-liberal tradition has converted the concept of citizenship based upon equity to global consumer based upon diversity. It can result into overlapping, multi-layered, multiple or divided loyalties in the future, including the armies. In the name of humanitarian intervention or war on terrorism, we may find multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic,

multi-national and multi-regional armies working together, moving beyond the countries of their birth or upbringing. To Huntington (1962, p. 221), “as society changes, so does the role of military. The more advanced a society becomes the more conservative and reactionary becomes the role of its military.”

A bureaucratic authoritarian state can no longer sustain the inherent contradictions in the process of globalisation. Such a state is not only alienated from civil society through its support of transnational capitalism and the upper echelons of society but results in making the weaker sections of society more organised so that it can make unified demands on the state through the democratisation process which cannot be met nor overlooked (Rice 1992). In a shift in paradigm “from territorial to human security” and “from government to governance”, it has become imperative to provide inclusive security against the abuse of human rights, genocide, forced displacement, ethnic cleansing, political violence, bureaucratic high-handedness, environmental degradation, political or economic instability. It implies striving for equity, not in the sense of equality but justice and fairness. To Anver Saloojee (2001):

“Social inclusion is about social cohesion plus, it is about citizenship plus, it is about the removal of barriers plus, it is anti-essentialist plus, it is about rights and responsibilities plus, it is about accommodation of differences plus, it is democracy plus, it is about a new way of thinking about problems of injustice, inequalities and exclusivity plus. It is a combination of various pluses that make the discourse on social inclusion so incredibly exciting.”

## References

- Ahmed, Ali 2009, 'The central debate in India's civil-military relations', Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, viewed on 17 November 2009.  
<[http://www.idsa.in/strategiccomments/CentraldebateinIndiacivilmilitaryrelations\\_AAahmed\\_060709](http://www.idsa.in/strategiccomments/CentraldebateinIndiacivilmilitaryrelations_AAahmed_060709)>
- Bhimaya, Kotera M. 2001, 'Civil-military relations: A comparative study of India and Pakistan', A dissertation submitted to Rand Graduate School.
- Chari, P. R. 1977, 'Civil military relations in India', *Armed Forces and Society*, vol.14, no.1, pp. 3-28.
- Cohen, Stephen P. 2001, *India: Emerging power*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Cohen, Stephen P. 1990, *The Indian Army: Its contribution to the development of a nation*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Cooney, Richard T. Jr. et al. 2003, 'Racial differences in the impact of military service on the socio-economic status of women veterans', *Armed Forces and Society*, vol.30, no.1, pp. 53-85.
- Cordozo, Ian 2005, *The Indian Army: A brief history*, Center for Armed Forces Historical Research, New Delhi.
- Dalvi, J. P. 1969, *Himalayan Blunder*, Thacker & Co, Bombay.
- Desch, Michael 1999, *Civilian control of the military: The changing security environment*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.
- Feaver, Peter D. 1992-93, 'Command and control in emerging nuclear nations', *International Security*, vol.17, no.3, p. 167.

- Feaver, Peter D. and Kohn Richard H. (eds.) 2001, *Soldiers and civilians: The civil-military gap and American national security*, MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Finer, Samuel E. 1962, *The man on horseback: The role of the military in politics*, Pall Mall Press, London.
- Gupta, Asha 2008, 'Culture of globalisation' or 'Globalisation of culture', a paper presented at ISA-WISC Conference held at Ljubljana, Slovenia, July.
- Haniffa, Aziz 2009, 'We have a 700,000 Army: How can the Taliban takeover?' *Rediffnews*, 6 May, Washington D.C.
- Horowitz, Donald 1980, *Coup theories and officers' motives: Sri Lanka in comparative perspective*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1968, *Political order in changing societies*, Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Huntington, S.P (ed.) 1962, *Changing patterns of military politics*, The Free Press of Glencoe Inc., New York.
- Huntington, S.P. 1957, *The soldier and the state: The theory and practice of civil military relations*, Belknap Press of Harvard University.
- India Express, 28 January 2003, 'Musharraf heads Pak's nuke command.'
- Janowitz, Morris, 1960, *The professional soldier: A social and political portrait*, Free Press, Glencoe, Ill.
- Joeck, Neil 2000, 'Nuclear relations in South Asia', in *Repairing the regime: Stopping the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, Washington D.C.

- Kowert, P. and Legro, J. 1996, 'Norms, identity and their limits: A theoretical reprise' in Katzenstein, P.J (ed.) *The culture of national security: Norms and identity in world politics*, Columbia University Press, New York.
- Kukreja, Veena 1991, *Civil-military relations in South Asia: Pakistan, Bangladesh and India*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
- Kundu, Apurba 1998, *Militarism in India: The Army and civil society in consensus*, I. B. Tauris, London.
- Lichbach, Mark Irving and Zuckerman, Alan S. (eds.) 1997, *Comparative politics: Rationality, culture and structure*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 81.
- Norris, Robert S. and Kristensen, Hans M. 2005, 'India's nuclear forces 2005', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol.61, no.5, September/October.
- Nordlinger, Eric A. 1977, *Soldiers in politics: Military coups and governments*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- Palit, D. K. 1999, 'War in the deterrent age,' *United Services Institution of India Journal*, vol.124, January-March.
- Pant, Harsh V. 2005, 'India's nuclear doctrine and command structure: Implications for India and the world', *Comparative Strategy*, vol.24, no.3, July.
- Parekh, B. 2000, *Rethinking multiculturalism*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Perkovich, George 2002, *India's nuclear bomb: The impact on global proliferation*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Pradhan, R. D. 1999, *From debacle to revival: Y. B. Chavan as Defence Minister, 1962-65*, Orient Longman, New Delhi.

- Raghavan, Srinath 2009, 'Civil-military relations in India: The China crisis and after', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol.32, no.1, February.
- Rice, Condoleezza 1992, 'The military under democracy', *Journal of Democracy*, vol.3, no.2, pp.27-41.
- Robertson, Roland 1992, *Globalisation: Social theory and global culture*, Sage, London.
- Rosen, Stephen P. 1996, *Societies and military power: India and its armies*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
- Rudolph, Lloyd I. and Rudolph, S.H. 1987, *In pursuit of Lakshmi: The political economy of the Indian state*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Sagan, Scott D. and Waltz, Kenneth N. 1995, *The spread of nuclear weapons: A debate*, Norton, New York.
- Saloojee, Anver 2001, 'Social inclusion, citizenship and diversity', a paper presented at a conference on *A New Way of Thinking?: Towards a Vision of Social Inclusion* organised by Canadian Council of Social Development and Laidlaw Foundation, Ottawa, 8-10 November.
- Segal, David R. and Ender, Morten G. 2008, 'Sociology in military officer education', *Armed Forces and Society*, vol.35, no.1, pp. 3-15.
- Shah, Aqil, 2009, 'Controlling coercion: Pakistan's civil-military relations in South Asian perspective', paper prepared at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, 5 April.
- Singh, Jasjit 2003, 'Pak N-button: US eyes on Army Chief's finger', *Indian Express*, January 9.
- Staniland, Paul 2008, 'Explaining civil-military relations in complex political environments: India and Pakistan in comparative perspective', *Security Studies*, vol.17, pp. 322-362.

- Stepan, Alfred 1988, *Rethinking military politics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton N.J.
- Szeman, Imre 1997, 'Book review on *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalisation* by Arjun Appadurai 1996, *Cultural Logic*, vol.1, no.1, pp. 1-7, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Tanham, Gerge K. 1996, 'Securing India: An interpreted essay' in K. Bajpai, and A. Mattoo, (eds.) *Securing India: Strategic thought and practice*, Manohar Publications, Delhi.
- Tellis, Ashley J. 2001, *India's emerging nuclear posture: Between recessed deterrent and ready arsenal*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Tilly, Charles 1985, 'State making and war making as organised crime', in Evans, P.B. (ed.) *Bringing the state back in*, Cambridge University Press.
- Varshney, Ashutosh 1998, 'Why democracy survives in India?' *Journal of Democracy*, vol.9, no.3, pp.36-58.
- Vombatkere, S. G. 2008, 'Nuclear deal and some strategic considerations,' *Mainstream*, XLVI, no.34, August 10.
- Waeber, Max 1919 'Politics as a vocation', a lecture delivered at the Free Students Society/Movement of the Munich University in January during the German Revolution of 1918-19.
- Wiener, Myron 1968, *The Indian National Congress: Party building a new nation*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.



## Section V

### Social and Environmental Issues in Pakistan

- Climate change impacts and adaptation in Pakistan: Case of Shigar Valley



# Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation in Pakistan: Case of Shigar Valley

*Aneel Salman\**

## Abstract

The phenomenon of climate change has redefined the concept of development. It is now established that it will adversely affect marginalised social groups, which depend directly on natural resources for economic sustenance. The impacts of climate change on Pakistan are likely to be severe. Sixty-five percent of Pakistan's population, and two-thirds of its poor, live in rural areas. These areas will be the ones most affected by climate change and they will also be the most difficult to assess, plan for, and administer. These changes could lead to political instability, food insecurity, and local and regional conflicts. The gap between rich and poor in Pakistan is already growing and climate change is likely to make this gap larger unless pre-emptive steps are taken.

Unfortunately, climate research in Pakistan is still at a very nascent stage and so data about climate-related impacts is minimal. This paper is based on a larger project that is looking at the environmental and socio-economic impacts of climate change on coastal and mountainous communities in Pakistan over the past twenty years, and the adaptive measures taken by them to protect themselves from climate hazards. Another objective of the research project is to provide clear recommendations for environmental practitioners and policymakers on how to cope with the impacts, as well as to understand the development opportunities surrounding ongoing climate change.

This present case study explores the potential threats and impacts of climate change on the Shigar Valley, a mountainous area located near the Central Karakoram National Park. Sections 1 and 2 look at regional and national climate change vulnerabilities. Sections 3 and 4 outline the geography and demography of the study area, as well as project methodology. From the analysis of baseline geophysical data, field survey and in-depth interviews, sections 5 and 6 document and analyse specific impacts of climate change on the mountainous ecosystem, its environment, and socio-economic activities and gives policy recommendations.

---

\* Dr. Aneel Salman is a Fulbright Scholar, who has done his doctorate in Ecological Economics from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, NY, USA. His areas of research include ecological and climate change economics, welfare and behavioural economics, public policy, business management, and the Pak-Afghan security nexus.

## Section 1

### Regional Impacts of Climate Change

“Climate change is a development, economic, and investment challenge. It offers an opportunity for economic and social transformation that can lead to an inclusive and sustainable globalisation. That is why addressing climate change is a critical pillar of the development agenda.”— Robert Zoellick<sup>1</sup>

Climate change is occurring along with other biophysical and demographic effects, which make it more complex. Given its multiple effects and varied timescales, one needs to transcend the general list of how climate change is understood and undertake a detailed spatial and temporal analysis within each country on how it is possible to manage climate risk for different parts of the economy and of the society now and in the future (Sachs 2007). The issue of climate change and social risk is relatively new. Earlier, the focus was on understanding climate change science, but the recent concern about human induced climate change has forced us to think about climate change and the development nexus. Climate change has different impacts in different geographical regions within national economies and the field of economics has yet to adequately address its pace of change and social impacts (Sachs 2007).

A consensus has emerged among scientists and policy makers that global climate change represents a major threat to the environment and to the well-being of humankind and the biosphere (Stern 2007; IPCC 2007). During the past century, average global temperature has risen by about 1°C with much of that increase due to human activity, especially fossil fuel burning and deforestation. The rate of increase has accelerated during the past 20 years or so as human impact now dominates natural processes. The real concern is not what has happened so far, but that global temperatures are projected to increase further by between 1.4°C and 5.8°C by 2100 and to continue to rise long after that (IPCC 2007).

---

<sup>1</sup> World Bank Group President, at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia in December 2007.

Scenarios of the likely consequences of such an increase differ substantially among regions, but include sea level rise, shortages of fresh water, an increase in droughts and floods, repeated forest fires, more severe storms, an increase in heat episodes, agricultural disruption, a proliferation of infectious diseases, and biodiversity loss. The possibility of runaway positive feedback effects from, for example, the release of marine clathrates buried under the ocean floor and massive amounts of methane from permafrost is less certain (Flannery 2005; IPCC 2007). Evidence from past climate regimes indicate that even if CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were immediately halted, the Earth would warm by 2-3°C solely because of past emissions and the inertia of the climate system (Haywood and Williams 2005; Jiang et al. 2005). Even if extreme mitigation steps are taken soon, all living species adapted to particular climate regimes are most likely in for a rough ride in the coming decades and centuries.

Asia is the largest continent on Earth spread over four climactic zones. This region faces formidable challenges in its efforts to tackle climate related risks. South Asia, which is home to a substantial portion of the world's population, is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change (Table 1). Millions of people in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh will eventually be displaced by rising sea levels. The rapidly melting glaciers of the Himalayas, Karakoram and HinduKush range are the primary sources of potable water for Pakistan and neighbouring India (Jianchu et al., 2009; Cruz et al. 2007).

Table 1: Impacts of Climate Change on South Asia

Impacts	Sectoral Vulnerabilities	Adaptive Capacity
<p>Temperature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warming above the global mean in central Asia, the Tibetan Plateau, northern, eastern and southern Asia.</li> <li>Fewer very cold days in South Asia.</li> </ul>	<p>Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing water stress to over a hundred million people due to decrease of freshwater availability, particularly in large river basins.</li> <li>Increase in the number and severity of glacial melt-related floods, slope destabilisation followed by decrease in river flows as glaciers disappear.</li> </ul>	<p>Adaptive capacity varies between countries depending on social structure, culture, economic capacity, geography and level of environmental degradation.</p>
<p>Extreme Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing frequency and intensity of extreme events particularly: droughts during the summer months; increase in extreme rainfall and winds associated with tropical cyclones in South Asia; intense rainfall events causing landslides and severe floods; heat waves/hot spells in summer of longer duration.</li> </ul>	<p>Agriculture and food security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreases in crop yield for many parts of Asia putting many millions of people at risk from hunger.</li> <li>Reduced soil moisture and evapotranspiration may increase land degradation and desertification.</li> <li>Agriculture may expand in productivity in northern areas.</li> </ul>	<p>Capacity is increasing in some parts of Asia, for example the success of early warning systems for extreme weather events in Bangladesh and the Philippines. However, capacity is still constrained due to poor resource bases, inequalities in income, weak institutions and limited technology.</p>
<p>Precipitation, snow and ice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in precipitation in most of Asia.</li> <li>Increase in the frequency of intense precipitation events in parts of S.Asia.</li> <li>Increasing reduction in snow and ice in Himalayan and Tibetan Plateau Glaciers.</li> </ul>	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heat stress and changing patterns in the occurrence of disease vectors affecting health.</li> <li>Increases in endemic morbidity and mortality due to diarrhoeal disease.</li> <li>Increase in the abundance and/or toxicity of cholera.</li> </ul>	
	<p>Coastal Zones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tens of millions of people in low-lying coastal areas affected by sea level rise and an increase in the intensity of tropical cyclones.</li> <li>Coastal inundation is likely to seriously affect the aquaculture industry and infrastructure particularly in heavily populated megadeltas.</li> <li>Stability of wetlands, mangroves, and coral reefs increasingly threatened.</li> </ul>	

Source: Cruz et al. (2007)

Analysis of climatic data shows that there has been an increase in average temperature of 0.6°C to 1.0°C in the coastal areas since the early 1990s. During 2005, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan faced temperatures 5-6°C above the regional average (Kelkar and Bhadwal 2007). Temperature changes in the mountain ranges of the Himalayas have been even more dramatic, resulting in accelerated melting of glaciers from Nepal to the Hindu Kush (WWF 2008). There is increase in summer and winter precipitation over the last 40 years in Northern Pakistan and 10-15 percent decrease in the coastal belt and hyper arid plains (Farooq and Khan 2004). Past evidence is hard to evaluate since extreme weather events have always taken place and it is impossible to attribute any specific event to climate change. However, all climate change scenarios point to increased flooding in the mountainous regions of Asia from glacial melting and in coastal regions due to sea level rise and the intensification of tropical storms. These changing physical impacts will have unknown, but likely adverse consequences on agricultural output, water availability, and migration patterns.

Wescoast (1991) analyses that the yearly run-off from the upper Indus basin river which may increase to 16 percent can lead to positive impacts such as more water for households and hydropower generation, but could also potentially cause floods, water logging and salinity, as well as affect the agricultural output of rice and wheat in the province of Punjab. Climate models indicate that this melting will accelerate in the coming years with unknown, but severe consequences on drinking water, agricultural irrigation, and human health.

South Asian economies are also heavily dependent on agriculture--the economic sector most vulnerable to climate change. Crop yields are already declining in the region due to climate change. According to the IPCC Chair Rajendra Pachauri, "Wheat production in India is already in decline, for no other reason than climate change. Everyone thought we didn't have to worry about Indian agriculture for several decades. Now we know it's being affected." (quoted in Worstall 2007). The increase in temperature would decrease the agricultural output mainly due to reduction in crop life cycle especially the grain filling period (Kelkar and Bhadwal 2007). Changes in the timing of monsoons are already having an adverse effect on agriculture in Pakistan and India.

The Red Cross estimates that over the past three years, tens of thousands of families in India, Pakistan, Nepal, China and Bangladesh have been displaced by severe flooding. It is the very

poor in low income countries that are the most susceptible to the effects of climate change. Recent monsoons in India resulted in a major river changing course resulting in the loss of thousands of human lives and tens of thousands of refugees. Water shortages in the north of Pakistan and sea-level rise along the coast could result in millions of environmental refugees flooding the nation's major inland cities.

Infant and child mortality is the highest in South Asia. According to a World Bank (2006) report environmental health risks contribute to more than 20 percent of the total disease incidence. Environmental health risks will accelerate with climate change, as water shortage becomes more acute and as more and more environmental refugees flock to urban hubs. Given the above present and future impacts of climate change, the health indicators for South Asia, especially Pakistan will be alarming. Climate-sensitive diseases such as malaria, typhoid and dengue fever are predicated to increase (IUCN 2000). Temperature changes are also likely to impact livestock.

The effects of climate change whether environmental, economic or social are a threat to the resiliency of communities especially for the ones which are directly dependent on ecosystems for their livelihoods, food security and energy (IUCN 2000).

The Bali Action Plan 2009 as well as the subsequent Copenhagen Accord at the Conference Of Parties 15 (COP15) have called for urgent "enhanced action and international cooperation on adaptation" (UNFCCC 2010, p.6) and that the developed countries should provide "adequate, predictable and sustainable financial resources, technology and capacity-building to support the implementation of adaptation action in developing countries" (UNFCCC 2010, p.6).

In terms of mitigation South Asia, in spite of its large population, produces only a fraction of the world's annual greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, significant steps toward climate change mitigation are unlikely to have a major impact unless the world's largest emitters, the United States and China, take the lead.

## Section 2

### Pakistan's Environmental Outlook

The relationship between development and the environment is especially critical in rural developing countries. How then does a developing country like Pakistan cope with future changes that are generally known but only vaguely understood in terms of timing and severity? One way to begin is to consider the basic human needs of the Pakistani people, and how the provision of these basic needs will be affected by climate change. Climatic disruption and the social disruption likely to accompany it, will have a negative impact on Pakistan's development indicators. Sixty-five percent of Pakistan's population, and two-thirds of it is poor, live in rural areas. These areas will be the ones most affected by climate change and they will also be the most difficult to assess, plan for, and administer. Agricultural employment and income may deteriorate. Those with inadequate incomes and dependent on biomass will be most vulnerable to sea level rise, water and energy shortages, and the intensification of storms. In the decades to come much of the coastal area of Pakistan may be submerged.

Even if we were to put the potential forecasts of climate related risks aside, the present state of the environment in Pakistan is dismal. Land, forests and pastures are degraded by prolonged misuse. The rich soils of the Indus basin are experiencing water logging and salinity. Wind and water erosion is accelerating and desertification is rapidly spreading. Forests have disappeared and rangelands are being denuded (Khan et al. 2007; Yusuf 2008). Most of this country's forests, located in the mountainous region of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP<sup>2</sup>), are vanishing at an alarming rate (Suleri 2002). The FAO (2005) estimates that around 53,000 hectares of forests in Pakistan vanish annually.

Ecological changes are having the greatest impact on women. Coastal women are walking longer distances for household fuelwood, as well as livestock fodder given the mangrove degradation and construction of ocean walls (MoE 2003; Siegmann 2006). Changing farming practices in Pakistan's fragile biosphere and increasing desertification are having similar impacts on them. When men migrate from the villages to urban centres in search of

---

<sup>2</sup> Editor's Note: NWFP was renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in April 2010. For the sake of formality, NWFP is used in the anthology.

employment, the women are being left with the responsibility of taking care of degraded land holdings (Ahmed et al 2008).

However, analysis of the possible effects of climate change should not be limited to the environmental and economic effects alone. Khan (2002) has pointed out that the environmental effects of climate change and modernisation on Pakistan are remarkably similar – infrastructure degradation, disruption of water supplies and soil fertility, and pressure on resource use.

Pakistan's vulnerability is compounded by a climate-sensitive agro-economy, pervasive poverty, poor road and rail networks, high illiteracy rate, over-exploitation of natural resources and inter and intra regional conflicts. All these problems, in addition to limited institutional and scientific facilities and data, have contributed to Pakistan's low adaptive capacity. Unfortunately, the knowledge and information needed for sound decision-making on this issue are also low. These changes could lead to further political instability, security concerns, and even conflicts with neighbouring countries.

It is, therefore, important for a country like Pakistan to focus on those "win, win" actions that further the twin goals of sustainable development and climate change adaptation. Adaptation measures can help communities cope with the uncertainty of climate related risks. These measures can range from simple behavioural changes at the individual level to technological ones like improved sea defences, biodiversity conservation, early warning systems, and economic ones like better risk and insurance management and flood proof housing.

### Section 3

#### The Shigar Valley

The study area, Shigar valley, is located along the right bank of the Indus River in Central Karakoram, Pakistan. The famous mountain K2 lies to the North of the valley, while the town of Skardu lies at its South (Figure 1). Nagar valley is in the West and District Ganche is to the East. It is situated at an altitude of 2,798 meters above sea level. The valley is a sub division of District Skardu, and according to the 1998 census, the estimated population was 45, 520

consisting of 24,091 males and 21,429 females. Interviews with the local people and non-governmental organisations working in the area, gave modest estimates of the population having risen to approximately 60,000-70,000 (2009). Given the terrain and isolated nature of many villages, this number could be a lot higher. The valley has ten Union councils<sup>3</sup> (UCs), five on the upper side of the river and five on the lower side of river. The total area of Shigar valley is 170,939 sq feet and it has 62 villages.

Historically, Shigar was part of Baltistan, where Buddhism was the main religion before Islam. Up until 1840, Shigar was ruled by the local ruler of the Amacha dynasty. In 1840, the Maharaja of Kashmir attacked Baltistan and the region remained under Dogra regime until Pakistan's independence on 14 August 1947. Like other areas of Baltistan, Islam was introduced in the late fourteenth century by the prominent Muslim scholar Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamdani. Later, other Muslim scholars preached Islam and the whole area accepted this faith. Approximately 95 percent of people living in Shigar valley are Shias and the other 5 percent are Sunnis.

The valley is rich in architectural monuments like Khanqas<sup>4</sup>, mosques, and forts. The town of Shigar alone has more than 20 important historical sites. The most prominent monuments in this region are the Shigar Fort and Amburiq Mosque, which is known as the first mosque of the region, and Astana Mir Yahya. These prestigious historical monuments have gradually been restored by the local communities and by the Agha Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP). These sites are a constant reminder to the local population, as well as tourists, of the glorious past of the region.

---

<sup>3</sup> A union council is the fifth tier of government, an elected local government body in Pakistan consisting of 21 councilors, and headed by a nazim (which is equivalent to a mayor) and a naib nazim (deputy). At the time this paper was written this system of governance was still in place.

<sup>4</sup> Building designed specifically for gatherings of a *Sufi* brotherhood, or *tariqa*, and is a place for spiritual retreat and character reformation.

Figure 1: Map of Northern Area Districts



Land use in Shigar can be classified as settlement areas with orchards, cropland and irrigated meadows. Every household has about 10 to 15 kanals<sup>5</sup> land; there are some families which have even bigger farms e.g. 100 to 150 kanals. The majority of irrigated land is used as cropland.

## Section 4

### Methodology

Detailed information on the impact of climate change in the Shigar valley is not readily available.<sup>6</sup> For designing the questionnaire, the Deputy Commissioner of Skardu, The World Conservation Union (IUCN) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) staff working in the Northern Areas were consulted for details, along with community based organisations (CBOs) for specific local information. Scientific data on temperature and precipitation was obtained from various sources, including the Pakistan Meteorological Department. Other literature and internet based research also helped in identifying the main climate change concerns specific to areas that are similar to Shigar valley in terms of geography, climate, and physiographic features, as well as adaptation strategies.

<sup>5</sup> A kanal is a traditional unit of land area in Pakistan equal to 605 square yards or 1/8 acre; this is equivalent to about 505.857 square meters.

<sup>6</sup> In 2008, a socio-economic study of Shigar was conducted by the Centre for Development Studies, Freie University, Berlin.

On the basis of this information gathered, a questionnaire was designed to serve as an ancillary tool. This draft questionnaire was circulated for input within the research team, including the IUCN and WWF. This semi-structured questionnaire consisted of three broad sections: general information, household information and information on climate change and its impact. This tool contributed to the qualitative component of the study, which aims at gathering information on community views and experiences related to climate change adaptation and changes in the natural environment.

After consultation with WWF, three unions on the upper part of the river--Marapi, Markunja and Hshupi-- were selected for the survey. Triangulation through various sources of information was used as a tool to ensure data reliability. Since the study is primarily qualitative in nature, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were also conducted.

Marapi and Markunja are economically and socially active UCs. Literacy rate is above 50 percent and people have access to electricity, roads and are close to Skardu city. Hshupi is a village of UC Anchor, a thickly populated area. Agriculture and fruit growing are the major source of income. Apples and cherries from this area are very famous. The Government of Pakistan (GoP) has established a large fruit nursery where scientific research can be done. Total households in Marapi UC are 687, Markunja UC 795 and Hshupi 297.

Efforts were made to ensure equal representation of males and females in the interviews conducted. Although the researchers tried to maintain a balance between different age groups that are relevant to the study, more responses were received from older age groups. Given the nature of the survey where information of climate related changes over the past twenty years was required this age group was ideal. The study also reflects responses of people from diverse income groups and professions, especially those with more interaction with the natural environment (e.g. shepherds, farmers, environment/forest department employees).

Hundred respondents were selected and interviewed at random, not randomly. These included 40 (30 males, 10 females) from Marapi, 40 (32 males, 8 females) from Markunja and 20 (16 males, 4 females) from Hshupi. Given its quasi-anthropological nature, a one-week survey was conducted in the selected UCs. In-depth interviews and two focus groups were carried out

with local people, government officials and NGO representatives. The primary target group was household members residing in each village and the secondary target group was relevant key government department officials, local organisation members, village heads, and notables in the area.

## **Section 5**

### **Findings**

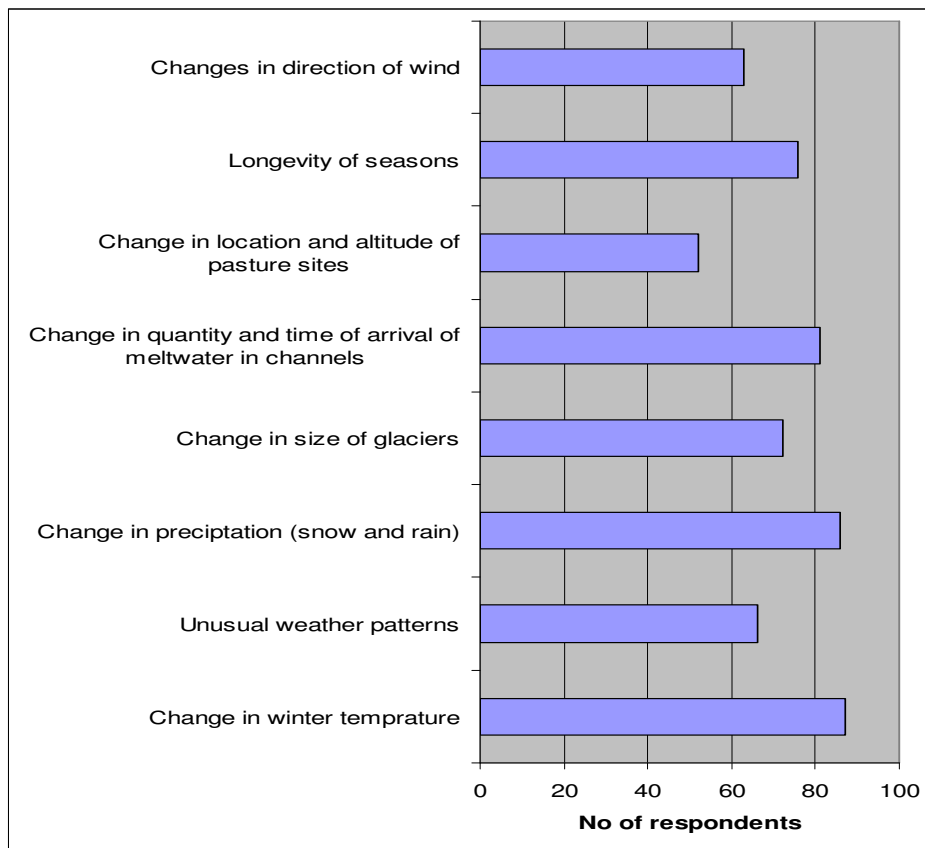
The respondents were asked to provide their input regarding the situation in 2009 and twenty years ago (1989 - baseline year for study), for the various parameters considered under the study (Table-2):

Table 2

Precipitation and Temperature	Water Resources	Agriculture	Biodiversity	Lifestyle Patterns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Change in winter temperatures</li> <li>-Change in flowering time and quantity and quality of fruit trees</li> <li>-Change in the quality, location and altitude of pasture sites</li> <li>-Unusual weather patterns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Change in precipitation (snow and rain)</li> <li>-Change in size of glaciers</li> <li>-Change in quantity and time of arrival of melt water in channels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change in crops cultivated</li> <li>-Change in cropping calendar (sowing and harvesting times of agricultural crops)</li> <li>-Change in crop yields</li> <li>-Change in incidence of crop pests and diseases</li> <li>-Changes in the direction of wind</li> <li>-Live stock</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Changes in sighting of bird species</li> <li>-Changes in the sighting of animals</li> <li>-Changes in natural environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Change in construction style and materials used</li> <li>-Livelihood strategies</li> <li>-Change in clothing</li> <li>-Change in quantity of fuel wood required for heating in winters</li> <li>-Change in incidence of diseases</li> <li>-Migration</li> </ul>

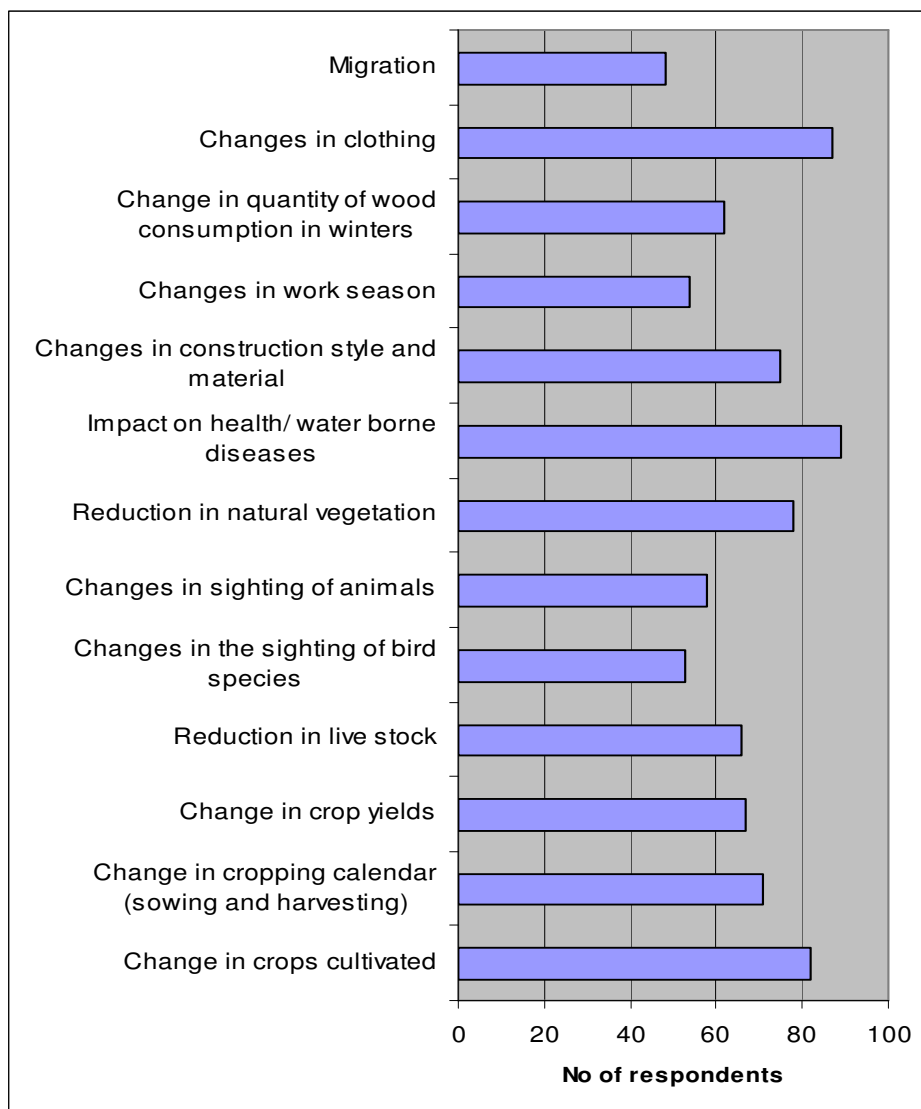
The response of community members clearly indicates that they perceive that climate of Shigar has changed greatly over the past twenty years. They feel that the changing climate has affected the natural environment, traditional lifestyle and livelihoods of the local population. All the respondents reported that there has been change in winter temperature, change in precipitation (rain and snow) and unusual weather patterns. The responses (in %) are shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2



Following impacts were reported on the livelihoods and surroundings of people because of climate change (Figure 3):

Figure 3



## Local Climate - Precipitation and Temperature

The aspects of changes in local climate assessed in the survey included the following:

### *Winter temperatures*

Land surface temperatures rise more than sea surface temperatures and temperatures in higher elevations are rising more rapidly (Liu and Chen 2000). The general perception was that there has been an increase in mean temperature as confirmed from data on temperature trends from the mean maximum temperature from the Meteorological Department. Winters have changed over the last two decades. Most of the respondents said that now winters are warmer compared to the past. The minimum temperature for winter and the maximum temperature for summer were also reported to be increasing. The mean temperature for Skardu for the period (1980-2006) shows an overall annual increase of 0.17° C per decade (Steinbauer and Zeidler 2008). The winter season has become milder and shorter, and summer is now considerably warmer. About 20 years ago, the winter season started in October, but now it starts in November. The amount of snowfall has also declined over the last 20 years, except in 2009, which was an exceptional year when the area received several inches of snow. Villagers assumed it would last till March and that their crops would die, but the snow melted in a few days. Warmer temperatures are also increasing the risk of droughts (from land surface drying) and floods (from increased water vapour). The summer season in Shigar valley has not changed as much, it is almost the same as before. The only noticeable change is that people have started using fans and freezers in their homes and shops.

Climate records (daily maximum and minimum temperature and rainfall) for the last 100 years for Skardu are available with the Meteorological Department in Lahore. The mean annual maximum temperature has increased since the year 2000 in Skardu district. The Global Change Impact Study Centre in Islamabad made some temperature projections for different regions in Pakistan. In the A2 scenario calculated from 13 GCMs predicts an increase of roughly 4° C by 2080.

Table 3

Mean maximum temperature (° C) at Skardu	
Year	Mean Annual
1993	18.8
1994	19.4
1995	18.0
1996	17.8
1997	19.9
1998	19.8
1999	18.7
2000	18.3
2001	20.8
2002	20.2

#### *Flowering time and quantity / Quality of fruit trees*

A variety of fruit tree species are found in Shigar valley. These include apple, apricot, pear and cherry. Apricot and apple trees are more common and almost every family has these trees. Interestingly, it was reported that the taste of these fruits has also changed. Apricot production is the highest in the region and at times they have to throw away the fruit. Apricot branches are also used as fuel wood.

During the survey, it was revealed that there has been a shift in the flowering time of fruit trees by about 7–15 days during the past 15-20 years. The flowering times for fruit trees are: plum (July), apple (October), pear (October), and walnut (October). Earlier, flowering took place in mid-April, but in 2008 and 2009 apricot trees (which blossom first) blossomed between the last week of March and the first week of April. Mulberries are harvested in the middle of June.

### *Quality, location and altitude of pasture sites*

There are different pastures for summers (mountains) and winters (lowlands). The village elders shared that there are 22 grazing sites for the 22 villages of Shigar town. An indigenous system of usage has been developed over the years strictly followed by the residents, whereby households use designated sites at specific time periods. Permission is required by households if livestock is taken to some other site. Less precipitation in recent years has had a drastic impact on the pasture sites. There is much less forest cover and deterioration in the quality and quantity of natural resources (especially grass) at the pasture sites. The grass at the sites is dry and less green due to less rain. It is also shorter – from 4.0 feet earlier to 1.5 feet now. However, there has been no change in the timings and duration when shepherds take the livestock for grazing. Goats and sheep are taken to pastures from May to October, while cows are taken from May to September. Some households take livestock to their own land close to home for grazing. Households, which are economically sound, at times buy fodder from the market (a practice which was not needed earlier).

### *Unusual weather patterns*

The people of Shigar mentioned a change in natural precipitation as a clear indicator of climate change. The amount of precipitation (both rainfall and snow) has reduced substantially. There has hardly been any snowfall during the past four years. The precipitation predictability, frequency and extent have also undergone a change. There have been certain erratic weather events, especially the replacement of snowfall with rainfall in winters. In January 2009, the area received an unusually heavy snowfall, an amount not seen in the last 40 or more years as remembered by the older people in the village. Some pointed out that climate has become very variable. Rainfall has decreased considerably in the valley for the last two decades. Reduced rainfall is affecting the grass and forests in the valley. There is no special season for rainfall in the Shigar valley as is the case with monsoons in the low-lying Punjab province. There has also been a change in occurrence of floods, though the change varied across villages. The reason for the variance was attributed to erratic weather conditions and rainfall, as well as loose soil (due to arid conditions), causing floods. The floods of 2001 and 2004 caused massive destruction in Hshupi village.

## Water Resources

The impacts of climatic changes on water availability were investigated through:

### *Change in precipitation (snow and rain)*

There has been a drastic reduction in the amount of precipitation over the past 20 years. The snow would start falling in November-December and continue till February-March. The snow cover on the mountains would exceed six feet and on the ground was at least two to three inches thick. It was reported that there used to be so much snow that it would not completely melt even during the summer season. Over the last six to seven years, hardly any snowfall has occurred in the valley except in January 2009. Earlier snow would melt in April – May, but the respondents shared that the January snow melted by March. Risk of landslides has increased due to decreased snowfall and forest cover.

Annual rainfall in the area has also reduced in the last seven to eight years; the land has become drier and more arid affecting agriculture (response of the farmers at Hshupi). Rain would start in April and there would be continuous rain (six to nine times monthly). In summers, *jari* season (rains) would occur once in July-August. Frequent and heavy rainfall would make mud houses leak or collapse. Now, it rains two to five times in a year. When it does rain, it is heavy and causes floods.

*“Weather changes are abrupt and uncertainty has increased. We never used to get floods but I can’t forget the destruction caused by floods in 2001 and 2004. There was only one to two hours’ time to secure a safe place and carry out our valuables. When the flood is about to come there is silence all around and then all of a sudden there is a bang and water streams downward. Floods are expected even if there are no rains or snow, with the increase in temperature it softens the glaciers and a gas accumulates which bursts and water is everywhere. During the floods, there is almost no help from the government and we manage ourselves.”* (Noor Hassan, age 45, resident of Hshupi)

Almost every household has drinking water through streams and springs. NGOs like Northern Areas Public Works Department (NAPWD) and AKRSP have supplied water through pipelines and one pipeline supplies water to three houses. There are two water storage tanks in Shigar for Marapi and Markunja and a community water filtration unit in Shigar, but

this filtration unit supplies water for the two villages of Markunja and Shigar Fort only. Most of the villages without filtration system have to drink unfiltered water, which is causing many diseases. Due to limited water sources, people use the muddy glacier water. In winters, when water is frozen people store their drinking water in drums and cans.

### *Size of glaciers*

*“My grandfather’s village was located at higher altitude, glaciers were so close to the village and waterway that we had to walk over glaciers at times; but now they cannot even be seen.”* (Mehboob Ali Abbas, age 42, resident of Marapi)

Most of the glaciers in the Karakoram Mountains are retreating (Hewitt 2005; Haritashya et al 2007; Steinbauer and Zeidler 2008). Since glaciers are located higher in the mountains and as most community members do not travel there, many respondents had not personally seen any change in the size of glaciers. By word of mouth from the tourist guides (who carry the luggage for the expeditions to K2 base camp) and shepherds (who took the livestock to pasture during summer) people are aware that glaciers are retreating. There is a major difference in the present size of glaciers compared to 15–20 years ago. Some think this recession in size is due to change in temperature and precipitation. Some locals said that the shrinking of glaciers and warming temperature has caused an increase in availability of water from glacial melt.

*“I have lived all my life in Shigar. I was a tourist guide and herder. The glaciers are retreating and melting throughout the upper segments of the Karakoram. This is the major indicator of climate change. As a tourist guide, I observed glaciers were quite away from the Karakoram Highway (KKH) in the early 1970s but have slid down gradually from their previous positions and are seen now very close to the KKH. The pastures close to the glaciers have been severely affected by the retreating glaciers and now it takes more time to travel to the pastures than two decades ago.”* (Abdul Mateen, age 68, resident of Markunja)

### *Quantity and time of arrival of melt water in channels*

The sources of water in Shigar valley are the glaciers and snow. Water is available in abundance for both irrigation and for drinking. Surplus melt water now arrives in water channels by March (15 days earlier), and is adequate to fulfil the communities requirements.

Streams are filled by April-June, till September-November. Due to warmer climate, snow melts earlier. The elders of the village reported that there has been a reduction in the quantity of melt water in water channels over the past 20 years. Earlier, there was so much melt water that it was almost flood-like and crossing the river was not possible. The amount of melt water available depends on the amount of snowfall. More snowfall means more avalanches, which in turn means more rain. However, now that the glaciers have shrunk, fewer avalanches occur and hence less melt water is available. There has been no change in turbidity time, which was mostly observed to occur from May-August, as reported by most people. They also said that there is no turbidity in spring water.

### **Agriculture**

The effects of the changing temperature and precipitation regimes on local agriculture were assessed through the following parameters:

#### ***Crops cultivated***

Almost all the people in Shigar own land and are engaged in farming. Every household owns 5-10 kanal of land for cultivation and grow fruit trees. Each household cultivates vegetables for their own household use, not for commercial sale. Field preparation is done in spring, irrigation in summer followed by harvesting in autumn. Only potatoes are cultivated for commercial purposes in the region. Potato production in Markunja is twice as much as Marapi. Previously, local seeds and organic farmyard manure (FYM) were used as inputs, but increasing demand caused by expanding population, limited land holdings and availability of high yielding hybrid seed varieties and chemical fertilisers has transformed this local agricultural practice.

Earlier, winters were harsh and lasted for a longer time (November-February) therefore only one crop was grown per year. Cooler temperatures are more suitable for growing millet (*bajra*) and barley. Since the last few years, two crops are grown each year, as there is a longer duration of suitable weather for crop cultivation. When one crop is ready, there is still enough time for the second crop to be sown and harvested. However, not all households cultivate two crops each year; some still grow one crop (maize) for domestic use.

*"I am retired from the Pakistan army and now I am a farmer. We have been growing wheat and barley but now prefer to grow potatoes for commercial purposes. The profits are higher and the weather is more suitable. When there is a shortage of potatoes in the Sindh and Punjab markets then we become the suppliers. There are changes in productivity due to warmer climate, crop disease, increase in the price of fertilisers, water shortage and change in sowing and harvesting times. Another important factor is that the use of fertilisers has decreased the growing capacity of our lands."* (Fida Ali, age 62, resident of Marapi)

There has also been an increase in number and types of crop species grown. Wheat, barley, maize and vegetables (red beans, radish, carrot, cabbage and onion) are grown by most of the house holds for domestic consumption. Potatoes have gained importance as a cash crop and have been grown commercially during the past five to six years. They are supplied to other cities and the farmers get a good price in the market.

### *Cropping calendar (sowing and harvesting times of agricultural crops)*

The sowing season in Shigar is March-April. The respondents were unanimous in their opinion that the sowing and harvesting time of crops has undergone a change and that sowing now takes place earlier. However, there is some difference of opinion as to the number of days by which the sowing time has changed, which can be attributed to the variations in the location of the agricultural fields. Most respondents reported a shift of about 10–15 days, while some reported a shift of as much as one month. The responses regarding the harvesting time (July- August) of various crops are also varied, with some respondents reporting no change in harvesting time, while others reporting a shift of up to 7-15 days, or even a month according to some community members. The reason given for these changes is change in weather conditions and precipitation – warmer temperature in recent years, leading to early harvesting of crops.

### *Crop yields*

According to the locals, the annual yield has increased in the last 10 to 15 years, especially of wheat and potatoes. A general trend is a 30-40 percent increase in yield. The annual yield of barley has remained almost the same because same seed variety has been used for many decades. Most farmers recognised that the use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides and new

variety seeds has increased the annual yield. But the farmers have also noticed that the land quality has been decreased over the years, thus increased dependency on fertiliser use.

*“Agriculture is our main profession so everyone needs water. With the passage of time communities developed water rights for equitable division of water. Shigar has one of the best apricots, apples and cherries but we have no established markets for fresh fruits. The Government of Pakistan opened one nursery for apples and cherries. Due to absence of infrastructure and harsh winters we are unfortunate in attracting any investment from companies. Fruits become rotten and are wasted; only dry apricots are sent to other cities for business but that is limited.”* (Ghulam Haider, age 52, resident of Hshupi)

### ***Incidence of crop pests and diseases***

Crop diseases have increased in the Shigar valley in the last few years. The type of pest attacks include black colored pest on wheat, big sized pest on wheat, grass and vegetables; *lojomi* (hole in potato crop); *lom/sbor* (pest in which leaves dry up – due to less rain), *ashore* (pest in which wheat grain becomes weak and slack), *kinuroogh*: (wheat grain becomes black), *mulagai* (worm in potato). Since the past 15-20 years, all fruit trees (apple, walnut, pear, apricot) have been infected with diseases and also cause itching and rashes on the skin of the pickers. The respondents at Hshupi (being commercial farmers) observed the incidence of diseases more as compared to the past. They are using pesticides as an antidote.

### ***Direction of wind***

The indigenous knowledge (IK) of the local farmers and herders used to guide them about the timing for various farm practices, including the collection of grasses for feeding animals in winter. The direction of wind and, based on this, predicting weather and planning for various farm practices, remained a prominent part of the indigenous knowledge in the past. According to the herders and farmers, the wind direction was quite predictable fifteen, twenty years ago, but now that was no longer the case. This has created ambiguity for the farmers in planning various farming activities in terms of using the direction of wind as an indicator.

### *Livestock*

Every family in Shigar owns livestock, but during the survey it was revealed that the number of livestock per household has declined. Livestock includes goats, sheep, cows, oxen, yak, and donkeys. Households maintain livestock to meet their domestic needs for meat (especially for funerals and religious festivals), milk, dairy products and fertiliser.

*“Every household has their own livestock but only for domestic purpose not for commercial sale. Sometimes we sell the male animal. On the average families have three to five animals. We use them to get milk, meat, and wool. The livestock is reared in winters at home and when the summer starts we send our animals with a shepherd to the pastures. The shepherd is not given any salary, he takes milk and butter and sells it and also he gathers the wood from forest and sells it in the market. There are not as many grazing sites as there used to be. In winters, we store the fodder or buy from market.”*  
(Ejaz Hussain, age 46, resident of Markunja)

There has been no substantial change in the livestock health and productivity, in terms of milk/meat obtained per domestic animal. However, there has been a change in the source of food for livestock which now feeds on market purchased food, as natural fodder (grass) and rainfall has decreased, affecting pastures. Many respondents said that milk production has increased with the use of chemical fodder and the increase in diet supplements (wheat *chapatis* and mustard oil), though grass quantity has decreased. Also, the quantity of butter has increased, though this is due to easy extraction with the use of machines. Those who reported less quantity of milk production now, attributed it to less food being available for livestock. In the fields where fodder was once grown, now potato cultivation is done instead. Hence, there is less grass available during potato cultivation season.

### **Biodiversity**

Variations in the incidence of various species in the region were assessed with reference to the following aspects:

#### *Sighting of bird species*

Twenty years ago, Shigar used to be very rich with regard to bird species. The main bird species of the area are crows, wild pigeons, chakor, ram chakor, sparrows, partridges, hawks

and eagles. It has been noted that years ago many migratory birds were seen in April but now migratory patterns seem to have changed. Crows have become extinct and others species are rarely seen. Now the surviving bird species of the area are sparrows, doves and wild pigeons. Locals link this disappearance due to hunting practices, change in weather conditions and loss of habitat due to deforestation.

*“There has been about a 70 percent reduction in the number of migratory birds during the last twenty years. In addition to hunting and more disturbances, coupled with shrinkage of wetland habitats, the increase in the average temperature of the area is one of the possible reasons for it. The local ponds have very few frogs, and there is almost 70 percent reduction in the number of butterflies in the last 12 years which if it continues will affect the pollination process drastically.”* (Ghulam Mehdi, age 54, resident of Marapi)

### *Sighting of animals*

Earlier markhor, musk deer, snow leopard, blue sheep, ibex, marcopolo sheep, urial and wolf were seen in the area. Senior residents stated that the animals they saw in their youth were no longer found. Snow leopards were seen earlier, but none have been spotted in the region for the past ten years. Ibex and markhor have also been spotted rarely. Due to hunting, increased human activity in forests, deforestation and changes in weather patterns these animals seem to have become extinct in the area. The population of markhor and keil also decreased considerably due to hunting and the scarcity of grazing sites.

### *Changes in natural environment*

Community forestry is practiced in the region. Poplar, mulberry, *bair*, *beo*, willow and *shabtoot* are some of the trees grown. Juniper (*cheer*) and *katal* is also still seen in the area, though the quantity has reduced drastically, due to excessive use of these trees as fuel wood, construction and grazing. In the highlands there are almost no natural forests left. Earlier, people of Shigar were dependent on medicinal plants for the treatment of ailments. Improved access to modern medicine through the establishment of hospitals and clinics has reduced dependence on traditional medicine, hence reducing the use of medicinal plants. But some of these plants still face extinction due to overgrazing. Even though the cold has decreased, deforestation in the

region is primarily the result of fuel wood consumption given the increased gas prices. Wood is less expensive, so people use it for cooking, heating and timber for house making.

Environmental change was also analysed using a Likert scale ranking ( 1 less in quantity, 5 more in quantity) for the snow fall in the region; 1 decrease in size, 5 increase in size for the glaciers; 1 less and 5 more for rain fall and quantity of melt water. Comparison was made between the present and 20 years ago. As shown in Table 4, the results are quite striking. Males and females in all three UCs surveyed strongly agreed that snowfall has decreased drastically, glaciers have receded, rainfall is less frequent, and the quantity of melt water has reduced.

Since respondents are not scientists, they do not and cannot use scientific language; however, their observations and analysis of the environmental changes synchronise with the scientific and GIS analysis.

Table 4.

Village			Snowfall		Glacier Size		Rainfall		Quantity of melt water	
			2008*	20 yrs	2009	20 yrs	2009	20 yrs	2009	20 yrs
Marapi	Male	30	2.2	4.9	3.8	5.0	2.3	4.2	2.8	5.0
	Female	10	2.5	4.3	4.5	5.0	2.4	4.2	2.4	5.0
Markunja	Male	32	2.4	4.7	3.9	5.0	2.4	4.9	2.8	4.9
	Female	8	2.1	4.2	4.2	5.0	2.5	4.1	2.9	5.0
Hshupi	Male	16	2.2	4.8	3.2	5.0	2.5	4.3	2.5	5.0
	Female	4	1.9	4.1	4.0	5.0	2.6	4.9	3.0	4.8
		100								

\*For the analysis of snowfall, 2008 was taken as the present reference point because 2009 has been an exceptional year with more snow fall as compared to previous years.

### Lifestyle Patterns

The change in climate has had a huge impact on the lives of people. Contrary to the notions that climate change impacts are by far very negative, from this researcher's interviews it was observed that standards of living have improved. Clothing, architecture, construction material, and food consumption has changed. Almost 100 percent respondents reported having a cell phone (in many cases even two), which keeps them connected with their families and friends.

Telecom companies have made huge investments in the region and are sensitising people about the power of information. New roads are still under construction and the Government of Pakistan utilises radios and FM channels to communicate with villages in remote areas. Kerosene lamps were used before electricity was introduced. Manure made from dry animal dung is another low price energy source used in mountain economies for heating and cooking purposes. The Skardu district produces its own electricity and (96 percent) of the respondent households in Shigar have electricity. People have fans, freezers and energy saver light bulbs, which consume less electricity in their homes and businesses. During winter, production of electricity is less than its supply as water freezes, but in summer the situation is vice versa. In case of power outages, people use kerosene lamps as an alternative. Interestingly, the perception (23 percent) is that climate change has increased household incomes in general since in the past they were working for only five to six months, but now due to increase in temperatures (less colder winters) they are able to work for almost nine months. The diet of the people has also shifted from consumption of local organic food (e.g. barley, millet, vegetables, apricots, milk) to packaged food available in the market (e.g. *Dalda*, tea, rice).

The valley has seen an increase in construction work in the last five to eight years, some of the reasons recorded during in-depth interviews were the upgrade of main road to Skardu, increase in population and more employment opportunities. Furthermore, some respondents added that traditional/old houses were close to collapsing and for safety purposes renovation was necessary. Some of the old respondents highlighted this activity as collapse of old heritage and negative effect on the agricultural output as the new houses were constructed on croplands.

Women play an important part both inside and outside the house. It's a strictly closed society and women observe *pardah* (veil). Their spatial radius of activity is highly unequal. In the past few years, women have been encouraged to obtain education and all the female interviewees reported studying in female schools with female teachers. Men and women carry out different economic tasks as shown in Table 5 below:

Table 5.

Labour	Women	Men	Joint
Household	Household	Buying food/supplies from market	
Field	-Weeding -Sowing	-Irrigation -Ploughing	Harvesting
Animals	-Feeding -Milking -Taking care of elders and children -Spinning wool	High pasture	
Monetary Income	-Teacher -Lady health worker -Nurse -Lady Shopkeeper	-Shopkeeper -Teacher -Armed forces -Constructor -Public administration - Tour guide	

*"I teach at the girl's school in Shigar, in the afternoon I do all the domestic chores. I clean the house, make food, and help my children with their home work. I help my husband equally in the field; he also works in a hospital. The society is still strict regarding pardah, we have special shopping places. However, with the passage of time the role of women is changing, they participate in household decision making and girls are encouraged to have an education. There is a computer centre in Shigar and women are learning how to use computers. Earlier, I was using only wood for cooking and heating in winters, but now I have the facility of natural gas. To protect ourselves from chilly winds we use plastic sheets to cover the windows in winters. In summer, we use electric fans and freezers. The size of windows is now larger to have more light and air in summer."* (Khadija, 37, resident of Marapi)

Education is seen as the precondition for higher status and high income jobs in Shigar. Some schools have been operational in this region since the 1930s. There are 24 schools in Shigar (16 governments, four private and four community managed). One of the reasons for out-migration in this region is education. There is 50.7 percent (66 percent male, 33.2 percent female) adult literacy ratio in Shigar. The youth literacy rate (15-24 years) is plausible i-e 74.4 percent (86 percent male, 62 percent female) (ZELF 2008).

The changes in the lifestyle of the community over the past 20 years, which may be attributed to climate change, were assessed through:

### *Livelihood strategies<sup>7</sup>*

These strategies were analysed in terms of cash income sources of the households in the study areas. Some 87 percent respondents had adopted diverse livelihood strategies since they had two or more sources of cash income for their households. Labour (non-natural) was the main source of income for most of the respondents, followed by salary and business (government servants, tour guides, school teachers, soldiers in the Army, taxi drivers, construction workers, shop keepers, work in NGOs). Very few families (12 percent) are entirely dependent on agriculture as their primary source of cash income. Some 89 percent owned their land<sup>8</sup>, but due to small land holdings (67 percent), large families<sup>9</sup> (35 percent), and climate unpredictability (27 percent), it was being used for household food needs and not commercial, agriculture purposes.

### *Construction style and materials used*

Earlier, the construction of houses was simple with low roof houses, one small window and a double story. Some 7 percent houses have a large underground room, called a '*kaksha*', which was heated where the whole family would live during winters. Sometimes cattle were also accommodated in the same room for greater warmth.

With the change in temperature, access to resources and information, people are building big houses with large windows and high roofs. Earlier, there was a large single room where all the family members lived together, but now 75 percent of them reported living in separate rooms. With the change in construction design, the construction material used has undergone a drastic change. Earlier indigenous construction material (wood, stone, mud walls, unfired bricks, woollen carpets) was used, which would provide better insulation in extreme temperatures. Since the winters are not very cold any longer, cement and roller compacted concrete (RCC) blocks are commonly used for house construction, which is not only more convenient to use, but also allows the houses to be kept cleaner.

---

<sup>7</sup> Livelihoods strategies are activities that generate the means of household survival. These may be natural resource based activities or non-natural resource based (Ellis 2000).

<sup>8</sup> In joint family system, the ownership of land lies with the father until he divides it among his children.

<sup>9</sup> Family size is considered large if total number of family in one house exceeds 10.

Some 32 percent respondents saw this change as a negative development. The cultural values of Shigar are eroding with these changes. The development should not be uncontrolled but it has to be managed. People used to live together in clans, sharing resources and having close community connections. The change of architecture has not only broken this social bonding, but also reduced the amount of agrarian land as people are constructing bigger houses on their lands. There are issues of sanitation and sewage as every household has a separate water outlet and toilet. Also, the elders observed that the average life of cemented houses is far less than the mud houses. The cement houses with separate rooms also require fuel wood (or gas heaters) for heating during winters.

### *Change in clothing*

The people in Shigar used to wear heavy hand-made woollen clothing in winters. Women used to make these woollen clothes/caps, but with the change in weather patterns people have given up their traditional clothes. Warm clothing is not needed anymore as readymade sweaters and Chinese jackets are sufficient to protect them from the cold. Twenty years ago they required three to four blankets for sleeping, but now two are enough.

*“The climate is much warmer now. Earlier, water would freeze in pots while being carried home. Fifteen years ago, it was so cold that trees would break in winter. I used to store meat for winters as it was too cold to leave home. Wheat (4–5 maunds<sup>10</sup>) was also stored as there was no road access in winter. We used to make warm woollen clothes at home for winters, but now it’s not that cold and we buy sweaters, shawls and jackets from the bazaar (market). The duration of winter season is shorter and warmer compared to previous years ago. Some of the villages have access to filtered water, but there is incidence of gastric diseases due to unclean water. Apart from being muddy, people living upstream make it dirty and unsuitable for drinking. They wash their clothes, livestock and sometimes dump waste in the stream. We at the receiving end, downstream, become the victims.”* (Maqsooma, 98, resident of Markunja)

---

<sup>10</sup> 1 maund= 37.32 kg

### *Quantity of fuel wood required for heating in winters*

Per capita rate of energy consumption in Northern Areas is the lowest in Pakistan (IUCN 2003). Fire wood, kerosene oil, electricity, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), diesel oil, dung cakes and batteries are the major energy sources. Wood, dung cake and harvest residues are primarily used for heating and cooking purposes. Electricity, LPG and kerosene are used for lighting. In Shigar, electricity is generated by hydropower stations. On average, an expense of Rs 100-300 (\$2- 4) is spent on energy consumption.

Wood dependent users reported that the wood collection has become difficult and time consuming. Due to decreasing forest cover they have to travel long distances. Some 52 percent respondents reported a definite reduction in the consumption of fuel wood per person during winters, since the past five years. Reasons given for per head reduction in fuel wood use are the availability of gas heaters and electricity, less intensity of winter cold and less snowfall.

Earlier, people used to sit around a fire/*desi* stove all day, as it was too cold to step out and do anything else. A substantial amount of wood was needed to be stored for winter. Consumption per household has reduced by 30-50% on average. For 100 maunds<sup>11</sup> used per year, 50-70 maunds are consumed in winters. Population increase and the increase in the number of rooms per house has resulted in an overall increase in fuel usage, though per head consumption has reduced. Hence, overall consumption depends entirely on household size.

### *Incidence of diseases*

The incidence of diseases in Shigar Valley is not high. During winters people catch colds, coughs, flu, fever, etc. Gastric diseases especially are more common in summers due to the unfiltered water, and unclean fruit. Some of the reported diseases are goiter, pneumonia, TB, typhoid, malaria, cholera and hepatitis. Diarrhoea is the most frequent disease and consistent among patients of the ages between 5 and 15 years. There are fewer people exposed to this disease who are using filtered water. According to older respondents, the new generation is more sensitive and prone to diseases. Some 17 % of the locals think that the replacement of organic food with synthetic market food (such as Dalda, rice, sesame seed oil and tea) has caused an increase in prevalent diseases. However, 53 % respondents also felt that the

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

incidence of disease has been reduced due to awareness, different spring water / clean water usage, and improved access to medical facilities. Additionally, availability of iodized salt has reduced the incidence of goiter. The Rural Health Center at Shigar is a 25-bed hospital used by locals in case of medical emergency. If the disease cannot be treated, patients have to go to a hospital in Skardu.

### *Migration*

Migration in Shigar valley is mainly due to economic reasons (21 %) or for the purpose of higher education (45 %). The majority of people who have migrated are government servants, serving in Pakistan Army, and those who work for private companies. Individual family members may migrate in the winters but not the whole family to cities (especially nearby Gilgit) for work. Some 10% of the interviewees reported male members migrating to temporarily to the NWFP and Azad Kashmir because of the availability of work during the 2005 South Asia earthquake.

## **Section 6**

### **Analysis and Recommendations**

From the above findings, it is clear that the mountainous region of Shigar is experiencing both positive and negative impacts of climate related changes. While economically, the less harsh winter now gives locals more time to remain active in their fields and jobs, the loss of biodiversity and severe deforestation in the area is a cause of great concern. During the interviews, especially with the local officials, this researcher found very little empathy regarding the various changes in cropping patterns, loss of forest cover, animal species, and sanitation problems shared by the locals. However, lack of understanding about the issue of climate change and its impacts amongst the officials was also prevalent.

It is very important to remember that while climate changes in precipitation and temperature have slow onset, they often lead to long-term losses in agriculture, biodiversity and livelihoods (UNFCCC 2007). Therefore, it is imperative to recognise, document and understand past environmental related changes in comparison to present experiences in order to deal and plan accurately for climate variability. This not only provides valuable information but also reduces

vulnerability to climate related disasters. Here the role of the state and local, traditional institutions is crucial in building resilience into the development and investment plans for the region.

Livelihood and agricultural strategies are rooted in available natural resources, as well as in the social and cultural structures, “Older forms are often rooted in older ecosystem contexts that may no longer be prevalent” (Joy et al. 2004, p.17). Using local, traditional knowledge the Shigar locals have used crop diversification strategies to adapt agricultural practices as indicated by the data. However, efforts to buffer their attempts need to be made by developing climate-resilient, adaptive crops and seed varieties. Scientific technological know-how about crop rotation, livestock breeding, developing local food banks for people and livestock should also be undertaken to create more awareness amongst local farmers and stimulate timely action. Research into better food preservation techniques should also be undertaken given how much of the local fruit goes to waste due to lack of knowledge about proper storage. The Government should encourage, through tax incentive schemes, farmers who have undertaken crop diversification (leading to improved food security) steps on their own accord.

The provincial government of NWFP also needs to urgently start reforestation and afforestation initiatives in the area. Large scale forestation efforts can lead to improved land use management, better municipal town planning, erosion control and soil conservation. Tolerant forest trees suitable to the changing mountainous terrain should be planted and local joint forest management committees formed to manage them. With input from the locals, the provincial government should declare conservation areas to protect native plant, as well as rare animal species.

The valley does not have its own weather centre and the population is dependent on weather related information from the local radio stations. For a region, where most villages are located in remote highland areas, early warning systems combined with indigenous knowledge and systems of communication should be advocated and strengthened. Given the limited budgetary resources of provincial governments, the Federal Government promptly needs to develop its technical/scientific capacity by setting up more weather stations to support provision of services specifically related to floods, rains, droughts and other relevant climatic occurrences. Establishing national and local climate change committees would be another

much needed step towards spreading awareness within the communities about climate risks and adaptation. Countless lives can be saved through better understanding of climate disaster characteristics.

Under the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Forestry Sector Project, which began in 1995, the Village Land Use Plan (VLUP) was developed and institutionalised in parts of NWFP. Under the VLUP, Village Development Committees and Women's Organisations were established. Theoretically, these institutions should subsequently evolve into the local community based organisations for improved natural resources management and developing NRM plans at the village level (Khattak 2002; ADB 1995). While the project itself received mixed reviews (Shahbaz et al. 2006), the idea of pro-poor and participatory VDCs and WOs, with support from the traditional structures like *jirga* needs to be revitalised. The key to a sound climate change adaptation strategy is strengthening of local and traditional institutions and defining their functions which include information gathering and its dissemination, resource allocation and mobilisation, capacity building, applications of modern technology (telecommunications and alternative energy), leadership and social networking with other institutions. This enhances the capacity to manage climate-sensitive assets and natural resources and increases the resilience of communities (World Bank 2009; Agrawal 2008).

While Shigar does not face any immediate water availability issues for irrigation and domestic, household use, an improved and equitable water management system through understanding water flows and water quality is required. The filtration plants setup by the local NGO are already facing increasing stress with the population rising and demand for clean water. Creating awareness about efficiency in the proper and sensible usage of water is also necessary. Two dams were being constructed at the time of the survey and the locals shared their apprehensions that water from the dams might be used to benefit the Sindh and Punjab provinces, leaving them marginalised. While the creation of such water reservoirs is important, activities such as localised rainwater harvesting and surface water storage should also be encouraged.

Locals, especially village elders, have intimate knowledge about their natural and environmental resources. Given the pace of development and changing life styles, cultural heritage, traditions and customs are at stake. Culture is an important tool for development and

buildings are the mirrors portraying how societies shape. Some 43 percent of the respondents praised and appreciated the efforts of IUCN, Agha Khan Cultural Services Programme (AKCSP), and Shigar Town Management and Development Society (STM&DS) for creating awareness about the importance of cultural heritage. Reconstruction initiatives like Rehabilitation of Shigar Fort, Chinpa and Halpapa historical settlements are important to preserve indigenous knowledge and architecture. The process encourages local participation involving Town Management Societies (TMS). The following doesn't fit. From field observations and interaction with the village elders, it becomes apparent that local knowledge and capacities do exist in Shigar and should be used to complement more centralised and "expert" planning. If vulnerability to change induced by variations in climate and the sustainability and improvement of the livelihoods of poor people are to be achieved, there needs to be an understanding of how the poor and vulnerable sustain their livelihoods. In addition to this a knowledge base needs to be created on the role of natural resources in livelihood activities and the scope for adaptation actions that reduce vulnerabilities and increase the resilience of poor people (Task Force on Climate Change 2003).

## Conclusion

Adaptation to climatic variation has occurred for centuries, but anthropogenic climate change poses a challenge of greater magnitude than ever known before (IPCC 2007a). Adaptive responses take place through adjustments in physical, ecological and human systems to reduce vulnerability or enhance resilience in response to expected changes. Resilience can be defined as the capacity of linked social-ecological systems to take in repeated disorder such as natural disasters like hurricanes and floods and be able to retain essential composition and means (Adjer et al. 2005). This adaptive capacity is unevenly distributed, and those who are poor and marginalised are most at risk, often being the most dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. In response to environmental risks the common adaptation responses are mobility, storage, diversification, communal pooling and exchange (Agrawal 2008). The effectiveness of these adaptive strategies depends on the nature of the environmental threat, local institutions culture, local institutions of the community, geographic location, economic and social factors (Ostrom 1990; Jütting 2003; Agrawal 2008; Rodrik et al. 2002; Sachs 2003). Vulnerability is also exacerbated by human induced change to these systems, and climate change is projected to compound the existing pressures on natural resources and environment (IPCC 2007).

Climate induced risks and disasters can severely destabilise economic, social development and increase poverty in Shigar Valley. Since the impact of climate change is diverse and its effects vary in different ecosystems, there can be no one-size-fits-all approach while formulating a climate risk management strategy (Agrawal 2008). At the institutional level, local governments play a critical role in the development and implementation of policies and measures to address climate change. Approaches that emphasise a bottom-up approach and that recognise rural coping strategies and indigenous knowledge must be understood and documented, since these will add to local adaptive capacities.

## References

- ADB 1995, 'Forestry sector project Pakistan', The Asian Development Bank, Manila.
- Agrawal, A. 2008, 'The role of local institutions in adaptation to climate change', The Social Development Department, The World Bank Group, Washington, D.C.
- Cruz, R. V. et al. 2007, 'Climate change 2007: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability- contribution of working group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change', Cambridge University Press, UK.
- Ellis, F. 2000, 'Rural livelihoods and diversity in developing countries', Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- FAO 2005, 'State of the world's forests', Food and Agricultural Organisation, United Nations Forestry Department, Rome.
- Farooq, A.B. and Khan, A.H. 2004, 'Climate change perspective in Pakistan', *Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Network (APN) Capacity Building Workshop on Global Change Research*, Islamabad, pp.39-46.
- Flannery, T. 2005, '*The Weather Makers*', New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, New York.
- Haritashya, U. K. et al. 2007, 'Satellite observations of glacier advances and retreat in the Western Karakoram', American Geophysical Union (AGU) Fall Meeting.
- Haywood, A. M. Williams, M. 2005, 'The climate of the future: clues from 3 million years ago', *Geology Today*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp.138-143.
- Hewitt K. 2005, 'The Karakoram anomaly? Glacier expansion and the elevation effect, Karakoram Himalaya', *Mountain Research and Development* 25, viewed in Jan 2008, <<http://www.iucn.org/tsunami/docs/ip-tsunami-risks-and-services-2.pdf>>

IPCC 2007, 'Climate change 2007: The physical science basis- Contribution of working group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change', Geneva: <<http://www.ipcc.ch>>

IPCC 2007a, 'Contribution of working group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change', Geneva: <<http://www.ipcc.ch>>

IUCN 2000, 'Scoping study for IUCN's possible involvement within the climate change sector in South/South East Asia', The World Conservation Union, Pakistan.

IUCN 2003, 'Northern areas strategy for sustainable development', Background Paper Energy, The World Conservation Union, Pakistan.

Jianchu, Xu Grumbine, R.E. et al. 2009, 'The melting Himalayas: Cascading effects of climate change on water, biodiversity, and livelihoods', *Conservation Biology*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp.520–530, Society for Conservation Biology.

Jiang, D. et al. 2005, 'Modeling the Middle Pleistocene climate with a Global Atmospheric General Circulation Model', *Journal of Geophysical Research*, 110, D14107.

Joy, K.J. Paranjape, S. with Kirankumar, A.K. Lele, R. and Adagale, R. Dec.2004, 'Watershed development review: Issues and prospects', Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Environment and Development (CISED), India.

Jütting, J. 2003, 'Institutions and development: A critical review', Working Paper No. 210, Social Institutions and Dialogue OECD Development Centre.

Kelkar, U. and Bhadwal, S. 2007, 'South Asian regional study on climate change impacts and adaptation: Implications for human development', UNDP Human Development Report 2007-08 Occasional Paper, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Geneva.

Khan, S.R. 2002, 'IMF conditions stunt growth', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Special Article, November 2-9, Mumbai, India.

Khan, S. R. et al. Aug. 2007, 'The quest for sustainable forest management: Exploring public-private partnerships in the forestry sector in Pakistan', Working Paper Series 107, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan.

Khattak, A. K. 2002, 'Guidelines for the preparation of joint forest management plans for upland forests in NWFP', Forest Management Centre, Peshawar, Pakistan.

Liu, X. Chen, B. 2000, 'Climatic warming in the Tibetan Plateau during recent decades', *International Journal of Climatology*, vol. 20, no. 14, pp. 1729-1742.

MoE 2003, 'Pakistan's initial national communication on climate change', Ministry of Environment, Government of Pakistan.

Ostrom, E. 1990, 'Governing the Commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action', Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Rodrik, D. Subramanian, A. Trebbi, F. 2002, 'Institutions rule: The primacy of institutions over integration and geography in economic development', IMF Working Paper, WP/02/189, International Monetary Fund, Washington, D.C.

Sachs, J. 2003, 'Institutions don't rule: Direct effects of geography on per capita income', NBER Working Paper, No. w9490, February.

Sachs, J. 2007, 'Managing risks of a changing climate to support development', Report of the Asia Regional Workshop in Nepal, UNDP, New York.

Shahbaz, B. et al. 2006, 'Participatory forest management', in *Troubled Times, Sustainable Development and Governance in the Age of Extremes*, Uzma Haroon and Sarah Siddiq (eds.), Sustainable Development Policy Institute and SAMA Books, Pakistan.

Siegmann, K. et al. (Oct. 2006), 'Pakistan's water challenges: a human development perspective', Working Paper Series 105, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan.

Steinbauer, M. J, Zeidler J. 2008, 'Climate change in the Northern Areas Pakistan Impacts on glaciers, ecology and livelihoods', Internal Report Version 1.2, World Wildlife Fund, Pakistan.

Stern, N. et al. 2007, 'The economics of climate change: The Stern review', Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Suleri, A.Q. 2002, 'Regional study on forest policy and institutional reform, Final Report of the Pakistan Case Study, Asian Development Bank, Manila.

Task Force on Climate Change. 2003, 'Livelihoods and climate change: Combating disaster risk reduction, natural resource management and climate change adaptation in a new approach to the reduction of vulnerability and poverty', Manitoba, Canada.

UNDP. 2007, 'Human Development Report 2007-08 – Flight Climate Change', New York: United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

UNFCCC 2007 'Climate change: Impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation in developing countries', United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat, Bonn, Germany.

UNFCCC Jan.2010, 'Report of the Conference of the Parties on its fifteenth session', Copenhagen, 7-19 December 2009, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Yusuf, M. May 2008, 'Forest management in Pakistan: A legal and institutional analysis', Working Paper Series 108, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan.

Wescoat Jr., James L. 1991, 'Managing the Indus River basin in light of climate change: Four conceptual approaches', *Global Environmental Change*, vol. 1, no. 5, December, pp. 381-395.

World Bank 2006, 'Pakistan strategic country environmental assessment', (2 vols.), South Asia Environment and Social Development Unit, Washington, D.C.

World Bank 2009, 'South Asia climate change strategy', The World Bank, Washington, D.C.

Worstall, T. 2007, 'Indian wheat yields', *The Broadsheet*, Sept. 17, Viewed Sept. 2007, <[www.timworstall.com](http://www.timworstall.com)>

WWF 2008, 'Detailed ecological assessment of fauna including limnology studies at Keti Bunder', Indus for All Programme, World Wildlife Fund, Pakistan.

ZELF 2008, 'The Shigar microcosm: Socio-economic investigations in a Karakoram oasis, Northern Areas of Pakistan', Centre for Development Studies, Freie Universitaet Berlin, Berlin.

## **Bibliography**

Adger, W.N. Hughes, P.T. Folke, C. Carpenter, R. S. and Rockström, J. 2005, 'Social-ecological resilience to coastal disasters', *Science*, 12 August 2005, vol. 309. no. 5737, pp. 1036 – 1039.

Ahmad, S.N. et al. Sept. 2008, 'State of livelihood assets in the earthquake affected areas: a way forward', Working Paper Series 109, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan.

Blaikie, Piers, et al. Feb. 2005, 'The Indian Ocean tsunami: Reducing risk and vulnerability to future natural disasters and loss of ecosystem services', The World Conservation Union (IUCN).

Dasgupta, C. 2007, 'Climate-change challenge for the poor – Part I', Yale Global Online, A Publication of Yale Centre for the Study of Globalisation, Sept.27, viewed in Jan. 2008, <<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/climate-change-challenge-poor-%E2%80%93-part-i>>

Jilani, R. Haq, M. and Naseer, A. 2007, 'A study of glaciers in Northern Pakistan', Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), Pakistan.

Munir, S. 2008, 'Satellite-based study of glaciers retreat in Northern Pakistan', Pakistan Space Agency, 37<sup>th</sup> COSPAR Scientific Assembly, 13-20 July 2008, Montréal, Canada, p.2135.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author wishes to thank Mr. Asif Bilal Lodhi, Commissioner, Baltistan, for his generous hospitality and support during the field visits. The author would also like to thank his wife Sarah for her love and advice. The study would not have been possible without the financial support of the South Asia Network of Economic Research Institutes (SANEI).

## Section VI

### ICTs and Women Empowerment

The Gender digital divide in rural Pakistan: How wide is it and how to bridge it?

ICTs for women empowerment: Learning from best practices



# The Gender Digital Divide in Rural Pakistan: How Wide is it and How to Bridge it?

*Karin Astrid Siegmann\**

## **Abstract**

While Pakistan's National Information Technology (IT) Policy aims at harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development, especially in the underserved rural areas, it ignores the role of existing gender inequalities on the possible benefits of ICTs. We have investigated aspects of the 'gender digital divide' in rural areas of Pakistan in order to enable an evidence-based gender-sensitive revision of the policy as well as ICT-related interventions from which both females and males gain. The study took place in four of the most marginalised rural districts of the country where this divide is likely to be most pronounced. We found mobile phones to be the ICT that is most commonly available in rural Pakistan. Radios and TV sets are the second most widespread technologies in marginalised rural areas. However, mobile sets at hand are largely owned by women's husbands, fathers and brothers, whose permission to make calls is required by a large share of all female respondents. I, therefore, argue that availability and gendered use of ICTs are two different things altogether. Social norms related to women and girls' access to education as well as regulating their mobility prevent them from using ICTs. These norms have to be taken into account in policies and interventions to ensure women and girls' access to and beneficial use of ICTs.

---

\* Dr. Karin Astrid holds a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from the University of Bonn, Germany, and is working as a lecturer in Labour and Gender Economics at the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam (ISS), The Hague. During the past years, she has investigated gender dynamics of labour markets influenced by global restructuring. Before joining the ISS, she worked as a Research Fellow at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in Islamabad, where she is now part of the visiting faculty.

## Introduction

Travelling through the streets of Karachi, Lahore or Peshawar, one cannot fail to notice the significance that modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) have gained in the lives of Pakistani citizens. While mobile phones in all shapes and brands are now essential items carried by pedestrians, *rikshawaley* and automobilists, colourful billboards tower above the traveller, advertising the latest mobile phone gadget or wireless access to the internet.

The omnipresence of ICTs in Pakistan's urban spaces has been catalysed by the liberalisation of the ICT sector during the past decade. The establishment of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) in 2002 served to stimulate the growth of cable TV. A telecommunication Deregulation Policy was issued in the year after and a Mobile Cellular Policy in the year 2004. In order to facilitate the growth of internet connections, all internet service providers were allowed to provide broadband services in the same year. As a result, foreign direct investment (FDI) in ICT-related sectors increased significantly and peaked in fiscal year 2005-06 with a 54 percent share of total FDI inflows (Federal Bureau of Statistics 2007, p. 43), indicating the keen interest of international ICT providers to serve Pakistani customers.

Table 1: Indicators of ICT Penetration in Pakistan, 2007 (million)

Total teledensity <sup>a</sup>	45
TV sets	9
Households with TV sets (%) <sup>b</sup>	54
Households with radio sets (%)	31.7
Computers	2.4
Internet subscriptions	3.5

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Telephone lines per 100 inhabitants. Total teledensity includes fixed, wireless loop lines (WLLs) and mobile teledensities.

<sup>b</sup>Figure for 2004-05

Source: Federal Bureau of Statistics (2007)

This is reflected in the availability of ICTs in Pakistani households. Teledensity, i.e. telephone lines per 100 inhabitants, be it fixed PTCL, wireless loop lines (WLLs) or mobile phones, rose from 12 to 61 percent between 2005 and 2009 (Ministry of Finance 2009, p. 216) and internet subscriptions were 3.5 million in 2007 in comparison with 0.5 million in 2000. This

is assumed to imply that more than a tenth of the Pakistani population uses the internet, a far higher share than in other South Asian countries (Federal Bureau of Statistics 2007, pp. 54-6). The number of computers has increased ten-fold between 2003 and 2007 and in 2007, more than half of the country's households owned a TV set.

The question is whether these developments have touched the lives of women and men, girls and boys in rural areas as well. While the proclaimed objective of the Government of Pakistan's IT policy is to harness the potential of ICTs for development and focus on ICT education and provision of related infrastructure in rural areas (IT & Telecommunications Division 2000), in 2005, 80 percent of the ICT-related infrastructure was installed in urban areas (Yasin 2005, p. 10). Another significant, but largely invisible disparity is the gap in access to and use of ICTs between women and men, girls and boys in Pakistan - the 'gender digital divide'. The recently compiled Pakistan ICT Indicators do not provide information on ICT use disaggregated by sex (Federal Bureau of Statistics 2007) and neither does the scattered research on the role of ICTs for development in Pakistan cover gender dimensions (e.g. Gao and Rafiq 2009; Kalim and Lodhi 2002; Mujahid 2002; Perraton 2003; Shafique and Mahmood 2008; Silva and Zainudeen 2007). The only available study on gendered use of telephones in Pakistan finds a significant divide in access to these devices (Zainudeen et al. 2008). This contrasts with an international discourse on the benefits of ICTs for human development (e.g. World Summit on the Information Society 2003, 2005). More specifically, international case studies and policy statements have pointed out the wide range of applications of ICTs for gender equality and women's empowerment (e.g. Gurumurthy 2004; Hafkin and Taggart 2001; Huyer and Mitter 2003; Shaheen forthcoming 2010; UN 2005). In order to enable an evidence-based formulation of gender-sensitive policy and interventions, I have investigated aspects of the 'gender digital divide' in rural areas of Pakistan, where the current gap is likely to be most pronounced. The objective of this paper is, therefore, to investigate the gender digital divide in rural Pakistan.

Despite repeated policy commitments to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment<sup>1</sup>, the actual gender disparities in Pakistan are wide in regional and international

---

<sup>1</sup> Pakistan has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Specific policies to promote gender equality have been articulated in the National Plan for Development and Empowerment of Women (2002), the National Plan of Action (1998) and the Government's Poverty Reduction

comparison. Only a third of females have access to formal education as compared to half of their male counterparts. The situation in rural areas is particularly grave where the female literacy rate is only 26 percent compared to 47 percent for males. Labour force participation amongst women is only half that of men and most of them work as unpaid family helpers in agriculture (Federal Bureau of Statistics 2008). The remaining gainfully employed women workers earn only one-third of the average male income (Federal Bureau of Statistics 2009). Socio-cultural norms that constrain female mobility in order to protect the family's honour limit women and girls' access to public facilities, such as for educational and health purposes as well as business opportunities (Mumtaz 2007, pp. 149-50). The limited interaction with the wider society, compounded by poor educational levels especially in rural areas, is an obstacle in access to information related to health and hygiene as well as regarding business opportunities. Resultantly, Pakistan's Gender Development Index is the lowest in the South Asian region and amongst the bottom thirty in international ranking (UNDP 2009, p. 183).

The specific questions this paper, therefore, addresses include the kind of ICTs being accessed by men and women and which ICTs are being accessed and utilised by them in rural areas of the country and, if they are, for which purposes. It also explores how the effects of this use are being perceived. As indicated above, these questions are embedded in the broader concern for gender equality in access to resources in deprived rural areas and the role – enabling the reduction of (or) aggravating existing disparities - modern technology may play therein. Amongst others, I hope to provide a useful input for Pakistan's National IT Policy, which is currently under revision.

The paper is structured as follows. The next section introduces the research methodology and main characteristics of the survey respondents. While section 3 describes the gender gaps in access to and use of ICTs that we identified, section 4 details the main purposes of women and men's use of ICTs and the perceived impact thereof. In section 5, I summarise these findings and draw conclusions for ICT-related policies and interventions.

---

Strategy papers (PRSP) (Finance Division 2009, 2003; World Bank 2005, p. iii). The PRSP is aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and identifies gender equality in educational opportunity as an explicit goal.

## Methodology and Survey Sample

### *Measuring the gap*

The present study considered both 'old' ICTs, such as broadcasting equipment, and 'new' ICTs, like mobile phones and computers. The devices covered were fixed telephone lines, wireless loop (WL) and mobile phones in the area of telecommunication, radio and both ordinary and cable/satellite TV for broadcasting as well as computer equipment such as computers and internet. In order to answer questions about i) which of these ICTs are accessible for and used by women and men ii) for which purposes ICTs are utilised and iii) how the effects of ICT use are perceived by men and women, a mixed methods study was conducted in rural areas of all four provinces of Pakistan. The distinction made below between ownership, access and use serves the purpose to take into account the gendered use of ICTs.

Two villages each were selected in the districts of Batagram (former North-West Frontier Province, NWFP<sup>2</sup>), Bolan (Balochistan), Muzzafargarh (Punjab) and Tharparkar (Sindh). The districts were chosen according to extreme case sampling, i.e. the selection of unusual or special cases (Patton 1990, pp. 169-71). The sampling strategy was motivated by the assumption that such extreme cases may be especially enlightening, in particular in the context of directly policy-relevant research. In the present context, it was assumed that the selection of rural districts characterised by a greater degree of deprivation in terms of income, education and health may provide a more robust base for policy recommendations intended to narrow the gender digital divide.

From each province, therefore, a district was chosen which ranked lowest on the district-wise Human Development Index (Hussain et al. 2003, pp. 134-7) and where the security situation was sufficiently stable to conduct research. In order to allow us to gauge the impact of liberalisation in the ICT sector beyond the individual level, the selection of villages within each district was guided by the search for two places that were roughly comparable in socio-economic indicators such as location, size and demographic structure, but with only one of them covered by mobile phone network(s).

---

<sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup> Editor's Note: NWFP was renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in April 2010. For the sake of formality, NWFP is used in the anthology.

In each village, a questionnaire-based survey<sup>3</sup> with female and male participants was combined with focus group discussions (FGDs) with groups of six to 12 adult women and girls. The focus on female FGD participants was motivated by the need to give a voice to stakeholders whose situation and interests are poorly represented in related policy discourses in Pakistan. This advantage of FGDs has been emphasized by feminist scholars in particular (e.g. Madriz 2000). Amongst others, such between-methods triangulation may increase researchers' confidence in their results and lead to richer data. It may also enable the researcher to uncover contradictions (Jick 1979, in Johnson et al. 2007, p. 115). Triangulation was not conducted at the level of cases, but at that of patterns (Flick 2004, pp. 181-2), i.e. FGD participants were not systematically selected as a sub-sample of the questionnaire respondents. Questionnaire respondents were selected by random sampling. While the questionnaire focussed on questions regarding access to, use and perceived effects of ICTs as well as possible determinants thereof, it also included indicators of gender (in-) equality and gender norms in the local setting. The FGDs, in addition, looked into benefits and disadvantages of ICTs perceived by the participants, their assumptions about factors influencing women's and girls' access to and use of ICTs as well as into their suggestions for change towards narrowing the gender digital divide. The fieldwork resulted in 535 structured interviews with adult women and men and 32 FGDs, half of which with adult women and half of them with underaged girls, i.e. female youth below the age of 18 years.<sup>4</sup> The present paper is largely based on the exploratory analysis of the quantitative data.

#### *The survey respondents and their households*

More than half of the survey respondents fell into the range above 20 and below 40 years of age. Women were slightly older, with one-third of them belonging to the age bracket between 30-39 years in comparison with one fifth of men. Most respondents were married (82 percent), again, with an even larger share of female respondents being married than men. Almost half of them did not follow any formal education. A small minority of both female and male respondents (around two percent) mentioned their participation in religious education as a type of non-formal education. Not unexpectedly, given the gender-based disparities outlined above, the situation for women was far worse than for male respondents. Whereas almost two-

---

<sup>3</sup> In the following, 'survey' refers to the questionnaire-based structured interviews.

<sup>4</sup> In exceptional cases, young women of 21 years took part in the girls' FGDs.

thirds of women did not access any formal schooling, the share was one-third for men. Gender gaps in education widened with age. The share of male respondents who completed matriculation was more than three times the share of their female counterparts. Whereas, the overall levels of schooling for women and men were lowest in Bolan district (92 percent no formal schooling amongst females and 55 percent amongst males), the gender gap in education was highest in Batagram (68 percent no formal schooling amongst females versus 17 percent amongst males). Resultantly, it is not surprising that Urdu, the national language, is spoken by a sixth of women only. A similar share of male respondents indicated knowledge of English, which commonly included the ability to read the country's official language. Hardly any women in the sample, in contrast, knew English.

On average, households consisted of seven members, with slightly larger households in Muzaffargarh district and smaller ones in Bolan. Their livelihoods were largely based on agriculture with the main income sources being wages and (probably to a lesser degree) salaries<sup>5</sup>, crop and livestock production. More than two-thirds of all respondents' households accessed these three sources. The fact that only a thin majority of the respondent households owned land, points to the significance of landlessness in the rural setting. Resultantly, less than half of all households as a whole generated a monthly cash income that had been stipulated as the 2008 minimum wage per month for an individual worker, namely Rs. 6,000<sup>6</sup> per month. Average cash incomes were highest in Batagram (Rs. 9,199) and lowest in Bolan and Muzaffargarh (Rs. 7,216 and Rs. 7,252) with greater income inequality in Muzaffargarh.

Electrification is a necessary prerequisite for the use of ICTs: Almost half of the respondents' households were electrified. There was wide variation across districts, though. While the selected districts in Balochistan and Southern Punjab reflected the average, almost all respondents in Batagram district had access to electricity at home, but none of the respondents' houses in Tharparkar were electrified. Respondents' households with access to the electric grid faced extremely irregular supply, though. Half of them experienced electrical power outages of seven (Bolan), 15 (Batagram) and up to 18 (Muzaffargarh) hours during the hot summer months. These power cuts were slightly shorter in winters, but nonetheless significant. Less than two percent of those respondents' households protected themselves

---

<sup>5</sup> The related survey question did not distinguish between wages and salaries.

<sup>6</sup> In 2008, on average, one Euro equaled Rs. 107.77.

against this volatility with a generator, whereas 23 percent of them had a stabiliser. These facilities were most common in Batagram district and – besides the Tharparkar households without grid access – not available in Bolan.

### *Women's status*

Besides the gender gaps in education outlined above, the study areas were characterised by large gender disparities in health status. A vast majority of three-fourths of female respondents reported to have experienced illness or injury during the six months prior to the survey in comparison with only a quarter of males.<sup>7</sup>

As mentioned earlier, women's mobility in Pakistan is subject to severe constraints. In the survey, this is reflected by the fact that only 13 percent of female respondents were allowed to visit a health care provider in their village without company. Outside their village, this share shrunk to six percent. These restrictions especially for movement within the village are most severe in the age bracket between 20 and below 40 years. For those who required company, this chiefly concerned male household members. In more than two-thirds of all cases this was the husband, followed by the son in 13 percent of all cases whose company is required for movement (outside the village: husband 73 percent, son 12 percent).

Sadly, the study results indicate that women have internalised their marginalised position in society. This can be illustrated by the fact that while most respondents agreed to the statement that men have a natural advantage in the use of technologies, this share amongst women is even higher than amongst men.

---

<sup>7</sup> The social construction of gender identities should be kept in mind in the interpretation of these figures. They may have a bearing on the articulation of illness or injury.

## Gender gaps in access to and use of ICTs

### *Accessing ICTs*

Reflecting their omnipresence in the streets of urban Pakistan, also in the most marginalised rural areas of the country, mobile phones are the most common ICT (Figure 1). In almost half of all surveyed households at least one mobile phone set is available, mirroring the phenomenal growth of mobile connections in the country during the past decade. These sets are more relevant in villages with mobile phone coverage. In villages with network coverage, the share of households holding mobile phones rises to 59 percent. However, mobile phones may also be useful in areas without network coverage. They might be utilised outside the village, in areas where network signals can be received. In those locations, still little less than a third of all households own mobile phones.

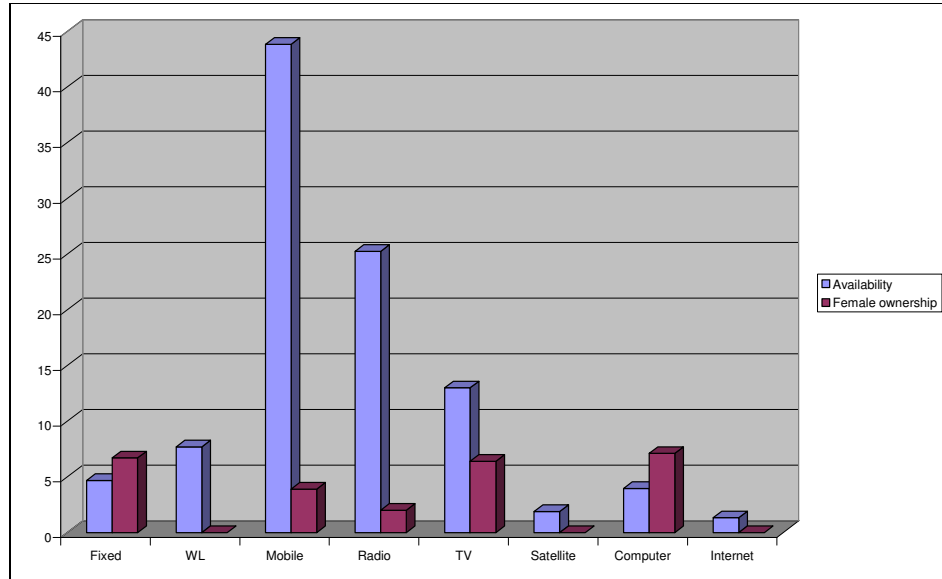
Radios and TV sets are the second most widespread technologies, available in a quarter of and 13 percent of the surveyed rural households, respectively. Similar to mobile phones, Batagram district has by far the highest share of households equipped with radios (32 percent), followed by Bolan and Tharparkar (27 percent). Muzzafargarh is lagging behind with mere 15 percent of all households. Computers and internet are available in an insignificant proportion of the households.

As pooling and sharing of resources is common and necessary in households in rural Pakistan, the distinction between ICT availability, ownership and use serves the purpose to investigate the shared use of ICTs. Figure 1 also indicates that, even where they are available in their immediate environment, women rarely own ICTs. Husbands, fathers and brothers in the households, for instance, largely possess the mobile phone sets at hand.<sup>8</sup> This indicates that rather than network coverage and the presence of mobile phones alone, socio-cultural factors also determine whether ICTs can be accessed by female users in rural areas.

---

<sup>8</sup> 'Ownership' is self-defined by the questionnaire respondents. At the minimum, it refers to the authority to grant physical and social access to the ICT.

Figure 1: ICT Availability and Ownership in Marginalised Areas of Rural Pakistan, 2007 (%)



Note: The percentages for female ownership refer to those households only in which the respective ICT is available.

### *Using ICTs*

While fixed telephone lines are relatively rare in the selected rural districts (Figure 1), if available in a household, they are the type of ICT that is used most by women. All women with a PTCL connection in their home also reported using it. This is not always the case for male respondents, possibly due to their easier access to alternatives for telecommunication, especially mobile phones. Men use the mobile phones available in their households with a greater likelihood than women (91 versus 70 percent). This gap is especially wide in Tharparkar district where 71 percent of men, but only a fifth of female respondents in households with a mobile phone actually use the device. In a majority of cases no permission is required for the use of telecommunication tools, but wide differences by gender and depending on the type of ICT can be observed: Men rarely need someone else's authorisation, while more than 40 percent of all female respondents with a mobile phone in their household require the permission of the male owners to make calls. This compares with 22 percent of female fixed line users. This may bar them effectively from using mobile phones as expressed in this statement of an FGD participant:

“If sometimes, someone who has it [a mobile phone] and is a close relative, we ask them for a call, they say there is no need.” (FGD Women 2, Gaaman)

Besides, mobile phones’ availability in households without network coverage is unlikely to benefit women much, given the constraints they face for movement outside the village.

It is plausible that the gender gap in use of mobile phones is related to the fact that more men are owners of sets’ as compared to women, which means it is not as binding or a necessity for them to ask other household members for permission for use. In addition, women who participated in FGDs explain these gender differences through reference to social norms, amongst others. Mobile phones, for instance, are regarded as dangerous in girls’ hands, in particular. Mothers fear that their daughters will use mobiles to set dates to meet boys and therefore disgrace their families.

“Let me explain why people don’t like to give mobiles to young girls. In our area, the girls who were using mobiles, they started talking to boys through mobiles. They fixed a time to meet with the boys and ran away from home, and in our area, it’s very bad if someone leaves the home and parents for a boy and people of our area prefer to kill the girl if she runs away with a boy.” (FGD Women 1, Batagram)

The role of boys in such socially unacceptable use of telecommunication technology is largely ignored – at least no comparable constraints to keep them from making mobile phone calls were mentioned.

The lack of ‘mobile literacy’ is an additional obstacle for women’s use of mobile phones. One respondent from Muzzafargarh district mentioned that:

“ Women don’t even know how to dial a number.” (FGD Women 2, Gaaman)

The lack of access to formal education for more than two-thirds of adult women in the research locations translates into difficulties in using mobile phones for which basic numeracy is required.

Listening to the radio available in the household is more common amongst men, while watching TV is more attractive for female users, both regarding the likelihood of use and its

duration. Whereas most men listen to the radio available in their households for up to seven hours per week (average 14 hours), women use audio equipment far less (mean eight, median four hours). In contrast, women watch TV for a slightly longer weekly period as compared to men (mean/median female respondents 14 hours versus 14/9 hours male respondents). The reasons for these differences may be related to contents and/or the language in which the programmes are offered. Mostly, no permission is required for the use of these broadcasting devices: No male respondent needs somebody else's consent to listen to the radio or watch TV. For female users, authorisation is required in 16 percent (by the husband) and six percent of all cases, especially in Bolan district. In short, the 'old' ICTs of radio and TV combine advantages of physical availability in a relatively large share of households and comparatively easy access in terms of permission for use and understanding of contents for female users. The greater popularity of TV amongst women may be related to the fact that the TV has the advantage of partially overcoming language barriers through visualisation.

Yet, similar to the perceived risks involved in girls' use of mobile phones, TV has a bad image amongst women:

“TV is supporting a very negative environment. Some TV channels are promoting vulgarity.” (FGD Women 2, Batagram)

It is interesting to note that participants in the FGDs in Batagram expressed the strongest reservations against ICT use by women and girls for socio-cultural reasons, while at the same time, they were most available and utilised in this district.

The widest gender gaps in ICT utilisation exist in the area of computer equipment available at respondents' homes: Whereas 80 percent of males with a computer present in their household and all men who have internet access at home actually use these devices, this is the case only for 40 and 20 percent of all related female respondents. However, as indicated above, in the poor rural areas in which this study took place, these facilities are very rare to non-existent, anyway. For internet use, no authorisation is required for either female or male respondents. However, a little less than a third of all female users need permission to be able to utilise their household's computer. This exclusively concerns female respondents in Batagram.

In sum, this implies that while computer equipment is hardly available in marginalised areas of rural Pakistan, the few devices available at home are also of little relevance for female users.

Table 2: ICT Use Outside the House in Marginalised Areas of Rural Pakistan by Respondent's Sex and ICT Device, 2007 (%)

	Fixed line	WL	Mobile	Radio	TV	Computer	Internet
Female	2.96	17.78	13.70	4.81	4.81	0.00	0.00
Male	2.64	20.00	27.17	1.89	6.42	1.51	1.13

As indicated in the discussion of mobile phone use, ICTs may be used outside the household, for instance, at relatives' or neighbours' homes or in communal places, such as public call offices (PCOs), internet cafes or computer centres. The Government of Pakistan assumes that such public provision of ICTs may help to bridge the digital divide caused by prohibitively high costs of equipment (Federal Bureau of Statistics 2007, p. 5). The survey results show that, to date, this is uncommon, though. Two-thirds of all respondents do not utilise ICTs outside their own household. ICT use outside the home is most widespread in Tharparkar with three-quarters of all respondents answering positively and least common in Muzzafargarh district, with less than a tenth. Once again, gender differences are significant here: Only 28 percent of all female respondents utilise ICTs away from home, compared to 43 percent of all men. The statement of a girl from Southern Punjab illustrates this:

“Women never go to a PCO. Only my brothers sometimes go and speak to other brothers. We women can never speak to them, only men can contact.”

(FGD Girls 1, Gaaman)

As hypothesised above, it is likely that part of this gap can be related to the constraints imposed on women and girls' movements outside the home. Not surprisingly, the ICTs used outside the home chiefly involve tools for telecommunication, such as WL phones and mobile phones. A far larger relative share of male respondents makes calls on mobile phones outside their household (27 percent as compared to 14 percent of female respondents).

## Purposes and Perceived Impact of ICT Use

### *Purposes of ICT use*

For both women and men, the main purpose of using different types of telecommunication tools, be it fixed telephone lines, WL or mobile phones, is networking with family and friends. This holds true in about 90 percent of all cases and reflects findings from earlier studies (Silva and Zainudeen 2007, p. 9). Telecommunication for business or professional use has a far lower relevance in general and that mainly for male users. Around a tenth of them stated using fixed phone lines, WL or mobile phones for this purpose. While professional use also is the second most important reason for female users of telecommunication devices, it is relevant for users of mobile phones only (six percent of female respondents using mobile phones).

Broadcasting equipment, in contrast, is utilised chiefly for information access and entertainment. The purposes for use of radio and TV differ significantly, though. Whereas 41 percent of radio users wish to access information and 28 percent of them listen to it for leisure, the latter is the case for more than half of all those watching TV. These reasons also differ by gender. Access to information through the radio motivates about a third of female users in comparison with almost half of all men. Use of broadcasting tools for relaxation, on the other hand, is far more important for women than men. Almost 40 percent of all male respondents' answers refer to uses of TV for leisure, while this share rises to three-quarters for women.

Educational purposes are most important in the use of computer equipment. About half of all computer users report education and skill enhancement to be their primary objectives and a little more than a tenth wish to access information through their use of computers. The internet is seen as both a source of information and of relaxation: While two-thirds of its users mention access to information as their primary motive, the remaining third browse the internet for relaxation. This reflects mainly the views of male respondents as the few female users did not respond to this question.

### *Perceived impact of ICT use*

With only slight gender differences, most ICT users perceive changes in their situation resulting from utilisation, especially WL and mobile phones seen as bringing about change.

The impact of ICT use perceived by women and men in the research locations commonly reflects its purpose. Whereas men, for instance, stress access to information and benefits for their work through the use of telecommunication devices, women appreciate easier communication with their family members.

“When I miss my parents, I just call them and talk to them and feel happy.”

(FGD Girls 1, Batagram)

The quote above illustrates that the opportunities offered by modern telecommunication tools are particularly important in the patri-local setting of Pakistan where women and girls commonly move to their husband’s family after marriage.

Not surprisingly, the perceived impact of watching TV or listening to the radio mainly relates to information access and entertainment. Despite the negative image that TV has in rural NWFP in particular, this woman, for example, who participated in a FGD in Batagram, appreciated political information through TV:

“... By watching news, I got information how bad the situation in our country has been for the, I think, past two years, but now the situation is getting worse.

You can ask where I got all this from, only from the TV.” (FGD Women 2, Batagram)

Female respondents also mention educational effects, such as learning about child health or cooking, and appreciate radio programmes in local languages.

## Summary and Conclusions

### *Key findings*

The overview of study results on the gender digital divide in rural Pakistan highlights that availability and gendered use of ICTs are two different things altogether. While mobile phones are the ICT that is prevalent in almost half of all households even in the most marginalised districts in the country, this does not imply that they are easily accessible to and used by women and girls. Even high mobile phone penetration is insufficient to enable women and girls to telecommunicate because permission is often required for making phone calls, the necessary mobility to receive network signals is restricted for women and the use of mobile

phones as well as of other ICTs by women and girls carries a negative stigma. Besides, the wide gender disparity in access to education forms an obstacle is using ICTs more generally. The negative perceptions women and girls have of their technological skills heighten these hurdles.

While, so far, computers and internet access have hardly reached poor rural areas, if available in the household, the gender gap in use of ICTs is widest in case of such computer equipment. The 'old' ICTs of radio and TV, on the other hand, combine the advantages of physical availability and comparatively easy access for females. Accessibility has a strong socio-cultural side to it. In case of broadcasting equipment, it implies, amongst others, that permission for use is largely not required and that contents are understandable and attractive.

### *Closing the gender gap<sup>9</sup>*

These findings need to be kept in mind for the ongoing revision of the National IT Policy as well as for public and private stakeholders' interventions for women's empowerment through ICTs more generally. The current IT policy focuses on broad penetration with ICT-related infrastructure as the main path to make the potential of ICTs available for the development of rural Pakistan (IT & Telecommunications Division 2000). While encouraging special efforts to train and induct women in the ICT sector, it does not refer to gender differences in access to and use of ICTs. The policy, therefore, implicitly assumes gender-neutral technologies. In a similar spirit, the ICT Indicators compiled by the Government of Pakistan's Statistics Division equate penetration of specific ICTs with accessibility to the population (Federal Bureau of Statistics 2007, p. 11) and relate a digital divide to dissimilar access to high performing technology, both in terms of the availability of technologies and their costs (Ibid. p. 5).

The present results contradict these assumptions. While the gender digital divide is wide in marginalised areas of rural Pakistan, the findings reported above highlight that policies and interventions aiming to use ICTs for human development need to go beyond the provision of technological hardware. Social norms have been identified as crucial factors determining women and girls' access to and use of ICTs. They need to be addressed if universal access to

---

<sup>9</sup> This sub-section is partially based on Siegmann (2009).

ICTs including rural areas of the country is the Government of Pakistan's objective. Control over technology in the form of ownership, mobility restrictions and other cultural constraints for females, such as their difficulties in accessing schooling, have to be taken into consideration in ICTs for development.

Based on the results presented above, broadcasting equipment apparently scores well in these areas. Research across Asia (e.g. ISIS International 2007) and practitioners' experience<sup>10</sup> have shown how, for instance, radio programmes can give a voice to women's concerns and can feature women as producers of media content in a male-dominated domain. Therefore, public and private organisations with the aim of promoting women's empowerment should not neglect 'old' ICTs such as radio and TV in their efforts to harness the potential of ICTs for greater gender equality. If public media bodies, such as the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation or Pakistan Television, or private electronic media join hands with non-governmental organisations, media tools with a powerful reach to women and girls in rural areas can be developed. Existing localised programmes should be extended to cover more languages and contents of special interest to women.

A lot of attention of public bodies and private actors in Pakistan is being paid to the provision of computers and internet access to rural areas. Yet, these 'new' ICTs, so far, hardly have any relevance for female users. This is largely due to the multiple hurdles they face in accessing them outlined above. If this situation is to be redressed and the promotion of wide-spread use of ICTs is a policy objective as expressed in the current National IT Policy and the MDGs, then especially these socio-cultural norms as crucial factors determining women and girls' access to and beneficial use of ICTs have to be taken into account. This means, for example, that projects initiated with support of the Universal Services Fund (USF), which was established by the Government to support the development of telecommunication services in un-served and under-served areas throughout the country, need to consider the social perception of spaces utilised for telecentres. The experience of Dareecha, a project of the National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Lahore, for ICT literacy for rural school students shows that, for instance, girls' schools are considered decent and safe places for girls' learning and practising on computer equipment, while the present study indicates that PCOs are perceived as no-go-areas for many rural women.

---

<sup>10</sup> See, for instance, the experience of UKS Foundation, Islamabad at <<http://www.ukresearch.com>>

Besides, initiatives need to be taken at the policy level. The implicit assumption of the current IT policy is that the provision of related infrastructure and technical training are the main steps necessary to harness ICTs' potential for human development. The research findings outlined here indicate that this is not sufficient, especially if the goal is to reach out to the female population in rural areas. The establishment of a gender working group in the IT Ministry can ensure that these socio-cultural concerns are being taken into account. The discourse on development benefits of ICTs in Pakistan is currently dominated by an engineering perspective. Progress in bridging the gender digital divide in Pakistan should be monitored with the support of gender-disaggregated IT indicators to be compiled by the Federal Bureau of Statistics, focusing on access and use, rather than technical infrastructure alone.

It may be useful to close on the cautious note that ICTs alone are not a silver bullet for development. Major challenges, such as the livelihood insecurity pervasive in rural Pakistan, the lack of physical infrastructure and facilities for education and health care, have to be addressed first, before ICTs can prove beneficial for human development in rural Pakistan in general and for greater gender equality in particular. The quote below illustrates this in an insistent manner:

“My daughter, we are very poor people and we do not have such kind of things. We are worried about flour, not about phones. We bring flour from Mithi. There is no comfort in our lives. [...] It would be useless to have mobile phones without other facilities.” (FGD Women 1, Malahnor Vena)

### **Acknowledgements**

This research has been made possible by funding of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Excellent project coordination and research assistance provided by Nazima Shaheen, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, is gratefully acknowledged. The empirical research has been coordinated by Talimand Khan, SDPI and his team. I have benefited tremendously from the discussion of the study results with participants of various dissemination events in August and December 2009 as well as from the thoughtful suggestions of an anonymous reviewer. All remaining errors are solely my own.

## References

Federal Bureau of Statistics 2009, 'Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2007-08', Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

Federal Bureau of Statistics 2008, 'Labour force survey 2007-08', Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

Federal Bureau of Statistics 2007, 'Pakistan ICT indicators', Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

Finance Division 2009, 'Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) – II', Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

Flick, U. 2004, 'Triangulation in qualitative research', in U. Flick, et al. (eds), *A companion to qualitative research*, pp. 178-183, Sage, London, UK.

Gao, P. and Rafiq, A. 2009, 'The transformation of the mobile telecommunications industry in Pakistan: A developing country perspective', *Telecommunications Policy*, vol.33, no.5-6, pp. 309-23.

Gurumurthy, A. 2004, 'Gender and ICTs: Overview report', Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, UK.

Hafkin, N. and Taggart, N. 2001, 'Gender, information technology, and developing countries: An analytic study', United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Washington D.C., USA.

Hussain, A. Kemal, A.R. Hamid, A.I. Ali, Imran, Mumtaz, K. and Qutub, A. 2003, 'Pakistan National Human Development Report 2003 - Poverty, growth and governance', United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Karachi.

Huyer, S. Mitter, S. 2003, 'ICTs, globalisation and poverty reduction: Gender dimensions of the knowledge society', Gender Advisory Board, UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD).

IT & Telecommunications Division 2000, 'IT Policy and Action Plan', Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

Isis International 2007, 'People's communications for development', Isis International, Manila, Philippines.

Johnson, R.B. Onwuegbuzie, A.J. and Turner, L.A. 2007, 'Toward a definition of mixed methods research', *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, vol.1, no.2, pp. 112-33.

Kalim, R. and Lodhi, S.A. 2002, 'The knowledge-based economy: Trends and implications for Pakistan', *The Pakistan Development Review*, vol. 41, no.4, pp. 787-804.

Madriz, E. 2000, 'Focus groups in feminist research', in N.K. Denzin et al. (eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research*, pp. 835-850, Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Ministry of Finance 2009, 'Pakistan Economic Survey 2008-2009', Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

Mujahid, Y.H. 2002, 'Digital opportunity initiative for Pakistan', *The Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries*, vol.8, no.6, pp. 1-14.

Mumtaz, K. 2007, 'Gender and poverty in Pakistan', *Development*, vol.50, no.2, pp. 149-53.

Patton, M.Q. 1990, *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*, Sage, Beverly Hills, CA.

Perraton, H. 2003, 'Pakistan - ICT use in education', in G. Farrell et al. (eds.), *Meta-survey on the use of technologies in education in Asia and the Pacific 2003-2004*, UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, Bangkok.

Shafique, F. and Mahmood, K. 2008, 'Indicators of the emerging information society in Pakistan', *Information Development*, vol. 24, no.1, pp. 66-78.

Shaheen, N. (forthcoming), 'ICTs for women empowerment: Learning from best practices.'

Siegmann, K.A. 2009, 'The great digital divide', *Dawn*, 21 September 2009, Pakistan.

Silva, H.D. and Zainudeen, Z.A. 2007, 'Teleuse on a shoestring: Poverty reduction through telecom access at the 'Bottom of the Pyramid', paper presented at the conference '*Annual Symposium on Poverty Research in Sri Lanka*'.

United Nations 2005, 'Gender equality and empowerment of women through ICT', United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, New York.

UNDP 2009, 'Human Development Report 2009 - Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development', UNDP, New York.

World Bank 2005, 'Pakistan country gender assessment - Bridging the gender gap: Opportunities and challenges', World Bank, Washington D.C.

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) 2003, 'Building the information society: A global challenge in the new millennium', International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Geneva.

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) 2005, 'Tunis Commitment', International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Tunis.

Yasin, M. 2005, 'Information and telecommunications technologies leading the way: Pakistan's response', Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan.

Zainudeen, Z.A. Iqbal, T. Samarajiva, R. and Ratnadiwakara, D. 2008, 'Who's got the phone? The gendered use of telephones at the bottom of the pyramid', LIRNEasia, Colombo.

**SDPI's Twelfth Sustainable Development Conference**

**FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH ASIA  
RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES**

21 –23 December 2009

Organised by the

**Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)  
Islamabad, Pakistan**

**CONFERENCE PROGRAMME**



Monday, 21 <sup>st</sup> December, 2009		Day One
<b>Opening Plenary</b>		<b>9:00 am – 11:00 am</b>
<p><b>Welcome Address and Introduction to the Conference</b>            Abid Qaiyum Suleri            Executive Director, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan</p> <p><b>Remarks by the Chief Guest</b>            Syed Naveed Qamar            Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources</p> <p><b>Introduction to the SDC Anthology and Book Launch</b>            Title of the Book: <i>Peace and Sustainable Development in South Asia: Issues and Challenges of Globalisation</i></p> <p><b>Keynote Speaker:</b> Saba Gul Khattak, Member Social Sector, Planning Commission of Pakistan, Islamabad, and, former Executive Director, SDPI</p> <p><b>Plenary Title:</b> Violence and Accountability</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>		
<b>Tea / Coffee</b>		<b>11:00 am – 11:30 am</b>

Monday, 21 <sup>st</sup> December, 2009		Day One
<b>Concurrent Panel A-1</b>		<b>11:30 am – 1:30 pm</b>
<p><b>South Asia in 2060</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Adil Najam, The Frederick S. Pardee Professor for Global Public Policy, Boston University, USA</p>		
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>	
Nihal Rodrigo, Former Sri Lankan Ambassador to China; and, Former Secretary General, SAARC, Colombo, Sri Lanka	The future of South Asian integration	

Dipak Gyawali, Director of the Nepal Water Conservation Foundation and Pragya of the Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, Kathmandu, Nepal	Trans-boundary water issues
A. K. Enamul Haque, Executive Director Economic Research Group and Professor and Head of Economics United International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh	South Asian economy
Ishrat Hussain, Former Governor, State Bank of Pakistan and Director, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan	South Asian economy
Amitabh Mattoo, Professor, Centre for International Politics, Organisation and Disarmament Jawaharlal Nehru University, India	Conflict in South Asia
Discussion	
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>1:30 pm – 2:30 pm</b>
<b>Concurrent Panel A-2</b>	<b>11:30 am – 1:30 pm</b>
<p><b>The Politics of Policy Research in Developing Countries</b>  <b>Chair and Discussant:</b> Afiya Zia, Independent Civic &amp; Social Organisation Professional, Karachi, Pakistan</p>	
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>
Saba Gul Khattak, Member Social Sector, Planning Commission of Pakistan; and, Visiting Research Fellow, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan	Research in difficult settings: Reflections on Pakistan
Lubna Chaudhry, Associate Professor, Binghamton University, State University of New York, USA	On the value of the "unruly": Researching Pakistani women differently
Nazish Brohi, Independent Researcher, Lahore, Pakistan	The reification of culture and neo-archaeology of the indigenous

Raza Ahmad, Development Practitioner and Researcher, Lahore, Pakistan	Discourse, donors and development: The conundrum of policy research in Pakistan
Discussion	
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>1:30 pm – 2:30 pm</b>

<b>Concurrent Panel A-3</b>	<b>11:30 am – 1:30 pm</b>
<p><b>Household Water Treatment Systems and Safe Water Storage for Sustainable Access to Safe Drinking Water in South Asia</b>  <b>Session I</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Muhammad Yasin, Adviser, Centre for Capacity Building, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan  <b>Discussant:</b> Engineer Mumtaz Hussain, Editor "The Environ Monitor", Lahore, Pakistan</p>	
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>
Mahmood A. Khwaja, Senior Adviser Chemicals & Sustainable Industrial Development and Visiting Fellow, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan	Household treatment systems and safe storage for sustainable access to safe drinking water in remote rural areas: Use of Nadi Water Filters – A case study
F. H. Mughal, Controller, Karachi Building Control Authority, Department of Local Government, Government of Sindh, Karachi, Pakistan	Assessing the sustainable access to safe drinking water in Sindh
Muhammad Luqman and Abdullah Yasar, Sustainable Development Study Centre, G.C. University, Lahore, Pakistan	Sustainable techniques for arsenic removal from drinking water in rural areas of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent
Discussion	

Monday, 21 <sup>st</sup> December, 2009		Day One
<b>Concurrent Panel A-4</b>		<b>2:30 pm – 4:30 pm</b>
<p><b>The Prospects of Normalisation of Kashmir</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Talat Masood, Retired General, Islamabad, Pakistan</p>		
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>	
Amitabh Mattoo, Professor, Centre for International Politics, Organisation and Disarmament Jawaharlal Nehru University, India	Resolving the Kashmir conflict	
Shah Ghulam Qadir, Speaker, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Assembly	The way forward on Kashmir	
Zulfiqar Abbasi, Former President Azad Jammu Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Trading our way to peace	
Paolo Cotta, Pugwash, Secretary General, Pugwash Conferences, USA	Normalising Kashmir: The importance of cross-LoC dialogue	
Discussion		
<b>Concurrent Panel A-5</b>		<b>2:30 pm – 4:30 pm</b>
<p><b>Global Financial Crisis: Response of South Asia</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, Regional Policy Coordinator, ActionAid,  Asia  <b>Discussant:</b> Shafqat Munir, ActionAid, Pakistan</p>		
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>	
Karin Astrid Siegmann, Lecturer, Labour and Gender Economics, Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague, Netherlands	The financial crisis in South Asia: From jobless growth to jobless slump?	
Sakuntala Narasimhan, Columnist and Author, Bangalore, India	Gender dimensions of global financial crisis: Case study of India	

Vaqar Ahmad, Macroeconomics Section, Planning Commission, Islamabad, Pakistan	Impact of the financial crisis on the socio-economy of Pakistan
Discussion	
<b>Concurrent Panel A-6</b>	<b>2:30 pm – 4:30 pm</b>
<p><b>Household Water Treatment Systems and Safe Water Storage for Sustainable Access to Safe Drinking Water in South Asia</b>  <b>Session II</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Manzoor H. Soomro, Chairman, Pakistan Science Foundation, Islamabad, Pakistan  <b>Discussant:</b> Mustafa Talpur, Adviser, WaterAid-South Asia, Islamabad, Pakistan</p>	
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>
Padmaja Shreshtha, Senior Programme Manager, Environment and Public Health Organisation (ENPHO), New Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal	'Partnership for Safe Water' initiative for the promotion of Household Water Treatment (HWT) options in Nepal
Linda Smith and Sushil Tuladhar, Filters for Families (FFF) 'Arsenic Mitigation and Research in Nepal' (Presented in absentia by Mahmood A. Khwaja, Visiting Research Fellow, SDPI, Islamabad)	SONO Filter: Household technology for arsenic reduction from ground water in Nepal
Discussion	

<b>Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2009</b>		<b>Day Two</b>
<b>Concurrent Panel B-1</b>	<b>9:00am – 11:00 am</b>	
<p><b>Women and ICTs in South Asia: Exclusion or Empowerment?</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Muhammad Ali, Director General (GE), Ministry of Women Development, Islamabad, Pakistan  <b>Discussant:</b> Marvi Memon, Pakistan Muslim League-Q, Islamabad, Pakistan</p>		

<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>
Karin Astrid Siegmann, Lecturer, Labour and Gender Economics, Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague, Netherlands	The gender digital divide in rural Pakistan: How wide is it and how to bridge it?
Nazima Shaheen, Project Coordinator, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan	ICTs for women empowerment: Learning from best practices
Anupama Saxena, Associate Professor and In-charge-Director of Women's Studies and Development Centre, Guru Ghasidas University, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, India	Exploring gender gaps in rural E- Governance in India: A case study of e-gram Suraj ( E-Rural Good Governance Scheme) scheme of Chhattisgarh state of India
Discussion	
<b>Tea</b>	<b>11.00am-11.30am</b>
<b>Concurrent Panel B-2</b>	<b>9:00am - 11:00 am</b>

<b>Alternative Textbooks for Social and Political Harmony</b>	
<b>Chair and Discussant:</b> Tariq Rehman, Director, Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan	
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>
Shahid Siddiqi, Professor & Director Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences Lahore School of Economics, Lahore, Pakistan	Diversity for harmony: A case for alternative textbooks
Sarfraz Khan, Director, Area Study Centre University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Pakistan	Role of alternative textbooks in promoting political and social harmony
Shahjahan Baloch, IDSP, Quetta, Pakistan	The importance of alternative textbooks for social and political harmony
Discussion	
<b>Tea</b>	<b>11.00am-11.30am</b>

<b>Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2009</b>		<b>Day Two</b>
<b>Concurrent Panel B-3</b>		<b>9:00am – 11:00 am</b>
<b>National Sustainable Development Strategy</b>		
<b>Chair:</b> Imtinan E. Qureshi, Executive Director, COMSATS, Islamabad, Pakistan		
<b>Discussants:</b> Abid Q. Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan; Aurangzeb Khan, Chief Environment, Planning Commission of Pakistan, Islamabad; Shoaib Aziz, ActionAid-Pakistan, Islamabad, Pakistan; and, Safdar Sohail, DG, Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development, Islamabad, Pakistan		
<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Title</b>	
Irfan Tariq, Ministry of Environment, Islamabad, Pakistan	National Sustainable Development Strategy	
Discussion		
<b>Tea</b>		<b>11:00 am – 11:30 am</b>
<b>Concurrent Panel B-4</b>		<b>11:30am – 1:30 pm</b>
<b>Pakistan's Military Offensive, the IDP Crisis, and Prospects for Taming Militancy</b>		
<b>Chair and Discussant:</b> Talimand Khan, Survey Coordinator, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan		
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>	
Ziauddin Yousafzai, Spokesperson, Loya Jirga (Grand Council), Swat, Pakistan	Swat's IDP challenge from a civil society perspective	
Shaukat Sharar, Shaukat Associates, Architect and Surveyors and Development Specialist, Swat, Pakistan	Reconstruction and rehabilitation in Swat	
Noor Saleem, Lecturer, Islamabad Model College, Ministry of Education, Islamabad, Pakistan	Waziristan's IDP challenge	
Omar Hayat, Chief of Staff, Special Support Group	Government's strategy to cope with the IDP challenge and lessons learnt	
Shakeel Qadar, Director General, PARSA, Peshawar, Pakistan	IDPs coping strategy in South Waziristan and Swat	
Discussion		
<b>Lunch</b>		<b>1:30 pm – 2:30 pm</b>

Tuesday, 22 <sup>nd</sup> December, 2009		Day Two
<b>Concurrent Panel B-5</b>		<b>11:30am – 1:30 pm</b>
<p><b>TEEB Plenary Session:</b>  <b>The Economics of Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Pushpam Kumar, Scientific Coordinator, TEEB, University of Liverpool, England  (Introduction and its relevance for South Asia)</p>		
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>	
Madhu Verma, Professor, Faculty of Environment & Developmental Economics, Indian Institute of Forest Management, Nehru Nagar, Bhopal, India	Emerging messages for national planners	
Rehana Siddiqui, Chief of Research, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Quaid-e-University, Islamabad, Pakistan	Valuation of natural / environmental capital for policy makers	
John Gowdy, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York, USA; and, President, International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE)	Discounting in projects impacting ecosystem services and climate	
Discussion		
<b>Concurrent Panel B-6</b>		<b>1:30am – 1:30 pm</b>
<p><b>Social Dimensions of Food Security (Food Insecurity: Militancy Nexus)</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Haji Muhammad Adeel, Senator, ANP, Pakistan  <b>Discussants:</b> Avanish Kumar, Associate Professor &amp; Area Chair, Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, India; and, Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, Research Associate, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan</p>		
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>	
Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan	Social dimensions of food insecurity in Pakistan	

Bishnu Raj Upreti, South Asia Regional Coordinator, NCCR North-South, Kathmandu, Nepal	Relationship between food insecurity, social tension and political conflict in Nepal
Roshan Malik, Research Assistant and Ph.D. Student, Rural Sociology, Iowa State University, USA	Food security and governance nexus
Discussion	
<b>Concurrent Panel B-7</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>2:30pm – 4:30 pm</b></span>	
<b>Civil-Military Relations and the Political Economy of Military Intervention Chair and Discussant:</b> Ejaz Haider, News Editor, The Friday Times; and, Consultant, SAMAA TV, Lahore, Pakistan	
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>
Asha Gupta, Lecturer, University of Delhi, India	Civil-military relations in India: Emerging trends
Ahmet Selim Tekelioglu, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Political Science, Boston University, USA	A comparative study of the civil-military relations in Turkey and Pakistan: Differences and future trajectories
Bishnu Raj Upreti, South Asia Regional Coordinator, NCCR North-South, Kathmandu, Nepal	Civil-military relations and the political transition in Nepal
Talat Mahmood, Senior Fellow Social Science Research Centre, Berlin, Germany	Comparing military rule with democratic periods in Pakistan: An evaluation of democratic progress
Ceren Ergenc, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Political Science, Boston University, USA	China's civil-military relations
Discussion	

<b>Concurrent Panel B-8</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>2:30pm – 4:30 pm</b></span>	
<b>State of Food Security in Pakistan</b> <b>Chair:</b> M. Ashfaq, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan	
<b>Discussants:</b> Pius Rohner, Country Director, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Islamabad, Pakistan; and, Roshan Malik, Research Assistant and Ph.D. Student, Rural Sociology, Iowa State University, USA	

<b>Speakers:</b>
Sahib Haq, Senior Programme Officer, World Food Programme, Islamabad, Pakistan
Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan

<b>Concurrent Panel B-9</b>		<b>2:30pm – 4:30 pm</b>
<b>Climate Change and Chemicals' Use: Adaptation and Mitigation Measures for Minimizing the Emerging Environmental and Health Impacts</b>		
<b>Chair:</b> Shafqat Kakakhel, Former Acting Executive Director, United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and SDPI Senior Adviser on Climate Change, Islamabad, Pakistan		
<b>Discussant:</b> Nazima Shaheen, Project Coordinator, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan		
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>	
Mahmood A. Khwaja, Senior Adviser Chemicals & Sustainable Industrial Development and Visiting Fellow, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan	Impacts of climate change on some selected polluted sites: The emerging environmental/health issues and measures for control	
Thuppil Venkatesh, LEAD Man and Director, National Referral Centre for Lead Poisoning, Delhi, India	Lead toxicity and climate change	
Jahangir Mirza, Senior Scientist, Research Institute of Hydro-Québec, Montreal, Canada  (Presented in absentia by Mahmood A. Khwaja, Visiting Research Fellow, SDPI, Islamabad)	Adaptation measures to minimize climate change impacts: Construction materials A case study	
Discussion		

Wednesday, 23 <sup>rd</sup> December, 2009		Day Three
<b>Concurrent Panel C-1</b>		<b>9:00am – 11:00 am</b>
<b>Climate Change Impacts and Actions in South Asia</b> <b>Session I</b> <b>Chair:</b> Nuzrat Yar Khan, HEC Professor on Sustainability Science, Sustainable Development Study Centre, Government College University, Lahore, Pakistan <b>Discussant:</b> Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, Regional Policy Coordinator, Asia, ActionAid International, Dhaka, Bangladesh		
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>	
Aneel Salman, Fulbright Scholar, Department of Economics, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York, USA	Sustainable well-being and climate change in Pakistan: Case of Shigar Valley mountain ecosystem	
Avanish Kumar, Associate Professor & Area Chair, Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, India	Challenges of social and spatial inequity and opportunities for CSOs in South Asia	
Shakeel Ramay, Research Associate, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan	Climate change and food security	
Discussion		
<b>Tea</b>		<b>11.00am-11.30am</b>
<b>Concurrent Panel C-2</b>		<b>9:00am – 11:00 am</b>
<b>Role of Women Parliamentarians in Social and Political Change</b> <b>Chair:</b> Nafisa Shah, Chairperson, National Commission on Human Development, Islamabad, Pakistan <b>Discussant:</b> Marvi Memon, Member National Assembly, Pakistan Muslim League-Q, Islamabad, Pakistan		
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>	
Farzana Bari, Gender Studies Department, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan	Women challenging the political frontiers in Pakistan	
Naeem Mirza, Programme Director, Aurat Foundation, Islamabad,	Role of women parliamentarians and need for internal party quotas	

Pakistan	
Discussion	
<b>Tea</b>	<b>11.00am-11.30am</b>

<b>Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2009</b>		<b>Day Three</b>
<b>Concurrent Panel C-3</b>		<b>9:00am – 11:00 am</b>
<b>The State of Brick Kilns in Pakistan</b>		
<b>Chair:</b> Abid Q. Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan		
<b>Discussants:</b> Tahir Pervaiz Dar, National Project Director, EEBP, Islamabad, Pakistan		
<b>Speakers</b>		
		<b>Title</b>
Saba Gul Khattak, Member Social Sector, Planning Commission of Pakistan; and, Visiting Research Fellow, SDPI, Islamabad		Social analysis of the brick production units in Pakistan
Zulfiqar Ali Shah Bukhari, Freelance Consultant, Legal Services for Engineering and Energy Projects, Islamabad, Pakistan  (Presented in absentia by Mian Suleman Gul, Energy Efficient Brick Production (EEBP) Programme, Pakistan)		Legal review of the brick production sector In Pakistan
Abrar Ahmad, Freelance Consultant, Energy Projects, Islamabad, Pakistan		Contemporary brick manufacturing technologies in Pakistan
Ayesha Rehman, Researcher, Islamabad, Pakistan		Non-Fired Bricks using industrial wastes: An environment-friendly option
Discussion		
<b>Tea</b>		<b>11.00am-11.30am</b>

Wednesday, 23 <sup>rd</sup> December, 2009		Day Three
<b>Concurrent Panel C-4</b>		<b>11:30am – 1:30 pm</b>
<p><b>Climate Change Negotiations: Debriefing of Copenhagen COP-15 Session II</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Shafqat Kakakhel, Former Acting Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and SDPI Senior Adviser on Climate Change, Islamabad, Pakistan  <b>Discussant:</b> Adil Najam, The Frederick S. Pardee Professor for Global Public Policy and Director, The Frederick S. Pardee Centre for the Study of the Longer-Range Future</p>		
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>	
Sanjay Vashist, Adviser, Climate Change Programme Heinrich Boll Foundation; and, Director, Climate Action Network in South Asia, Delhi, India	Politics of climate change negotiations	
Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, Research Associate, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan	Climate change negotiations: Civil society perspective	
Palash Kanti Das, International Policy Adviser, OXFAM, Dhaka, Bangladesh	Shared vision for South Asia	
Pervaiz Amir, Senior Economist, Consultant, Asianics, Islamabad, Pakistan	The International politics of adaptation	
Discussion		
<b>Lunch</b>		<b>1:30 pm – 2:30 pm</b>

Wednesday, 23 <sup>rd</sup> December, 2009		Day Three
<b>Concurrent Panel C-5</b>		<b>11:30am – 1:30 pm</b>
<p><b>Renewable Energy for Sustainable Development in South Asia</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Arif Alauddin, CEO, Alternative Energy Development Board, Islamabad, Pakistan  <b>Discussants:</b> Irfan Yousuf, Deputy Director, AEDB, Islamabad, Pakistan; and, Mohammad Khurshid, Deputy Secretary, Economic Affairs Division, Ministry of Economic Affairs &amp; Statistics, Islamabad, Pakistan; and, Tajammul Hussain, Director General (International Affairs), COMSATS, Islamabad, Pakistan</p>		
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>	
Arif Alauddin, CEO, Alternative Energy Development Board AEDB, Islamabad, Pakistan	Renewable energy options for Pakistan	
Pervaiz Akhter, Former D. G., Pakistan Council for Renewable Energy Technologies, Islamabad, Pakistan	Energy sustainability and role of renewable energy in the energy mix of Pakistan	
Zafar Iqbal Zaidi, D. G., Pakistan Council for Renewable Energy Technologies, Islamabad, Pakistan	Development of renewable energy Technologies in Pakistan	
Irfan Mehmood, Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, Islamabad, Pakistan	Critical analyses of Pakistan Energy Policy (Power Sector) and suggestions for integration of renewables	
Discussion		
<b>Lunch</b>		<b>1:30 pm – 2:30 pm</b>

Wednesday, 23 <sup>rd</sup> December, 2009		Day Three
<b>Concurrent Panel C-6</b>		
<b>11:30am – 1:30 pm</b>		
<b>Gender Justice</b> <b>Chair and Discussant:</b> Lubna Chaudhry, Associate Professor, Binghamton University, State University of New York, USA		
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Title</b>	
Mome Saleem, Research Associate, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan	Uncommon man identified	
Mehmood Khan, Fiazganj district, Khairpur Sindh, Pakistan	Tables turned: 'Power to the powerless'	
Azim Khan, Kaggawalla, Peshawar, Pakistan	Breaking the norms of patriarchal cultural: 'Sawara practice undermined'	
Discussion		

<b>Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2009</b>	<b>Day Three</b>
<b>H U Beg Memorial Lecture</b>	<b>2:30 pm – 4:30 pm</b>
<p><b>Keynote Speaker:</b> Adil Najam The Frederick S. Pardee Professor for Global Public Policy Director, The Frederick S. Pardee Centre for the Study of the Longer-Range Future Professor, Department of International Relations Professor, Department of Geography and Environment Boston University, USA</p> <p><b>Plenary Title:</b> Future of South Asia</p> <p><b>Remarks by the Guest of Honour:</b> Fauzia Wahab, Information Secretary, Pakistan People's Party, Islamabad, Pakistan</p> <p><b>Remarks by the Chief Guest:</b> Farzana Raja, Chairperson, Benazir Income Support Programme, Islamabad, Pakistan</p>	
<b>Vote of Thanks</b>	
Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan	
<b>High Tea / Coffee</b>	