

Emerging Trends related to Rural Development in Pakistan

1. Population Pressure in Pakistan

Pakistan's rapidly growing population is putting more pressure on land resources; more people need more land to grow crops and more wood for fuel and timber. Pakistan is the 7th most populous nation in the world and its 170 million people are growing at the rate of almost 2 percent a year. At this rate the population will reach 217 million by 2020 and will double in next 32 years. Such a rapidly growing population means . Heavy population pressures is resulting in fragmentation of land holdings, clearing of forest land for crop cultivation, illicit cutting of trees for firewood and timber due to cold climate much fuelwood is needed for heating the houses in winter, wildlife habitat loss, more hunting and trapping of wild animals and birds, rapid loss of species, decline in populations of wildlife.

- I. Greater fragmentation of farmlands
- II. Greater competition for water
- III. Greater pressure on fragile and marginal lands
- IV. The denudation of natural forests and rangelands.

2. Poverty status in country

Definition of Poverty

Poverty is the state of one who lacks a certain amount of material possessions or money. Absolute poverty or destitution refers to being unable to afford basic human needs, which commonly includes clean and fresh water, nutrition, health care, education, clothing and shelter.

World Situation

About 1.7 billion people are estimated to live in absolute poverty today. Relative poverty refers to lacking a usual or socially acceptable level of resources or income as compared with others within a society or country

Pakistan Situation

Over the past decade, poverty levels have increased in rural areas while they declined in urban areas. About one-third of the total households in the country were considered below the poverty line, whereas poverty levels in rural areas remained close to 39 percent.

Rural Poor and Poverty

An objective analysis of the rural poor has indicated that they are not a homogenous group but are

differentiated with respect to socio-economic conditions, agro-ecological situations and religio-cultural patterns. They also have certain commonalities such as; landlessness or small subsistence holding, isolation from the main economy, unorganized and leaderless, lack capital and have no access to credit, and lack of marketable skills.

Poor Peoples Exploitation In Pakistan

Poor people tend to exploit their limited land resources more intensively to meet immediate needs, even if exploitation compromises the long-term stability and viability of the land and its natural resources. Poverty compels dryland farmers to degrade their land in order to produce more food and meet their material needs. Of course, further degradation of land and natural resources leads, in a vicious circle, to even more poverty.

3. Migration and Permanent Settlements

The major anthropogenic impacts of prolonged drought especially in the dryland areas of Sindh and Balochistan were malnutrition, higher animal sales, and significant increase in migration to irrigated areas. This forced migration often resulted in conflicts with sedentary populations due to competition for land resources, especially due to competing demand for water and grazing of livestock. In many areas people opted for changing their livelihood and became sedentary placing greater pressure on the natural regeneration land resources.

Development often brings social and economic pressures on the local people and forces them to change their lifestyle. For example, with the arrival electricity and road connections in previously remote areas of Balochistan transhumance practices are weakening. Many pastoral communities have now started permanently settling near roads and digging deep wells to irrigate their newly developed agriculture lands. As a result traditional use of rangelands is dying out, leading to their degradation because the land is left fallow or people are changing land use uses towards permanent settlements with more intensive resource uses

4. Intensification of Agriculture

Agriculture contributes about 25 percent of Pakistan's GDP and 60 percent of foreign exchange earnings. Agricultural growth will be critical in the coming years as Pakistan will have to double its cereal production, particularly wheat, to meet food demands of its growing population. Economic pressures leading to the spread of commercial agriculture (cash crops) exacerbates the situation by encouraging monoculture and short fallows. In order to boost productivity, farmers rely on heavy use of chemical fertilizer and frequent watering.

Increasing intensification, often with the help of subsidies, is contributing to degrading agro-ecosystems, polluting streams and rivers, reducing essential nutrients and eliminating beneficial micro-organisms. As a result, agricultural run-off, which includes pesticides as well as nitrates, is now the leading cause of freshwater contamination. Intensification and the production practices that go with it are also leading to

the loss of local, sustainable production systems as well as traditional and highly valuable crop varieties

5. Flash Floods

Flooding is a regular feature in arid and semi arid regions of the country usually caused by heavy downpour during the monsoon season. It is estimated that between 1950 and 2001 total losses from floods have been in the order of US\$10 billion and over 6,000 lives lost. Excessive flooding buries top soil under the infertile sediments and inhibits cultivation, hence contributing to land degradation and loss of biodiversity. Of course, deforestation, soil erosion and compaction contribute to flooding.

Pakistan has seen many floods, the most worst and destructive is the recent 2010 Pakistan floods, other floods which caused destruction in the history of Pakistan, includes the flood of 1950, which killed 2910 people, On 1 July 1977 heavy rains and flooding in Karachi, killed 248 people, according to Pakistan meteorological department 207 millimeters (8.1 in) of rain fell in 24 hours.^[7] In 1992 flooding during Monsoon season killed 1,834 people across the country, in 1993 flooding during Monsoon rains killed 3,084 people, in 2003 Sindh province was badly affected due to monsoon rains causing damages in billions, killed 178 people, while in 2007 Cyclone Yemeni submerged lower part of Baluchistan Province in sea water killing 380 people. Before that it killed 213 people in Karachi on its way to Baluchistan.

2010 Floods

2010 July floods swept away the 20 % of Pakistan's land, the flood is the result of unprecedented Monsoon rains which lasted from 28 July to 31 July 2010. Khyber Pakhtunhwa and North eastern Punjab were badly affected during the monsoon rains when dams, rivers and lakes overflowed. By mid-August, according to the governmental Federal Flood Commission (FFC), the floods had caused the deaths of at least 1,540 people, while 2,088 people had received injuries, 557,226 houses had been destroyed, and over 6 million people had been displaced. One month later, the data had been updated to reveal 1,781 deaths, 2,966 people with injuries, and more than 1.89 million homes destroyed. The flood affected more than 20 million people exceeding the combined total of individuals affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 Kashmir earthquake and the 2010 Haiti earthquake. The flood is considered as worst in Pakistan's history affecting people of all four provinces and Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir region of Pakistan.

6. Fodder Shortage

World Situation

Over two third of World's impoverished peoples live in rural areas and rely on agriculture for a significant part of their livelihood. Livestock is an important asset of this group.

Livestock is an important sector of agriculture in Pakistan which accounts for 49.1 % of agricultural value added and about 11.4%. 30-35 million of rural population are engaged in livestock. Fodder /forage production is a major limiting factor for livestock production. Out of total cultivated area 22.96 million hectare 11% is under fodder and production of 53 million tons green fodder. Beside this Pakistan is

facing acute shortage of green fodder specially in winter months.

More than 60 per cent of natural grazing areas of the country have production levels lower than one third of their biological potential. More than one-third of the country area has been classified as under risk of desertification.