



# Research Briefs & News

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue no. 3 April 2006

## inbrief

### From the Executive Director's Desk



Dr. Saeed Shafqat

The tension between human desire to reproduce and the government's efforts to reduce fertility is perpetual and is becoming increasingly thorny in many developing countries and Pakistan is no exception. This issue necessitates the formulation of such social policies that may serve to bridge this schism. The question arises; do societal values play a role in determining a government's policy? This raises a whole set of ethical concerns about socio-cultural practices, which in a society like Pakistan demand careful and evidence-based studies.

Understandably the government and those who help it shape population policy cannot be oblivious of these concerns. Although reproductive health and family welfare programmes have been the primary focus of Pakistan's pronouncements and population policies and noticeable progress has been made but not sufficient enough to rouse confidence in the efficacy of these policies.

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### Child health in Pakistan: Research and policy implications

Dr. Shafqat Shehzad presented her research on child health with particular reference to Pakistan. Providing an overview of theoretical literature on the subject, she examined various theories and schools of thought to explain why people demand more or less number of children; quality versus quantity of children issues; economic costs of rearing children; availability and demand for health services; and more importantly factors associated with these issues.



Dr. Shafqat Shehzad  
February 2006

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### Donors and issues of population, policy and development in Pakistan

In his talk Dr. Adeel Malik raised two critical questions; how and when donor policies for poverty alleviation fail? Is poverty merely a problem of effective resource allocation? Dr. Adeel Malik



Dr. Adeel Malik  
January 2006

began by analyzing the role of the major lending agencies and focused on the World Bank, which had laid emphasis on structural and macroeconomic reform till the 1980s. However, the proportion of lending to social sectors increased from 8% in the 1980s to 27.5% in the 1990s. During the 1990s Social Action Programme (SAP) became the primary vehicle of lending. The WB strategy was extraordinarily focused on social service delivery, and that led to increased social sector spending. SAP was a collaborative effort by the donors for improving social service delivery. The expectation was that the WB would finance 10% of Pakistan's annual social sector budget.

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## Donors and issues of population, policy and development in Pakistan

Actually, the WB financed only 6% of social sector spending. It supported 27 different sub-programs in four sectors in all the provinces: basic sanitation, primary health, population welfare, and rural water supply and sanitation. Ironically, the SAP period witnessed a decline in social indicators: education enrolment stagnated during the 1990s; government contribution to SAP expenditures reached a low of 1.4% of GDP against the targeted 1.9% of GDP. Dr. Malik pointed out that SAP was a controversial and ambitious multi-billion dollar initiative and failed to achieve the desired objective.

Making a critical appraisal of the Country Assessment Reports (CAS) of the WB, Dr. Malik observed that they took a very superficial view of poverty, as poverty is largely seen in the context of unfavorable resource endowments. Thus, the solution to poverty was sought mainly in allocating more resources to the poor and incremental reforms. Unequal asset ownership (that hampers productivity) though highlighted by Bank's own reports was not accounted for in lending priorities. Dr. Malik drew attention that land inequality is related to *rent-seeking behavior* and corruption in the public canal irrigation system, this combination of the two, *reduced incentives to invest in land*, exclusion of the poor from formal *credit markets*, and higher dependence of the landless on *non-agricultural sources* of income. The issue of land reforms – considered as the “mother of all reforms” was thus ignored.

Dr. Adeel Malik commented that despite

these failures, there were no “triggers” for exit from the programme. The World Bank seemed to ignore its own supervisor's assessments, audit reports and continued to push money through the system without necessary adjustments. As noted above, the Bank's strategy had an exclusive focus on social service delivery and saw poverty as a resource problem. Its interventions were based on a deficient understanding of the social and political context. The SAP was ill designed and the Bank did not adjust the programme to correct failures or to employ its leverage. Its singular attention was on quantitative expansion of social services. Despite these difficulties Dr. Malik highlighted that the Bank management and staff were NOT ignorant of these issues of power and political economy but official statements avoided the discussion and thus inhibited a broader and healthier dialogue.

Contextualizing the SAP experience and substantiating his findings he argued that there is noticeable disconnect between economic growth and poverty reduction in Pakistan. He observed that Pakistan had a decent growth record, historically growing at around 5 percent per annum. Providing an overview of 1990's (1992-99), he pointed out that more than 12 million people were added to the ranks of the poor in Pakistan. According to the basic needs head count, poverty increased by 5 percent between 1992-93 and 2000-01.

Weaving linkages between elite structures, land ownership and scale of poverty he explained pre-colonial and colonial policies of land distribution helped to shape the post-independence dominance of land owning elite and institutional structures, which continues to persist even today.



Dr. Adeel Malik has PhD in Economics from Oxford University, England. He obtained his Masters in Economics from Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad. He is a Rhode Scholar. He has also been associated with Harvard University as researcher and visiting scholar. Currently, he is lecturer in Development Economics at Oxford University.

The large and very large land owners control 66% of agricultural land. While, almost one-half of rural households own no land. This highly skewed pattern of land ownership is complicated by frequent and premature dissolution of governments in the 1990s, military interventions, ethnic and religious fractionalization, low spending on social sectors (education and health), inflexible defense spending, rising debt servicing and stagnation in government revenues. Under these conditions, taxing agricultural land or effective land reform has not occurred, while abuse of the irrigation system by the powerful continued which contributed to the rising poverty in Pakistan. As a consequence of this disconnect, Pakistan has a high and rising poverty and large gaps exist in social achievement and disparity widens between gender, rural-urban and rich-poor.

## Sufism gave different segments of society 'common identity'

Professor Michel Boivin,  
Center of Indian and South Asian  
Studies, Paris, France

Professor Michel Boivin has said that through Sufism, different segments of society, sects and groups in Pakistan have a common identity.

Boivin was giving talk on “sufi saints in Sindh: impact on Pakistani values and

culture” at National Institute of Population Studies on April 27, 2006. It was part of series of seminars the institute started December last on population and development issues that included a few academic sessions also. Dr Saeed Shafiqat, Executive Director of NIPS, conducted the proceedings.

Boivin said that music and literature is integral and integrating part of mystic culture. He said that people all over Sindh think in terms of Sufis teachings. He also reviewed Orientalists and Sindh authors of Sufism.

He specifically focused on “Dama dam mast qalandar” and Sehwan sharif and the song, he

said, was probably written by someone called Nizami from Multan. He mentioned that the song is linked with both Hazrat Lal Shehbaz Qalandar and Hazrat Ali (RA). He said that on the occasion of Urs at Sehwan, Lal Shehbaz Qalandar is treated as bridegroom and he saw three “mehndi” (henna) rituals on the occasion; one performed by Sajjada Nasheen and the two others by Hindu priestly families. He said that Sufis never ask for conversion to Islam. They composed poetry and used music, and in this case, Lal shebaz inducted dance (dhammal) also.

(The News- April 28, 2006)



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## Child health in Pakistan: Research and policy implications

She noted that by and large children are deprived of good health in the developing world because of lack of access to health care services, lack of access to economic resources (income) that results in malnutrition and other factors such as lack of access to safe water and proper sanitation facilities. Dr. Shehzad was incisive that in order to improve child health in Pakistan, *causes* of ill health should be tackled rather than the *consequences*.

To substantiate her findings and analysis she relied on and made an effective use of national micro-level datasets, including the so far only available Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 1990-91, and Population Labour and Migration Survey, 2003. She noted that although Pakistan has made some progress in reducing child and infant mortality rates, however, neonatal mortality rates remain intransigent to change. Almost 61 percent of infant deaths take place during the first four weeks of birth and the proportion was higher for female as compared to male in the rural areas. In rural areas more female children die in the first week of life and are prone to more illnesses as compared to their male counterparts. She presented evidence from her published research that a child's permanent health has a significant positive impact on child's transitory health deviations and that a

good permanent health status enables children to overcome morbidity and helps in quick recovery. She however, pointed out that large family size; lack of parental education and poverty can have a significantly negative effect on child's health.

Dr. Shehzad's presentation was innovative and rigorous in methodology. She applied rigorous econometric techniques to explore socio-economic determinants of child health and uses OLS, 2SLS, Probit models for determinants of mortality and survival. She also developed a health status measurement model using Latent Variables (LV) techniques to differentiate between health states, such as permanent and transitory. Through a Decomposition analysis, she found that Pakistan was not an outlier in the sample of selected 65 developing countries, but infant and child mortality rates of Pakistan were higher than the average infant and child mortality rates of these countries. Using health measurement indicators like height for age, weight for age, arm circumference, diarrhoea, acute respiratory infection and fever data from the PDHS 1990-91 and applying method of Latent Variables employing various indicators of permanent and transitory health she found that children with better permanent health can overcome illness relatively more quickly. Highlighting the policy implications of her research she observed that income is not the



Dr. Shafqat Shehzad has PhD in Health Economics from the University of Sussex at Brighton, England. She obtained her M.Phil and Masters in Economics from Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad. Her research work on Health policy, child health, maternal health and usages of information technology has been published in journals of international repute. Currently, she is serving as Research Fellow (Health), Sustainable Development Institute, Islamabad

only significant factor to reduce mortality. The significantly positive effect of income reduces when other factors like mother's education and her ability to process information relating to child's nutritional medical advice and hygiene and increased access to health care are added in the model. She persuasively argued that by improving socioeconomic opportunities; better access to health care; improved household living conditions Pakistan could achieve significant improvements in child's health status. Through increase in demand for quality children, reductions in fertility are possible through a quantity and quality trade-off.

### From the Executive Director's Desk

It is evident that the governments in Pakistan have been slow in recognizing population as a socio-cultural issue and that could lead to huge political and economic implications.

It is about time to think beyond family planning oriented population policies and pay attention towards the non-clinical dimensions of population to integrate and mainstream population issues in the policy and development arena. That would happen if curbing population growth rate, managing and improving the quality of population were recognized as core national concerns. Which implies recognizing that high population growth

rate creates distortions between societal and state resource base. Increasingly a rapidly growing population is skewing Pakistan's economic and social indicators. This puts pressure on policy makers to devise policies and find ways to restore the balance between population and resources.

At the NIPS we believe that we can help and assist the policy makers in setting an agenda on population and development goals by sustaining the ongoing research on reproductive health, family welfare and by recognizing population as core national issue and encouraging policy relevant

research on migration, urbanization, education, environment, gender balance, poverty alleviation and governance—research agenda that stimulates social policies to restore a healthy balance between population and resources. We would welcome projects and appreciate the support of public and private partners, collaborators and donors in this endeavor.

### Megacities

By 2015, 17 of world's 21 mega cities will be in the developing countries, and most will be in Asia, which experiences approximately 60% of the world major disasters annually.

( [www.iiasa.ac.at/research/RMS](http://www.iiasa.ac.at/research/RMS) )

## NIPS Board of Governor's Meeting (April 02, 2006)

Ch. Shahbaz Hussain, Federal Minister for Population Welfare/Chairperson commented that the NIPS should continue the path it has chosen and sustain training, surveys and research activities. He directed that the Board should meet every quarter.



### Watch out!

The Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency is working on enhancing humans so that they can go seven days without sleep or food and not lose cognitive ability; display unlimited endurance; and regrow lost limbs the way tadpoles replace amputated tails.

(The Wilson Quarterly, winter 2006:30.)



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