



Session 4

Constraints and Challenges Arising from Demographic Transitions/Imbalances

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Labor Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic and its Social and Economic Consequences

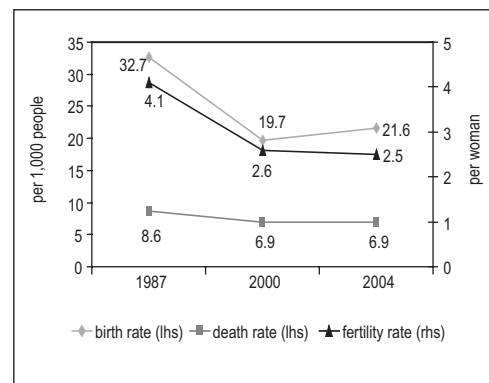
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Demographic Situation in the Kyrgyz Republic

The tremendous social and economic change related to the breakup of the Soviet Union strongly affected the demographic situation in the Kyrgyz Republic. Fertility and birth rates dropped and the death rate declined² (see figure) following the transition to independence and the market economy, accompanied by sharp political and economic shocks and a period of continuous instability, the sudden shift to a new environment with significantly greater risks and uncertainties, the end of massive subsidies from the central Soviet budget, and the resulting decline in the quantity and quality of social services. The natural population growth rate fell from 24.1% in 1987 (the last “quiet” year of the Soviet period) to 14.7% in 2004. Still, the population is growing relatively fast; in 2005, it reached 5.1 million people, or 0.6 million more than in 1991, when the country gained independence.

The population is predominantly rural (65% of the population) and young (children compose about 40% of the population; about half of the population is of working age). The issue of employment, especially rural employment, is therefore very acute. While official unemployment figures are rather low (registered unemployment is just 3%, and estimated unemployment as defined by the International Labour Organization is 9%), these figures assume that all peasants with a piece of land are employed.

Demographic Trends in the Kyrgyz Republic, 1987–2004



* Note: lhs – left-hand side axis, rhs – right-hand side axis

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators; National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic.

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² The decline in mortality is mainly due to the decline in infant mortality rate (from 69 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 52 in 2002, according to the World Development Indicators) which, in turn, is a consequence of reduced fertility rate.

Because land and agrarian reform in the 1990s gave land to virtually every peasant, there is no rural unemployment, according to official records. In reality, however, since the collapse of the previous mode of agricultural production, based on extensive use of resources and permanent inflow of subsidies to large agricultural enterprises, agricultural activities have not been able to feed the growing rural population. A natural response to this situation is the migration of young people from rural to urban areas and, increasingly, abroad in search of employment opportunities. Migration has become a major social and economic phenomenon in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Migration Pattern in the Country

Migration both from and to the Kyrgyz Republic has been traditionally large since the end of the 19th century. However, in the pre-Soviet and especially in the Soviet period, migration was mainly immigration from Russia and Ukraine and was forced or organized (Cossack settlers in pre-Soviet times, evacuees during World War II, specialists and skilled workers participating in postwar industrialization, students); voluntary migration was marginal. The situation changed dramatically after independence. There was a large outflow of people in the early 1990s. All emigrated voluntarily for ethnic identity and economic reasons. All these migrations (apart from those of students) were associated with a permanent change of residence. Recently, however, there has been a new trend: temporary migration driven exclusively by economic reasons.

The temporary migrants are mainly ethnic Kyrgyz, but ethnic minorities are also well represented. This makes the phenomenon different from the permanent migrations, where the migrants were mostly minorities (mainly Russians, Ukrainians, and Germans). The main destinations of the temporary migrants are Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation (especially the Urals and Siberia). The total number of migrants from the Kyrgyz Republic is not known as there are no reliable official statistics. By conservative estimates, 160,000–200,000 people from the Kyrgyz Republic, or about 10% of the labor force of slightly more than 2 million, are working abroad. The Department of Migration Service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides larger estimates: 300,000 people working in the Russian Federation, 40,000–80,000 in Kazakhstan, and 20,000 in Western Europe (Italy, United Kingdom, and other countries), Republic of Korea, Turkey, and United States. Journalists say the total numbers are closer to 500,000–700,000, but these figures seem too subjective and unfounded.

The reasons for migration are mostly economic. Living standards, wages, employment, and market opportunities are significantly higher in oil-rich Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation than in the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan,

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or Uzbekistan. Migrants fill niches in the labor markets of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation that their citizens do not find as attractive as other employment options. Apart from economic reasons, the migrants choose to go to Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation because they speak Russian (universally spoken by people in their 30s and 40s in the Kyrgyz Republic, but less common among younger people) or (for those less conversant in Russian) find the Kazakh language not much different from the Kyrgyz language, and because of cultural kinship with the other former Soviet republics.

Interestingly, relatively few temporary migrants from the Kyrgyz Republic work for hire; most are self-employed or small entrepreneurs, mainly in trade but also in services. This circumstance is often overlooked when the legal status of migrants is discussed because people (and policy makers) think traditionally of migrant hiring rules, while the right for and conditions of self-employment and entrepreneurial activity are much more important for the migrants from the Kyrgyz Republic. Labor migration to Kazakhstan has a specific purpose: migrants from the Kyrgyz Republic work in agriculture, growing crops like tobacco, where they have much more experience than the local peasants.

It is worth noting that the Kyrgyz Republic not only supplies labor migrants to other countries but also receives them from other countries, mainly from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. These immigrants work in agriculture and construction and successfully compete in the domestic labor market of the Kyrgyz Republic with their attractive combination of skill, readiness to work for modest pay (even by Kyrgyz Republic standards), and good work ethic. Again, there are no reliable statistics on these immigrants as they largely work on an informal basis, but there are certainly thousands of immigrant workers during the agricultural season in the Kyrgyz Republic.

While economically motivated migration is the core of all intercountry human flows in the region, the movement of people for business (non-employment) and personal needs is also quite intensive. This is very easily understandable, if one accounts for the still close economic, cultural, scientific, and (last but not least) family ties among the people of Central Asia. Unfortunately, this movement is hindered by the visa regime for Kyrgyz Republic citizens in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, complicated registration rules in Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, and burdensome border checks at virtually all borders. Given government corruption and ineffectiveness in the region, these measures only serve to create problems for ordinary people and do not discourage those involved in illegal activities, who should be prevented from crossing the borders.

Economic and Social Implications of Migration

The availability of such a large labor force working abroad has numerous economic, social, and human implications for the Kyrgyz Republic. From the economic standpoint, migration has two positive consequences: (i) reduced unemployment in the country, and (ii) even more importantly, large inflow of remittances from the migrant workers. The National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic has estimated incoming remittances in 2004 at \$179 million.³ This figure takes into account only the money sent through financial institutions (mainly Western Union and the like); however, it is well known that a large part of money is in cash, brought back by people when they periodically return home to see their families or sent through relatives, friends, and neighbors. By different estimates, the remittances may reach \$300 million, or much more than gross foreign direct investment. Many experts believe that the remittances are a main reason for the reduction in poverty in the last few years. The remittances have also reduced inequality because migrants generally come from families that are not rich. This money mainly goes to personal consumption or is saved or invested in housing; in the last 3 years real estate prices in Bishkek and Osh (the largest towns in the country) increased four- or fivefold. Unfortunately, the concentration of remittances in the capital and the largest towns and their limited use for productive investments has increased regional inequality in the Kyrgyz Republic and reduced the potential positive impact on the economy. Another less positive effect of migration on the domestic situation is the outflow of young and well-educated people, who easily find employment in much less competitive markets in Almaty, Kazakhstan, or in Moscow and other Russian Federation cities. On the other hand, the possibility of finding well-paid employment abroad supports the inflow of young people to universities in the Kyrgyz Republic, especially those with a reputation for providing good education.

Until recently, despite the obvious large importance of migration in the economic and social development of the Kyrgyz Republic and the recipient countries, governments paid too little attention to its less fortunate consequences. The legal status of migrants abroad is unclear, especially for the self-employed and those employed in agriculture; migrants who are hired for urban jobs in the Russian Federation are now subject to protectionist legislation, which makes it more costly to hire foreign migrants. Getting temporary registration in Russian Federation cities poses much greater difficulties. Therefore, official employment opportunities are not many, and people work mostly in the shadow economy with no legal protection. This makes them

³ 8.1% of GDP at the current exchange rate.

very vulnerable to exploitation and crime, and leaves them without good access to health care and education for their children.

Now the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic is addressing these problems by concluding agreements whereby its migrants would be granted a more stable status by the central and regional governments of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. An important direction of support to migrants is the establishment of recruitment companies in the Kyrgyz Republic, to organize migration according to the legislation of recipient countries and provide needed legal guarantees to the workers. The Governments of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation also have the creation of such companies in mind. Obviously, the Kyrgyz Republic must also develop a migration policy that takes into account the long-term nature of migration and its potential for further expansion in view of the reduced population in the Russian Federation and the still high population growth in the Kyrgyz Republic. The policy should not only protect the legal rights of the country's migrants abroad, but also provide them with training suitable for the target labor markets, create hiring infrastructure, strengthen the financial infrastructure for migrants to send money back safely, among other measures. This policy should be developed with the participation of migrants; however, they have not yet organized themselves to become a partner in discussions with the Government.

Labor immigration requires a proper policy response as well. Recently, labor migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have become so visible and competitive that the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic (Jogorku Kenesh) even attempted to introduce a protectionist measure against immigrant workers who would set their deductions for the Social Fund at a prohibitively high rate (100% of their wage, compared with 25% for Kyrgyz hired workers). But such a policy, like others of this kind, would not solve the problem as migrants remain in the shadow economy, but would only create unnecessary distortions in the domestic labor market.

Labor migration has recently emerged as an important item: the country's long-term development agenda. It requires a proper regulatory and policy environment, which has yet to be created. The Government and the society of the Kyrgyz Republic are just at the very start of this process.

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Constraints and Challenges Arising from Demographic Transitions and Imbalances: Pakistan at the Crossroads

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Introduction

The size, composition, and rate of growth of the population are important in the social and economic development of a country. The future of people, economies, societies, and the state lies in their population dynamics. On the other hand, the future of population dynamics also lies in the future of economies and societies, and the ideals, plans, and programs of government.

Demographic statistics are essential in assessing growth and development, determining educational capabilities, drafting plans, and drawing up economic policies. Demographic data are analyzed to answer basic questions about economic development, labor force participation, occupational structure, employment status, use of manpower, and distribution of literacy in technical and vocational fields. Demographic data are helpful in examining the types, quantity, and quality of major public facilities like water, electricity, and basic health units within given geographic areas. Indeed, population concerns must be central, not peripheral, to the programs of government.

Demographic analysis helps to gain knowledge about unsettled and nomadic people. It elaborates migration trends and effects on community life. Demographers highlight the relationship between the distribution of resources and the population, and forecast labor force trends and needs. Is there capability, for example, to absorb rural migrants? The demographic study explains the geographic and occupational transfers, the rural to urban shifts, the areas and extent of the pressures, the sufficiency or insufficiencies of the opportunities.

Demographic Imbalance

Demographic imbalance is a mismatch of population and resources. According to a United Nations report released on 25 August 2005 (*The Daily News*, 29 August 2005, page 17):

the gap between the world's rich and poor is getting bigger. Inequality between the world's richest and poorest nations has grown progressively

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worse over the last 10 years. Some 80 percent of the world's domestic product belongs to 1 billion people living in the developed world, while the remaining 20 percent is shared by 5.5 billion people living in developing countries. The poorest countries have fallen even further behind the richest countries. The disparity has been widened between the income of the poor and the income of the rich.

The inequality could be in income or in access to basic social services and decision making. The widening of the gap shows that governments are unable to confront profound social challenges and place people at the center of development.

Challenges and Constraints

Serious gaps in available information and in the amount and quality of data must be eliminated. Sometimes the data are not accurate in the first place because people tend not to provide information to (official) government workers for fear of harassment. People do not trust data collection agencies and their objectives. In developing countries, the government sometimes tends to use the data for political ends. Figures are sometimes inflated. For instance, Pakistan's literacy rate placed at 53% (Islamabad, Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan: Pakistan Economic Survey 2004–2005, page 138).

In 1951, when Pakistan had its first census, the country had a population of 34 million. In the most recent census in 1998, the population was 134 million, and the Pakistan Economic Survey 2004–2005 placed the figure at close to 150 million. A census is a vast undertaking that needs much planning, adequate resources, control, and trained enumerators. An increasingly important function of the demographer is developing survey techniques for collecting information about the family structure, way of life, quality of life, and family planning (not only birth control but also resource distribution). Inadequate and unreliable population statistics make it very difficult to formulate effective plans for social and economic development.

But the predictability of population dynamics is less useful without predictable economic and social development. To maintain balance in a society, basic needs like food must be provided for increasing numbers. Pakistan, once considered the breadbasket of the area, now does not even have half a basketful and must import basic food items like potatoes, garlic, and onions from India. Pakistan receives 600 sacks of potatoes from India daily (Ocampo 2005). How was this population imbalance created in a country with agriculture as a backbone of the economy and about 70% of the people are in the villages? A major cause is migration.

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Migration is as old as the need of human beings to have a better life. Its impact on a country and on the migrants themselves is profound. The whole pattern of politics, economy, and social values and norms can change as a result (*The Daily Nawa-i-Waqt*, 7 August 2005). Migration is a process of changing residence and moving the migrant's social activities from one place to another (Rizvi, Farzana. 2005. International Migration and Pakistan. *Pakistan Vision* 6(1 July): page 97). Migrants generally attach themselves to areas where economic opportunities are abundant and where they will receive better pay for their work (Weeks 1992, page 223). Migration can be explained by a variety of socioeconomic conditions. It can be free or forced. People in Pakistan migrated to seek safer areas during the floods of June–July 2005, and to escape drought in Cholistan and Thar. Whatever the cause of the migration may be, the balance of the host place is disrupted.

In the developing world, migration is most remarkable in its rural-urban form, often the main cause of the so-called urban explosion. Thousands of Third World peasants leave their villages daily to find permanent or temporary shelter elsewhere (Selier 1988, page 7). The main driving force is the search for jobs and for refuge from a difficult situation. In Islamabad, 58% of the people come from different areas. These include not only the proper job seekers but also the gypsies, who wander from place to place before settling in a spot close to the road but away from the local population, where daily food needs and water are available. A few years ago, empty plots were easy to find. Now, with commercialization, it is difficult to get one. In Lahore's upscale localities, empty plots rent for as much as PRs600 a month.

In the 21st century, gypsies still live the traditional way, totally different from the rest. Their unity is their main characteristic. They provide cheap labor in the cities and put up with extreme weather conditions. Some male gypsies earn about PRs200–300 a day pulling donkey carts (Selier 1988, page 11). Others earn a living with magic tricks, while a few simply stay home. Gypsy women make very good housemaids. A major part of the gypsy economy is run by females. In the villages, they sell small items on barter.

About 15 million people live as gypsies in Pakistan. In Lahore, they number more than 50,000 and the number is constantly rising (*Weekly Family Magazine*, 18–24 September 2005, pages 10–28) because the gypsies move constantly from place to place and do not get themselves registered at birth and get identity cards. Most of them cannot vote. But their dwellings unfortunately dispense with hygiene and pose health problems, especially in the rainy season. Another negative aspect is the incidence of thefts and fraud. Three hundred gypsy children were arrested for theft in Lahore in September 2005 (*Weekly Family Magazine*, 18–24 September 2005, pages 10–28). Despite

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the United Nations convention on the rights of children, about 1.2 million children work as beggars and vendors in Pakistan according to a survey by the Centre for Research and Development in Karachi (*The Daily Nawa-i-Waqt*, 10 August 2005).

In 1951, only 17% of the population of Pakistan was living in cities or towns. Today, urbanites make up more than 32% of the population, having left behind fertile agricultural lands and forests to build businesses and houses in the cities. The rapid urbanization, at 4.9% a year, reflects the urban bias of state investment. Pakistan is projected to be predominantly urban by the next decade (*The Daily News*, 30 August 2005). More than half of the urban population is in the eight big cities of Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Multan, Hyderabad, Gujranwala, and Peshawar. According to the 1998 census, Sindh is the most urbanized province with 49% of the population in urban centers, followed by Punjab with 31%, Balochistan with 24%, and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) with 17%. The proportion of migrants from other provinces is significant in Sindh, while shifts to urban areas in Punjab and NWFP are mostly from within the province. In Karachi, more than 38% of the immigrants are from Punjab (*The Daily News*, 2 October 2005).

The population shift requires more land and space to settle. Class I and II agricultural land is taken up by city dwellers because it is level and easy to develop. Fertile land is sold at lucrative prices. There are no controls over the acquisition of agricultural land for housing. The demographic imbalance is responsible for many problems.

Shocks and Their Effects

Harsh socioeconomic inequalities and struggles over meager resources bring violence and terror. Failure to pursue a comprehensive integrated approach to development will perpetuate the inequalities, for which every one pays the price (*The Daily News*, 2 October 2005). The society faces a host of important problems in this regard.

Poverty

According to the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme (2005), Pakistan in 2003–2004 ranked 144th in poverty indices; in 2001–2002, it was 138th from 175 countries. Six million families in Pakistan live below the poverty line. According to the State Bank of Pakistan (October 2005), unemployment is at 36% and 41% of the people live below the poverty line. The top 20% own 43.3% of the wealth, while the poorest 20% must make do with 3.7% of the national wealth. The gross domestic product (GDP) may have grown by 8.4% in 2005 but the growth

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has not reached the masses. Investment in big cities has not trickled down. Instead, the wealth of villages goes to the cities and only a very small part comes back. The lack of rural industrialization deprives the rural masses of the benefits of development. Meanwhile, poverty-driven migration from the rural to the urban areas proceeds, posing severe threats to economic, social, and physical conditions.

Poor Land Utilization

The cities, already overcrowded, are choked further with the flood of migrants. Problems related to jobs, food and water, sanitation, and transportation have become even more acute. Despite being an agricultural country, Pakistan imports its vegetables, spices, beans, and meat. Agriculture lacks solid planning. As the cities have expanded into nearby agricultural lands, uncultivated land has been left unused. Of the total land area of 803,940 km², 60% is not cultivated. A third of the farmers give half of their yield to landlords; “0.1 percent of landlords control 15 percent of all cultivable land” (*The Daily News*, 2 October 2005). Consumers, on the other hand, spend 60% of their income on food and utilities and spend a great deal less on clothing, medicines, and education (*The Daily Nawa-i-Waqt*, 18 September 2005). A survey in October 2005 by the Statistics Department of Pakistan showed that 75% of the population is not satisfied with the economy. About 27% of the youth capable of employment are unemployed. Policies favor the elite while the bulk of population does not benefit and many even have reduced incomes especially in the rural areas.

Low Public Investment in Agriculture

Agriculture’s share in the recent budget, 2004–2005 is PRs 9.1 billion, (\$1 dollar is equivalent to Rs60 or \$151.66 million) or 4.5% of the development budget. Agriculture contributes 24% of the national income but receives only 0.15% of GDP in government investment (*The Daily Nawa-i-Waqt*, August 2005).

Ecological Imbalance

The population of cities is ever increasing as people look for jobs, security, health and education services, and generally better living conditions, and the cities pay a heavy toll. The landscape is a mix of overly crowded mega cities, decaying intermediate cities, paralyzed secondary cities and towns, and a vast rural hinterland. Fertile land is used for residential and industrial expansion. One Kanal (500 sq yard) piece of land in Islamabad sells for PRs20 million (approximately \$333,333). The price of oil also rises and falls steeply. Between

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1999 and 2005, the Government increased the price of oil 49 times and reduced it 22 times (*The Daily Nawa-i-Waqt*, August, 2 October 2005).

Environmental Hazards

According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2004–2005: “No city in Pakistan has a proper waste collection and disposal system for municipal or hazardous wastes. Our industries use about 525 types of chemicals and dyes/ colors in different processing industries. Their processing generates wastes [that]...contaminat[e]...soil[,]...pose [a] potential risk to public health and damage the fertility of cropland.” The industrial units set up on agricultural land release toxic effluents that have wasted huge parcels of land. Kasur, Faisalabad, and Sialkot are a few examples. The demographic imbalance, poor sanitation, and inadequate resources also exert pressure on the facilities. The power supply is overburdened. Worn-down water and sanitation pipes pose health hazards as well.

Resource distribution is uneven between cities. Lahore has a population of about 7.5 million but only 6,500 sanitary workers. Delhi, on the other hand, has 46,000 sanitary workers to serve its population of 11 million (*The Daily Nawa-i-Waqt*, 22 August 2005). Eighty-four percent of Lahore’s budget is for nondevelopment uses.

Poor Governance

The district coordinating officer of Lahore said in 2005 that only PRs1 billion (\$16.66 million) out of the PRs6.2 billion (\$103.3 million) district budget is available for development. Of the total budget, the district government raised only PRs500 million (\$8.3 million); PRs5.7 billion (\$95 million) came from the provincial government.

Around 10,000 motor vehicles on average are registered every month owing to the ease of leasing (*Dawn*, 23 August 2005). Parking is a serious problem. The vehicles also produce air and noise pollution beyond the prescribed levels. Because of over consumption and underproduction of electricity, supply disruptions many times a day cause great inconvenience to households and industrial consumers. Even on the eve of Independence Day (14 August) lights went off almost 1,500 times in the Lahore metropolis (*The News*, 16 August 2005). The proliferation of squatters, *katchi abadis* (clusters of makeshift dwellings), and gypsy towns, and even the sprawling upmarket sectors all overburden the system. The imbalance creates social disarray—behavioral problems, intolerance, ethnic friction, unemployment, breakdowns in law and order, and traffic snarls—and environmental degradation.

Lack of Potable Water

Water is the universal lifeline. Of the water used worldwide, 70% goes to agriculture, 20% to industry, and only 6% to households. Potable water is available to only 25.61% of the people in the urban areas of Pakistan and to only 23.5% of those in the rural areas. In the provision of potable water, Pakistan ranks 80th out of 122 countries (UNDP 2005). The countries of the world resolved in 2000 to provide potable water to at least half of their population by 2015. According to the director general of the Environmental Protection Agency, which is in charge of the Clean Drinking Water Initiative (CDWI) in Pakistan, it will take 5 years to install water purification plants all over the country (*The Daily News*, 11 September 2005). Government plans to set up those plants with a budget of PRs10 billion (\$166.66). The problem is that most of the population, and especially the at-risk population, would still not have access to drinking water because the areas where these people live are not covered by water purification plants. Clean water is hard to come by. Despite government efforts to provide clean water to every citizen, cases of water contamination occur from time to time and even the federal capital is not exempt.

The population of [the] metropolis has crossed 800,000 and at present needs 100 million gallons of water daily [to meet] the civil and industrial needs of the...city but the supply of this essential source of life is limited to 65 million gallons per day. During the dry [season] the administration has to [ration] the water. The people resort to the tapping of [subsoil] resources and [the water table] further recedes. With the construction boom, the corporate sector needs more water. (*The Daily News*, 8 September 2005)

Government plans to provide safe drinking water by 2007 under the grand program Water for All costing PRs6.5 billion. But not more than 30% of the country's population would get purified water under that scheme. (*Dawn*, 25 August 2005)

Health

Access to medical help is a basic right, and governments are responsible for providing medical care. Pakistan devotes less than 1% of gross national product (GNP) to health. It ranks 135th among 177 countries in health service provision according to the *Human Development Report* (UNDP 2005). Most people in the rural areas have no access to health services. Whatever help they get in this regard is likely to be substandard or provided by charlatans. Even villages near the federal and provincial capitals do not get health services or clean water. The basic health units (BHUs) set up in the villages each have an

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officially appointed doctor but, most of the time, the doctor is not around to help, so the support staff attends to the patients. The doctor does not deserve all the blame either. BHUs are hard to reach and are not properly equipped with medicines, clean water, and other facilities. To get the care they need, the patients travel to the city.

The doctor-patient ratio reflects the level of development of health services, and the country in general. In Pakistan, as Governor Khalil-Ur-Rehman of North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) observed, one doctor serves nearly 2,000 patients, compared with the international standard of one doctor for every 500 patients. The doctor-population ratio in NWFP is 1:5,146; in the rest of the country, it is 1:1,773. There is one hospital bed for every 1,703 persons in NWFP, and one bed for every 1,514 persons elsewhere in the country (Islamabad, Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan: Pakistan Economic Survey 2004–2005, page 148).

Education

According to the Pakistan Economic Survey of 2004–2005, the official literacy rate in 2003–2004 was 53%. Pakistan plans to increase investment in education to 4% of GDP within the next 5 years (*The Daily Nawa-i-Waqt*, 8 October 2005). The Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2005 estimated the size of the literate population at less than 40% and those with at least a college degree at 4%. Although the Government claims that it spends billions of rupees for education, none of the 5,500 villages in Punjab province have even one school, the report on an education management and information system survey said. Literacy in most parts of southern Punjab, like Mailis, Pak Patan, Pirwala, Ouch Sharif, and Ahmad Pur East is only around 12% (*The Daily News*, 2 September 2005).

The Government spent about 2.7% of GDP on education in 1999. In 2005, it spent only 1.8%. Five million children of school age are not in school (*The Daily Nawa-i-Waqt*, 15 September 2005).

Government schools cannot accommodate all applicants. Hence, the children of the poor, if they can be spared their economic tasks, go instead to neighborhood institutions. But there they have to spend for books, uniforms, and other essentials. Passing a few classes leads nowhere. The private schools give good-quality education but are too costly.

Opportunities

Demographic imbalances can occur with over- or under-population. In some instances, the demographic imbalance is quite visible but is ignored and overlooked for reasons known only to the policy makers, whose priorities

have yet to be defined. Some areas are overdeveloped, while others in the same city are underdeveloped. The Government has promised to provide potable water and electricity for all by 2007 (*The Daily News*, 30 August 2005). The Punjab government plans to change the rusted water pipes (mainly in posh areas) to avoid sewage contamination. To settle the problem of power disruptions in Lahore, 1,500 transformers will be installed to relieve the overloaded system. The social welfare department, for its part, is helping the poor. The Child Protection and Welfare Bureau in Punjab rescues and cares for poor and abandoned children in the province and attends to their rehabilitation. The Institute of Pakistan *Bait-ul-Mall* has a budget of PRs5 billion (\$83.3 million), which it uses to help people. Efforts have also been made to eradicate child labor through training and the provision of financial incentives to children.

The demographic changes, especially upward mobility, have some positive elements as well. Migrants to the cities provide skilled and unskilled labor. Females make good household help. To meet the rising cost of living, these people often take up two or three jobs. A parallel economy thus exists. After arriving in the city, the migrants become better aware of education, health, and hygiene needs. Vaccinations are done properly. Birth certificates, needed for school registration, help in keeping data on the migrants. The new entrants into the cities and the communities they join can learn from each other.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The demography of big cities is continuously changing. Migrants from the countryside work as porters, street vendors, taxi drivers, and day laborers, and often live in shantytowns on the outskirts of the cities. The cities, especially their more upscale areas, are encroaching on agricultural lands.

Proportional urbanization is needed for balanced regional growth. Six percent of the population of Pakistan is urban and 22% of this urban population lives in Karachi's more than 500 towns and cities. The United Nations, in its annual report (2005), has recommended that developing countries set aside at least 20% of their budget for basic health and social services for the poorest sectors of the population. To resolve the inequality between the urban and rural sectors, Pakistan must provide social and physical infrastructure with no political bias.

Water supply and health services are basic rights of the citizens and not a privilege. If the rights are not given, those deprived may take them by force. Awareness of basic rights and needs is growing as communication systems develop. With the cities spreading outward, urban and rural areas must join hands in a relationship based on equality, social justice, and harmonious

interdependence. Some drastic steps, including administrative and legal changes, are needed to help narrow the rural-urban divide. Technical and vocational training, more and better infrastructure, judicial reforms and the rule of law, monitoring of BHUs and provision of incentives to BHU staff, support and rescue programs for small farmers, more equitable development—all these can help avoid the demographic imbalance.

The luxuries that make life more comfortable for 5% of the people create a sense of deprivation among the poor. The right priorities and proper planning can make a difference. In resettlement, careful calculation and a bigger budget are needed.

To keep demographic balance and harmony, as the Holy Prophet said, “Settle the new towns rather than making the already existing cities overcrowded.”

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