Profile of district

Mardan

with focus on livelihood related issues

South Asia Partnership-Pakistan

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Mardan
with focus on livelihood related issues

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Published by
South Asia Partnership-Pakistan
Haseeb Memorial Trust Building, Nasirabad, 2 km Raiwind Road,
P.O. Thokar Niaz Beg, Lahore-53700, Pakistan
Ph: 92-42-35311701-3, 5-6, Fax: 92-42-35311710
Email: info@sappk.org, Website: www.sappk.org

Printed by
Visionaries Division

Quantity: 500

December 2009

Any part of this publication can be reproduced provided a reference is
made to this original publication.

Introduction

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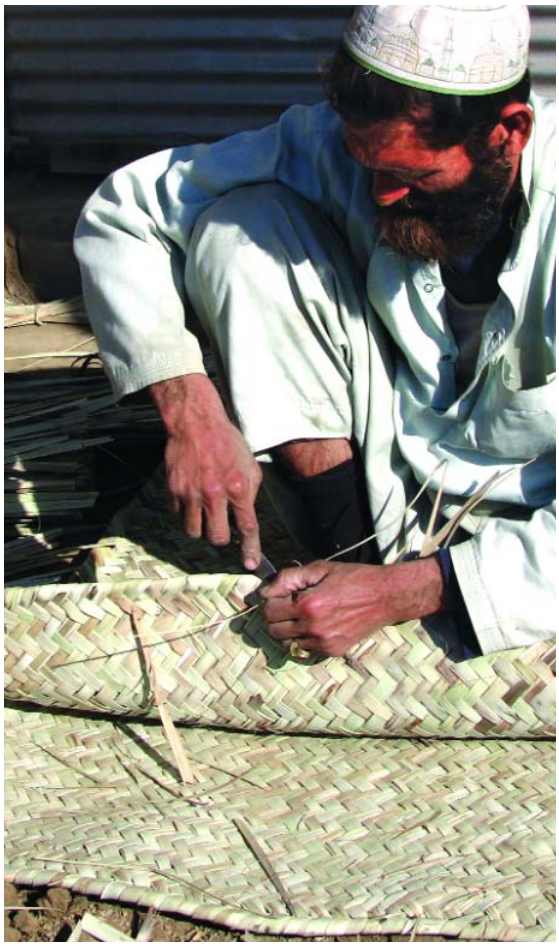
This publication is a result of a research exercise carried out to understand and document the current status of different ways and means of earning livelihoods in a group of selected districts of Pakistan and other factors that have an impact on people's capacity to utilize available resources and that of creating new ones. The study is a part of South Asia Partnership, Pakistan's (SAP-PK) strategy to realize its mission of creating an engendered, critical society in South Asia based on the universal principles of human dignity, justice, democracy and peaceful coexistence. As member of South Asian civil society movement, SAP-Pk is striving to empower marginalized sections of society and working to influence policies in their favor.

Data for the study is collected through secondary as well as primary sources. The secondary data is mostly quoted from Population Census 1998, Agriculture Census 2000, Agriculture Machinery Census 2004, Industry Census 2004, Animal Census 2006, Punjab Development Statistics 2008 and other government sources. Information from some departmental studies like Multiple Indicator Cluster Study by Planning Commission 2003-04 has also been used. The figures have been projected to the latest year using growth rates. But growth rates for some parameters are either not available or are generalized for the national or provincial level as their district break-ups are not available. This may have resulted in not very accurate projected figures for the district. We however believe that this is unlikely to undermine the broader conclusions drawn from these.



Livelihood has very rarely been a subject for any scientific research despite its utmost importance. The need to initiate such work was absolutely necessary, as the traditional livelihood sources are rapidly depleting. This situation has pushed a large portion of population, especially those who have been associated with agriculture and traditional sources of earning in rural areas. They are left stranded as far as their livelihood sources are concerned. This factor contributes substantial rise in poverty. The situation is particularly affecting the landless and the farmers with small land holdings and rural workers. The women farmers and tillers belonging to religious minorities are the worst affected as they were solely dependent on traditional modes of earning.

In this scenario the work in hand is a commendable task undertaken and completed by the writers. It is a wonderful effort in the right direction. The work definitely provides a basis for further research on livelihood sources. There is not only occasional analysis included in the profile but the facts and figures provided also stimulate the reader to build up different analysis. The book very clearly shows how the nature and availability of livelihood sources can have effects on poverty and poor people.

This research work was conducted in 15 districts of all four provinces. The districts selected include

where the South Asia Partnership has been working since its inception for the betterment of poorer sections of the society through various initiatives. The publication gives a detail description of demographic factors such as population of male and female in the district and how these differences denote to discrimination and bias against womenfolk of the country. The research focuses more on female population of the rural areas with stress on maternity health, literacy, enrollment and drop-out ratio among girl students.

The district profile also notes the changes in pattern of livelihood sources. It also deals with the number of issues such as health facilities, transportation and communication, irrigation, pattern of crops, land ownership patterns, livestock and industrial growth in the district. The work includes the politics of international trade agreements and its implications on Pakistan's industrial and agricultural sectors and especially on livelihood sources of the population. All the facts are substantiated by related data which is another quality of this work.

It is in fact a valuable addition in the efforts of South Asia Partnership- Pakistan spanning over the periods of two decades in the field of research especially on the subjects related to poor farmers and rural workers. And of course livelihood stands high in this list.

I want to conclude by removing some misconceptions prevalent in our 'intellectual' brethren about the efficacy and usefulness of written work. They opine that since the South Asia Partnership-Pakistan is working for the peasant and rural workers, the big majority of those are unable to read so the written work will be fruitless. I wonder if one goes with this approach then the publishing and printing of books should be halted at once, for even the big majority of literate population has no tendency towards reading the books especially on serious subjects. The efficacy of the written work cannot be measured by mere number of souls who have actually read it but by the effects the work has generated. To quote an example "DAS CAPITAL" would have been, most probably, read by some thousand people but the effect it produced and still generating is even immeasurable.

This work will definitely be helpful for the policy makers, for the development experts, for non governmental organization in evolving their strategies to coup poverty and deprivation. The research is capable of organizing peasants and workers both rural and industrial around identified issues.

Mohammed Tahseen
Executive Director

Mardan district falls in the area constituting the Peshawar valley, which first appears in the history as part of the Gandhara kingdom. The armies of Alexander reached the Valley in 326 BC. After Alexander's departure, it came under the rule of Chandragupta, who ruled it from 321 to 297 BC. During the reign of the Buddhist emperor Ashoka, the grandson of Chandragupta, Buddhism was the religion of the Peshawar valley. The valley saw a revival of Brahmanism after the Greeks took over in the time of king Mehanda. The Scythians and Indians followed and retained control of the valley till the 7th century AD.

Before the end of 7th century, Afghans appeared in the valley. At that time Peshawar valley was under the control of rulers of Lahore. The Afghans joined the Gakhars who held the country between the Indus and the Jhelum rivers and compelled the Lahore rulers to cede to them the hill country west of the Indus and south of the Kabul River. In the 10th century, the area came under the control of Sultan Subaktageen who defeated Raja Jaipal, the Hindu ruler of Lahore. Subaktageen's son Sultan Mahmood made this area a rallying point for his numerous raids into the interior of India. In the 15th century the Pathans of Ghor overthrew the Ghaznavis, bringing an end to the Ghaznavi era. In 1505 AD, the Mughal emperor Babar invaded the area through Khyber Pass. The valley remained under the rule of Mughals up to the time of Aurangzeb. During this regime, the Pathan tribes revolted and Aurangzeb himself led his army to re-establish his writ. But after a hard struggle lasting for two years (1673-75), he was compelled to agree to a deal, which left the Pathans practically independent.

In 1738 came the surrender of Peshawar to Nadir Shah by which all the territory west of the Indus, which included present-day Mardan district was ceded by the Mughals to Nadir Shah. Ranjit Singh took Attock in 1814 and Peshawar in 1818. He left Hari Singh Nalwa in command and withdrew himself

to Lahore. This valley remained under the control of Sikhs up to 1849. Sikhs were defeated by the British in the Second Sikh War. Major Lawrence was appointed as the first deputy commissioner of Peshawar. From that date Peshawar became administrative district under the Punjab government. At that time present-day Mardan district was part of Peshawar district. In 1901, Frontier Province was constituted and in 1937, Mardan was declared a separate district.

The name of Mardan was associated with a small area after the name of Pir Mardan Shah, a prominent religious figure. Gradually, the large surrounding area also came to be known as Mardan.

Mardan district is mainly inhabited by Yusafzai Pakhtuns but the Lundkhwar Valley has sizeable Khattak population. Besides these main tribes, some Sayyeds and Gujjars also live in the district. The Gujjars are more in number and some historians opine that they are the original inhabitants of the area.

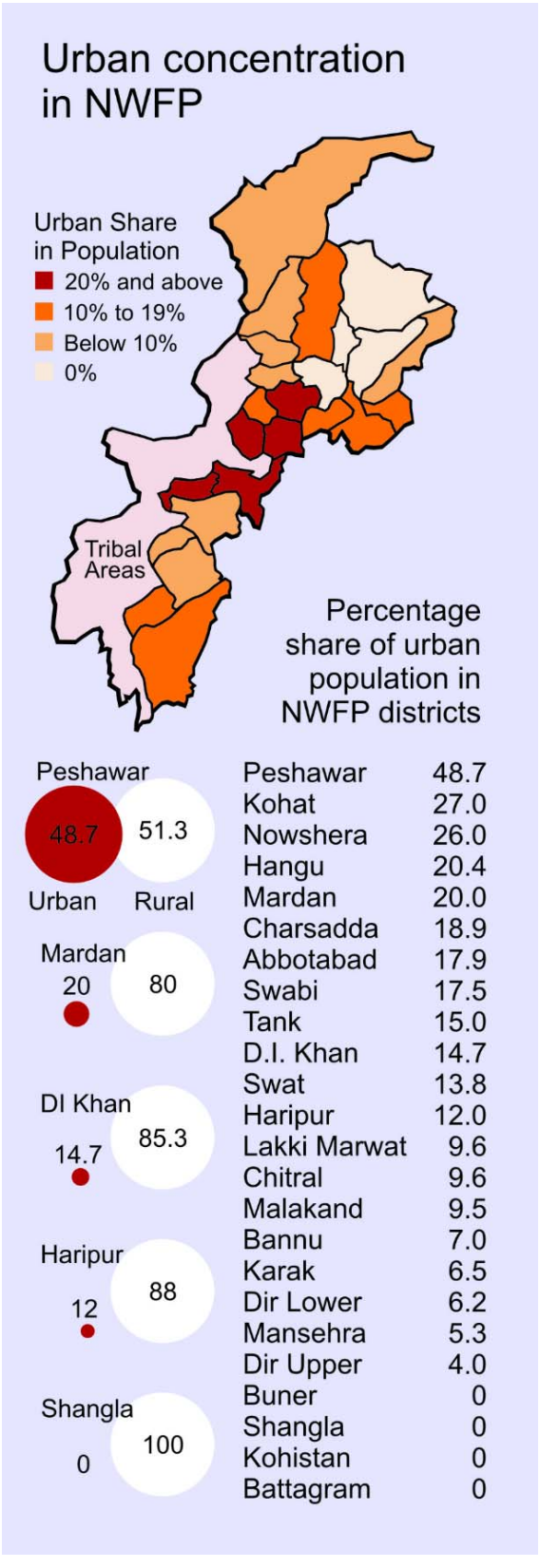
District Mardan's geography can broadly be divided into two parts, north eastern hilly area and south western plain. The entire northern side of the district is bound by the hills. In the district the highest point in these hills are Pajja and Sakra, 2,056 meters high and Garo or Pato, 1,816 meter high. The south western half of the district is mostly composed of fertile plains with low hills strewn across it. It is generally accepted that this plain once formed the bed of a lake, which was gradually filled up by the load of the river flowing into it from the surrounding hills. From the foothills the plain runs down at first with a steep slope, which carries the rain

Mardan District
Population 2007
1,743,907

3 Towns	166 Villages
20.2%	79.8%
Urban 352,494	Rural 1,391,413

Towns	Population
Mardan	285,013
Takhat Bhai	58,766
Mardan Cantt	8,715

Villages	No	% Share
5000 & above	92	85.5
2,000 to 5,000	39	11.1
1,000 to 2,000	21	2.8
Less than 1,000	14	0.6
All villages	166	100.0



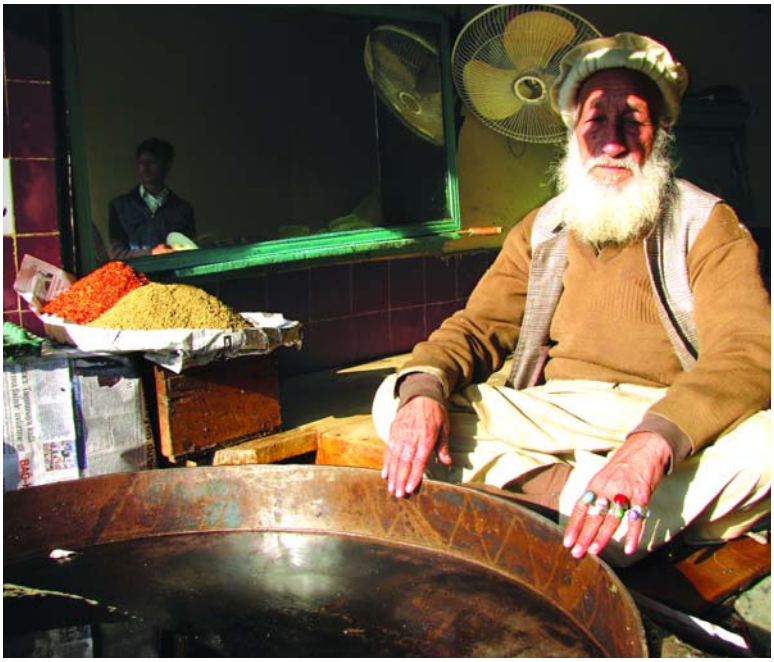
water to the lower levels and ultimately to the Kabul River. Generally streams flow from the north to the south. Most of the streams drain into Kabul River. Important streams, which join Kalpani are Baghiari Khawar on the west and Muqam Khawar, coming from Sudham Valley and Naranji Khawar from the Narangi hills on the left.

The district is bounded on the north by Buner district and Malakand Protected Area, on the east by Swabi and Buner districts, on the south by Nowshera district and on the west by Charsadda district and Malakand Protected Area.

The district occupies an area of 1,632 square kilometer. It is the 10th smallest district with respect to area and second largest in terms of population in 24 settled districts of the province, Malakand being the smallest with respect to area while Chitral is the biggest one. Mardan can be called a medium sized district in terms of area. The area of 15 out of 24 districts does not exceed 2,000 square kilometer mark. The most populated districts in the province are smaller in area.

The summer season is extremely hot in Mardan district. A steep rise of temperature is recorded from May to June. Even July, August and September record quite high temperatures. The temperature reaches its maximum (41.5° C) in the month of June. Due to intensive cultivation and irrigation the tract is humid and heat is oppressive. However, a rapid fall of temperature is recorded from October onwards. The coldest months are December and January. The mean temperature recorded for the month of January, the coldest

month, is 2° C. Most of the rainfall occurs in the month of July, August, December and January. Maximum rainfall recorded for the month of August, the rainiest month, is 126 mm. The relative humidity is quite high throughout the year while maximum humidity has been recorded in December, which is 73 per cent.



Mardan has two teshils namely Mardan and Takht Bhai. There are three urban localities namely Takht Bhai, Mardan and Mardan Cantonment. One fifth of the Mardan population lives in those three urban localities, largest being Mardan city with a population of around 300 thousand, according to 2007 estimates. The other urban localities Takht Bhai and Mardan Cant host only 60 and 8 thousand persons respectively. Mardan is a district of big villages. Around 86 per cent of rural population lives in 92 villages, each has a population of more than five thousand people. As many as 39 villages are inhabited by two to five thousand people considered as medium sized villages. 11 in every 100 villagers live in these medium sized localities. The homes of the rest 4 per cent of rural population are in 35 villages, their average population is less than 2000 people.

Mardan district, like many others in NWFP is rural in its essence and urban portion in the population is very low. On an average, 17 percent population lives in cities in NWFP. Mardan is 5th largest district of NWFP in terms of hosting more urban population. Peshawar has highest portion of urban population (49 percent) while there is no urban locality at all in Shangla, Kohistan, Buner and Batagram districts of the province. Half of the districts of the province have less than 10 per cent of urban population.

Total population of the district according to 1998 census was 1,460,100 with a very high intercensal percentage increase of 60 per cent since March 1981 when it was 881,465. The average annual growth rate was 3.01 percent during this period. This is quite high compared with the provincial average of 2.81 and national 2.69. Mardan was the 11th district with high population growth rate with Buner topping the list followed by Peshawar and Lower Dir in the province. The province can be divided into two parts in terms of annual average

Matkanai
Bat Khela
Guniar
Dad Banda
Zulmkot
MALAKAND
Mora Banda Kili
Jowar
Galkala
MALAKAND PROTECTED AREA
BUNER DISTRICT
Zarmanda
Bampokha
Tursak
DARGAI
Nansar
Khorkai
Khui Bormol
Pipal
Sangau
Qasmi
Nawan Kklay
Alo
Kodar
Kalu
Babuzai
Pirsai
Baroch
Sorai Malandrai
Dheri
Shamozai
Goru Ambella
Landkhwar
Joil Banda
Matta
Zorifi
Jaur
Klatlang
Surkhawar
Rai Kili
Kattigarhi
Sherdarra
Jalala
TEHSIL MARDAN
Ganjai
Kot
Sawoldher
Machai
Taja
Dandoo
Pirabad
TAKHT BHAI
Bakhshali
Gujrat
Jalal
Parmulia
TEHSIL TAKHT BHAI
Fatima
Gariala
Shani Khan
Gardi
Sari Bahlol
Panerak
Chel
Zandu
Nawankill
Sari
Shahbazgarh
Ismaila
Koruna Kandar
MARDAN
Garhi Kapura
Taraki
Manga
Gldar
Dargai
Chamtar
CHARSADDA DISTRICT
Khazana Dheri
Mayor
Sudher
Gumbad
Khawaja Rashk
Khat
Taru Qasim
SWABI DISTRICT
Zarinabad
Jagannath
Kalyas Banda
Bago Banda
Akbarpur
Chauki
Tulandi
Area of detail Mardan
Peshawar
Kheshki
Islamabad
KABUL RIVER
Mian Kili
NOWSHERA
Lahore
Quetta
Multan
Amangarh Industrial Area
Aza Khel
Akora Khattak
Piran
Jahangi
Manki
Umarai
NAWSHERA DISTRICT
Karachi
Manhai
Jallozai
Spin Kana

population growth. The area composed of Batagram, Kohistan, Abbottabad, Haripur, Mansehra and Chitral districts has low growth rate while the pocket containing Peshawar Valley and other plain areas of the district have very high growth rate. Observers cite two main reasons; one, heavy movement of economic migrants from mountainous to plain areas and two enumeration problems countered by census organization due to rough and very difficult terrain of many districts.

Propagated at the national annual growth rate, the population of Mardan district is estimated at 1,743,907 for 2007. Mardan is the second most populous district of the province with only Peshawar ahead of it. The population density here is 897 souls per square kilometer, which is third highest in NWFP province with Peshawar leading as the most dense district (1606 persons/sq km) and Chitral being the least (21 persons per square kilometer). The average density in NWFP is 238 people per square kilometer.

The average household size in Mardan is 8.4, little higher than the provincial average and 11th highest in NWFP. The average household size of NWFP is 8 while the national average is 6.9. The only two districts of the province having a household size lower than the national average are Abbottabad and Kohistan, 6.4 each. The highest household size in NWFP is of Hangu where 10.4 people live in an average house. There are 12 districts in NWFP where the household size is higher than the provincial average.

Districts with high household size:

Hangu	10.4	Malakand	9.1
Karak	10	Buner	9.0
Bannu	9.7	Swat	8.8
Lower Dir	9.3	Peshawar	8.5
Tank	9.3	Mardan	8.4
Lakki Marwat	9.2	Shangla	8.1

As emerged from the 1998 census the population of district is predominantly Muslim, which is 99.5 per cent. There are few minority communities in NWFP as the average Muslim percentage for the province stands at 99.5 per cent. It means that one in 200 persons of NWFP believes in other faiths than Islam. Peshawar hosts a little more religious minority groups than

others, as they make 1.3 per cent of the total population of this district. Muslims in all other districts make more than 99 per cent of the population.

In real numbers the 1998 census counted only 2,038 Christians, 4,765 Ahmedis and 266 Hindus in the entire district of Mardan. The religion of 102 persons was not specified. The majority of tiny Christian minority (90 per cent) lives in Mardan city. Majority of Ahmedis live in rural areas of Mardan tehsil.

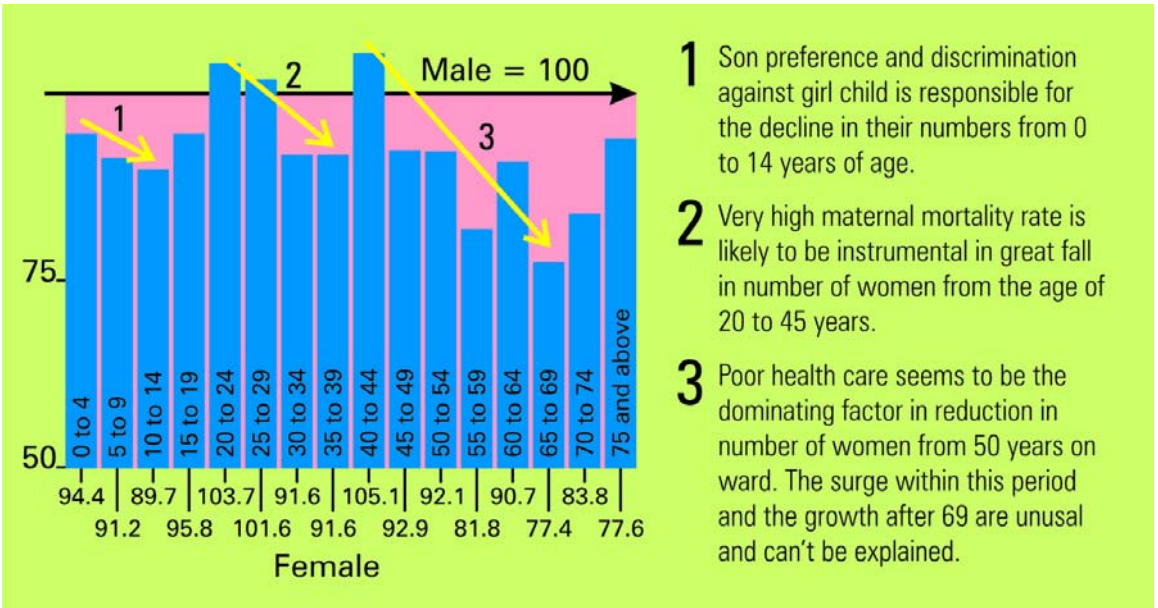
Pashtu is the mother tongue of an overwhelming majority (over 98 per cent) of Mardan district. Hindko is spoken by only 0.6 per cent and Punjabi by 0.5 per cent in the district. Most of the Punjabis live in Mardan city where the language of 2 per cent people is registered as Punjabi.

Population of male and female is not and has never been equal in most parts of the globe. Females are naturally more in numbers for a variety of reasons. United Nations figures tell us that there are more females than males in 119 of the total 191 countries in the world. It is equal in 10 and female population is less than that of males in the rest 62.

In the developed countries like Europe, USA, Australia and Japan, there are 105 women against every 100 men. The figure is 102 in the poor continent of Africa as well as in Latin America. In a sharp contrast, number of females is less than that of males in China, South Asia and Middle East.

Pakistan besides falling in the list of countries with low female to male ratio is also one of the only four countries where life expectancy at birth of females is less than that for males. In Pakistan, female population per hundred male population is 92. Situation is worst in Balochistan where the ratio is 87, while it is 89 in Sindh, 93 in Punjab and 95 in NWFP.

Number of females per 100 males in the Mardan district (sex ratio) is 93.8. This is little above the



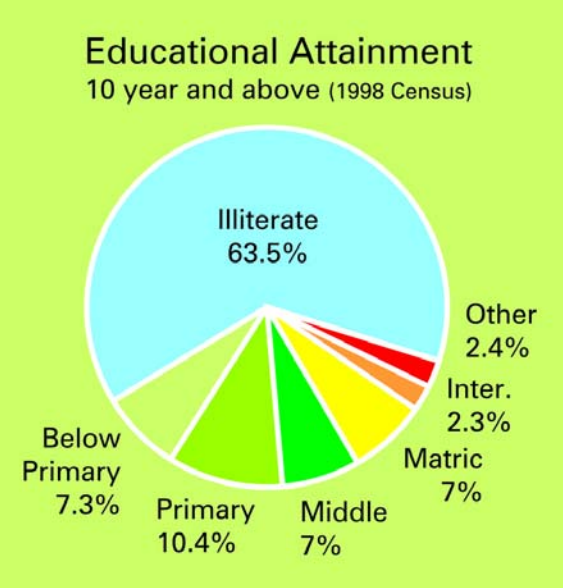
1 Son preference and discrimination against girl child is responsible for the decline in their numbers from 0 to 14 years of age.

2 Very high maternal mortality rate is likely to be instrumental in great fall in number of women from the age of 20 to 45 years.

3 Poor health care seems to be the dominating factor in reduction in number of women from 50 years on ward. The surge within this period and the growth after 69 are unusal and can't be explained.

national average of 92 but below the provincial average of 95.
If all the districts of Pakistan are arranged in descending order of sex ratio, Mardan stands at number 28 among 106 districts. Highest ratio is in Chakwal (109.1) while the lowest is in District Malir of Karachi (78.9). There are only ten districts where the ratio touches hundred-mark.
The age-wise break-up of sex ratio for Mardan follows the national trend. Typically at the national level the number of females in comparison to that of males, drops three times along the age line. The first decline starts immediately after birth as the nutritional and health care requirements of the girl child are not taken care of by the families that prefer sons over daughters. The same is true for Mardan as the sex ratio for the age group 0-4 years stands at 94 and drops by five percentage points by the age group 10-14 years.

Girls and young women play a very important role in agriculture. There are numerous house and farm chores that are solely considered the job of women. As they cross puberty, their 'productive value' increases and their numbers improve dramatically. This is the time when their 'reproductive value' also becomes important. As a national trend the number of females (per 100 males) starts improving after the age of 15. The same holds for Mardan. But the district outpaces many others in this development. While in other districts the number of young women only comes close to that of males, in Mardan it exceeds to 104 females against 100 males for the age group 20-24 years. This can be attributed, with considerable certainty, to the outflow of male adults employed mainly in security services and performing duties in other parts of the country.
The ratio starts falling nationally after touching the peak at around 25 years. As women start bearing children at this age, they face new health risks that are poorly attended. As a result their number starts declining again and continues to do till the age of 45 when they come out of the reproductive cycle. Mardan follows this trend too as the female to male ratio drops by 12 percentage points between 20 to 40 years. This is a big drop though in many other districts it is even bigger. This suggests that maternal mortality rate is likely to be high in Mardan.
The number of women rises immediately after the end of their reproductive age, nationally and provin-



Gender gap in literacy

	Overall	Male	Female	Relative
Abbottabad	57	75	39	54
Haripur	51	69	34	54
Peshawar	42	56	26	41
Kohat	44	65	23	37
Malakand	40	55	23	39
Mansehra	36	51	23	48
Nowshera	43	61	23	34
Chitral	40	58	22	37
Mardan	36	54	18	32
Swabi	36	54	18	34
Karak	42	68	18	29
D.I. Khan	31	43	18	37
Charsadda	31	47	14	28
Swat	29	43	13	29
Lower Dir	30	49	12	27
Bannu	32	51	12	22
Hangu	31	53	10	20
Laki Marwat	30	50	9	17
Tank	26	42	9	19
Buner	23	38	8	21
Upper Dir	21	36	6	17
Shangla	15	25	4	14
Kohistan	11	17	3	13
Battagram	18	29	6	21
NWFP	35	51	19	35

cially. In Mardan it is in fact highest for any age group that is 105 for 40-44 years. The respite however is short-lived as it starts declining for the third time immediately after this age.

At around the age of 50, generally the daughters-in-law take over the charge and the old women's role in the family shrinks to marginal and complementary jobs. They don't have any social security resources to draw upon for their health care. They neither have ownership of any resources like land. In comparison old men are more likely to be enjoying some pension or might be in possession of a property which makes them a better candidate for their children's attention when it comes to expenditure on health care and taking care of other old age needs.

The number of women in Mardan rises again for the age group 60-64 years and surges yet again for 70-74 years group. This is unlike the national or provincial trend and can't be explained.

There are sharp differences in the sex ratio for the rural and the urban populations. The sex ratio for rural Mardan is 94.7 while that for urban is 90.4. The three typical drops in female population are also far less visible in urban areas. Economic migrations hold the key to the demographic features of the tiny urban centers of the district.

Overall literacy rate of the district is just 36 percent according to 1998 census report. Mardan district is 9th district with respect to high literacy in the province. District Abbottabad tops the list with 56.6 per cent literacy. The literacy among male population is much higher 53 per cent as compared to the pitiful 18 per cent for females.

Within the district male population of urban Mardan has the highest literacy rate of 63 per cent and lowest is for rural females of Takht Bhai tehsil, which is 17 per cent. According to 1998 data, no district other than two of Hazara division, Haripur and Abbottabad, in the entire province surpass the 50 per cent mark for overall literacy. There were just seven district in NWFP in 1998 where literacy ratio is not below 40 percent.

The entire NWFP province shows an unfortunate pattern of low female literacy (just 19 per cent) as compared to male literacy (51 per cent). This huge difference shows that male children are prioritized over girls as the male education is attached to jobs and services while girl education is considered an additional burden on the household resources and/or affront to the social values. There are 14 districts in NWFP, where male literacy is more than 50 per cent while there is no district, which can have more than 50 per cent literate women population. The best district in female literacy is Abbottabad where only 39 per cent females are literate. Keeping aside the two Hazara districts of Abbottabad (39) and Haripur (37) there is only Peshawar (26) where one fourth of female population is literate. Rest is a sorry tale of neglect. There are seven districts in the province where female literacy is under 10 per cent. In Kohistan only 3 per cent while in Batagram only one per cent of female population of ten year plus age is literate.

Mardan is no exception to the provincial trend. In comparative terms, there are 32 literate women against 100 literate men in Mardan. Kohistan is at bottom where only 13 women are literate against every 100 literate men. It is important to note that Mianwali district is the worst in Punjab in male-female literacy ratio and there are 35 literate women against 100 literate men here. It is worth mentioning here that this analysis counts only the settled districts of the province and if the Frontier Regions and tribal agencies are included the picture gets bleaker. For instance the female literacy rate in FR region of Dera Ismail Khan is just one per cent.

A later study, Social and Living Standard Measurement Survey 2004-05, notes that overall literacy in Mardan district has accrued up to 48 percent with 68 per cent male and 30 per cent female literacy.

School enrollment for children aged 5 to 9 in NWFP was 44 percent (excluding Katchi class and 78 including Katchi class) during the year 2003-2004. The difference between the districts in enrollment figures is quite big. The Hazara division and districts of Karak and Peshawar have a good ratio of net enrollment while in the rough hilly terrains the ratio is very low. It is over 70 percent in Abbottabad, 64 in Mansehra, 63 in Haripur and 62 in Karak while in Kohistan and Shangla districts it is 27 per cent. Net enrolment rate at primary level in district Mardan (55) is higher than the provincial average and the district stands sixth in the descending list of districts. It means that almost 11 in every 20 children of school-going age are going to schools in Mardan.

According to official data 79 out of every 1000

A typical household

Average household size in Mardan district is 8.4 persons. The urban households are smaller with an average of 7.5 persons.

- Households having four or less family members make only 16 percent of the total households in the district while 52.3 percent consists of eight or more family members.
- 27.5 percent of the total families live in one room houses, although their average family size is 6 persons.
- On an average each housing unit has 2.3 rooms and each room houses 3.65 persons.

Only 6 percent of the houses in rural area were on rent while the figure was 34.4 percent for the urban areas.

- 13 percent of the houses in rural areas were aged less than 5 years while the figure for urban areas was 11 percent.
- 43.5 percent of the houses in villages have walls made of baked bricks while the rest have kaccha walls. In towns however 74.7 percent of the houses are built with baked bricks. Similarly in urban areas 36.6 percent of the roofs are built with reinforced concrete and 53.8 percent with wood while in rural areas only 11.7 percent houses have RCC roofs and the majorities (80.1 percent) are made of wooden planks.
- 19 percent of the rural households have a hand pump and 14.3 percent have tap water within the house while in urban areas 32.8 percent depend on tap water and 31.6 percent use hand pump for daily use water.
- In towns 93.3 percent have electricity connections while in villages 81.1 percent have this facility and the rest burn oil for light.
- 54.6 percent use natural gas as cooking fuel in urban areas with the rest burning wood or kerosene oil while in rural areas only 1.7 percent has gas connections while the rest burn wood for cooking their food.
- In rural area 43.3 percent of the houses do not have a latrine while in urban area 16.1 percent houses lack this facility.
- 20.7 percent of the rural households have access to television while the ratio for urban areas in 40.9 percent.

newborn infants in NWFP die before reaching their first birth day. This is called Infant Mortality Rate (IMR). For Mardan district, the IMR is 76. This is a little better than the provincial average. The best in the province is for Haripur (66) and the worst for Kohistan (104).

District	IMR	District	IMR
Kohistan	104.1	Chitral	76.3
Batagram	98.5	Hangu	75.9
Shangla	98.0	Bunner	74.6
Swat	95.7	Nowshera	73.4
Tank	91.1	Kohat	72.8
Upper Dir	90.2	Abbotabad	72.1
Swabi	83.1	Mansehra	70.9
DI Khan	82.9	Peshawar	70.8
Bannu	82.0	Karak	69.3
Lower Dir	81.2	Malakand	67.5
Lakki Marwat	77.0	Haripur	65.9
Charsadda	76.7		
Mardan	76.4	**NWFP**	**79.0**

Pakistan in general is ranked at the bottom ten countries of the world with regard to availability of hospital beds. The country has only 7 beds for every 10,000 persons. The availability of hospital beds per 10,000 persons stands at 6 in NWFP province. This average is 165 in Japan, 30 in Sri Lanka, 17 in Iran and 13 in Iraq. On an average, there is just one doctor for more than 6,000 people in NWFP.

Mardan is part of Peshawar valley that was the home of Khudai Khidmatgar movement in earlier part of the last century. Utmanzai of Charsadda district, headquarter of the movement and home town of Bacha Khan family is just a few kilometers away. The history of popular politics of the area revolves around this movement. Elections in the district have been a two way fight between the secular and nationalist Khudai Khidmatgars and the religious elements lead by Mullahs till the emergence of Pakistan People's Party in late 1960s. It has now become a three way struggle with Awami National Party and the PPP as the main players and the religious leaders as minor partners waiting only for occasional gains.

In the first general elections held in 1970, two full and one shared constituencies were allotted to the then Mardan district. The shared constituency included parts of Mardan and Hazara districts. Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan was a candidate of his own Muslim League faction from this constituency. He won this seat quite easily by defeating National Awami Party's Abdul Aziz Khan with a margin of over seven thousand votes. Khan Qayyum had won an exclusive Hazara and a Peshawar seat as well. His faction of the Muslim League was against military rule and Ayub propped official version of the Muslim League. Just like the PPP, he drove along the anti-Ayub fervor to perform well in the elections. His party later joined the PPP government and he remained Federal Interior Minister till the next elections in 1977. On the two exclusively Mardan district constituencies, one seat each was shared by PPP and NAP (Wali) in 1970. The erstwhile rivals, the Surkhposh and the Mullahs, joined hands to oppose the formidable PPP in 1977. Mullahs and NAP were part of Pakistan National Alliance. Mardan was allotted four national seats for these elections. PPP could get only one of these. Begum Nasim Wali Khan was one of the alliance's

winners from the district.

1985's non-party elections were boycotted by the PPP and other political parties. The boycott seemingly let the religious figures enter into electoral politics more successfully. Maualna Gauhar Rehman of Jamat-e-Islami won from Mardan in the elections marked by low turnout. Nawabzada Abdul Ghafoor Khan, Fazal Dad Khan and Yaqoob Khan from known political families of the district also made it to the parliament.

By 1988 elections, another district namely Swabi was carved out of Mardan district and the number of national constituencies for the district was reduced to two. On one seat PPP candidate defeated quite easily the Awami National Party candidate Azam Khan Hoti. In the other constituency, PPP candidate lost in the four way fight to JUI (F)'s candidate with a slender margin of 900 votes.

In 1990 elections, all the right-wing parties opposing PPP were united on the platform of IJI and probably had a secret seat adjustment with ANP. IJI had no candidate on one of Mardan's seats that was won by ANP's Azam Khan Hoti by overpowering PPP's Khanzada Khan. On the other seat there was no ANP candidate and IJI's Mir Afzal Khan defeated PPP's candidate.

Three years later PML-N was in disarray and both the Mardan seats were clinched by PPP. Khanzada Khan won over ANP's Muhammad Sareer easily while the contest was very close on the other seat. Haji Yaqoob Khan of PPP defeated Azam Khan Hoti of ANP with a margin of just 410 votes.

In 1997 elections, PPP performed poorly and ANP swept the district clean. ANP's margin of victory was

also big. In fact on one seat the PPP candidate wasn't even a runner-up.

In the new delimitations for 2002 elections Mardan was allotted three national constituencies. All the religious parties joined to form Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA). The US forces had just entered Afghanistan to unseat the Taliban government and destroy Al Qaida network. Taliban are ethnically Pakhtuns that have almost always ruled over Afghanistan. But the new power equation brought non-Pakhtun ethnic minorities of Afghanistan to the fore for the first time. Taliban became not only the vanguard of Al Qaida brand of Islam but also started representing Pakhtun penchant for rule over all of Afghanistan. This amalgamation of anti-Americanism, love for Islam and Pushtun nationalism provided the united religious parties an edge over others in most parts of NWFP. The party romped home with a thumping and unprecedented majority and alone formed government in the province for the first time.

MMA won all the three constituencies from Mardan as none of the two traditional political forces could put any resistance to this new alliance. Maulana Ataur Rehman, brother of JUI (F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman was among the winners from the district. MMA however could not retain its popularity till the next elections held in 2008 and the district's politics again started revolving around the PPP and the ANP. Both the parties won one seat each while the third one fell to MMA as the votes were split between three heavy weights here.

The provincial electoral politics in the district also revolves around traditional ANP-PPP rivalry with occasional share for Muslim League and religious figures with the exception of MMA sweep in 2002. Although there are some influential families including Hotis and Mohmands but the political process in the district revolves around parties. An evidence of this is that independent candidates have never succeeded in the district's politics.

In 1988 elections, five out of the six provincial seats in the district were bagged by PPP while one was pocketed by ANP. In 1990 elections, PPP was washed out as three seats each were shared by ANP and IJI. Three years later IJI got nothing and the six Mardan seats were equally shared by ANP and PPP. In the 1997 elections, four seats were clinched by ANP while two were bagged by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz.

The 2002 elections were a nightmare for mainstream political forces of Mardan. Eight provincial constituencies were awarded to the district for these elections, out of which seven were won by MMA while only one seat was grabbed by PPP candidate Abdul Akbar. In the 2008 elections, however, PPP and ANP bounced back. PPP got four provincial seats while ANP managed to win three. Only one seat was won by MMA. The real competition on most of the constituencies took place between ANP and PPP. Serving Chief Minister Amir Haider Khan Hoti was elected from PF-23 Mardan I.

NWFP politics from people to power

Red shirts and green pastures

Khudai Khidmatgar literally meaning servants of God was a social reform movement manned by the volunteers motivated and organized by Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan. It was founded in 1929. The movement though mostly participated by Pakhtun Muslims was secular in its ideology. It soon became a political movement that wanted an end to the British rule. It was organized like an army yet it employed non-violence as its resistance strategy. Its members wore red shirts that became the strongest identity feature of the movement. Khudai Khidmatgar Tehreek is also known as Surkhposh (red shirt) movement.

Ghafar Khan, popularly known as Bacha Khan was a renowned social and political figure even before the launch of this movement. He was famous for his vigorous campaigns to promote modern education among Pakhtuns to help mainstream them. It is believed that at its peak Khudai Khidmatgar movement had one hundred thousand members.

The British were deadly opposed to the movement and treated its non-violent members very brutally. The movement's association with red color that in those days was a known symbol of socialist revolutionaries, made the British Imperialists almost hysterical in their responses. They over ran a gathering of red shirts at Qisa Khawani Bazaar, Peshawar in April 1930 and fired at the peaceful protesters. The protests were sparked by the arrest of Bacha Khan. Some estimates put the death toll of this massacre at four hundred.

The massacre shot the movement to prominence as the event sparked protests all across the Indian subcontinent. The movement also realized that it needed to have allies within the larger Indian polity. Bacha Khan had developed an ideological association with Mahtama Gandhi who championed the cause of non-violent resistance to British rule all over India. Khudai Khidmatgar Tehreek joined Indian National Congress in August 1931.

Government of India Act 1935 promised limited autonomy to provinces of India and elected provincial governments were formed in 1937. Khudai Khidmatgar won 19 of the 40 seats of NWFP but was denied the right to rule by the governor who installed Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayum Khan as the first chief minister of the province. He however had to face a no-confidence move and was replaced by Abdul Jabbar Khan (known as Dr Khan) of Khudai Khidmatgar. He was elder brother of Ghafar Khan. Bacha Khan had been barred from entering the province for seven years before these elections.

Indian National Congress raised pressure on the British government for granting the country complete freedom after it joined the World War II. The party had formed governments in eight of the eleven provinces which all resigned in 1939. Dr Khan's government in NWFP also followed the party decision.

By that time Khudai Khidmatgar movement started facing internal rifts. The lower middle class party had been at loggerheads with the British bureaucracy throughout its government who worked to fan factional fights over minor perks and petty issues. Bacha Khan wanted to keep out of the electoral politics for internal reasons but Congress did not want to lose a province. Khudai Khidmatgar again won 31

of the 50 NWFP seats in 1946-47 elections but again Muslim League formed the government. Dr Khan, however, soon parted ways with his brother and toppled the Muslim League government to once again become the chief minister of the province. His government was later dismissed by the newly created central government of Pakistan on 22 August 1947. He again found favor with the new rulers to become the first chief minister of West Pakistan in 1955. This was despite that Bacha Khan's Khudai Khidmatgar Tehreek vehemently opposed the One-Unit policy that created the province of West Pakistan. The movement was barred from participating in 1951 elections by the Muslim League government. Dr Khan probably exemplifies the rift within the Khudai Khidmatgar cadres and leaders.

After the creation of Pakistan Khudai Khidmatgar became the victim of state oppression as the Muslim League hated it for siding with the Congress. It was legally banned as anti-state party and barred from participating in the new country's first provincial elections. The 1951 elections were obviously won by the Muslim League with a majority. Yet Bacha Khan the main pillar of the movement held his ground, maintained his popularity and decided to side with the nationalists within Pakistan.

A number of left-leaning nationalist parties of Pakistan joined hands in 1957 to form National Awami Party (NAP). Khudai Khidmatgar led by Bacha Khan was part of it. All political parties in the country were however banned the next year as Gen Ayub Khan imposed martial law. The parties were revived in 1962. But the two clusters of NAP, one led by Maulana Bhashani of Bengal and the other by Wali Khan, son of Bacha Khan had had differences on a number of issues. Many political analysts believe that Bashani sided with Beijing while Wali Khan with Moscow in the Sio-Russian rift of those Cold War days. The party finally split into Bashani and Wali groups in 1967.

NAP (Wali) performed well in the country's first general elections in 1970. It won largest number of seats in Balochistan and formed government there. It stood second in NWFP and formed coalition government with Jamiat Ulemae Islam. Bhutto dismissed the NAP government in Balochistan in 73 on treason charges and the NWFP government resigned in protest. Bhutto banned NAP (Wali) in 75. Nationalist parties of the country united themselves again in 1986 under the name Awami National Party with Wali Khan as its president and Rasul Bakhsh Palejo of Sindh's Awami Tehreek as its general secretary. The party allied itself with Pakistan People's Party in the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD). After 1988 elections ANP and PPP formed coalition government in NWFP. They however parted ways after 1990 elections as ANP again formed government in the province in alliance with Nawaz Sharif's IJI. No other party constituting the ANP could show considerable performance in elections. This and political differences changed the ANP from an allied party of nationalists from across the country to a party of Pakhtun nationalists alone. In fact Pakhtuns of northern Balochistan also stopped associating themselves with the party while the non-Pakhtun population of NWFP is also alien to the party. This includes Hindko speaking majority population of Haripur, Abbottabad and Mansehra districts and Seraiki speaking majority of Dera Ismail Khan. The political base of ANP is now limited to the Pakhtun areas of NWFP where Ghaffar Khan founded Khudai Khidmatgar movement around a century ago. The party is now headed by Ghafar Khan's grandson and still flies a red flag.

The area most suitable for agriculture in NWFP stretches from the foothills of Swat up to Kabul River and this includes Mardan district. Mardan is a fertile plain with very good rainfall. The district also possesses a Punjab-like canal system and that makes Mardan and Swabi the hub of cash crops, tobacco and sugarcane. Mardan is one of the two biggest producers of fine tobacco in the country and ranks at the top in many other crops in the province.

Mardan is among the few districts of NWFP with high land-use intensity. Little more than a quarter of the cultivable land is not cultivated in NWFP. The southern districts and the districts in hilly north have very low land use intensity but as far as Peshawar valley (comprising Peshawar, Nowshera, Charsadda, Mardan and Swabi districts) is concerned the intensity is almost 99 per cent. For Mardan, it is 98 per cent. Almost all the cultivated area is irrigated through an elaborate canal system.

According to Agriculture Census 2000 every one in 20 farming families of NWFP belongs to Mardan districts. Similarly one in every 25 cultivable acres of the province is there in Mardan district.

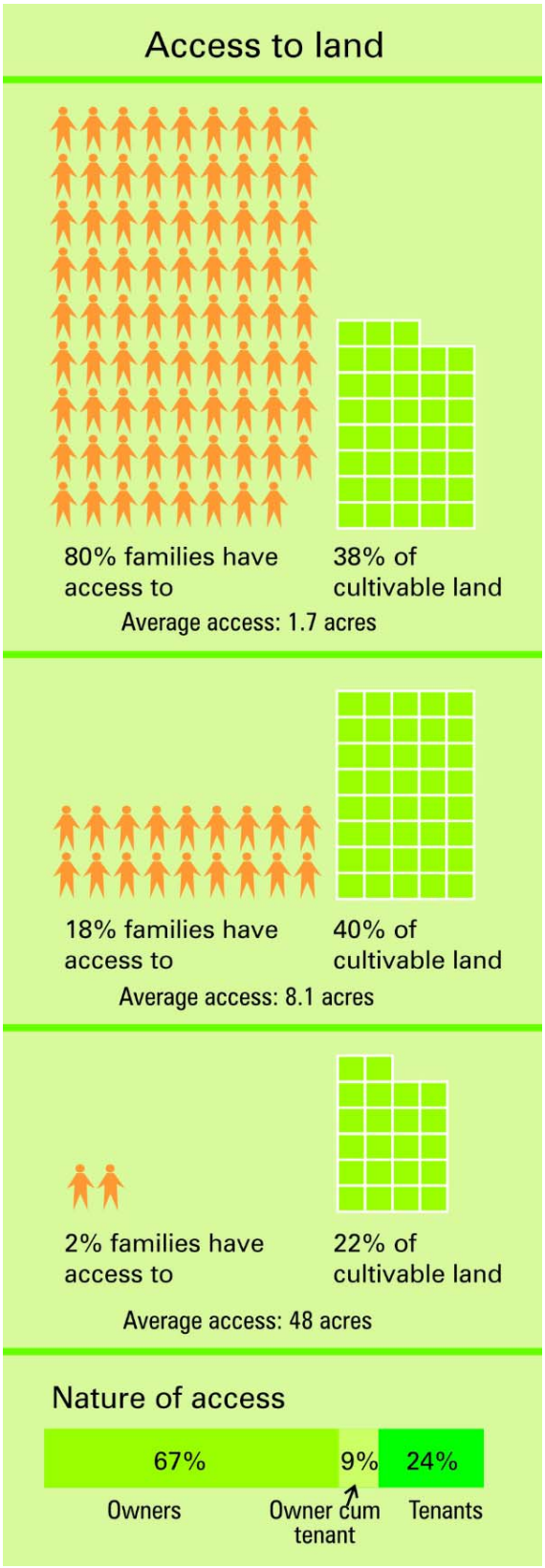
Despite the fact that Mardan is second most populous urban centre in NWFP, four in every five persons live in villages. According to an estimate 165,644 families live in rural Mardan, out of which, 62,459 families have some kind of access to land. This means that 38 per cent of Mardan's rural families have access to farmland while the rest over 100,000 thousand families are landless and rely on services in security agencies, trade, rural service industry, livestock or simply agricultural labor for their livelihood.

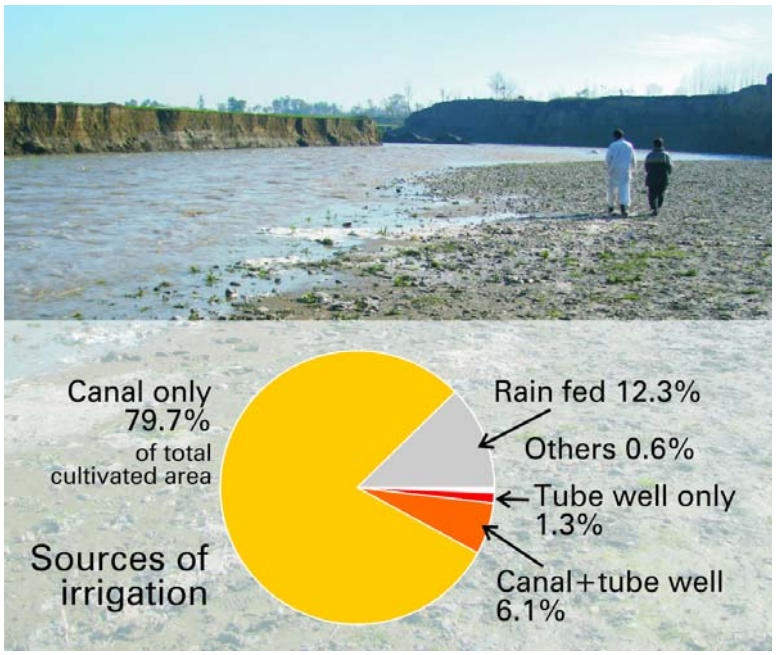
Of the farming community two third (67 percent) is land owner while 9 per cent are owner-cum-tenants. It means that more than 9,000 land owning families acquire an additional piece of land on rent. Around 15 thousand families are tenants only. They make up

24 per cent of the farming community. It implies that one fourth of the farming community has adopted this occupation despite the fact that they own no land in the district. The high tenancy rate is common in areas where cash crops dominate the cropping pattern. Another example is the potato-growing Punjab belt of Okara, Sahiwal and Pakpattan districts. Dominance of tobacco and sugar in Mardan is the likely reason for high tenancy rate.

Access to land within the farming families of Mardan is highly unequal. It is dominated by very small farmers. Four in every five farmers of the district are small farmers with an average access to just 1.7 acres. They make an overwhelming part of the farming community but have access to just 38 per cent of the total cultivable land. On the other hand the medium farmers with an average access to 8 acres make 38 per cent of the community while they enjoy the same ratio of access to (38 per cent) cultivable land. The large farmers are just two per cent of the community but they enjoy big land holdings with an average access of 38 acres and control over 16 per cent of the cultivable land of the district. There are just 96 families, who enjoy the control of huge 6 per cent of the cultivable land of the district with average access to 149 acres per family. The combined share of large and very large farmers (2 percent) in the district's total cultivable land is 22 percent.

According to 2004 Agriculture Machinery Census, there is one tractor and its implements available for 22 farming families in the district. Mardan is third on the list of districts with respect to more machinery use in the province. Mardan's machinery use is far





better than the provincial average. In NWFP, on an average one tractor is available to 58 farming families while for Punjab, one tractor is readily available to 12 farming families. The best district is Malakand in NWFP where availability equals that of Punjab. Second best district is Hangu where 20 families have access to one tractor. Mardan's ratio, though high on NWFP standards is still behind the Punjab average despite the fact that Mardan's soil is no inferior to Punjab's. The worst district in NWFP with respect to machinery use is Battagram where there are only 56 tractors in the entire district.

The main source of irrigation in the district is canals. The Upper Swat Canal irrigates mostly the Mardan district and the Lower Swat Canal irrigates south-western part of the district. Tube-wells and lift pumps also supplement the canal irrigation. Three lift irrigation schemes are operational in the district namely New Mayar Lift Irrigation Scheme, Old Mayar Lift Irrigation Scheme and Arabi Banda Lift Irrigation Scheme. Some main rivers, streams and canals in Mardan district include Main Canal RD, Disty No 7, Disty No 8, Koragh Branch, Sheikh Yousaf Minor, Disty No 9, Minor No 1/9. Tube-well use is not common due to easy availability of canal water in the district. According to Machinery Census 2004, there were only 520 tube-wells in the entire district.

Low access to land of the overwhelming majority of farmers coupled with easy availability of canal water has made cash crops to dominate the crop pattern in Mardan. Wheat and maize are the main food crops in the district. Mardan considerably contributes to the production of sugarcane in the province and stands second in terms of acreage and production after Swabi. At least one third of the district's area is allotted to sugarcane. Mardan tops the list in province and the country as well in producing the other sugar yielding commodity that is sugar beat. The crop is yet in experimental phase in the country and many project it as a replacement of tobacco. Mardan is the only district in the country that produces fine Virginia tobacco. It is the second biggest tobacco growing district of the province and the country after the neighboring Swabi, the tobacco of later district, many believe, is not of superior quality. Mardan dedicates 8 per cent of its total area to tobacco, which is a very high ratio compared with other districts and crops.

Crop	Production rank in NWFP	Country
Wheat	2	49
Maize	2	10
Sugarcane	2	11
Tobacco	2	2
Vegetables	2	34
Sugar beet	1	1
Barley	3	6
Plums	1	2
Citrus	1	28
Pears	2	2

In minor crops, Mardan is second biggest producer of vegetables in the province. In fruits, Mardan's specialty is plum as almost one percent of total cultivated area of the district is allotted to this fruit. Only Kalat of Balochistan produces more plums than Mardan in the entire country. In pears, it is behind Swat only. Garlic, potato and tomatoes are also grown on relatively wider scale. In cereals, barley and jowar are also grown at significant scales.

In rural Mardan district livestock is as big an economic activity as farming. Out of a total of 166 thousand rural families of the district, 62 thousand are farming families. The families rearing milch animals are, however, more than 89 thousand. If it is assumed that all the farming families have access to milch animals (as is the practice in agrarian districts), there are around 27 thousand landless rural families that keep cows and/or buffaloes for milk. This makes up a little more than a quarter of all the landless. In terms of food security this means that these families though do not have direct access to grains yet they have secured milk supply.

Mardan district is a livestock friendly district of the province. It stands third in terms of more number of livestock holding families after Dera Ismail Khan and Lower Dir. In cattle category no other district of the province matches the number of cow rearing families of Mardan district. According to 2006 census there are more than 79 thousand families that rear cows and bulls in the district. Mardan is second largest district after Abbottabad in buffalo rearing as around 43 thousand families in the district reported keeping buffalos in 2006. Few families (only 5 thousand approximately) rear sheep while the families rearing goats are more in number.

In Mardan district, every livestock holding family owns three cows and a buffalo. Average herd size for sheep is 11 animals. The families rearing goats are little less than 52,000 with an average herd size

of 4 animals. There are over 2,436 camels in the district and 1,595 horses and asses while the population of domestic poultry in the district is around 1.6 million.

Animal ownership pattern

	As percent of total		Average
	Families	Animals	herd size
Small	98	87	2
Medium	2	9	9
Large	0.2	4	34

Contrary to the extremely uneven access to land, livestock ownership is quite evenly distributed. The small herd owners make 98 per cent of the community and own 87 per cent of livestock. Medium herd owners make 2 per cent of the community and have access to 9 per cent animal stock. The large herd owners are just 0.2 per cent of the community and own 4 per cent of the livestock. This implies that livestock, like farming, is the activity of very small entrepreneurs and the animal farming on large commercial scale is rare in the district.

Though agriculture is the major economic activity in Mardan district, it is not able to provide a sustainable livelihood to the entire population in direct or indirect manner. Mardan has a very limited industrial base though it fairs well in comparison to many other districts of the province. According to 1998 census, there were 66 factories established in Mardan's Industrial Zone, the majority of which were idle. As Mardan is rich in sugarcane, tobacco, poplar and sheesham wood, there are a number of industrial units here producing sugar, cigarettes, match boxes, furniture, marble, flour and steel. 42 per cent of the total employed population is associated with agriculture while only three percent earn their livelihood from industries in the district.

Around 15 per cent of the Mardan's total employed population is attached with construction industry while another 22 per cent seeks livelihood from elementary occupations. The workers linked to construction and elementary occupations are more or less daily wage laborers. Labor thus becomes the second largest source of employment in Mardan district. Sugar and tobacco are traded on large scale in Mardan district. According to some estimates almost one in every 10 employed person of Mardan is attached to this trade.

Tobacco: Backbone of Mardan's economy

Tobacco is the backbone of Mardan's economy. The district is the second biggest producer of the commodity in the country with the neighboring Swabi claiming the top position. In Pakistan, although tobacco cultivation occupies a relatively small area of 0.27 percent of the total irrigated land in the country, it is of great value for the government as a source of revenue, employment and foreign exchange earnings. According to Pakistan Tobacco Board statistics, during 2004-2005, the federal exchequer received an amount of Rs 28 billion as central excise duty and sales tax on tobacco products. In excise duty head only tobacco contributes 20 per cent against sugar's 11 per cent and cotton's 3 per cent to the overall revenue. Being a highly labor-intensive crop, it is claimed that about eighty thousand persons are involved in its cultivation, fifty thousands are engaged in 26 factories of the tobacco industry and another one million find indirect employment. This employment is shared by a number of NWFP districts including Mardan.

Tobacco is the mainstay of Mardan's agriculture. It is the only district in the country which produces fine Virginia tobacco. The soil pH here is perfect for crops like sugarcane, tobacco and citrus etc.

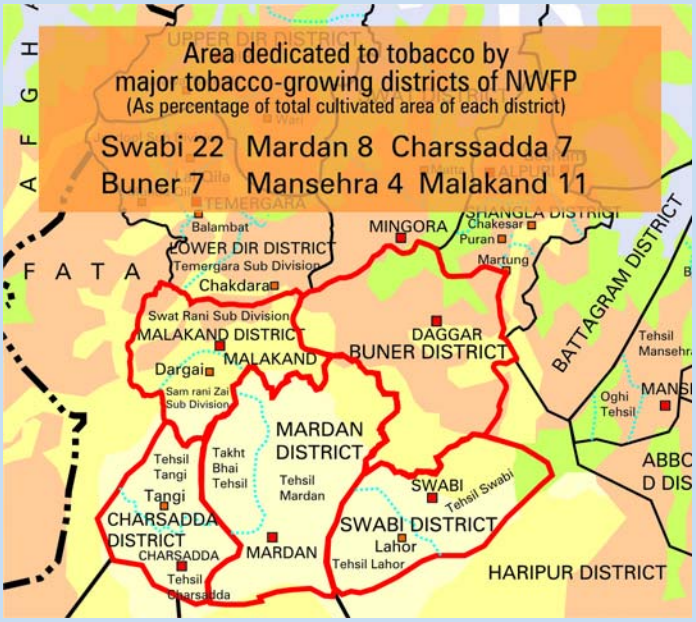
Though the exact number of families attached to tobacco cultivation in the district is not available with officials, a careful estimate based on the agriculture census data puts it at around 4,500 farming families. Tobacco cultivating families make seven per cent of the farming community of the district.

Agriculture Census 2000 suggests that tobacco growing is a favorite business of medium farmers with an access to over-5 but under-25 acres of land. Very large farmers and very small farmers cultivate less tobacco. Very large farmers prefer sugarcane while very small farmers are more inclined to wheat and maize cultivation. The above table gives an idea of tobacco preference by the farmers

Who grows tobacco?

Farm size (acres)	Tobacco farms*
Under 1	2
1 to under 2.5	3
2.5 to under 5	5
5 to under 7.5	5
7.5 to under 12.5	5
12.5 to 25	10
25 to under 50	2
50 to under 100	0
100 to under 150	0
150 and above	0
Total average	4

* As percent of the total farms in each category



of various categories.

Bulk of the tobacco produced in Pakistan is of the cigarette-type, as more than three fourth of total tobacco produced is consumed in making cigarettes. NWFP province contributes more than three fourth of cigarette tobacco to the national production. Pakistan is one of the big producers of very fine (Flue-Cured Virginia) FCV tobacco in the world. The non-cigarette types of tobaccos called Rustica are mostly used for hookah/chillum, niswar (sniffing). Rustica tobacco is an inferior quality tobacco plant that is grown on small farms all over the country. Mardan hosts a research station for FCV and Rustica tobacco.

The cigarette-type (FCV) tobacco is perhaps the only crop in Pakistan, cultivation of which is strictly controlled and farmers are provided quotas for production. Pakistan Tobacco Board, a government body, receives tobacco leaf demand estimates from the industry and divides the total demand into quota permits and distributes it among the farmers. It is important to note that 3 in every 10 acres hosting FCV in Pakistan are in Mardan. This quota system is introduced to ensure a fair share to farmers and keep a check on surplus production that could depress the market price of the commodity. PTB announces different prices for various varieties of tobacco before the commencement of the season. PTB claims to keep a check on the purchase process through Vigilance Committees to ensure transparency in the payments to farmers.

"The tobacco manufacturing and/ or exporting companies are required to indicate their tobacco requirements to the Pakistan Tobacco Board (PTB) by the 21st of October each year in respect of the ensuing crop. After lengthy discussions between the Board and other stakeholders i.e. buyers, growers, dealers, etc. and taking into account factors like crop size, prices, domestic usage and exports, these figures are

finalized. The purpose of this exercise which is carried out diligently each year is to ensure a balance between the demand for tobacco by the companies and the crop size", reads the official document of Pakistan Tobacco Board.

The farmers, who cultivate tobacco without quotas produce the crop at their own 'free-market' risk.

A quota is valid for the production of a tobacco on a hectre of land that is five jareeb, a local measure, which according to official estimates can produce 2,100 kgs of cured tobacco. Farmers, however produce up to 2,500 kgs of tobacco from five jareebs. A quota simply means that company is bound to purchase from a quota holding farmer 2,100 kgs of cured tobacco on not less than the minimum price announced for that specific season.

The government fixes price of tobacco keeping in view the increase in cost of production of tobacco, rate of inflation, world tobacco trends, increases allowed in prices of other agricultural commodities and whole-sale price index of raw materials for the industry. The farmers contest this claim by asserting that international market offers much higher prices for FCV as well as the inflation in input prices are not considered while calculating the minimum price.

The system does not work smoothly anyway. There are many loopholes that are effectively exploited by the industry for extra gains. The industry intends not only to pay less to the farmers, it also looks for undocumented purchases as it helps it in evading taxes on its value added products as well.

Tobacco is a 180-day crop, the seedlings of which are planted in the field in March and harvested between July and August before starting the curing process. The tobacco harvesting, curing and marketing season spreads over a period of nearly three months; July to September. Unlike other crops, tobacco growers have to process the harvested tobacco before bringing it to the factory gate. This cost-intensive processing is called curing, in which tobacco leaves are dried and converted into raw tobacco. For this purpose fire-wood furnaces are used.

10 grams of seeds are required to grow a jareeb of tobacco. All the seeds are provided by the tobacco companies, namely Lakson and Pakistan Tobacco Company, free of cost to farmers. Besides seed, factories take no other responsibility. Some farmers bear the expenses themselves while others seek finances from banks and private moneylenders on high interest rate. If a farmer fails to gather finances from any source, he sells his quota to an affording fellow and grows some other crop. While canal-water is abundantly available fertilizers, pesticides, machinery, maintenance, harvesting and processing costs are quite high.

The calculations suggest that the farmers with rented farm get almost nothing except the money equaling minimum wages for a laborer fixed by the government. However, the land owning farmers can make upto Rs 56,000 in income. The facing column gives details of expenses and income from tobacco cultivation. The values given in table are contested by many farmers who claim that SARDO is a pro-industry organization.

Many farmers complain that they never get the announced price as industry makes deductions on one pretext or the other. Factories have set their own

Social roots of tobacco plant

Haji Abdul Nabi is an old man in his late 70's. A tobacco farmer and a social activist, Haji has a dynamic and vibrant personality. He is the founder of Sarhad Agriculture and Rural Development Organization (SARDO). Fluent in English, Urdu and Pashto Haji sahib has all the figures on his fingertips and understands the nitty-gritty of international trade and trade agreements like WTO. Named Baba-e-Tamaku (father of tobacco) by the local people, he attempts to advocate the interests of tobacco farmers, flays government policies and keeps a soft corner for the industry.

He contests the negative impacts of tobacco on human health and sees international conspiracy behind the enactment of anti-smoking law in Pakistan. "It is a conspiracy by Jews to deprive the Pakhtuns of their cash crop," he says adding that it is the excessive use of anything that is injurious to health. "See, many people die of water born diseases, hundreds die of sugar and salt related illnesses but no one calls for banning sugar, salt or water". He thinks that tobacco consumption is not prohibited in Islam. "Tobacco consumption is disliked (makrooh) but not prohibited (haram)," he goes on to say. Haji sahib provides the fellow growers with the moral ground to continue with this business.

He strongly believes that no crop can replace tobacco. "Government on the pressure of World Health Organization and some national organizations is planning to replace tobacco with citrus but this is practically impossible. Citrus bears fruit after five years. What will the farmers do in these years?" he questions.

He also rejects what he spells as 'undue' criticism of industry saying that it is the cordial farmer-industry relation, which can ensure better return to farmers. He instead blames the government for wrong calculation of input cost. "We have calculated that an amount Rs 87.50 is spent on inputs on a kilogram of tobacco but the government has fixed the price at Rs 82. It is unfair treatment". He knows how to play on the raw nerves. "Had the share of big brother (Punjab) in tobacco production been more than what it is now, the situation would have been different altogether," he asserts.

Haji further says that NWFP farmers are paid way less than the international prices despite the fact that tobacco is one of the leading sources of revenue for the government. While admitting that deductions are done on the part of industry, he says farmers are more or less paid as per announced price.

quality standards and assess the quality of each lot themselves. Farmers can by no means challenge those assessments. The factories check moisture content and color of dried leaves and grade the produce with A,B,C,D and A1, B2, C3 etc. There are no provisions in the law about the quality standards and related deductions. According to farmers tobacco with little moisture is subjected to 15 per cent deduction in purchase price while the discolored produce is subjected to 17 per cent price deduction. Some farmers report that they were given Rs 39 per kg rate instead of the announced Rs 82 after the deductions during last season (2008). These deductions are essentially illegal and their level varies according to the supply situation.

Apart from deductions, the farmers suffer in case of surplus production in other ways too. The surplus is calculated on the basis of officially determined average expected yield which many complain is always set below the actual production. The surplus is sold at open market points called mandis that are not legally bound to follow the minimum purchase price rules. Local farmers believe that these sales points are actually the illegal purchase points of the same factories and they buy the surplus on throwaway prices. If the production is low, the mandis offer somewhat reasonable prices. If supply exceeds the expected demand the deductions are higher and many and if the supply falls short of the demand the deductions go down. The overall production thus follows a multi-year cycle. When the farmers make loss in tobacco in a season, they stop growing it and opt for other crops. This trend leads to short supply that results in lower deductions and better returns to farmers. This

Balance sheet

Sarhad Agriculture and Rural Development is an organization, working for the welfare of farmers. The organization has developed the following chart of approximate expenses and income from a jareeb of tobacco.

Cost and income calculations 2008-09

Description	Cost (PKR)
Seedlings and transplantation	4,500
Machinery cost	15,000
Maintenance	6,500
Manures and fertilizers	34,000
Water	500
Pesticides	8,000
Harvesting	5,600
Curing	8,300
Packing and transportation	1,600
Tobacco-cess	2,000
Land rent	50,000
Labor	36,000
Total cost	**154,000**
Cost per kg	64
Average production	2,400
Minimum price announced	82
Actual average price	75
	(Rs per kg for 2009)
Total Income	**180,000**
Net gain	6,000
Monthly income for tenant	1,000
Monthly income for owner	9,333

in turn attracts back the farmers to this crop and better supply again suppresses the prices and the farmer comes back to the point where he had left. The quotas or contracts, easily available in one season become a very precious and most sought after document a few years later.

The repeated cycle is frustrating many farmers. According to farmers of Shergarh area of Mardan, the acreage of tobacco has fallen by 50 per cent in last five years. Though official figures dispute their claim, the acreage has anyway substantially dropped in Mardan.

Auction system of India

The Senate Sub-committee on Agriculture recommended on March 5, 2009 that minimum support price for FCV tobacco be set at Rs 150 per kg for 2009 crop against Pakistan Tobacco Board's (PTB). suggested Rs 82. The support price for the past season was Rs 67. The sub committee was reviewing concerns of tobacco farmers for past few months. It also heard the point views of the cigarette manufacturers and officials of Pakistan Tobacco Board. The committee also recommended that auction system

Inhaling humiliation

Muhammad Ayaz is a young farmer from a Takht Bhai village. He has been growing tobacco since last many years. He owns seven acres of land and gets one quota for growing tobacco. Well-educated Ayaz who feeds a family of nine is fed-up with tobacco cultivation and is considering switching to some other crop. "We the growers of Mardan don't have many options except to grow tobacco. Sugarcane cultivation is even more risky and orchards are very cost-intensive," he says.

"Look, it is hell of a job. You have to grow crop, harvest it and then go through an arduous process of curing, which is time consuming and needs expertise and money. We have to establish a furnace and the quality of tobacco depends upon the quality of furnace. If anything goes wrong at any stage from the selection of furnace type to its installation and the process, the produce is subjected to deduction." He claims that he in his entire tobacco growing experience never got the minimum announced price. "In this season (2008) my produce was subjected to 20% deduction. I got less money than I can earn from a job in Islamabad," he believes.

"It is due to the tactics of the factory owners that almost half of the tobacco growers have abandoned the crop and remaining farmers are seriously thinking of joining them," he says. Ayaz thinks that the humiliation, the farmers suffer at the hands of the industry is deliberately done to promote undocumented trade, which helps the factories evade taxes and is detrimental to the interests of farmers.

should be adopted for tobacco trade from the next cropping season.

The representatives of the tobacco growers pleaded before the committee that the in-put costs and overall inflation has increased exorbitantly justifying their demand for almost doubling of the support price. The apprehensive Pakistan Tobacco Board warned that at this price the companies may lower their purchase targets leaving a big unsold surplus with the farmers. The companies however may be willing to pay the growers higher price this time but not for the reasons that the growers have mentioned. Tobacco supply at the international level has dwindled recently and company stocks are fast depleting. This has raised the international market prices to very high levels. FCV tobacco auctions in Andhra Pradesh and Karnatka, India in 2008 fetched Pak Rs 140 to 180 per kg; that was double the previous year price in the country.

The Indian Tobacco Board has proven itself to be more sensitive to international trade situation than their Pakistani counterparts. ITB in fact follows a different system that is more responsive to international trade fluctuations on the one hand and is more effective in protecting the interests of its farmers. The Senate sub-committee has eluded to this system while recommending the adoption of an auction system for tobacco trade.

The Indian government had amended the Tobacco Board Act 1975 and a new system was introduced after studying and adapting the tobacco sale model of Zimbabwe from 1984.

Following is an account of how this system works.

A minimum support price for the crop is announced every year before the commencement of planting season.

Farmers are registered with the board for each season. Each is allowed to cultivate a certain area and produce a quota of quantity. This helps ITB in correlating supply with the demand.

Farmers are required to grade their produce at the barn before bringing it for sale. The grading standards are set and verified by the board officials.

The board sets auction centers close to the villages of the producers. Each center has around ten auction platforms and one in enough to sell the produce of 250 to 300 farmers.

Farmers grade their produce and bring it to auction centers on specified dates. The Board weighs and labels each consignment and grades its quality.

Lots are then auctioned to registered buyers. The starting price is set according to the quality and other factors like national and international market trends. It is never below the minimum support price.

In the event of any market crisis when prices fall below the minimum support prices, Trading Wing of Tobacco Board is empowered and obliged to make purchases at the minimum support price.

The farmer is empowered to reject the final bid and request a re-auction or may refuse to sell at that day. Similarly a buyer can complain to Senior Classifier if he finds out that the quality of the lot was not what was specified at the time of auction.

After the auction, the buyers collect lots from the centers.

Growers are paid the auction amounts through 15 days post-dated bank cheques.

The board deducts one percent from the auction amount as service charges and 1 paisa per kg as tax.

Crop substitution: up in smoke

Is the global campaign against tobacco use picking up or is it just shifting its center? Tobacco use in Europe and USA is continuously declining while it is growing steadily in the developing world especially in the populous Asia. Tobacco production is also now being concentrated in developing countries. Though around 100 countries grow it, 80 percent of the world production comes from ten countries.

Tobacco use in Pakistan is growing rapidly. Pakistan produced 66 billion cigarettes in year 2006-07. This equals 750 cigarettes for its entire 88 million population aged 15 years or above. This is more than double the national production for 1990-91.

Cigarette manufacturing in Pakistan is dominated by two heavy weights: Pakistan Tobacco Company which is a subsidiary of British American Tobacco (BAT) and Lakson Tobacco which is an affiliate of Philip Morris International (PMI). The two companies are obviously the biggest local buyers of tobacco leaves. Pakistan though is not among the top growers of tobacco, it has more than what it needs for home consumption.

The World Health Organization negotiated a treaty called Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC) with member countries in 2003. The binding agreement that came into force in 2005 calls the signatories to work in a comprehensive and holistic manner to control and eradicate tobacco use. The core supply reduction provisions provided in the FCTC article 15-17 call for support for economically viable alternative activities for tobacco growers.

While a number of signatories, including Pakistan, have enacted laws to ban smoking at public places and enforced stringent rules for printing health warnings on cigarette packs, there has been little progress on efforts to replace tobacco as a crop. Tobacco cultivation is in fact growing in developing countries as a cash crop. For example, Brazil has replaced USA as the second biggest producer of the crop and has become the biggest exporter.

There have been some experiments to substitute tobacco with other crops or other economic activities but the results have been overshadowed by the governments' desire to raise exports and collect taxes from cigarette manufacturers.

There can't perhaps be one magical solution to replace tobacco crop as the socio-economic significance of growing tobacco varies from one area to the other. The solutions have to be local and strong political will is required to find and implement them.

The government of Pakistan earns huge sums in tax from cigarette manufacturers. Pakistan Tobacco Company chairman told the magazine Tobacco Reporter in 2005 that his company paid around Rs 16 billion in taxes. "We are the single largest contributor to government revenue outside the oil sector," he pointed out. "And I'm fairly certain that we pay more than the entire textile industry of this country. We contribute to the federal government and to the Frontier government locally."

The resource strapped government of Pakistan is hooked on to this tax money and it will take it quite an effort to come out of this addiction and make tobacco crop substitution a reality.

SAP-Pk partner in district

Women Development Organization (WDO)

The area constituting Mardan district is part of Peshawar valley. Until 1937, Mardan district was a part of Peshawar district. It is bounded on the north by Buner district and Malakand protected area, on the east by Swabi and Buner districts, on the South by Nowshera district and on the west by Charsadda district and Malakand protected area. The total area of the district is 1632 kilometers. It is divided mainly into two parts, North-Eastern hilly area and south western plain.

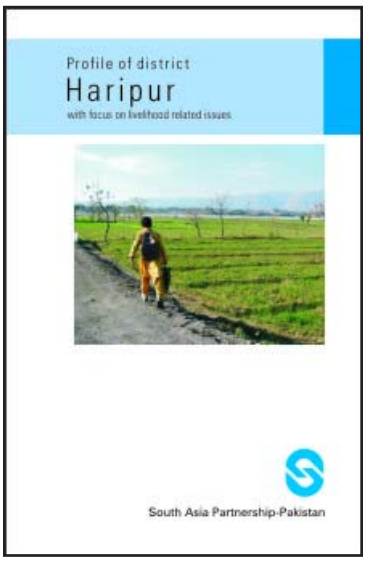
Mardan is known as the best agricultural area. Its land is very suitable for cultivation of sugarcane and tobacco. The major crops grown in the district are wheat, sugar-cane, tobacco, maize, rice, rapeseed and mustard etc. Fruits and vegetables are also grown. The important frits are orange, plum, peach, apricot, pear, rare mango and apple.

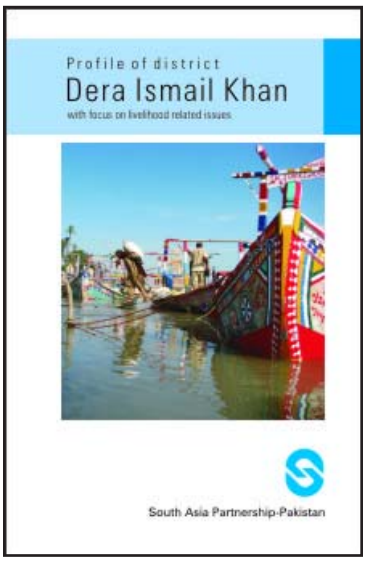
Culturally, NWFP generally and Mardan particularly don't have an enviable record in human rights, especially women's rights. Peasants are also very poor. Reasons like these motivated youth of the area to form Women Development Organization in 1995. The predominant objective of this newly formed body of informed citizen was to empower communities especially women, youth and peasant workers, politically and economically. Peace and child rights also became its concerns as it moved along the time.

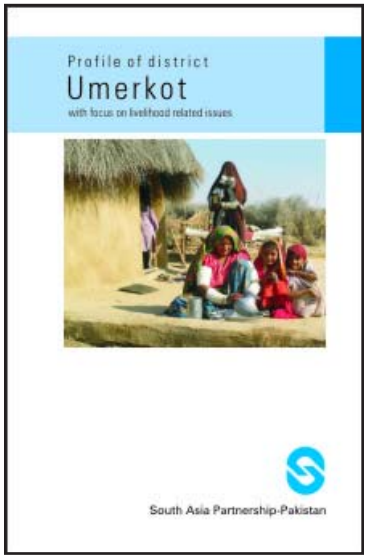
WDO is working both in urban and rural areas of Mardan. It has been partner of SAP-Pk in Supporting Democratic Eelectoral Process (1999-2000), Democratic Rights and Citizens Education Program (DRCEP: 2002-2003), Pakistan Colaition for Free, Fair and Democratic Elections (PACFREL-2008) and then Strengthening Democratic Governance in Pakistan (SDGP: 2005 to date).

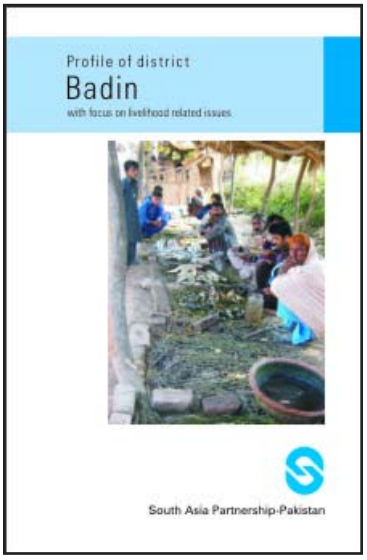
WDO has successfully implemented several projects and programs in pursuit of its objectives. Some of these are Community Awareness Program, Legal Aid and Guidance Program for Women Prisoners, Citizens Empowerment Program, Women's Vocational Center, Home-based Workers Network, etc. It has about 20 staff and team of more than 100 volunteers handling the operational spread in 65 union councils.

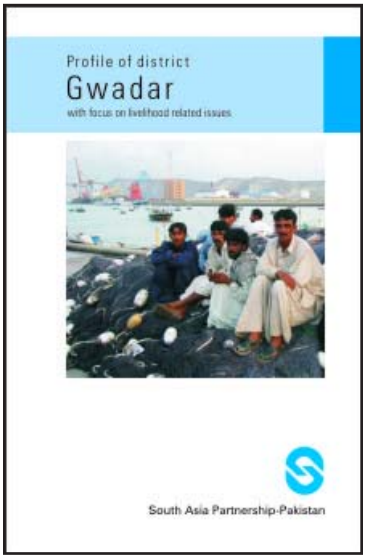
Other publications in this series

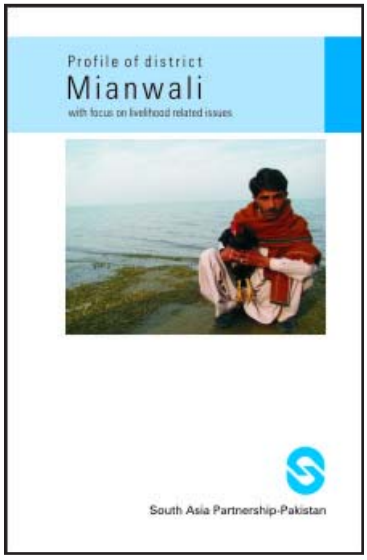


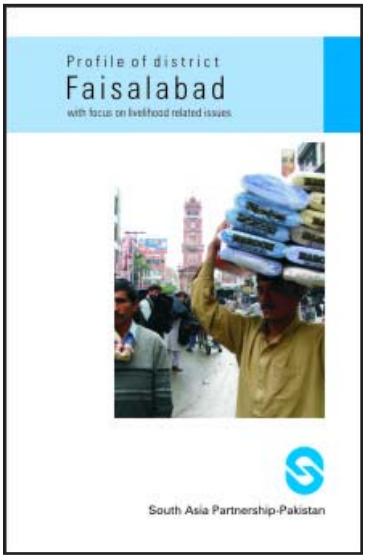












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