

Profile of district Kech

with focus on livelihood related issues



South Asia Partnership-Pakistan

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Kech
with focus on livelihood related issues

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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 women-folk 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



Kech the land of a popular romantic legend, has been the geographical, social and political centre of Makran region. The area is said to be possessed by Iranian king Kaus followed by Afrasiab of Turan and then by Kai Khusrau, again an Iranian. Then there is a long list of kings, including Lehasp, Gushtasp, Bahman, Huma and Darab, who ruled the area till the year 325 BC when a contingent of Alexander's army passed through Makran, called Gadrosia by them, on its way from India to Macedonia. Greek historian Arrian has commented on the land, environment and people of the area. He found the climate very hot, the soil sandy and the land inept for human settlement. Afterwards, the area was ruled by Seleukos Nikator, one of Alexander's generals, who lost it to Chandragupta in 303 BC.

In the fifth century AD the area was reportedly given to Bahram-i-Gor as a part of dower of Shermah's daughter. In 643 AD, a Muslim army under the com-

mand of Abdullah conquered Makran and wrote to the Caliph about aridity of the land. Arabs continued to rule here in the following centuries. In 10th century Ibn Haukal wrote that the ruler of Makran was an Arab, Isa bin Madan, who had established his residence in the city of Kech which was half the size of Multan. Although many invaders, like Seljuks, Ghaznavis, Ghoris and the Mughals, conquered the land but mostly the local rulers, including Hoats, Rinds, Maliks, Buledais and Gichkis, exercised authority in the area as the conquerors never stayed here for long.

Two regimes of local rulers, of Buledais and Gichkis, are worth mentioning here. The Buledais gained power with the rise of the Zikri sect in seventeenth century. They ruled the area for more than a century up to the year 1740. In the last years of their rule they converted back to Sunni sect of Islam. The Zikri folks joined hands with Gichkis, who were their faith-fellows. The ruler of the neighboring state of

Kalat, Mir Nasir Khan I, held anti-Zikri Muslim faith. Khan sought help from Ahmed Shah Abdali and was able to defeat Gichkis. He added the area to his Khanate but nominated local chiefs as his Governors of the area allowing them to keep half of the revenue collected. Mir Mehrab Khan, grand successor of Mir Nasir Khan I, appointed Faqir Bizenjo as his naib (assistant) in Kech. This naib represented the Khan in this area for more than 40 years. Afterwards local influential were appointed as naibs due to ineffectiveness of non-local naibs.

The first Afghan war (1838-39) invited the attention of the British to the area. Major Goldsmith visited the area in 1861 and an Assistant Political Agent was appointed at Gwadar in 1863. Kech remained under control of the Khan of Kalat, through his nazims, during the colonial era, however the British rulers had influence in its affairs.

After the division of the Indian subcontinent into two sovereign states, Makran joined the Balochistan States Union in early 1949 along with Kalat, Lasbela and Kharan. In October 1955, Makran was given the status of a district of former West Pakistan province after its accession to Pakistan. On 1st July 1970, when One Unit was dissolved and Balochistan gained the status of a province, Makran became one of its eight districts. On 1st July 1977, Makran was declared a division and was divided into three districts, named Panjgur, Turbat and Gwadar. Turbat was notified as a district on July 1, 1977. In 1994-95, the name of Turbat district was changed to its old name, Kech. Now the name of the district is Kech while Turbat town is its headquarters.

Kech is known across the country for being the



Population
Kech District 2007
493,521

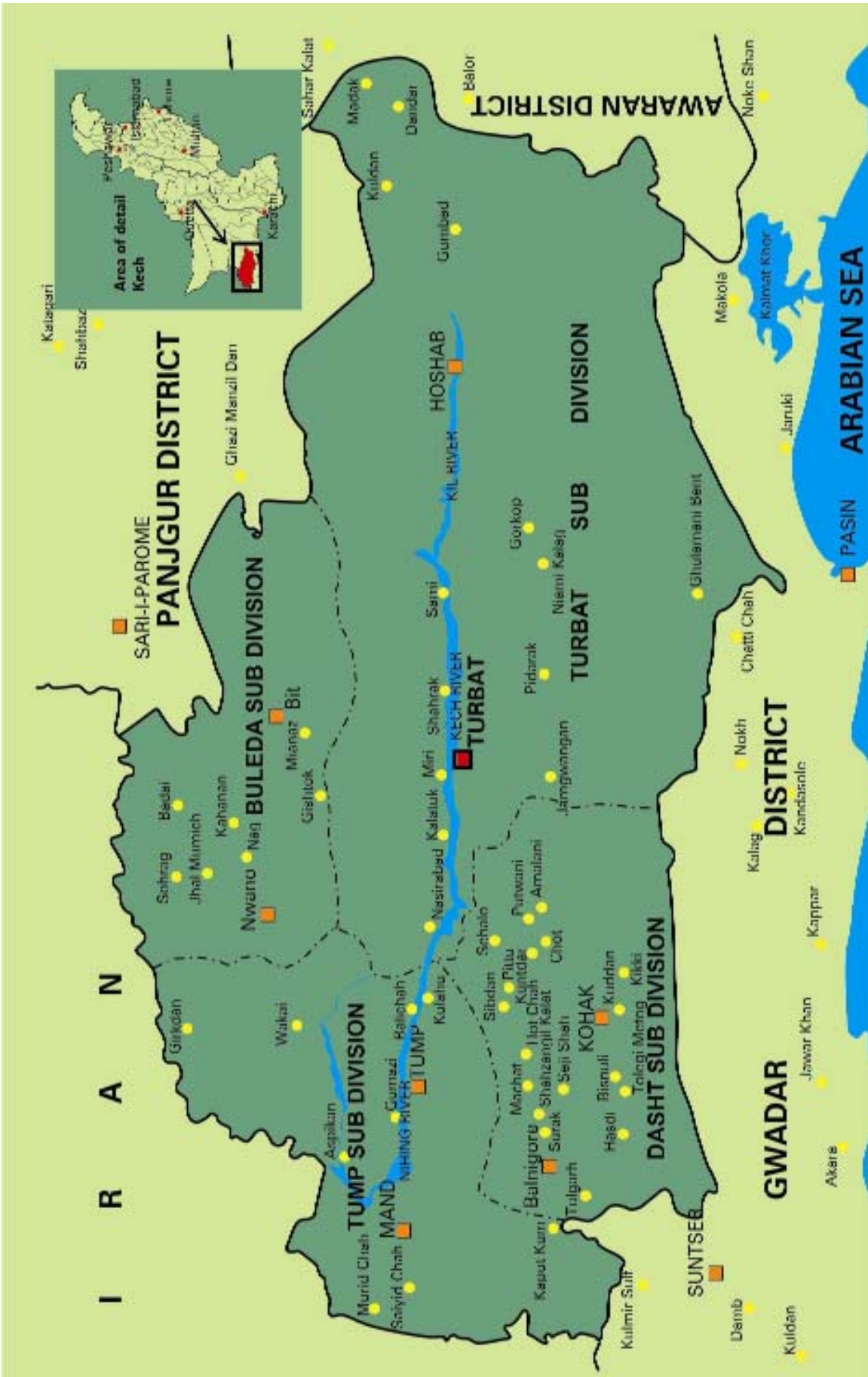
1 Town **271 Villages**

16.6% **83.4%**

Urban **Rural**
81,938 **411,583**

Towns **Population**
Kech **81,938**

Villages	No	% share
5000 & above	8	16.2
2,000 to 5,000	43	38.8
1,000 to 2,000	66	26.9
Less than 1,000	154	18.2
All villages	217	100.0



home of the hero of the popular romantic story Sassi-Punnu. Punnu was a Hoat (a Baloch cast) prince remnant of whose fort can still be seen near Turbat. Sassi-Punnu is an important part of Punjabi, Sindhi and Balochi folklore.

Kech district is bound on the north by Panjgur district, on the east by Awaran district, on the south by Gwadar district and on the west by Iran. The district comprises four sub-divisions namely Turbat, Buleda, Dasht and Tump.

The district's **geography** is characterized by the mountains that stretch from north-east to south-west. There are two important parallel mountain ranges, running in the east-west direction. The upper northern area of the Kech River is dominated by the hills of Central Makran Range, which consists of successive ridges, gradually rising from south to north with valleys lying in between. The height of this range varies from 900 meters to 1400 meters. The area, south of Kech River, is occupied by the Coastal Makran Range, which has two main offshoots; one is Gokprosh, running from east to west along the Kech river and then across the river westwards to Iran, the second offshoot moves almost along the southern boundary of the district separating it from Gwadar district. The height of Makran Coastal Range varies from 600 meters to 900 meters.

The valleys lying within these mountain ranges are



either structural or depositional. The important valleys include Nihang, Zamuran, Buleda, Kech, Tump and Mand in the northern part of the district and Dasht, Balingore, Nigwar and Pidarak valleys in the south. The main rivers of Kech district are Nihang and Kech Kaur, which flow in the opposite direction but combine in one at Kaur-e-Awaran, which moves in southwest direction through Dasht Valley with its name as Dasht Kaur and falls in the Arabian Sea in Gwadar district. There are other streams like Kaur-e-Buleda, Kill Kaur, Gish Kaur, Dokurm, Dadde, Neelag, Koh-e-Murad Kaur, which originate from different points but enter the Kech Kaur/Dasht Kaur. Another important stream is Shadi Kaur, which flows from the southern slope of Makran Coastal Range and falls in the Arabian Sea near Pasni town of Gwadar district.

The total **area** of the district is 22,539 square kilometers. Balochistan is the biggest of the four

Population density in Pakistan

Squares represent relative areas of Pakistan's four provinces while circles show their population in this graphics



Punjab

Population:
90 million
Area:
205,345 sq km
Density:
359 persons/sq km



Sindh

Population:
37 million
Area:
140,914 sq km
Density:
216 persons/sq km



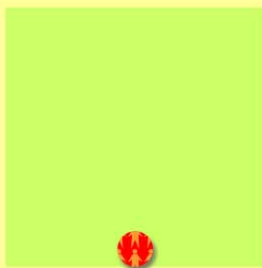
NWFP

Population:
22 million
Area:
74,521 sq km
Density:
238 persons/sq km



Balochistan

Population:
8 million
Area:
347,190 sq km
Density:
19 persons/sq km



provinces of Pakistan with respect to area and the smallest in terms of population. Kech is among the most populated districts of the province. It is also among the biggest districts in terms of area. It is the 5th largest districts of the province with respect to area and 4th in terms of hosting more population.

Average size of districts in Pakistan

	Number of districts	Average area (sq km)
Punjab	34	6,040
Sindh	21	6,710
NWFP	24	3,105
Balochistan	26	13,353
Kech district		22,539

The **climate** of Kech is hot in summer and mild in winter. Summer season lasts from March to November, with June the hottest month when mercury shoots up to 40 degree centigrade. Winter season lasts from December to February with January as the coldest month with mean maximum temperature remaining at about 18 degree centigrade. In winter the north and northeast wind (Gorich) is particularly chilling. Average rainfall is very low (109 mm only) as well as scanty and uncertain.

There is only one urban locality, the city of Turbat, in the entire district. Around 17 per cent of the total population of Kech district lives in this city. The 2007 estimate for its population is around 81,000 souls.

Majority of the **rural** population lives in medium-sized rural settlements. There are eight villages in Kech district, the population of which is more than

5,000 and they, cumulatively, host around 8 per cent of the rural population of the district. Around two third of the village population lives in 109 medium-sized villages, the population of each is more than 1,000 people but less than 5,000 souls. Around one-third rural population is scattered into 154 small localities, each of which is the abode of less than 1,000 people.

There are few urban localities in Balochistan province. Kech district is rural in its essence. Seven out of 26 districts of Balochistan have less than 10 per cent urban population. There is no urban settlement in district Awaran.

Percent of urban population in Balochistan districts

Quetta	74	Jaffarabad	20
Gwadar	54	Chaghi	18
Lasbela	37	Kech	17
Sibi	32	Zhob	16
Khuzdar	28	Nasirabad	16

Total population of the district according to 1998 census was 413,204 with a very low inter-censal increase of just 8 per cent since March 1981 when it was 379,467.

The average annual growth rate was 0.5 percent during this period. This is very low compared with the provincial average of 2.5 and the national of 2.69. Heavy outflow of **population** due to fewer livelihood opportunities in many Balochistan districts results in stagnant population growth. The overall growth rate for Balochistan (2.5) is lower than the national average (2.69) and it further falls in resource-deficient southern and south-western districts, mainly inhabited by Baloch tribes. The



growth rate in north and north-eastern district is relatively high. If Balochistan districts are arranged in descending order, Kech stands third from bottom in terms of growth rate. Only Ziarat and Awaran district have lower **growth rate** than Kech. Although no Balochistan district registered negative growth during 1981-1998, there are 4 districts with under one percent growth rate while growth in 12 other districts is lower than the provincial average. Though Kech district, as a whole, managed to register a positive growth, but the sub-divisions of Buleda and Tump, registered a negative growth of -0.7 and -0.9 percentage points respectively while Turbat sub-division registered an inter-censal growth rate of 2.26. This implies that population

within the district is concentrating in Turbat which is the only urban center of the area.

Growth rate in (1981-98) Balochistan districts

Ziarat	0.2	Loralai	1.4
Awaran	0.4	Zhob	1.5
Kech	0.5	Killa Saifullah	1.6
Kalat	0.8	Kohlu	2.0
Bolan	1.2	Panjgur	2.2
Mastung	1.3	Musakhel	2.3

Propagated at the national annual growth rate, the population of Kech district should be 493,521 for 2009 and if propagated at the growth rate, it had in the inter-censal period of 1981-1998, it stands at 436,507. In any case it can be safely said that the district's population currently is little less than half a million.

Kech is among very sparsely populated districts of the province. The population density here is just 18 souls per square kilometer, which is 10th lowest in Balochistan province with Chaghi at bottom having a density of just 4 persons per square kilometer.

Balochistan province is very thinly populated with just three districts namely Quetta, Jafarabad and Killa Abdullah having density running in three figures. In the province, on an average only 19 persons live in a square kilometer.

No other region of the entire country resembles Balochistan districts in terms of low population density. The least dense districts of NWFP, Sindh and Punjab are Chitral, Tharparkar and Rajanpur with population density of 21, 47 and 90 souls per square kilometer respectively. As many as 10 districts of Balochistan have population density lower than

Chitral, the district with the lowest density in the entire country leaving Balochistan.

Population density in districts of Balochistan (persons per square kilometer)

Chaghi	4	Zhob	14
Awaran	4	Panjgur	14
Kharan	4	Gwadar	15
Khuzdar	12	Dera Bugti	18
Kohlu	13	Kech	18

The average **household size** in Kech is 5.1, far lower than the provincial average of 6.7 and the national average of 6.9. The districts with predominantly Baloch population have smaller household size compared with the districts of Pakhtun belt. The family size of south-western Baloch districts of Kech, Awaran, Khuzdar, Gwadar and Kharan does not exceed 6 persons.

Household size in Balochistan

Baloch districts		Pakhtun districts	
Kech	5.1	Loralai	7.4
Awaran	5.4	Mastung	7.9
Khuzdar	5.4	Zhob	7.9
Gwadar	5.5	Killa Abdullah	8.0
Kharan	5.8	Quetta	8.5

As emerged from the 1998 census the population of district is predominantly Muslim, which is 99.55 per cent. There are few **minority** communities in Balochistan as the average Muslim percentage for the province stands at 98.75 per cent. It means that only four of 500 residents of Balochistan believe in faiths other than Islam. Hindu, Christian, Scheduled Castes and Ahmedis are the tiny minority communities of the

province. Hindus make 39 per cent of the total non-Muslim population of Balochistan. Another eight per cent non-Muslim population belongs to scheduled castes. The share of Christians and Ahmedis in minority communities is 32 and 12 per cent respectively.

Almost two third of the Christian population of Balochistan province lives in Quetta city alone while Hindus mostly reside in towns and villages of Kalat, Nasirabad and Quetta divisions. The home of half of the Ahmedi community is also Quetta. The only difference is that Ahmedis mainly live in villages of Quetta division. The community of scheduled castes is evenly dispersed in rural areas of all divisions of Balochistan with the exception of Zhob.

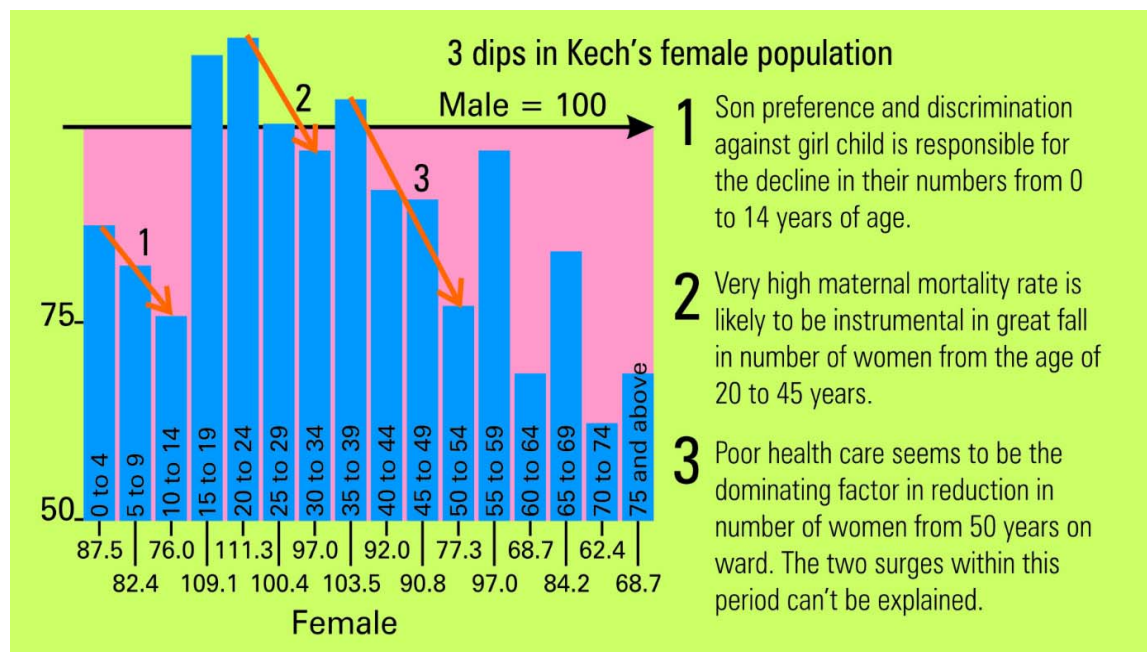
Scheduled castes are the largest group in the tiny minority community of Kech district. They were 934 in numbers, at the time of 1998 census, against 204 Christians, 45 Hindus, 143 Ahmedis and 526 others. Most of the minority communities live in Kech subdivision.

An overwhelming majority (99.2 per cent) of Kech speaks Balochi **language**. In Turbat city 1.5 per cent of the population has Punjabi as their mother tongue while another one per cent speak Urdu.

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 of 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 Kech district (sex ratio) is 91, little better than the national average and close to national average of 92.

If all the districts of Pakistan are arranged in descending order of sex ratio, Kech stands at number 64 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.

Kech is among the few Balochistan districts where sex ratio is higher than the provincial average. All

these districts share a very common characteristic; lack of livelihood opportunities with the only exception of Jaffarabad. Lack of economic opportunities pushes the male population out of the districts to other parts of province or country. In Turbat, for instance, remittances generated by the male population doing jobs or labor in Iran or Gulf States, are the foremost and major source of income. It can be conveniently said that absence of male population and not better conditions for womenfolk, help sex-ratio figure of these districts soar, deceitfully above the dismal provincial figure.

Another characteristic most of these districts share is the common geography and topography. Stretching southward, five of them are situated in a row.

The age-wise break-up of sex ratio for Kech 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 Kech as the sex ratio for the age group 0-4 years stands at 87.5 and drops by 13 percentage points by the age group 10-14 years. Girls and young women play a very important role in livelihood earning. 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 Kech as the sex ratio for the 20-24 age group becomes 111 females against every 100 males. This stunning figure is a result of two factors. One, in this age group women are economical more productive and hence gain some value and two, the men of this age group migrate to other places for work. The trend continues till the age of 29, though the ratio declines to 100 for falling again to 97 for the age group of 30-34 years. It gets



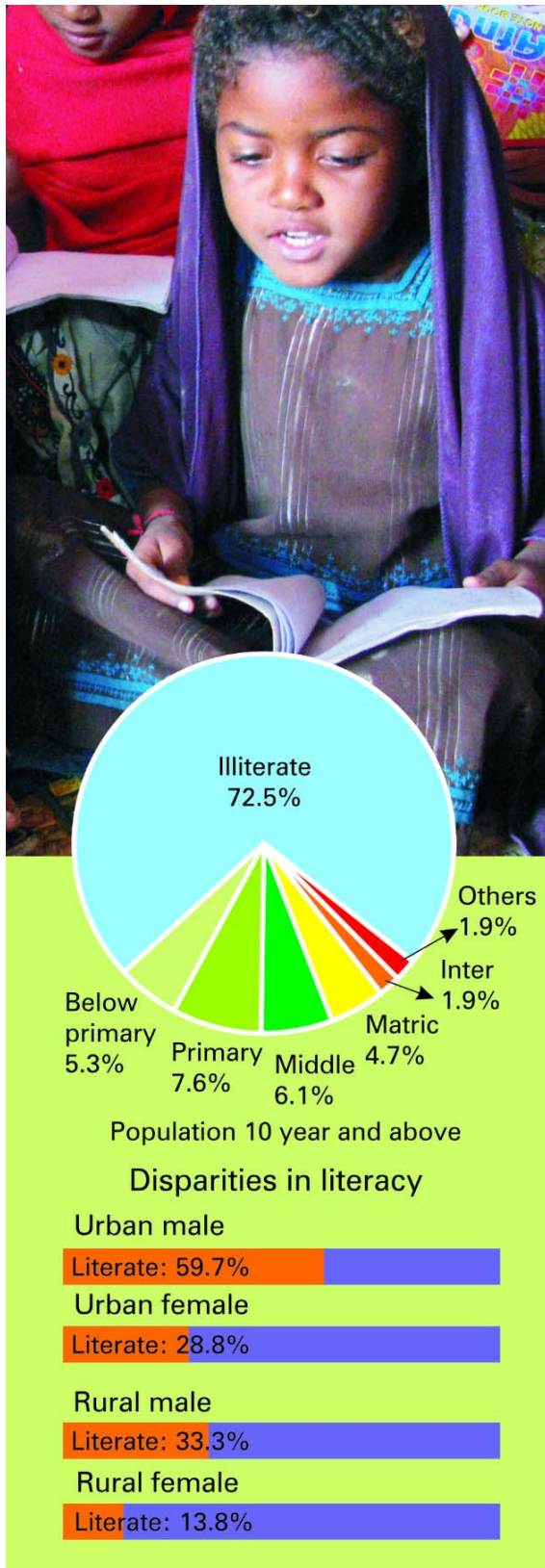
another surge from 35 to 39 years of age when it soars to 103, never to touch the 100 mark again. Nationally, the ratio starts falling after touching the peak at around 25 years. As women start bearing children at this age, they face new health risks that are poorly attended. As a result their number starts declining again and continues to do till the age of 45 when they come out of the reproductive cycle. Kech follows this trend too as the female to male ratio drops by 7 percentage points between 20 to 40 years. This is a mild drop if compared with other districts but one should not forget the continued out-flow of male population from the district.

The number of women rises immediately after the end of their reproductive age, nationally but Kech follows here an adverse trend. The sex ratio keeps dropping until the age of 55 when it becomes just 77 per cent. It gets another peak, the last of the series of three, in the next five years when with surge of 19 per cent makes it 92 women against

100 men. But this short-lived surge is reversed and continues to drop till the age of 76 plus when it becomes 69 only. In addition to behavioral issues, the gradual return of ageing male population from outside may contribute to rather awkward sex ratio for older population.

There are differences in the sex ratio for the rural and the urban populations. The sex ratio for rural Kech is little higher (92) than that of urban one (87).

Overall **literacy** rate of the district is just 27.5 percent, according to 1998 census report. The entire Balochistan province shows a pathetic trend in literacy with an overall literacy rate of just 24 per cent. Kech district is 6th district with respect to 'high literacy' in the province. District Quetta tops the list with 57 per cent literate population. There is a huge difference between Quetta and rest of the province as the district with second highest literacy rate, Ziarat, has a ratio of just 34 per cent.



In Balochistan, the female literacy suffers even more as only 1 in every 7 females is literate against one in every three literate males. In relative terms there are only 35 literate females against every 100 literate males in the province. 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 an affront to the social values. There are 22 districts in Balochistan where male literacy is more than 20 per cent while there are only two districts namely Quetta (45) and Panjgor (22), where female literacy exceeds the dismal 20 per cent mark. The female literacy fails to go into double digits in 14 out of 26 districts of the province. The situation in Kech follows the provincial pattern where 38 per cent male and only 16 per cent female know how to read and write. In other words there are just 40 literate females against every 100 literate males in the district.

The gravity of the situation can be judged by the fact that the male-female literacy ratio of Kech, the third best performing district in Balochistan is equal to that of Muzaffargarh, the third worst of 35 districts of Punjab. Dera Bugti is worst in this respect where there are only 13 literate women against every 100 literate men. The male-female literacy ratio of Balochistan districts resembles with that of NWFP districts. Strong tribal bonds and anti-women customs are major culprits in both provinces.

A later study, Social and Living Standard Measurement Survey 2004-05, notes that overall literacy in Kech district has accrued up to 58 percent with 76 per cent male and 37 per cent female litera-

A typical household

- Average household size in Kech district is 5.1 persons.

The rural households are smaller with an average of 5 persons against the urban ones comprising 5.4 persons.

- Households having four or less family members make 47 percent of the total households in the district while 18 percent consist of eight or more family members.

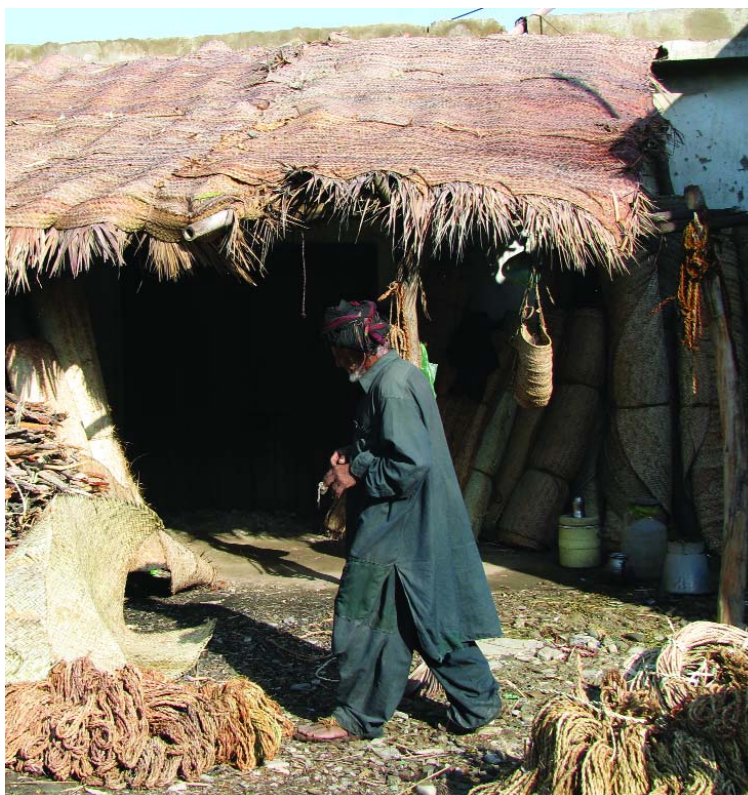
- 78 percent of the total families live in one room houses, although their average family size is 4.6 persons.

- On an average each housing unit has 1.3 rooms and each room houses 3.9 persons.

- Only 0.3 percent of the houses in rural area were on rent, when enumerated in 1998 while the figure was 7 percent for the urban houses.

- 16 percent of the houses in rural areas were aged less than 5 years while the figure for urban areas was 7 percent.

- Only 4 percent of the houses in villages have walls made of baked bricks while the rest have kacha walls. In towns however 19 percent of the houses are built with backed bricks. The roofs of 78 per cent of urban and 91 per cent of rural houses are made of wood.



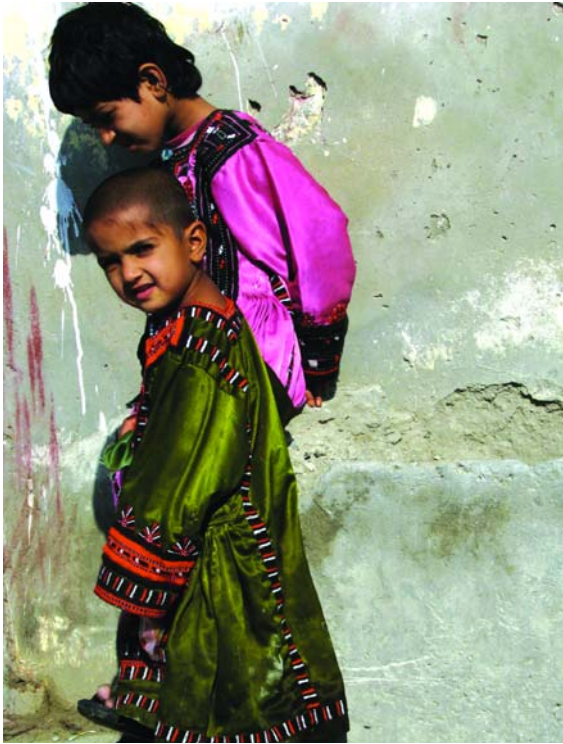
- Only 18 per cent of rural population have access to tap water and hand pumps while the urban population having access to these water resources stands at 45 per cent.

- In city of Turbat 96 percent houses have electricity connections while in villages only 3 percent have this facility and the rest burn oil for light.

- Wood is the largest kitchen fuel for both rural (93 percent) and urban (92 percent). Only 3 per cent urban families use natural gas.

- In rural area 53 percent of the houses do not have a latrine while in urban area 6 percent houses lack this facility.

- Only 11 percent of the rural households have access to television while the ratio for urban areas is 36 percent.



cy. Kech, according to this study is the best performing district on literacy front in the entire province. School enrollment for children aged 5 to 9 in Balochistan was 37 percent (excluding Katchi class) during the year 2003-2004. The difference between the districts in enrollment figures is quite big. It is highest in Kech district, followed by Ziarat, Pishin and Quetta. The bottom districts are Nasirabad, Jhal Magsi, Musakhel and Panjgoor.

The net enrollment ratio for Kech is much higher than the provincial average. According to this study, the district has attained 100 per cent mark in school enrollment. This might be a consequence of the fact that district's economy is now dominated by persons employed abroad who have realized the importance of education the hard way.

District wise breakup of Infant Mortality Rates (IMR)

for Balochistan is not available, however, according to latest official figure for the province, around 158 out of 1000 children do not reach their 5th birthday in the province (Under 5 Mortality Rate). The IMR and U5MR in Balochistan is high with wide urban-rural and male-female variation. Under-5 mortality in rural areas (164 per 1000 live births) is higher than in urban children (130 per 1000 live births). About two out of every five children are under weight for their age. The National Nutrition Survey of 2001-02 projected a figure of 35.3 percent for malnourished children of 6-59 months age for Balochistan province. According to the EPI coverage survey 2001, only 35 per cent children in the age group of 12-23 months were fully immunized. Studies show that the **health** indicators for Kech have improved a lot and in many instances are now the best in the province.

One study shows that IMR in Kech is just 44.

Maternal mortality is high at 880 per 100,000 births in Balochistan. The majority of women have anemia, iodine deficiency, or general malnutrition. A large number of mothers, including many young girls aged 15-19, die each year due to pregnancy-related complications. 20 percent of pregnant women availed the services of antenatal care from trained birth attendants (42 percent urban and 16 percent rural). Skilled birth attendants provided assistance to 21 percent of women during delivery (44 percent urban and 16 percent rural). There is one Divisional Headquarters Hospital in the district along with five Rural Health Centers and 23 Basic Health Units. There is a Leprosy Hospital and four mother and child healthcare centers and 45 civil dispensaries.

Elections were held in Punjab, NWFP and Sindh before independence in 1940's but not in Balochistan due to special status of the region. The people of three provinces were given the right to choose their provincial representatives in 1950's but people of Balochistan were again not granted the same and the provincial administration continued to be run by Chief Commissioners instead of Chief Ministers until 1955 when the entire West Pakistan was merged into one unit. Two indirect elections of 1962 and 1965, however, were held in Balochistan. The first-ever general **elections** on adult-franchise were held in Balochistan in 1970. Only four national seats were allotted to the province in these elections. Makran, Kharan and Lasbela districts were allotted to the last of the national seat titled NW-138 Kalat II. Kech, being a teshil of Makran district fell in this constituency.

The entire province was divided into 20 provincial constituencies. Makran district was allotted two provincial constituencies. The present-day Kech district was divided between the two Makran constituencies. The present sub-divisions of Tump and Buleda were part of PB-17 Makran I while Turbat and Dasht sub-divisions were part of PB-18 Makran II.

This was the first time that renowned Baloch nationalist leaders including Khair Bux Maree, Abdul Hayee Baloch and Ghaus Bux Bizenjo entered into electoral politics from the platform of National Awami Party-Wali Khan group (NAP-Wali), a left-wing amalgam of Pakhtun and Baloch nationalists. NAP emerged clear winner in Balochistan as it won three out of total four national seats in the province.

One seat of Pakhtun belt was won by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Hazarvi).

Nationalist leader Mir Ghaus Bux Bizenjo of NAP defeated Prince Mohyuddin Baloch of Qayum Muslim League on the national seat, the present-day Kech district was part of which. This was a huge constituency comprising Makran, Kharan and Lasbela districts. The two provincial seats of Makran were also won by NAP-Wali. On provincial front NAP-Wali bagged 54 per cent of total valid polled votes in district while in the national constituency 46 per cent of total votes were polled by NAP-Wali.

Bizenjo was a senior leftist-secular politician who had served as President of Kalat State in 1946-47. He had opposed the merger of Kalat with Pakistan. He joined the National Awami Party-Wali when Pakistani left broke into two parts in the wake of Sino-Soviet conflict in 1967. Being a thorough secular, he opposed the alliance of NAP with JUI in NWFP. However, the difference of opinion with Wali Khan on this issue did not stop him from joining NAP's short-lived Balochistan government as governor and he took active part in the negotiations on 1973 constitution.

NAP government was ousted on the orders of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1973. Bizenjo was arrested along with other NAP leaders on charges of treason. After the release of NAP leaders in 1978, Bizenjo clashed with Wali Khan over the direction of the party and broke away founding his own Pakistan National Party. After the death of Mir Ghaus Bakhsh in 1989, his son Mir Hasil Bizenjo took over the political faction of his father.

Amanullah Gichki was elected unopposed on Kalat II seat in 1977 as there was no other candidate due to ban on NAP and arrest of nationalist leaders. Gichkis were the erstwhile rulers of the area. People of Turbat and Panjgur districts that now formed NA 207 showed little interest in the non-party elections of 1985, and one Maulvi Abdul Haq was elected polling just over 16 thousand votes in the low turnout elections.

In 1988 elections, Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo was the PNP candidate on Turbat-Panjgur constituency, NA-207. The real competition was between two nationalist parties, PNP and Balochistan National Alliance (BNA). BNA's Manzoor Ahmed outclassed the veteran nationalist Bizenjo.

In 1990 elections PNP and another nationalist party Balochistan National Movement fielded their candidates in NA-207. This time the PNP candidate Mir Bizan Bizenjo managed to defeat BNM's

Muhammad Yaseen with a margin of over 3,000 votes. Bizan Bizenjo, son of Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo was in field due to death of his father. He was also elected from his native Khuzdar seat. In bye-elections his brother Mir Hasil Bizenjo was elected from Khuzdar seat.

Mir Bizan Bizenjo could not retain his seat in the next elections and lost to BNM-Hayee group's Dr Muhammad Yasin conceding a huge lead of around 14,000 votes. There were three nationalist candidates in this constituency. Besides PNP and BNM-H groups' candidates, BNM-Mangel's candidate Qazi Ghulam Rasool also contested and polled around 1,600 votes. PNP could not win a single national seat in these elections; however both factions of

BNM got one each in National Assembly.

PNP, now renamed as Balochistan National Party (BNP), struck back in 1997 reclaiming the constituency defeating BNM's Dr Yasin by a clear margin of 12,000 votes.

From 1985 to 1997, Kech was allotted three provincial seats namely PB-37 Turbat I, PB-38 Turbat II and PB-39 Turbat III (later renamed as Kech I, II and III). Like national seats, the real contest on the provincial seats of Kech was held among various nationalist factions in all elections. In 1988 elections, all the three Turbat seats were won by Balochistan National Alliance. In 1990, these were divided between BNM, PNP and Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP). In 1993 elections BNM-Hayee group held sway winning all the three provincial seats of Turbat district while in the next elections held in 1997 Bizenjo's BNP got two while BNM managed to win one provincial seat.

In the new demarcation for 2002 elections, Kech was allotted a shared national seat with Gwadar district instead of Panjgur and three whole provincial seats. These elections proved to be a nightmare for nationalist forces of Kech, who kept fighting with each other while the non-nationalist independent candidate Zubaida Jalal returned winner. She later served as the federal minister. In 2008 elections, only Balochistan National Party (Awami) contested the elections while rest of the nationalist factions boycotted in protest against military operation in Balochistan. With no other nationalist candidate in the field, Yaqoob Bizenjo of BNP defeated independent Zubaida Jalal with a huge margin of 28,000 votes.



Kech has very limited livelihood resources. Most of the Kech people are engaged in trade with Iran and Gulf on one side and with Karachi on the other. Remittances from relatives abroad are the main source of income for a large number of families of Kech. Major legal **trade** remains confined to dates that are sent to Karachi, Quetta, Sukkur and other parts of the country. Dates are also exported to foreign markets after processing in Sindh. The city of Turbat is the major center of business activities, both trade and smuggling.

Agriculture and livestock come after trade and remittances as the main income resources in the district. Agriculture with the exception of production of dates is largely confined to subsistence practices.

More than half of the cultivable area in Balochistan province is not actually cultivated. The ratio of cultivated area against the cultivable in Kech district however, is more than half. Kech is among the

medium level utilizers of land resource as intensity here crosses the 50 per cent mark. This is a good ratio if compared with the 6 per cent in the neighboring Gwadar district. Of total 307,860 acres available for farming, as many as 165,822 are actually cultivated in Kech district.

There are around 16,000 families that partially or fully rely on agriculture for their livelihood. According to a careful 2007 estimate, around 96,000 families live in Kech district. This means that around 17 per cent or one sixth of families of Kech district are attached to farming.

Of the tiny farming community of Kech 98 per cent are owners of the land, they cultivate. Tenancy is not a viable business in the district, that's why only 200 tenant families were reported in the entire district in the 2000 Agriculture Census.

Access to land within the farming families of Kech district, is highly unequal, to say the least. Of the farming community, more than two third of the fam-

ilies are small farmers, having an access to 1 to 5 acres, with average access to just 2 acres. They cumulatively have access to just 5.5 per cent of total cultivable land of the district. Provided the climatic conditions and low fertility of land it is highly unlikely that these families could depend on agriculture alone for their livelihood. Agriculture for these around 11,000 families is just a supplementary activity.

20 per cent of the farming community comprises the medium-sized farmers, with an average access to 11 acres. They own 11 per cent of total cultivable land of the district. Agriculture may be a major support to the livelihood of these families but again not the number one source of income.

Big farmers, with an access to 25-100 acres of land, make eight per cent of farming community with an average land holding of 44 acres. Big farmers have access to around 19 per cent of the district's farming land.

Very big landlords are 4 per cent of the community with an average access of 353 acres per family. In real numbers, there are 563 families that own a sprawling over 64 per cent of the farming land of the district. It means that over 15 and half thousand families own a third of the available land while 563 families own the rest two third. This huge disparity makes agricultural irrelevant for majority of the population of Kech district. Managing a huge farm averaging 353 acres is a daunting task for a single family and this could be a major reason for low agricultural productivity of the district as vast pieces of land are rendered uncultivated.

Poverty of agriculture in Kech district can be gauged

by another indicator; the use of agricultural machinery. There were only 367 tractors in the entire district when last enumerated for the Agriculture Machinery Census 2004. Jafarabad district has the highest number of tractors 832 while Gwadar is at bottom with just 84 tractors in the entire district. There are 9,244 tractors in the entire province. Machinery use in this poorest province is pathetic especially if compared with Punjab where 16 districts host more tractors each than the entire Balochistan province. There are 19,600 tractors in the district of Rahimyar Khan district alone.

Kech had its own traditional **irrigation** system consisting of Karez, Kaur, Kaurjo, open wells and small dams. Karez is an underground water stream, while Kaur is the Balochi word for open stream, Kaurjo means smaller open water channels supplied from the pools in a river bed. Historical records dated year 1904 counted 127 karezes, 118 large kaurjos, 76 open well and 5 small dams. All these were locally managed and maintained by the farming communities. The maintenance of these water resources was a specialized job and as the economy shifted from subsistence to cash, it became hard for the communities to engage the skilled persons on regular basis. Output of the poorly maintained Karezes has reduced drastically. Today, a large area of Kech between Apsar and Nasirabad on both sides of Kech Kaur, Tump and Mand, which was irrigated by Karez is facing acute shortage of irrigation water. Agriculture of Tehsil Buleda of the district wholly depends on Chib-e-Kaurjo and Jawan-Mardan Kaurjo. A number of other artificial

water channels of the area, Kaurjos, have also dried up.

Mirani dam is a concrete faced, rock filled 127 feet high dam built on non-perennial Dasht River that has two tributaries; Kech River and Nihing River. The dam built with a cost of Rs 5.86 billion is situated 40 km west of Turbat city. It has the storage capacity of 302,000 acre feet water that can irrigate 33,200 acres of land through its two canals, Right Bank Canal and Left Bank Canal. The project was inaugurated in November 2006 and according to Wapda has been substantially completed and the Government of Balochistan is undertaking the command area development. Till November 2008, only 500 acres in the dam's command area were under cultivation. Farmers of the area lack incentives and need investment. There are reports suggesting that the government intends to lease the land to investors from Middle East that are interested in setting up commercial farms here. The recent global recession that was followed by an unprecedented hike in world commodity prices has made insecure many rich yet food deficient countries. Private entrepreneurs in the Middle East dealing in fresh food products have expressed interest in setting up their own farms in foreign countries. They might prefer Kech for its proximity with the new port at Gwadar. The Balochistan government however denies that it intends a land sell-out of that scale and nature. While locals still await dividends from Mirani Dam, they have already become a victim of what they call flaws in its designs. The dam's reservoir has submerged one of the most fertile valleys of the area stretching from Nasirabad to Tump. Dasht River is



formed by the joining of Nihing and Kech Kaur in this (Kech) valley between Kalatuk and Nasirabad. Kech Kaur in turn is formed by joining of Gish Kaur and Kil Kaur. So the dam has to hold back the waters of four natural streams which all are flooded in the rainy season. In 2007, when it rained for three consecutive days, Mirani Dam was filled to capacity and the water encroached into the land close to the reservoir destroying the date orchards of Nasirabad, Kalatuk and Nouzar. The much awaited Amen season this year passed without harvesting of dates.

The **crop pattern** in Kech is dominated by dates. Kech produces 49 per cent of the provincial and 20 per cent of the national date production. This is the number one district in Balochistan in terms of



producing dates and comes second on national list after Khairpur. Though the production of grains and fodder in this district is very low, the production of fruits, pulses and vegetables is relatively better. 36 per cent of the total cultivated area of the district is under dates. No other crop in district occupies more than two per cent of the total cultivated area. The second biggest crop after dates is vegetables. Onion, tomatoes, chilies and other vegetables cumulatively occupy five per cent of the total cultivated area of the district. For vegetables, this ratio is quite fair.

The production of barley and wheat in 2006-07 season remained at 800 and 1,400 tons respectively. This dismal production is not enough to feed even a fraction of farming community itself. Pulses are pro-

duced in Kech district in adequate quantity. Beans locally known as banklenk are sown in irrigated areas as autumn crop. It is the most popular pulse used in the district since centuries. Kech also produces citrus, guava, banana and pomegranate in quantities that are hardly enough for local consumption.

According to [Livestock](#) Census 2006, only 5000 families rear milk animals (mainly cows). It means that only 6 per cent of the rural population rear milk animals in the district. Households rearing goats are more in number. Almost 16,400 families (17 per cent of the rural population) raise goats with an average herd size of 27 animals. The families reporting sheep are just under 3,000.

There is no major industry in Kech district except the Wapda power generation plant at Buleda and a flour mill at Turbat.

No minerals have been reported in the district. However, salt is obtained by private enterprises from some areas of close drainage locally called kaps, in Balgattar and Dandar.

The district is connected with other parts of the provinces and country by air and road. Turbat airport is the fourth busiest airports of the country. Good roads are rare in the district. Turbat has a radio station.

Trade, especially the trade of dates is the backbone of the economy of the district besides [remittances](#) sent by workers from abroad.

People of Kech were employed in the army of Indian state of Rajputana and after partition they are

regularly recruited in Muscat Army. A laborer working in Middle East can save and send home around 500 dirham (Rs 11,000) every month. Bullo Mund, 90-minute drive from Turbat city is a fast emerging center of border trade between Pakistan and Iran. Hundreds of shops in the main markets of Bullo Mund sell Iranian goods from candies to refrigerators and carpets. Smuggled Iranian motorcycles ply all over the district. Most of the district's fuel requirements are met by the Irani smuggled oil. Beside this food and vegetables are also imported unofficially. Apart from Pakistani rupee, Irani rials, Muscat and Dubai dirham and US dollars are frequently used in the district. Official trade between Iran and Pakistan takes place by rail and road at Taftan-Mirjava border of Balochistan.



Dates are produced all over Pakistan yet their production is essentially concentrated in three areas. The first and foremost is the Makran division of Balochistan comprising Kech, Panjgoor and Gwadar districts. 11 in every 20 acres of date orchards of the country are in this area. This area cumulatively produces 40 per cent of total national production of dates. Arid conditions and absence of a modern irrigation system result in low yield, however quality-wise the dates of Panjgoor are appreciated as one of the best dates in country. The second area comprises Khairpur and Sukkur districts of Sindh that produces 46 per cent of total dates of country though area under dates here is less than that in Balochistan. Better irrigation gives the farmers of these districts an edge over their Makran counterparts. The third area is southern

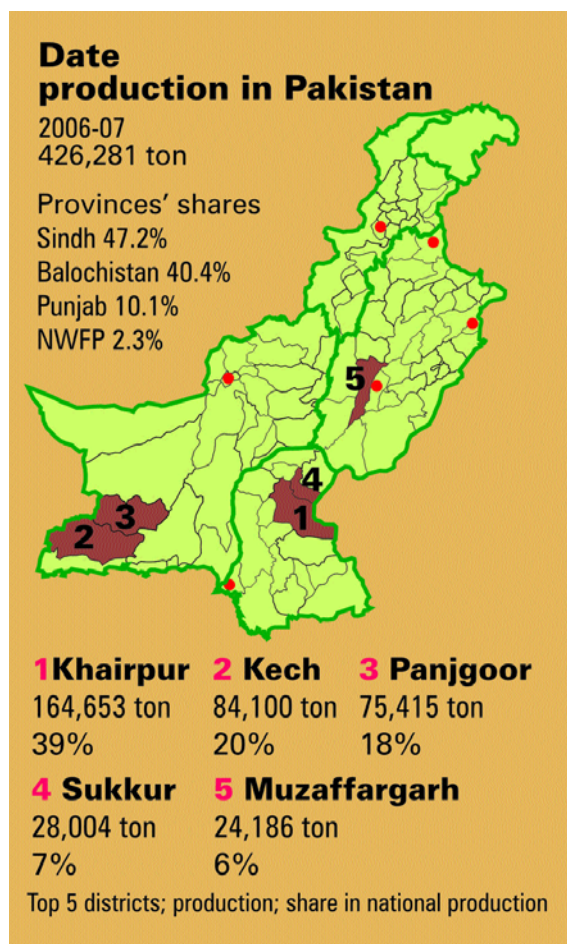
Punjab, which produces 7 percent of total dates of country with higher per acre yield than Sindh and Balochistan.

If we see it district-wise, six districts, three in Balochistan, two in Sindh and one in Punjab cumulatively produce 90 percent of dates in Pakistan.

Khairpur tops the list both in acreage and production followed by Kech and Panjgoor district. The best yield is of Muzaffargarh followed by Sukkur and Khairpur. Kech despite allocating the area almost equal to Khairpur one, falls short in production due to low yield, being at bottom in terms of yield.

Muzaffargarh's per acre yield is more than double that of two Balochistan districts, Kech and Panjgoor.

People of Kech believe that dates were introduced in the area by Arab invaders when they established



cantonments in different localities of Makran. Date in Turbat is known as naa and adult date tree is called mach. Date trees are divided into two classes in Makran, nasabi and kuroch. Nasabi are pure bred trees. Date palms have separate male and female plants. During the flowering season the orchards managers climb up the male plant, collect its pollen and sprinkle it on flowers of the female plant. They thus practice selective breeding and over long periods of time generations of families have developed their own varieties of dates. These selectively bred date palms are called nasabi while the others are named kuroch, literally meaning bastard. The nasabi trees are best varieties and well priced. First class

nasabi varieties are Ap-dandan, Begum Jungi, Haleni, Nazani, Muzati and Sabzo. Second classes of nasabi are Jowana bu shams, Dandari, Gurbago, Shingish kand. While the ordinary quality nasabi dates are Dishtari, Rogni, Kaleri, Hussani, Kungo and Gogna.

Date palm is greatly valued in Makran. A tenant, who plants a new date tree and abandons tenancy afterwards, retains a half share in the bearings of the tree as an inalienable right. Date palms after planting take 4 to 7 years to produce fruit and for a good yield of commercial value between 7 to 10 years. A date tree which has been well cared for attains a height of 80 to 100 feet and a girth of 5 feet. A date palm can last for up to 180 years or in the local terminology for the life span of three generations. A full grown date palm can produce 80 to 120 kilograms of dates per harvest season. In order to get good returns the bunches of dates need to be thinned and covered before ripening so that they grow bigger in size and are safe from severe weather conditions and pest attacks.

Locals divide the date fruit season into four parts - machosp, pappukwar, rang and amen. Machosp is the season starting after 15th February and lasting for three months. This is the pollination season and orchard owners arrange for the labor-intensive practice of collecting pollen from male plants and sprinkling it on the female plants. This practice is unique to dates as pollination is naturally done in other fruit orchards. Around the middle of May unripe, green date fruit appears in the plants, this is called pappukwar. A month later the fruit enters the rang phase that is when the color of the dates starts

changing and finally the harvesting starts by the end of June and may continue till September. This period when matured bunches of dates are plucked is called Amen season.

The ripe fruit from each tree is gathered on every third day. Date tree climbing is an art and tree climber in Kech is called tor. Date is collected in small baskets called pat made of the leaves of dwarf palm. The juicy kinds of dates such as Haleni, Begum Jungi, Kaleri, Muzati and Chapshuk are so delicate that if collected in pat baskets they lose color and shape and rot quite quickly. The harvesters carry glass jars to tree tops to collect these special varieties.

The Amen season has traditionally occupied a central place in the economic, social and cultural lives of the people of Kech. Date is one of the two major traditional staple foods, the other being fish. Date was considered more important of the two as it could be preserved for longer periods. At the beginning of the Amen season people like fishermen, nomads and highlander from all over Kech would crowd around orchards. They would camp there along with their livestock, participate in the harvest and survive on dates through these months. Turbat could store enough for its people and had the surplus for trade. The city thus became a center of trade in the area.

Date crop however has lost its traditional significance as livelihood resources have diversified. Kech men working in Middle East, mostly as unskilled labor, send cash back home. Orchard owners complain of labor shortage in Amen season and have to pay as much as Rs 300 per day to the harvesters.

Dates are no more the staple food. They instead are an export item and a foreign exchange earner. India is almost the sole importer of Pakistani dates and Sukkur date market in Sindh holds sway over this trade. Sukkur market sets the price for each season. If the dried date demand in India is higher than the production in Khairpur and Sukkur, Kech dates get a good price otherwise they are doomed. President of Date Growers Association of Pakistan Sardar Abdul Rehman Baloch of Kech claims that he got the highest ever price for his produce in 2008 and that was Rs 1000 per 40 kg or Rs 25 per kg that is close to the price of a kilo of wheat produced in Sindh and Punjab. The farm gate date prices vary between 15 to 25 rupees. Locals used to barter a kilo of fish with six of dates but now as fish sells for Rs 300 to 400 per kg, the barter is not a possibility and they need cash to access their second most important food item.

There are over 300 varieties of dates produced in Pakistan. In trade terms the major date varieties found in Pakistan include Aseel, Fasli, Karbala and Kupro of Sindh; Begum Jungi, Haleni, Nazani and Muzati of Balochistan; Dhakki and Gulshan of NWFP and a seedless variety of Punjab. The date varieties grown in Khairpur and Panjgoor are the most preferred ones. Presently, more than 54 date processing units are working in the country. The major processors are Panama Impex Agency, Karachi, Pak-Iran International (Pvt) Ltd, Syed International Sukkur, Prime Dates Product (Pvt) Ltd, etc. Other processing units are established at Lahore, Dera Ismail Khan and Quetta.



Pakistan is the sixth top producer of dates with some 8 per cent share in world production. It once was the fourth top producer and exporter of dates.

Country	Production (000 tons)	Share in world production %
Egypt	1,130	17
Iran	1,000	15
Saudi Arabia	983	15
UAE	755	11
Algeria	500	8
Pakistan	500	8
Iraq	440	7
Sudan	332	5
Oman	256	4
Libya	175	3

FAO statistics for 2007

Around 90 per cent of the total world production is consumed in the producer countries. Same is the case with Pakistan. Dates consumption in Pakistan is concentrated in the regions that produce it. Overall per capita consumption of dates has reduced, according to FAO data, from 4 kilograms in 1993 to 3 kilograms in 2003. Dates are consumed only in Ramadan in most parts of the country.

Date consumption within the country fell as exports of the commodity rose from 6 per cent of production in 1996 to 21 per cent in 2006. Pakistan on an average, exports one sixth of its production to other countries but it has to import a large quantity from other countries mainly for consumption in Ramadan when the demand for dates grows many folds.

Dates are preferred over any other thing to break the fast following Sunnah. Ramadan follows the Arabic lunar calendar that is ten days shorter than the regular solar one. This makes arrival of Ramadan revolve around seasons following a 36 year cycle. It thus syncs with the date harvesting season in the country for only few years and that necessitates the import of dates. Pakistan imports a big quantity of fresh dates mainly from Iran and UAE.

During the ten years between 1997-06 Pakistan on an average produced 568 thousand tones of dates per year and exported 12.5 percent of these. Its average annual export volume stands at 70 thousand tones while it imported 30 thousand tones of dates during each of these ten years. Pakistan exports dried dates and imports mostly fresh dates.

According to an estimate, only 10 per cent of dates produced in the world are traded. India is the largest importer of the fruit and purchases 40 per cent of total fruit offered by all the growers. India is the largest and almost single importer of Pakistani dates as well and it picks up 90 percent of what Pakistan sells abroad.

Pakistani dates' export consists of two varieties, fresh dates and dried dates. Dried dates are in high demand in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, USA and Canada. Fresh dates make way to UAE, Saudi Arabia, England and other countries. Pakistan earned 32 million dollars through export of dates in 2006. Recent tension between Pakistan and India has, according to newspapers reports, affected export of dried dates to India.

Therhi, in district Khairpur (Mirs) occupies a central place in date processing in Pakistan. Close to one dozen date factories are established in and around this township. Exporters buy well fleshed, fully ripened and sun-dried dates in plastic trays or wooden crates from the growers through a chain of middlemen. Dates are processed manually. The process starts with a light warm-water wash to remove dust and sand. The fruit is then spread on large tables for manual sorting, grading and packing.

The processing of dried dates for exports is much simpler. The fruit is cleaned, graded and packed in 70 kg jute bags. Agha Qadirdad Khan date market, situated on the left bank of river Indus, near Baberloi, one of the earliest homes of dates in Sindh and Khairpur date market, on the National Highway, is the main processing centers for dried dates.

Date processing industry in Pakistan is still in infancy and poor processing and packaging practices keep it away from lucrative western markets. There is no dearth of markets for both fresh and dry dates. Pakistan needs to explore new destinations in Europe and Americas besides consolidating the Sub-continent market, which will never get short of demand for dry dates due to cultural and religious reasons.

Date production and export in Pakistan is erratic to say the least. It suffered three major declines in production in 1999, 2003 and 2006 within last one decade. These are attributed to more rains during monsoon seasons and cyclone in Makran region in 2003. Rains damage the crop badly.

No government institute engages in research and development for dates. Farmers depend on their centuries old knowledge for taking care of this important crop. No doubt that Pakistan is at bottom ten countries of the world with regard to yield despite enjoying 7th rank in overall production. Egypt, the star performer gets six times more yield from an acre of dates if compared with Pakistan. China, Gulf States with the exception of UAE, Sudan and USA are all ahead of Pakistan.

Yield (maunds per acre) 2007

Egypt	341	Bahrain	90
China	155	Oman	79
Qatar	151	USA	71
Kuwait	101	Saudi Arabia	64
Sudan	97	Pakistan	60

FAO stats

SAP-Pk partner in district

Makran Resource Center (MRC)

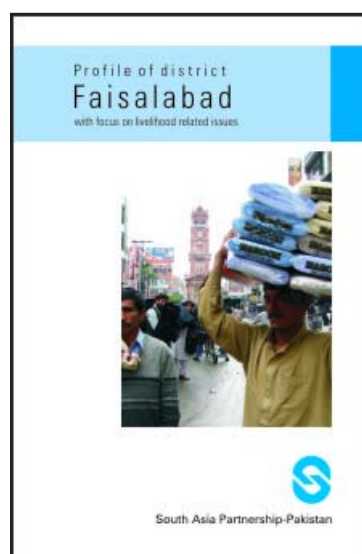
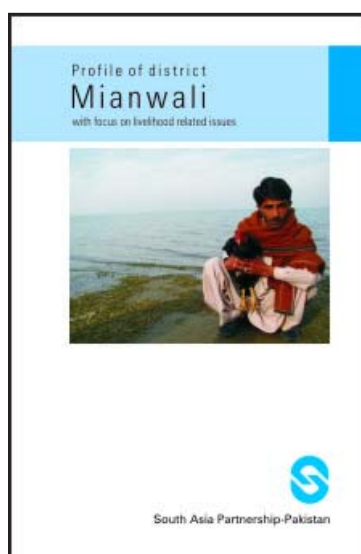
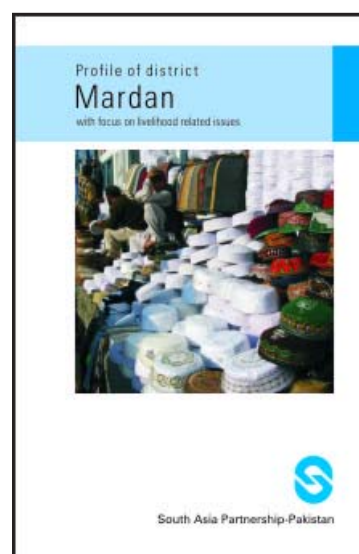
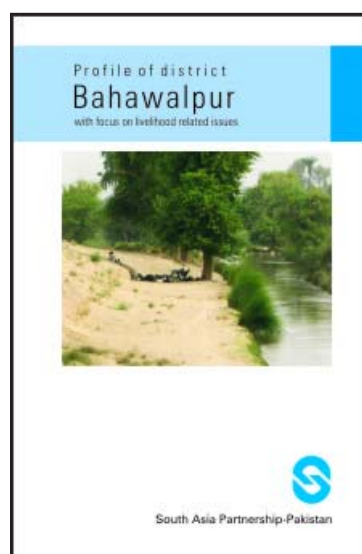
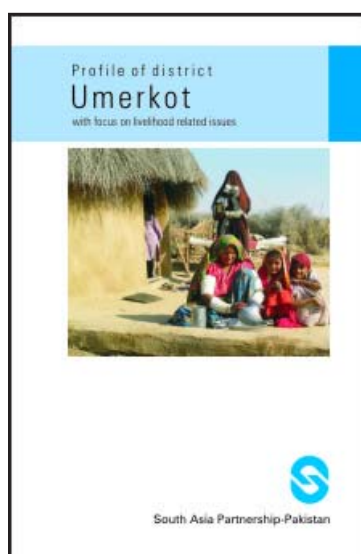
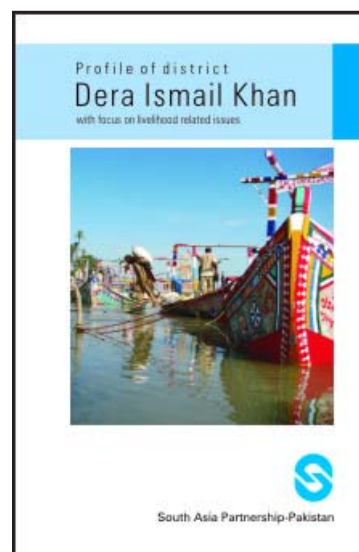
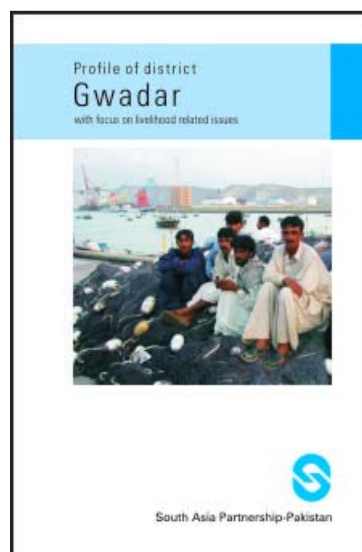
Makran is a semi-desert coastal strip in the south of Balochistan, in Iran and Pakistan, along the coast of the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman. It used to be a princely state before 1955. The Persian phrase Mahi khoran, or fish-eaters, is believed to be the origin of the modern word Makkuran. This narrow coastal plain rises very rapidly into several mountain ranges. Of the 1,000 km coastline, about 750 km is in Pakistan. Its climate is very dry, with very little rainfall. It is very sparsely inhabited, with much of the population being concentrated in a string of small ports including Chabahar, Gwadar, Jiwani, Pasni, Ormara and many smaller fishing villages.

Makran Resource Center (MRC) came into being as a response to a catastrophic flood in 1998. Later, as the situation grew better, the organization found its relevance in several other issues facing the poverty-stricken and unorganized rural peasantry. It was working with the same population in the coming years when 'socio-economic development of the marginalized people' became the overall objective of the organization and programs on political education, health, art and culture, promotion of local products, and local government became its priority.

MRC employs techniques such as capacity building, advocacy, networking and information-dissemination in delivery of its programs and services. The ultimate objective of MRC is to create local groups who are well informed and programatically and organizationally sustainable.

Currently, MRC is a partner of SAP-PK in the program, Strengthening Democratic Governance in Pakistan (SDGP).

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