



Mercury Poisoning Dentistry

Dr Mahmood A. Khwaja

Scientific evidence, including UNEP Global Mercury report, establishes mercury as an extremely toxic substance which is a major threat to wildlife, ecosystem and human health at a global scale. Children are more at risk from mercury poisoning which affects their neurological development and brain. Mercury vapors can cause damages to central nervous system, thyroid, kidneys, lungs, immune system, eyes, gums and skin. Neurological and behavioral disorders include tremors, insomnia, memory and vision problems, neuromuscular effects and headaches. Fetuses and young children are more vulnerable to the mercury vapors.

Mercury (Hg), also known as quick silver, is an essential constituent of dental amalgam, which are also called silver fillings and amalgam fillings and are widely done because it's inexpensive; ease of use, best settling material and most importantly it is resin free which make it less allergic than composite fillings. These fillings gave off mercury vapors and its amount depends upon cavity size, tooth characteristics, composition,

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age of amalgam, time taken for filling, the number of fillings, temperature of ingested food/drinking liquids and the activities like chewing & grinding of teeth.

In 2010, a study in Pakistan evaluating the amalgam use by dentists in the country and its waste management indicated that 92% dentists use amalgam often/always whereas 56% of the study samples disagreed that amalgam should be phased out and replaced with non-mercury fillings. 92% dentists of the selected number of samples perceived amalgam a health risk, whereas 46% considered

it an environmental hazard. A similar study carried out in Karachi indicated 94% of dentists perform dental amalgam restoration, 57% using hand mixing for dispensing and 55% disposing of mercury waste in the sink.

In the recently completed study carried out by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), in collaboration with zero mercury working group (ZMWG) and European Environmental Bureau (EEB), mercury analyzer, mercury levels were examined in and around 34 dental clinics, hospitals, dental colleges and teaching hospitals of five cities of Pakistan, namely Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Abbottabad and Lahore. The selected sampling points at these sites were operative dentistry/treatment sections, adjacent corridors and surrounding open air. Measurements were carried out employing a calibrated Lumex Mercury Analyzer.

Among all the visited/monitored dental sites in Lahore, Peshawar, Abbottabad, Rawalpindi & Islamabad, eleven (11) sites were most contaminated with mercury level in air many times higher than the recommended



limit of 300ng/m³. Mercury level in air of operative dentistry (OPD) at 15 out of 17 dental teaching institutions was found to be higher than the recommended limit, whereas, similar higher mercury levels were observed in 5 out of 7 general hospitals and all the 10 private clinics visited. Highest mercury levels in OPD air at teaching institutions, general hospitals and private clinics were found to be 44,067, 17,172 and 1,800 ng/m³ and the lowest values at these sites were 109, 174 and 333 ng/m³, respectively. Among dental sites mercury contamination of air was found to be generally in the increasing order operative section > corridor > open air and at teaching institutions > general hospitals > private clinics.

The study also showed the unawareness among medical and paramedical staff regarding appropriate handling of mercury/mercury amalgam, mercury containing wastes, improper and inadequate ventilation system at operative dentistry wards and lack of awareness regarding health hazards of mercury to human health, The main reason for the observed elevated levels of mercury in air at OPD, adjacent corridors and the surrounding air, was the careless use of mercury/mercury amalgam and inadequate mercury/mercury amalgam waste management at the sites.

According to a preliminary report on mercury inventory, published in 2000 by ministry of environment, government of Pakistan, dentistry is one of the main point sources of mercury releases and emissions in Pakistan. The estimated maximum and minimum emission and transfer of mercury in the country is about 36,900 and 10,800 kg per year, respectively. The estimated amount of mercury consumed in dental sector in the country is reported as 65 kgs/annum. At present, there is no mercury specific legislation in the country. However, development of a mercury management action plan is in the making.

To minimize mercury releases, waste generation and to safeguard public health, especially of children and paramedical and medical staff, the following recommendations are made for the consideration of all stakeholders, including officials of Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), ministries of health & environment and the environmental protection agencies.

- Following the best preventive approach - "Waste Reduction at Source," mercury emissions/releases streams be identified within dental sites through an environmental waste audit and accordingly, control measures be designed and implemented at the earliest.
- Best in-house environmental practices (cross

ventilation, exhaust fans) and use of best environment friendly technology be encouraged, standard operating procedures for mercury handling, transport and use, be developed and implemented.

- An institutional mercury waste management plan be put in place at all mercury operated sites and the same be periodically monitored and evaluated, by the management.
- Capsulated mercury amalgam use be promoted, as these effectively and substantially reduce mercury waste, releases/emissions to the environment.
- Non-mercury dental fillings be advised to patients by dentists.
- At the identified highly polluted dental sites in the present study (evident from the reported data of snap/spot measurements of mercury vapors in air at the time of measurements), a follow up comprehensive survey and monitoring program, including measurement of mercury levels for 8 hours exposure period, be developed and implemented at the earliest, to further confirm risks to public health in general and children, visitors/medical staff in particular.
- Mercury specific legislation, including national emissions/releases standards, standard minimum mercury in products and protocols for permit/license be introduced for private clinics/teaching institutions.

A persistent pollutant, Mercury is not limited to its source but it travels, on times, thousands of kilometers away from the source. Mercury poses serious risks to environment and human health, especially the health of children. In September, last year, IUCN World Conservation Congress (IUCN WCC-2012) adopted SDPI Motion (M-169) and called upon government representatives of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to support a legally binding treaty on Mercury with an objective to protect human health and the environment from hazardous and toxic Mercury. Early this year, in January, 140 countries in Geneva adopted a ground-breaking, world's first legally binding treaty on mercury, to be called "Minamata Convention on Mercury (MCM)," limiting the use and emission of hazardous mercury. MCM shall be open for signatures at a diplomatic conference in Japan, in October 2013

Hopefully, Minamata Convention on mercury (2013) would be signed and ratified by government of Pakistan at the earliest time possible. ■

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Agglomeration Economies in Agriculture Services: Firm-level Inquiry Analysis from Pakistan

Samavia Batool

SDPI plans to conduct a research study on agglomeration economies, which would explore the impact of agricultural services agglomeration on the revenue growth of these service providers. The study also aims to explore the impact of upstream and downstream firm agglomeration on the performance of these firms keeping in view the rural urban dynamics. Furthermore, this study would also explore the constraints facing the growth of these agricultural service firms in Pakistan.

Urban economics describe the term 'agglomeration economies' as the benefits obtained by the firms by the virtue of their close location. This concept relates to the idea of economies of scale and network effects. Simply put, Clustering of firms in close locality help reducing cost of production due to multiple suppliers, spill-over effects, greater specialization and division of labour. The ultimate end to agglomeration economies is the formation and growth of a city due to which this theme is central to the concept of urbanization.

Upstream and downstream agglomeration refers to the situations in which upstream firms and downstream firms cluster together. Upstream firms are the firms involved in the production of goods and services whereas downstream firms are involved in the distribution process (marketing and transportation).

Pakistan being an agro based economy is highly dependent on the agriculture sector. Agriculture sector contributes 21.4% to the GDP and employs 45% of the total labour force. While Pakistan has one of the highest population growth rate (2%) in the Asia-Pacific region, the growth rate of agriculture (3.3%) also needs to be enhanced in order to ensure food security.

According to a report by Planning Commission of Pakistan (2011), more than 30% of the agricultural output in Pakistan is wasted annually due to poor farm-to-market channels etc. By saving this, agriculture output can be expanded. Increased agricultural productivity will help to increase the share of agriculture in the GDP of Pakistan thus contributing more in the development process of the country.

Agricultural service providers are a substantial player in the agriculture sector. These include firms involved in whole-sale and retail trade, agri-transport services, input services, outreach services, extension services etc. However, there prevail significant gaps in the policy formulation for these firms. Research-based policy formulation may help enhance the overall performance of the agriculture sector for which our study is an attempt. SDPI's endeavor is to develop recommendations for services firms and to engage policy makers to support growth of the service sector and enhancing its productivity.

Firm-level survey would be conducted in two representative districts from each province. Using survey data, regression model, Key informant interviews and focus group discussion, the impact of agglomeration on the firm growth and the problems faced by the actors involved in agricultural services would be analyzed separately in urban and rural setting. Moreover, network analysis and risk and vulnerability analysis would be done to

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identify how firm linkages are made within a competitive environment and what kind of risks are associated with clustering of the agricultural service providers in Pakistan.

The study will also help contribute to the academic literature in many ways. Initially, the study would examine the revenue growth at the firm level as opposed to previous studies which focused exclusively on industrial revenue growth. Secondly, the impact of upstream and downstream agglomeration would be assessed simultaneously. Lastly, the impact of agglomeration on rural and urban welfare would also be analyzed.

The main purpose of this study is to provide recommendations based on research findings and to disseminate these to relevant agriculture policy making bodies of Pakistan. All the relevant stakeholders would also be engaged through roundtables etc. Working papers, policy briefs and op-eds would thus be produced for this purpose. ■

Succession Planning

Brig (Retd) Mohammad Yasin

Succession planning is a process by which an organization plans and develops its staff in managerial positions to succeed key position holders. For this purpose, internal staff is identified and developed. Various studies show that successful organizations endeavor continuity in leadership using internal talent. Such organizations do not bring in outsiders to replace retiring or separating CEOs.

Jin Collins (2005) says, "Visionary companies develop, promote, and carefully select managerial talent grown from inside the company to a greater degree than the comparison companies. They do this as a key step in preserving their core. Over the period 1806 to 1992, we found evidence that only two visionary companies (11.1 percent) ever hired a chief executive directly from outside the company, compared to thirteen (72.2 percent) of the comparison companies. Of 113 chief executives for which we have data in the visionary companies, only 3.5 percent came directly from outside the company, versus 22.1 percent of 140 CEOs at the comparison companies. In other words, the visionary companies were six times more likely to promote insiders to chief executive than the comparison companies."

Why succession planning is vital for organizations? Suppose a CEO develops serious differences with the board, resigns and leaves. Who will replace him, when no one is identified with the right talent, developed, mentored and groomed to succeed the CEO? Obviously, the organization will face serious difficulties because of lost leadership. Therefore, the only way to reduce this loss is through succession planning.

Many organizations have succession plans, but in most of them such plans exist only on paper. Very few go through the process of identifying talent in all departments and then implement a leadership development program. Collins (2005) suggests a continuous self-reinforcing process which he calls a "leadership continuity loop" as shown below:

"Absence of any of these elements can lead to management discontinuities that force a company to search outside for a chief executive – and therefore pull the company away from its core ideology. Such discontinuities can impede progress, as a company stalls due to turmoil at the top. In fact, we saw a pattern common in the comparison companies that stand in contrast to the "management continuity loop" in the visionary companies. We came to call this pattern the "leadership

gap and savior syndrome."

Selection of CEOs in the Development Sector in Pakistan

To find out the selection trend of CEOs in Pakistan's development sector, human resource managers of 25 organizations (both national and international) were asked the following questions:

1. In your Organization, how many CEOs/ Executive Director were?
 - Internally promoted
 - Inducted from outside the organization
 - Inducted on merit
2. Give brief reasons for your answer:

Responses of the survey:

Majority of the respondents shared that, in their organizations board of directors is responsible for hiring CEOs. Sixty percent of the respondents said that internally promoted CEOs should be preferred because they know the organizational culture, its vision and mission, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. Thirty two percent were of the view that external appointees come with an open mind and they can be more creative and innovative. Even those who preferred external inductees said that their organization should have effective succession managements in every department, because it will be good for continuity and organizational morale.

Consider the example of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) which is run by an Authority composed of three members, a chairperson appointed by the Government from amongst the members. The other two members are a Member Technical and Member Finance. From the last over eight months the company is without an authority because the two members and the Chairman got retired. PTA has stalled; there is no work, no guidance, no decisions, no planning and no execution. Politics and legal Issues compound the problem. Unending search for "saviors" continues without any seriousness. Had there been a strategy for succession planning and development of successors, things would have been different. Compare this with the defense forces where there is succession planning and development at every level. The result is "leadership continuity loop."

Let me give another example, that of Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), established in 1992 --- all chief executives have been home grown.

Although there have been ups and downs in financial health, but this non-government organization has not stalled. However, succession planning and development holds true for CEOs and not in lower echelons where the Institute continues to face discontinuities and suffer from “savior syndrome”.

What if an organization is stalled and it must make change in its strategy and move in a different direction? What if the internal leadership is struck with the status quo and is reluctant to make a bold move? In such cases, the company should look outside to succeed the CEO. Many organizations feel that the only way to create a change is to look for outsiders with no ties to the status quo. Others fear that outsiders who don't understand the business, its culture and its values will simply create disruption, Donald Sull (1999) says, “the recommended approach is to look for new leaders from within the organization but from outside the core business. Inside managers can break free of the old formula and imagine themselves as outsiders”.

Example. At one time, although, Intel had built an attractive microprocessor business, but it clung to the memory business until its Chairman and its President sat down and deliberately imagined what would happen if they were replaced with outsiders. They agreed that outsiders would get out of the memory business thus making a successful change Donald Sull calls it “the insider-outsider change agent”.

Succession Planning and Development Process

Succession planning must be done by a senior leadership team and must be aligned with an organization's strategic goals. The human resource department has an important role to play in succession development. The Rawls Group's HR's role in succession planning is to find people who fit the culture and to help them develop the skills to build the organization so it stays viable in the future.

How to plan succession?

- (1) Based on the organization's future strategy, set strategic goals.
- (2) For each job, define the qualifications, experience, knowledge and skills required.
- (3) Evaluate if the employees in various positions have the required knowledge and skill set. If not then identify the gap.
- (4) Prepare a plan for capacity building of the existing staff and induction of fresh people with the required talent.
- (5) As Jim Collin says, “make sure you have the right people in the bus and right people in different seats. Because if you have right people

in the bus, they will take the bust to its destination.”

HRIS

The emerging HR software technologies today are facilitating succession planning by recruiting the right people. Such tools must be made use of. One such tool is described below:

Halogen Software's Succession (Copied from the website, www.workforce.com). It is a talent pool approach that aligns the company's workforce competencies with strategic plans and follows a phased approach to succession planning.

Phase-1: Understanding workforce potential and retention risks through performance appraisals. Includes tools to predict employee potential and identify opportunities for promotion.

Phase-2: Groom high-potential employees for future talent needs. Include talent profile tools to track and compare talent assessment updates and identify gaps.

Phase-3: Recruit from within. Includes tools to assess talent and performance data and filling open positions, calculating bench strength or measuring whether talent development goals have been achieved.

Conclusion

Succession planning and development has to be a well planned and continuous process. It should not be limited to a CEO's position, but should include all key roles in an organization. Systematic capacity building, grooming and mentoring will prepare employees for succession. Capacity development should not be limited to employees with higher talent, but should cover all employees otherwise it will affect morale and motivation. It is important that succession plans should not remain on paper, they should be implemented. As David Lacker, a professor in the graduate school of business at Stanford University says, “Every company has a succession planning document. The question you have to ask is, will it be operational?”

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The Global Financial Crisis and South Asia: A Preliminary Assessment

Safwan A. Khan, Samavia Batool

The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) that emerged in the latter half of 2007 led to severe recessions in the leading world economies. It was earlier thought that the SAARC member states in the region remained insulated from the GFC shocks, as growth rates in most of SAARC economies remained positive in the period right after the crisis began. However, as literature suggests, this was not entirely true. As the world economy slowed down and many countries came under severe austerity measures, including those in the European region, macroeconomic indicators in the SAARC region came under duress too.

Transmission Channels

The GFC showed through multiple channels in South Asia. These include, but are not limited to, trade, migration and remittance flows. Although the latter two have maintained an increasing trend in South Asia throughout the period after the crisis first emerged, it can be argued that these could have been higher had the crisis not taken place.

The most apparent impact of the GFC for South Asia as a region was in terms of trade. There was a reduction up to 20% in real terms in international trade, leaving implications for trade-dependent economies of Asia. As credit availability strained in the immediate aftermath of the crisis, demand for goods reduced, coupled with emerging difficulties in obtaining trade finances. There was flight of capital from countries perceived as more prone to the crisis, which also contributed to credit tightening and exchange rate depreciation in some countries. Moreover, countries with more flexible financial and trade regimes were more exposed to the crisis (Bernanke, 2009).

Another study indicates that outward migration flows in some Asian countries were affected due to the GFC. The "number of family members working as migrant workers abroad" from three Asian countries, Bangladesh Indonesia and Philippines reduced by and 3% during the period of the crisis (ADB, 2012). This was further exacerbated by a decline in the number of those seeking overseas migration, primarily for two reasons: migration became more expensive due to loss in income, and there emerged a continuous dearth in jobs overseas. The crisis also affected household incomes through remittances, as there was an observed reduction in income due to scarcity of jobs and declining wages overseas as well as back home (ADB, 2012).

GFC and South Asia

There was a significant reduction in the growth rate of GDP in Pakistan, i.e. 6.8% in 2007 to 1.2% in 2009. A similar retraction was also observed in Bangladesh, where real GDP fell by 0.1% following the emergence of the crisis in 2008. Bangladesh also experienced a 67% decrease in FDI, increase in the rate of inflation, and reduction in both exports as well as imports. Around 70,000 Bangladeshi migrants returned to their home country after the crisis, and there was also a substantial decrease in outward migration from the country by the year 2009 (Sanogo, 2010).

Inflation levels also rose sharply in Pakistan, coupled with high levels of unemployment in the country (Nanto, 2009). Karachi Stock Exchange (KSE) Index valued down from 15373 points to 9144 points in the year 2009 (Muhammad, Hussain and Ali, 2009). Pakistan witnessed an immediate reduction in trade as did Bangladesh, with the current account deficit reaching 8.4% of GDP in 2008 compared to 4.3% in 2007 (Amjad and Din, 2010). As noted in an ADB study, poverty head count ratio for Pakistan also increased by 40% during 2008-09.

Economic growth in India fell from 9.3% in 2007 to 7.3% in 2008, coupled with currency depreciation by 15.6% from 2007 to 2009. FDI was also affected, experiencing a reduction of up to 56% during 2007-2008. However, FDI did pick up in India a year later (Goldstein and Xie, 2009). Economic growth was also affected in Sri Lanka, falling from 6.8% in 2007 to 4% in 2009. There was a nearly 75% reduction in FDI from 2007 to 2008. It must be noted though that FDI had already been under stress in Sri Lanka even before the crisis began. The current account deficit swelled up to 7.1% of GDP in 2008 from 4.5% in 2007. More importantly, there was a significant reduction in workers' remittances, which fell from \$2.5 billion in 2007 to \$1.6 billion in 2008 (Amjad and Din, 2010).

Nepal was apparently least affected by the crisis, owing to financial markets that still remain least integrated with global financial markets. The country did experience a reduction in the growth of remittances and exports, while aid flows were also negatively affected. There was also a reduction in FDI and earnings from tourism immediately after the crisis (Khadka and Budhathoki, 2013). Maldives, having had recently recovered from the economic fallout after the tsunami in

2004, had to again face the negative shocks of the GFC as tourism got severely affected in the country. Moreover, the budget deficit widened up to 14% of GDP in 2008 (UNDP, 2009). The tourism sector was also affected in Bhutan, where GDP growth fell from 19% in 2007 to 5% in 2008. There was an expansion in the fiscal deficit from 3% in 2008-09 to 6.9% in 2009-10, as other macroeconomic indicators, including current account deficit and inflation rate also worsened in the country (Phuspal, 2009).

One can thus observe from the literature as well as from these revealing statistics that even though the South Asian region may have initially escaped the shocks of the GFC, it did become vulnerable the negative effects of the crises at later stages, with countries in the region getting affected at various time-periods since the GFC began in 2008. The impact of the crises may have also left a mark on human resource development in SAARC economies, a subject that remains of immense interest for further inquiry.

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Mirror mirror on the wall

Media canvas is full of disillusioned sketches of both men and women. It has not fixed the gap for both sides putting a heavier burden on the viewers

By Akseeb Javed

When I was a child, my favourite pastime was when my grandmother used to read bedtime stories to me. Those stories took me to a magical world full of wonders of nature. In a subtle way, I was being taught that two strong forces exist in the society; good and evil. In my imagination, snow-white was like a knight in shining armour, who defeated her evil stepmother with the kind support of a Prince. Later, the television gave virtual presentation to my thoughts that were different from my imaginary world. Indeed, there was a snow-white and a wicked stepmother, but there was something missing...

With the passage of time, bedtime stories were

overshadowed by broadcast media. TV emerged as one of the popular medium of communication. Unconsciously, it started changing the society's perception of reality based on its own notion of realism. Similarly, drama is considered the popular genre of media that offers a complete package to its viewers portraying in-depth the development of realistic characters dealing with a variety of emotional themes.

During the decade of 80s, there was only one popular TV channel --- Pakistan Television (PTV). It telecast a number of quality drama serials such as Dhoop Kinaray, Ankahi, Tanhayan, Shama, Waris, Khuda ki Basti, Dhuan, Angan Terha, Andhera Ujala, Anch,

Alpha Bravo Charlie etc. The story line of these serials focused equally on character building of both men and women. For instance, the protagonist of Dhoop Kinaray had a balanced personality. Dr Ahmer though depicted as a hardworking, dedicated, and focused doctor, he showed range of emotions such as anger, despair, dejection, love and affection. Similarly, Zoya, the heroine, was portrayed as a cheerful and lively girl yet she reflected an emotional strength during the time when her father went through financial crisis. The actor in the supporting role, Dr Irfan, was an entertainer and a funny character, but a sensible person. So, there was a balance in the perception and description of gender in other PTV plays.

Later the 20th century witnessed a boom of TV channels, which was great from technological point of view but it deteriorated the content of plays. Slowly foreign culture begins to influence the essence of our dramas. Consequently, it affected the way men and women are presented in the mass media. Nowadays, the TV serials have become a battlefield of the same sexes. In drama serial Maat, the two sisters fight to get the affection of one man. Though Saman has ulterior motives, she was triumphant in the end apparently. Likewise, in Mere Charagar, Abeeha becomes a pendulum between the affection of two brothers. Moreover, a sick human psychology is portrayed in the serials such as Mera Naseeb, Bilquis Kour, Lahasil, Pani Jaisa pyar, Qaid-e-Tanhaie, Dil-e-Muztir, Mere herjaie etc.

In the aforementioned dramas, the characters are far from being real. Till the climax the protagonist has a distorted version of truth and then a sudden bang

most likely in the last episode of the serial brings him back to his senses. In the meanwhile, he remain tangled in the cobweb of conspiracies weaved by the antagonist of the play. In the same way, the females in the leading roles are either depicted as religious, moral, submissive, quiet, devoted, and naïve, or wicked, obnoxiously bold, outspoken, and devious witches.

This twisted characterization of gender in the dramas negatively affects the identity of both male and female in the society. As media has a stronghold on the way we perceive our surroundings so the tampered version of the opposite sexes overshadowed the reality. As a result, men are acting like conquerors and women a scheming tragedy queens. The reality is somewhere lost between the lines.

Media canvas is full of disillusioned sketches of both men and women. It has not fixed the gap for both sides and put a heavier burden on the viewers. Men and women are portrayed in a stereotypical, sexist, extremist, and absurd way. Instead of breaking the shackles of our monotonous routine these dramas are making us antsy and fretful—here lies the difference between the bedtime stories and the dilemma of gender perspectives in media.

So when I asked

Mirror on the wall

Who is fairest of all?

No words appear. The mirror remained silent this time... Childhood innocence has been lost, it's veiled behind media half truths. Mirror has nothing to tell because there's no realism ■

Energy Crisis and Inflation

By Muhammad Zeshan

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), in its third quarterly report, asserts that stable energy prices have contributed the most to decline in inflation rate, as electricity tariffs have not been revised since May 2012. Same is the case with the natural gas tariff for domestic consumption, which was halved during July 2012 and no revision has been witnessed after that period. Though the energy prices in Pakistan are volatile, they move within certain bands as these prices are controlled by the state. This factor puts a cap on the inflationary pressures, and suppresses the inflationary expectations. However, this practice is promoting a culture in which people are not aware of the true energy price. Currently, international oil prices are rising and

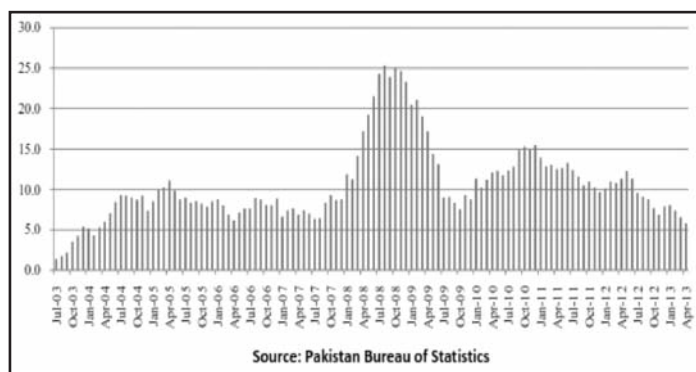
an upward revision in the electricity tariff is expected, which would promote optimal electricity consumption. Though the energy prices have played an important role in price stability during the year 2013, this trend is not much likely to continue as the new government plans eliminating many subsidies in near future.

The inflation rate represented by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) indicates the price trend of goods and services in Pakistan. The key factors affecting its growth are the rise in energy prices, the supply of money, supply side gaps, government controlled prices, and exchange rate adjustment. Basically, CPI represents the headline inflation, which captures the price movements over the time, hence this is a good in-

indicator of inflation.

During the current fiscal year 2012-13, the CPI took start with a single digit inflation rate, which persisted till April 2013. Over the last 10 months, the inflation rate has been falling downward persistently. The basic reason behind this falling inflation is the stable energy prices, improved supply of food and nonfood goods and the falling global commodity prices. From July 2012 to April 2013, the averaged inflation rate was 7.8% compared to the 10.8% last year.

Figure 1 Inflationary Trend of Consumer Price Index

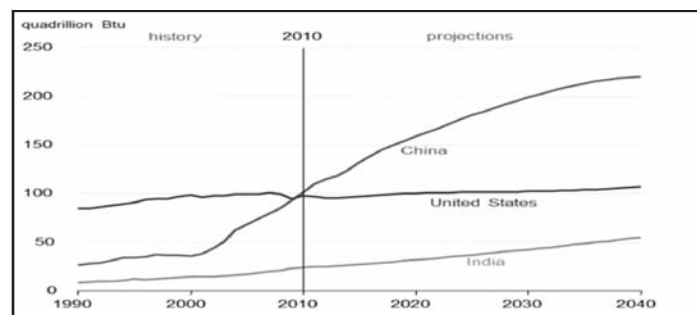


From the global economic perspective, uncertainty prevails in the energy market. The crude oil future prices have been falling as US military strike on Syria has delayed, hence the expected disruption to the energy supplies has come to an end while still tensions are there. The New York Mercantile Exchange predicts a fall in crude oil future prices for October at US\$ 108.63 per barrel representing a fall of 0.8%. Though, Syria is not an important oil producer, investors are afraid that the effects of war might spill over affecting oil supplies in neighbouring countries. Further, involvement of other countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia can disrupt oil supply as both are the major oil suppliers.

China also plays an important role in the energy

market as China is the second largest oil consumer in the world. Industrial production in China rose 10.4% during August 2013 as compared to the expected 9.9%. This optimistic economic outlook reveals that exports rose more than expected during August, and this trend seems to persist in the near future. In addition, the International Energy Outlook predicts that energy consumption in China would be greater than India and United States till 2040 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 Energy Consumption in China, India and United States



Source: International Energy Outlook, 2013

The current scenario reveals that though the future energy prices are falling as US has delayed its strike against Syria, but uncertainty still prevails in the energy market, which may lead to expectations of higher energy prices in the future. Further, industrial production in China has been rising persistently over the time, which needs more energy inputs resulting in higher energy prices. Both these factors indicate an expected increase in energy prices in the future as the supply disruption is expected in the energy market. On the other hand, the energy prices in Pakistan are controlled by the state. If the international energy prices increase while these prices are not shifted to the consumers, then subsidized energy prices would keep the inflation stabilized, but would raise the fiscal deficit significantly. ■

Child Labour: Areas for Future Research

By Muhammad Hamza Abbas

Pakistan ranks 6th in the world in terms of its population and 5th on the list of young population. However, a huge chunk of population is below 19, i.e., around 53%. With the current level of literacy and health services, it is obvious that the country is home to one of the biggest child labor populations in the world. Besides, it is signatory to a number of interna-

tional conventions that call for eradicating child labour and has ratified United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and International Labour Organization's (ILO's) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention.

A 2012 report released by the Islamabad based Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child

(SPARC) shows that there are 12 million child labourers in the country. Similarly, Federal Bureau of Statistics (2010-11) survey shows that out of total 40 million, 3.8 million in the age group of 5-14 are working all over Pakistan, and the worst part of it is that 50 % falls in the age group of 5-9. Agriculture sector, which is considered the backbone of Pakistan's economy, employs 2.7 million children aging 5-14 years. Unfortunately, there is no data available on household child workers that can be in millions.

There is a need to evaluate the work done so far by the civil society and government supported by the donor organizations in this sector. However, more research and practical measures are required to create an enabling environment for the children. It will help gauge the level of impact generated by the activities to meet the goals of the programme. The evaluation to be undertaken needed to be goals-based, process-based and outcomes-based.

In Pakistan, economic opportunities are rare for the poor, that's why the children are compelled to enter the labour market despite the families do know that long-term economic gains are much lower than an educated person. Emerson and Souza (2007) write that merely enrolling the children into schools is not enough, gov-

ernments need to curtail the activities in which they are involved. This is an important area of future research for the policy makers in the country.

Different civil society organizations and provincial governments are working on the theme of child labour with no visual outcomes, so it is important to come up with a common strategy. There is a dire need to study whether any joint efforts by all the agencies could bring fruit to the efforts for reduction in child labour or the individual efforts were more productive.

Child labour has been a lingering issue since a long time, and it did affect the international image of Pakistan. In our formal and informal sectors, child labour is extensively being involved. So it is really important to measure the impact of loss to our exports due to presence of child labour in our industries and informal sector, or in other words macroeconomic analysis from child labour perspective.

Except a few reports on child labour and a small-scale data collection, there is not much being done from the research point of view. So this area remains unexplored and with the new ideas and research based advocacy campaigns the issue of child labour can be handled effectively. ■

Anti-Corruption Measures: Proposals for new government

By **Fayyaz Yasin**

There remains a concomitant nexus between corruption and power. It is not the power, but the fear of loss of power that leads to corruption. In Pakistan, corruption has appeared to be one of the biggest challenges to democracy. Almost all the elected governments, replaced by the military oligarchy, had been charged for massive corruption. However, the present government is lucky enough that people preferred democracy than another dictatorship despite heavy corruption charges on the successive government. In fact, the people's resolve for democracy has appeared with their commitment to help establish a transparent and efficient government that can deliver.

In this age of technology, when a vigilant and vibrant media has already inculcated a sense of political judgment among masses, and social media has provided a platform for the social audit of public service delivery and policies, it is increasingly becoming harder for the incumbents to backtrack from the claims and promises made during the election campaigns – biggest one of

which was to curb corruption and reclaim the money siphoned off from the national kitty during the last five years.

Masses' concern with the increasing corruption in the country is for two reasons – when public resources allocated for public service delivery are misused, it limits their access to adequate number of schools, hospitals, roads and the necessary infrastructure. Secondly, corruption corrodes rule of law, limits people's access to jobs and justice and hinders their way out of poverty that inculcates a sense of frustration and social chaos, which cause widespread crimes.

Fighting corruption is not something that a single agency, unit or initiative can do in isolation; it involves the wholehearted efforts of the entire ruling elite. But, before this effort begins, there should be a clearly laid out roadmap to achieve the carefully set goals. And since masses at large are the primary victims of corruption in state institutions, they should be taken on board and given ownership of this anti-corruption drive.

This anti-corruption drive should be comprehensive and all encompassing. And before it is launched, there should be a clear-cut message regarding seriousness and sincerity of the government in pursuing its agenda. This message should be substantiated with research based measures to curb corruption in its all manifestations – bribery, cronyism and nepotism, embezzlements, extortions, frauds and state captures. Nothing causes a greater blow to the anti-corruption efforts of a regime other than its perception of pursuing the agenda half-heartedly or with its selective implementation.

We have successful anti-corruption initiatives implemented in our neighborhood and in outer world at large. These initiatives can be replicated after their indigenization and suitability to the local needs. The best of these initiatives is promulgation of the right to information. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has drafted a right to information bill, which ranks third best in the world. Other provinces can also follow the suit provided that there is sincerity in their claim to empower the

common man and giving them right to hold the public servants and political leadership to account.

Provided there is a will, the government can also seek help from civil society, research and academic community and of course the youth – the latter one is perhaps most eager to play their role in curbing this menace. Once out with a comprehensive strategy and supporting actions to pursue this agenda, the government will regain its credibility among the masses, and this credibility will provide it the much needed social and political capital to make tough decisions for economic and fiscal stabilization and improvement of security situation.

However, if the state remains unbothered by aspiration of the masses for good governance, and shrugs off the allegations of its consent and involvement in issues like Nandipur power project scandal and import of hybrid cars, it will perhaps lose credibility to take even smallest of the decisions that establish its writ. And if it happens, this will definitely not be a good step for sustainability and deepening of democracy in Pakistan. ■

A quick fix, again

Developing countries' experiences with IMF are neither very pleasant nor very helpful. However, unless any other lifeline works, IMF is a quick fix solution

Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri

Shakespearean saying, "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown", proved very true for Mian Nawaz Sharif who has been trying to handle triple "E-crisis" (i.e. energy, economy, and extremism) since his party won the general elections.

The severity of crisis forced PML-N government to utilise three vital lifelines within first month of coming into power. The first lifeline was Saudi Arabia. There were reports about Saudi oil, up to the tune of US\$ 15 billion, on deferred payment basis. However, this lifeline did not work and the government had to resort to second and third options, i.e. seeking a bailout package from IMF and rushing for Chinese support mainly in energy sector.

Before the Premier's current visit to China, Pakistan had signed 400 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with China, including a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). However, more than 350 of such MoUs were just photo-shoot opportunities and could never get materialize. The effectiveness of this lifeline would not depend on the number of MoUs signed during the Premier's visit but on the fact that how many of those

would turn into legally binding agreements.

Chinese investment in Pakistani energy sector is quite a viable option provided we can offer an "easy entry and easy exit" policy to foreign direct investors. The biggest bottleneck for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Pakistan is not physical security threats, but the policies and procedures that turn both entry and exit of any investor extremely difficult and painful process. So one has to wait and see if this lifeline brings any relief for the government.

IMF, the third lifeline, is comparatively a safe bet than the other two. However, the staff level agreement of providing Pakistan an Extended Fund Facility (EFF) ... a long-term support for economic reforms and to improve balance of Payment... needs to be vetted by IMF's Executive Board in September 2013 before any transaction can be made to Pakistan.

This vetting would depend on "front loading" by September 2013 of "home grown solutions" committed by Ishaq Dar's team. Before discussing the pros and cons of this home grown solution, let me talk you through on how IMF engages with its member countries.

A country decides to go to IMF when its economy is not performing well and outflows exceed inflows. This situation leads to a balance of payment crisis and that is where IMF comes handy. The major component of Pakistan's outflows in 2013 is debt servicing to IMF. We have just made a hefty payment to the fund in June 2013 and need to pay another US\$ 3 billion within next few months. As we don't have enough forex reserves to make this payment, hence we have to borrow more.

EFF is an engagement for next 10 years. The mark up would be 5.75 per cent (3 per cent add on US Federal treasury markup which is around 2.75 per cent) and its repayment would start after 4 years. This implies that PML-N would be paying off the major portion of this EFF in its next tenure only if it gets another turn in 2018 elections; alternatively its successors would accuse PML-N of financial mismanagement and may have to resort to another loan to clear this debt.

The cycle where the successive governments have to take tough decisions for its predecessor's "economic wrong doings" results in lack of political ownership of IMF agreements.

IMF's prescription is to reform the economy through reducing fiscal deficit. The member country seeking help from IMF has to present a plan on how it would curtail expenditures and increase revenue. This plan is usually known as "home grown solution". The expenditures of Government of Pakistan consist of debt servicing, defense & security, day to day administration, and development.

The former three are inflexible and more or less sacred so there cannot be any reduction here. It means any home grown solution to reduce expenditures would mainly hit the development expenditures and to some extent (ritually) day to day administration expenditures. This would hit the poor, lower middle class, and middle class the most.

On the other hand, the government of Pakistan's major revenue sources are non-tax revenue, indirect taxes, and direct taxes. Indirect taxes are applicable on everyone, whereas direct taxes are applicable on taxable class only. While we know Pakistan's tax to GDP ratio is extremely low, we also know that majority

of Pakistanis, irrespective of their social status, are paying some sort of indirect tax. The implementation of taxation policy is highly tilted in favour of elites.

The Finance Minister was adamant that he would not impose new (direct) taxes, and would not abandon the SRO (statutory regulatory order) regime which provides exemption from taxes and duties to a select few. It is true that certain SROs are legitimate and necessary (such as duty free import of medical equipment/ambulances by a charity hospital). However, most of the SROs are a source of tax evasion.

Lack of political will for increasing the direct taxes would lead the government to increase its revenue through indirect taxes and non-tax revenue. Both of which again hit the poor, lower middle class, and middle class the most.

The federal budget 2013, prepared in hurry to present something tangible to the IMF mission who were to start their visit on 17th June, included the above-mentioned cost saving and revenue enhancement measures.

One agrees that the economy should be documented; non targeted subsi-

dies should be abandoned; loss making public sector enterprises should be revamped; power sector should be reformed; and austerity measures should be adopted. However, one also expects that on revenue enhancement side, more people should be brought in tax net and direct taxes should be levied. Income above a certain threshold should be taxed irrespective of the fact that it is generated through industry, services, or agriculture.

Developing countries' experiences with IMF are neither very pleasant nor very helpful. However, unless any other lifeline works, IMF is a quick fix solution. While availing this solution, it is the government's duty to ensure that majority of Pakistanis who fall in low income group are protected from side effects of front loading of home grown solution. Life of people belonging to middle and lower income groups is already miserable. They should not get the undue share of uneasiness for the crown they never wore. ■

— Courtesy *The News, Islamabad (July 28, 2013)*

The major component of Pakistan's outflows in 2013 is debt servicing to IMF. We have just made a hefty payment to the fund in June 2013 and need to pay another US\$ 3 billion within next few months. As we don't have enough forex reserves to make this payment, hence we have to borrow more.

Environmental Regulations & their Compliance in Textile Processing Sector

Faisalabad constitutes more than 65% of overall textile export market of Pakistan, and its share in total exports is more than 40%. The city stands third in GDP in the country after Karachi and Lahore; its GDP (PPP) was \$14 billion in 2008. Though, textile industry in Faisalabad contributes to country's total exports significantly, its contribution to pollution is also rising. Moreover, environmental concerns are increasing due to waste water discharge from this industry.

The study conducted by SDPI on Environmental Regulations and their Compliance in Textile Processing Sector in Pakistan identifies the factors that can influence compliance and non-compliance of the textile processing sector in Faisalabad with the environmental regulations. In textile processing industries, some sub-processes are relatively polluters of higher order.

For industry in Faisalabad, Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (PEPA) as a 'Regulator' has been assigned the tasks to ensure monitoring, enforcement, and implementation of environmental laws. The current environmental regulations pertaining to textile industry exist in the form of National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS) Pakistan Environment Protection Act, or international certifications such as ISOs, Eco-Labeling, OEKO TEX, SA 8000, Reach and many others. However, when it comes to assessing how far textile industry is ensuring compliance with NEQS, a number of factors are responsible for compliance and poor-compliance of the textile firms in Faisalabad.

International customers' pressure is the major reason for compliance in mostly large firms. No particular "Code of Conduct" is followed by textile industry at large; hence "pollution management practices" are not in use. EPA takes actions against non-compliant firms with legal proceedings in local high court/tribunal. Non-compliant is subjected to fine, which is less hence ineffective. Owing to lack of education on environmental issues, majority of small textile units are unaware of rules and regulations implemented by EPA. A large number of firms manipulates the environmental laws especially NEQS through unfair means due to high costs of compliance. Government bodies see their role more as regulator rather than an advisor i.e. provision of technical assistance to these firms. One of the important challenges the textile processing industry at large is facing is the installation of effluent treatment technology. Many large firms go for effluent treatment technology in order to generate more exports hence stay compliant. Due to high costs involved and low pro-

duction rates, all small and medium and some large firms cannot explore options for installing effluent treatment technology due to lack of financial resources and/or due to lack of advisory/technical services available in the market. Many firms do not agree with NEQS regulations for either being too stringent or obsolete as modern ways of running mills/factories/units/plants are ruling out outdated regulations. Firms have to wait for a year for getting environmental clearance/license/NOCs for installing effluent treatment technology which makes compliance process cumbersome. Many large & medium firms have to face stringent requirements by international customers who negotiate for lower prices yet demand higher level of compliance. Small firms lack awareness and education on environmental issues and solutions. Similarly, the major challenge faced by EPA is dearth of human resource, which makes it hard for an official to pay visit to every firm every month and hence ensure monitoring and enforcement in the industry. Almost every firm disposes of treated/untreated waste, but there are no checks and balances to treat overall industrial waste, which is drained into main rivers after semi-treatment in the combined Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) that is still not fully functional. Community in Faisalabad is not aware of pollution; hence exerts no pressure on textile owners to stay compliant. Many large and medium firms are taking remedial measures for minimizing waste either because of international customers' demand or to save cost. All Pakistan Textile Processing Mills Association (APTPMA) in collaboration with Program for Industrial Sustainable Development (PISD) encourages member firms to participate in awareness campaigns, forums, seminars and workshops regarding protection of environment, establishment of ETP at firm level, and a combined ETP in Faisalabad.

Recommendations

Government can play the role of facilitator rather than regulator. It needs to understand industry's problems, provide subsidies for installing new effluent treatment plants to comply with NEQS. Firms should be given assistance in terms of funds/loans/incentives such as tax evasions to install the in-house effluent treatment facilities. Combined effluent treatment plant may not be a good idea to treat over all industrial waste considering the size of the industry. It should be either constructed or made functional for those who cannot afford any such in-house facility due to lack of funds or space. Ministry of Textile, Ministry of Climate Change,

and Environment Protection Department should provide assistance to textile industry with a positive attitude to overcome the challenges by simplifying the

processes involved in compliance despite creating hindrances and complications. ■

—by *Gul Waseem*

Making Quality Education Accessible in Pakistan: A Social Accountability Perspective

Making Quality Education Accessible in Pakistan: A Social Accountability Perspective-District Khanewal and Vehari', a joint project of SDPI and Ilm Ideas, is in its third phase wherein key stakeholders are being imparted training. However, first and second phases involve inception meetings with key stakeholders and collection of data through qualitative and quantitative techniques respectively. The data collected on the project's objectives includes: (i) state of quality of education in both districts, (ii) admission and retention rate in both districts, (iii) gender gaps in access to education, (iv) status of participatory governance in education sector, and (v) effectiveness of participatory school governance methods.

Teachers are one of the most important stakeholders of the project in the third phase. As many as 75 teachers have been trained in both the districts with the objectives that are (a) diffusion of lessons gathered from both qualitative and quantitative data, and (b) concept and status of social accountability and participatory school governance in education sector.

a) Diffusion of Lessons

A number of issues were highlighted by the participants of the training at the time of diffusion of lessons. The most important issue was about various initiatives of the Punjab government in education sector. It may be mentioned that the Punjab government has taken various steps to enhance the quality of education. Universal Primary Education (UPE) survey and Universal Secondary Education (USE) survey is one of them with the objective of enhancing enrollment rate. Teachers are carrying out the survey whereas a strict monitoring system has been established to control teachers' absenteeism.

The extra burden on teachers has ultimately har-
boured teachers' grievances and intra-administrative

conflicts (a result drawn from data and teachers' training). Thus, the participants of the training have been sensitized about the types of conflicts that vary from teacher-to-teacher conflicts, teacher-to-administration conflicts, teacher-to-monitoring team conflicts and teacher-to-education officers conflicts. Additionally, teachers were also told as how to resolve the issues through various ways, including increased interaction with administration, filing of complaints and follow-up, making teachers union functional (a suggestion from the participants), demanding a dedicated team to conduct UPE and USE surveys, following the government provisions, proper utilization of financial funds, Farroogh-e-Taleem Fund (FTF) and School Management Committee (SMC) fund, and dedication towards their profession.

b) Social Accountability and Participatory School Governance

The participants filled a pre-training evaluation form. More than 80 per cent teachers were not aware about Social Accountability and Participatory Governance. Thus, they were briefed about these two topics, which were also linked to working of School Management Committees (SMCs). Community interaction and response was another issue initiated by the trainers under these two topics. Various suggestions from participants were recorded in this regard. Most of the participants emphasized upon parent-teacher meetings to enhance community involvement in teaching and administration matters.

The trainers, who were the Assistant Education Officers (AEOs), also discussed some of the new initiatives by the Punjab government in education sector. Merger of girls and boys primary schools is one of the most recent initiatives. ■

— by *Afsheen Naz, Research Associate.*

Afghanistan – Pakistan Trade: Emerging Trends and Challenges

A dialogue between both Pakistan and Afghanistan to remove trade barriers, use of advanced technologies at the border to record all import and export data, stringent steps to discourage smuggling, im-

provement in infrastructure and visa facilities, and decrease in the number of checkpoints is mandatory to enhance trade ties between the two countries.

This was the crux of a roundtable consultative meet-

ing, "Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade: Emerging Trends and Challenges", organized by Economic Growth Unit at Sustainable Development Policy Institute on 23rd August, 2013 in Islamabad prior to the visit of Afghan President Hamid Karzai to Pakistan. Keeping in view the importance of trade relations between the two countries, government officials, experts, representatives from business community and media provided their input. The roundtable focused on the situational analysis of Afghanistan-Pakistan trade and recent developments at government level, implications of informal trade between the two countries, trade barriers, and recommendations for trade-specific advice.

Brief of the discussion

Participants said trade continues in spite of security and other issues. Afghanistan is allowed export to India but the same is not allowed from India to Afghanistan. At the Joint Economic Commission meetings between the two countries, Afghan side stressed the need to enter into bilateral trade agreement to utilize the trade potential, they said, and added that trade scenario between Afghanistan and Pakistan presents an ironical situation where free movement of trade, goods and services is essential, but unfortunately at the same time, it has to undergo greater security arrangements. They said that trade never stops even between the countries at war and policy makers must take appropriate measures to bridge historical geo-political challenges and devise policies to protect the interests of both the countries.

A representative of PTI think tank was of the view that easier movement of goods and services will help flourish the perpetual trade, which is requirement of 21st century. He envisioned a greater cooperation between the two countries under regional trade agreement such as SAFTA and Afghanistan being a part of those agreements.

Quoting the example of India and China, a representative of JUI-F said both the countries have frozen the issues, which were affecting trade, as the volume of their trade is over \$ 70 billion. He lamented that trade data between Afghanistan and Pakistan is still not available. "Quality literature is missing, statistics are outdated, smuggled goods are coming to Pakistan after re-routing, and Mafia system at border is a major barrier."

He said that Afghanistan is short of labour, and 60-70 thousand skilled and unskilled Pakistanis are currently working there while earning up to \$25,000 a month. He said it takes 10 days to deliver fruits (perishable) from Afghanistan to India, and costs in billions

According to estimates, he said, the trade potential between both the countries is \$10 billion, which needs to be explored. By taking appropriate measures, we can overcome corruption, improve security, enhance the volume of trade and earn more revenues.

A representative from Afghan Embassy said that though no exact trade data between both the countries is available, some unofficial estimates show \$2.5 billion legal and \$2 billion illegal trade. He said the volume of transit trade through Karachi has decreased compared to past due to delays in customs clearing and recent imposition of duties causing gradual diversion of Afghan trade to other routes such as Charbagh in Iran. He stressed the need for establishing a system that provides the facility of tracking consignment with insurance and to eliminate the issue of missing consignment.

A former office-bearer of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry called for removing the irritants by sitting together. He said by solving the political issues we can enhance the volume of our trade. He informed the roundtable that Afghanistan was added to the SAARC group at the behest of India.

A former office-bearer of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI) highlighted that Afghan trade has diverted to Iran where India supply a number of goods to Afghanistan through Iran and those products further re-routed to Pakistan. He said that with electronic data system of FBR, duty refund is now an easy procedure. He said China has captured our market and our local market has almost collapsed.

A representative from Pakistan Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PAJCCI) was of the view that trade difficulties exit on both sides of the border. "Pakistani transporters, traders, clearing and insurance companies, and businesses at large are facing more challenges as compared to their Afghan counterparts due to system hiccups." She regretted that Pakistan Embassy in Afghanistan issue multiple entry visa to traders after submitting application in three days and without appearing in person while Afghan Embassy in Pakistan gives Pakistani businessmen single entry visa, asks for multiple documents, physical presence and take more time. She said due to no security arrangements, consignments lost or burnt on the way and traders have to face court cases. "In past, when railway was operational, there were no cases of missing consignments and parties were earning revenues." She said APTTA provides provision to import vegetables from Afghanistan and products can be transported to Pakistan, but complex procedures are involved in it, which itself is a trade

barrier. "APTTA covers duty losses and do not safeguard the interests of importer or trader with respect to safety of transit goods from port to border. This has reduced business activity i.e., 40% from Torkham border to Kabul and further to Jalalabad whereas Chaman business has totally gone out of proportion. Major benefits have been passed on to Iran where Afghan traders are doing transit trade through Bander Abbas. The benefit of insurance guarantees has only been to insurance companies and even the government has failed to tap the advantages out of it. On account of insurance premium, Afghan importers are bearing heavy losses, as they have to pay a huge amount i.e., high tariff, duty and taxes on electronic items. The premium of each container is about Rs 2-3 lakh. PAJCCI proposed to put trackers or chips on trucks and transit goods but in vain. The management of trucks in transit becomes significantly difficult due to this issue." She added that under APTTA there is no duty or taxes on goods in transit, but some charges include fees for weighing, scanning, sealing tolls for bridges, roads etc. Officials at checkpoints misuse these heads and extort money for the clearance of consignments.

A representative from media asked for mechanism to minimize smuggling in transit trade and highlighted issue of duty refunds. He suggested to identify smuggled products and proposed export duty on smuggled items.

Recommendations

For the government, it was recommended to

- a. Register importers and exporters trading with Afghanistan
- b. Use advanced information & communication technologies to register trade data at the border
- c. Take appropriate measures to discourage smuggling /informal trade
- d. Ensure security specifically at the borders by the two governments
- e. Establish online complaint system with 24 hour response time
- f. Improve infrastructure facilities
- g. Simplify procedures and visa matter
- h. Decrease the number of check posts to avoid corruption
- i. Initiate speedy dialogue between both the governments for the removal of trade barriers

For business community, it was recommended to

- j. Export quality products to gain the trust of buyer in Afghanistan
- k. Add tracker on truck and container separately
- l. Complain about any illegal act immediately
- m. Discourage bribe seekers
- n. Register with Chambers of Commerce and Industry to have coordination with all businessmen. ■

— by Nafeesa Hashmi
(nafhas@gmail.com), Research analyst

ASRC Initiative

Call to use Mendeley Software for advance searching skills and citation management

Pakistan Librarians Welfare Organization (PLWO), Federal Branch and Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad jointly organized a one-day workshop on "Advance Searching Skills and Citation Management by using Mendeley Software" on September 14 at Sustainable Development Policy Institute.

Muhammad Farooq, the Director, Information Services Department, Riphah International University, Islamabad and Ms Saira Hanif Soroya, Lecturer, Department of Library & Information Science, University of Sargodha were resource persons.

The workshop was attended by a large number of librarians, researchers, academia, and experts from de-

velopment and and corporate sectors.

In his opening remarks, Ahmed Salim, the Senior Adviser at SDPI, said that we should keep our knowledge updated to compete with the world. Knowledge can be built by consulting literature and effective use of libraries, he added.

Muhammad Shahid Soroya, the President of Pakistan Librarians Welfare Organization, and Secretary-General of Pakistan Library Association, congratulating the federal branch for conducting successful workshop, said such gatherings make strong relationship among professionals.

Tassawar Hussain, the President of Pakistan Li-
Continued on page 21

16th Sustainable Development Conference

Creating Momentum: Today is Tomorrow**Introduction**

Sixteenth Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) titled "Creating Momentum: Today is Tomorrow" will be held from December 10-12, 2013 in Islamabad, Pakistan. SDPI has organised 15 SDCs since the inception of the Institute in 1992. The SDC is a flagship event of the Institute that not only provides a forum for SDPI's own research but also invites other researchers and academics from the region to share their work and engage in dialogue with fellow panellists and the audience. The SDC series is also a prime conference with a major focus on South Asia, which sets the tone and discourse for sustainable development in the region.

Over the years, the conference series has grown and expanded in terms of participation from the audience. SDPI's Fifteenth SDC showcased 24 panels and 3 plenary sessions hosting 145 delegates from 18 countries including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, China, Germany, India, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, the Netherlands, UK, and the US. This Conference was a host to an audience of over 1,600 representing the public and private sectors, university students, and members of civil society.

The SDC series highlights varied issues pertaining to sustainable development. Every year, there is an overarching theme which provides a forum for discussion on covering contemporary and energy issues.

While six months are spent in organising the conference itself, another six months following the conference are spent in the publication process of the peer reviewed and edited anthology based on the papers presented. The papers go through extensive software and peer review; revisions are made by authors where necessary; and, once approved by the referee, an edited manuscript is prepared and sent to a publisher. The anthology is then launched at the succeeding conference. The synopsis of the anthologies can be viewed at SDPI's homepage: www.sdpi.org. This year, our anthology titled "Sustainable Development in South Asia: Shaping the Future" will be launched at the occasion of the Sixteenth Sustainable Development Conference in December 2013.

Format

There will be two to three keynote plenary sessions in which prominent keynote speakers will be invited to address significant areas as highlighted in the overar-

ching theme. The plenary each day will be followed by concurrent sessions / panels on sub-themes. The plenary will last for one hour and 30 minutes while the duration of each panel will be two hours with three to five presentations

Concept Note

Even a cursory look at South Asia will reveal that we have been long on words and theories but short on actions and implementation. If the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is anything to go by, most developing countries are falling woefully short on most of the targets set therein. It is not only the failure of developing world, but also of the developed world which had promised to forge development partnership and provide development support under MDG 8.

The time to act has been fast passing us by but all we have done is to wait, procrastinate and delay. Even when we know the questions that haunt the states and societies in the region and even when we know the need to work out timely answers for those, there is precious little that the governments and non-governmental stake-holders have achieved to show that they are serious about resolving the multiple crises and problems staring starkly at the countries in the region.

After having agreed that equitably shared natural resources have the best chance of being sustainably maintained for the future, what have we done to achieve that goal? After acknowledging that economically egalitarian societies and states have a proven track record of stability, security and prosperity, what have we done to change unequal and divided states and societies at war with themselves? After having understood that increasing literacy and improving health-care facilities can create equal opportunities for betterment of lives across all political, social, cultural and economic divides, what have we done to take schools and hospitals to those sections of the society which don't have them?

The reason for such failure is obvious: We did not start working on attaining these objectives as early as we should have. It goes without saying that halving poverty, reducing infant mortality, increasing literacy and improving other socio-economic and environmental indicators need long term planning, commitment of resources, implementation and monitoring to become a reality. But while this realization has been there al-

most always, it has not resulted in corresponding and timely action. The truth is that we haven't yet even started on most counts.

Now, however, time seems to be running out fast. Procrastination, delays and unending debates over theory are the luxuries available to none of the countries in the region. The moment to act is now – the tomorrow that we once dreamed of when envisioning equitable, sustainable, secure, stable and prosperous societies in the region has arrived except that our states and societies remain as unequal, as unsustainable, as insecure and as poor as they always have been. If we have done anything to change the situation for the better it is that we have not done anything at all. Or at the least not enough and certainly not on time to realize a better tomorrow.

It is already too late to further delay the implementation of the plans that the Afro-Asian states in particular and South Asian states in general ever had for their societies to move forward in tandem with the rest of the world. Either they start acting today or there will be no tomorrow that promises economic equality, social justice, environmental sustainability and societal peace and security to more than one billion people living in the region.

The failure to act today and urgently is premised on the argument that waiting for another tomorrow for action will result in wasting opportunities that may not be available ever again. As is already obvious from the various deadlines that the developing countries have missed on MDGs and other global and regional commitments, the options we still have today will soon become missed opportunities of the yesterday. Inaction no longer remains an option if it ever was in the past.

Just consider a scenario in which all the states and the societies in the region let the present pass by without ensuring a future that people in the region not just deserve but direly need. Without moving instantly to resolving the multiple interstate and intrastate conflicts over politics, history, environment, commerce and distribution of natural resources, we can only envision a future which promises more conflict.

Let us take South Asia as an example, as the foreign forces plan to leave Afghanistan, for instance, the time is now for Pakistan and India to move towards finding a lasting solution to the outstanding issues between them. Otherwise, they are set to continue their rivalry in Afghanistan, making it a theatre for their proxy wars. Bangladesh is facing the prospects of political agitation over 1971 war crime trials even when its terrible working conditions for textile workers have taken hundreds of lives in recent times. If the country does

not act now to resolve its internal political conflict and the state and the society do not move quickly to ensure better working conditions in the industry, it runs the risk of stymieing its economic growth. In places like Sri Lanka and Nepal, the post-conflict transition is both slow and controversial and runs a serious risk of reversal if nothing is done today to ensure continuity, equal participation and democratic dialogue across the dividing lines. Similarly, Bhutan and Maldives are facing teething problems in their transition to democratic governance and if they do not take on these problems today, they are certain to encounter the prospects of their nascent troubles turning into gigantic conflicts and chronic crises as the example of Pakistan clearly shows.

Lack of regional integration in areas like economy and environment means that each of the eight countries in the region continues to suffer the financial and physical consequences of inaction in isolation. Unmanaged floods and persisting droughts, economic and investment opportunities wasted due to trade barriers and unequal and discriminatory tariff regimes have already resulted in deadly disasters across the region as well as having led to a heavy dependence on third party trade and/or extra-regional powers in the economic arena.

Not that South Asia today is totally devoid of trends that, if taken proper care of today, can lead to a tomorrow of our dreams. There are some visibly positive social, economic, cultural and political changes taking place across the region. A growing middle class, access to information and technology, improved literacy and increased space for media freedom and civil society activism are ensuring a democratic participation in running the affairs of the states like never before. But at the same, these very trends are leading to consumerism at an unprecedented scale, leading to an exploitation of precious natural resources like water, land and forests in a rapacious manner and atomising the power of the state to an ever-increasing number of stake-holders and players.

To take advantage of the positive impacts of the factors mentioned above, we need to move today to give diplomacy, participatory politics and democratic dialogue a big chance in running the regional affairs.

The coming SDC will be an effort to advocate the dire and urgent need for bringing about much needed changes within each country of the region as well as among all the states and the societies in the region. The focus of the Conference will be on stressing that today is the time to act otherwise we will be condemned to a tomorrow which offers little hope for im-

proved living conditions in the region.

In this Conference, researchers, academicians, scientists, policy makers and experts from different fields will be able to recommend policy interventions and present workable solutions to the emerging challenges discussed above. The focus is South Asia and its

neighbouring regions, but we welcome contributions from other regions, highlighting the success and or failure stories, which may serve as lesson learnt for South Asian countries. Within above overarching theme, a number of panels based on sub-themes listed below will be organized.

Forthcoming SDC Anthology

Sustainable Development in South Asia: Shaping the Future

“Sustainable Development in South Asia: Shaping the Future” is being jointly published by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute and Sang-e-Meel Publications. It will be launched on the occasion of the Sixteenth SDC being held in December 2013.

Book Blurb: Despite the intrinsically political nature of most sustainable development challenges facing the world today, most theories, deliberations, research and even implementation linking sustainability to development primarily follow apolitical and linear policy processes. Bringing together a range of subjects - from civil military relations, role of



public and private sector in development, food and climate security, religious freedoms, and feminism after 9/11- this book 'Sustainable Development in South Asia: Shaping the Future' uniquely examines the reasons why national governments, together with international aid agencies, have been unable to provide real and binding solutions to the myriad of problems standing in the way of emerging South Asia economies.

For further details, please contact the SDC Unit:

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Beware of Mercury

Painting/Poster competition on Oct 10

SDPI is holding a paintings/poster competition on “Chemicals Impacts on Environment and Children Health – Beware of Mercury” for Islamabad school-children. The last date for submission of entries is 10th October, 2013.

The competition seeks to raise awareness on negative effects of chemicals especially mercury on environment and health. We anticipate that the contest would lead to greater understanding and support for minimizing chemicals' production and use (especially mercury) for protection of environment, healthy living and sustainable development.

The painting/poster competition is targeted at two levels: junior level (class 5th – 8th) and senior level (class 9th – 12th, including O & A levels students). Following are the few brief rules for competition.

Rules

- Posters must have creativity, original artwork and ideas.
- Posters should not be mounted on mat board.
- Participants may use any type of media, such as water color, crayon, color pencil, etc.
- Computer clip art, pictures from magazines and other print media, or any other copyrighted brand or product images will not be accepted.
- Participants must provide complete information such as Full Name, Guardian Name, Age, Grade/Class, Name of School, and Address.
- Decision of the panel of judges constituted by SDPI would be final who may also recommend not to award a prize/prizes in view of lack of quality or inadequate number of entries.

Centre for Capacity Building (CCB)

1. Report Writing (July 3-4, 2013)



Customized workshop on Report Writing was conducted for the staff of Sightsavers International, Pakistan. As many as 17 people participated in the workshop.

The Sightsavers is an international charity organization working to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. In Pakistan, it is working in different schools in Karachi, Lahore, Multan, and Rawalpindi. Its main focus is to identify people suffering from different eye defects/diseases and to provide them curative facilities along with community awareness.

The 2-day workshop was conducted to train the project teams, which consist of field in-charges, optometrists, refractionists, community eye health workers and community organizers, in report writing and case study writing skills. They need these skills for writing reports and case studies for their donors as well as their record. Itfaq Khaliq Khan, the Program Officer at Sightsavers Country Office, was the coordinator of the workshop.

Objectives

The main objectives of the workshop include:

- To know about the types of report

- To understand the aims and elements of effective writing
- To understand the difference between report and case study
- To understand the essentials and components of various types of reports
- To explore practical ways to plan and get started and how to build the structure of report
- To improve the participants' knowledge of drafting, editing, documentation and presentation of reports and case study
- To learn techniques to fine tune the reports and case studies
- The basics and sequence in writing a case study

2. First Aid, Fire-fighting and Disaster Management (July 10, 2013)

Customized workshop on Firefighting and Disaster Risk Reduction, was conducted for SDPI staff. As many as 19 staff members participated in the workshop.

Objectives

The main objectives of the workshop were:

- To sensitize participants about emergency and



disaster management.

- To educate them about triage in case of mega disaster.
- To tell them about management of FBAO and CPR.
- To understand medical and traumatic emergencies.
- To enable them to handle minor injuries, bandages, and wound management.
- To provide quick and on time first aid services.
- To impart knowledge about triangle of fire, evac-

uation plan, use of fire extinguisher and fire safety tips.

3. Proposal Writing & Developing The Research Component of Project Proposal (Aug 19, 2013)

An In-house training session on Proposal Writing and Developing the Research Component of Project Proposal was conducted, which was participated by 10 people.

Contents

The key contents of the workshop include:

- What is a project proposal, what is it used for?
- Funding agency/donor's expectations from a proposal
- Common reasons for rejection of project proposals
- How to begin for preparing the project Proposal
- Components of the project proposal
- Description of the components of the Project Proposal with examples
- Order in which the project proposal is actually prepared
- Developing the research component of project proposals
- Distribution of handouts of actual successful project proposals to participants ■

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brarians Welfare Organization, Federal Branch, said that unfortunately, much of historical literature has been lost in the country primarily due to lack of proper management of libraries in the country. He recommended proper trainings for library staff so that they can better maintain data according to requirement of researchers and field staff.

Saira Hanif, the Lecturer at University of Sargodha, delivered her talk on citation management using Mendeley software. She briefed participants on various techniques of citation management using Mendeley software. After presentation, she also conducted a mock session to resolve different questions raised by participants.

Muhammad Farooq, the Director, Information Services Department, Riphah International University, discussed advance searching techniques. In this inter-active session, participants learnt through practical training that how to make online searching skills more effective.

In his concluding remarks, Raja Muhammad



Ibrahim, the Chief Librarian, COMSATS University, Islamabad emphasized the need to equip researchers with advanced softwares to excel in the field of research and development. He was of the view that training programs for librarians are important because well-trained librarians can facilitate researchers according to the research demand. He also urged librarians to get involved in the research to bring efficiency in their work.

— By Ali Aamer

Advocacy at SDPI

Track-II preparatory meeting for upcoming '9th Ministerial Conference Meeting' of WTO

(03rd July)

Participants at the meeting called upon South Asian countries to adopt a common stance, which must go beyond the standard discourse focusing on sectoral priorities such as agriculture, food security, climate change, trade facilitation, aid for trade and intellectual property rights. They demanded commerce ministries in SAARC countries to take a coordinating role and bring other national institutions on a shared vision for global and regional trade.

Returns on Investing in Female Education: Impact on Younger Sibling Human Capital

(04th July)

Experts at the seminar said that investing in the education of oldest sister in household increases the learning outcomes of younger siblings in the family. They urged policy makers to look into the fact that increasing oldest sister's education will also have the unintended consequence of increasing the education of her younger siblings. Merely looking at the impact of girls education while ignoring potential impact on younger siblings is systematic underestimation of total benefits of female education, experts added.

Peace in Balochistan & the Role of Federation

(08th July)



Speakers at the seminar said that Balochistan has the worst situation in human development and sustainable peace is not possible unless traditional paradigm of state security is reversed in favour of individual security. They said that the only way forward for peace in Balochistan is the acceptance of six-point demands of Baloch people; only then they would trust federation and come to negotiating table.

Understanding the Dynamics of Access to Public Services: The Framework for Voice, Exit and Accountability

(15th July)



Participants of the seminar said that access to services in Pakistan is undermined by a weak bureaucratic structure, which is tarnished by political clientage, resource constraints and lack of accountability mechanisms. They maintained that advanced societies have well-functioned bureaucratic systems where welfare services are provided on the basis of equity by the state through open, fair and competent administration. The access to services becomes problematic in Pakistan where apart from disposal income, factors such as influence, status and entitlements also play an important part.

Pakistan Federal Budget 2013-14 and Role of IMF

(22nd July)

Speakers at the seminar said IMF monetary support is not a bad move if it leads to fiscal reforms, increased tax collection and documentation of economy. However, experts also demanded of the government to present its plan of action to ensure the implementation of reforms, particularly the strengthening of tax machinery, expansion of tax base, reduction in indirect taxes and reforms in public sector enterprises.

AAWAZ Utha: Citizen's Charter of Demand for Local Governance

(29th July)

Representatives of civil society at a press conference presented a 'Citizen's Charter of Demand' calling upon the federal and provincial governments to legis-

late and hold local bodies elections in accordance with the Constitution of Pakistan. They identified serious gaps in draft laws and urged policy makers to revisit, revise and improve the draft bills in the larger interests of the people of Pakistan. They also demanded of the provincial governments to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities and ensure enhanced representation of excluded groups in political process.

Local Governments' Legislation and Citizens' Concerns

01st August, 2013 (Conference)



Parliamentarians and experts at a conference called for devising a local government system that is 'democratically representative' and ensure meaningful participation of citizens. The conference seeks to raise public concerns about the gaps in draft local bodies bills presented in provincial assemblies and to make them more democratic, representative and accountable.

How Will Pakistan Move to Sustainable Development: Policy? Activism? Action?

(06th August)



Delivering a lecture, the speaker urged the development community to adopt 'action' oriented approach for sustainable development rather than merely pursuing policy activism. It's time for social innovation and a transformation towards sustainability where emphasis must have been on positive consumption behaviors, conservation, green building practices and preventing depletion of natural resources, he said, adding that unfortunately, Pakistan policy discourse responded by merely focusing on increasing the supply side.

Armed Man Episode in Islamabad: Lessons Learnt in Crisis Management and Ethical Media Practices
(19th August)



Experts at the seminar declared the fiasco as failure of leadership along with non-professionalism of police force which resulted in an embarrassing end. Criticizing the political interference in operational matters, experts called for institutional independence and steps for improving morale of police force. They also urged media for ethical considerations while reporting in crisis situations.

Rural to Urban Transition and Their Peri-Urban Interface: Identifying, Mapping, and Understanding Peri-Urban Area in India and Pakistan

(29th August)

The management of peri-urban areas is neglected by both rural and urban administrations because they are located beyond both rural and urban boundaries of cities in zones that are generally not identified as specific entities of planning. This was mutually agreed by Pakistani and Indian students during a webinar.

Afghanistan Reconnected: Linking Energy Suppliers to Consumers in Asia

(September 02)

Experts at a conference said that Pakistan must

evolve a strategic approach of 'aligning interests' with all the countries to mutually benefit from boundless opportunities presented by Central Asia. Deliberating on current dynamics of geo-politics in the region, they said that it's all about energy and pipeline politics for many Central Asian states. 'Abu Dhabi Process' supported by the United Arab Emirates and Germany promotes regional dialogue on post-2014 economic transition in Afghanistan, and highlights Afghanistan's role as transit and trade hub, connecting economies and resources of Central and South Asia.

The Geo-Politics and Geo-Economic Situation in Central Asia and Relations with Pakistan

(September 9)

Experts advised Pakistan must seek a strategic approach of 'aligning interests' with all countries to mutually benefit from boundless opportunities presented by Central Asia. They said that Central Asia is a region in transition, where most of the states got independence by default, without any struggle and

preparation. They were of the view that regional countries are trying to transform from quasi-independent states to full independence states adding that their armies are still under Russian control under agreement such as CSTO (Common Wealth Security Treaty Organizations) along with inherited structures such as single party system.

Energy Governance in Pakistan

(September 23)

Experts during a panel discussion expressed concern over the increasing inequality and energy crisis. They said bad governance is threatening the stability and security of the country. They were of the view that social justice system and pro poor policies are must for a progressive and prosperous Pakistan. They said the government should also focus on coal and LNG products to overcome energy shortage. Furthermore, they said the government should introduce tariff rationalization plan and meaningful energy governance reforms. ■

Launch of SANSAR Chapter in Pakistan

(September 10)



South Asian Network on Sustainability and Responsibility (SANSAR), a regional platform on 'Corporate Social Responsibility', has launched its Pakistan chapter. Launch of SANSAR-Pakistan

Speakers, on the occasion, said that unethical business practices needs to be stopped while businesses have to adopt Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for the support and uplift of communities. They further said that SANSAR promotes understanding of social, economic, and environmental responsibilities of businesses and aspires to demonstrate the link between CSR, sustainability and poverty alleviation as well. ■