1. Background

The socio-economic development in Balochistan is challenged by sparsely located population, internal conflicts and pressures from western border neighbouring Afghanistan. A large part of Balochistan is governed by tribal chiefs, making development interventions extremely difficult and in turn posing a challenge to human development and inclusive growth.

Balochistan province also lags behind the rest of Pakistan in almost all key socio-economic indicators, and 16 of its 24 districts (including the RAHA districts Chaghi, Qila Abdulla and Qila Saifullah) fall among the top 20 vulnerable districts of the country. The multidimensional poverty indicators seen across Balochistan show it is one of the poorest across the globe. Furthermore, the province is also bearing the influx of Afghan refugees, which stands around 851,000 persons.

In view of the above-mentioned challenges, Balochistan receives support from the federal government. There are also initiatives by the provincial government to address rising vulnerabilities. Marred by issues related to political interference in development projects, corruption, non-existence of effective monitoring, and lack of grievance redressal mechanisms, the impact of these programmes on the lives of the poor remains weak.

The new provincial government, despite a deteriorated law and order situation, is moving ahead with local body polls to strengthen democratic governance. The recent earthquake, which particularly affected Awaran district and adjoining areas, has exposed gaps in service delivery. This is partially on account of weak capacity of civil administration.

A recent study by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) conducted for United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) analyses the social protection and assistance programmes in some targeted areas after evaluating them on pre-determined criteria. The basic aim of this study was to assess the efficiency of these programmes and to see whether they could be extended to RAHA areas.

2. Social protection and assistance programmes

These programmes in Balochistan can broadly be divided into two categories, a) social insurance programmes, and b) social assistance programmes.

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1 This policy brief presents key findings and recommendations from the detailed study on the same subject commissioned by UNDP Pakistan.
2 Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas.
3 The policy brief exhibits findings from the qualitative and quantitative data collected from Balochistan. Primary data was collected from three districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Pishin, Loralai, and Chaghi.
Social Insurance Programmes
In total, there are four social insurance programmes. These are Provincial Government Servants’ Pension Programmes (PGSPP), GoB4 Benevolent Fund (GBF), People’s Representatives Programmes (PRP), and Balochistan Employees Social Security Institution (BESSI). Among these, PGSPP and GBF are essentially for the provincial government employees. BESSI is for the commercial and industrial employees of the private sector, while PRP is a programme aimed for the poor.

The pension system’s targeting efficiency is satisfactory with high levels of coverage. For not being pegged to the inflation rate, financial support provided under the programme has been termed inadequate. The grievance redressal mechanism is lengthy and slow.

GBF is a contributory fund for which mandatory deductions from the salaries of provincial employees are made whereas all the provincial public employees cannot claim this fund. Under the fund, educational scholarships and marriage allowance for children of the employees, maintenance allowance for the widows, funeral expenses of the deceased employees, paid Hajj opportunity and farewell grants can be claimed.

The Fund has high targeting efficiency, as the service is available to all the eligible provincial civil servants. Owing to the strict criteria for grant processing, large number of employees cannot benefit from it. Some difficulties in access arise, as there is no announced schedule in Department of Services and General Administration (S&GAD) to discuss and screen applications.

During the course of our study, we found number of provincial government employees, who were unaware of the benefits. Adequacy of support is relatively better provided one succeeds to obtain them. Most respondents were also not aware of grievance redressal mechanism. Public employees in the RAHA can benefit from both the pension programmes, and the GBF. These programmes have fairly strong potential to impact Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to poverty reduction, education and health.

PRP is a social protection intervention that is managed via grants disbursements to the Members of Provincial Assembly (MPAs). These funds are mainly utilized to benefit individuals through the provision of productive inputs such as sewing machines, electricity and gas meters. The funds can also be utilized to purchase agricultural machines (tractors and bulldozers). Prior to their initiation, all schemes are to be vetted by the Planning and Development Department in Quetta.

PRP’s reliance on political representatives has come under question on various occasions. There have been concerns of transparency, which have been partially addressed. The

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4 Government of Balochistan.
study has found this programme low in its targeting efficiency. Since the schemes initiated under the programme are quite small, their coverage is not satisfactory and there are difficulties in their access. There exists no clearly stipulated or documented grievance redressal mechanism.

Under BESSI the contributions are lower than those seen in other provinces. Employer organizations are bound to provide BESSI a list of all secured workers. Benefits include medical cover, provision of cash during illness; and funeral grants. Cash benefits at BESSI include sickness, and maternity benefits; partial and total disablement pension; disablement gratuity and a survivor’s pension.

As BESSI only targets the workers in the formal sector, the extent of programme coverage is low. The workers from industrial sector make a very small population in Balochistan. The BESSI only has three medical units out of which two are situated in Quetta while the third one is in Karachi. The quality of services leaves a lot to be desired. The grievance redressal mechanism is not easy to understand for the beneficiaries.

Contrary to PRP, BESSI has significant contribution towards the attainment of health-related MDGs. If industrial and commercial zones for RAHA districts are opened under the new provincial government, BESSI benefits can be extended to these areas.

Social Assistance Programmes in Balochistan

There are three kinds of social assistance programmes in Balochistan. These programmes are on top of the two social assistance initiatives undertaken by the World Food Programme (WFP). The programmes run by the provincial government include Pakistan Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Department of Social Welfare, Special Education, Literacy and non-Formal Education. The programmes run by WFP include School Feeding Programme, Early Recovery Programme, and Programme for Afghan Refugees.

PDMA is responsible for the protection during natural disasters and calamities. PDMA has been active during floods and earthquakes. In 2011 and 2012, it distributed 11,097 metric tons of food items in affected areas. In addition, it provided blankets, tents, medicines, and clothes. PDMA’s operations have covered 13 districts of Balochistan.

The criterion of benefit distribution by PDMA is not clearly documented. Ease of access in case of PDMA operations has been relatively better. The adequacy of support is satisfactory while grievance redressal is quick and effective. Since the benefits extended are temporary, they do not contribute to the attainment of MDGs. The interventions are also available to the affected people in RAHA.

The Department of Social Welfare, Special Education, Literacy and non-Formal Education is responsible for regulation of voluntary organizations, special education and management
of rehabilitation centers for victims of abuse. The department provides Darul Aman for women, working women hostels, training centers, industrial homes, and baby day care centers. The programme has its offices in 30 districts.

The targeting efficiency of these programmes is rather high, but coverage is low and facilities available are not sufficient for a large part of the deserving population. Their ease of access has been termed satisfactory. Most of the benefits are in-kind and offer support to those, who are considered eligible. The programmes still need to strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms and outreach.

The WFP initiated school feeding programme in seven districts of Balochistan, namely Qila Saifullah, Zhob, Noshki, Chaghi, Pishin, Kharan, and Washuk. The school feeding programme however, discontinued in 2012. Under early recovery programme, WFP distributed 13,122 metric tons of food and reached out to over 362,000 households in the province. Initial livelihood recovery activities were started in Kalat, Khuzdar, Loralai, Qila Abdullah and Lasbela where infrastructure rehabilitation programmes such as desilting of water courses, repair of houses, and cleaning of water ponds took place.

The school feeding programme was run in public schools, therefore, its targeting efficiency was high. Similarly, the cash for work programme targeted the most severely affected people in two districts making sure that all the potential beneficiaries take their due share. Both the school feeding programme and cash for work programme had a lower coverage, as they could not be extended to even one-third of the population.

Nevertheless, despite a lower geographic scope, the ease of access to these programmes was satisfactory with considerable adequacy of support to the target group. One finds grievance redressal mechanism missing. The two programmes did contribute towards the attainment of MDG1, MDG4 and MDG5. In case these programmes are reopened, there can be a fair expectation of extending these interventions to RAHA.

The UNHCR has also been one of the main service providers in Afghan refugee villages in Balochistan. Presently, the agency funds 26 schools for Afghan children in different camps. These schools are run and maintained by Save the Children Foundation. There are 16,500 children enrolled in these schools. More funds are also available for the provision of basic health facilities in all the refugee villages. The health facilities extended by the agency are managed by Save the Children, American Refugee Committee and Taraqee Foundation. Other services include tertiary care and vocational training for which it organized three-month training courses covering a range of subjects. UNHCR also provides child protection services for those separated from their families.

The services provided by UNHCR target only those Afghan refugees having registration cards, and not all the refugees can benefit from these services. The targeting efficiency of
these programmes is relatively better with a reasonable geographic coverage. However, the scale of assistance activities has been in decline since long. The refugees living in RAHA are already benefiting from these services. With the exit of NATO forces from Afghanistan, there are apprehensions of a civil war in Afghanistan that may trigger greater influx of refugees inside Pakistan. If it happens, these programmes will be more important in the context of their significant scalability.

Under the Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan Initiative in 2009, the Pakistan People’s Party government introduced Prime Minister’s Special Initiative on Balochistan. The primary objective of the programme was to lessen the sense of deprivation and to confer cultural, economic and political rights to the people of Balochistan. A number of projects started under this initiative have linkages with the RAHA priorities. There is a strong likelihood that the new provincial government will continue the initiative in some form.

3. Policy Options
After the 2013 general elections, there is a renewed confidence in the new provincial government in Balochistan. The government plans to move ahead with local body polls despite law and order challenges. The region has also suffered from natural disasters, and the difficulties faced during the recent earthquake reflect weak capacity of the province to deliver on poverty and human development reforms. In case of future social protection interventions, the following policy agenda will be crucial.

- Although targeting efficiency of pension and benevolent fund programmes is high, the amount of financial support is inadequate and not indexed to inflation rate. In case of benevolent fund, once retired, a public employee cannot benefit from it. Moreover, there are issues with ease of access under both the programmes. The sense of deprivation should not be allowed to prevail in the presence of such comprehensive programmes. Ease of access should be ensured through the use of e-governance tools and pensions should be revised often to enable the beneficiaries to hedge against poverty and afford standard health and education facilities.
- PRP has been a disappointment in terms of generating employability as well as extending health and education facilities for the targeted communities. The MPAs, instead of initiating activities that meet the community needs have been reportedly opting for activities where vested interests could be served. Such programmes should be stopped in future. Instead, the money earmarked under the PRP programme should be diverted towards better performing department like social welfare and women development, or towards social assistance schemes such as Zakat or Benazir Income Support Program (BISP).
- BESSI has a limited targeting efficiency, and it only covers workers from the formal sector and does not include employees from agriculture and informal
sectors. The ease of access is relatively better for the beneficiaries living in Quetta and Karachi. Others have to travel from far-flung areas to reach these cities. In order to ensure fair distribution of its services, the BESSI should do a clear mapping of its potential beneficiaries. Once the mapping exercise is completed, the services would be extended to the most crowded areas that are also central to the far-flung locations. Given the high poverty rate prevalent in the province, and its links with political chaos, the department should be reformed to extend social services to as many beneficiaries as possible, and that too with a decent ease of access.

- Department of Social Welfare, Special Education, Literacy and Non-Formal Education exhibits **limited extent of programme coverage**. The drug rehabilitation centers, Darul Aman for women, educational scholarships, and health facilities provided under the programme are not enough to cater to the needs of a large and poor population. In view of the increased NFC\(^5\) award, the funds earmarked for the department should be significantly increased. In order to improve its targeting efficiency, poverty score card data already available with BISP should be used.

- WFP’s School Feeding Programme was a good initiative to helping children meet their daily nutritional needs. The programme is now closed due to lack of funding. This programme should be reinitiated in Balochistan, which remains food insecure.

- The financial support for Afghan refugees is now declining. Geographic scope of these programmes is low and there exists no formal grievance redressal mechanism. As long as Afghan refugees are living in the refugee camps, this support must continue to ensure a reasonable and decent living for them.

Going forward the efficiency of social protection in Balochistan will critically depend upon ability to mobilize resources through development partners, raise own revenues for developmental needs, and build robust administrative capacity that can meet the expectations of the poor. Given the current political economy milieu in the province, the federal government and development partners will need to engage more closely with the new provincial administration.

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\(^5\) National Finance Commission.