15th Sustainable Development Conference

‘Sustainable Development in South Asia: Shaping the Future’

Introduction

Sustainable Development Policy Institute’s (SDPI) 15th Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) was held from 11—13 December 2012 in Islamabad. The overarching theme of the conference was ‘Sustainable Development in South Asia: Shaping the Future’. As the title suggests, speakers from 18 countries, during the three-day deliberations, looked at the future of sustainable development in South Asia. They analyzed how things will look 20, 30 or even 50 years from now; threw light on issues that will be looming large; made concrete suggestions on how to overcome future challenges; and, gave practical policy recommendations about a sustainable South Asia. Speakers also discussed the challenges that at this day and year are not apparent but may become the biggest threat or opportunity in times to come. In their presentations and debates, participants provided workable solutions for future threats and challenges.

SDC is a flagship event that not only provides a forum for SDPI’s own researchers but also invites other researchers and academics from the region to share their work and engage in dialogue with fellow panellists and the audience. SDPI has organised 15 SDCs since the inception of the Institute in 1992. The SDC series, which has become an annual feature, is also a prime conference in South Asia with a major focus on this region. This conference sets the tone and discourse for sustainable development in South Asia.

SDPI’s 15th SDC showcased 24 panels and three 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 USA. This conference was host to over 1,600 audience, who participated in the dialogue with the panelists.

Pakistan’s Defence Minister Syed Naveed Qamar was the chief guest at the opening plenary while Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission of Pakistan Dr Nadeem-ul Haq, and the Minister for Information and Broadcasting Qamar-ul-Zaman Kaira were the Guests of Honor at the closing plenary.

The SDC anthology titled ‘Paradigms of Sustainable Development in South Asia’ based on papers presented at the Fourteenth SDC and SDPI’s Annual Report for the year 2012 were also launched on the occasion along with the other publications including: Clustered Deprivation: District Profile of Poverty in Pakistan; The SDC Series in a Glance (an Urdu Publication); and, Environment, Trade and Governance for Sustainable Development. SDPI’s Sustainable Development Television (SDTV) showcased a documentary on SDPI’s 20 years and live-streamed the SDC sessions.

This special post, the SDC bulletin gives details of the conference proceedings and provides a gist of the key points of presentations.
Pakistan’s Defence Minister Syed Naveed Qamar was the chief guest at the 15th SDC’s opening plenary, which held on December 11, 2012. SDPI Executive Director Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri opened the conference with his introductory note and the Board of Governor’s Chairperson Dr Saeed Shafqat presented the welcome address. IUCN Vice-President and former information minister Javed Jabbar spoke in length on the issue of ‘National Diversity’s Regional Dimension’.

In his welcome address, Dr Shafqat Saeed appreciated the SDPI’s role as a leading think-tank and in improving the existing policies and practices in the country. He also lauded the role of institute in achieving some initiatives such as the establishment of Ministry of National Food Security and Research and its Zero Hunger Program. Appreciating the SDPI study “Pakistan Power Sector Outlook: Appraisal of KESC in Post Privatization Period” he also highlighted the SDPI’s role in presenting the government’s stance during the Rio Conference in Brazil on climate change, as well as part played about the issue of phasing out mercury at the Global Conservation Congress 2012.

He said Aawaz project is also another achievement that throws light upon gender issues whereas major achievement in 2012 is the successful holding of the 5th South Asia Economic Summit in Islamabad. In the end, he paid tributes to late Nasir Khan for his unprecedented contributions at the institute.

Discussing future trends in South Asia, he said the South Asian states must curb inequality, promote regional interdependence and cooperation, rationalize defence expenditures, and encourage promotion of cultural and educational exchanges. He reiterated that South Asian states need to open up opportunities for the ordinary people and warned that no sustainable development is possible under present circumstances. Dr Shafqat said elite is the main hindrance in achieving social equality. He proposed the restructuring of power structure in South Asia and regional cooperation among South Asian states.

Out of a total trade of $680 billion dollars in 2010, he said only 5% was inter-regional compared to 32% in South East Asia. Thus, poor connectivity and cross border conflicts were major impediments in regional integration, he added. He called upon the Saarc governments to play...
a more vigilant role in the region. There is also a need to shift expenditures from military to social sectors in South Asia, he said, proposing that for a prosperous and secure future, South Asia needs to move away from ‘economy of war’ to ‘economy of peace’, so that inclusive and equitable economic growth could be ensured.

Dr Abid Suleri, in his introductory note, said the world population would rise to 8.5 billion in 2030, which would result in an increased demand for resources. Issues which the South Asia may face then would include access to resources, technology, peace & conflict, weather, economic, political, commercial and environmental cooperation. He said that the choices that policy-makers make today will determine ‘how the future may unfold in South Asia’.

Javed Jabbar said South Asia is a region of rich diversity yet it still lags behind in many development indicators because of the region’s mindless obsession with economic growth and open market. South Asia has the largest democracy in the world yet, it is home to Afghanistan, a country that is mired in wars and conflicts since the past three decades. He said that among various issues confronting the region’s climate change is one that can cause unprecedented misery particularly in a country like Bangladesh. Furthermore, he warned that poverty can plague and wreck the social fabric of South Asian societies. Sustainable development can only be achieved when complimented by economic, social, environmental and political sustainability, he added.

Naveed Qamar said the task at hand confronting the country is indeed not easy but one that needs to be dealt with. He emphasized that regional integration can play a vital role in alleviating poverty and inequality in South Asia. He supported the idea of passing a ‘green budget’ in parliament, which would evaluate the economic cost of environmental capital and goods, such as the economic value of a tree. He said that South Asian countries should learn from their history. He also stressed the women’s greater role in attaining sustainable development in the country.
balance of power between the North and the South; it is fragmented and specialized; it is dependent upon financial assistance and aid from the North; and, there is the crisis of inaction/non-compliance, particularly from the UN Security Council. For global governance to be effective for all, there is a need to overcome these shortcomings. Stephen Commins, in his presentation titled “Global Governance and Social Accountability: Whose Voices? Whose Choices?”, said that the global governance system has to be more inclusive of the voices of those most affected by the global challenges of today. Developing as well as the least developing economies do not have a substantial voice at the UN or the IMF, and have, therefore, missed many opportunities to contribute to developments in global governance. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the very same reason have not been able to deliver as perceived, because they were based on the existing international relations that favoured the mandate of major political and economic powers in the world.

Accountability, according to Commins, is a pro-active process, which justifies actions, behavior and results. Global governance should offer upward mechanisms of accountability such as monitoring, citizen participation and participatory budgeting, amongst others. Increasing accountability at all levels of governance would open up opportunities for the most marginalized nations to voice their concerns.

Mome Saleem said that South Asia is amongst the most deprived regions of the world. Nevertheless, its strategic location, abundance of natural resources and huge middle-income population offers significant potential opportunities as well as challenges. Cooperation at the regional level has been increased due to the establishment of Saarc, and this has enhanced the representation of South Asian countries at the global level. South Asian countries, in particular, have enjoyed very little from the contemporary global governance structure; western hegemony and the ongoing global financial crisis have caused further resentment with the system. India has an important role to play in this regard. It could voice the collective agenda of Saarc countries at global forums such as the G8 and G20, where its economic and political power has been affirmed by the Western powers.

On the other hand, Saarc is facing its own set of challenges and weaknesses that are hindering regional integration. Power imbalances, development divides and the existence of several intra-and extra-regional territorial conflicts have reduced incentives to cooperate. The way forward for Saarc is to help countries move beyond these complications and work towards the greater good. Saarc must expand its agenda to address the full range of problems and issues facing the developing nations of South Asia. On a regional level, there has to be greater support for the establishment of a single market through the free flow of capital, labour and services, integration of food security and climate change policies, and stronger political commitment. The role of non-state actors such as the civil society and the business sector in enhancing regional governance in South Asia is also vital in this regard.

Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, in his presentation titled ‘Analyzing the Global Governance Systems’, gave a historical and conceptual account of global governance, and the institutions and mechanisms constituting the global governance system. He reflected on the institutional system developed by the western nations to support global governance, specifically the establishment of the United Nations and the trilateral economic institutions, namely the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). These institutions, Shakeel said, were established to promote the economic agenda of western powers in the developing world. However, this form of global governance has created structural imbalances in the global system and this has further deepened the divide between the North and the South (the first and the third world). There have been winners and losers at both sides, but the costs of global governance have been disproportionately higher for the South.

Nevertheless, there has been a shift in the balance of power due to the emergence of Asian powers such as China, India and several East Asian countries. They are not yet ready to take a leadership role in either regional or global governance. If the contemporary global governance system is not reformed to incorporate the agenda of the South, it is likely to cause further problems in the future.

Giving his account of the third world’s perspective
on the global governance system, Nadeem Ahmed said that the North has tremendous power to manipulate the global governance system and, therefore, this power has to be normalized through the inclusion and representation of South in global decision-making. The primary agenda of the South is the development of trust amongst themselves and with the developed nations. This trust could only be built if the South is allowed to fully contribute to and participate in the global governance processes, particularly in setting of mandates of the IMF and World Bank.

Dr Hans Frey gave an interesting insight into the political, economic, social and technological changes around the world caused by the recent developments in globalization and global governance. He said that the notion of nation-states is on the decline due to changes in economic and social structures and advancements in technology. Technology has played a critical role in this aspect; it has made learning easier and much more efficient, and has evolved our perceptions about virtual limitations. Increasing access to new modes of connectivity have removed geographical mobility problems. Beyond this, there have been political and social pressures on market reforms to make growth inclusive and counteract the problem of environmental externalities due to market failures. Overall, it is quite uncertain what these changes are leading us towards and how they would affect us in the end.

Dr Sunil Dasgupta said the option of creating a better world is not far-fetched. However, our ideals for a utopia need to be realistic and achievable. There have been developments towards a more inclusive and responsible world, and several changes are indicative of this: the expansion of the number of development agencies working for the betterment of the poorer nations and the move from G7/G8 to G20. Representation also requires that someone must bear the costs of leadership. Historically, the costs of leadership of the West were borne by the US at the end of the World War II. To lead South Asia into a stronger regional bloc, these leadership costs must now be borne by India. Drawing upon the concept of Prisoner’s Dilemma, Dasgupta asserted that the reiteration of interactions between countries would increase incentives to cooperate.

**Policy Recommendations**

**Johannes Blankenbach**
- Make the mechanisms and the institutions of global governance more adaptable to the needs of the developing world.
- Reduce dependency on aid and external financing. Rather focus on internal generation of funds.
- Combine the agenda of the MDGs and SGDs since they are essentially aiming to achieve similar goals. For this purpose, there has to be concerted actions by both the North and the South
- Overcome the current crisis of blockade in decision making and deliverance, non-compliance and inaction in the global governance system

**Stephen Commens**
- Devise mechanisms and provide opportunities for those most affected by the global challenges of climate change and poverty etc. to represent their interests and voice their concerns.

**Mome Saleem**
- Enhance the role of South Asia in G-8 and G-20 to raise a sense of ownership of and responsibility in the region
- Need for a new and self-sustaining regional growth model
- Reducing mistrust between South Asian countries through cooperation and dialogue
- Need for an integrated food security and climate change policy
- South Asia should use the Saarc forum to develop a collective agenda of South Asian nations to be voiced at the international forums.
- Enhance the role of South Asia in global governance through the role of stakeholders such as civil society, the government and the private sector.

**Shakeel Ahmad Ramay**
- We need to adopt and adapt to a global governance system to effectively deal with transnational issues such as climate change, tourism, cybercrime, terrorism and aviation amongst others
- There has to be a change in the balance of power structure so that the Western hegemonies are not able to unilaterally dictate the policies implemented in the developing world.

**Nadeem Ahmad**
- Representative South Asian nations must be given veto powers in the UN Security Council
- Strengthening of the UN ECOSOC by providing ‘Oversight of Development Commitments’ of UN members states
- Global financial regulations are required, especially with regard to capital mobility. This is essential for reducing the susceptibility of poorer nations to external financial shocks
- Minimizing the role of MNCs in setting the global economic outlook
- South-South cooperation should not be perceived
as a threat by the Western world

- Environment should be seen as a global public good in global policy making.
- North should take a lead in environment sustainability. The South does not have the capacity to lead at this point
- Ecological debt can be linked to the Accumulated Economic Debt of South. Climate change should be seen as an opportunity “to do the business right”.

**Will media be a catalyst for change?**

By Ayesha Wasti & Irum Kazmi

The session was chaired by Ms Moneeza Hashmi and speakers included Fahd Hussain, TV anchor, Badar Alam, the editor of monthly Herald, and Farrukh Pitafi from News One channel. Special comments were delivered by Ejaz Haider from SDPI and Mohammad Malick, a senior journalist. Panel organizers/moderators were Imrana Niazi and Uzma T. Haroon from SDPI.

Speakers were of the opinion that media is paramount tool and a catalyst as well as a driving force. Over the years, the radio channels mushroomed. Everything is a breaking news so, the code of ethics needs to be sorted out. They agreed that the media has progressed optimistically. It is a platform where people have the freedom to express their opinions or share their knowledge.

Farrukh Pitafi said that maturity is mandatory in media to prevent negative changes in future. These days, he said, the smart phones let people stay connected with each other all the time. “This is a good progress but needs some control. The major social issues of Pakistan are still unsolved, which needs a serious attention. The problems like lack of tolerance and terrorism are not being addressed rather than opinion makers are injecting their views to the public. Media helps public see the actual side of the picture. In order to solve these problems, the best policy is to educate people. Education gives knowledge, which helps people change their views about life. Subject-matters are looked critically and logically rather than emotionally. The capacity building of a common man is very important. Law making has become irrelevant because nobody follows the laws. If the education sector is promoted and encouraged, this would create awareness about every subject. Knowledge is power and if power is handled intelligently then media can be used in so many useful ways.”

Badar Alam was of the view that change is taking place too fast to keep track of it. Media has been expanding phenomenally. Geo and PTV are the largest ad revenue receiving channels in Pakistan. Today the number of private channels is far more than public channels compared to 20 years ago. The reason is the invisible sources that keep on funding these channels for their advertisements. There is a dire need of professional journalists, editors and professionals in this field.

“Journalism is going to get worse before it gets better.”

Fahd Hussain pointed out the changes that took place due to media in the due course of time. In the past, he said, politics was done in drawing rooms but now it is performed publicly such as live coverage is telecast for the general public. “News satisfies the basic impulse that means media is undergoing a revolutionary period and it is satisfying the quest of people. Media is aggressively influencing the society but it does not mean that media is also responsible for change. Each individual needs to control things he may watch and perceive. In near future, it is expected that Pakistan will also have 3G network. With this technology, everyone would have access to internet all the time, which means media will be further compacted in the form of mobile phones at which people would be able to see television at any time of the day and would be connected to each other all the time.

Mohammad Malick said though media is progressing, it still requires some limitations. Public often looks at media as a ‘messiah’ but in reality it is not. It is a source of information when perceived correctly. Once the 3G network is introduced in Pakistan, the control over the public freedom would get extremely difficult. Each person would have access to Twitter and Face-
book and will be able to say anything under false identities. But, media highlights issues and also investigates into matters where the public cannot approach.

Ejaz Haider pointed out that competitiveness of the media channels. If a channel keeps a smaller template in front of it to follow then smaller its impact would be. Similarly, a big channel like GEO has a much greater influence than the rest of the private channels.

Discussion
There is no tool to measure the extent of freedom that can be expressed in media. Moreover, the effect on each individual cannot be evaluated due to difference in the perceptions of each person. Every individual looks at the same picture but from his own angle. The variations in the perceptions make it difficult to set the limitations in the media. This is still a dilemma as to where the freedom ends and from where the rights start. Freedom of expression cannot be quantified or decided. Laws related to antimonopoly should be formulated. There is a need to control the player and the financial source of private channels.

Media is a catalyst for change but it depends on the way it is looked at. Media is a tool that can be used by an individual either positively or negatively. It depends on the willingness and knowledge of a person as to how to use this tool. Besides, it has been a very good platform in promoting and handling the women rights, women empowerment and gender issues.

Dynamics of non-Traditional Security Threats in South Asia

By Fareeha Mehmood

The session was chaired by Dr Saba Gul Khattak, the member of Board of Governors, SDPI, Pakistan. Speakers included: Dr Naeem Akram from Economic Affairs Division, Islamabad; Khurram Javed Kazi from Diplomatic Academy, Azerbaijan; Dr Bishnu Raj Upreti from National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR); Dr Jürgen Scheffran from Research Group Climate Change and Security (CLISEC), Germany; and Tahir Dhindsa from SDPI, Islamabad. Special comments were delivered by Karamat Ali from Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER), Karachi, Pakistan. Shakeel Ramay and Sehrish Jahangir from SDPI, Islamabad were panel organizers.

Tahir Dhindsa gave a presentation on Regional Conflict Through the Prism of Energy. He said that historically, the muscular energy is one of the major forms of energy. In the past, slaves were used in cotton trade in Southern US that gave birth to the industrial America. Afterwards, with the discovery of fossil fuels, the dependence on petroleum went on increasing thus bringing worldwide revolution. He added that one gallon or 4.5 liters of gasoline is equivalent to hiring one adult for five days. According to the presentation, total US net petroleum imports are 8,436,000 barrels/day, crude oil imports from OPEC stands at 4,195,000 barrels/day and US petroleum products from OPEC are equivalent to 339,000 barrel/day. In other words, dependence of US on net Petroleum imports stands at 45%. He said on January 2011, Saudi Arabia was having the largest oil reserves with oil production of 260.1 billion barrels. He concluded his presentation with the view that the energy resources primarily oil and gas are integral part of economic growth and development. And these energy resources, which are shared by the countries, can lead to conflicting situation thus threatening the sovereignty of the state, he concluded.

Khurram Javed talked about the prospects of cooperation on the future of energy in South Asia. He started with an old Kantian notion that militarized interstate conflicts are less likely to occur between democratic countries with high levels of trade (mutual-interdependence), widely known as democratic peace theory. Discussing the Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project, he said that IP gas pipeline will start from Asalouyeh (Iran), run through Balochistan and Sindh and end up in Multan (Pakistan). IP can later be extended from Multan to New Delhi (India). The pipeline is estimated to be completed by the end of 2014 at an estimated cost of US $7.5 billion. IP gas
pipeline will deliver gas to Pakistan at a price of $11 per MMBTU cheaper in comparison to import cost of Qatari LNG, which would cost $18 per MMBTU. It is true that India pulled out of IP but there is a probability that rising energy demands will force India to reconsider its decision to join it again, he added. Regarding Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Gas (TAPI) gas pipeline, he said TAPI is expected to pump 700 billion cubic feet of gas per year from Daulatabad in Turkmenistan through Herat and Kandahar in Afghanistan, Quetta and Multan in Pakistan to Fazlikha in India. TAPI will provide gas to Pakistan at a cost of $13 per MMBTU. Another part of this project is a crude oil export pipeline from Chardzhou in Turkmenistan, via Afghanistan, to a terminal on Pakistan’s Arabian Sea coast, with a capacity of one million barrels per day. Discussing the prospects of Trans-Caspian Pipeline, he said that with improving relations between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, diversification of energy sources, Trans-Caspian pipeline will commission within the next decade. This will bring a new era of East bound oil and gas pipelines, which can later be linked to TAPI, and bring Caspian gas to South Asia. He anticipated that in coming 20 years, gas pipelines and bilateral trade would integrate South Asia in to zone of peace. South Asia will follow the path of South East Asia and achieve phenomenal economic growth resulting into higher living standards and reduced poverty. There is a probability that visa regimes will be waived between South Asian countries resulting in free movement of people. On the other hand in next 50 years following the EU model, South Asia will transform into a Supra-national entity with a common currency, monetary, fiscal and customs union. Through cooperation and interdependence, South Asia could become poverty-free region.

About the climate change and human insecurity in South Asia, Naeem Akram said in the context of South Asian countries, there are at least two components of human security that are likely to be affected severely by climate change that is food and health security. He said Climate Change Vulnerability Index 2010 computed by Maple-croft, out of 170 countries, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan were ranked 1st, 2nd, 4th and 16th most vulnerable countries in the world. Climate change affects the food security through the dimension of food availability, reduction in production and supply of food items, having an inflationary impact consequently affecting their accessibility to food markets. It is estimated that almost all the South Asian countries except India are net food importers and food insecurity exists in many South Asian countries. It is also estimated that around 40 per cent of the world’s hungry population lives in South Asia. Over the years, many developing countries have made significant progress regarding hunger reduction. On the other hand, South Asian countries still lag behind the food security.

In addition to food security, climate change also affects at least two basic requirements for maintaining good health i.e. clean air and water. Heatwaves may increase the risk of heat related morbidity and mortality. During 1980-98 in India, 18 heatwaves were reported. Only in 1998 heatwave, 10 states were affected causing 1,300 deaths. He said the rising temperatures and humidity levels will increase the transmission of vector-borne diseases such as Malaria, Dengue Fever, Yellow Fever etc. He said a study has been conducted to assess the impact of climate change on food and health security. For this purpose, panel data spanning over 1972-2009 for the select South Asian countries including Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka has been used. The study asserts that if climate change is not controlled then food and health security of the South Asia will be reduced. However, South Asian countries alone can do very little in controlling the climate change as their share is limited in GHGs emission compared to developed countries. Hence, there is a need for a joint and comprehensive policy regarding the adoption of mitigation strategies to control the climate change.

Dr Bishnu Raj Upreti highlighted the nontraditional security challenges in post-conflict, Nepal. He said that the IPCC indicated Nepal as “white spot” and warned the country about the serious consequences of climate change driven disasters. Politicization of climate change has diverted the attention of masses over the technocratic debate of climate driven disasters, he said, adding that political uncertainty, misleading federal debates and complications, poor governance and
mismanagement of natural resources, including poor access to basic services, poor livelihood options and corruption are overshadowing the climate change debate or relevant issues to be discussed. He was of view that more insecurity is created if the issues are politicized beyond the good interests.

He suggested that there is a need to create climate resilient livelihoods i.e. ensuring the livelihood security of poor and marginalized population and deliver them peace dividends appropriately. There should be better coordination among the key actors and locally elected leadership should be preferred. The connection of local and central levels, effective implementation of plans and good governance within the institutes is also very important measure that needs to be taken on urgent basis. There is a need for conflict sensitive and climate resilient adaptation and focus on preventive measures, adaptation, restoration and rehabilitation. He concluded that climate change debate in Nepal at present is narrow, politicized and in bureaucratic control, therefore, people are unable to understand relationship between climate and peace. There is a dire need for changing current approach and style of climate variability related debates and response should essentially address the climate risks of peace and security. He further suggested that the region should think beyond its own country and focus on regional cooperation. He also stressed that the current scenario calls for redefining the policy responses and people’s participation/ownership. The holistic integrated approach is required at present and there is a dire need to move from generalized to specialized concept. He recommended to devise responsive institutional framework and institutional complementarily not only within the state but also across the region. Hence, a collaborative and holistic approach seems to be the only way to face the combined challenges across the region.

Dr Jürgen Scheffran, discussing the cases of conflict and cooperation with respect to climate change in South Asia and Himalaya, he said that energy and climate change are closely linked with each other and global distribution of climate change impact is different. He was of view that human insecurity is attributed to unavailability of water and food.

According to Global Climate Risk Index 2013, Pakistan is among much-affected areas and would be drastically impacted by the climate change. The vulnerability to climate impact depends on exposure to climate change, sensitivity to climate change and adaptive capacity. He further said the most vulnerable countries have low human development index and climate change adds to already existing risks for human security. Therefore, human development and adaptive capacity are important to contain the double exposure of disasters and armed conflicts. While discussing the dynamics of climate driven migrations, he elaborated that the multi causal and complex nature of migration requires more sophisticated models to deal with causes and consequences. He suggested that there are three ways to tackle this issue, including adaptation to prevent the migration through strengthening adaptive capacity and social resilience of communities affected by climate change through improved livelihoods and institutions. Secondly, considering migration as adaptation where the communities are threatened despite efforts for local adaptation, protection and migration is a legitimate adaptive measure. He recommended that there is a need to develop innovative approaches and institutional settings for a constructive relationship between migration, resilience building and climate adaptation.

Karamat Ali, stressing the need for cooperation between South Asian countries, pointed out that 60% people in South Asia are poor and illiterate. To maintain the sovereignty of states, the natural resources have been divided among the countries, which has damaged the true essence of these resources. He raised a question that instead of division, why these resources cannot be shared equally among the countries through joint management. He called for the adoption of sharing mode rather than adversial mode.

He recommended that instead of adopting ASEAN Model for 20 years and EU model for 50 years, we have to move rather more quickly as challenges faced by the region are very fast and urgent. The politicization of religious/ethnic group impeding democratization needs to be addressed on urgent basis. There is also a need to secularize the politics across the region as excessive politicization of issues diverts the attention from main concerns. The militarization is another big hurdle and most of the resources and budget has been allocated by both Pakistan and India in military. The de-
militarization of Siachen since 2005 to-date has been primarily due to lack of coordination between Indian and Pakistani governments. He concluded that only the collaborative and cooperative approach can lead to sustainable development across the region.

The chair concluded the session with the view that traditional and nontraditional security threats should be dealt simultaneously. Also, the cooperative and collaborative approach is the only way out for the South Asian region.

Public financing of education in Pakistan: Estimating gaps and future costs

By Junaid Zahid

The session was chaired by Tasadduq Rasul, the acting Country Director of ActionAid, Pakistan. Hamza Abbas from SDPI, Islamabad and Zohair Zaidi from ActionAid, Islamabad spoke in detail on the issue.

Focusing on the Importance of education as part of the progress of any nation, the speakers stressed the need for comprehensively improving the early childhood care and formulating the education sector plans. They called upon the government to finalize Foreign Assistance Policy Framework.

In his presentation on public financing of primary education in Pakistan, Hamza Abbas discussed the estimation gaps and the future cost to meet primary education goals/targets of EFA/MDGs.

Discussing the duration to accomplish the goals of primary education under the MDGs and EFA, he mainly focused on Balochistan and Sindh provinces of Pakistan and anticipated that the financial requirements would fill the resources' gaps. Pointing out the future costs, he said these are mandatory at national level especially in case of Baluchistan and Sindh. He suggested ways to better the financial procedures while creating alliances between various government departments and synchronization of INGOs with society.

Discussing the methodological approaches, he said that all the authorized budget documents of the federal and provisional governments were composed and then analyzed for the implementation of education, mainly primary education, and transferred to excel sheets. He further said that according to review of literature, the documents were accomplished to evaluate the state of education in Pakistan but the progress in primary education is against EFA and MDGs. He also recommended that it is essential to make a well-developed framework for achieving the Universal Primary Education.

According to his research report, there are no current records on education and also the progress report against the aims and objectives of EFA and MDGs. However the progress data, which has been compiled by Planning Commission of Pakistan from 2008 to 2009, mentions the MDGs he said. Discussing further the review of literature, he highlighted contradictions in data related to primary education regarding goals and targets in EFA and MDGs. He also reported the primary age group at regional and national levels, which is 5-9 and 4-9 respectively.

He also dilated upon the primary education goals, objectives and indicators under EFA and MDGs. Main targets of EFA are to enhance and improve not only the childhood education but also care for the most defenseless and underprivileged children. He explained the MDGs indicators used for monitoring net enrolment ratio, proportion of pupils and ratio of girls and boys in primary, secondary and tertiary level of education. He also discussed the international obligations for the elementary education and concluded that Article 4 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Child (UNCRC) assures an increase in budgetary allocation for children in the field of education. He drew the attention of the audience towards the current global monitoring report of EFA in which Pakistan is mentioned far away from EFA goals and has reduced its costs on education from 2.6% to 2.3% of GNP over the decade.

He discussed facilities in the government primary schools at regional level mainly in Baluchistan and Sindh by explaining the annual state of education report 2012. He said that UNESCO estimates show that Sindh will achieve 100 per cent NER and Universal Primary Education in 2066 but only if the given popula-
tion remains the same and there is no drastic increase in population growth rate. Baluchistan will be able to achieve universal primary education by 2027. He also said that if NER at primary level increases by five points per year then 100 per cent NER in primary education will be achieved by 2019-20.

He also put forward the following recommendations to improve education spending in Pakistan.

1. Improved economic growth and revenue base leads to increase public expenditure on education. Strive to improve tax collection system by increasing power and authorities.

2. Government and civil society can jointly initiate tracking of primary education budget and in return it is helpful of civil society organizations to have access to actual expenditures made to the various sectors in the country.

3. It is necessary to make a detailed and integrated review of educational management system including social budgeting and finance, procurement, logistics, information management and monitoring and evaluation within the education system.

4. Improving institutions that govern the use of resources for translating resources into better primary education outcomes.

5. All governments must introduce laws on free and compulsory education before the end of national and provincial assemblies’ tenures.


7. Working on Fiscal Space and it can be achieved by prioritizing the allocations made under different sectors.

Mr. Zohair gave a presentation on aid effectiveness. He said Pakistan is highly dependent on foreign loans. He said that in 1970s foreign aid formed about 40% of government expenses but now it is round about 8% of total government expenditure. He also discussed the major heads, including 12.9 million out of school children and poor infrastructure of schools. He highlighted the expenditures required for education, debt liability created for every student and province-wise Breakdown of Aid to Education by showing the pie charts. Comparing Aid necessity with corruption, he provided the information about Annual Debt Servicing, which is Rs547.87 billion and Annual Interest is Rs54.60 billion. He also suggested to:

1. Finalize Foreign Assistance Policy Framework.

2. Bridge Data Deficits for the formulation of Education Sector Plans.

3. Improve synchronization of policies, procedures and aid expenditure to make the aid flows more reliable.

4. To improve public financial management and procurement systems.

5. Cancel Pakistan’s debt or convert it into effective Debt SWAP Programs in Education

6. Engage and demand from donors and government to fully implement their Aid Effectiveness commitments

7. Track and publicize the aid flows to key sectors.

In his concluding remarks, Tassaduq Rasul said that there is a gap between what are we doing and what we need to do. He added that we need to build models, accountability mechanism and tracking.

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Future of food security analysis in Asia: Integrated phase classification (IPC)

By Duaa Sayed

The session was chaired by Ahmed Bukhsh Lehri, the Secretary for Ministry of National Food Security and Research. Erminio Sacco, the Chief Technical Adviser from FAO’s regional headquarters in Bangkok, presented a concise summary of IPC efforts in Asia, Ms Kaija Korpi from the Global Support Unit in Rome gave a broader presentation on the successes and failures of IPC, Ms Maria-Bernardita Flores, the Assistant Secretary of Health and Executive Director of the National Nutrition Council of Philippines, added a much needed comparative country context by outlining the efforts in Philippines to conduct IPC analysis. Saheb Haq, the Program Officer of VAM unit at SDPI summarized the food security issues in Pakistan highlight-
ing the need for IPC in the country. Special comments were delivered by notable experts including Dr Abid Suleri, the Executive Director of SDPI, Krishna Pahari from World Food Program, Rajendra Aryal from FAO, Kevin Gallagher, the Country Representative of FAO in Pakistan, and Jean Luc Siblot, the Country Director of World Food Program in Pakistan.

Earlier, a documentary highlighting the key components of the IPC framework was shown to the audience.

Panellists from Pakistan, the Asian region, and the Global Headquarters in Rome were called upon to share their expertise. Food Security is a growing concern in Pakistan. After the formation of Ministry of National Food Security and Research, it is evident that this is an issue which needs the attention of policymakers. The need for IPC in this current scenario is palpable, as was indicated by Saheb Haq in his presentation on the food security situation in Pakistan. The effect of soaring food prices has severely diminished the availability of food for Pakistani citizens and has had a direct impact on their food security. Though, there was a global food crisis after 2007, the world prices eventually fell. Pakistani food prices, however, continued to remain high due to support prices. Pakistan has also been victim to a series of natural and man-made disasters leading to a further deterioration of the food security situation. This condition is evident from the fact that as compared to 2006, in terms of caloric intake, Pakistan consumed less food in 2009.

With a growing need to address food security in Pakistan, IPC has the potential to be a highly useful situational analysis tool. Ms Korpi, in her presentation, brought to light the benefits and shortcomings of the IPC tool. IPC has been successful in bridging the gap between organizations working for the food security cause. Through this process, IPC has also built technical consensus among experts in the field, and through its methodology made the process transparent. As IPC brings together all major organizations working towards food security, there is also no duplication of efforts. Through dissemination of the Map, IPC is also improving communication of food security issues and also raises awareness for the same. IPC also has the benefit of making the best use of existing structures and data, and in doing so it ensures an improvement on that which already exists rather than “reinventing the wheel”. By using existing data sets, IPC also allows identification of any data gaps that may exist.

IPC however is not a perfect tool as Ms Korpi pointed out in her presentation. There are some gaps and shortcomings in the framework that need to be addressed. The reliance on secondary data as mentioned above may be a benefit, however in some areas where data sets are lacking IPC analysis can be difficult to conduct. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of food security knowledge among some of the technicians, making it difficult to conduct the analysis in the absence of basic concepts. IPC has also proven to be challenging for urban areas, where the analysis mechanism needs to be modified to accurately assess the food security condition. Additionally, IPC is missing the essential response component that is crucial for policy makers.

However, despite these issues, IPC is successfully under way in six Asian countries i.e. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal Myanmar, Philippines and Cambodia. Erminio Sacco, in his presentation, provided an overview of the IPC process in Asia to highlight the key accomplishments of the project in the region. He emphasized that IPC is a viable tool for Asia through strong government involvement and a wide and invested stakeholder audience. This is coupled with the availability of rich quality data and the strong institutional capacity available in these countries that serve to sustain and facilitate this analysis.

The practical application of IPC and the required institutional procedures to implement it were discussed by Ms Maria Bernadita. The presentation offered an overview of the processes involved in introducing IPC to Mindanao, one of the three island clusters of the Philippines. The benefits of IPC previously discussed in theory were exhibited through the Philippine experience.

Through the IPC analysis, the specific causes of food insecurity in Mindanao were identified that could lead to formulation of an evidence based response plan. Additionally, IPC allowed the establishment of a multi-level partnership for food security analysis, and
the IPC’s participating food security practitioners were able to enhance their existing knowledge base. The IPC analysis process was made successful by the coalition of food security experts under one roof while sharing their expertise and data. Through this process, data gaps were identified and the capacity-building needs for future IPC exercises were addressed. Overall the IPC initiative has led to a multi-disciplinary analysis of food security situation in Mindanao and expanded existing partnerships among agencies opening the door for future collaborations outside IPC.

IPC is becoming a global standard and efforts are being made to replicate the model for non-food security related issues. For example, the initiative for health is already under way by the World Health Organization. The momentum that the IPC analysis has gained needs to be maintained.

By Kashmala Chaudhry and Mehwish Akhter

Civil-Military Imbalance and its Policy Implications

The session was chaired by Dr Saeed Shafqat, the Chairperson of Board of Governors, SDPI, Pakistan. Speakers included Maj-Gen. (retired) Athar Abbas, Dr Sunil Dasgupta from USA, Dr Bishnu Upreti, a political analyst from Nepal, and Ejaz Haider from SDPI. Special comments were delivered by Dr Ali Cheema from Lahore and Dr Ilhan Niaz from Islamabad.

Discussing Civil Military Relations (CMR), Bishnu Upreti said that conceptual work at local level and concepts developed even at South Asian level are not getting space in western journals, rather following western framework a contextualized framework is required. To formulate such a framework, a close interaction, integration and common understanding of political leadership, civil society and armed forces is required. At the time of post-conflict, this contextualized framework is a precondition to achieve stability, peace and democracy. To develop functional mechanisms, interactive processes and national security doctrine, and security priorities for better civil military relations in post-conflict transitional countries, concerted efforts of stakeholders is required.

He further said that political parties can be a paradoxical threat to stability. Therefore, in addition to CMR, democratization of political forces, de-radicalization of society and demilitarization of youth are also important in achieving peace, stability and security, which is only possible through commitment among political parties, security forces and society.

He concluded that for the countries suffering from conflict and political instability, western notion of CMR is not an ideal conceptual framework. A new school of thought is required to develop contextualized framework. It is, therefore, important to combine the experiences and strengths of historically developed model of CMR with the contextual requirements of post-conflict states and for that a new school of thought is required.

Dr Sunil Dasgupta said the political leaders in India, especially Nehru and even before Gandhi, made it sure that military remained subordinate to the political class. Among the first thing that Nehru did was to demote...
the Commander-in-Chief of Indian army to that of a chief of army staff, made the defence minister superior to the uniform services and this was among the earliest decisions made. The question arises that why this choice was made and why does it continue especially when others have moved away from that model of civil military relation.

Indian civil military relation stems from Indian strategic restraint. Political elite has this very strong belief against the use of force and consequently led to blind neglect of military institution in India. Clear evidence of it is that Indian military spending has grown to the country’s economic wellbeing except of 60’s when it depended on US aid; threats have not changed military spending, which is extraordinary. Defence spending and GDP growth have almost the same slope.

In Indian context, military operations revolve around following four points:

Use of Force: It involves question of where, when and how much force is going to be used. When civilian masters order use of force, it is always going to be use of force and they order converse it is never going to be use of force, this is called always-never problem.

Public Support: Question about public support for the use of force is what should be done to secure and keep public support. In some cases like when a country is attacked, public support is obvious and this public support diminishes as use of force diverts from this point. In that case what is the logic that is used to maintain public support. One is the logic of mobilization i.e. the logic that sustains the support in the home front for a military program. And opposed to that there is a logic of war fighting.

Preparedness: it is often times quite a distance from use of force. It involves direction of preparedness i.e. preparedness for insurgency, tank warfare, airline battle, submarine battle, and degree of preparedness.

Military Welfare: It involves salaries, retirement benefits, jobs after service, health etc, which in most of the functioning governments have support of the state.

These four types of questions present a different type of civil military problem. On the issue of use of force, civilian authority has absolute control whereas the other three points are under the control of military.

Talking in Pakistani context, Maj-Gen. (Retd) Athar Abbas was of the view that internal weakness (of state) invites aggression and, therefore, provides chance to external interference. He discussed some of the CMR issues which included objective or subjective control, threat perception, defence expenditure, nuclear weapons control, employment on internal security, relations with India, Afghan war and relations with US, economic meltdown and socio-economic governance. Talking about military’s expectations regarding political stability, what he suggested was to take ownership of the security, should adhere to the rules as defined in the constitution and that military should not resist objective control. Therefore, either political parties should defend the country or form such an organization (referring to military) which can defend the country. He further stated that military rule is counterproductive in the long run, so it should be avoided and let the process continue to allow the system to develop. Moreover, public, defence department, parliament and judiciary should own their security.

Ejaz Haider said that the basic requirement for national security is the civilian supremacy and effective civilian control of the military. The civil-military challenge is to reconcile a military strong enough to do anything the civilians ask with a military subordinate enough to do only what civilians authorise. Thus, for the institutional framework to function smoothly, every organisation must retain a balance vis-à-vis other organisations as well as in its relationship to the institution (rules of the game). The story of military interventions is essentially that of one organisation, the military, going out of balance in relation both to other organisations as well as the larger institutional framework, which subsumes the will of the people and by so doing provides legitimacy to the state. He also highlighted the theories regarding subjective and objective civilian control and said civil-military relations cannot be looked at in dichotomous terms. He concluded that military is not the sole manifestation of national power. Moreover, complex states and societies require negotiation processes based on the idea of constitutionalism and that states, to be strong, require legitimacy where legitimacy requires acceptance of rules of the game, balance among the powers of different organisations, and peoples' partic-
By Sehrish Jahangir

The session was chaired by Shamsul Mulk, the former Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Abdul Wali from Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad and Nihal Rodrigo, the former Secretary-General, Saarc, Sri Lanka, spoke on the occasion while special comments were delivered by Dr Talat Mehmood from Social Science Research Centre, Germany, Prof. Jan Breman, Netherlands and Haris Khalique, Pakistan.

Nehal Rodrigo, referring to Francis Fukuyama’s book ‘End of History and the Last Man’ published in 1991, quoted Fukuyama as saying: ‘Institutionalization of western liberal democracy is a final form of governance and ‘it’s the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution’. While contradicting this statement, he said that ‘actually change is the only constant factor in the history and the forms of the governance have to be just to the evolving situations over the centuries’. He added that somewhere the fourth wave is also appearing and Middle East is considered as fourth wave of democracy.

Establishing the notion that there is no single system of governance that is applicable throughout South Asia, he referred to different democratic systems. For example, he said, monarchy in Bhutan has evolved to function democratically under the principle of gross national happiness; in Nepal, royalty has been replaced and a new political system has been gradually emerged; and in Sri Lanka, there is a devolution plan agreed between central government of Sri Lanka and minority groups, “The single conceptual construct applicable to all states need not to be internationally forced on the region by the human rights industry,” said Mr Rodrigo, while concluding his speech.

Abdul Wali presented a paper titled ‘Pakistan, a praetorian democracy’, questioning the democratic culture Pakistan and flaws in democracy that hampers true democracy in the country. Giving an historical account of praetorian democracy, he said its roots go back to the Roman Empire where the imperial guards excelled in their powers and used to put undue pressure on the Kings and Princes and had great influence on law and administrative functions of the state.

He further said that praetorian class has both political and economic influences and they are not only involved in selecting the councils and peers but also manages to formulate such policies, which may propagate their own agenda. “Praetorian class has ideological strings and they think that they are saviors of national ideology”, he added.

Mr Wali declared Pakistan an extremely non-democratic country, where Praetorian democracy prevails due to power structure imbalances. Discussing the ill powers of this group, he pointed out that this group destabilizes the political situation by cautioning the institutional security like the instances of memo case, Kerry-Lugar bill, Kargil episode and the like.

Dr Talat Mehmood spoke about the quality of democracy in South Asia and for this he referred to Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI). He said that immense differences in the quality of democracy exist and the third wave of democracy along with hybrid sys-
tem has been emerged. Taking account of democracy around the world, he said, “Democracy around the world rose from 26.9% in 1974 to 62.9% in 2010, however, the quality of democracy varies from country to country, where many political systems are now in the grey zone between autocracy and democracy”.

Referring to the new theory made by him and his colleagues called embedded democracy, he said “if one of the partial regimes of an embedded democracy is damaged in such a way that it changes the entire logic of a constitutional democracy, one can no longer speak of an intact embedded democracy. We are then dealing with a certain type of defective democracy’.

“The third wave of democracy has endorsed democracies around the world from 26.9% in 1974 to 62.9% in 2010, however, the quality of democracy is another question,” Dr. Mehmood added. While explaining the BTI indices, he mentioned that Pakistan is least democratic state, that’s why solid initiatives for lowering corruption are immediately required. Referring to a paper titled “Is Pakistan, the reverse wave for Future” by Diamond and Larry (2010), he said that ‘military coup (1999) was the single most serious reversal of democracy in Pakistan during the third wave’.

Prof. Jon Breman said: “Framework of democracy is a society based on equality”. He said when he was researching along the countryside of India, the landowners of villages used to say that “our state makers made a very great mistake while laying the foundation by giving rights of vote to those, who shouldn’t be given this right; for them inequality was the formation principle of society”. He elaborated that similar notions were observed in North and South of Pakistan, particularly in Sindh, while he was conducting research there. “To form the strong base of a nation, every person should be acknowledged as a citizen and a very courageous act to give the right of vote to everyone is required; be it Pakistan, Bangladesh or India”, he added.

Sharing his views about globalization, Mr Breman said that it did not start in the last three decades under the patronage of different international agencies but it started centuries ago and the face of globalization in the past was very much similar to colonialism. “It is a paradox that in the west there is a trend of more equality at home whereas elsewhere overseas colonial rule on the basis of inequality is being set up,” he maintained. “While there is a trend of more equality in the west, there is inequality at the global level,” he added. Haris Khalique said that the praetorian democracy is the democracy of rich that prevails not only in Pakistan but also in other parts of South Asia. “The question of class needs to be brought back to the discourse of democracy and it’s not the poverty but it’s the gross inequalities that we see in South Asia”. He further said that “without equality, the concept of democracy is deficient and is called a deficient democracy not because of the structural reasons but because it is non exclusive”.

He said that law making can help in medium and long-term prevalence of democracy but politicized social movement and redistribution of resources will be essential at the moment. “State needs to redefine itself and Pakistan will not be the first one to do so,” he added.

Shamsul Mulk said that being a witness of democracy, one of the revolutionary step ever taken for enhancing democratization of Pakistan was the formation of district governments by the Musharraf regime. “For the first time in Pakistan, there was a democratic institution even at the village level, which had executive powers; later, people charged the system for a lot of corruption, but isn’t a lot of corruption now even in the national and provincial assemblies ?”, he asked.

“A country which gains 5th largest catchment in the world, which has 50,000 sq miles of rich soil, the weather which allows cropping round the year, which also has the underground reservoirs along with the culture having centuries old experience of agriculture, has no business to be poor”, Mr Mulk concluded.
Conflicting female and feminist identities after 9/11

By Sadia Sharif

The session was chaired by Dr Saba Gul Khattak, the former executive director of SDPI, Islamabad, and special comments were delivered by Dr Lubna Chaudhry, Binghamton, USA. Speakers included: Dr Shama Dossa, ARROW, Canada, Dr Nathalene Reynolds, SDPI, Dr Nida Kirmani, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore, and Ms Sara Khan, Islamabad.

Presenting a research report on “Caught between an Onslaught of Imperialisms: Struggles of Constructing Feminists Identities in Contemporary Pakistan”, Dr Shama Dossa said that feminism is a word sometimes used as an insult and as a mechanism for control and setting limits and boundaries, e.g. you often hear comments like “keep your feminist ideas to yourself”. In many cases, she said, the people making such comments don’t even know what being a feminist means. “However, the full extent the challenges of taking on the added identity of being a feminist had not sunk in. This entailed embracing my intrinsic rights and the urge to access them, which to-date is an ongoing struggle. As a consequence of the globalization of ‘development’, NGOs play a significant role in the production of professionalized empowerment and feminist identity construction,” she added.

Dr Nathalene Reynolds highlighted the conflicting female and feminist identities in France. Discussing the ban on construction of minarets in Switzerland and burqa (veil) in Belgium, she said it is a consequence of western propaganda that accompanied the American response to the events of 9/11. She further said that in 2009, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), an organ of the Council of Europe, in its annual report, realized that the economic crisis had provoked “development of racist phenomena in Europe. The Commission underlined a new phenomenon that was the introduction of “restrictions of a judicial character specifically targeting Muslims, which have also been exploited politically.

Dr Nida Kirmani presented her research paper on “Strategic Engagements: Analyzing the Indian and Pakistani Women’s Movements’ Relationships with Islam”. She said that women are often instrumental in the discourse of ‘fundamentalist’ groups, as symbolic markers of the community’s identity, which generally translates into placing restrictions on their rights. Hence, most women rights movements, including those in India and Pakistan, have had an antagonistic relationship with religious discourses and actors and have viewed religion as a source of oppression rather than a source of liberation.

She said in India, women from Muslim backgrounds are thus pushed more and more to identify as ‘Muslim women’, largely because of their minority status while in Pakistan, the identification as ‘Muslim women’ has been promoted by some donor agencies and international NGOs, but overall women rights activists do not feel the need to identify on religious terms, and are only strategically engaged with religious discourses on needs-basis.

Ms Sara Khan presented a study titled “A Critique of Pakistani Liberal Feminist’s Response to Chand Bibi Incident” on a tragic event of Swat. According to her, it is the crisis of representation that Pakistani feminists have to deal with where they cannot avoid engaging with constructing identities of their subjects as ‘others’ once they claim to have knowledge of them and their situation.

She highlighted the key issues around which women rights activists have had to confront religion.
She also explored debates around discursive strategies within both movements in relation to religion/strategy. Such a comparative analysis is useful in highlighting the impact of the political and social context on the choices and strategies of women's movements vis-à-vis religion, in a Muslim-minority and a Muslim-majority context, she added.

Later, she defined liberal feminists in Pakistan as a group of feminists who oppose mixing of state and religion, appeal to universal rights and liberal ideologies as emancipatory and dismiss faith based-religious women movements/groups as having any liberatory potential. “Feminists in Pakistan no matter what ideological grouping they belong to cannot avoid the challenge of questioning their subject positions in relation to the explanatory potential and political effect of the knowledge that is produced and activism that takes place”, she said.

She demanded a feminist community in Pakistan for a more nuanced understanding of their situated-ness in this nexus, greater cognizance of how remnants of colonialism. Orientalism are embedded in their discursive practices, which can be appropriated for exploitative means if they are not aware, self reflexive and critical of their own practices.

Dr Lubna said that national and international societies have not managed to address post 9/11 coloniality of power in a proper way. In the west, feminists have bogged down between patriotic vs feminism. Hence, in this case, binary solidarity across a region might not be seen as liberal or might be seen as facilitating fundamentalist.

She appreciated the efforts of SDPI to arrange a panel in a bid to discuss such sensitive issues. Transnational feminists have not taken a stand against their rights. There are two sub sets of feminist thinking. First, Muslims dealing with their identity dilemmas and the second sub set is gender & development conflict industry in the larger context. Thus, very few issues regarding situation of females, subsequent to 9/11, have been addressed, which are done in a way that is conducive to promote feminist theorizing. So, transnational feminism has really failed to do commitment in the last few years.

Role of Public Infrastructure in Reshaping Asia’s Future

By Mehreen Bano & M Adnan

The session was chaired and moderated by Prof. Dr Manzoor Hussain Soomro, the Chairman of Pakistan Science Foundation, and Dr Vaqar Ahmed, SDPI, respectively.

Speakers included: Dr Nadia Tahir, the Associate Professor of Economics, University of Lahore, Ms Yumei Zhang, Agricultural Information Institute, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, China, and Naveed Iftikhar, the Governance Specialist of Economic Reforms Unit (ERU), Ministry of Finance, Islamabad.

The discussion was initiated by the chair, who identified the function of infrastructure in impacting economic growth and financing of public infrastructure through alternate financing modes.

Ms Yumei Zhang, in her presentation, titled: ‘Growth and distributive effects of public infrastructure investments in China’, said that in China infrastructures have significantly improved over the past 30 years and reached to the fastest economic growth rate i.e. 10%. She stressed the need for increasing public infrastructure investment, which what she said should be considered a key strategy for inclusive growth.

She further said that China’s economic development will still benefit from further investments in public infrastructure especially in rural areas. Reducing poverty and inequality through inclusive growth has become a major mandate of development policy.

“China could consider investing more in rural infrastructure to reduce inequality between rural and urban households by promoting equal access to basic public services”, she added.

Dr Nadia Tahir, in her presentation on ‘Railways in Pakistan, India and China: Performance and Prospects’, discussed the current state of railways in Pakistan, China and India, as well as past progress and opportunities for future. She said that railways in China is the second biggest freight and passenger carrier in the world. Since 2000, China’s railway used regional administration autonomy for profitability model (Asset Operation Liability System and Management Restructuring). According to her, China’s railways growth in freight is from industrial output and coal. On the other hand, Indian railways is technically efficient by using marketing strategy of capacity utilization. The reason behind its progress is a planned reduction in unit costs and improvement in customer service quality.

She said that the major losses faced by the Pakistan Railways today are a direct result of decreasing revenues with increased expenditures. The inefficient operations, weak regulation and poor safety are also
the major reasons of its decline.

She added that in Pakistan, accumulated railway deficit reached US$ 618 million in 2009-10. On the other hand, India is likely to invest over $48 billion and China has planned to invest $292 billion in their railway industry. “China emerged as a leader in providing railway facilities and equipments,” she said.

Regarding the growth of railways in future, Dr Nadia suggested that building a transnational rail network with local railways offer a huge potential for growth and trade between three countries. However, good quality of infrastructure requires huge investments, which can promote rail-industry linkage, revive slowing growth and integrate the region for equitable growth. “A good rail network will enable trade with the help of quick movement of large volume of goods between the three countries.” She said that revival of railways does not just require investment, however, its governance must also change to maximize the productivity of investment. Pakistan Railways is technically inefficient in the usage of inputs, which led to financial inefficiency because costs to service delivery have risen sharply, she added.

“The lesson drawn for Pakistan is that technical efficiency leads to other efficiencies and railways development can be sustained by steady public investment and autonomous and professional management,” she concluded.

Naveed Iftikhar added to the discussion by saying that the government had played the role in bridging the gap of private sector investment in strategic sectors of the economy including transport, communication, energy, heavy industries, banking & finance and food & agriculture. He said that PSEs have created market distortions; it has suppressed entrepreneurship, innovating culture and exerted fiscal pressure on public exchequer. It has proved that the government ownership has resulted in lower productivity. As a result, PSEs has underperformed as compare to their private sector counterpart.

He also presented two case studies of public infrastructure, i) “Crisis of Pakistan Railways”, and ii) Current crisis of Power Sector”.

He said that the government has planned a “railway revitalization strategy for restructuring Pakistan Railways”, which has been approved by CCOR. He said that a financial restructuring and repair of locomotives is also being addressed by the government. He said that private-sector involvement can contribute in many areas, especially, for maintenance and support services through train operation to rolling stock and infrastructure provision.

Discussing the second study, he proposed a strategy that sustained intervention is needed to produce the required results. Moreover, for a long-term solution, there is a need to improve fuel mix through indigenous resources to decrease dependence on imported fuel. He called for tapping local coal, hydel, solar, wind and other sources of renewable energy potential and put forward the following suggestions pursued for PSEs and retained by the Government of Pakistan

• Stand-alone legislation on Governance and Operations of PSEs should be introduced.
• Hybrid arrangements of the formation of PSEs should be disbanded.
• Code of Corporate Governance for PSEs should be promulgated.
• Nomination Commission/ Specialized Unit should be established for the appointment of directors in PSEs and database for performance and accountability of directors may be developed by the Commission.
• Central Monitoring Unit should be developed for continuous performance monitoring and advisory.
• Public Service Obligation (PSO) and commercial services may be separated in accounting framework.
• Employees of PSEs may not be treated as civil servants.
• Participation of private sector in the operation of PSEs should be enhanced.
• Regulatory quality should be improved in all sectors.

Dr Vaqar Ahmed concluded the session by saying that “debate needs to be focused on state-market relationship as China and India have continuously evolved this. The government should evolve with the same space as market evolves, he added.
Reducing impact of climate driven migration on women

By Sadia Ishfaq

The session was chaired by Shafqat Kakakhel, the Member of SDPI Board of Governors while Ms Lena Lindberg, the Country Director of UN Women, Islamabad, was the guest of honour. Speakers included Dr Giovanna Gioli, Research Group Climate Change and Security (CLISEC), Germany, and Zahida Rehman, DevCon, Sanghar, Pakistan. Special comments were delivered by Stephen Commins, University of California at LA, USA and Feryal Gauhar, Political Economist and Member of SDPI Board of Governors.

Discussing climate change-driven migration in the context of Pakistan, Shafqat Kakakhel said that humanitarian crises often lead to forced dislocations, especially where human pursuit becomes a challenge. Under such circumstances, women are the most prone to suffer unfortunately because of the ‘overall status of women’ in society where they are usually given ‘the raw end of the deal’.

Referring to the fourth assessment report of IPCC, Kakakhel said this is despite the fact that the status of women in climate-driven migrant communities has received international recognition. Other international institutions such as the United Nations, World Bank and Asian Development Bank have repeatedly drawn the world attention towards this issue. He said that discussions held in the 18th COP in Doha this year showed that Asian countries would need $40 billion to enable them to take appropriate climate-change adaptation measures. He added that an agreement has been reached on the establishment of a mechanism to provide relief to countries that suffer from impact of climate change, however, the issue will be thoroughly discussed in the 19th COP at Warsaw in 2013.

Highlighting the case of Pakistan, he said that the southern region of Pakistan is particularly vulnerable to land inundation as a result of sea level rise. He added that in a large agrarian economy, farmers lose an essential livelihood resource due to climate change. In such cases, marginalised farmers have no other option but to migrate. The northern areas of Pakistan similarly face varying environmental changes. He concluded that such varying climatic shifts have consequences for gender relations, which must be seen in the context of local cultural norms and social institutions.

Ms Lena Lindberg said that women were often left alone in the aftermath of natural catastrophe while men opt for migration. She said that UN Women is currently pursuing projects in other regions that focus on building innovative skills among women, where they are taught to use small-scale clean technology especially in rural areas where there is limited or no electricity.

Commenting on post-MDGs, she said that new development goals that we set after 2015 have to be sustainable development goals, which have to take into account climate change as a global environmental force. She warned that goals that are unsustainable eventually undermine social stability, exacerbate poverty and gender gaps, and hinder economic growth. She highlighted the role that policy-makers have to play in this regard.

Dr Giovanna Gioli presented the findings of a joint research carried out in the northern areas of Pakistan. She argued that migration is not a last resort option rather, it is a decision taken by middle or upper middle classes to improve overall economic conditions of the household. She added that because the area studied was facing unsustainable environmental practices
(such as deforestation), it was becoming increasingly prone to erratic rainfall, landslides and other natural disasters.

Her research shows that climate change is an indirect driver of migration and environmental change affects incomes, which eventually trigger migration. Seventy six per cent of the households that were surveyed had reported that men migrated for better opportunities, while women were left with increased workload with additional responsibilities.

Dr Gioli concluded that although migration builds community resilience, it cannot be perceived as a successful adaptation strategy, especially in cases where it is opted as a ‘flight from misery’. She proposed that women empowerment has to be recognised in mainstream government policies. She added that currently, national adaptation plans of various countries are being re-analyzed, especially those which are based on the biased assumption that migration is a last resort option to adapt to climate change.

Zahida Rehman focused on how climate change driven migration affects men and women differently. She presented a case study on the largest cotton-producing district of Sindh, Sangarh.

Sangarh was one of the worst flood affected districts in 2011. The local infrastructure was completely destroyed as a result of the floods. Union Council offices suffered, which affected the ability of local authorities to reach out to flood-stricken people. Where there was relief distribution, it was usually on the basis of kinship or political affiliations. Under such circumstances, local women innovated indigenous mechanisms to cope with the crisis. For example, Ms Rehman claimed that women converted household utensils into rudimentary boats to stay afloat in high waters during the flood.

Ms Rehman recommended that disaster management authorities at the national, provincial and district levels must be equipped with state of the art technology/equipment to deal effectively in times of humanitarian crises.

She also proposed that local villagers should be provided disaster risk reduction trainings to enable them to respond to crises in a better way.

Stephen Commins maintained that institutional responses to climate change are usually bifurcated. He said that institutions have a role to play in providing justice to those affected by the adverse impact of climate change and disasters. He added that programmes such as those being carried out by UN Women could bring about a change in the lives of women besides helping them empowering.

Some interesting points were raised during the question-answer session at the end of the panel discussion. For example, one participant highlighted the need to revise Saarc and ASEAN charters to make them more gender-sensitive.

Feryal Gauhar said that often the intangibles get missed out in research that is focused on presenting research findings through quantitative means in the form of statistical tables and visual graphs. She concluded that the absence of and insensitivity to women voices in government policies constructs barriers in reaching out to those affected by the adverse impact of climate change.

**Will Social movements empower poor and marginalized people struggle for improved livelihood and well-being?**

*By Irum & Zeeshan*

The session was chaired by Karamat Ali from PILER, Karachi, and moderated by Dr Aasim Sajjad Akhtar, QAU, Islamabad and Prof Geof Wood, UK. Speakers included Muhammad Luqman (Faisalabad, Pakistan), Awanish Kumar (India), Mahendra Sapkota (Nepal) and Dr Urs Geiser (Switzerland).

Karamat Ali said poverty is the result of prevailing power relations while social movements appear in response to this power structure. These movements are important for poverty alleviation and income redistribution efforts, he said, adding that they aim to increase the earnings of the poor to bring them out of the poverty net. However, he said, the contribution of these social movements is very small in poverty reduction efforts in Pakistan. “They work mainly on the prevailing dominant ideas such as restructuring the social structure system and pay attention to the issues that are not focused by the existing social structure.” In this way, they claim to improve the existing structure and to balance the power structure, he said, adding that the social movements are not much obvious in Pakistan. The poor lack empowerment, which can be granted through a healthy political process. It requires the transformation of institutional structure, which might be facilitated by the respective representatives from all the segments of society, he concluded.

Prof Geof Wood said the government emphasizes mainly on large and medium-scale farmers while the
marginalized sections of society get a little attention. There is a need for continual reform structure in favour of equitable distribution of resources. Along with all this, there is a need to strengthen the market structure. “As most of the villages in South Asia have the same characteristics, the situation is same in this region.” However, in most of the countries, the private sector comes forward and facilitates the marginalized class in a country, he said, adding that it mainly focuses on rural development, human rights, health conditions, working conditions and income inequalities.

Awanish Kumar was of the view that the role of social movements in poverty alleviation is somehow clear but still it needs further elaboration on the ways that are more crucial in poverty reduction. He stressed the need to follow those pathways that lead to a lower level of poverty, which requires an in-depth investigation. Furthermore, the social movements should involve the general public and the local politicians so that a consensus could be built on resolving the social grievances.

Mahendra Sapkota said if market opportunities are not available to all, it would result in an unbalanced social structure and would cause a bureaucratic and authoritative culture. It can enlodge the the poor towards the alternative power sources so that they could available the resources that are essential for their survival, he said, adding that it would discourage the activities like political inclusion and other related activities that are framed for poverty alleviation strategy. “It is generally accepted that these social movements are the source of power that fight for a particular issue, class or identity and provide their support to the people, who belong to that group. However, an active participation in politics require resources while the poor are unable to manage while their participation can be effective through collective actions. It helps them in securing the political responses, the attention of media and other welfare groups in the society.”

In some places, he said, the marginalized people even do not have the right to change their profession but only the privileged classes. He further said that this is inclusive exploitation in which people are deprived of the community resources. He maintained that people of tribal areas are mainly working in agriculture sector whereas the power groups are engaged in better occupations. They own the capital goods whereas land holding and capital assets are narrowly skewed towards these power groups. He said the top 10% people from the influential groups own most of the resources in the locality and it is difficult to shift the resources from one caste to another. The rising income of some specific classes also increases the income inequality in the long run, he added.

Dr Aasim Sajjad Akhtar said the poor are rarely organised because of the diverse structure of problems, which they face. Most of the time, they accept this reality that they are poor and they do not try to improve their living standard. However, others strive to fight against poverty with the help of social movements, which emerge on the basis of prevailing dynamic social relationships in society. He added that mostly of those are involved in the social movements, who are more responsive to social affiliations. “Other than working on the issues that directly affect the poor, these movements also address other issues, which are indirectly involved with the poor.” They run campaigns and other activities to increase the representation in various segments of society. In rural areas, these movements are engaged in addressing the chronic poverty, which is normally based on the sectarian and the ethnic identity, he said.

Discussing the multiple dimensions of poverty, he said the idea of common property resources can in-
crease the welfare level in a society where resources are skewed towards powerful influences. “However, differences between the people are rising over the years, which is giving rise to social movements. These movements challenge the terms, which create differences between the people of certain identity. If people in a sect, ethnicity or group are facing some disadvantage, which is governed by other powerful groups, these movements struggle for their rights.” Unfavourable recognition strengthens the chronic poverty and needs a persistent in-depth treatment. In helping the poor and in reducing the poverty, we need to work on the deep mechanism that is prevailing in our society, Asim Sajjad concluded.

Karamat Ali said the efforts of civil society in this direction are obvious in the 90s. “It starts working on rural development, human rights, advocacy, health and sanitation, educational poverty etc. Occasionally, there are some movements that work on cultural differences to protect ethnic or sectarian identity but they work least for the development of marginalized people.” He stressed the need to include the marginalized people in the mainstream decision making process. But, the agendas of political parties do not include the welfare of marginalized class, he said.

Dr Urs Geiser said to analyze the evolution of these social movements, it would be important to follow the paths adopted by these social movements. They form roots in both rural and urban areas and in civil society; this helps them to understand the working of the state, of other social organizations so that they could mobilize their resources efficiently. He said they try to become constructive and supportive while staging any protest. In this way, they intervene in the society to strengthen the marginalized actors, he added.

He said: “The social movements are currently emphasizing on poverty, which originates from the lack of weak governance. There is a need for collective decision making process. Target groups should be part of the decision making process. It can be addressed in a better way by a collective effort from potential stakeholders in society e.g. the government, non-government organizations, donors, and the leaders from marginalized groups. there is a need of a decentralized system so that power could be shifted from centre to local partners.”

**Promoting Sustainable Enterprises in South Asia**

By Fareeha Mehmood

The session was chaired by Altaf M Saleem, Shakarganj Mills Lahore, Pakistan and moderated by Qasim Shah and Anam Khan from SDPI. Mujeeb Ahmed Niazi, Afghanistan, delivered the special comments while speakers included Pramod John, India, Dr Shahmin Zaman, the CEO of CSR Centre, Bangladesh, and Mochan Bhattacharya, Nepal.

Sharing his views about the experiences and challenges faced by the small holders, Pramod John said that Prakruthi, one of the founding member of South Asian Network on Sustainability and Responsibility (SANSAR) was established in 1991 and has so far played a very important role in promoting the sustainable enterprises and addressing the concerns of small enterprises.

Highlighting the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), he elaborated that CSR is essential for ensuring the sustainability of supply chains, enhancing profitability through operational efficiency gains and improving relations with investment community. It will also enhance the employee relations and yield better results with respect to recruitment, motivation, retention, learning and innovation and productivity. He further said that the companies incorporating the CSR practices are likely to encounter a number of challenges. These challenges include environmental and social issues, attracting employees for CSR, identifying the metrics, understanding the government policies and community perspective on sustainable business engagement, incorporating sustainability in to financial business case, lack of capacity of civil society to engage with companies and lack of understanding about the distinction between CSR and philanthropist activities.

He suggested some strategies for the effective implementation of CSR and in order to address the aforementioned challenges. He also suggested that at first the farmers and small/large business groups coupled with CBOs and civil society should be given a platform and transform it in to critical volume having serious concerns about running their businesses sustainably. Secondly, the market access should be ensured for the process of certification. Later, the concept of CSR should be introduced strategically through networking with the stakeholders. The collaboration with media and the government is also very vital part of this whole process. He also emphasized that incorporating CSR would allow the business enterprises to grow sustainably, thereby maximizing the outputs with minimum inputs and costs.
Mochan Bhattarai said that roots of CSR in Nepal dates back to 2003 when a study titled “Status of CSR in Nepalese Companies” was carried out by Lotus Opportunities and ActionAid. He further added that the recent study “Current Status of CSR in Nepal” done by SAFoRb, SWATEE and ECCA highlighted that philanthropist activities are still performed by major institutions in the name of CSR. The media in Nepal has also played the role in reporting these philanthropist activities as CSR, thus creating a misconception about two entirely different concepts. Mochan further added that currently, the CSR program is operating in bits and pieces within Nepal and there is a need to create awareness among masses, clarity on accounting and reporting procedures and legal incentives to take up this initiative of CSR strategically for promoting sustainable enterprises across South Asia. A major step taken in Nepal to create awareness about CSR is the inclusion of the topic in curriculum of management schools and has also mentioned CSR under PSD strategy in its three year interim plan. He further elaborated that majority of banks in Nepal have opened CSR departments. Some of them are tied and work closely with the local NGOs, for example KIST bank with “Sapana, Sahas Ra Hami”, Bank of Kathmandu with TEWA etc but still, a lot has to be done not only in clarifying the distinction between philanthropist activities and CSR but also running the business sustainably.

The active players promoting CSR includes SRBDN – backstopped by Environmental Camps for Conservation Awareness (ECCA), Nepal, National Business Initiative (NBI), UN Global Compact Local Network Nepal (UNGCLNN), Step Foundation (For Carpet) Sector, FNCCI – CSR Forum (Federation of National Chamber of Commerce and Industries) and NCCR North-South Regional Office. Talking about the ECCA role, he said that ECCA has been involved in back-stopping SRDN (hosting & management), research study and articles updation, facilitation, organizing and participation in CSR related events, enterprise initiatives, South Asian Network on sustainability and responsibility and liaison with Saarc secretariat. The challenges that have been faced by ECCA, in implementing CSR within the businesses include: political uncertainty, lack of skilled labor, power crisis, labor problems, lack of proper legislation, support from government and low priority by private sectors at Business Association level. He recommended to strengthen networks like SANSAR and SRBDN. He also stressed that there should be better legislation and regulations favouring the incorporation of CSR in both small and large enterprises. Also, the government should take initiative for promoting responsible businesses. He concluded that usually CSR is seen as beyond the compliance with laws but due to lack of enforcement in Nepal, the concept of “Towards Compliance” is required. Also CSR is required on both meso (joint initiatives by commodity associations) and meta (lobbying for regulations and enforcement thereof, supporting law-making) levels in order to get the desired results.

Anam Khan talked about regulatory versus voluntary CSR in next 20 years. Discussing the broader objectives and background of SANSAR, she highlighted that our businesses have traditionally been socially responsible and ancient wisdom inspires people to work for the larger objective of the well-being of all stakeholders. Elaborating the business benefits associated with CSR, she compared the regulatory and voluntary approaches towards CSR and said that though, the regulatory approach would ensure the adaptability towards it, at the same time this approach would encounter with political pressures, capacity constraints within the institutes and limitations within the human and financial resources. On the other hand, the voluntary approach would lead to good and correct understanding of CSR concepts, acceptability by private
sector and implementation of systematic and sustainable CSR strategies. While comparing these two approaches in countries across South Asia, she said that in India the CSR voluntary guidelines were introduced in 2009 and now the debate is going on to make it mandatory for all enterprises to invest 2% of their profit in CSR. In Pakistan, the CSR order was passed in 2009 and CSR Voluntary Guidelines were introduced in 2012. In Bangladesh, Nepal and Afghanistan, they are far behind and debate is still going on for adopting either of these approaches to enforce the CSR practices within the enterprises. She suggested that there is a dire need for formulating South Asian CSR guidelines, South Asian branding and integration of Saarc through trade negotiations and exchanges and use Saarc forum for enhancing CSR practices.

Ms Shahamin S. Zaman said that CSR Centre in Bangladesh is the founder of SANSAR and operates on the principle of human development targets set in Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Bangladesh through private sector led growth. He then elaborated that the UN Global Compact, a global platform for CSR, describes 10 universally accepted principles for conducting responsible business on four thematic areas, including human rights, labor standards, environment and anti-corruption. She also highlighted that the implementation of CSR within Bangladesh, as in other developing countries encounter with challenges, including awareness and understanding about CSR, vision for sustainable growth, implementation of SMEs and lack of CSR guidelines in Bangladesh. The South Asian regional priorities of SANSAR enables the connection at varied levels and sectors, bringing together stakeholders across the segments to a platform of sharing, understanding safeguard producer interests by improving product quality, market access and income distribution. The focus areas of SANSAR include: policy outreach, capacity building, research and dissemination of results and networking. She suggested that the businesses can create a critical voice of South Asia, explore business opportunities and negotiate for better trade opportunities across South Asia, thereby promoting sustainable business enterprises across the region. She then shared some highlights of a sugar study being conducted in Bangladesh and recommended that in order to efficiently incorporate CSR in sugar sector, there is a need to increase competition among the suppliers for efficient and standardized sugar production, promote new private investment in sugar industry and open up the sugar market for the freedom of export and import, consequently increasing the foreign direct investment in sugar industry in Bangladesh. The incentives should also be given in the form of subsidy to reduce the production cost and increase the working capital. She recommended the development of CSR guidelines at national and regional level, thus linking the countries in South Asia for better business.

Mujeeb Ahmed Niazi congratulated all the participants for sharing such thoughtful ideas. He also stressed that in many developing countries in South Asia, the philanthropy is confused with CSR and the first step in promoting the incorporation of CSR within the businesses is to clarify the difference between these two entirely different concepts. He also suggested that market access should be given through certification and certification process should be equipped with incorporation of CSR. He also stressed that CSR is beneficial for businesses and they can increase the profit through adopting these CSR practices.

Question-Answer session: To a question of Mr Ali (Business Recorder) that Is there any study to map out the formal and informal activities in CSR?, Miss Shahamin replied that though the informal sector in CSR is a great challenge, a report would be launched in Bangladesh regarding the informal sector soon. Ms Anam highlighted that the informal sector has also been mapped in the sugar study done by SDPI and the study showed that most of the sugar mills in Pakistan do not have formal CSR departments.

To a question that what would be the basic reason for business enterprises to adopt CSR, the experts agreed that CSR must be equated with increased productivity and reduced inputs. The chair concluded that at first the CSR should be redefined with its larger objectives and in addition to this sequencing of regulations it is very important to get the desired results rather than just adopting the CSR through regulatory approach.
Director of Women’s Economic Development in the Market Linkages department of MEDA, Economic Development Association, Canada; and Fareeda Khan, the National Project Coordinator, Promoting Gender Equality for Decent Employment Project, ILO, Pakistan Ameena Saeed, the Managing Director of Oxford University Press, and President of Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Karachi, and Dr Nazre Hyder, the Senior Economic Advisor, SDPI, were the discussants.

Ambreen Baig talked about the sustainability of women economic empowerment with special focus on breakthrough and incremental change approaches. She said that women’s access to the opportunities, assets, services and needed support can advance women economically. Decision-making authority has an important role to play. According to her, the major ingredient for empowering women economically is ensuring gender equality in terms of rights based approach (RBA).

Discussing breakthrough vs incremental changes, she said that both approaches are necessary. Incremental advances often build the foundation for rapid change while breakthrough change can remove barriers and rapidly shift societal viewpoints and practices. She emphasised that collective action can enable a wide range of opportunities for women. She said the example of AKRSP, a women’s organization in Gilgit-Baltistan, has been working to uplift native communities for the past 30 years.

To empower women, she said, access and availability of resources for women needs must be ensured. Secondly, women access to finance should be given prime importance which will encourage and enable women to build their own businesses. She upheld the idea that skills, business and vocational training can play a vital role in women economic empowerment. This will help them to enter into the field of entrepreneurship and act as a role model for other women. She was of the view that loans are more effective than grants, which should be promoted.

Waheed Ahmad, in his presentation on “Social Sustainability in Transport: Women’s Empowerment through Mobility in Urban Areas of Pakistan”, highlighted the new dimensions and linkages of gender with transport. He also pointed out the importance of women’s mobility and transport services for their empowerment in urban areas of Pakistan. In his presentation, he explained how social, spatial and institutional structure hinders the process of women’s economic empowerment. He said that social, cultural and religious values have a strong influence on the limited access of women towards employment and socio-economic activities. He said that apart from these barriers working/traveling women face verbal, physical and sexual harassment, especially in public transport. He also highlighted that characteristics of the built environment has a negative impact on transportation of women such as lack of efficient and affordable transport services and distance/safety issue for pedestrian.

He further said that gendered travel needs have been due to the existing gender-blind transport policy, which is acerbating this issue.

He recommended that contribution in terms of transport and social exclusion literature needs to be implemented. He was of the view that new dimension into gender and transport should be introduced along with the inclusion of right based and empowerment approaches. He suggested that women’s transport needs in urban areas should be documented along with the women’s voices incorporated into policy and planning frameworks of Pakistan. He said that special focus should be given for providing safe and efficient public transport services, along with measures to change societal perceptions towards women’s mobility at public places.

Helen Loftin, during her presentation on “Women’s Economic Empowerment - breakthrough changes”, said that potential of any country to succeed in social, economic and environmental measures is wholly dependent upon engagement of their female citizens. She said that economists estimated that approximately one billion women could enter the workforce over the next 10 years and can dramatically change the global economy. According to her, in developing countries, the change in position for many women entrepreneurs is profound as they will integrate and utilise market systems in future, which can be transformational at the same time for them, their families
and their communities.

She gave examples of breakthrough changes that stem from women’s participation in vibrant value chains in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This provides an interesting perspective to which economic improvement yields enhanced empowerment. She said that women empowerment can be demonstrated through political engagement, market position, and mentorship. She maintained that 41 countries are “at the starting gate” and yet have not systematically approached women empowerment. She said that Pakistan ranked 127th out of 128th in this map. Only Yemen ranks below Pakistan. She recommended that market system can be a conduit and tool for women empowerment. She was of the view that success can generate positive demonstration effects on other women and a chain process can be achieved in the form of copycat behavior among other women. She elaborated her view with success stories about women empowerment in Pakistan through this approach.

Farida Khan, in her study, “Mainstreaming Gender in the Departments of Labour”, pointed out national and international context regarding gender based labour rights. She said that according to the Constitution of Pakistan particularly Articles 4, 11, 17, 18, 25, 37(c), 37(d) and Article 37(e) refer to the equal opportunity to both the gender. She said that although national context is quite strong, its implementation is a big question mark. She emphasized that strengthening the understanding and application of gender mainstreaming in the national machinery such as government departments should be applied. She was of the view that skill development especially for women should be encouraged. She said that media can play a vital role in raising awareness and promoting the culture of women empowerment. She added that gender discrimination is putting extra restriction on the mobility and work opportunities for women. She also raised the concern of women unfriendly instruments used at workplaces. This existing discrimination among the society, male friendly design of the workplace and instruments were highlighted by Ms Farida.

She recommended that laws need to be revised to make the process of labour inspection gender responsive. Regarding structural changes, she suggested that more women inspectors need to be recruited. She also suggested that training checklists need to be ensured to make inspections more gender responsive.

Ms Rhonda thanked all the speakers for presenting their studies and providing the audience with immense knowledge.

Dr Nazre Hyder encouraged the phenomena of women empowerment. He said that national income is directly linked with the women economic empowerment, and it can bring a lot of benefit to her family, community and for the country at large. He emphasized that commercial mainstreaming of women is very important for women economic empowerment. He said that women were playing a vital role in agriculture produce for ages and similarly they can excel in other commercial means. He further said that without ensuring three things women economic empowerment is not possible within the country, and they are access to education both technical and vocational, training and skill development, women involvement into political and social affairs. He emphasized that transport policy needs to be revised keeping in mind the gender perspective.

Ameena Saeed said that education is the biggest barrier for women in accessing the economic opportunities. She quoted that around eight million educated women are inhibited to work due to the societal barriers. She emphasized that women-friendly environment and policies need to be implemented so that this segment of the society might act productively for the country at large. She said that in today’s world, inflation is a challenge for survival, which can be taken up as an opportunity by women to empower themselves.

In her concluding remarks, Ms Rhonda said that women as the most important segment of the society should be promoted in terms of economic empowerment. Empowering women will definitely empower the society benefiting the whole country. She said time has come where women participation needs to be encouraged. She also said that without the implementation and revision of policies/laws, the phenomena of women empowerment cannot be achieved.

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Fifteenth SDC Special Bulletin

Ameena Saiyid speaks at the session while Dr Nazre Hyder and Ms Rhonda Gossen Ehsani look on.
Addressing NTBs in India-Pakistan Trade: Implications for South Asia

By Saad Rajpoot

The session was chaired by Khurram Dastgir Khan, the Member of National Assembly, whereas the discussants were Dr Safdar Sohail, Islamabad and Dr Pervez Tahir, Lahore. Speakers included Ali Khizar, the Head of Research in daily Business Recorder, Muhammad Adnan, who represented the CEO of Qaim Automotives Manufacturers, Karachi Engineer M.A Jabbar, and Saad Rajput, Dr Vaqar Ahmed from SDPI moderated the session.

Saad Rajput, in his presentation, identified the main non-tariff barriers faced by Pakistani merchants, who export leather, textile as well as fruits and vegetables to India. He addressed the issue as how the goods exported by Pakistan to India were often re-valued at Indian ports. The transaction values of these goods were rejected upon which they were re-valued at higher rates, as compared to those imported by India from more expensive markets such as the European Union. Furthermore, the tariff structure in India was complex and non-transparent. Goods which were subject to an official tariff of 12% for example, were subject to tariffs of around 25% once all additional duties such as the Countervailing Duty (CVD), additional CVD and education cess were accounted for. The import licensing regime in India was also tightly regulated, and import licenses were usually issued for raw materials and intermediate goods that would act as inputs for Indian export sectors. As for financial measures to restrict imports, Indian banks did not accept L/C’s issued by Pakistani banks of over US$10,000. This was mainly due to a trust deficit between the two nations.

Rajput shed further light on how textile goods exported by Pakistan to India were subject to composite taxation and extensive sampling, which made the export of high quality apparel exported in small quantities infeasible. Quality standards certified by company labs in Pakistan were also unacceptable for exporting purposes to India. The agricultural sector in India benefited from generous subsidies, thereby making imported agricultural and food products uncompetitive in the Indian market. These were also subject to sampling procedures monitored by the Port Health Authority in India, equivalent certifications of which issued by Pakistani labs were unacceptable. As for the leather hides industry, this was subject to minimum non-tariff barriers since India imported leather from Pakistan for its booming leather footwear industry.

Ali Khizer started his talk by mentioning the amount of informal trade that exists between the two economies via Singapore, Hong Kong and UAE. Once non-tariff barriers are brought down and trade opens up between India and Pakistan, this informal trade could be brought into the formal channel, thereby increasing revenues for governments in both countries. Khizer’s talk touched upon a somewhat romantic narrative on the possibilities and gains from India-Pakistan trade. He highlighted as to how the China-Taiwan and China-Japan example should be followed, in which trade paved the way for the solution of political issues. Businessmen on both sides of the border are looking towards the easing of trade between the two South Asian economies, he said, adding that real estate activity had picked up on the Pakistani side near the border and industries were being set up in Bhatinda in India with the hope to cater to the needs of Lahore.

Muhammad Adnan, speaking on behalf of Engineer Jabbar, said trade proposals made by the Asian Development Bank and Saarc Chamber led to a growth in South Asian export growth from 4.3% to 20.1%. While touching upon the problems faced by businessmen, Adnan addressed the issue of the lack of infrastructure on both sides of the border required for increased trade. No cargo trains are allowed via Sindh, and only a limited number of road routes and warehouses exist at the land border between India and Pakistan. More routes should be opened up for trade in Sindh and the Punjab, since these could act as a catalyst for increased trade between the two South Asian economies.

On the technical barriers to trade, Adnan said Indian certification requirements greatly impede the export of cement to India from Pakistan. A multiplicity of rules and regulations exist since there are around 20 standard setting bodies in India. India also enforced mandatory certification requirements for a range of...
products of export potential to Pakistan that further impede the growth of bilateral trade. The cumulative impact of all non-tariff barriers imposed by India is discouraging, despite the existence of a huge potential for bilateral trade. In the case of cotton, for example, Pakistani cotton was temporarily banned by India due to health issues, although in the same period Pakistan was exporting cotton to the Western markets.

Dr Safdar Sohail provided the audience with an alternative picture by identifying how it was wrong to think of South Asia as a homogenous region. He pointed out that the non-tariff barriers in India existed due to a deeper structural problem that needed to be addressed. India’s blatant distaste for imports was even recognized by the WTO. To bolster this distaste for imports, India maintained a systemic trade policy and Indian policy-makers were not interested in any kind of reform.

To support his argument, Sohail cited the example of sugar trade between the two countries. He said Pakistan had a surplus stock of sugar of around one million tones, which could not be exported to India since finished sugar was put on the sensitive list of non-trade-able items by India. Pakistan even had a cost advantage over Indian finished sugar, but was still not allowed to export it to India. Furthermore, India spent a huge chunk of its GDP on subsidies for the agricultural sector. These subsidies were provided separately by the government at the Federal level first, and then at the state level. Sohail pointed out that if competition policies were not harmonized between the two economies, of which subsidies were an integral part, economic integration can simply not take place. If India does not reform its agricultural subsidy policy, Pakistani farmers will demand the same once trade opens up. Thus, a perverse competition of subsidies will ensue.

Sohail pointed out that the South Asian region as a whole needs to diversify on its export-oriented products, as well as its export markets. The political economy aspect of trade integration cannot be ignored. If economic integration is the region’s goal, it should focus towards the convergence of GDP growth rates, since only this would reflect a truly integrated economic union.

At the end, Dr Pervez Tahir briefed the participants as how the united India before 1947 was economically more integrated than currently is the European Union. It was then de-constructed, and efforts are now being made to re-construct an economically integrated subcontinent. He drew the attention of the audience to fragile trading relations between the two countries that were often determined by political oscillations. Discussing the difference between the two economies, Tahir said Pakistan had always been a liberal and more open economy whereas India was a closed economy in the past and has recently started opening up to the world. Coming to the issue of informal trade, he maintained as the largest export market of India was UAE, whose second largest export market was Pakistan. This was enough to deduce the amount of informal trade that exists between India and Pakistan, as well as the direction of this informal trade.

Tahir went on to say that trade was a business-like matter, and although close to impossible, politics and emotions should not be a part of trade-related policy making. While doubts exist on both sides of the border, both the countries need to find avenues to move forward. Greater trade will beget winners and losers, but that is only business. The eventual gain to consumers from more trade between the two countries would be huge, which should be the focus of policymakers on both sides of the border.

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Fragile and conflict situation: Social and livelihood implications

By Fayyaz Yasin

Stephen Commis from USA said violent conflicts disrupt livelihood and markets, and this makes the people vulnerable to hunger and malnourishment. Conflict situations, he added, are usually well-responded by the governments and the donor agencies, who moved by the plight of people, intervene to facilitate them in terms of getting food and shelter and restoring the public service delivery including health...
and education. However, Stephen said that they do not realize the importance of restoring the markets to which permanent livelihoods of conflict-affected families is associated. Without restoring the markets, the affected communities cannot be made to regain their financial and social stability.

He was of the view that immediate solutions cannot be sought for conflicts, so the governments and donors need to focus more on problem solving and give more time and investment for the establishment of infrastructure, revival of supply chain and market mechanism. He further said that one-size-fits-all approach is incorrect, and instead of coming up with and forcing ready-made conflict resolution models, the donors must also consider and take stock of the local contexts. Citing Pakistan’s example, he said that conflicts have resulted in limiting people’s access to markets, and have worsened social and contractual relations between landlords and the tenants. To him, livelihoods of the people, affected in conflicts can be restored through restoring markets.

Dr Bishnu, the second speaker of the session, cited Nepal’s example and said that the country is in political transition, which has dismantled its institutions while dealing with the livelihood issues. He said that enhancing investment in the livelihood sector should be priority of the governments so that chronic evils of food insecurity and poverty can be controlled. He maintained that capitalizing on a large bulk of youth in Nepal can be helpful in this regard. To him, this was the right time the potential of youth in Nepal, and rest of the South Asian countries, be realized. He was of the view that if remained untrained and unskilled, instead of an asset, this youth bulge can prove to be the biggest liability of the country.

Suggesting some solutions to deal with the issue, he said that there should be better relations between the people and the state and the local development process should be brought forward after consensus so that there could be local ownership of development – something essential for securing livelihoods. He stood for the point that development loses its meanings unless local people are taken on board through a participatory decision-making process, which completely regards local culture and traditions.

Dr Babar Shabbaz from university of agriculture, Faisalabad, presenting his research work in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said that high food prices, low crop productivity and malfunctioning of social safety nets are the common concern for deteriorated livelihood conditions in the province. Sighting his research work, he said that amid the climate change, food consumption patterns of the people living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are changing. There was a time when maize used to be the staple food of the local dwellers, however, now it was being replaced by other less nutritious food items. Amid low productivity of the agricultural sector of the area, people are now moving away from agriculture and are focusing more on other professions, including services.

Paul Harvey of UK told about the livelihood consortium his office is running across seven countries. He said that the project on secure livelihoods is in its inception phase, and the developments on it will be shared after the ongoing research work is completed. He said that secure livelihood and food security is fast becoming the prime agenda of development agencies across the world. And his office, with the help of the consortium partners, including SDPI in Pakistan, has been carrying out research to have the baseline data on livelihood and food security, he added.

Qasim Shah from SDPI said that these are the markets through which the livelihood issues can be addressed, and instead of the one-off initiatives, the
governments and the donors should focus on the markets on regular basis. To him, following a disaster, it was okay for the government and donor agencies to rush to the calamity-hit areas with food and shelter or at a later stage to revive the service delivery. However, in order to make people stand on their own out of those misery, it was imperative to help them re-establish their markets – which are primary targets of such calamities and mostly remain vulnerable in Pakistan.

Geoff Woods of Bath University, UK, said that there is a dire need to attach security perspective to the development work. He said that while empathizing with those who suffer insecurity of food and livelihoods, they should be empowered to have greater hold of the environment around them. To him, a more inclusive definition of poverty is the state of people where they have least control over the environment around them. Being in this state renders them vulnerable to even minor changes around them. The panacea to such state of theirs was to have them on board in the development process through a participatory and more inclusive development process.

During the questions & answer session, one of the participants asked as to why there has been a late realization with regard to the role of markets in solving conflicts and pacing up the rehabilitation process of those struck by calamities. In reply, it was told that the research work on the subject took off rather late. However, now many of the donors have realized the importance of this concept, and they are not only investing on research in the relevant themes, but are also trying to build capacity of the people and communities.

Conflict: Anatomy, Impact, Challenges and resolution

By Duaa Sayed

The session was chaired by Dr Yunus Samad from UK

The discussion focused on how the growing dependence on Jirgas and panchayats, a negligible conviction rate for criminals and an overall institutional set up that endorses violence and conflict, are now the staples of Pakistani society.

Khadim Hussain from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Shamimur Rahman Malick from Lahore, in their presentations, discussed the institutional and governance failures leading to large-scale conflict, and a micro level analysis of conflict along with various mechanisms available in the legislation to resolve these disputes respectively. Their presentations were capped with comments by Damon Bristow, Head of Governance Group, DFID in Islamabad, and Sunil Dasgupta, and the chair.

Khadim Hussain, citing our legal framework as an Anglo Saxon Hangover, pointed out as to how the Anglo Saxon Law criminalizes society with laws against congregation, and claimed that indigenous law is focused on building society. He further said the second area of concern, which stems from a reliance on the colonial legal framework, is the transformation of police from an agent of security to a wielder of power and control.

There is a strategic paradigm shift, which sees territorial security become more important than human security with building armies becoming more important that building schools and hospitals.

While referencing governance and its importance, he said, the governance in Pakistan has a centrist mindset adopting an elitist top-down approach. This leads to an institutional breakdown, which has impeded service delivery. He attributed the crisis to this approach, which leads to anti pluralist implementation strategies.

As a complement to the macro level institutional basis of violence mapped out by Mr Khadim, Shamimur Rahman Malick gave a background of the legal framework of conflict resolution and mediation. Focusing on community and district level conflicts, Mr Malick outlined various dispute resolution mechanisms, both formal and informal. He also highlighted judicial blockages that lead to the ascendance of informal dispute resolution mechanisms.

He said there are different types of disputes that vary depending on their severity and the relationships of the parties involved. The most basic disputes are at the household level. These are generally resolved by family and people who prefer to avoid the court system for such disputes. Discussing the various legal provisions for dispute resolution mechanisms depending on the gravity of the conflict, he emphasized the role and importance of third party mediators in resolving disputes through the formal mechanism. Mr Malick pointed out that mediators could only play a role in compoundable cases. These are cases where the victim or accuser is a non-state actor. In these cases, the accuser can forgive the accused, leading the case to be compounded.

In addressing the challenges to the institutional mechanism, he highlighted the growing power of reli-
gious groups, which is leading to a wave of religious intolerance. He said that the conviction rate for robbery cases is almost zero leading to the ascendance of informal dispute resolution mechanisms. Over one hundred cases are submitted to judges in a single day.

For these issues, Mr Malick recommended training of “potoharis” due to the absence of a protection mechanism for witnesses. The power of local community leaders including “potoharis” and “thanedars” is unchecked leading to a significant abuse of position. To curb this issue Mr Malick recommended checks and balances on their power, and develop community based evaluations to make these officials accountable to the local people.

He also pointed out the backlog of cases in the court system that lead to slow down the judicial system and an ascendance of the informal dispute resolution mechanisms. The cause for this slowdown is a shortage of judges in comparison to the number of cases they receive. Over one hundred cases are submitted before judges in a single day, and for this purpose he recommends more sitting judges to be added to the court system.

In his list of recommendations Mr Malick also added the need for training of mediators and arbitrators so that they know that they can be the instruments of peace. He also recommend training of presiding officers as how to be good mediators. Lawyers are only given training on legal procedural issues, he said and recommended that they also receive training on mediation and dispute settlement.

He called for the inclusion of fundamental rights in school curriculum so that people might know what their basic rights are, in addition to changes in the school curriculums to remove lessons that promote disharmony in the society.

Dr Sunil Dasgupta added to the discussion by raising a key difference between conflict and violence. “Conflict is the organic consequence of a plural society and can be harnessed for productive outcomes. Violence, however, is an unnatural phenomenon that needs to be studied.” He said conflict does not always lead to violence. With that distinction, a considerable change in the theme of the remaining discussion was witnessed with the focus now on determining what factors convert conflict into violence. The speaker discussed the relationship between violence and wealth. It was suggested that the relationship could be plotted as an inverted U curve with violence initially growing with wealth. It is to be noted that acts of violence require immense resources if conducted on a large scale. As the level of wealth rises, the incidences of violence are expected to go down.

Dr Yunus Samad continued the discussion by putting a question that at what level is the violence endemic? The question does not necessarily address only bombs and large-scale violence that hit the newspaper headlines but refers to more day to day acts of aggression. As a proposed answer to this question, Dr Samad highlighted the role of the informal economy. More importantly, he said, for every activity that is illegal, the state is in some way complicit and we can’t ignore the perception that violence is a part of the political process.

Models of conflict resolution do exist in Pakistan. Upstream conflict preservations prevent conflict before it happens. Conflict is so costly, brings back issues of social contract.

Mr Damon Bristow tied the various themes in a concise way and pointed out the existing conflict management mechanism in Pakistan, which had successfully drawn the Swat conflict to a close. He outlined the potential in the 18th Constitutional Amendment for appeasing some of the conflict in the country, pointing specifically to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where the total budget rose from Rs18 billion to 90 billion after the 18th amendment. ■
Women political participation, opportunities and challenges

By Mohammad Sohaib and Hina Kanwal

The session was chaired by Anis Haroon, the Chairperson of National Commission on the Status of Women, and moderated by Malick Shahbaz. Speakers included Shabbir Ahmed, the Deputy Country Director of International Foundation for Election System (IFES), Marvi Sirmed from Strengthening Democracy through Parliamentary Development (UNDP). Comments were delivered by Rashid Titumir, the Chairman of Unnayan Onneshan, Dhaka, Bangladesh and Feryal Gauhar, the Political Economist and social activist.

Shabbir Ahmed, referring to the representation of women in parliament, said that Pakistan stands 59th in the world, which is better than the West and the US. He said Burkina Faso, which is a poor country of West Africa, has a large number of women workers in all sectors. He argued that women problems are different as a candidate and as participant. In Pakistan, there are only 76 women in National Assembly. Only 16 out of those have been elected while other 60 are on reserved seats. These 76 women in parliament represent the whole population of women.

Discussing the role of woman as voter, he said the main issue is that most of the women have not national identity cards and their vote is not registered. Vote registration is not mandatory in Pakistan whereas in Australia voting is compulsory. He pointed out that fear of violence keeps the women away from polling stations. The women are prevented from voting, and men tell them to whom they have to vote. We need to show trust in women, he said and suggested that political parties should consider women election on general seats.

Marvi Sirmed briefed the audience regarding the history of women in parliament. She elaborated her work on Women’s Parliamentary Caucus (WPC). The legislation on different issues like anti-women practices, sexual harassment, child protection, code of civil procedures, domestic violence, amendment to Family Courts Act, in-house working women protection, fiscal responsibility, quality check on baby food, rights of juvenile offenders, charter of child rights, senior citizens’ rights, corporal punishment, organ transplant etc by women caucus. But controversial issues could not be touched. She further said that women are very active in parliament particularly in standing committees. She presented the figure that out of total 35 Federal ministers only four are women, a woman out of 19 ministers of state, only one is woman. There is no woman as advisor to prime minister and only one is the private assistant. The several bills are brought by women in house. She also emphasized that caucus should need to strategize. Moreover, she suggested the women to engage with civil society, think tanks and women’s study departments in several universities.

Rashid Titumir, the Chairman of Unnayan Onneshan, Dhaka, said that Bangladesh has no problem of women’s participation in politics but we have problems in understanding the political system. He stated that correlation between cause and effect is very important and suggested to focus on the grass roots or local level issues. One assumes that election system provides the complete representation of the society, which is a problem, he said, and raised few questions that what would be the political participation in post-colonial state and how do we frame that? How do we position ourselves when any act of women is political? How do we really move forward?

Feryal Gauhar said that the 65 years of Pakistan’s political history has been trampled upon by military interventions. In last military intervention, a few women
By Rabia Manzoor

The session was chaired by Moazzam Jatoi, the Minister of State for Food Security, Pakistan. Speakers included Dr Muhammad Ashfaq from Institute of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, and Nirmal Kumar, Kathmandu University/NCCR North South Balkumari, Guwarko Chowk, Lalitpur, Nepal.

Special comments were delivered by Abdul Basit Khan, the Additional Secretary for Ministry of Food Security, Rashed Titumir, the Chairman of Unnayan Onneshan, Bangladesh, and Dr Abid Suleri, the Executive Director of SDPI, Islamabad.

Shakeel Ramay, while opening the debate, said that the food security was a major issue confronting South Asia. Dr Abid Suleri appreciated the measures taken by the ministry regarding food security situation in the country.

Nirmal Kumar, referring to the far western regions of Nepal particularly Kalilai, Achham and Bajura, said there are 22% marginal cultivators, only 8% of total households are food self-sufficient and 05% people face hidden hunger at least for a month in a year. Accessibility of subsidized food through Nepal Food Corporation, distributed through the World Food Program (WFP) aid and market, contribute to fulfil the demands of local people for six months on an average in a year. He said seasonal migration from the western villages of Nepal to India is a major supporting source of marginal groups to buy food. However, recent trends of increasing population growth and impact of climate change in the region may increase further fragmentation of land and the number of landless and marginal cultivator could reach up to 30% by 2030 and 40% by 2050. Number of self-sufficient household is expected to be reduced simultaneously and people threatened with hunger will rise to 10% in 2030 and 15% by 2050. However, accessibility to food through market may take over the role of food distribution as further investment in road construction is estimated within the next 10 years. The current scenario of employment opportunities shows that there will be no more additional jobs that will sustain the purchasing power of local people,

Food Security in South Asia: The way forward

By Rabia Manzoor
which may give rise to the duration of seasonal migration especially to gulf countries leaving their households in the region vulnerable. The current seemingly unstable land rights and social issues in the region may also catalyze hunger issues because of food insecurity. He ended his analysis by providing recommendations regarding land reforms, climate change adaptive agriculture system, market ration system, and alternative livelihoods opportunities to the marginal groups to increase their food purchasing power to counter the predicted situation in the far-western region of Nepal.

Referring to the works of Mr Kumar, Zahid Asghar elaborated that Pakistan also suffered from the similar dilemma of food insecurity. He provided assessments of the calorie-income and macro-nutrient income elasticity variables and their respective impact on the populace of Pakistan. He said that Pakistan, being a food insecure state, is faced with many challenges, including poverty that may or may not have a direct link with the inadequate nutrition of its poor population. Furthermore, calorie intake is an important factor in determining both human health and productivity. Income is considered an important factor in calorie consumption of people, but there is no consensus on the issue. To measure this relationship, the impact of income on calorie intake is estimated using Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement (PSLM) 2007-08 survey data. Besides, calorie-income relationship, macronutrient (protein and fat) income relationship, which plays important role in food security, is also assessed. Income-expenditure elasticity for calorie demand range from 0.38 to 0.42, for protein 0.29 to 0.32 and, for fats 0.62 to 0.64 respectively. Robust regression is being used for possible protection against outliers. The results show that income has a positive and significant relationship with calorie intake. The role of income remains significant when socio-economic variables such as household head’s education, household headed by female, and access to safe drinking are included that also directly affect food consumption. In the end, they advocated that policies should be focused on increasing income for the poor.

Regarding the precarious food security situation, Muhammad Ashfaq highlighted the conditions at the rural households of Faisalabad district in Pakistan. He said that the focus of their study was to analyze how many small/marginal farmers, workers and female-headed households were food insecure. The study was conducted in Faisalabad district during March 2012. A total of 80 rural households were selected randomly from the study area and interviewed directly. The results show that 81.50% female-headed households were food insecure followed by workers (75%) and small/marginal farmers (69%) respectively. About 87% workers were adversely affected by the recent inflation trend related to food commodities as compared to the female-headed household (74%) and small farmers (72%). Overall, about 77% respondents were affected by the drastic rise in prices of food commodities in recent years. Other important socio-economic variables of households were also analysed, such as age, education, debt burden, land holding, occupation of respondents and type of house. Their results revealed that the level of education of household head and medical expenditures on family members were significantly affecting the food security. The number of family members, debt burden and age of household heads were negatively affecting the food security situation of households. The male-headed households were more food secure as compared to female-headed households. The recommendations given included measures to enhance literacy rate in rural areas, address population control, introduce safety-net programmes for female-headed household, break the vicious cycle, where inadequate food leads to poor health condition, which leads to low labour productivity and high incidence of illness, government needs to provide adequate medical facilities to the rural poor.

Abdul Basit Khan, paying tributes to SDPI for organizing the event, said that the issue of food insecurity was a multi-dimension alone, therefore, a multi-dimensional strategy was required to combat the issue. He further said that the ministry of food and security had initiated the Zero Hunger Program in March 2012 on the lines of a project successfully implemented in Brazil. He said that accessibility of food to the population is a major problem and for this purpose the ministry has undertaken various programs with the help of World Food program (WFP). He also men-
tioned the government’s initiatives such as Benazir Income Support Program and Bait ul Maal which provide financial aid to poverty stricken population. He informed the audience that National Food Security Policy as well as National Food Security Council will be introduced soon to cater to the needs of insecure people.

At the end, Moazzam Jatoi said a government survey indicated that 17.17% of the total population was below the poverty line. He said the ministry mainly focused on the accessibility of food to the poor. He added that war on terror as well as the global climatic changes had taken its toll on the accessibility of food in the country. Though, the government is undergoing financial constraints, Zero Hunger Program has been introduced to help the food insecure, he said, adding that 58% of the country’s population was suffering from malnutrition. He maintained that the government is working hard to counter this issue while initiating micro and macro level efforts in combating food insecurity in the country.

Key Recommendations

1. Introduce the new agriculture technologies and easily access of these technologies to small and large farmers.
2. Promote climate change agriculture adaptation systems.
3. Work for food ration system.
4. Focus on inter-regional food distribution.
5. Initiate land reforms programs.
6. Announce alternative livelihood opportunities to the marginal groups.
7. Promote safety net programs for the female headed households.
8. Provision of medical facilities in rural areas.
9. Increase literacy rate.
10. To introduce soft loan scheme.
11. To control population as it puts pressure on demand for food.

Religious freedoms: South Asian perspectives

The session was chaired by Dr Khalid Masud, the Director-General of Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University and ad hoc Judge Shariat of Appellate Bench, Supreme Court of Pakistan. Speakers included Dr Imdad Hussain from Center for Public Policy and Governance Lahore, Pakistan, Dr Nathalene Reynolds from SDPI, Pakistan, Dr Younas Samad from University of Bradford, UK, Amjad Saleem from Cordoba Foundation, London, Dr Khatau Mal from Thardeep Rural Development Programme, Mithi, Pakistan along with a message from Dr Heiner Biefeldt, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief, and a film by Dr Shobha Das from Minority Rights Group International, UK.

Special comments were delivered by Ahmed Salim, Senior Advisor on Education and Religious Diversity, SDPI.

Dr Khalid Masud said that national identity cannot be defined without religion, as Pakistan was created in the name of religion. “Muslims were in minority in the sub-continent at the time of partition, so being a minority they demanded a separate homeland. In this demand, other minorities in the sub-continent also joined hands with Muslims because they thought of having

By Afsheen Naz
been protected in a better way, he said, adding: “We incorporated the religion factor in our constitution where concept of state of ‘Pakistan as an Islamic state’ itself was problematic.” He suggested that the differences, either religious or ethnic, should be respected and must not be politicized.

Dr Imdad Hussain, in his presentation on “Hope in the time of despair: Possibilities of interfaith peace in Pakistan”, said that there are three types of challenges to cope with religious harmony which are cultural, political and social. According to him, internet/social media is contributing towards the spread of message of peace and harmony. He stressed the need to revisit identity politics and particularly religious-based minority identity.

Dr Nathalene Raynolds, in her paper on “On the civic rights of Muslims of the Indian state of Gujarat: Events since 2002” said that the events that shook the state of Gujarat at the beginning of 2002 forced observers, who had seen the rise of Hindu nationalists in Indian political life as having occurred relatively harmoniously to reconsider.

Dr Yunus Samad, in his presentation on “Religious freedoms in Pakistan: Alternative future”, said that “the failure to recognize difference causes harm, and recognition of difference is necessary to create a just society”. “Religious minorities in Pakistan suffer from inter-religious and intra-religious discrimination, disadvantage and violence” he said. Dr Samad said that debates on the management of difference in multicultural and multiethnic society raise issues of justice at the level of principle and social cohesion at pragmatic level. Injustices to religious minorities in Pakistan are also indicative of injustices to other forms of minorities and women and violence is a common corollary, he added. “Be more radical in repealing discriminatory legislation, adopt a stance of equality to all religions and adopt legislation that proscribes discrimination on the grounds of religion and foster inter-community dialogue in the pursuit of religious harmony,” he recommended.

Amjad Saleem, speaking on “Religious freedoms: Sri Lankan perspectives”, said that after a wave of a prolonged conflict in Sri Lanka, the insecurity of identity has been felt at all levels, but the Sinhala Buddhism is posing the greatest threat to religious freedoms in Sri Lanka. “Sri Lankan Buddhism has historically been very strongly linked with Buddhism in Myanmar with both countries sharing the same ideologies, he added. He further said that “it is clear that monks in Myanmar are heavily influenced by the clergy of Sri Lanka.” Thus, any change of ideological thinking amongst the former will relate to thinking amongst the latter”. While concluding his presentation, he suggested that “there is a need to conduct an honest dialogue between the government, regional bodies and organizations to address this issue”.

Dr Khatau Mal, in his presentation on “Contribution and Struggles of Hindu Community in Sindh, Pakistan”, said that only those Hindus migrate from Pakistan who are from upper class or belong to trader families but the low caste Hindus never migrated from Pakistan as they feel themselves secure here. “Many of the Hindus have been recruited as doctors to Pakistan Army, which is a very good step”, he added.

Dr Shobha Das, delivering the message of Dr Heiner Bielefeldt on “Religious freedoms globally and in Pakistan - reflections from the UN” said that freedom of expression is different from religious freedom. While elaborating the film, she said that “Pakistan is not the only country where blasphemy laws prevailed but there are many other countries as well”. She said civil society is very active in Pakistan in highlighting the issues related to minorities.

Ahmed Salim said that Pakistan has ratified almost 10 UN human rights treaties and most of the clauses of the Constitution of Pakistan are based on these declarations. He said that according to the Constitution, non-Muslims are not bound to take education contrary to their religion, but unfortunately the same is not being practiced”. “At the time of creation of Pakistan, there was a question about ‘Pakistan for whom’ and thus this question was answered in the objective resolution”, he said, adding: “Pakistan was created on the basis of separate electorate system, but right after the creation of Pakistan, non-Muslims were treated differently.”

Reducing environmental risks in South Asia: The way forward for a sustainable ship recycling industry in South Asia

By Mehwish Javed

The session was chaired by Ghulam Mohayuddin Mari, the member of Infrastructure of Planning Commission of Pakistan. Speakers included Patrizia Heidegger, the Executive Director of NGO Ship breaking Platform, Brussels, Muhammad Majid Bashir, the Attorney at Law, and Kanwar Muhammad Javed Iqbal
Ms Delphine Reuter from NGO Ship breaking Platform, Brussels, Dr M. A. Khwaja from SDPI, and Ahmed Aslam, Expert Member from Basel Convention Secretariat /World Bank & Consultant for Report on Environmental Social Issues of Ship breaking, were the discussants.

In Pakistan, about 50% steel is produced from ship industry, which is one of the favourable signs for bringing good effects on economy. Started in 1973, Ship breaking industry created a tremendous boom in employment sector in the country. However, there is a growing concern among environmentalists about hazards while ship recycling process is carried out. Hazardous impact of ship breaking would deem as big dearth to worker’s performance. There must be some steps taken for the management of waste in this regard.

Ghulam Mohayuddin Mari while briefing the participants on ship recycling situation in the world said that in Pakistan, it is comparatively better as compared to other countries, but there is a lack of proper management and we need to be more focused.

Patrizia Heidegger throwing light on “Safe and Environmentally Sound Ship Recycling: “The Implementation of International Norms in South Asia” suggested that there should be decent working conditions and environmental justice for recycling activities. She said that end-of life vessels are major source of hazardous waste. Highlighting some figures of hazardous waste generated from ship breaking industry in Pakistan e.g 5200 tons of asbestos, 1000 tons of PCB’s, and 1400 tons of ozone depleting substances, she said Pakistan ranked 3rd in ship breaking where most of the work is done on sandy beaches while in China, it is done on docks and quayside and landing facility is used in Turkey. There are consequent results of unsafe ship breaking activities on workers’ health like accidents caused by explosions, emergence of itching and other skin diseases while exposure to asbestos and also it is impossible to use huge cranes for equipments, together with difficult management of hazardous waste. It has been notified that in Bangladesh profit margin of ship breaking industry is much higher while in Pakistan labor cost is high. Urging the Pakistani industry to develop safe environment to have jobs and revenues, she said there should be some measures taken for the health of workers.

Majid Bashir while pointing out some discrepancies and ineffectiveness of ship breaking activities in terms of unsafe environment, said that we have infrastructure and can take care of issues like health, safety, working hours for labors. He referred to various laws including Article 4(c) which states: “No person shall be compelled to do that which the law does not required him to do”, The Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997 (PEPA), The Pakistan Penal Code ,1860 (PPC), The Code of Criminal Procedure ,1898 (Cr.PC), The Constitution of Pakistan and The Factories Act, 1934 (FA). He also highlighted environmental protection order-sec16 e.g if laws are being violated, no need to listen to complaint. There are also penalties under sec-17 e.g one million rupee fine to polluter. He said that we have proper rules and regulations and we can claim for each unfair act if it is against environment or health.

Kanwar Javed Iqbal while giving an overview of shipbreaking and recycling industry, yard observations and findings, global dynamics, strategic ways and how to make some improvements, said that global centre of ship recycling industry is located in South Asia, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and about 70-80% of international market for ship breaking of ocean-going vessels has comprised these countries and 5% of vessels are scrapped out of these countries.

He said thousands of workers are dependent on this industry and most of them, who migrated from highly poor and marginalized areas, are working in pathetic conditions. He said a huge amount of hazardous material is being accumulated in the yard day by day putting the life of workers at stake, so there should be a proper mechanism of hazardous waste treatment. He further informed the session that factory reported about 95% standards, which have been followed, whereas PEPA 2% and about 96% labor laws are followed by owners. “We expect positive response from the government regarding betterment of this particular industry. There is a need for adoption of green ship breaking standards and proper enforcement mechanism. We need awareness training and capacity building of workers regarding their health and mechanized
Building resilient nations and safer communities: Disaster Management in South Asia

By Muhammad Sohaib

The session was chaired by Arif Jabbar, the Country Director of Oxfam, and speakers included: Sanaullah Rustamani, Hyderabad; Ms Atiya Kazmi from Fatima Jinnah Woman University, Rawalpindi; A. Z. M. Saleh, the Research and Outreach Officer, Unnayan Onneshan, Bangladesh. Special comments were delivered by Irina Mosel, the Technical Expert at SDPI, while Shafqat Muneer from Oxfam moderated the session.

The two researchers from Bangladesh and Pakistan quoted strong case studies showing as to how the vulnerable communities to floods and climate change have adapted to be resilient to disasters.

Atiya Ali Kazmi presented a case study of a resilient community from Basti Lashkarpur, a village in Muzaffargarh district of Southern Punjab. The researcher, during a field visit to this village, got the firsthand account of how the self-reliant communities can proactively reduce their vulnerabilities to natural disasters. Basti Lashkarpur houses a small farming community and is sandwiched between the two offshoots of Chenab river and is only accessible by boats.

The efforts for disaster risk reduction (DRR) mainstreaming efforts at community level include proper record keeping such as inventories and lists of people living in the village, hazards mapping, village vulnerability profile, economic ranking and issues along with their solutions. Their preparedness comprises establishment of committee for early warning and monitoring of flood situation, livestock management, agriculture risk analysis, construction of safer places at highly raised platforms.

In Basti Lashkarpur, the village disaster management plan involved both men and women in DRR activities and they were trained for their roles on technical grounds making best use of their capacities. As a result of these activities, an improved human and social capital was developed and most among them assumed their responsibility as local community leaders. The capacity building and training sessions made them confident and imparted them skills to manage any disaster situation as first responders.

The case study narrates the vibrant humanitarian advocacy efforts the villagers undertook to amplify their voices at district level line departments and to make the duty bearers accountable. The district forum of community leaders was formed and the community leaders represented the community at appropriate level with their key advocacy messages. The community also approached their elected representatives to push them for demands. The district forums emerged through a process from local level community based organizations (CBOs) to union council level clusters of CBOs. Women and marginalized people represented at all levels.

A. Z.M Saleh, referring to a case study in Bangladesh, narrated as to how the farming communities have adapted to the climate change that has im-
pacted agriculture a lot. He presented different models of innovative agriculture practices resilient to natural disasters. He said climate conditions of South Asian countries are slightly different from each other and there is a need to remodel the cropping patterns. He said rainfall and temperature are two climatic variables that shape the structure of socio-ecological system and any alternation of rainfall and temperature cycle as a result of climate change eventually hampers agriculture production.

He suggested that we need to focus the objectives, which are giving priority to adaption in agriculture that will ensure food security, seeds protection and resilient community.

Sanaullah Rustamani analyzed the damages incurred during the last three consecutive floods that hit Sindh province. Describing the history of disasters and floods in Sindh since 1960, he said in 2011 floods, more than 9 million people were affected in 676 union councils while in 2012 floods more than three million people were affected and two hundred thousand houses destroyed. He called upon disaster management authorities to engage local community in disaster management and make them resilient. He suggested building small dams in Baluchistan to store flood water before it enters Indus river. He emphasized upon the use of new technology to ensure proper drainage of floodwater so that its level recede quickly saving hundreds of thousands at risk. Linking Hamal Lake and Mancher Lake and increasing the capacity of Main Narra Valley Drain in Sindh are important in timely drainage of water.

Irina Mosel suggested that there is a need to develop a linkage between government and community in response to disasters. At the institutional level, the government should provide technical assistance to community so as to save people from disasters. She also recommended focusing on rehabilitation of affected areas and called for rebuilding disaster prone houses empowering communities to be resilient in future. Improved and inclusive disaster management, infrastructure development and planning at national level and response at local level can ensure an integrated response to emergencies in the country. It would be good if the authorities include minorities, women and other marginalized groups in disaster management efforts.

Arif Jabbar said mainstreaming DRR is the key area in disaster management. Since women are more vulnerable to disasters and conflict, they need to be made resilient. “We can be benefitted by floods through learning, planning and management,” he said, and stressed the need to change the mindset of bureaucracy from top to bottom and community from bottom to top. Disaster risk reduction activities at national and regional levels and sharing of best practices can ensure building resilience. He said that we need to make a framework which should be shared at Saarc level.

The presenters and the discussants were of the view that resilience is of paramount in disaster management system to save more lives in the region. South Asia is prone to natural disasters that lead to social disasters too.

The focus of the session has been on mainstreaming DRR into development, as an outcome of a higher level political will in all the South Asian countries. This very political will can be translated into serious consideration of the risks emanating from natural hazards in the development frameworks. The mainstreaming of DRR in legislation, institutional structures, sectoral policies, budgets, project designs and impact assessment processes can ensure building of resilient nations and safer communities in South Asia. This political will needs to be expressed both at country and regional levels.

The mainstreaming of DRR in economic, political and administrative governance can bring about a
change in perception of duty bearers and vulnerable communities in terms of preparedness and can ensure implementation on disaster risk reduction plans and policies. DRR requires enforcement of building codes and safety standards, environmental risks and vulnerabilities, effective early warning system, awareness and preparedness models and practices prevalent among vulnerable communities.

### Reducing Environmental Risks in South Asia: Impacts of Climate Change on Mangroves Ecosystem in South Asia

By Kashif Malik & Sehrish Jahangir

The session was chaired by Mahmood Akhtar Cheema, the Manager of IUCN, Islamabad and speakers included Moshiur Rahman from Institute of Water Management, Bangladesh, Dr Zia Hashmi, the Senior Scientific Officer at GCISC, and Kashif Salik & Sehrish Jahangir from SDPI. Rab Nawaz, the Regional Director, WWF, Karachi, was the discussant at the session.

In the 1930s, Mahmood Cheema said, mangroves cover in geographical boundaries of Pakistan was estimated at 600,000 hectares whereas the estimates of 2005 show huge reduction in mangroves cover to 86,000 hectares. The recent studies show a slight increase in mangroves covers where few organizations have taken considerable initiatives of planting mangroves through participatory approach, he added.

Referring to the Mangroves For Future (MFF) project, he said that the important work done by MFF is the assessment of post-tsunami situation in 2004, which revealed that among the coastal populations the damages were quite less in the areas that were having mangrove cover around them. Since then, the realization began and the then US president Bill Clinton initiated the programme for developing partnership with local governments and people in order to work together to save the ecosystem, he said, adding that the beauty of this programme is that it works on the principles of participatory approach.

Moshiur Rehman while discussing the relationship between Sundarban trees and salinity said that sea level rise is proportional to increase in salinity and these trends will continue in future peaking the levels of salinity and degrading the habitat of such trees. Giving an account of study area, Mr Rehman said that Sundarbans, the UNESCO’s world heritage site, is the largest single block of tidal halophytic mangrove forest in the world; spreading across parts of Bangladesh and India. Mr Rehman, while sharing the study results, focused two prominent river systems in Sundarbans area that are Pussur-Sibsa and Baleswar and said that it is evident from the model results that from the outfall of Baleswar river to 80km inland the Sea Level Rise (SLR) is almost same as the global value for minimum water level and it gradually reduces to 15cm for 50cm global SLR and 56cm for 100cm global SLR at 135km from the river mouth.

He added that the ecosystem of Sundarbans is highly dependent on salinity and any change in the salinity level due to sea level rise in Sundarbans may change the pattern of mangroves species there.

Dr Zia Hashmi while discussing the hydrological regime in the mangrove forest region, said that the average flow below Kotri has declined to 0.89 MAF however the essential requirement of flows is at least 10MAF. The unavailability of fresh water flows has declined the mangroves form 604,870 hectares in 1932 to 86,000 hectares in 2005, he said, adding that analysis of rainfall data shows a negative trend over the period.
1961-2010, however, analysis of flow data of Indus river downstream of Kotri barrage shows availability of water from Indus river for a very short duration during the year; stressing the fresh water supplies of mangroves in the study area. Decrease in rainfall or river flow will aggravate adverse ecological impact over mangroves ecosystem; rendering it more vulnerable to expectedly more frequent and more intense extreme hydrological events.

Sehrish Jahangir presented a paper on socio-economic and environmental vulnerability assessment of Indus Delta: A case study of Keti Bander. She said that the communities dependent on mangroves ecosystem of Indus Delta in South Asia are becoming vulnerable owing to the sensitive linkage of this ecosystem with decreasing fresh water availability and changing climatic parameters. She shared with the participants the indices of vulnerability for the study area calculated through composite vulnerability Index (CVI) method. The value for composite vulnerability index stood at 0.55 whereas for exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity the figures came out as 0.52, 0.69 and 0.45 respectively. She said that Keti Bunder is highly sensitive and hence vulnerable both socio-economically and environmentally. She also called for the future projections of current socio-economic vulnerability, as they will be essential for the development of long-term future development plans of the area.

Kashif Salik spoke about the ecological assessment of Indus Delta in the context of environmental flows requirement. Dilating upon the ranks for different indicators of ecological sensitivity and importance of Indus Delta, he said that sensitivity is very high for unique aquatic biota, diversity of aquatic habitats, presence of protected areas, and fresh water flow reduction. Explaining further the indicators of present river position, he pointed out delta under natural vegetation and degree of flow regulation as highly sensitive indicators while the ranks for other indicators remained between low to medium range. Discussing the ecological status of Indus delta and related environmental flows requirement, he said that “the associated habitat and dynamics of biota have been disturbed in Indus delta due to decrease in fresh water flows in Indus river”.

Mr Salik explained five types of Environmental Management Classes (EMC), and after thorough review placed Indus delta in third EMC that is ‘C’, which says that the habitats and dynamics of biota have been disturbed, but basic ecosystem functions are still intact in the delta.

Rab Nawaz said that mangroves are unique ecosystem that provide numerous ecosystem services and at the same time remain on the frontline of climate vulnerability and water scarcity issues. Mangroves are basically being eroded because of low downstream water flow and construction of barrages on Indus river that has played a contributing factor to reduce the amount of water and sediments reaching the delta, he added.

He further elaborated that our problems are caused by our own decisions, practices and bad policies and it’s not merely the climate change responsible for the prevailing situation.

He further said that the Water Accord 1991 is a proof that we are provided with the best policies and the best research but the only problem is the ill-devised implementation process. What we need to do is to sit together and act collectively. He said the recent increase in the mangroves cover due to the plantation effort done by the wildlife department, forest department and IUCN is a good example of participatory approach and collective efforts.

**Education and Social Exclusion: Perceptions, Practices and Possibilities**

*By Nathalene Reynolds*

The session was chaired by Sadiqa Salahuddin, the Executive Director of Indus Resource Centre, Karachi. Speakers included Sadia Jabeen, the lecturer of Sociology at Virtual University, Lahore, Dr Sajid Ali, the Assistant Professor at Institute for Educational Development, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Fawad Usman Khan, the Director of SUDHAAR, Lahore, and Arif Naveed, a Ph. D student at Cambridge University, England. Fayyaz Yasin, the Research Assistant at the SDPI, moderated the session.

The chair opened the session with the introduction of the speakers. She regretted that Shahnaz Mohiuddin, the Research Scholar at the Department of Geography, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, did not obtain a visa on time. Mrs Mohiuddin was intended to talk on Disparities in Human Resource Development in Kashmir Valley- A Regional Approach.

Sadia Jabeen, in her presentation, Evaluating gender inequality in South Asia: Reflections from textbooks of India, Nepal and Pakistan, said that South Asian society was segregated along gender lines with strongly defined gender roles and expectations. Analysing textbooks written in vernacular languages was, therefore, important as the latter were more prone to stereotypes.
Engaging in such a study, Ms Jabeen chose to focus on three countries: India, Nepal and Pakistan. She thus attempted to explore areas of gender negativity in existing textbooks at primary level, which reinforced gender segregation and ‘gender apartheid’ in these three societies that already had two other sources of inequality: family and religion. Ms Jabeen selected 25 textbooks at random from each of these three countries. Focusing on gender roles and their stereotypes, she defined five categories: neutral, positive, negative, as well as male and female-oriented. Except for Nepal (where the curriculum, contrary to India and Pakistan, was national), women were excluded from important areas of society. The Pakistan case study was an example of ‘gender apartheid’. 57% of writers of the (provincial) textbooks were female but they also depicted a male-dominated society. The role of women in Indian and more notably Indian textbooks, were more diverse; in Pakistan, it tended to be confined to households.

Concluding her talk, Ms Sadia Jabeen deplored the lack of gender sensitivity of Pakistani female writers, and emphasized the role model Nepal could play. She recommended the introduction, especially in Pakistan, of Gender Neutral Language (GNL). Moreover, South Asian textbooks should emphasize that men and women work collectively for building a better society. Women should be made more visible, and depicted as active, attributing them qualities generally given to men. Helping to open South Asian minds through textbooks would thus greatly contribute to building a progressive and democratic region within a short period of 20 to 25 years.

In his presentation, Envisaging Education and zones of exclusion: The Life chances for a Pakistan Child, Dr Sajid Ali, Assistant Professor at the Institute for Educational Development, Aga Khan University, Karachi, said that he had not yet completed his study. He defined the term exclusion and the zones of exclusion. He envisaged (zone 0 referred to children who were de facto excluded from school; zone 1 to 6 described the situation in developing countries where children could drop out of school at any time). Economic, social and geographical indicators and gender categories were important. The number of illiterate children attending school in rural areas could be as high as 50% of the total schoolboys and girls. In Sindh, children only got 15 minutes teaching a day even when teachers were present. Schools were poorly equipped; electricity was scarce; 28% of surveyed schools did not have any toilets, thus preventing parents from sending their daughters; 11% of the total number of school buildings were declared dangerous. One should add to this grim picture that the poor fate of girls whose situation in urban areas was hardly better.

According to Dr Ali, education was essential as it offered new generations a better future, allowing them to struggle against exploitation. The central government recently acknowledged that prospects were very bleak; it admitted that children should learn English at school as the latter was a key to climbing the social ladder. But, teachers themselves should be taught English! Ironically, the state never envisaged the translation, into provincial languages, of the National Education Policy.

Dr Sajid Ali concluded by stressing that he was short of any recommendations as failures to implement similar guidelines continued.

Fawad Usman Khan intended to give a talk on Gender and Religious Discrimination in Pakistan. Unfortunately the time given to each speaker (20 minutes) was short, and he gave priority to showing a documentary. ââ.â. Because of some technical problem, the sound was however barely audible.

Arif Naveed, in his presentation on Education and Social Exclusion, said the constraints of access represented one face of exclusion. He dwelt on the difficult process of socialisation and stratification. 86.6 million children were excluded from school; disparities between and within provinces, districts and regions were to be noted; no province was without pockets of exclusion: indeed there was a correlation between poverty and exclusion from school.

Noting that school reinforced patriarchy and religious divides, he then looked at the curricula of different provinces of Pakistan. He concluded that students were educated to hate, which was unfortunately ‘an understanding of Pakistani citizenship’. Even when non-Muslims were respected, the expectation was that they would eventually convert to Islam.
Underlining that textbooks were at odds with the religious and linguistic diversity of the country, he recommended that education should play not a reproductive role but a transformative role.

Fayyaz Yasin while lauding the presentations, called for the implementation of Article 25 of the Constitution. He censured the negative role of television dramas that usually depicted women as responsible for family ruin. The recently conducted Awaz survey showed that the cause of many troubles the country faced were elsewhere: in the last 10 years, no new public school had been opened; parents who could afford to do so sent their children to private schools. Unfortunately education was ‘not on the radar of our politicians’; dress code, instead of the content of education, was the focus.

Regional climate agenda in the context of Doha outcomes

By Hina Kanwal and Muhammad Arsalan

The session was chaired by Shafqat Kakakhel, the member of SDPI Board of Governors and ex-ambassador and moderated by Shakeel Ramay from SDPI. Speakers included Manjeet Dhakal from Clean Energy, Nepal, Farrukh Iqbal, Tirthankar Mandal from Climate Action Network South Asia, Harjeet Singh and Tariq Banuri, the former executive director of SDPI.

Shafqat Kakakhel, discussing the global threats and challenges of climate change, said eight countries of South Asia have no role to play in this regard. He said it is, therefore, extremely important to take action at domestic, regional and global levels. “The action at domestic level should be particularly in the context of adaptation to the impact of climate change, which is irreversible and unavoidable, the action at regional level should be in terms of cooperation on cross boundary issues and the action at global level must be taken to address the challenges of climate change.” He also
threw light on the climate change issue with reference to an event that concluded on 8th of December 2012 after 36 hours of the annual conference of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC).

The outcome of the conference, which contained a number of decisions, had a very convenient title called the gateway that is Doha Gateway. The decisions were painstakingly negotiated with the delegates from almost 195 countries in nail-biting sessions, which also at times witnessed trafficking of accusations and all kinds of blames. The outcome of Doha conference has provoked mixed reactions, he said. He quoted Qatari Minister Abdullah Al Haye as saying that “Doha has opened up a new gate way to a bigger ambition and greater action”. He also quoted a UK minister as saying that “This is not perfect but it is a genuine progress. It’s the beginning of the future discussions on a new trite calling for cuts by both developed and developing countries. The new agreement has to be signed in 2015 and implemented from 2020.

“The EU Environment Chief said: We have crossed the bridge from the old climate region to the new system, and now we are on our way to the 2015 global deal. She, however, warned that very difficult negotiations are lying ahead.”

While explaining the outcomes of Doha Conference, Tirthankar Mandal presented the graph of climate change prepared by the scientific community. He also talked about adaptation, which what he said is a highly questionable and unprecedented issue. Under the Kyoto Protocol commitment the basic issue was the second commitment of the Kyoto Protocol that should be 8 or 5 years. He said that there are two prime objectives, one is to keep the temperature rise below the 0°C and also to reduce the GTG (giga ton gas).

The developed countries are bound to provide finance and technological support to developing countries because developing countries face lack of ambitions and support by the developed countries. We have 8 years commitment till 2020 in Doha conference between the Kyoto Protocol parties. But it’s a very weak outcome in terms of developing countries’ actions under the Kyoto Protocol. Various efforts have been recognized by the Kyoto Protocol outcomes, which say that there will be the high level of ministerial meetings in 2014 about the ambition reduction targets by the developed countries. There are rules and mechanisms, which had been agreed. He also explored that South Asian countries groups have common position on many issues especially on mitigation. Later, he presented a chart to explain under which degree South Asian countries lie.

He further said that question of ambition for support to developed countries and low level of ambition is currently at this place.

Manjeet Dhakal discussed the finance and technology development and their transfer as per Doha outcome. He also elaborated the outstanding issues discussed in Doha Conference. These are institutional arrangement between Technology Executive Committee (TEC), Climate Technology Center & Network (CTCN) and Conference of Parties (CoP) and other institutions, reporting lines for the technology mechanism, linkages of technology mechanism bodies in the reporting structure and barriers on technology transfer such as IPR. He also discussed about the decision taken in Doha conference, including UNEP consortium to host CTCN, MoU adopted, Request to appoint Designated National Authority at country level, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Long Term Finance (LTF) work program, extended Institutional arrangement between GCF and CoP by 19th session, promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations.

Harjeet Singh briefed about the background of adaptation and its framework, which was recognized in 2001. The World Bank report of this year shows that agriculture is impacted because of this scenario. He also explained the key points about the progress that had been perceived in Doha conference. He said Na-
The session was chaired by Dr Parvez Hassan and Ms Shehnaz Wazir Ali (TBC), Adviser to Prime Minister, was the guest of honour. Those who spoke on the occasion included: Dr Ishrat Hussain, Dean and Director of the Institute of Business Administration, Karachi; Dr Tariq Banuri, Professor at University of Utah, Salt Lake City, USA; Dr Saba Gul Khattak, the Member of SDPI Board of Governors; and Dr Abid Sulieri, the SDPI Executive Director.

Dr Ishrat Hussain, evoking divergent views economists and environmentalists used to hold, said that such a debate is passé. While economists have come to acknowledge the need to face important challenges such as, soil erosion, scarcity and salinity of water or air pollution, environmentalists began to embrace market-based solutions to the need for environmental protection. Both parties nowadays tend to agree that the challenges of sustainable development extend beyond raising per capita income or protecting environment; other issues such as equity, inclusive growth, gender and social practices are of concern. Public interventions were thus necessary as macroeconomic stability and sound institutions were essential for sustained growth and its equitable distribution.

He dwelt on five major challenges: governance at international, national and local levels, climate change, the shift in economic power balance from advanced to emerging and developing economies, inequality in incomes and opportunities, and lastly jobs and employment.

Dr Hussain reminded the audience that the “expanding urbanised middle class in Asia” would exert
“new demands for greater voice and participation, greater accountability for results and better services”. Thus, there is a need for “effective institutions of governance at national and local level”. As to the “Green Climate Fund”, it “should be fully financed even before the deadline of 2020 so that developing nations start converting to cleaner energy sources and adapting to a shifting climate that may damage people’s health, agriculture and livelihoods in general”.

Dr Tariq Banuri dwelt extensively on many challenges (such as climate change, economic and financial crises, food security and inequality) facing us and the needs to respond to them. He deplored the marginalisation of social issues but also of sustainable development in the decision-making process; the Kyoto Protocol never bore any result. One could but be concerned at the absence of political leadership within countries as well as globally while there was an excessive reliance on the voluntary sector.

Dr Banuri said: “We could not escape the necessity of repairing the fraying consensus over equity and social justice, two concepts that have been almost abandoned of late. There was nonetheless a conflict between profit, people and nature, which should also be examined.” However one should no longer try to rely on governments, as they would not stand up to corporate business. It thus fell on the research community and the civil society to play a historic role in the quick launch of a global citizens’ movement that would answer the challenges, Dr Tariq Banuri enumerated at the beginning. He underlined the possibility of four strategies, among which the push and pull strategy (push: oppose the mainstream’s agendas and legitimacy; and pull to drag instead of piecemeal approaches.

Dr Saba Gul Khattak first reminded the audience of the context of the SDPI birth and the little place gender issues were given at that time. She listed the challenges that the institute faced at the time of its creation, such as the need to align SDPI agenda with NCS; institution building and knowledge capacity; gender, peace, conflict vis-à-vis development; funding and donors’ pressure.

Thanks to the donors’ impact, the consortium, Awaaz, (of which SDPI was a member) was recently constituted, encouraging NGOs to come together. This was an important move that promises to attain better results in this field. Dr Khattak underlined questions that needed more investigation; in particular the problem of power, exploitation and the need to understand the neo-liberalist order but also to look into the history of imperialism.

Dr Khattak then looked at some methodological aspects of the work that remained, and concluded that interdisciplinary approaches still needed to be reinforced.

Dr Abid Suleri hailed the success of the 15th SDC that comprised 24 panels and 3 special plenaries. SDC had a total of 145 delegates from across South Asia including 42 delegates from outside Pakistan. He also dealt with important issues facing us. Although statistics showed that South Asia was on the right track, and many challenges remained, he was confident the region could deal with them as it had now a lively civil society. He did
not, however, underestimate the dangers facing South Asia, dwelling on different aspects.

Dr Abid underlined the need to enhance the role of South Asia in global governance through the role of stakeholders such as civil society, the government and the private sector. Examining the dynamics of non-traditional security threats, Dr Abid proposed revisiting the institutional framework. Democracy should also be enhanced, increasing women’s empowerment and visibility but also ending all religious discrimination. Moreover, public infrastructure had a major role to play in reshaping South Asia’s future; this should not however undermine the role private sector could play. Multilateral programmes that focus on innovation in developing climate-resilient technology would lead to food security. Lastly, he underlined the need to promote regional peace through Indo-Pakistan trade normalisation.

Sustainability Discourse and Practices: Repositioning South Asia

By Safyan Kakakhel

Dr Nadeemul Haq, the Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission was the chief guest, and Qamar Zaman Kaira, the Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, was the guest of honour on the occasion of closing plenary. Special comments were delivered by Dr Mahendra P. Lama, the founding Vice-Chancellor of University of Sikkim, India, and while Dr Abid Suleri, the Executive Director of SDPI, presented the vote of thanks.

The Closing Plenary commenced with the screening of a documentary on SDPI’s role in, and contribution to, policy research and sustainable development in various sectors over the twenty years of its existence since 1992. The documentary, produced by the Sustainable Development Television, highlighted the key focus areas of research and achievements of SDPI.

Dr Mahendra P. Lama paid tributes and homage to the late H. U. Beg and his efforts in the areas of inclusive development and human security in South Asia. He said that South Asia, as the highly endowed region, remains tightly integrated as an economic bloc and system. Given the varied geography, rich socio-cultural heritage, extraordinary biodiversity and natural resources, robust institutions and huge pool of quality human resources, we could have expected it to grow steadily, and as a region of efficiency, sufficiency, and sustainability, but in reality we failed to capitalize on all our strengths and resources and we could never think big and out of the box, which turned this region into a mini-power and a periphery for many decades. The region disintegrated because of various historical and political reasons, and we are now trying to re-integrate the economic strength of South Asia.

Dr Mahendra P. Lama said that South Asia faces several issues of sustainability in the coming decades. They vary from agricultural practices to water security, reform disparities to over-exploitation of natural resources, institutional decadence to conflicts and instabilities, climate change impact to newer forms of disasters, aggrandizement on traditional wisdoms to weakening institutions and technological deprivations. He highlighted the grave situation of water resources and the importance of effective water management measures to avoid the risk of widespread desertification in the next two decades, and the potential of water-related conflicts, i.e. “water wars”, breaking out between neighboring countries. He said that universities and research and advocacy institutions like SDPI could be used to connect the villagers and urban conglomerates and communities and bring them to the knowledge generation in sharing platform for sustainable solutions to various public problems.

Dr Abid Suleri said that some of the salient features of the new South Asian regional order are the promotion of the factors augmenting democracy in the region, women’s participation in public space, demilitarization of South Asia (both civil and military), regional economic integration, assertion of role in global governance and global governance bodies, non-traditional security threats like food insecurity, water conflicts, climate change and energy, regional solutions to food security, religious freedom, and freedom of beliefs and expression of thoughts, development of coping mechanisms for natural and man-made disasters, promotion of regional cooperation, and education, among others.

Later, Dr Abid Suleri delivered his vote of thanks to the participants, speakers, panel organizers, chairs and all the individuals and organizations, who participated in the conference and all those who organized it.

Dr Nadeem ul Haq said that economic development is usually planned and carried out without keeping in
mind the importance of economic growth. Economic growth is the important aspect and economic development measures, livelihoods and efforts to achieve sustainability need to be aligned with the growth aspect. He stressed the importance of keeping abreast with global technological advancements in sustainable development. Technological change and advancements are keeping ahead of resource shortages facing the world and are the future of effective sustainable growth systems. He said: “We live in the age of the tesla car, electric and hybrid engines and solar powered engines to name just a few of the numerous new technologies developed to enhance national, regional and global sustainability.

He was of the opinion that growth and development is not a matter of the amount of money and development aid you receive, but about how well you organize yourself. He said that a number of organizational themes must be challenged immediately, if you are to make progress. One is our public service management or civil service management, which we face, and which is why we have an energy shortage and an education shortage because we are managing our systems in an acronistic manner. Secondly, as the competition commission has shown us, there are no markets in our country. We need to have vigorous markets yet we have oligopolistic markets. We need more deregulations and openness; the ‘SRO culture’ has to go. Thirdly, we need cities since growth cannot occur without cities; cities that are modern and aggressively innovative and aggressively culture developing. Fourthly, we need social capital. We have 90 million children and we need a way to reach them. The ways to reach them fall under human security and that is health and education. We need to add a third item to health and education, and that is social capital. We need to facilitate migration and make sure that these children have social capital in the cities.

Dr Nadeem ul Haq further added that we in South Asia need to challenge old notions. One of these is the amount of control the government has on the economy, which should not be too large. Secondly, we need to challenge protection in the economy. Thirdly, we need to challenge ourselves about the extent of the role of agriculture in our economy, and question ourselves how long we are going to hang on to traditional sectors.

Dr Nadeem ul Haq pointed out that the government of Pakistan must provide funding for research. We have funding for roads and construction projects but not research. The best way to create research based on an indigenous agenda is to fund it ourselves. He said that almost all the research being carried out in the country right now is funded by international aid and donor agencies.

Qamar Zaman Kaira congratulated SDPI and appreciated its role in strengthening democracy through its research in policy-making and sustainable development. He said that the central theme of this Sustainable Development Conference is highly relevant to the
current situation through which the South Asian region is passing through. Most of the countries in the region have adopted democracy and are working hard not only to bring down barriers to trade and investment in the region but also for deeper integration and people to people interaction between the nations. He added that we should focus not only on economic growth, but also on equity. Social justice and regard of environment can help us remove income and consumption disparities and inequalities of opportunities for the people can be reduced.

Mr Kaira said that a deeper look into the history of politics and development in Pakistan reveals three dominant patterns emerging from the socio-economic realities of the country: 1) Decentralization without democracy (used repeatedly by dictatorial regimes to establish political expediency), 2) Democracy without decentralization (democracy given too little time and opportunity to play out its role) 3) Growth without development (growth performance of the 1960’s, despite excellent GDP growth, did not translate into the overall development and poverty alleviation).

He said that societal integration and unity is one of most basic prerequisites for any type of development, including sustainable development, in Pakistan and other nations in South Asia and around the world. He said that Pakistan has paid a heavy price due to wars in the region played out by superpowers fighting for superiority in the past decades, which severely damaged its near-secular society into an extremist society. Promotion of peace and tolerance and fostering mutual trust are critical elements to achieve an environment conducive for sustainable growth and development in South Asia.

Activities of Advocacy Unit

‘Slight change in rainfall can be disastrous for agriculture, economy’
(01st October)

Speakers at a Special Lecture on ‘South Asia Monsoon in 21st Century’ said that high resolution climate models used at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, USA have predicted weakening of summer monsoon precipitation over South Asia by the end of 21st century. They also called for advance research on monsoon, which is the lifeline of South Asian economies. Around 75 per cent of total annual rainfall in major parts of South Asia is contributed by summer monsoon and a slight change in the pattern can have disastrous impact on agriculture, economy and livelihood of millions of South Asians, they concluded.

Clear-cut framework for drone strikes sought
(04th October)

Experts at a roundtable discussion on ‘Drone Strikes: Are Operational concerns Guiding Strategy’ stressed the need for a clear legal, operational and ethical framework to conduct drones strikes in any part of the world.

Raising various policy points while elaborating operational and strategic concerns, they were of the view that US won’t give drone technology to Pakistan, as it involves access to sophisticated satellite network. They said, international law does not allow spy agencies to conduct militarized operation in sovereign countries. However, they added, Pakistanis need to hold themselves accountable for compromising sovereignty before criticizing USA for the violation of their sovereignty, they said.

Role of TV as mass medium in mitigating conflicts discussed
(8th- 9th October)

Panelists at a 2-day training workshop on ‘Media for Peace’ discussed avenues for cross media collaboration to promote peace through the exchange of best practices for responsible reporting. They said both print and electronic media have characteristics with different perceptions and diverging treatments. The panelists discussed the role television plays as a mass medium in mitigating conflicts and promoting peace. The discussion also came up with interesting observation where social media was identified as the most sought after medium for information.

SAE in understanding poverty dimensions highlighted
(15th October)

World Food Programme (WFP) and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) are using a specialized analysis technique called ‘Small Area Estimates’ to map poverty and to assess food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition in the country. Speakers at a special lecture on “Measuring Poverty in Small Areas: How Low You Can Go?” highlighted the role of Small Area Estimation (SAE) in understanding the dimensions and finer details of poverty. They said that large-scale national surveys are usually unable to provide detailed information at local level, which necessitates the use of “Small Area Estimate”, a technique that pro-
vide reliable estimates from lower geographic level by using statistical modeling.

**Speakers say Pakistan can’t afford civil-military divide in security issues**

(18 October)

Participants at a roundtable conference on ‘Civil-Military Imbalance and its Policy Implications’ agreed that Pakistan cannot afford the reflection of civil-military fault-line in the formulation of its security policy. They were of the view that ironically, despite this divide being the biggest security threat to Pakistan, there is not much quality work has been done in this area. Some participants argued that the military wants civilian government and parliament to lead the national security policy but unfortunately there is not much progress due to lack of institutional mechanism, implementation capacity and support system in civil administration.

**Findings of study challenges popular notion of masculinity**

(22nd October)

Experts at a seminar on ‘Locating Men in Women Rights Activism: Launch of Research Study on Masculinities’ emphasized upon understanding the notions of masculinity to change men’s behavior towards women. Participants were also apprised of a research study conducted by Rozan narrating the stories of five men, who took affirmative actions against sexual violence against men, women and transgender persons in the context of Pakistan. Findings of the study also challenged the popular notion of masculinity as static, unchangeable and biological.

**‘Recovery ratio of missing children is less than 4pc’**

(8th November)

Speakers at a seminar on ‘Missing Children: A Wake-up Call for Society’ said that issue of missing children is less acknowledged in Pakistan primarily because of lack of understanding and awareness about the missing children’s issue. They said the recovery ratio of missing children is less than four per cent. They called for devising, strengthening and sensitizing the state response mechanism and educating society to secure and protect missing Pakistani children. They also demanded of the police to properly investigate the cases.

**Need to promote message of love, peace, harmony stressed**

(12th November)

Speakers on the occasion of screening a documentary on ‘Sufi Message: Love, Peace and Harmony’ said that Sufi message of love, peace and harmony needs to be promoted for a tolerant and peaceful society. Two documentaries were screened at the occasion which presented the lives and teachings of Sufi saints Baba Bulleh Shah and Shah Shams Sabzwari. The documentaries reflected upon the ‘humanist’ nature of Sufism, which is the core of every religion in the world.

**“Sectarian violence occurs due to historical contingency”**

(15th November)

Speaker at a lecture on ‘A Historian’s Tale of Sectarian Violence: Essence or Contingency’, said that sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shi’ites is an anomaly happening because of historical contingency and not due to the essence of respective creeds. They said that explanations to sectarian violence have essentialist characteristics, which means that there exists something in the very essence of sectarian doctrines or nature of perpetrators, which is causing such murderous acts.

**Political consensus on social protection for all stressed**

(19th November)

Speakers at a seminar jointly held by SDPI and PILER on ‘Realising the Right to Social Security: Towards New Solutions’ expressed their concern over meager allocations on social sector like education, health and poverty alleviation and underlined the need to have an increased investment on social sector to provide universal social security benefits to the vulnerable population. They underlined the need for political consensus on the social protection for all citizens.

**Experts say civil sector’s ability to formulate any policy is declining**

(28th November)

Experts at a roundtable discussion on Civil-Military Imbalance and Its Policy Implications’ said that due to certain socio-eco trends, civilian side is facing an imbalance and great decree of administration decline. Professionalism on civil side had collapsed and the ability of Pakistan’s civil sector to formulate any policy is declining due to inept governance, corruption and weak strategies, they maintained. As a result, military is perceived to be the Pakistan’s most reliable institute, they added.

Participants also discussed the paradoxical debate of striking a balance between the two through the conduct of free and fair elections, having a parliamentary democracy or opting for constitutionalism as a better
solution to the problems.

**Call to protect consumers from cartels**
*(5th December)*

Experts at a special seminar on ‘Adverse Impact of Cartels on the Poor held in connection with World Competition Day demanded strict measures to protect consumers from the cartels. They demanded independence of regulators, effective enforcement and monitoring mechanism, awareness raising and healthy business practices.

**Reference of late Sheikh Asad Rahman,**
*(6 December)*

Paying rich tribute to renowned human rights activist, late Sheikh Asad Rahman, participants of a memorial reference said that he was a true humanist, who dedicated his whole life for the oppressed people of Pakistan and continued struggle for the rights of Baloch people. Friends called him the 'symbol of continuous struggle' who fought for civil justice, equality and legitimate rights of the oppressed people.

**Civil-Military Imbalance and its Policy Implications**
*(21st December)*

Speakers at a roundtable discussion on Civil-Military Imbalance and Its Policy Implications highlighted the increasing distrust of military and its approaches as well as the sense that foreign policy and security policy objectives are largely been determined by army and not shared with population at large.

**Arab Spring the most defining event of history:**
*Analysts*
*(24th December)*

Analysts at a special lecture on ‘The Arab Spring Two Years On, and the Destruction of Gaza: Results, Prospects, Consequences,’ termed the Arab spring the most defining event in the region’s history after Iranian revolution. They said deprived, oppressed and marginalized people have taken their destiny in their own hands against Western-backed extremely oppressive autocratic regimes. Historically, it was military in Arab states that earlier provided vehicle to uprisings, but now it is the people, who are the agents of change.

‘Govt financing of research is extremely poor’

Sharing the findings of an SDPI study, Landscaping Policy Relevant Research in Pakistan: Identifying the Key Actors, the participants said that policy research in Pakistan is geographically clustered in Islamabad and Lahore. There are very few policy research insti-
tutions in Karachi and none in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. They said the government financing of research is extremely poor and where it exists, is only focused on the technical and scientific aspects of agriculture, nutrition and health. Whereas, the critically important policy research areas are altogether ignored and are surviving on the resources offered by the international donor agencies.

**Status of Religious Freedom in Pakistan**

This initiative aims at strengthening capacities and networking of religious minority, civil society organizations (CSOs) and activists so that they might effectively advocate for tolerance and freedom of religion could significantly contribute towards this priority. All programme activities will contribute towards this aim, including capacity building, research and publications creating a greater awareness of the issues specific to religious minorities in target countries, and advocacy work.

A three-day national level training (from Dec. 17 to Dec.19, 2012) of all community representatives, including Christian, Bahais, Hindus and Muslims on ‘Religious Freedoms’ on was organized at a local Hotel in Islamabad. Major objectives behind this training workshop were to sensitize the community members about the religious freedom, constitutional protection and international frameworks for the minority rights.

Earlier, an Advocacy Strategy and Stakeholder Mapping meeting was conducted on Dec 12, 2012 to discuss the ground situation of religious freedoms.

A panel in 15th SDC on the topic “Religious Freedoms: South Asian Perspectives” was also organized under this project.

The project report revolves around these objectives:

**Objectives:**

* • To update the current status of religious freedoms in Pakistan
* • To sensitize the community on the human rights mechanisms and specially the UN mechanism on Human Rights through online training
* • To advocate the implementation of human rights, including freedom of religion and belief, at local, national, regional and international levels.
* • To make a film in this perspective on three transitional states: Egypt, Iraq and Pakistan.

**Ongoing Work:** A national level three-month E-training has been proposed in the project. Training manual is being prepared in Urdu and the announcement of the training will be made soon.