

**Department of Development Studies**

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*The Department of Development Studies is introducing its first Policy Brief. Showcasing the research output of the department, the Policy Brief aims to cover a contingent of standardised as well as heterodox domains of Development. Our first edition has covered a diverse range of research areas: the disputatious issue of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) pertaining to health and healthcare; the stimulating need for gender sensitising Higher Education, and the political economy of electoral accountability in a Punjabi village context.*

## **Higher Education for Women: A Self-Empowerment and Gender Perspective**

Sairah Zafar Khan (2012-2014)

### **Key Findings**

1. Higher education content fails to provide same level of core development across faculties, this adds to discontentment and disconnect amongst women students. Entering into higher education puts women students in distinct groups of core development depending upon their choices of subject and institute. Each group has its own level of core development which is determined through the modes and quality of curriculum and co-curriculum activities specific to the area of study. Once in Higher Education Institutes, women students face gender as well as subject stratification as higher education in Pakistan is not able to meet the varied requirements of gender strategic needs of women enrolled in different faculties on a similar scale.
2. Students who are coming to higher education institutions purely for academic learning, mostly natural science students, are satisfied with their level of personal development through education; but those who are looking for self-growth, skill development and marketability of their degrees (mostly applied sciences, social sciences and linguistic students) are discontented with the content and the whole idea of personal empowerment through higher education. These divides put women students in marginally different contexts of core development. As their development aspects vary, the changes they bring about in themselves also differ and this creates a divide and conflict between women of different subject fields.
3. Higher education fails to add to the level of dignity and sense of belonging to the wider society for women. With reference to low levels of self-esteem and dignity and no significant improvement in either for most of the women in higher education, the major reasons seem to be lack of acknowledgement, commodification of knowledge by numerous degree awarding institutes ungoverned by quality checks, and stereotyping disciplines with an imaginary intellect and academic status.
4. Some students believe that an increased access to higher education and abundance of degree awarding institutions have also led to a decrease in the value of higher education. A few students, on the other hand, pointed out that pursuing a degree is not as important as the institution you are attending, for the purpose of uplifting your self-esteem based on

your educational achievements. Some students also vocalised the opinion that for women students self-esteem can be achieved only when they are a part of a certain degree programme from a specific institution. A socio-cultural requirement of getting married, reproducing and involving oneself in gender specific roles defined by the societal norms still irk many women's self-esteem despite their educational achievements.

5. Women's participation in higher education is a means to address the gender parity issues in Pakistan and can act as an arbitrament to harmonise different dimensions of the systems which obscure progress towards an egalitarian society. Its importance as an avenue to bring about change in socio-cultural settings cannot be discounted. The feeling of being prejudiced against is expressed heartily by the men. This is especially true for male students, while male teachers merely 'shrugged off' the discussions related to women. Male students have been much more vocal and provided the insight into a male mind which studies alongside women in Higher Education Institutes and works with them in offices. Most men in higher education, like most women, are unaware of the dynamics of women as well as youth's personal empowerment.
6. Higher education system lacks a discourse to help the learners become agents of change themselves. It does not encourage students to participate in globalisation, underpinned by a gender inclusive approach, where different people express themselves in their particular ways as they have unique identities, backgrounds and desires. It has not developed the potency to question and disagree in students. Men and women both are victims of internalised oppression as they lack the urge to question the status quo. Similarly, they lack the ambition to understand the social realities and re-construct them.

### **Policy Implications**

1. Overall higher education goals and targets have to be synchronised and unified across all faculties to determine and work towards a pedestal of core development among all students. A strict mandate for university formation and programmes to be offered to the students should be applied and followed, controlled by a central body such as HEC.
2. A methodology which is based on the respect of women and communication with men and women involved in higher education needs to be looked into. It has to be based on believing in the capabilities of women and their ability to bring changes within and around themselves.
3. Activities aimed at orientation of students towards higher and international study programmes and national and international labour market and niches can be built into the methodological approach.
4. Centralised training content can guide and motivate new and old teachers to respect individual differences and commit to their role in the empowerment process of their students. At the primary and secondary levels, teacher education should raise awareness of practices that treat boys and girls differently and suggest and apply approaches that promote gender parity.
5. Women empowerment is a gender issue therefore it requires inclusion of men to lessen hurdles and create possibilities of change initiation from 'the other end'. Any change of

curriculum content should be made keeping in view the acceptance and presence of male students and male instructors. As HEC is working towards a unified system of quality control and course outline for each programme, it should make sure that inclusion of women in the curriculum should not demoralise or threaten their male counterparts.

6. It needs to include women as active citizens and role models in such a manner that it motivates women students and show their fellow men that power sharing is beneficial for all. All men (students, teachers as well as policy makers at all levels) need to be sensitised to the need of gender equity in higher education in such a way that they do not feel powerless and help stimulate the change needed in societal thought process to accept women in public and private domains on equal terms.

### **Measuring the Protection Gap in the International Health Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): The Case of South Waziristan Agency's IDPs**

Shahid Khan (2011-2013)

#### **Key Findings**

1. The study highlighted the inadequacy and inappropriateness of health services provided to IDPs of South Waziristan Agency (SWA) due to negligence of UN, international law and the state. The health services for most of health problems were absolutely missing and not tailored according to the age and sex needs of IDPs. This study found out that the burden of mental health problems was almost equal to the physical health problems among IDPs. The frequency of health services provision was not regular and resulted in huge levels of morbidity and mortality. Even the security check-posts proved to be a hurdle for IDPs in camps to seek medical treatment whereas IDPs in host community were freely using it.
2. The social capital and economic status decided the fate of SWA IDPs whether to join host community or camp. The IDPs with low level of economic status and social capital joined camp and became the victims of inadequate and inappropriate arrangements of accommodation, water and sanitation, *pardah* arrangement, security situation and unorganised relief activities like food distribution in IDP camps.
3. The common issues related to physical health in camps and in host community were almost same which mostly affected female, children and elderly. Most common infections included common colds, skin infections, chest infections, diarrhea for children; reproductive health issues for women in reproductive age and cardiac problems, arthritis, mobility problems among elderly people.
4. The issue of mental stress emerged to be the most common where IDPs in camp were more affected as compared to IDPs living in host community. It was present among all age groups and in both the sexes however, people in older age were affected the most. Moreover, more women in camps had to face issues related to pregnancies and reproductive health than those living in host communities.
5. It was evident that in absence of international protection, higher level of social capital and economic status facilitated many of IDPs to join host community and utilise health facilities present in district Tank. Whereas in comparison, IDPs living in camp bear the load of health problems due to inadequacy and absence of health care facilities.

## Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings from this research and the conclusions presented above, the following recommendations are made for effective interventions towards the SWA IDPs health needs fulfillment:

1. There is a need of an overarching binding international law for IDPs complete protection encircling shelter and health by binding UN, INGOs and national governments.
2. The support and protection provided to IDPs at both localities during displacement by relatives, friends, fellow tribesmen and host community should be acknowledged and they should be paid back by government or any other concerned institution. Although it is improper from the cultural point of view, it would be of great help for them as they are already overburdened by expenditures form last five years since the start of the armed conflict. Moreover, it would lessen the burden on the minds of those IDPs who were helped by host communities and who consider it as a social loan and want to pay it back in future.
3. The cultural norms of *purdah* and prestige in tribal society should be incorporated in building small shelter homes to protect their self-esteem instead of keeping them in tents.
4. To eliminate unemployment among IDPs government and NGOs should initiate livelihood programmes.
5. The World Food Programme (WFP) should also give cash along with food as many of the IDPs sell ration to fulfil their other than food needs. This could be done by rationalising the size of the ration distributed.
6. There is a need to develop proper policies to integrate IDPs health related provisions in local district health system in the recipient areas.
7. It is important that displaced persons have access to involvement in the policy-making process in order to open up channels of dialogue with health decision planners, to clarify misunderstandings and build a relationship between health providers and IDPs.
8. There has to be improved coordination between security forces, DHO and NGOs (international and local) to facilitate IDPs health in conflict ridden areas. Especially security forces should be kept away from camp and roads so that a free movement is possible for IDPs for health seeking and employment.
9. There is a need for regular epidemiological surveillance of the IDPs' health problems at both localities for better health policy making.
10. There is a need to create a health service package for IDPs based on their complete exemption from all health service fees in host communities.
11. Presence of a psychiatrist and psychologist should be made mandatory in camps and host community and this staff should go to IDP houses and resolve their mental health problems at household level and at hospital level both because many IDPs do not consider mental health treatment necessary though the lack of treatment has serious consequences.
12. The health assistance under broader umbrella of central, provincial and international health bodies should be made available at district level to solve health related issues of IDPs in foreseeable future.

# **Informal Institutions and Governance: Examining the Impact of Clientelism on Electoral Accountability in Rural Punjab, Pakistan**

Zahid Aqil (2011-2013)

## **Key Findings**

1. Significant majority of the voters in rural Punjab are bloc voters.
2. They are dependent on Vote Bloc Leaders (VBLs) for their access to social and public resources and services.
3. Votes are exchanged for targeted goods and services.
4. Voters hold Candidates for Legislative Assemblies (CLAs) accountable for targeted goods and services.
5. They quit supporting those CLAs who do not or are no more able to provide targeted goods and services.
6. Delivery of targeted goods and services is perceived by CLAs to yield high rate of return in terms of votes.
7. Majority of the voters in rural Punjab does not have the capacity to hold their VBLs or CLAs accountable.
8. Electoral accountability in rural Punjab has very limited capacity to constrain the behaviour of the Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLA).
9. The more dependent a voter the more clientelistic it is in its voting choices and less able to hold its VBL or MLA accountable.
10. Clientelistic mode of citizen politician linkages undermines electoral accountability in rural Punjab.

## **Policy Recommendations**

1. State needs to focus on the provision of basic services on universal basis to minimise dependence of the electorates for such resources and services.
2. Campaigns meant to make the voters better aware of needs to be undertaken.
3. Political parties need to develop their organisational structure at the grassroots level to establish direct linkages with the electorates instead of through vote bloc leaders.
4. A ban should be imposed on allocation of constituency development funds to the members of legislative assemblies.
5. Local government system should be in place and the development funds currently being allocated to members of legislative assemblies should instead be routed through the local governments.
6. A ban should also be imposed on discretionary allocation of public offices.
7. Transfers of public sector employees should be subject to the rule of Law.