



# **POVERTY & FOOD SECURITY**

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**Supplement – November 2011**

## POVERTY & FOOD SECURITY

### Inflation & Food Security

#### Domestic Context

##### **Malnourishment among Women, Children Rising In KP, Fata**

Malnourishment among women and children has increased in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Fata over the last decade and therefore, they should be provided with balanced diet for fighting diseases according to the findings of the National Nutrition Survey-2011. The survey was conducted by the health department, Pakistan Medical and Research Council, Cabinet Division and the Aga Khan University, Karachi with the financial assistance of the Department for International Development, UK and Australian Agency for International Development, while 27,963 households from all the four provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan participated in it. The households were asked about their income, education and knowledge about diseases with a special focus on causes of malnutrition among women and children. The survey found that there was a slight improvement in the cases of underweight children. According to the findings, 15.1 percent children suffered from acute malnutrition compared to 14.1 percent in 2001, while 43.6 percent children had mild malnutrition that more than 40 percent reported during the last survey conducted in 2001. Malnutrition has made children vulnerable to diarrhea, dysentery, anemia, pneumonia and respiratory tract infections. The survey also showed that 31.5 percent children were underweight against 37.5 percent reported in the previous survey and that 31.1 percent were born underweight.

According to the findings, 62.5 percent children and 52 percent pregnant women suffered from severe anemia compared to 49.7 percent and 45 percent during the last exercise respectively. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Fata, increase in the cases of malnutrition among women and children was reported. The prevalence of malnutrition in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was 43-48 percent and Fata 58 percent. A total of 17.2 percent children were malnourished and 24.1 percent underweight in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa compared to 13 percent and 35.5 percent in previous survey respectively. Anemia was found among 42.8 percent children and 29.6 percent pregnant women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa compared to 56 percent and 44 percent report in 2001. The survey found that 58 percent households didn't have access to balanced diet nationwide, while 72 percent households in Sindh, 63 percent in Balochistan, 58.4 percent in Fata, 57 percent Azad Jammu and Kashmir, 39.8 percent and 28.2 percent were food deficient. The main reasons, it said, were lack of awareness of significance of zinc, vitamins, iodine, and national calamities that trigger mass displacement and poverty.

[Dawn - November 30, 2011]

##### **Malnutrition Increasing At Alarming Rate across Province**

The percentage of children suffering from chronic malnutrition in Punjab has increased to 39 percent as compared to 32.5 percent in 2001 referring to the deplorable condition where two out of every five children are malnourished, revealed the National Nutrition Survey 2011 – Punjab. To make the report public, an event titled “Provincial Dissemination of National Nutrition Survey 2011, Punjab” was organized by the Bureau of Statistics Punjab Planning and Development Department in collaboration with the UNICEF. Punjab Health Special Secretary Dawood Muhammad Bareach said that the rate of acute malnutrition was about 14 percent. Quoting from the survey report, the children in the province were exposed to the threat of

death, being susceptible to numerous diseases owing to malnutrition. The percentage of children with iodine deficiency had increased; however, those with anemia and other deficiencies, including that of Vitamin A, remain unchanged since the last survey of 2001. The current survey revealed that deficiency of Vitamin D was more common among children now, and was one of the major public health problems in the province. Separately, the health secretary informed that the provincial government had taken the results of this new survey very seriously and was working closely with the UNICEF and other partners to reduce malnutrition amongst vulnerable children as well as pregnant women. One of the leading causes of this malnutrition was the devastation caused by the 2010 monsoon floods that contributed heavily in the spread of diseases and malnutrition. Almost 30 percent of households in Punjab were food insecure due to lack of access to adequate food. Almost one-third of the children across the province were underweight, and the situation was even worse for children in the rural areas.

[Daily Times - November 24, 2011]

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### **‘Nutrition Scarcity Increases in Women, Children’**

According to results of the National Nutrition Survey 2011, the number of children and women having nutrition deficiency as compared to the year 2001 has been increased to a record level. The survey has expressed concern over the situation of nutrition scarcity in the country and called upon the government to take serious measures in this regard. The results were declared in a session held in Peshawar with the participation of representatives of the department of Health of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Fata, Unicef, and the federal government. According to the survey report, 15.1% children in the country are facing absolute food scarcity while 43.6% are facing little nutrition problem. Some 31.5% children are under weight. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Fata are also witnessing increase in nutrition scarcity, which has been moved up in the province from 43% to 48% and reached 58% in Fata. Poverty, floods, earthquake, emergency and law and order situation and migrations are found to be the main reasons behind the food scarcity.

[The News - November 30, 2011]

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### **Vegetable, Fruit Prices Likely To Surge By 25% To 30%**

In the wake of fresh increase in prices of diesel and petroleum related products announced by the government, traders in the wholesale and retail markets of Karachi are anticipating an increase of 25% to 30% in the prices of all kinds of vegetables and fruits. It may be recalled here that demand for vegetables and fruits for around 20 million population of Karachi is met through long distance supply from Sindh Interior, Balochistan and areas of Punjab province bordering Sindh. Approximately around 14 to 15 thousand tones of fruits and vegetables reach Karachi Subzi Mandi, situated along Super High way via 700 to 800 trucks – providing job opportunities to around 100,000 people. However, the latest spike in prices of petroleum products especially diesel which is used by majority of transporters, has negative prospects as far as rates of all vegetables and fruits are concerned. The latest surge in prices of petroleum products would only trigger an across-the-board price increase in all kinds of vegetables and fruits reaching Karachi markets daily from long distances. The upward revision in prices of petroleum products without any significant increase in their rates in the international markets has been described by traders as arbitrary and unjustified move by the federal government. Traders have also enhanced their rates during the last few months in the garb of fresh increase in fuel charges. They blamed the situation on enhanced transport charges which is adding fuel to the fire as rates of all vegetables and fruits are already on the higher side and the fresh increase would serve as a last straw on camel’s back as far as buying capacity of consumers are concerned. Almost all fresh vegetables would be available to consumers at higher rates which

would be a burden on their pockets, compelling them to divert their income in this head earmarked for other expenditures.

[Daily Times - November 04, 2011]

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## Global Context

### Pakistan Slips Further In Human Development Index

Pakistan's ranking in overall Human Development Index (HDI) has further slipped to 145th position in 2011 compared to 125th last year as almost 50 percent population of the country remains deprived of the basic necessities of education and health. The country's 49.4 percent population is living into the cruel clutches of multidimensional poverty and 53.4 percent is witnessing intense deprivation, the United Nations Development Report 2011 titled "Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All" states. At a time when there has been no official figure available in the country to measure poverty since 2005-06, the Human Development Report (HDR) 2011 is the latest authentic document on this subject. Pakistan stood at 125th position among the club of 169 nations and was categorized as medium human development country in last year's report. But this year's report put Pakistan's overall ranking in terms of Human Development Index at 145th position among 187 nations and territories and slipped into low human development category. Out of 187 measured countries there are 46 in the low human development category.

The HDR report says that another 11 per cent population is at the risk of multidimensional poverty while 27.4 per cent population lives in severe poverty. The multidimensional poverty index (MPI) defines as multiple deprivations at the individual level in education, health and standard of living. Pakistan did not perform well on the life expectancy at birth index. Life expectancy in Pakistan stands at 65.4 years as against 67.2 years in 2010. Even Bangladesh has better life expectancy than Pakistan (68.9 years). For gender inequality, Pakistan scored 115 among 187 countries. The labour force participation rate for female is just 21.7 per cent while for male it is 84.9 per cent, the report states. The country did not have long-term overarching theme for growth because of adopting short-term policies. For the last five years there has been no increase in per capita income due to low economic growth and high population growth rate. Migration towards cities could provide solution to tackle the issue of poverty and women too would find inclusion in urban areas but these cities should not be run as bureaucratic enclaves.

According to UNDP's statement, development progress in the world's poorest countries could be halted or even reversed by mid-century unless bold steps are taken to slow climate change, prevent further environmental damage, and reduce deep inequalities within and among nations, according to projections in the 2011 Human Development Report. The 2011 Report argues that environmental sustainability can be most fairly and effectively achieved by addressing health, education, incomes and gender disparities together with global action on energy production and ecosystem protection. It further warns that South Asia must overcome acute poverty and internal inequalities to maintain current rates of progress. According to the Report, South Asia has among the world's highest levels of urban air pollution, especially with cities in Bangladesh and Pakistan suffering from acute air contamination. The Report also warns that deteriorating environmental conditions and increasingly extreme weather conditions -such as the severe floods that have hit Pakistan for two years in a row - could undermine economic progress in many countries in the region.

This year, Pakistan ranks 145 among 187 countries and territories. In comparison, India is at 134 and Bangladesh at 146 in the HDI. Norway, Australia and the Netherlands rank the highest, while the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger and Burundi are at the bottom. Additionally, the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) (introduced last year) identifies multiple deprivations in the same households in education, health and standard of living. In Pakistan

49.4% of the population suffer multiple deprivations while an additional 11.0% are vulnerable to multiple deprivations, states the Report. In the Gender Inequality Index (GII), South Asian women are shown to lag significantly behind men in education and labour force participation. In Pakistan women's parliamentary representation has improved with 21% of parliamentary seats held by women. The GI reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions - reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity. Pakistan has a GI value of 0.573, ranking it 115 out of 146 countries in the 2011 index.

[The News - November 30, 2011]

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