



Research Briefs & News

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue No:04 Sep. 2006

inbrief



Remarks from Executive Director's Desk

The Seminar Series at the NIPS continues to widen the scope, range and deliberations on population issues. Our effort is to promote dialogue among policy makers, academia and the civil society stakeholders. This would lead to judicious and prudent policy formulation and ultimately restoring a balance between population growth and resource development and improving quality of life and good governance. The dialogue will also facilitate partnerships between civil society and public and private sectors and devise ways to encourage inter-sectoral coordination on reproductive health and population stabilization concerns.

At the NIPS we are keen to pursue and endorse activities and programmes that help in achieving the ICPD and MDGs. We strive to invite speakers to our seminars who are doing research in analyzing linkages between demographic and development factors and are willing to share their findings. If you are that person or know someone who falls in that category please send us an abstract and we would invite you to our Seminar Series.

Through dissemination of these deliberations and findings we hope to sensitize the policy makers on how and why building national consensus and seeking international collaboration on issues of population and development should be the immediate, medium and long-term goal of Pakistan.

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River Diplomacy and Regional Security in South Asia

Dr. Robert Wirsing, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies Hawaii gave a talk on River Diplomacy and Regional Security in South Asia on March 22nd 2006 at the NIPS Seminar Series. He started his presentation by saying that in modern times, bitter rivalry over river resources has been a constant in international relations. He observed, much of South Asia currently faces rapidly escalating problems of acute river resource scarcity. This has triggered a rash of *intrastate* (inter-provincial) river resource battles, at times leading to bloodshed, especially in India and Pakistan. Inevitably, it has also intensified *interstate* disputes over the management and control of the region's shared river resources. This has led, in turn, to a growing demand in the region for intensified government efforts to resolve these disputes through diplomacy. So far, however, government efforts in this regard have been fairly halfhearted, and diplomatic gains, correspondingly, fairly meager. Therefore, Dr. Wirsing asserted, that cumulative river resource sharing agreements—whether bilateral or multilateral—might lay the foundation for more pacific interstate relations among the region's habitually feuding co-riparian states appears at least premature if not entirely misplaced.

Analyzing the causes of river resources rivalry, he said that the stalemate emerges from three stubborn and mutually reinforcing realities characterizing the region's co-riparian states—first, the existence among them of fundamental differences in natural

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River Diplomacy and Regional Security in South Asia

river resources endowments; second, the pressing need felt by all of their governments to secure the benefits of river resource development for their own country's rapidly mounting national requirements; and third, their almost uniformly resolute adherence to diplomatic formulations, strategies and objectives that are in large part incommensurable and, therefore, irreconcilable. Given these impediments he articulated, the stalemate is unlikely to be overcome barring a dramatic change in the way the region's river resources are conceptualized and managed. Implying, that these states would have to abandon their current almost exclusively unilateralist inclinations in favour of bilateral or even multilateral approaches that were significantly more trans-boundary, integrated or "river basin" in composition. Dr. Wirsing warned that the continued festering of un-addressed river resource disputes—between India and Pakistan, India and Nepal, and India and Bangladesh—is bound to retard rational river resource development in the region, stiffen the antagonism already apparent in these states' bilateral relationships and, inevitably, weigh heavily against hopes for expanded regional cooperation. Dwelling upon the third impediment to getting beyond diplomatic deadlock—he presented a grim reality and stark choices and said, these countries' almost uniformly resolute adherence to essentially incommensurable and, therefore, irreconcilable diplomatic formulations, strategies and objectives—there is very little encouraging news in the foregoing discussion about diplomacy's prospects for triggering greater river resource cooperation in the region. Unilateralism is everywhere in the saddle; and bilateral water resource initiatives, even when, as in the case of the Indus treaty, they have been functioning for decades, seem almost invariably overwhelmed by competing diplomatic agendas—by rival political and strategic objectives, in other words, that are ill-suited to accommodation and compromise. In the west of the subcontinent, New Delhi, with one eye trained on India's mushrooming energy

requirements and the imperative that the country shift some of its needs to hydroelectric power, stretches the meaning of run of the river dams almost to the breaking point at Baglihar. Islamabad, in turn, keen to maintain both its ownership of the western rivers and the integrity of the Indus Treaty, strives to repeat at Baglihar its earlier success in stopping in its tracks India's Wullar barrage scheme. Construction on that project, defended by India as a flood control scheme and attacked by Pakistan as a storage dam, was stopped in 1987 and remains still suspended today in spite of repeated efforts by India to overcome Pakistan's objections. In the north, New Delhi, inclined to invest heavily in hydropower development abroad only when it authors the terms and the investment is secure, as in Bhutan, dangles the prospect of bilateral cooperation before Nepalese but obdurately drops its heels when it comes to implementation. Kathmandu, dogged by extreme poverty, unchecked population growth, and a dangerous insurgency, in its turn strives to convert its hydropower resources—at India's expense—into an engine of national development. And in the northeast, New Delhi, driven politically to cater first to the bottomless needs of its own West Bengali and Assamese citizens and, at the same time, to keep open its options in regard to tapping the water resource riches of its northeast, plays for time, while Dhaka, painfully conscious that Bangladesh may have little time remaining in which to resolve its water problems, presses hard for river resource agreements.

In view of the diplomatic complexities, Dr. Wirsing reminded that an alternative diplomatic approach is needed for a fresh start and re-examination of the issues confronting South Asia. In this context he suggested three possible ways to address the problem: (i) Small-scale functional cooperation (Governmental, NGO, and Academic). (ii) Expanded bilateral treaties & institutions and (iii) Multilateral Basin Approach, sharing water management through multilateral agreements. He concluded by saying that the task is daunting and required leadership with courage and vision to reshape the future of river resource management in South Asia.

Reminisces: Mahidol University and Thailand, (2005-06)

Shahid Munir

I had a very productive, intellectually stimulating and a rewarding cultural and educational experience. It gives me pleasure to share with my colleagues some outstanding features of the Mahidol University, its faculty, work environment and departments. The University has dynamic mix and range of academic programmes, for example, it has faculty of Engineering, Environment, Microbiology, International College, College of Music, Arts and Science. The university has its own hospital and dispensary.

The Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR) is located at the Salaya Campus of Mahidol University. IPSR was established in 1971, and it has developed into one of the leading population studies research and training institutes in Asia. The Institute has about thirty teaching staff, and offers the Masters and Ph.D. programmes.

An International Master Degree Program, taught in English and focusing on population and social aspects of reproductive health research, has been offered for 16 years, and approximately 200 students from all over the world have graduated from this programme.

In addition, IPSR has for many years provided special training courses in partnership with international agencies. IPSR has been designated as a World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Social Research in Human Reproduction; UNAIDS Collaborating Center; a UNFPA Center of Excellence in Population and Family Planning/ Reproductive Health in the Inter-Regional project on South-to-South Collaboration; and the UK Wellcome Trust's Population's Study Center for Research Excellence in Asia.

During the year I got an opportunity to visit several cities, universities, colleges and schools of Thailand. Thailand has vibrant and diverse culture and is a tourist destination and attracts about hundred thousands tourist every month.



Availability, Reliability and Compatibility of Pakistani Statistical sources

Dr. Harry Feldman, Visiting Professor of Linguistics for Research Unit for Pakistani Languages, Quaid-i-Azam University delivered a talk on the 'Availability, Reliability and Compatibility of Pakistan's Statistical Sources' on May 04, 2006 at the NIPS Seminar Series. He was vigorous in articulating that population figures are unreliable in Pakistan, therefore, he asserted, any sample design based on these inaccurate data will lead to unreliable social statistics generated by sample surveys. The sampling errors which provide confidence intervals of any indices are bound to be misleading if the sampling weights are based on unreliable population figures. He expressed that this factor causes incompatibility of estimates generated through various cross sectional surveys.

Dr. Feldman also identified and analyzed various sources of non-sampling errors, which are common in many societies. These include: wording and sequence of questions to elicit information from respondents other than what is intended; memory lapse on the part of respondent;

incorrect information by the respondent; inaccurate translation of questions by the enumerators; altering question wording or explaining the intent of the question incorrectly; the enumerator may mishear the respondent or record the responses incorrectly; the responses may be incorrectly transcribed from the survey instruments and also errors may occur in processing. Non sampling errors increase with the increase in the size of the sample. Referring to the sources of incompatibility, Dr. Feldman noted that factors like- different geographic coverage; different populations in scope; composition of enumerator teams; and different conceptual foundations or data collection methodologies create data compatibility problems.

Dr. Feldman drew the attention to the inaccuracy of estimates because of inadequate or incorrect definition of concepts used in the surveys. He was particularly critical about the definitions used in the labour force surveys. He suggested that standard definitions prescribed by the respective expert groups

and recommended by specialised agencies of the United Nations might be used to avoid comparability problems. He perceptively observed that time lag between collection of data and release of results creates suspicion about the accuracy of the data. Therefore, he recommended that reduced time lag and provision of metadata to the users might minimise such suspicions.

In the light of these issues of reliability and compatibility Dr. Feldman concluded by calling for a new census which is timely, consistent, comprehensive in reporting of births, deaths and internal migration; timely and accurate emigration and immigration statistics. Compatibility of surveys could be enhanced by using common, consistent and conceptually robust and operationisable classifications and definitions. He recommended that a well-equipped and independent statistical agency would to all intents and purposes provide accurate and reliable social and demographic statistics.

A fresh Graduate from Mahidol University (Contd..)

It has very well developed infrastructure and a tourist friendly culture. Transportation and travel is very convenient. Important cities and beaches are easily accessible, I enjoyed visiting Chiang Mai, which is situated in hilly area and is about seven hundred k.m from Bangkok; about seven hours drive. This city has a rich cultural heritage and reminded me of Lahore. There are many renowned beaches in Thailand; Phuket, Pattaya, Chi am beaches are the most famous one. For those of you who would like to travel and shop (besides pursuing a Master's/PhD degree!), it is good to know that from Thailand it's very convenient and cheap to visit neighboring countries like Malaysia, Singapore, Laos Myanmar and Cambodia.

Mr. Shahid Munir (Associate fellow) was nominated by NIPS to pursue Masters at Mahidol University Thailand. During his one-year stay at the Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR) Mahidol University Thailand Mr. Shahid Munir completed his thesis titled "Influence of Mass media on the knowledge of HIV/AIDS Transmissions among ever married women of Pakistan". He also presented following conference papers.

- 1) HIV/AIDS Youth Past and Future
- 2) Women autonomy and Contraceptive use in Pakistan

On 7th October Mr. Shahid Munir gave an in house presentation about his thesis at the NIPS Seminar Room, which was attended by Executive Director and all Research Fellows. The presentation evoked stimulating discussion.



NIPS - News updates

- Mr. Iqbal Ahmad, Director General, Ministry of Population Welfare has joined NIPS as Director, Human Resource Development (HRD).
- Report on "Demand for Children in Rural Setting" by Mr. Zahir Hussain Fellow, Mr. Zafar Zahir Associate Fellow, Mr. Zafar Iqbal Qamar, Associate Fellow and, Mr. Faateh ud din Ahmad Programmer is completed and expected to be presented by Mr. Zahir Hussain on 14th of November 2006.
- Report on "Continuation of IUD and Injectable in Selected District of Punjab" will be presented by Ms. Aysha Sheraz and Mr. Shahid Munir on 14th of December 2006.
- Workshop on "Research Methodology and Data Analysis" was held from October 30 - November 1, 2006. The workshop was coordinated by Senior Fellow Mrs. Azra Aziz. The Deputy District Population Welfare Officers (DDPWOs) and Tehsil Population Welfare Officers (TPWOs) from Punjab were invited at NIPS for the training. Mr. Mazhar Hashmi Dy. Director General, FBS, Dr. Arshed Mehmood Director Population Council and Mr. Faateh ud din Ahmad Programmer NIPS were the resource persons.
- Dr. Shayne, Consultant PDHS from MEASURE Maryland University USA is on visit to NIPS (October 26, 2006 - November 16, 2006) to oversee the latest activities of PDHS.

PDHS - Update

(November 15, 2006)

PDHS field teams (29) started their work on September 4, 2006 in their home districts. Simultaneously all professional NIPS staff followed the field teams to facilitate and support in the use of field control sheets, questionnaire editing and linkage with Federal Bureau of Statistics offices. Quality Control Interviewers were deputed to work with various teams for three to four days to observe interviewing and filling of questionnaire process, and provide on the job training to weak interviewers. Monitoring was also undertaken by Aga Khan University colleagues in various districts to see the quality of data being recorded on child death verbal autopsies. NIPS Field Coordinators spend 3-4 days with various teams to examine their questionnaires, households contact and interviewer assignment process, questionnaire editing process, and measures taken prior to dispatch of questionnaires to NIPS, questionnaire validation and verification, etc. Project Director and Principal Investigator communicate with team supervisors and team members on regular basis. NIPS also established a comprehensive mechanism of questionnaires reception and office editing. A team of Questionnaire-Editors was trained to code open-ended questions and address any problem within the questionnaires prior to data entry. By November NIPS had received 318 PSUs from the field (31 percent of total number of PSUs).

Ms Jeanne Cushing, Macro Data Processing Specialist visited NIPS in September 2006 to support and facilitate finalization of the computer software for data entry and establish a mechanism for on-going checking of questionnaires. The software was finalized during her stay at NIPS thereby allowing a team of data entry operators to launch data entry on to computer. To-date a total of 150 plus PSUs have been entered onto computer and is being used to produce field check tables (FC tables) to examine critical areas. Dr. Shane Ryland, Consultant to Macro visited NIPS in November 2006 to meet PDHS core team and field teams across Pakistan to see their work, and review data coding and entry processes. Both Ms. Jeanne Cushing and Dr. Shane met with the Executive Director and reported satisfaction with the pace of work, quality of data, and the spirit with which teams are working in the field.



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