



Community-Led Approaches to Tackling Poverty: Who Needs What?

Policy Brief

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Introduction

The incidence of Multidimensional Poverty (MPI) in Balochistan is 71.2% as compared with the national average of 38.8%. This implies that 71.2% of the households in Balochistan do not even have the minimum access to basic goods and services which include education, health, sanitation and civic amenities. The macroeconomic solutions to micro-level problems have failed to serve as a panacea to sparsely-populated underprivileged communities in far flung areas of Balochistan. The idea of community-led approaches to tackling poverty was adopted by a European Union funded BRACE Programme. Community-led approaches to combat the challenges like poverty include activities undertaken by individuals, groups or organisations within defined geographical neighbourhoods in order to achieve social, economic or environmental objectives defined by participants with minimal external control. Thus, one of the primary objectives of the programme is to provide and disseminate evidence-based findings around poverty dynamics in Balochistan to guide policy and support the formulation of a Policy Framework for Community-Driven Local Development (CDLD).

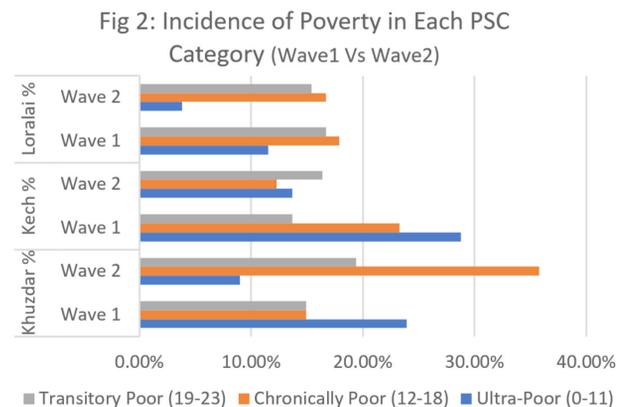
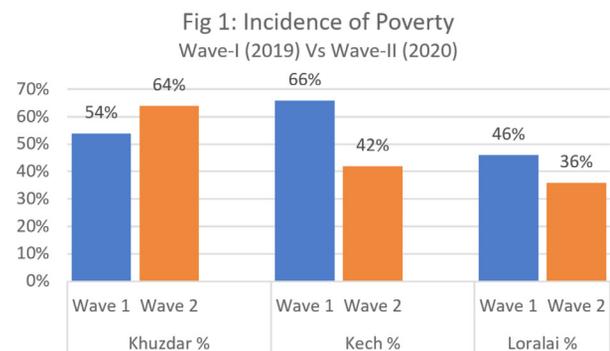
A longitudinal research study titled as “Participatory Action Research on Dynamics of Household Poverty and Inclusive Development in Balochistan with a Focus on Women’s Empowerment (PAR)” is underway. The first wave of PAR was completed in 2019 and a socio-economic baseline was established and Programme interventions were implemented that include Income Generating Grants (IGG), Community Investment Fund (CIF), Technical and Vocational Training (TVET), Community Physical Infrastructure (CPI) and awareness raising campaigns. All these interventions have been identified by the organised community households through the process of preparing Micro Investment Plans (MIP) at household level and Village Development Plans (VDP) at the village level. The impact of these interventions has been studied in

the 2nd wave of PAR through re-surveying the selected cohort of 218 respondents in Khuzdar, Kech and Loralai districts.

Results of the longitudinal study on poverty dynamics:

Programme interventions and possibly some external factors resulted in a significant decline in the incidence of poverty in surveyed households in districts Kech and Loralai. In Khuzdar, however, poverty (based on poverty score card) has increased by 10 percentage points.

Drought-like situation and lack of availability of water for agriculture usage are the key challenges for gaining a value-added agriculture output in villages of Khuzdar as reported by the respondents during wave 2. Karezat are the main sources of irrigation, which had been non-functional and have badly affected the agricultural production. Rainfall, which is the only source of irrigation water other than ground water, in Khuzdar has been lower than expected between wave 1 and wave 2.



However, an encouraging finding is that households in ultra-poor category on the Poverty Score Card (PSC) have declined in all the districts; graduating to the less poor categories. Figure 2 shows that households in poor categories decline in wave 2; implying that they graduated to non-poor categories. On the other hand, in Khuzdar, although ultra-poor households have reduced, the number of households in chronic and transitory poor has increased. Some non-poor households have fallen into poverty, as also depicted in figure 1.

The participants in the 2nd wave, perceived inflation, health expenses and low income as factors pushing them into poverty while previously majority attributed poverty to unemployment and lack of skills. With regards to factors that can pull them out of poverty, respondents in 2nd wave did not accord as much importance to human resource development and decreased dependency as they did in wave 1.

Recommendations

1. Dynamic Beneficiary Targeting:

IGG disbursement among the three districts is lowest in Khuzdar; it should be the highest considering the incidence of poverty in the drought-stricken district. IGG and CIF disbursement needs to be accelerated in all districts, especially Khuzdar where poor households have increased due to various factors. Government needs to devise macro-economic initiatives to deal with changing climate and increased droughts throughout Balochistan.

2. Aligning TVET with Local Job Market:

The study finds that in all three districts, there is a perception that illiteracy or lack of skills is not a poverty push factor. It was also observed during FGDs that a significant number of TVET beneficiaries were not employed in the vocation they were trained. This has resulted in a perception that illiteracy or lack of skill training do not push people further into poverty. TVET needs to be aligned with the goal of improving skills and supporting income generating activities to improve household income which if low is recognised by the participants of the study as one of the key factors that push vulnerable household into poverty.

3. Result oriented awareness campaigns:

Effectiveness of the awareness raising campaigns by Community Resource Persons (CRPs) using an all-encompassing Community Awareness Toolkit (CAT) can also be improved as respondents changed their perception about large family size and dependency ratio as a poverty push factor in wave 2. They do not think it is a push factor and also do not decrease dependency as a poverty pull factor. Large family size and high dependency ratio generally aggravate the impact of inflation, increase health expenses, and result in low household income, all of which are cited as poverty push factors by respondents themselves. This connection, however, seems to allude the respondents of the study and calls for improving the role of CRPs in making CAT sessions, especially on birth spacing, more effective. RSPN did a workshop in collaboration with NRSP and BRSP in Gwadar and Quetta for social organisers of nine rural districts where the BRACE Programme is being implemented.

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