

Research Report No. 71

EDUCATION STATUS OF DISTRICTS: AN EXPLORATION OF INTER-TEMPORAL CHANGES

SOCIAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

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July 2007

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SUMMARY

This research appraises inter-temporal educational status for the period 1998-2005. Access and inequality is measured through the District Education Index (DEI). DEI is a composite index and includes enrollments at various levels as well as literacy rates. Two data sources are used for this exercise: the Population Census 1998 and Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement Survey (PSLM 2005). The PSLM provides district level welfare indicators with a sample size of about 76,500 households The PSLM data is statistically comparable with the Census data, with some margin of sampling error. The comparative results indicate good progress in the enrollment and literacy rates during the period 1998-2005. Overall, about 5 percent annual growth is observed during this period in the composite index of district educational status.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education helps to improve living standards and enhances the quality of life. It can provide essential opportunities for all. Through international conventions and commitments many of the world's states, have recognized education as a human right. Needless to say that in a rapidly changing world, education has become more important than ever. Faced with increasing globalization, the rapid spread of democracy, technological innovation, the emergence of new market economies and changing public/private roles, developing countries need more highly educated and skilled populations. Similarly, individuals need added skills and information to compete and thrive.

The state of education in Pakistan however is characterized with low educational attainment and highly unequal access across income groups, between urban and rural populations, and between males and females. In terms of quality, issues and challenges of the education system include widespread teacher absenteeism, a weak management and supervision structure, shortage of trained and qualified teachers specially female teachers, a lack of dedication, motivation and interest of teachers in their profession and a lack of physical facilities. These characteristics, in terms of education quality, are more pertinent in public schooling in which about 80 percent of the country's children are enrolled. Moreover curriculum is mostly outdated and irrelevant and it does not fulfill the requirements of the present day.

The devolution of public education in Pakistan, promulgated through the Local Government Ordinance 2001, to function within the provincial framework and adhere to the federal and provincial laws, is not a response by the education authorities to widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of the existing system. Although the federal government has advocated increased decentralization at several instances in the past,² the current education devolution process is a direct result of the President's August 2001, initiative to devolve a number of responsibilities from provincial to newly elected district and sub-district level governments. This devolution plan, designed by the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB), entails transferring responsibilities—including primary-secondary education—as well as revenues from provincial to district level governments.

For detailed description of education inequalities during 1998, see Jamal and Khan (2005).

² An important step in this direction was the initiative of the Social Action Program (SAP).

The de jure new roles and responsibilities of districts under the devolution plan include; planning, monitoring and evaluation of the education system at the district level. They are also responsible for salaries and for managing teaching and non-teaching staff at the district level. The district has to generate its own funds in addition to the funds transferred by the federal and provincial government and it is the responsibility of the district to decide on how much to spend on education.

Nonetheless, during the implementation of the devolution plan some problems and issues were encountered. Some of these were an imprecise fiscal transfer framework and unclear delegation of financial powers, a multiple reporting line at the district level and the non availability of funds. In addition, other issues included the negligible role of School Management Committees (SMCs) and Citizen Community Boards (CCBs) in the management of schools, various unsettled issues between province and districts, the centralization of power at the district level particularly the delegation of financial power to the DCO, adoption of a top down planning approach by the DCOs, lack of capacity building of the officials working at the district level and most of all the unfamiliarity of the DCOs and EDOs with the new set up.

Although many issues have been resolved and some of the achievements include less cumbersome procedures for approval of small schemes, increased accountability of government functionaries, improvement in teacher attendance and wider public awareness; district governments are still facing a number of challenges in terms of working relationships with the province vis a vis fiscal transfers and development planning. Therefore, it would be too early to assess the achievements made in the devolved education sector.

In this background, it is not the intention of this research to evaluate reform and progress of devolved primary and secondary public sector education. Instead, it appraises overall district education status during 1998 and 2005. The findings will perhaps facilitate district governments for future planning and resource allocation in the education sector.

To summarize district performance in terms of enrollment and literacy, a District Education Index (DEI) is constructed which is explained in the following section. Principle findings are reported in section 3, while the last section is reserved for summary.

2. MEASURING EDUCATION PERFORMANCE

Education performance in its broader sense cannot easily be captured. In developing countries, even to get a simple 'input' factor such as enrollment poses problems. The most basic data is often unreliable, or unavailable. There are questions regarding supply side information (number of schools, students enrolled) which is provided and published by various provincial authorities. To make the exercise less disputed or debatable, demand side information available in household surveys are used to summarize district status in term of enrollment and literacy. This approach makes the analysis somewhat restrictive (in the absence of educational attainment and quality) but is preferred so as to avoid any reservations regarding the quality of the education data.

Two data sources are used for this exercise: the Population Census (Pakistan Census Organization, 1998) and the PSLM, 2005. The PSLM provides district level welfare indicators with a sample size of about 76,500 households The PSLM data is statistically comparable with the Census data with some margin of sampling error.

Districts educational status is measured through enrollment in various age cohorts and literacy rates. Three levels were chosen for the development of DEI – student population (enrollment) in age groups of 5-9³ years, 10-14 years and 15-24 years. These levels represent primary, secondary and tertiary grades. The tertiary grade is further divided into general (arts or science) and technical (includes education programs of engineering, medicine, public health, commerce and business administration, teaching, agriculture and law) enrollment ratios. Literacy rate is defined as the ratio of literate persons (who can read a newspaper and write a simple letter in any one language) to the population of 10 years and above.

The above five indicators are simple rates (enrolment or literacy) and may easily be combined. Instead of assigning equal weight to each indicator, Principal Component Technique of Factor Analysis is used to generate weights. This statistical procedure assigns the greatest weight to the variable which has the greatest variance (or dispersion). Similarly, the indicator with the lowest level of inequality will have the lowest weight. DEI is, therefore,

therefore, 5-9 age group is taken for both periods.

The relevant age for primary school is 6-10 years due to the pre-schooling (nursery and preparatory (Katchi) classes) phenomenon. This age group may be compiled from the information available in PSLM. However, Census 1998, only gives information with respect to the 5-9 age group. For comparative purposes,

the weighted average of five indicators with weights derived through a statistical procedure. To observe the provincial, regional and gender differences, DEI is computed separately for provinces, for rural and urban areas, and for male/female populations.

To comprehend the inequalities in the educational opportunities, a simple measure is used which is the Maximum to Minimum Ratio (MMR). The MMR of DEI provides a measure of the range of national or provincial educational disparities. If this ratio is small (close to 1), then it would mean that the districts have relatively equal level of education. If this measure is large, then the interpretation is more problematic, as it does not tell us if the high ratio is due to substantial variation in the distribution of DEI or the presence of outliers. Nevertheless, MMR provides a quick, easy to comprehend and politically powerful measure of regional inequality.

3. MAJOR FINDINGS

First, some comments on the education indicators chosen for this analysis warrant attention. As we have taken student population in various age cohorts, ⁴ a clear boundary between primary, secondary and tertiary levels is not feasible. Enrollment in the age cohort 5-9 indicates the net primary enrollment rate. However, enrollment in the age cohort 10-14 represents both over-age primary students and net enrollment in secondary level. Similarly, over-age secondary students and net tertiary enrollment are included in the age cohort 15-24. This goes to explain why the average level in enrollment 10-14, is high as compared with net primary enrollment rate (Table 1). Therefore, primary, secondary and tertiary levels are indicative and this caveat should be kept in mind while discussing enrollment rates.⁵

Tables 1 and 2, summarize levels as well as dispersion in the components of DEI. These tables reflect an optimistic picture of the progress in the education sector during the period of analysis. For instance, literacy rate has increased about 10 percentage points and enrollments in 5-9 age cohort, are 22 percentage points greater than before. However, no substantive

⁴ For instance, Population Census provides information in this way: number of children attending school in the 5-9 age group. Definitely, it is possible to compute standard gross and net enrollments in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary from the data in the PSLM. However, the same format is applied to compute enrollment rates to make them comparable.

⁵ An alternative option was to compute combined enrollment rate for the 5-24 age cohort. But this option does not allow substitution among various levels of education. For instance, a shortfall in tertiary education may be substituted with primary level. A weighted average index with enrollment at various levels is, therefore, preferred.

change is evident in the age cohort 15-24 years, which is reflective of tertiary education. MMR which is a simple and crude measure of inequality is also pointing towards a positive trend in terms of reducing disparities among districts. Each component of DEI now has a smaller range as compared with 1998.

TABLE 1 DISTRICT EDUCATION INDEX [Average Value of Components]						
	2005	1998				
Students in 5-9 Year Age Group [Primary]	55.67	33.56				
Students in 10-14 Year Age Group [Secondary]	59.07	43.93				
Students in 15-24 Year Age Group [Tertiary – General]	20.54	17.53				
Students in 15-24 Year Age Group [Tertiary – Technical]	0.38	0.34				
Literacy Rate	44.97	34.90				

TABLE 2 DISTRICT EDUCATION INDEX [Dispersion in the Components of DEI]		
	Mini	mum mum atio
	2005	1998
Students in 5-9 Year Age Group [Primary]	4.55	19.99
Students in 10-14 Year Age Group [Secondary]	3.29	12.00
Students in 15-24 Year Age Group [Tertiary – General]	8.31	20.68
Students in 15-24 Year Age Group [Tertiary – Technical]	190.92	327.91
Literacy Rate	4.00	6.79

TABLE 3 DISTRICT EDUCATION INDEX [Inter-Temporal Changes]				
	1981	1998		2005
Overall	17.18	29.5	41.0	
		[3.2%	6]	[4.8%]
Punjab	23.72	37.9	47.9	
		[2.89	6]	[3.4%]
Sindh	20.29	26.6	38.5	
		[1.6%	6]	[5.4%]
NWFP	15.06	28.3	42.4	
		[3.8%	6]	[5.9%]
Balochistan	7.67	20.6	31.5	
		[6.0%	6]	[6.2%]
Note: Annual Growth Rates (AGF	R)s from the last period in	average DEI are show	n in parenthesis	•

TABLE 4 OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN [5-14 Age Group]						
	2005 1998					
Overall	42.8	62.3	-5.2			
Punjab	31.5	48.9	-6.1			
Sindh 49.8 67.5 -4.3						
NWFP 40.0 66.3 -7.0						
Balochistan	57.0	74.1	-3.7			

TABLE 5 TOP 10 DISTRICTS OF PAKISTAN [According to DEI 2005]							
	District District Annual Education Education Index - 2005 Index - 1998 (%)						
Punjab	Rawalpindi	65.8	61.0	1.1			
	Chakwal	62.8	47.8	4.0			
	Lahore	61.9	52.2	2.5			
	Jhelum	61.4	56.3	1.2			
	Sialkot	61.0	54.0	1.7			
	Gujrat	60.3	55.6	1.2			
	Gujranwala	59.0	46.3	3.5			
	Attock 58.6 42.3 4.8						
Sindh	Karachi	63.6	51.7	3.0			
NWFP	Abottabad	61.5	47.8	3.7			

TABLE 6 LOWEST 10 DISTRICTS OF PAKISTAN [According to DEI 2005]					
District District Annual Education Education Growth Rate Index - 2005 Index - 1998 (%)					
Sindh	Jacobabad	25.3	20.2	3.3	
	Thatta	27.4	14.8	9.2	
NWFP	Kohistan	24.4	7.5	18.4	
Balochistan	Nasirabad	17.6	9.0	10.0	
	Jhal Magsi	18.2	5.8	17.7	
	Qillah Saifullah	23.1	19.1	2.8	
	Musa Khel	25.2	10.5	13.3	
	Qillabadullah	25.4	14.3	8.5	
	Panjgur	26.0	33.1	-3.4	
	Kharan	26.5	13.5	10.1	

TABLE 7
DISTRICT EDUCATION INDEX – REGIONAL SCENARIO
[Level and Inequality]

	Average Level		Maximum/Min	imum Ratio [%]	
	2005	1998	Growth	2005	1998
All Areas					
Combined	41.00	29.48	5.74	3.73	10.49
Male	44.08	37.78	2.95	2.77	7.70
Female	31.03	21.61	6.61	16.30	34.24
Rural Areas					
Combined	37.37	26.68	6.00	4.03	10.48
Male	41.67	35.78	3.08	2.97	8.23
Female	26.42	16.81	8.29	15.56	29.77
Urban Areas					
Combined	54.52	46.69	2.49	2.25	4.99
Male	53.21	53.53	0.06	1.86	2.99
Female	48.00	37.88	3.98	4.67	21.71

TABLE 8					
DISTRICT EDUCATION INDEX – PROVINCIAL SCENARIO [Level and Inequality]					
	A	verage Lev		T	imum Ratio [%]
	2005	1998	Growth	2005	1998
Combined					
Punjab	47.90	37.91	3.68	2.01	3.04
Sindh	38.51	26.63	5.94	2.51	4.01
NWFP	42.36	28.33	6.77	2.52	6.41
Balochistan	31.53	20.58	7.50	2.92	8.83
Female					
Punjab	42.13	31.46	4.76	2.68	4.14
Sindh	28.08	19.61	5.99	4.49	7.25
NWFP	28.74	17.27	9.37	14.88	23.61
Balochistan	19.57	13.31	6.90	6.94	18.07
Male					
Punjab	47.49	45.44	0.84	1.66	2.55
Sindh	41.65	33.81	3.43	1.96	2.99
NWFP	49.18	40.06	3.61	1.69	5.00

4.97

2.37

6.67

27.31

35.77

Balochistan

Table 3 presents level and inter-temporal changes in DEI. On the average, the value of DEI during 2005 indicates a shortfall of 59 percent (as against shortfall of 71 percent in 1998) from a perfect score of 100 percent. Overall, about 5 percent Annual Growth Rate (AGR) is observed during 1998-2005, while the growth rate was 3.2 percent for 1981-1998.⁶ The comparison therefore indicates pleasant progress in the enrollment and literacy rate during the 1998-2005. In the provinces, Balochistan is depicting more or less constant AGR of 6 percent from 1981. However, it is worth mentioning that the high growth rate in Balochistan may be due to very low base. A remarkable change in growth rate is observed in the NWFP province. Moreover, the magnitudes of DEI of NWFP in both periods (1998 and 2005) are greater than the DEI of Sindh. In fact, the gap in DEI between two provinces is widening.

District-wise inter-temporal changes in DEI are furnished in the Appendix. A few observations emerge. In Punjab, no district is showing double digit growth rate per annum during 1998 and 2005. Rajanpur district, which was at the bottom in ranking and had the lowest DEI in 1998, has changed its position with the growth rate of 9.5 percent per annum. This growth rate is the highest in the province. Lodhran district has replaced Rajanpur and it has the lowest rank in 2005 in terms of overall DEI. In Sindh, Badin, Shikarpur and Tharparker districts are showing double-digit growth rates, while the lowest (1.5 percent) growth rate is observed in Larkana district. District Jacobabad has the lowest magnitude of DEI in the province. The performance of districts Batagram, Lower Dir, Kohistan and Shangla in NWFP, is relatively better and they are showing double-digit growth rate in the DEI during the period of analysis. Interestingly, no growth is observed in DEI for Peshawar district, the capital of NWFP. Districts of Balochistan, which are performing relatively better and showing double-digit growth rate per annum include; Awaran, Jhal Magsi, Kalat, Kharan, Musa Khel, Nasirabad and Zhob. Again, it is surprising that no or insignificant growth rate is observed in Quetta and Ziarat, which are relatively developed districts of Balochistan. Panigur district is the only district of Pakistan which is showing a decline in DEI magnitude.

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⁶ DEI is also computed from the Population Census 1981. However, due to massive changes in district boundaries during 1981 and 1988, the DEI for 1981 is computed only for provinces. Moreover, DEI 1981 is not disaggregated into urban/rural and male/female dimensions.

To comprehend the improvement in devolved education responsibility (primary and secondary, 5-14 age cohort), Table 4 is developed. According to the table, the magnitude of out-of-school children has declined at a rate of 5 percent per annum during 1998 and 2005. Again, NWFP is leading with a declining rate of 7 percent. The rates of decline in out-of-school children for Balochistan and Sindh are close to 4 percent. It should be, however, noticed that during 2005, about 43 percent children of ages between 5 and 14 were not attending school.

Table 5 and 6 reflect the top 10 and the lowest 10 districts of Pakistan in terms of DEI, respectively. These are developed to highlight provincial disparities in the access to education. Eight out of top 10 districts belong to Punjab province. Abbottabad is representing NWFP in the top-10 category, while excluding Karachi, no district of Sindh appears in the category. As expected, 7 out of 10 bottom districts belong to Balochistan. Jacobabad and Thatta represent Sindh in the bottom-10 category, while only Kohistan district of NWFP is listed in the category from that province.

Table 7, presents an overall picture of regional and gender education access and inequality. During 2005, females were 13 percentage points behind males thereby indicating that inequality is higher among females than males. The MMR is 16 for female DEI as against 3 for male DEI. However, the table confirms the improvement in the level as well as reduction of disparities among districts in terms of female participation in education. In fact, growth in female DEI is quite substantive, especially in rural areas as compared with the rate associated with male DEI. A low level of educational status with high inequality is evident in rural areas. The position of urban females is also vulnerable, however, to a lesser extent. The highest access and the lowest inequality emerged in DEI for urban males, despite the fact that zero growth is observed in urban male DEI during 1998-2005.

Table 8, portrays the overall provincial picture with gender dimension. Punjab is leading with relatively higher values of DEI and lesser inequality ratios. Nonetheless, the growth rates of DEIs for Punjab are quite low as compared with other provinces. The range between minimum and maximum DEI is also the lowest in Punjab for the study period. The table also confirms that Sindh lags behind NWFP even in female education. Interestingly, the growth rate in female DEI for NWFP is the highest during the period of analysis. The MMR is also

the highest for NWFP female DEI. Balochistan, as expected, depicts a depressing picture both in terms of average levels and inequality.

4. SUMMARY

After the devolution of power, it is the responsibility of the district government to plan, monitor and evaluate education systems at district level. New role and responsibilities of districts under the devolution plan include; planning, monitoring and evaluation of education system at the district level. The new system of devolved education will perhaps help out in improving not only participation rate but also in enhancing the quality of education and reducing gender and regional disparities.

Nonetheless, still after 6 years in action, district governments are facing a number of challenges in terms of working relationships with provinces in terms of fiscal transfers and development planning. Therefore, it would be too early to assess the impact of devolution of power on the status of education.

Hence, this research is intended to appraise overall district status during 1998-2005, without exploring the cause and effect relationship between devolution of power and educational status of district.

The educational status is examined through the DEI, which is a composite index and includes enrollments at various levels and literacy rates. Comparative DEIs for both periods depict good progress in the enrollment and literacy rate during 1998-2005. The estimated value of DEI in 2005 indicates a shortfall of 59 percent (as against shortfall of 71 percent in 1998) from a perfect score of 100 percent. Overall, about 5 percent annual growth is observed during 1998-2005, while the growth rate was 3.2 percent for the 1981-1998 period. It is also observed that about 58 percent children of ages between 5 and 14 were not attending school in 2005.

In provinces, major findings include;

❖ The magnitudes of DEI of NWFP in both periods (1998 and 2005) are greater than the DEI of Sindh province.

- ❖ Punjab province is leading with relatively higher values of DEI and lesser inequality. Nonetheless, the growth rates of DEIs for Punjab are quite low as compared with other provinces.
- ❖ The rates of decline in out-of-school children for Balochistan and Sindh provinces are close to 4 percent, while NWFP is leading with a declining rate of 7 percent during 1998-2005.
- ❖ Sindh lags behind NWFP even in female education.
- ❖ Balochistan, as expected depicts a depressing picture both in terms of average levels and inequality.

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APPENDIX – A

TABLE A-1 DISTRICT EDUCATION INDEX [Punjab Province]					
	District Education Index - 2005	District Education Index - 1998	Annual Growth Rate (%)		
Attock	58.6	42.3	4.8		
Bahawalnagar	41.5	30.8	4.3		
Bahawalpur	37.6	28.5	4.0		
Bhakkar	42.2	29.4	5.3		
Chakwal	62.8	47.8	4.0		
D.G.Khan	37.3	23.3	6.9		
Faisalabad	51.9	44.9	2.1		
Gujranwala	59.0	46.3	3.5		
Gujrat	60.3	55.6	1.2		
Hafizabad	47.2	38.7	2.9		
Jhang	40.8	33.5	2.8		
Jhelum	61.4	56.3	1.2		
Kasur	47.0	31.6	5.8		
Khanewal	43.4	33.3	3.9		
Khushab	47.6	35.6	4.2		
Lahore	61.9	52.2	2.5		
Leiah	44.5	31.2	5.2		
Lodhran	34.2	25.5	4.3		
Mandi Bhauddin	52.1	44.0	2.5		
Mianwali	47.4	38.4	3.1		
Multan	41.7	35.5	2.3		
Muzaffargarh	32.7	23.6	4.8		
Narowal	54.2	44.8	2.8		
Okara	40.4	33.6	2.7		
Pakpattan	40.8	28.9	5.1		
R. Y. Khan	37.3	27.1	4.7		
Rajanpur	38.0	20.1	9.5		
Rawalpindi	65.8	61.0	1.1		
Sahiwal	45.6	36.4	3.3		
Sargodha	49.7	41.9	2.5		
Sheikhupura	50.8	37.5	4.4		
Sialkot	61.0	54.0	1.7		
T.T.Singh	52.1	44.8	2.2		
Vehari	39.5	30.6	3.7		

TABLE A-2 DISTRICT EDUCATION INDEX							
[Sindh Province]							
	District District Annual Education Education Growth Rate Index - 2005 Index - 1998 (%)						
Badin	37.1	18.1	10.8				
Dadu	35.4	29.0	2.9				
Ghotki	39.7	22.9	8.2				
Hyderabad	41.5	32.9	3.3				
Jacobabad	25.3	20.2	3.3				
Karachi	63.6	51.7	3.0				
Khairpur	37.2	29.8	3.2				
Larkana	31.2	28.1	1.5				
Mirpur Khas	36.1	25.4	5.1				
Nawab Shah	34.6	26.3	4.0				
Noshero Feroz	47.2	31.4	6.0				
Sanghar	35.3	26.4	4.2				
Shikarpur	43.1	20.6	11.2				
Sukkur	47.3	35.6	4.1				
Tharparkar	34.0	12.9	14.9				
Thatta	27.4	14.8	9.2				

TABLE A-3 DISTRICT EDUCATION INDEX [NWFP Province]

	District Education Index - 2005	District Education Index - 1998	Annual Growth Rate (%)
Abotabad	61.5	47.8	3.7
Bannu	40.7	24.9	7.3
Batagram	36.4	14.7	13.8
Buner	33.8	21.0	7.0
Charsadda	38.9	26.0	5.9
Chitral	52.6	39.6	4.1
D.I.Khan	33.8	24.6	4.7
Dir Lower	47.7	23.1	10.9
Dir Upper	31.3	19.4	7.1
Hangu	42.9	26.5	7.1
Haripur	53.6	44.4	2.7
Karak	48.5	34.9	4.8
Kohat	46.1	35.8	3.7
Kohistan	24.4	7.5	18.4
Lakki Marwat	40.1	28.3	5.1
Malakand	49.0	29.1	7.7
Mansehra	47.7	34.6	4.7
Mardan	46.8	31.7	5.7
Nowshera	44.6	33.4	4.2
Peshawar	43.6	43.7	.0
Shangla	31.5	13.7	12.7
Swabi	47.1	30.4	6.5
Swat	42.0	23.8	8.4
Tank	32.1	21.0	6.2

TABLE A-4 DISTRICT EDUCATION INDEX [Balochistan Province]			
	District Education Index - 2005	District Education Index - 1998	Annual Growth Rate (%)
Awaran	28.1	12.0	12.9
Barkhan	30.6	16.6	9.1
Bolan/Kachhi	28.7	16.3	8.4
Chaghi	29.5	26.1	1.7
Gwadar	36.4	26.9	4.4
Jafarabad	28.6	17.2	7.5
Jhal Magsi	18.2	5.8	17.7
Kalat	35.5	15.7	12.3
Ketch/Turbat	48.7	30.8	6.8
Kharan	26.5	13.5	10.1
Khuzdar	29.5	16.4	8.8
Lasbela	29.9	19.5	6.3
Loralai	30.6	17.8	8.0
Mastung	39.4	22.8	8.1
Musa Khel	25.2	10.5	13.3
Nasirabad	17.6	9.0	10.0
Panjgur	26.0	33.1	-3.4
Pashin	46.6	27.5	7.8
Qilla Abadullah	25.4	14.3	8.5
Qilla Saifullah	23.1	19.1	2.8
Quetta	51.5	51.4	.0
Sibi	33.4	19.7	7.9
Zhob	27.5	14.1	10.0
Ziarat	40.1	37.8	.9