



Abbottabad

An Integrated Development Vision

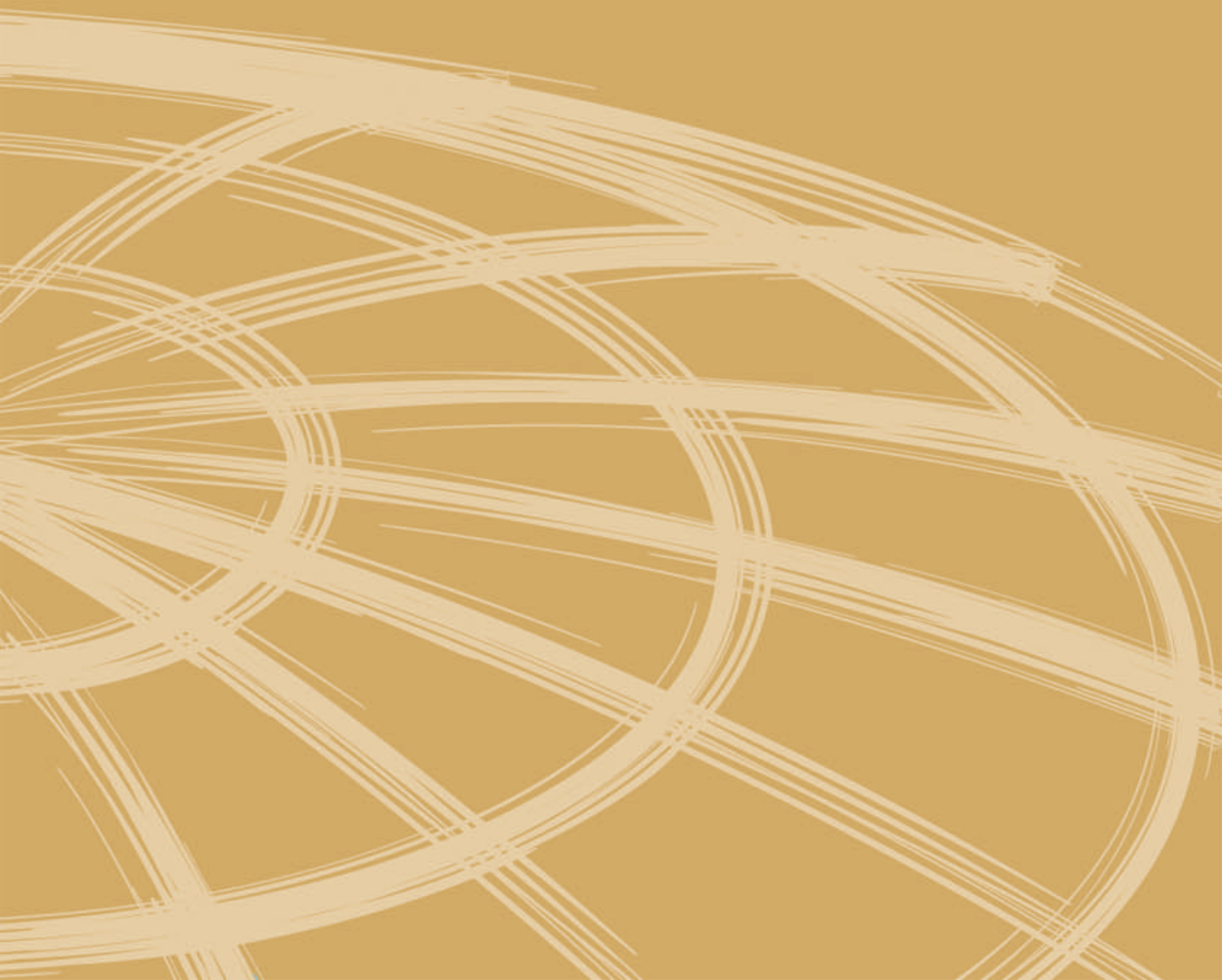


An Overview



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District Abbottabad

An Introduction

District Abbottabad is spread over an area of 1,967 square kilometers, and as per the last census of 1998 its population is 881,666. With an annual growth rate of 1.82 per cent the population of the district is expected to double by 2047. Abbottabad is one of the most densely populated districts in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) with 447 persons/ sq.km. While 82 per cent of the people live in rural areas there has been a perceptible increase in urbanization from 12.5 per cent in 1972 to 18.6 per cent in 2001 living in urban settlements. So whereas in 1883 Abbottabad, the district's headquarter, was a small town of 1,371 inhabitants it now has more than 100,000 people. This growth places great pressure on urban services etc.

The district is composed of 46 Union Councils with three Town Municipal Administration of Havelian, Abbottabad and Nawan Shehr. The District Government came into being with the recent devolution process.

It would be of interest to note that the name Abbottabad is derived from the name of its headquarter town which is named after the British Major James Abbott, who carried out the first Summary Settlement of Hazara in 1847. He later on became its first Deputy Commissioner when it was created as district after the annexation of Punjab in 1849. The mild and pleasant surroundings of Abbottabad are described in the settlement report compiled by Col. Wace on the conclusion of 1st Regular Settlement of the area in 1872 and recorded in the 1883-84 Gazetteer of Hazara:-

"The pleasant situation of Abbottabad, coupled with the accessibility of its mountains, makes it an all time favorable station. The scenery is picturesque in the extreme and charming from its endless variety. Its higher mountains are clothed with pines and other fine timber while the lower ranges are clothed with an almost unbroken spread of grass and brush wood...studded with narrow fields industriously terraced out of hill sides".

The total reported area of the district is 179,653.5 hectares, with 20.3 per cent designated as forest and 48.2 per cent classed as agricultural land. Only 11 per cent of the agriculture land has the facility of irrigation and the yields per hectare in relatively lower than other districts in the NWFP. The district is dependent on imports



from other parts of the country to meet the food requirements of the population. In 1999-2000 the district produced only 26,000 tons of wheat against the total requirement of 79,848 tons. Maize yields for the same year were 46,725 tons but the consumption stood at 74,906 tons. The years 1996-2000 saw a sharp fall of 27 per cent in rice production. Forests in the district are spread over an area of 36,394 hectares with major chunk as reserved forests.

Subsistence level agriculture is the mainstay of the economy of the district, with husbandry, poultry farming, small and medium scale private businesses, mining, small scale industries, public sector employments and private sector enterprises serving as supplementary and complementary elements of the economy. The poverty level in the district is by and large the same as other areas of the province, with conservative estimates indicating that almost 45 per cent of the provincial population living below the poverty line.

While 31 per cent of the houses in the district are kacha, 27 per cent of the population lives in houses comprising one room only. The population of the district is overwhelmingly Muslim (99 per cent). Hindko is the primary language with Punjabi, Urdu and Pushto spoken in urban areas.

There are strong tribal affiliations in the district but the social structure in Abbottabad is harmonious. The major tribes are Abbasi, Dhund, Awan, Gujar, Jadoon, Karlal, Tanoli.



Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision

Rising poverty in Abbottabad along with rapid resource depletion, dwindling opportunities and over grown population are compelling realities which demand a serious look at our approach to development, progress and passage towards a better future. Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision is an effort to focus on these issues. Compiled in two stand-alone volumes the strategy is basically aimed at:

- Critically assessing the existing situation in core areas.
- Identifying the strengths and opportunities of these sectors.
- Redirecting the development process to address critical issues in consonance with the parameters of sustainable development.
- Integrating the ongoing development process in various sectors that was previously undertaken in isolation.
- Indicating a way forward for satisfying present day needs without compromising the imperatives of conservation for future generations.

A brief narration of the situation in the area addressed in the strategy, the status of ongoing interventions and recommendations for future are outlined below:



Agriculture

Small land holdings with no irrigation facility are the reason why only subsistence level farming is undertaken in the district. The minimal quantity of surplus produce available gives little or no return to the farmers in the market, which in any case, is devoid of regulatory oversight. Farmers, in this hilly and difficult area, have very little access to transportation. Only 35 per cent of the reported area in the district is available for cultivation with a small proportion, 11 per cent, under irrigation. There are no prospects of change in the foreseeable future. Extension services in the area are poor and restricted to education and motivation only. The Agriculture Department has no mechanism to regulate the quality of inputs. As a result substandard and adulterated fertilizers and pesticides cause irreversible loss to the farmers. Continuous and unchecked escalation in prices adds to their problems.

The climate of Abbottabad is suited to fruit production, especially apples. Yield averages for maize and wheat are relatively better compared to similarly located areas in the province and there is considerable scope for improvement in maize yields.

Agriculture Extension, Barani Areas Development Project, Sarhad Rural Support Programme, Sungi Development Foundation and Agriculture Development Bank are some of the institutions providing various services in the sector. However, despite the presence of so many institutions, agriculture in the district has not shown much improvement and lies stagnant. This state of affairs is due to many factors that include limitations of the extension services, scattered and disintegrated interventions and indifference to the core issues of the sector despite it being the main stay of the economy.

While a majority of the population is employed in agriculture but the output in this sector leaves much to be desired. Also there had been no serious effort to facilitate and encourage women to access extension services in order to redeem the continuous waste of valuable human resource and knowledge base.

The Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision has, among others, the following recommendations for the agricultural sector:

- Evaluation of new approaches such as off-season vegetable, cultivation of new fruit, vegetable and cash crop varieties;
- Establishment of an objective, validated database of statistics to assess the status of key yields indicators.
- Coordination among natural resource-related departments, projects, NGOs and community-based organizations to improve timeliness and cost effectiveness of interventions.
- Establishment of key indicators, their dissemination to the lowest tiers of local government and farmers, setting of annual targets and assigning individual, collective and departmental responsibility.
- Objectively planned capacity-building effort for the extension department with regard to operational resources, mobility and coverage; awareness and understanding of the latest farming practices; capacity to transfer this knowledge to farmers;
- Provision of administrative and legislative cover for the supervisory role of the department in monitoring the production and use of seeds,, pesticides and fertilizer;
- Seeking innovative solutions to overcome water shortages. Improving irrigation and examining various water harvesting techniques on a small scale,
- Provision of legislative cover for market regulation to protect the interests of farmers.
- Formalization of gender participation in natural resource management activities,
- Introducing changes in current credit extension policies, removal of procedural difficulties; guidance to rural farmers in investment, record keeping and repayment schedules.
- Shifting the focus from subsistence farming to a market-oriented approach through capacity building, improvement in road access, market regulation, innovative land use, establishment of cooperatives and support from the private sector.



Forests and Watersheds

Forests cover some 20 per cent of the total area of Abbottabad and account for 5.4 per cent of the province's forest resources even though the district itself covers only 1.8 per cent of the total land area of the province. A major portion of these forests in Abbottabad are reserved forests. By and large forests are managed departmentally. The concept of participatory management of this resource is yet to be enunciated in the management policies with regard to the forests in this district. These forests have been subject to illegal felling, regeneration failure, and progressive depletion. Lack of continuity at the institutional level and the absence of participatory management has resulted in severe depletion of as much as 45 per cent of forest cover. Harvesting and marketing has been the hallmark of the working plans. In the absence of affordable alternative fuels, 85 per cent of the households are dependant on wood as fuel and source of energy. Abbottabad loses 2.8 million tons of soil annually. This loss could be controlled with watershed programmes, but only three of the seven watersheds in the district are included in the regular programmes. Some of the initiatives suggested in the strategy are as under:

- Determination of the actual forest cover and review of existing protection and promotion mechanisms;
- Consideration of options for development of social forestry as priority on the agenda of the District Government;
- Assisting forest department control illegal felling and removal of timber;
- Promoting efficient use and energy conservation along with efforts for expanding gas supply to rural areas;
- Actively involving local communities in managing forests, parks and reserves;
- Streamlining formulation and implementation of working plans;
- Ensuring meaningful coordination among various components of the sector,
- Devising a master plan to integrate communities and the forest department, with special emphasis on women;
- Embedding participatory orientation in the management plans of natural resource management sectors and
- Optimizing the impact of watershed programmes through quantification and prioritization of key issues

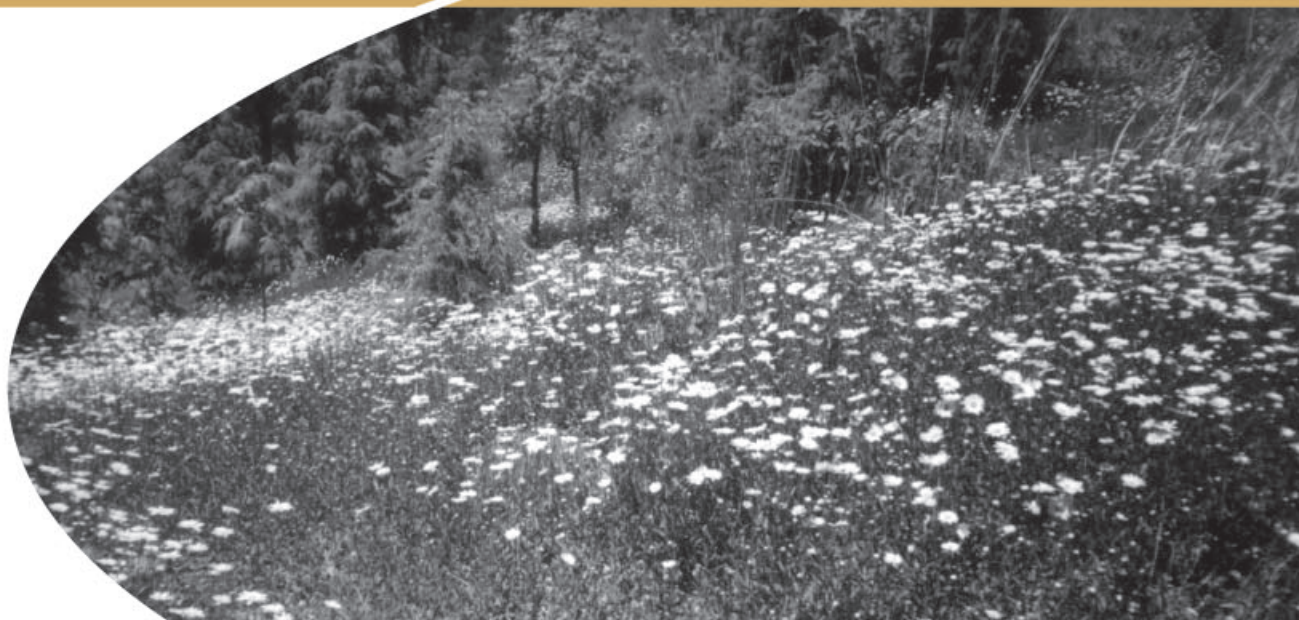


Livestock and Poultry

Livestock rearing is common in Abbottabad and while the number of livestock in the district has grown there has been no effort to address feed requirements and other husbandry inputs. Only 25 per cent of fodder used is produced in the district and 90 per cent of poultry feed is imported from other areas. Extension services are dysfunctional in remote areas with only 14 per cent coverage of the livestock.

Poultry farming has evolved as an industrial activity in the last several years with small scale domestic and large scale commercial producers in operation. However, few administrative, technical, marketing or financial incentives have been provided for this sector. Feed shortages, poor breed improvement and little knowledge of modern techniques are persistent problems. Public sector departments operate in isolation and without any participatory input from the stakeholders. Support services are poor and marketing facilities are non-existent. Abbottabad is recognized as a national poultry center and with its favorable climate and proximity to major markets it is poised to become a major poultry exporter. Nevertheless the progress achieved so far needs to be consolidated with capacity development and public-private cooperation to provide support and inputs such as breed improvement, feed supply, disease control, marketing support and the use of advanced technology. This sector has the potential of revolutionizing the economy and alleviating poverty in the district. Few of the recommendations in the Strategy for the sector are listed below:

- Solution of key husbandry issues, particularly the absence of indigenous breeds and inadequacy of insemination services.
- Seeking input from communities, projects and private sector in developing ways and means to improve the scale of women's contribution in the sector and assessing capacity shortfalls in public sector departments, local communities, producers and financial institutions for devising remedial interventions.
- Expanding extension services by employing female workers to improve their efficacy
- Formulation of a comprehensive marketing and production strategy for the poultry sector to address market volatility, overproduction and pricing.
- Providing support to backyard poultry producers, particularly women.
- Encouraging and promoting coordination between the public and private sectors to maximize private-sector participation and limit administrative input to enforcement and support functions only.



Grazing Land and Fodder Reserves

Abbottabad has grazing land spread over an estimated expanse of 90, 000 hectares, but there are no scientific studies or reliable data to assess the current status of this land. Matters relating to rangelands are managed by the Forest and Agriculture Departments without clear delineation of mandates and responsibilities. This is indicative of the fact that grazing lands and fodder reserves are not a priority for any single department. Fodder production stands at a nominal 9,616 tons which is short of the minimum requirement by a massive 75 per cent. Neglecting the sector is in sharp contrast to the official recognition of its importance in the National Conservation Strategy which states that rangelands "need to be managed if optimum productivity is to be both achieved and sustained". Given the importance and centrality of the sector to the economy of the district, the Strategy suggests the following prescription for improvement:

- Streamlining management of rangelands and determination of jurisdictional areas of different departments and initiating a dialogue for delegation of rangeland management to the District Government.
- Developing a comprehensive planning framework for addressing fodder shortages with emphasis on community participation.
- Using research findings to improve practices, introducing crop varieties with high fodder value and cultivating fodder trees.
- Entrusting communities with responsibility to ensure ecological stability of grazing lands.
- Building capacity of public and private sector stakeholders and sensitizing line departments on acquiring competence in participatory techniques, ecology, livestock husbandry, agricultural economics and fodder development.
- Evaluating the impact of past initiatives to determine achievements, failures and their causes and incorporating the learning into annual evaluation exercise
- Advocacy for highlighting the importance of grazing lands in poverty alleviation to mobilize communities for understanding this relationship



Biodiversity, Parks and Protected Areas

Defined as "variability among living organisms from all sources", biodiversity is the very essence of life. It includes ecosystems as well as ecological complexes of which they are a part. In Abbottabad, biodiversity is under threat from over exploitation, habitat destruction, soil erosion and excessive grazing. By and large this is due to mismanagement and poor understanding of the importance of biological diversity and its impact on life. Its conservation is hampered by the general lack of coordination and the absence of integrated interventions.

Abbottabad is home to three of the twelve habitats identified in the province but managerial arrangements of these habitats are far from satisfactory. Ayubia National Park and Qalandarabad Game Reserve are two protected areas in the district. As a result, some 6 per cent of the district's total land area is protected. As a matter of fact protected areas in the province do not actually protect wildlife or habitats, nor do they serve any other significant purpose. Abbottabad is no exception in this regard where no effective management or enforcement mechanisms exist. In general, parks and reserves have been handled in perfunctory manner, using a 'conservation-in-isolation' approach. The Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision suggests the following remedial measures in this regard:

- Compilation of a comprehensive inventory of genetic species and ecosystem diversity of the district and review of the manners in which threats to biodiversity could be addressed
- Establishing specific, measurable, attainable, reliable and time-bound indicators to help set goals and formulating coordination mechanisms to achieve targets.
- Using capacity building, advocacy and communications to raise awareness about biodiversity and promotion of understanding that biodiversity and protected areas are vital economic entities that can help in poverty alleviation



- Evaluating statutory support, biodiversity specific legislation and measures to reform the macro framework.
- Enforcement of the Environmental Impact Assessment regime to make development projects undergo assessment before implementation.
- Undertaking a survey of parks and protected areas to assess shortcomings and initiate remedial measures.
- Development of master plan for biodiversity ensuring input from the widest possible range of sources.
- Extending the protected areas network to 10% of the district's total area in line with Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy commitments

Fisheries

An estimated 117 km of rivers and streams run through Abbottabad but the potential of these water bodies to sustain fisheries has not yet been explored. Current output in the sector has never gone beyond two tons in any year. Habitat protection and enrichment is not a priority at local or provincial level and little has been done to check the discharge of dangerous effluents into water sources, which not only undermines water quality but also threatens the existence of fish species.

Water shortages aggravated by droughts and resultant focus on expanding drinking water coverage throw into doubt the capacity of the district's freshwater resources to sustain pisciculture. The district's fisheries and aquatic potential needs to be systematically studied. With a view to develop fisheries resources as a component of a diversified economy, the Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision has the following prescription:

- Enabling the wildlife, forest and fisheries department to undertake the exercise of audit of the fisheries resources for assessing the potential for future development.
- Addressing the pressure of pollution and its impact on aquatic resource deterioration and biodiversity loss and protecting aquatic resources from encroachment.
- Pursuing private-sector involvement in fisheries and examining the feasibility of establishing commercial fish farms. Motivating donors and projects already active in various natural resource management activities to enter the sector.
- Enriching aquatic resources on a site-specific basis through species introduction, habitat rehabilitation and protection.
- Providing institutional strengthening inputs to the fisheries department to cover technical knowledge, policy support and procedures conducive to sustainable development.

Mining

Mineral development is a low priority in Abbottabad. Total mineral output of the district in 1999-2000 was 106,701 tons with 84 per cent soapstone and limestone. Mining being a provincial subject is a complicated area for district-level interventions and minerals being a non-renewable resource are prima facie an unsustainable activity. These imperatives of the sector demand responsible management and careful use but it is unfortunate that the nonrenewable aspect of this resource has not been acknowledged, with the result that issues of minimizing wastage and optimizing recovery have not been addressed. The sector operates without regulation. Open pit and underground mining practices in the district have devastating effects on the ecosystem and the communities in the mining areas.

Given the district's mineral wealth, mining has the potential to serve as a key component in a diversified economy. But the trade-off between economic benefits and environmental damage needs to be carefully examined which is practically impossible in the current situation. The Strategy, keeping in view the limited space for district level interventions, proposes the following steps:

- Negotiating some degree of power for the District Government with regard to oversight, compliance and revenue sharing.
- Preparation of a district level master plan for mining with focus on addressing critical issues of health hazards, workers' welfare, training and enforcement of the EIA regime and responsible mining practices.
- Evaluating pollution impacts such as water contamination, dangerous emissions, noise and dust, as well as habitat destruction.
- Formulations of policy for efficient extraction, control of whole sale destruction of mined areas, maximization of recovery and minimizing of harmful impacts.
- Establishing annual indicators to check fluctuations in output and enable production sequencing.
- Evaluating the establishment of industrial units based on indigenous mineral resources, to alleviate poverty and generate employment.

Energy

In Abbottabad wood is the primary source of cooking fuel. Electricity from the national grid covers 75 per cent of the district, but estimating rural supply is difficult in the absence of uniform reporting systems. Line losses are as high as 22.2 per cent. Alternative fuel sources are scarce and expensive. LPG and kerosene are available but expensive, making these inaccessible to the rural poor. Pakistan's energy dilemma is best summed up in the National Conservation Strategy which states that "Pakistan has the worst of both worlds: it is energy-poor and energy profligate." In Abbottabad, the problem is aggravated by its total dependence on the national grid and absence of indigenous generation capacity. Keeping in view the issues in the energy sector the strategy proposes the following steps:

- Initiating a comprehensive, participatory effort to devise a district-level plan for the sector in pursuit of alternative fuel sources and undertaking advocacy efforts to increase civil society awareness about efficient fuel use.
- Encouraging fuel conservation, use of fuel-efficient heating and cooking devices. Promoting the use of LPG and address the twin factors of cost and availability.
- Initiate lobbying to increase the supply of natural gas to rural areas.
- Addressing the issue of traffic pollution by evaluating various remedial measures including the imposition of an environmental levy on the 'polluter pays' principle.
- Increasing the supply of fuel wood by promoting farm forestry, social forestry and nursery raising.
- Tapping of local energy sources by setting up micro-hydel power plants, developing solar energy, establishing biogas plants and building water mills.

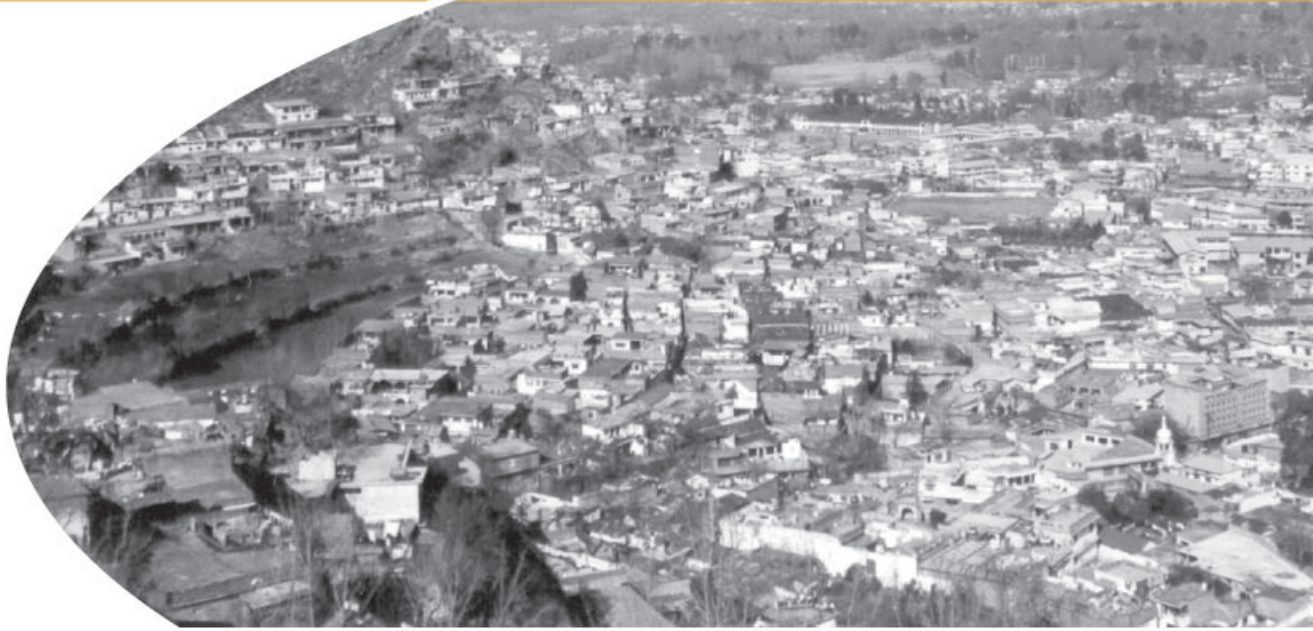


Waste Water and Solid Waste Management

Sanitation coverage in Abbottabad is no better than the national average of 30 per cent of the total population. Financial constraints, inadequate capacity, lack of oversight and the apathy of communities are collectively responsible for this situation. Planned initiatives, in the near future, will be complicated due to the creation of municipal authorities which are yet to appreciate the enormity of the problem. This is indicative of the fact that solutions in the short term are simply impossible. Urban areas in the district lack sewerage and drainage systems and the concept is alien to rural areas. Households discharge waste into open drains that run through residential area and pose serious health risks to inhabitants. Similar practices are adopted by hospitals, hotels, restaurants and small businesses everywhere in the district.

Consumption generates waste that increases with population growth and affluence. Conservative estimates put the amount of solid waste generated annually in the district at 20,000 tons. A 1992 survey reveals that the erstwhile municipal committees of Havelian and Abbottabad, and the Abbottabad Cantonment Board, were generating 10.9 tons of solid waste daily, of which only 50 per cent was collected while the remainder was allowed to accumulate in streets and open spaces. The Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision suggests the following measures to mitigate the situation:

- Assessment of key issues related to the discharge of effluent and their impact on water bodies, drinking water supply systems and public health.
- The District Government to provide leadership, coordination and integration to devise remedial plans by arriving at a consensus with municipal authorities
- Assessing existing capacity to handle waste water, including sanitation and sewerage facilities, staff, budget, oversight mechanisms, user costs and treatment, particularly in the case of hospital waste water.
- Helping town municipal authorities to assess needs, phase inputs, secure funds from donors and higher-tier authorities, and garner the support of local communities, NGOs and the private sector.
- Undertaking sustained advocacy campaign to promote awareness of the problem and highlight how individual households can make a difference.
- Exploring funding for infrastructure development, capacity building, technical inputs and awareness campaigns
- Making community involvement an integral component of planning, design and implementation for all new programmes.
- Identifying the sources and quantity of solid waste generated in the district in various categories and developing procedures for its appropriate disposal.
- Handling of biomedical waste, building incinerators at hospitals and examining support for recycling business to ease pressure on municipal services.



Land Use Planning and Zoning

Scarce land resources need to be used wisely but in the absence of strict regulatory regime the population pressure is likely to result in haphazard development with no regard for the impact on the environment. Rapid population growth has quickened the pace of urbanization in Abbottabad. It has witnessed unplanned construction resulting in severe congestions over stretching municipal services such as water supply and waste disposal.

In a region of breathtaking landscape and natural beauty, the urban areas are now being deprived of parks, playgrounds and open spaces. Despite the seriousness of the problem, land use planning and zoning has not been a priority for the local governments. It is important to recognize that land use and zoning is not simply an urban issue. While urbanization and its attendant processes must be brought under regulation, land use laws are equally relevant to the working of sectors such as mining and infrastructure development. The Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision suggests the following measures:

- Development of zoning and building specific codes to address haphazard urban development and an in-depth analysis of current land use laws and zoning regulations.
- Supporting and strengthening designated protected areas by providing oversight of urban growth, tourist activity and construction in their vicinity.
- Promoting advocacy, community awareness and stakeholder motivation to bring about behavioral change so that land use planning has the support of civil society.



Education

Abbottabad is known as a "city of education" which is key factor in human development. The level, standard and quality of education imparted in its primary institutions, determines economic growth and the direction of social change in a society. Despite substantial investment in this sector enrolment ratios have not picked up. There are no benchmarks to evaluate performance at various levels of education which cannot be under taken without the indicators on dropout and repeat rates, promotion and participation ratios and teacher-student ratios for accurate assessment. Motivation levels are low for teachers. The out dated curriculum invalidates the necessity and relevance of education for students and parents. There is no denying the fact that standards have witnessed a radical downside at every level of education

We, as a member state of the United Nations, are committed to achieve universal primary education by the year 2015. But a host of factors prevents districts such as Abbottabad from attaining this target.

In view of the private-sector onslaught in education sector the public sector is no more seen as an efficient service delivery arrangement. Private sector, in the district, accounts for almost 17 per cent of total enrolment at the primary level. In view of the centrality of education to development, economy, social change and employment the Strategy proposes, among others, the following interventions:

- Establishment of comprehensive database, disaggregated by gender and urban/rural area, for all levels of schooling and baseline indicators for enrolment, participation, drop-out, failure and repeat rates; average class size; teacher-student ratio and performance in examinations.
- Assessing the need for establishing new schools and colleges based on the considerations to improve female enrolment ratios.
- Devising measures to bring about transparency and accountability as an immediate input to improve long-term sustainability of all interventions.
- Ensuring that commitment to the Millennium Development Goals is built into all future planning and interventions.
- Discarding the top-down orientation that has characterized management of the education sector and encouraging the participation of communities to address issues in the sector.
- Establishment of a formal evaluation and promotion policy based on performance in relation to progress on indicators and development of implementation, oversight and review mechanism.
- Carrying out capacity development to improve management skills of education personnel with focus on teacher training.
- Strengthening technical and vocational training and reorienting IT education to focus on employment opportunities, economic diversification and poverty alleviation.

Health and Population Welfare

It is easier for a healthy population to pursue economic growth and sustainable development. Public health standards are universally accepted as key indicators of development and investment in human resources. Population welfare is an issue of critical importance as well, particularly in the developing world. Fertility rates, maternal and infant mortality rates, and traditional practices such as early marriage directly influence population growth and critically impact development and quality of life.

Prima facie Abbottabad is performing well in the health sector. The district ranks high in comparison with other parts of the province. With 108 health facilities and more than 1,500 medical personnel, in addition to the Ayub Medical Complex, indicators for this sector are indeed positive. But in terms of coverage and access there exist serious issues with regard to the overall performance of the sector. Most hospitals in the district are located in and around major urban centers with the result that rural communities in remote areas are left without access to proper medical facilities. Given our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals to reduce mortality rate among children under five and reduce the maternal mortality ratio by the year 2015, the Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision prescribes the following road map for health sector interventions:

- Developing indicators and benchmarks covering wide range of performance, disaggregated for rural/urban areas, to reveal the inequitable distribution of health care facilities.
- Examining the functioning of rural health centers and basic health units and developing indicators of performance of such facilities to assess their contribution to improving health care.
- Emphasizing primary and preventative health care with particular focus on nutrition, clean drinking water, sanitation, waste management and personal hygiene and evaluating the establishment of mobile teams, particularly for pediatric and reproductive medicine, to cater to remote and inaccessible areas
- Ensuring that all new facilities, particularly basic and rural health centers, are established on the basis of need and in consultation with stakeholders with "increasing coverage" as the sole guiding principle.
- Assessing progress on coverage, capacity development, funds generation through user charges, and the training and retention of technicians and nurses.
- Examining density, urbanization and the population growth trends to evolve appropriate interventions.
- Developing communication and advocacy package aimed at behavioral change since the success of family planning relies on community motivation and response.
- Encouraging private-sector involvement, particularly in areas such as advertising and reproductive health training through linkages with population welfare department.



Infrastructure: Roads and Communications

Infrastructure, such as roads, increases mobility and serve as a catalyst for economic activity but obliquely reflects on natural resources; there is an increase in noise due to increased vehicular traffic which generates noise and increases air pollution as well. As such it is imperative to take infrastructure development related decisions with due care and considerations of striking a balance between these contradictory tendencies. Adverse impacts of infrastructure development can be mitigated with careful planning, vigilant monitoring and aggressive regulation. In Abbottabad, infrastructure development has been allowed to proceed without any regard to these basic considerations or land use zoning; on the other hand infrastructure development is chronically under-funded, hampered by a lengthy approval and funding process and subject to constant political interference. Since opportunities are available for revenue generation through user charges such as tolls, tourist taxes, pollution charges and transit fees these options will need to be explored to provide for operation and maintenance as well as to fund new development.

While economic diversification depends on reliable communications networks, they must be viewed in terms of the trade-offs between environmental management and quality of life considerations. By its very nature, infrastructure development requires integrated, cross-sectoral oversight. This administrative aspect is important because of the challenges it poses in terms of coordination. As a matter of basic principle Abbottabad must preserve its natural beauty and biodiversity to attract tourism, which is a key component in economic diversification. The Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision has the following suggestions for interventions in the sector:

- Ensuring that key environmental considerations are incorporated into all future infrastructure development plans. And making EIA inputs compulsory prior to the construction of roads..
- Quantification of the impact of transit traffic in terms of congestion, air pollution, noise pollution, deforestation, biodiversity loss and soil erosion.
- Analyzing available financing options for infrastructure development as well as operation and maintenance costs.

- Examining the question of farm-to-market roads to address the needs of rural residents who require an efficient distribution network for their largely perishable agricultural products.
- Developing capacity of the works and services department in modern road construction technologies.
- Operationalizing coordinative mechanism to ensures integrated oversight by major players in the sector by creating an institutional entity operating under the aegis of District Government.
- Assessing all future roads development projects from the perspective of their potential contribution to sustainable development based on considerations of poverty alleviations, promoting livestock industry, catering to tourism needs, mitigating pollution, congestion, reducing negative environmental impacts and ensuring that the aesthetic appeal of the district is not compromised.

Drinking Water

The availability of potable water is basic to life and is an intrinsic part of the implementation mechanisms the Mid Term Review of National Conservation Strategy recommends. As a whole only 53 per cent of the country's population has access to safe water. Available records show that coverage in Abbottabad is comparatively better, extending to 85 per cent of rural and 90 per cent of the urban population but these figures do not reflect the qualitative aspect of water supplied to consumers. Untreated waste water is discharged into drinking water sources, with no system in place to monitor the effects on water quality. As such, it is not surprising that the incidence of waterborne diseases has not reduced despite numerous interventions in the health sector. In the race to extend coverage, quality considerations have received low priority. Besides the obvious health implications for the consumers, water supply and quality issues also affect the tourist industry. The Galliyat area faces a serious drinking water supply problem in summer, which deters tourists. Water supply and sanitation require major resource inputs which are simply beyond the capacity of the District Government and municipal administration. In view of the core issues in water supply sector the Strategy has the following proposals on guiding interventions:

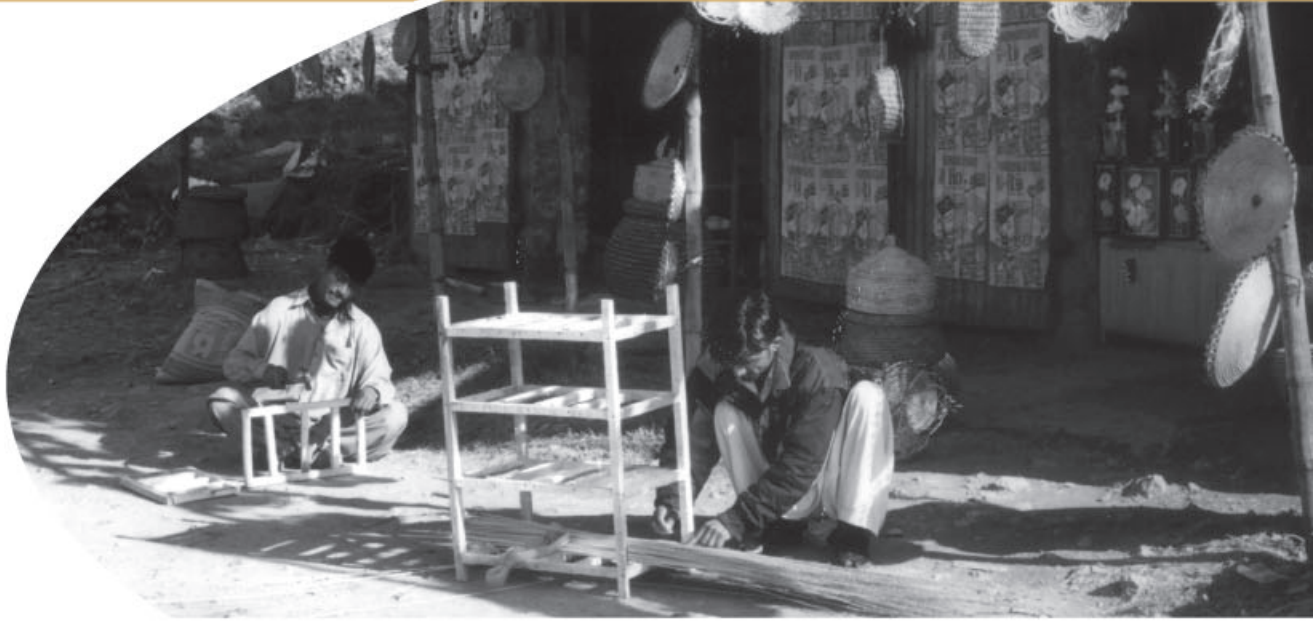
- Developing meaningful indicators to assess progress in areas such as access to improved water sources and ensuring that supply schemes are implemented on the basis of needs only.
- Modifying the current system of user charges and introducing use-based charges through installation of meters and devising a multi-tier tariff structure to subsidize poorer households.
- Regulating monitoring and enforcement mechanisms in urban areas to check leakage and misuse which account for losses as high as 50 per cent.
- Making community participation mandatory for all new policy initiatives and exploring possibilities for private-sector participation.
- Improving drainage, sewerage and sanitation facilities and pursuing construction of water treatment plants with funds generated through user charges and fines.
- Aligning investment in water supply with poverty alleviation initiatives to make full use of the synergies that exist between poverty reduction, nutrition and disease prevention programmes.



Eco-tourism

Eco-tourism as a concept is based on the idea of promoting nature-based activities with minimal negative social and environmental impacts. It can serve as an important component of local economy in areas of natural beauty. By creating employment eco-tourism directly addresses poverty alleviation. If undertaken to promote and develop the natural resources of the district, eco-tourism can have a positive impact on other areas as well. Despite its natural beauty, tourism has not flourished in Abbottabad. While it has the potential of attracting more tourists, the number of people visiting Abbottabad has recorded a minor decline. The Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision proposes the following interventions for the development of ecotourism:

- Undertaking a participatory analytic exercise to formulate an integrated plan for the district in which tourism, eco-tourism and pro-poor tourism occupy a pivotal role.
- Quantitative and qualitative assessment of accommodation by type, availability, location and occupancy ratio with trends over the last five years;
- Analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities in existing tourist facilities, aimed at uncovering gaps that can be addressed to effectuate improvement.
- Examining options for developing year-round tourism in Abbottabad.
- Launching eco-tourism activities with initial inputs geared towards the Ayubia National Park and examining incremental extension of such activities to the Birangali, Chhatri and Phalkot reserve forests
- Developing comprehensive marketing package to sell the district as a unique travel destination.
- Undertaking participatory interventions to popularize eco-tourism and make it a vibrant industry.
- Creating a custodial body to oversee the sector and evolve processes, mechanisms and systems to implement and monitor the numerous interventions necessary to take tourism out of its current state.



Enterprise Development

Enterprise plays an important role because of its potential to alleviate poverty and upgrade human capital. Its development is particularly important in the context of Abbottabad since few alternatives exist to increase employment. With no manufacturing or other industry, the prevalence of subsistence-level agriculture, and the lack of technical and vocational facilities, the district suffers from widespread poverty. Employment opportunities are yet to grow significantly despite various efforts in the public as well as private sectors. The Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision proposes the following interventions for enterprise development:

- Compiling statistics on unemployment, poverty, formal and informal sector, existing avenues of employment and the extent to which they are being exploited.
- Collection of authentic data on women's employment, examining categories of formal employment, unpaid work, domestic help, and participation in the informal economy.
- Examining efforts and initiatives that address poverty alleviation through micro enterprise development and access to credit and interacting with financial institutions for policy shift towards micro enterprise
- Developing the capacity of the human resources with focus on women and residents of rural areas where income from subsistence farming cannot keep pace with growing needs.
- Assessing the efficacy of systems, processes and mechanisms established for integrated planning.



Culture and Gender

The positive aspects of cultural heritage need to be harnessed to promote sustainable development. While the advent of the information age is bound to transform cultural values, effort is required to preserve those traditions that complement the development agenda of the district.

Women have a crucial role to play in virtually every sector of the economy. Mainstreaming their contribution is therefore essential. Education, capacity building and income generation opportunities will accelerate the pace of gender mainstreaming. Gender-sensitive initiatives are therefore crucial to economic progress. Women are key players in natural resource management activities that include fuel wood collection, livestock rearing, dairy production and backyard poultry operations but their role in poverty alleviation is yet to be acknowledged. The Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision proposes the following interventions for addressing the marginalized issues of the sector:

- Initially addressing those issues that are amenable to improvement within the existing socio-cultural milieu.
- Taking advantage of funds available through development programmes and international donors to promote micro enterprise activities among women.
- Promoting the economic participation of women and creating opportunities for greater income generation.
- Examining the option of establishing a coordinative, institutional home for gender specific interventions.
- Ensuring progress in enrolment of female students at all levels of education by providing necessary facilities as outlined in the vision for education sector.



Epilogue

Pursuing sustainable development is a formidable challenge. Here progress is slow and changes are only incremental. On this road resource shortfalls are not the only hurdles. Capacity constraints, intractable rigidity, and colonial thinking block understanding and acceptance of the concept. The absence of a participatory orientation weakens the efficacy of public-sector interventions. It is important to consider these issues and appreciate existing limitations at all levels so that the prescriptions outlined in the Vision are firmly grounded in reality. The District Government and Zilla Council must ensure that these constraints are taken into account in all routine planning and development interventions. To become reality the Vision shall require support from across the board, regardless of ideological and political divide.

Major concerns regarding implementation are of course related to devolution and the administrative transitional uncertainty. Fully aware of the structural and administrative difficulties involved in implementation, the Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision aims to address these issues in a more effective manner. As a first step, it will be important to highlight the exact nature of cross-sectoral linkages and impact on sustainable development through developing indicators. The Vision, its proposed interventions and indicators will be disseminated on an ongoing basis. It will be implemented through the existing institutional framework, having space for changes emerging under devolution. The Local Government Ordinance has created a representative District Government that works under the Nazim, assisted by the District Coordination Officer and functional offices. These groups of offices have been created in a manner that brings together related sectors. Devolution has created a number of potential mechanisms that, if put into operation will lead to better outcomes for the sustainable development interventions proposed in the Vision.

Primary responsibility for implementation rests with the District Government, which owns the Vision as a formal statement of purpose. Active participation of civil society will be critical to the efficient and timely implementation of the interventions and remedial initiatives. The Roundtable, as it has been reconceived, will bring together various informal groups and formal entities, thereby fostering a consensus based policy environment.

Another major issue in the pursuit of sustainable development is resource mobilization. The district relies heavily on resource allocations from the province. This dependence can be mitigated to some extent by generating funds through other existing and potential sources. Additional resources could be generated through effective advocacy with various windows having funding facilities for sustainable development and capitalizing on federal commitments under the National Conservation Strategy, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, National Environment Action Plan and Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility. The District Government may also be able to access substantial funding through bilateral and multilateral donor obligations under various international agreements. A decentralized fund managed at the district level can serve as a useful extra-fiscal instrument to promote sustainable development principles. The Abbottabad Integrated Development Vision proposes the establishment of Abbottabad Fund for Sustainable Development, which has the potential to ensure that economic development can occur in symbiosis with social equity and ecological improvement. The concept, embedded in the Local Government Ordinance, requires district governments to create appropriate financial mechanisms and strategies to fund integrated sustainable development.

The success or failure of the Vision cannot be assessed without monitoring. The District Government will be required to develop indicators to assess progress towards sustainability. These indicators should take into account key facets of each sector and cover all major components of the sustainable development paradigm.

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