

The Face of Extreme Poverty: Suburban Slums Survey

ZOHRA JABEEN

Assistant Professor Institute of Management Sciences Peshawar, Pakistan

Email: zohra.jabeen@imsciences.edu.pk

MOHAMMAD ALAMGIR

MBA, Institute of Management Sciences Peshawar

Email: aalamgir42@gmail.com

GOHAR SALEEM PARVAIZ

Assistant Professor, Institute of Management Sciences Peshawar

Email: gohar.saleem@imsciences.edu.pk

Abstract

The objective of the study was to portray the face of local community-level extreme poverty instead of giving poverty statistics or analyzing national and international poverty statistical data. The area chosen was the households from the extremely poor segments of Peshawar, Pakistan with a sample size of 294 respondents. The sample respondents were workers, pushcart based sellers and daily wage earners but not beggars. A scorecard methodology was used to identify the extreme poverty conditions, and describe their living conditions ranging from hunger to poor health, poor living and education conditions. The findings highlight the intensity of deprivation and provide evidence of the peculiar features of extreme poverty in the sample. More than 90% of the sample was living on less than the 2015 based poverty line of Rs 131 per capita equivalent to US\$ 1.25 per capita. In creating awareness about it, the study aspires to elicit civil society's response to such an extreme level of poverty where hunger and malnutrition runs high considering average basic food prices.

Keywords: Poverty, Extremely Poor, Scorecard, Survey.

Introduction

Poverty is considered to be the lack of money and sufficient or essential resources for livelihood. Basic definition of poverty is deprivation of essential elements that include availability of food, clothing, shelter, clean drinking water, employment opportunities, threat of violence and insufficient opportunities to learn and work. This is also called multidimensional poverty defined by Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, ophi.org.uk (OPHI). According to the World Bank statistics for 2015, 746 million people live in poverty with less than \$1.25 a day (revised to \$1.90 per capita in 2015) (Roser and Esteban (2017), The demographics of extreme poverty). More than three billion people are living on less than \$2.50 per day. According to UN's Human Development report (2014), more than 15% of the world's population comprises those who are vulnerable to multidimensional poverty and children are the most vulnerable as 22,000 children die each day due to poverty. In Pakistan, according to the National Nutrition Survey 2011, one-third of all children are underweight, and nearly 44 percent are stunted primarily due to the poverty and the state of hunger of the child's family. More than 40% of people in Pakistan live under poverty line, while some districts of Baluchistan and Sindh more than 80% of people live in abject poverty. (Ibid.). Children's malnutrition is a major issue particularly among the poor and illiterate people in Pakistan (National Nutrition Survey, Pakistan, (2011), Afridi et al, 2014, Ali et al. 2015).

The rest of the paper is divided in sections. Section II describes poverty reduction measures on an international level, followed by discussion related to Trickle-down theory of economics, Muslim world's poverty condition, usage and brief explanation of scorecard method of assessing poverty, Section III gives the purpose of the study, its objective and methodology. Section IV gives Analysis, Results and Conclusion. Analysis and results are combined for simplicity as the results are tabulated and explained.

Section II

a) Poverty Reduction

In a capitalist world poverty reduction was not a priority but was being introduced by international agencies on a global level. Economic growth policies were considered to bring about reduction in poverty because of the trickledown theory asserting that the fruits of growth and wealth will trickle down to the masses. Unfortunately, despite growth, the trickledown theory did not enable funding and resources to reach the poor. There is a rise in poverty numbers despite many arrangements by various international bodies such as the United Nations funded programs and other efforts by non-government organizations. Some term it as the unequal distribution of wealth among the people, as wealthier people are earning more and poor people are earning less.

A major portion of wealth lies in the hands of a group of people, and the remainder is distributed among a large number of people. (Alesina and Rodrick, 1994). It means that the wealth of the world is not going down to poor people but it is only invested and used by the wealthy people to increase their wealth. In other words, the trickle down theories of growth in economics did not work. This gap between wealth of people causes many problems such as slowing down of economic growth, creating social problems and also misuse of human potential (OECD 2015 report).

The United Nations (UN) sponsored agencies and funds have taken serious steps for eliminating of poverty from the world. In the year 2000, after the millennium summit, the UN set eight international development goals to be achieved by the year 2015 as Millennium Development Goals. This included the following:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

The first goal of the MDG's was the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, showing the urgency and importance of working for the eradication of poverty. Similarly after 2015, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) were set to move ahead in completely eradicating poverty. The UN set seventeen SDG's to be achieved by the year 2030. In SDG's the first goal is NO POVERTY, or elimination of poverty from the world.

b) The Muslim World and Poverty:

The Muslim world makes 24% of the world's population, with 1.8 billion population (PEW Data, 2015) while half of the world's poverty lies in the Muslim world. There is a huge income gap between the rich and poor of the Muslim world. On the one hand we have Arab world where a number of top billionaires reside while on the other hand we have African countries where most people are hardly getting two times food a day.

According to the estimates by Islamic financial analyst somewhere between \$200 million and \$1 trillion is spent in charities by volunteers and in the form of compulsory religious giving. Shirazi and Amin (2009). However, there is still persistent poverty in these countries. There are problem due to which such huge amounts are not helping in reducing poverty and hunger. Is there a problem in distribution of this charity amounts too? Many countries have formed zakat ministries and committees but it is not working. Despite the presence of such bodies, zakat is neither collected properly nor does it reach to right people, who deserve the aid of zakat. Recently some governments in Muslim countries have made laws to spend money of zakat properly. Malaysian government give tax benefit to those who give zakat properly to govt. formed institutions. In 2009 Islamic Fiqh Academy passed a resolution and made some changes in zakat rules, under which zakat can be used in the form of corporate zakat, cash zakat etc., and its purpose is to make zakat flexible according to modern times so that the money of zakat can used and can give in many different forms.

Pakistan is among the poor countries of the world where poverty levels are alarming. In addition, the ongoing “war on terror” caused a large number of non- poor people homeless and poor, especially in the northwest areas of the country. A large segment of such internally displaced people (IDP’s) were settled temporarily in Peshawar and nearby smaller cities. However, the management of the IDP’s was very poor and caused widespread misery. Some of the gap in lack of funds was met by the local donations from general public as they witness increasing number of IDPs and poor people in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Print media also mention increasing poverty in the province (Ullah, 2016, The Express Tribune). In addition, poverty is among the main issues for child malnutrition in the country over the years (Baig et al. (2006), Afridi et al, (2014), Ali et al. (2015).

c) **Poverty Measurement -Scorecard Method:**

Normally poverty is measured on the basis of level of income that is \$1.6 per capita income in developed countries, while in under developed countries it was \$1.25 per capita income. These levels are based on earning power and purchasing power parity. Nowadays, in national poverty measurement studies a more adoptable approach is multidimensional poverty, that takes into account different factors and measure the level of poor people from different angles (Alkire, Sabine, et al. 2010).

Different poverty programs aimed at eliminating poverty and supporting the poor, use poverty scoring methods for identifying and assessing a person or family as poor or not poor and accordingly providing them financial subsistence. For instance, in Bangladesh, microfinance programs use poverty scorecards (Chen S. and Schreiner M., 2009). Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) in Pakistan is one such example which is functioning with the help of foreign donations. It uses the scorecard method for identifying the poor and for impact assessment. (BISP publications, (2017), <https://bisp.gov.pk/publications/>). Likewise, there are many studies of other development programs and researchers, such as Schreiner’s which portray similar scorecard based studies for different countries such as Guatemala, Bolivia, China, India and Pakistan (Schreiner, 2009, 2010, 2015, 2016).

In a poverty score card all the relevant factors are assigned weightages and within a factor there is a band of scores, say as 0 to 10, or 0 to 5 which is assigned during the survey. The respondents are given score according to the data collected. All data per respondent is assessed in percentage of 100. The respondents’ score per factor and their overall percent score tells us about the intensity or level of poverty and about the factors where poverty is more intense or in good condition.

Therefore, it helps focus on the need of the respondents. If the respondents are given any subsistence aid, the surveys are held again after some time to assess its impact on improvement in their living conditions. Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) in Pakistan conducts surveys on this pattern.

Section III

a) Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to identify living conditions of extremely poor people living in extreme poverty in suburban slums in Peshawar in order to find their living condition. This was the focus in order to provide a picture or a face to the local poverty conditions and if it proves that people are facing extreme conditions of hunger and malnutrition, to inform the people about them, to help them and to inform the government about their plight. Therefore, the scope of the paper lies in the hope that the study may help make a connection between the extremely poor and the civil society at local level and help extricate them from extreme hunger and poverty when the civil society reaches over to them for their help.

The study collected data from those areas that are not covered by national surveys or UN based surveys. These include remote areas or those areas which are located far from cities, and also slums of the cities are not covered by these studies. This study focused on collecting data from slums and localities where poor people are located in large quantity.

b) Research Objective

Objective of the study was to highlight the per capita income and living conditions of extremely poor people who are living around and under poverty line of Rs. 131 or US\$ 1.25. For meeting this objective, the task or objective was to do the survey in suburban local locality where poor people reside in general, and by choosing suburban slums, to depict the condition of those who are not represented in the national surveys of Pakistan (Malik, Nazli & Whitney, 2014). Further, while identifying their poverty conditions, and doing random sampling, the sample choice was to look for those poor people who were not professional beggars but were those who are working.

c) Methodology

The direct approach of consumption based questionnaires such as the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM) are very difficult and have a cumbersome process with very long questionnaires (Schreiner, 2010). The poverty scorecard method used by Schreiner and many other authors is an expenditure-based approach used by local organizations and local governments for its simplicity and ease of conducting, it yet very accurate. It is simple, easy to answer quickly, and simple to verify and costs very less as compared to the national household living standard measurement questionnaires in which poverty measurement is a part of the whole activity. In addition the poverty scorecard is a handy tool for local organizations for their own management and targeting. It is simple and easy enough for the understanding of staff and management who need not be specialists in economics. Since the objective of the study was not related to deducing from national poverty measurement and allied data interpretation, and was more of a local profiling of poor, the scorecard method was used as a tool, and the variables that mattered in profiling of the individuals as poor were taken. It did not matter what proportion of the questions were asked about a particular factor, as long as the relevant information was obtained through the survey questions and as long as the respondents could easily answer them in a few minutes.

The study formulated a scorecard index calibrated keeping in focus the baseline of average earning of the respondents corresponding to the Pakistani Rupees (Rs.) corresponding to US \$1.25 per capita. At this level of earning, it is assumed that all of it is consumed in food requirements and can lead to malnutrition too. The questionnaire was very simple asking a few pertinent questions related to their basic consumption areas (like those given in the multi-dimensional poverty factors). These comprised average income, health, education, and for living standard and hygiene, included the type of dwelling, water access, and type of toilet.

Survey Location: The survey was carried out in the city of Peshawar suburbs where poor people live. These are near the areas which are business hubs and posh residential areas.

Sample Respondents: The respondents were people who were selling fruit, vegetables and other daily use things on hand carts, or those who were polishing or mending shoes. Besides, data was collected by visiting homes in slums and other areas where low income people reside.

a. Benchmark of Poverty Chosen:

A person, who is living under the poverty line set by UN poverty index, is living in poverty. Therefore, any person whose per day income is less than \$1.25 or Pakistani Rupees (Rs).131 per day, (Rs.105 =1 US\$ as per the exchange rate at the time of survey) Poverty was assessed on the basis of indexes set by the UN Poverty index that includes income, education, health, shelter, water and hygiene.

The data was summarized and arranged. In score card method every factor and every variable inside the factor gets a number; after that the score of every factor is summarized in an index of score to get a result. Data sample consisted of net 294 persons, although it was collected from 300 people, but 6 were rejected due to insufficient information or were out of our data range. Sampling type was random sampling, taking into account every third person/household for survey. After collecting data it was arranged on an excel sheet and different scores were given to every factor, i.e. income, education, health etc. Scores are ranging between zero (0) and five (5). Scores were given according to the condition and need of that factor. After allocating scores the data was arranged in an index forming score card.

Section IV

a) Analysis and Results:

Based on the findings as given in the above table the conditions of every factor contributing to extreme poverty has been analyzed below. First of all the income level was the determining factor of whether or not the respondent is the one who is earning approximately \$1.25 per capita for himself and his/her family. Each category is explained below. For the sake of simplicity in reading and understanding, the results of the survey are also given in the same tables for analysis.

Income:

Income was observed on the basis of daily per capita income. Observations range was between Rs. 0 and Rs. 131 or \$0 to \$1.25 per day person. Scores of 0 to 5, were allocated for different brackets of income. Level 0 shows lowest level or those with income below Rs. 50 while level 5 shows those samples whose income is above Rs. 131 but not more than Rs. 200 per capita.

Scores allocated to different income brackets are as under;

Income Score Standards

Score out of 5	Income level	Results_ Numbers	Cumulative total
0	below Rs 50/ person per day	83	
1	Rs 51-70	78	161
2	Rs 71-90	50	211
3	Rs 91-110	38	249
4	Rs 111-131	15	264
5	Rs.132 – 200	30	294

Number of observations who had income less than Rs 90 is 208 out of 294, so it is an alarming figure. It shows that more than half of our sample is living on less than US \$1 per day. While those observations whose income is above the poverty line limit or Rs.131 is only 30 out of 294.

Results:

The results of the survey indicate existence of extreme poverty and hunger in the sample. Based on the income levels the vast majority (264 out of 294), i.e. 89.7% of the sample was below the income level of Rs. 131/- per capital which falls under the previous US\$1.25 threshold. Only 30 respondent had income above Rs. 131/capita.

Education

Level of education was observed on the basis of number of children going to school. Score from zero to five were allocated to different levels. Zero means no children going to school/left school/Left uneducated. While score 5 means all children are going to school including boys and girls. Scores allocated are as under;

Education score standards

Score out of 5	Income level	Results_ Numbers	Cumulative numbers
0	Not going to school / children totally uneducated	97	97
1	Left school – partly educated	0	97
2	If 2, and 1 is going to school	14	111
3	If 2 >4, and half going to school	36	147
4	If >4 and half or more going to school	0	147
5	If all going to school	147	294

Regarding basic education, 147 out of the total 294 sample, were sending all of their children to school. 50 (36+14) were sending some children to school while some not to school (mostly girls not going to school) because of their own concept of not sending girls to school. On further probe, it was found that their female children were not going to school because of their own concept of not sending females to school. The number of observations having score zero is 97 (33%). A score of zero included those whose children were not of school-going age as well as those who had not gone to any school and are now grown up beyond school-going age. The latter were fifty in numbers.

Results

The apparent impression from the tabulation of this category of education was that 197 out of 294 (147+34+16) that makes 67% of the respondents were at present sending all (50%) or most (males only) of their children to school. Their schools were mostly government schools, where education is almost free (Rs. 50-100 per annum) and accessible to all.

Shelter

Shelter is among the basic needs and it is included in factors contributing to multidimensional poverty. Shelter was evaluated on the basis of nature of the dwelling, its condition, number of rooms, type of house and number of people living per room. The score allocated on the basis of above conditions is given below;

Housing score standards

Score out of 5	Income level	Results_ Numbers	Cumulative total
0	living in tents/makeshift houses	64	
1	4+ people/ room	15	79
2	4 people/room	43	122
3	3 people /room	88	210
4	1-2 people/room	2	212
5	House Ownership	82	294

The result grid shows that number of observations having scored zero are 64 that makes 22% of the entire sample. While those observations having scored 5 are 82 in number and it is 28% of the whole sample. It means only 28% of people in the sample had their own homes or afforded a decent living quarter but these houses were mostly made of mud. From rent expense perspective they were not paying rent. However, their homes were not of the nature that could be considered as above the score of 2. The remaining people were living on rent or with some other people or living in temporary homes that can barely protect them from cold and heat.

Health

Scoring for health facilities and expenses was also done on the same aim of finding out their monthly or yearly health expenses or their ability to bear a certain minimum amount. This also included whether they had health support such as Ngo’s based support or health insurance (the health insurance scheme was initiated by the provincial government recently). Scoring done on same rules from zero to five, is shown as under;

Health Score Standards

Score out of 5	Income level	Results_ Numbers	Cumulative total
0	Always borrow for health issues	0	
1	Rs. 4000 and above- sometimes borrow	70	70
2	Rs. 2500-3999, some health issues	51	121
3	Rs. 500-2499, minor health issues	121	242
4	Rs. 0-499, mostly healthy	1	243
5	Health card	51	294

Those with nothing available for health expenses were given score zero but there were none as they borrow when a health condition arises. Those who carried “Insaf Health Card” (the provincial government’s health insurance scheme) were given score 5. It meant better facility and less expense because this card has Rs. 0.3 million balance and is acceptable in all government hospitals and some private hospitals.

The survey results showed that 51 observations in our sample have “Insaf Health Card”, it is 17% of our sample. It means only 17% of the sample in which more than 80% are living under poverty line, have the facility of this card. On asking further, it was found that many people did not know how to ask for this health card and whom to approach for it. This showed poor distribution and neglecting of those who are eligible for this facility. While those observations that come under score zero are those who always borrow for health problems. Perhaps the respondents were shy in admitting borrowing for health needs.

Water

Water is life and it plays a key role in life standard of a society. Therefore water is included in our multidimensional poverty index. The survey tries to find how many people have access to clean drinking water and what source of water available to them. Scoring of water was done on the base of its availability

to the people, means how easily they are getting water, it includes govt. support, self-services and other sources. Values to observations were given on the basis of same standards that are 0 to 5.

Water Score Standards

Score out of 5	Description	Results_ Numbers	Cumulative total
0	None- very far	11	
1	Available in nearby Mosque	8	19
2	Available in the street	18	37
3	Outsource from neighbors	37	74
4	Shared Water connection	105	179
5	Own Well-pump	115	294

People having their own system for water are given score “5”, while those who are using shared water supply connection to get water score “4”. The observations with a score 5 were 115 and those securing a score of 4 were 105. Both scores taken together (115+105= 220) equals to 220/294. They make 75% of our sample. It means that 75% of the respondents of the sample had good access to water or were able to get water easily in their houses. The remaining 25% relied on other sources like street pumps or mosques or support- sharing from neighbors. Overall the situation showed that water was available to majority of respondents.

Hygiene

Hygiene refers to facilities available to people in their homes for their personal cleanliness, and its measurement proxy is toilets. Hygiene is also added to the list of factors that contribute multidimensional poverty index. It was therefore considered in the survey. Different studies have taken different approaches to finding out about Hygiene. This survey included hygiene by asking about the availability of toilets in their homes, their number and type /condition. The questions included question about the availability of toilets in their houses, the type of these toilets such as open toilet space only made of mud / stones or had a flush and made of proper bricks and had a roof. Hygiene factor was also given score from zero to five, depending on the conditions and availability.

Hygiene Score Standards

Score out of 5	Description	Results_ Numbers	Cumulative total
0	None	36	
1	Kacha (of mud and stones)	47	83
2	Kacha 2 (of mud and stones)	1	84
3	1 - proper toilet	152	236
4	2 proper toilets per house	48	284
5	more than 2 proper toilets per house	10	294

Those who had no facility of toilets in their home were given zero score. Those who had a temporary toilet space or toilet made of mud, stone or asbestos were given score 1 and 2 respectively, 3 for those who had one proper toilet and 4 for having more than one proper toilet in their home. Those with 2 or more than 2 toilets in good condition were given score of 4 and 5 respectively. Please note that for people living in these areas, a proper toilet does not necessarily means a water connection in the toilet but generally fetching-taking water along for ablution. The sample comprised all Muslim respondents, where cleaning and ablution with water is an essential part of their toilet use.

The survey shows that there are 36 observations that have “0” and 47 have score 1. It means 83/294 persons in our sample did not have access to proper toilets. While those having score 3 in our sample are 152 in number, making 51.7% of our sample. It means more than half of our sample have simple and 1 proper toilet in their homes. The result also shows that only 19% of people in sample have two or more than two toilets in their homes.

The final results of individual scores are summed up below:

Table No. 6: Results Scorecard

Scores/ Legend	Income	Education	Shelter	Health	Water	Hygiene
0	83	97	64	0	11	36
1	78	0	15	70	8	47
2	50	14	43	51	18	1
3	38	36	88	121	37	152
4	15	0	2	1	105	48
5	30	147	82	51	115	10
Total	294	294	294	294	294	294

Conclusion

The purpose of the survey was to do a local survey that targets the poor people, who may be living in extreme poverty and hunger, in order to find their condition and needs. While conducting the survey the indicators of multidimensional poverty were considered, those which are adopted by the UN poverty index for identifying the level of poverty. It included Income, education, shelter, water, health, hygiene. The survey also focused on food intake from perspective of calories and food based spending per capita in order to find the level of hunger and malnutrition among the respondents.

The area and segment of population chosen for the study is not represented in the national surveys. Therefore there is gap between actual poverty on ground and those showed in records. And also this is the main reason for divergence between facts on ground and national statistics

The survey was carried out in suburban slums areas and adjoining markets of Peshawar and the target was poor people and those working hard for their livelihood. Income was considered as the basic indicator of their poverty level as well as food intake. In the absence of a welfare state, all indicators of spending and living conditions are more or less dependent on their earning capacity, portraying their level of poverty while the sub indicators help probe the dimensions of poverty, and the conditions under which they are forced to live.

The findings tell us that more than 70% of the sample has income less than Rs 100, or \$0.86 per day per person, that is more than half of the sample. Hence our study proved the existence of extreme poverty. It goes one step further to prove that if suburban slum areas are also included in our national level surveys (and they do not include these areas, (Malik et al., (2014) then the figures for poverty would be much higher. In suburban areas there are many slums where majority of the people who have migrated to bigger cities in search of livelihood, mostly doing menial labor and small self-employments. Their dwellings are far from a level fit for healthy living and often causes them or their children to fall ill, with unmetalled (Kacha) uncovered ducts for flow of used water, which often stagnates in them and mosquitoes thrive in them.

The results of sub indicators depict the presence of multidimensional poverty and poor living conditions in terms of lack of decent shelter, hygienic living conditions, access and ability to educate their children. More

than 26% of people did not have facility of decent living quarters. While more than 28% of people have no access to proper hygienic system that can prevent them from different diseases. Although the sample did put the number of families with school going children to 50%, 33% of respondents had children either below school going age, or above the school –going age having left uneducated or had no children. There is a need to further enable people to educate their children and also to educate the elders to send both males and females to school. In addition, the older children should be provided adult education, in order to provide them basic education and civic –cum social education.

The result also shows the condition of water availability, that is good, and more than 70% of people had access to clean water. Keeping in mind that less than 35% people have access to governmental water connections in their vicinity and the remaining have self-arrangements for water, but the overall condition is good as compared to other indicators. One of the indirect contributions of the survey has been finding the presence of hunger and malnutrition among the respondents, based on estimates leading to deficient food intake as their income levels were so low that they can hardly eat bread. The poor people’s food intake is usually bread and tea with sugar, or perhaps some raw vegetable/s or cooked potatoes with a lot of spice if nothing else is available.

Summing up all the arguments the survey provides a face to the figures of poverty by describing the income level and living conditions of the poor, based on the parameters of income, children’s education, and hygiene and water availability. There is evidence of existence of extreme poverty and hunger combined with lack of basic facilities to majority of respondents, belonging to the poor segment of the society living in shanty homes and makeshift arrangements in the suburban city slums.

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Appendix –I

The final results of the score card are given in Appendix 1

Table No. 1: Results Scorecard

Legend	Income	Education	Shelter	Health	Water	Hygiene
Scores out of 5						
0	83	97	64	0	11	36
1	78	NA	15	70	8	47
2	50	14	43	51	18	1
3	38	36	88	121	37	152
4	15	NA	2	1	105	48
5	30	147	82	51	115	10
Total no of observations	294	294	294	294	294	294