

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA

Shangla Par - An Overview

The project area, which consists of the three villages of Alpuri, Lilownai and Shahpur, falls into the Shangla Par sub-division of Swat District (Fronstispiece). Shangla Par/Alpuri sub-division, which is one of the three sub-divisions of Swat District, lies at an altitude of 500-4,500 metres and is located in the catchment of the River Indus. The climate is typical of the Alpine Zone type, with an annual precipitation of over 1,000 mm and snow and frost in the winter. The winter rainfall is from November to April, and the summer, monsoon rainfall is from July to October. The summer mean temperature is about 28 °C while the winter mean is between one to eight degrees centigrade. The area is characterised by narrow cultivated fields in the mountain areas where slopes can be over 50 per cent. Severe winter and summer rains often cause flash floods and soil erosion. The population of Shangla Par is estimated at 344 thousand (251.5 thousand [1981 Census] with 3.2 per cent per annum growth rate). At this rate, the population is expected to reach 391 thousand in 1995 and 535 thousand in 2005. The total area of the sub-division is 148 thousand hectares; 28 per cent cultivated land, nearly 27 per cent forests, and 31 per cent pastures and grazing land. Most (about 92 per cent) of the cultivation is rainfed with low, varying productivity. The gross production value of the area's crops in 1986-87 was Rs 209 million only. The average landholding in the Shangla Par sub-division is less than five acres or two hectares.

The annual agricultural income accounts for only about 37 per cent of the household expenditure. A direct result of this has been the outflow of labour to the major cities as well as to the Middle East. The livestock population is high and outstrips fodder supplies. Shangla Par contains one-fifth of the total forests resources of Swat. These are mainly protected forests (communal forest looked after by the Forest Department). The income yielded by the forest is shared between the public and the Government at a ratio of 60:40. It is distributed to the adjoining landholders through the Revenue Department. The people of the area also have the rights to grazing, grass cutting, lopping of trees for fodder, collecting firewood, and to use for domestic timber.

In the recent past there has been an increasing trend of unemployment in the area, mainly relating to the sons of farmers whom the agricultural sector could not maintain/absorb. Moreover, farmers involved with *barani* (rainfed) cultivation move to the big cities between November to March in search of jobs and return in April to take up agricultural pursuits. On the other hand, the projected estimates of the population and the given employment ratios show that the civilian labour force will expand from 95,000 in 1991 to 150,000 in the year 2005, or an incremental requirement of 55,000 work places. Of these, nearly 45,000 will tend to gravitate towards the traditionally principal source of employment, viz., agriculture and agriculture-related activities. Sectorwise, the existing employment structure and the incremental requirements of employment are as given below in the chart on page two.

The school participation rate is 15 per cent - 28 per cent for boys and two per cent for girls. This compares poorly with the other parts of Swat where the participation rate is 26 per cent - 45 per cent for boys and six per cent for girls. The literacy rate of rural Swat is 7.6 per cent while for Shangla Par sub-division it is 4.8 per cent. This low literacy rate may itself be responsible for the low participation ratios.

Apart from the highway, there are no metalled roads, a large number of villages are without electricity, and water supply schemes are available to only about 29 per cent of the population. About 81 per cent

REQUIREMENTS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR
INCREMENTAL LABOUR FORCE

Employment Ratio (per cent)	Agri.	Ming.	Ind.	Comm.	Service	Other	Total
		77.7	0.3	2.0	4.7	8.5	6.8
1981	53,322	205	1,372	3,225	5,834	4,666	68,624
1991	73,815	285	1,900	4,465	8,075	6,460	95,000
2005	116,550	450	3,000	7,050	12,750	10,200	150,000
Incremental	42,735	165	1,100	2,585	4,675	3,740	55,000

of the people are involved in agriculture, livestock, and forestry; nine per cent in related agricultural production, and the rest in other activities. There is an acute shortage of schools, especially for girls. The area has only three Basic Health Units. There are only three bank branches in the sub-division and less than 2,000 shopping units which are almost all one-person shops. The absence of infrastructure acts as a constraint on the development of the area and the remote villages are not connected with markets, and this further constrains the development of the region.

The Alpuri/Shangla Par sub-division/*tehsil* has five sub-*tehsils* and 15 Union Councils. The administrative head of the sub-division is the Assistant Commissioner, followed by a *Tehsildar*. At the Union Council level, the functional activities are performed by the Councillors (elected representatives) and Secretaries who are the administrative officers of the Local Government and Rural Development Department. The Union Councils look after the minor development and maintenance works within their approved budgets. This set-up is then linked upwards in the pyramid with the set-up at district level.

Within the sub-division the three villages of the project area total about 1,444 hectares; out of which Lilownai village is the largest and accounts for 979 hectares, followed by Shahpur with 310 hectares, and Alpuri with about 154 hectares. The total population of the area is 22,220 of which 48 per cent live in Lilownai, 33 per cent in Shahpur, and 19 per cent in Alpuri. Four per cent of the population of Shahpur and Alpuri work outside the settlements while the corresponding figure for Lilownai is 17 per cent. The average density of the project area is 15 persons to a hectare. School participation rates vary from 11 per cent in Lilownai to 18 per cent in Shahpur. These areas share the overall literacy rate for Shangla Par sub-division. However, since literacy is defined as the ability to read and write in one's mother tongue, as such it is no index of anything beyond these simple skills.

Methodology

The first step was to select a group of three villages from a relatively depressed area with predominant rural characteristics. As such, Shangla Par, as the sub-division, and Lilownai, Alpuri, and Shahpur, as the villages, were selected for the sample. Also, because of the surplus labour and skills' shortage, together with low agricultural productivity, this area posed typical problems for off-farm employment activities (OFEA). Although Alpuri has become the sub-divisional headquarters, it has not changed in any way so far. The promise of State-provided off-farm employment is, however, there. This area is also the bedrock of Swat forestry. If OFEA do not take off in the desired directions, the forests of the area will be further depleted. The area is also losing educated manpower at the moment, whereas it these people who should provide leadership in the process of change and development. As such, these three villages were deemed to be an appropriate sample area.

The next step was to select the sample households. Here, the sampling framework was adopted with the following in mind. Households were to be selected from amongst the three villages on the basis of two characteristics; income group/landholding status and involvement in employment outside the crop sector of agriculture. Where the income group was concerned, households were drawn from lower and middle income classes which also coincided with the tenant-small landholders to the medium range landholders. That just about met the second criterion also, for the first look to OFEA in wage labour while the second look at OFEA from within the agricultural sector as well as service in government or semi-government organisations. To complete representation, a sample size was added for the higher income/landholding groups on the basis of proportional probability. Within these categories, however, the random sampling method was followed.

The original sample size was indicated at 50 households per village. Subsequently, however, the total size was firmed up at 133 when there were difficulties in tracking down certain household heads or securing the requisite information from them. The household survey was conducted during September to November, 1991.

There were three principal elements of the study, viz., a household survey, rapid rural appraisal, and information to be gathered from key informants. For the household survey, a structured questionnaire was used. For obtaining in-depth information, the rapid rural appraisal method was adopted. Along with this, discussions were held with key informants, local elders, and government officials posted there. Additionally, information was also derived from land records, forest records, and other secondary sources of data.