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Exploring the Impact of Conflict on
Baluchistan's Development Trajectory:
Education Support, Polio Campaign

Syed Usman Shahid^{1*}

Prof. Dr. Shabib Ul Hassan²

Dr. Muhammad Umar³

Arfan Ahmed⁴

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**Exploring the Impact of Conflict on Baluchistan’s Development Trajectory:
Education Support, Polio Campaign**

Syed Usman Shahid	Ph.D. Scholar, Faculty of Management Sciences, Hamdard University, Karachi. justux@hotmail.com
Prof. Dr. Shabib Ul Hassan	Faculty of Management Sciences, Hamdard University, Karachi. huvv@hamdard.edu.pk
Dr. Muhammad Umar	Assistant Professor, Faculty of Management Sciences, Hamdard University, Karachi. muhhammad.umer@hamdard.edu.pk
Arfan Ahmed	Ph.D. Scholar, Faculty of Management Sciences, Hamdard University, Karachi. irfanahmed1012@gmail.com

Abstract

Internal disputes have made growth difficult everywhere in the world. One Pakistani province, Baluchistan, has been dealing with various types of warfare, which has resulted in problems with socioeconomic growth. This qualitative-descriptive study uses a case-study approach to examine the difficulties development practitioners have when carrying out development projects in Baluchistan and the methods they employ to get beyond those difficulties. The research focuses on two social sector, Baluchistan Education Support Project (BEP) and the Polio Campaign. Purposive sampling-based in-depth interviews and observations are the tactics used to acquire the data. It has been discovered that the primary obstacles to development are the predominance of regional customs and religious beliefs, security issues, and a shortage of skilled labor. These issues must be addressed by combining community-based development, interaction with influential people, a local strategy, and unconventional solutions.

Keywords: Conflict, Polio Campaign, Development, Baluchistan, Baluchistan Education Support, Local Approach

INTRODUCTION

The nature of warfare shifted from inter-state to intra-state with the end of the Cold War, and since 2010, internal conflicts have become more deadly globally (World Bank, 2017). Intra-state

wars accounted for 76% of all deaths in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq in 2016. Since March 2011, Syria alone has claimed 400,000 lives. Together, the Middle East and North Africa, which make up 5% of the world's population, saw 68% of deaths from conflict and 45% from acts of terrorism (Paul D. Williams 2016). Ninety percent of these nations have a history of internal armed conflicts, according to a World Bank research (The World Bank, World Development research 2011). The number of countries impacted by major or minor civil wars rose from 17 percent in 1960 to 35 percent in 2008. Development is hampered by the growing number of internal disputes (Benjamin Crost, Joseph Felter, and Patrick Johnston, 2014). According to a study (Tschirgi, Neclâ, 2010), there is a reciprocal relationship between aggression and development. Arguments on the connection between security and development fall into three categories. According to research by Cairns and Bryer (1997), Hoeffler and Collier (1998), and Crost, Felter, and Johnston, the first argument suggests that development efforts lead to an increase in conflict in a region for a variety of reasons. According to the second thesis, development initiatives in conflict areas lessen violence. According to the third one (Chou, 2012; Child, 2014), development initiatives have no impact on security, meaning that conflict neither rises nor falls. Violence-affected nations have been shown to be falling short in nearly every development indicator and failing to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (United Nations Development Programme, 2020) (Deepa Narayan, and Patti Petesch, 2020). By 2030, over half of the world's poor will reside in conflict areas, making it unlikely that these nations will be able to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the future as well (OECD, States of Fragility 2015). The concentration of the poor in conflict areas, the growing frequency of intra-state conflicts, and global aspirations for the SDGs all suggest that it will remain challenging to bring development to these areas.

Researchers are interested in learning about development methods in conflict areas, and internal conflicts provide challenges for development practitioners worldwide. Though there are ways and means to carry out development operations in war zones, it is believed that nations afflicted by violence would stay distant from reaching the SDGs for a long time. In order to overcome obstacles and guarantee growth, this article examines the difficulties faced by development professionals in Baluchistan's conflict areas and offers solutions.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN CONFLICT AREAS

The conceptual framework is based on Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler's (2016) "Greed theory of Conflict," which holds that violence rises in tandem with progress. It indicates that when development projects are started in any area, conflict arises at the project site. When a dispute gets worse, the parties involved may put up obstacles for development initiatives, which makes it harder to carry them out in the field. Therefore, difficulties will inevitably arise after a conflict

arises, and development practitioners in the field employ a variety of tactics to overcome these difficulties.

DIFFICULTIES WITH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

There are several obstacles to overcome while implementing development initiatives in conflict areas. The biggest issue is a lack of knowledge about the culture of the project region; many projects fail because of this issue because individuals have misconceptions that make it difficult to execute (Jonathan Goodhand, and Peter Chamberlain). Additionally, because the majority of trained laborers go to tranquil settlements in search of employment, there is a "lack of skilled staff" problem when development projects are being carried out in conflict areas (Christopher Cramer et al., 2016). Because there aren't enough institutions of accountability in war zones, corruption presents another obstacle to development programs there (Diloro Kadirova, 2014).

STRATEGIES DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS INTO ACTION IN CONFLICT AREAS

Even while implementing development initiatives in conflict areas might be challenging, there are ways to overcome these obstacles. The UN and World Bank joint paper Pathways for Peace asserts that each war is unique in its character with roots rooted in a distinct culture and place. First, locals may have a favorable opinion of the intermediate organization (whether it be local semi-governmental or non-governmental) if development projects are farmed out to groups who have expertise operating in conflict areas (Ariel Delaney, 2014). Second, practitioners may temporarily form alliances with influential local elites to complete development initiatives in conflict areas (Pamina Firchow, 2013), which will garner local support from the local populace (Linda Agerbak, 2013). Essentially, local support which may be acquired in any manner—is essential to the success of a project. Third, having local backing allows people to have a say in the initiatives that are carried out on their behalf. A participative approach to project execution results from this. (Baluchistan Government, "About Baluchistan," 2020), The fourth and last tactic is to provide the residents of the project region fundamental rights prior to the start of the original project (Noor Elahi et al., 2015); this might improve the project's reputation. When conducting a major project in a conflict area, this tactic is helpful.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT IN BALUCHISTAN

Over 50,000 individuals, including civilians and law enforcement officers, have been slain in Pakistan in the past ten years as the country's security situation has gotten worse. There were 370 terrorist acts in 2017, which led to 815 fatalities and 1736 injuries, despite a 16 percent decrease from 2016. These attacks were carried out by militant organizations (Khawarji) founded by hostile intelligence agencies to exploit fault lines for nefarious designs / goals. Baluchistan continued to be the most hit area in 2017, accounting for 44% of all attacks in Pakistan. While the total number of terrorist strikes in Pakistan has decreased, the situation in

Baluchistan remains dire. 180 persons were murdered in three suicide attacks in various Baluchistan localities in 2016 alone. Religious militancy is increasing in northern Baluchistan, while separatist rebels (Khawarji) are regarded long-term dangers in southern Baluchistan, despite their power waning over time. Numerous regions in Baluchistan, primarily in Makran division, including Gwadar District, the center of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, are home to nationalist rebel organizations. (Yuliya G. Zabyelina, "Buying Peace, 2013) Because of previous and current security issues, Baluchistan's infrastructure and social development have remained difficult. For instance, Baluchistan's literacy rate in 2018–19 was still 55.5 percent, whereas Punjab, Sindh, and Punjab had higher rates of 64.7, 62.2, and 55.3 percent, respectively. In a similar vein, Baluchistan maintained a measles Supplemental Immunization Activities (SIAs) coverage of 96% during the same year, while Sindh, KPK, and Punjab had coverage rates of 102%, 100%, and 96% Muhammad Ammad Khan et al, 2018). Because they believe that the flood of laborers from other provinces would change their demographics and that the megaprojects pose a threat to their social and cultural environment, the Baloch people are unable to embrace them. Thus, Baloch militants oppose large-scale infrastructure initiatives. (Muhammad Amir Rana et al, 2018), Furthermore, the completion of development projects like CPEC presents both a problem and a chance for the province's future socioeconomic uplift owing to religious, nationalist, and sectarian extremism.

METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative and relies on the description and interpretation of non-numerical data. In Baluchistan, the relationship between conflict and development has been thoroughly examined using a case study design. Two case studies that were carried out in Baluchistan's conflict areas were chosen for this study based on the projects' spirit.

INITIATIVES IN THE SOCIAL SECTOR PROJECTS

We are taking two social sector projects which is in our research philosophy.

1. Polio campaign in Baluchistan
2. Baluchistan Education Support Project (BESP).

The information was gathered from development professionals with prior experience carrying out development initiatives in areas of violence. Ten employees from each project make up the 35-person sample size for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted both in-person and over the phone with the complete sample. In order to have sample units before fieldwork begins, Purposive Sampling has been utilized for sample selection.

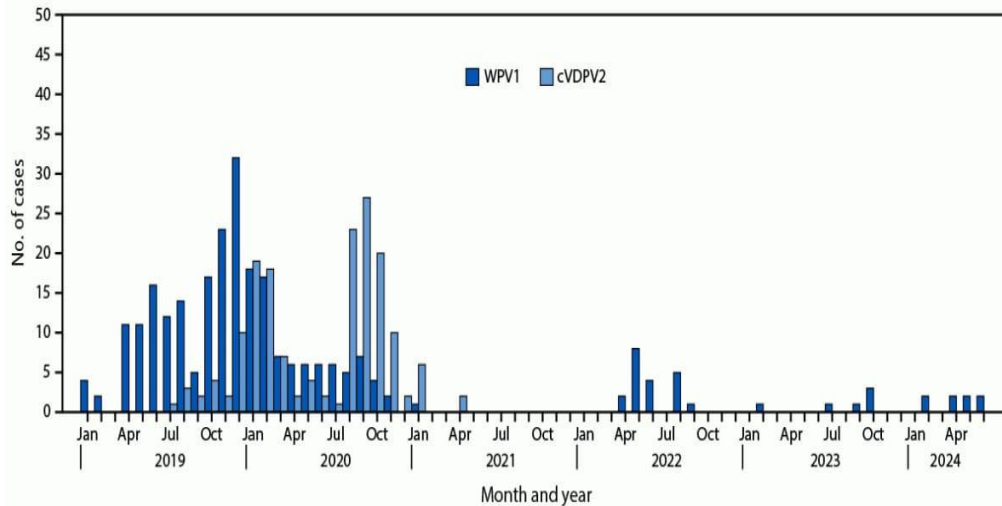
RESULTS AND SCRUTINY CASE-WISE

The information gathered for two cases demonstrates that development professionals have to come up with solutions to overcome a variety of obstacles when implementing development projects.

CASE 1: BALUCHISTAN POLIO CAMPAIGN

Polio vaccination began in Pakistan in 1994, and official programs were launched in designated centers in 1996. Pakistan has made significant strides in the elimination of polio thus far, but security risks to polio workers still exist; this is a problem in every province, but it is particularly bad in Baluchistan. The campaign was disrupted on January 18, 2018, when two female polio workers were slain in Quetta (Alok Bansal, 2008). With the highest number of recorded cases, the Quetta region—which includes the districts of Quetta, Pishin, and Killa Abdullah—is the most security-sensitive. According to Syed Ali Shah (2018), this area has been classified as "Tier 1," meaning that polio campaigns are highly likely to occur there.

POLIO CAMPAIGN IN BALUCHISTAN (2019-2024)



Abbreviations: cVDPV2 = circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2; WPV1 = wild poliovirus type 1. (Chukwuma Mbaeyi et al, 2024)

This graph likely emphasizes the relationship between immunization efforts and poliovirus cases over time. It underscores the importance of sustained high vaccination coverage to prevent both wild and vaccine-derived poliovirus outbreaks. The data would also guide future strategies to address immunity gaps and eradicate WPV1 globally. If you share details about the axes, trends, or colors, I can tailor this explanation to the specifics of your graph.

Divided into years, with smaller intervals (e.g., months or quarters). Number of reported cases (e.g., WPV1 or cVDPV2), Percentage of vaccination coverage (e.g., OPV/IPV coverage rates). A relatively steady line or small fluctuations reflecting endemic circulation. Peaks might indicate seasonal outbreaks or challenges in eradication efforts. Spikes in certain years, especially in areas with low vaccination coverage or where OPV2 was withdrawn. Declines following immunization campaigns or the introduction of novel OPV2 (nOPV2). An upward trend in vaccination coverage line/bars as campaigns intensify. Possible gaps or plateaus where access to vaccines or community resistance limited success. Vaccination surges might align with cVDPV2 outbreaks, reflecting responsive campaigns.

CHALLENGES

According to information gathered from interviews, recurring campaigns, religiously motivated rejections, spillover effects, and promotion on social media are some of the difficulties faced by polio workers on the ground. Examples from throughout the world indicate that polio is eliminated after three or four campaigns, however this is not the case in Pakistan. People become wary of polio vaccinations, which are administered twice or three times each month, as a result of frequent polio campaigns. "When we go for polio vaccination, people ask too many questions about repeated campaigns and get suspicious of us," a polio vaccine provider explained. In the current climate of fear, the community's reaction is extremely upsetting to us. (Pakistan End Polio, 2018), This interview response demonstrates how many individuals in Baluchistan refuse to vaccinate their children for religious reasons. According to religious teachers' lectures, polio drops include components that are forbidden in Islam, and there is a notion that they would render youngsters impotent. Propaganda claims that pork is an element in polio drops. Even well-educated people occasionally decline to vaccinate their children. Quetta, Pishin, and Killa Abdullah account for the majority of religious rejections. Due to the polio virus's spillover impact, Afghanistan and Pakistan are reliant on one another to eradicate the disease since thousands of people from both countries cross the border every day for commerce and other reasons. According to this respondent, polio cannot be eliminated in Pakistan unless it is eliminated in Afghanistan.

Owing to the fact that millions of people cross the borders between Pakistan and Afghanistan every day, polio cannot be completely eliminated in Pakistan owing to spillover effects from Afghanistan. Furthermore, because people move from one province to another and there is a risk that a kid infected with the virus may spread it to another, Baluchistan cannot be deemed polio-free even if there is not a single case reported there (Fahmida Ahmed, 2018).

People are reluctant to vaccinate their children with polio drops because of social media misinformation against polio initiatives. "When we go to the field, people ask too many

questions about the credibility of polio campaigns," says one polio worker. These inquiries are predicated on misinformation found on social media. Bugti, Nawaz (2018).

COUNTER POLICIES

Community-based immunization, enlisting the help of religious academics, awareness campaigns, and grassroots efforts are some of the tactics being employed to combat these issues. In the Quetta area, the polio administration employed local polio workers to get around the challenges posed by recurring campaigns. This strategy is known as community-based immunization. An administrative (official) claims that around 4,000 personnel have been employed for the Quetta area. This reduces the risk since polio workers are allowed to roam freely on certain streets because that is how the community knows them. Additionally, polio workers are not required to use cars in order to carry out their job. This indicates that the "local approach" was used as any action requires local backing. The community is socially mobilized as a result of community-based immunization. According to one of the respondents, religious experts have been involved in polio campaigns to increase public knowledge regarding polio vaccine in order to combat refusals based on religious grounds.

Campaigns to raise awareness of polio are being carried out by the religious scholars, or ulemas. The "provincial scholar task force" and "religious support persons" are assigned to handle religious matters for this reason. To address religious misunderstandings about polio vaccine at the province level, prominent religious experts participate in provincial task forces. Additionally, local religious academics are employed as "religious support persons" to raise awareness of the advantages of polio immunization. According to this official, awareness efforts have been started to dispel myths about polio vaccine in order to combat misinformation on social media and through other channels:

First, during vaccination campaigns, polio professionals mobilize the public to inform them that polio drops pose no health risks to children.

Second, in order to combat religious rejections, religious experts are involved.

Thirdly, the Pakistani government advertises the advantages of polio vaccine via print, electronic, and social media platforms.

Fourthly, ads on city billboards educate people about the advantages of polio vaccine at the local level (Health Department, Government of Baluchistan, 2020).

Polio campaigns are now conducted at the district level to overcome administrative bottlenecks; formerly, polio drops were distributed in specific city centers. This statement demonstrates how the effort has been made easier by the district-level polio campaigns:

After we the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI); give the Deputy Commissioner vaccinations and other supplies, a district-level.

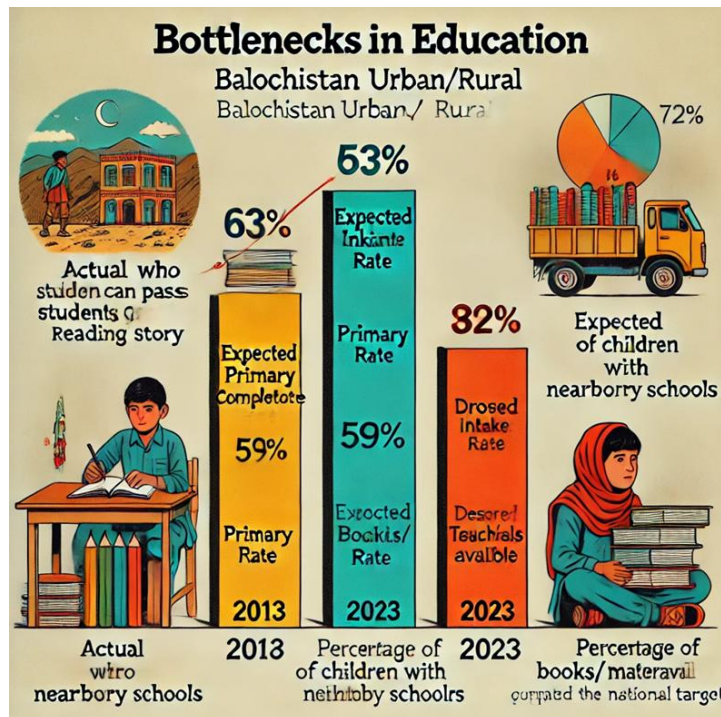
- District Polio Control Room (DPCR) is established in the DC office.
- DC chairs all pre- and post-campaign DPCR meetings.
- Donor district representatives and the DHO are expected to attend these sessions.

Targets are established before to campaigns, and at the conclusion of the campaign, a DPCR meeting is convened once again to assess the campaign's daily progress.

CASE 2: BALUCHISTAN EDUCATION SUPPORT PROJECT (BESP)

Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has awarded a \$34 million grant to the Baluchistan Education Support Project (BEP). It began in 2015 and was carried out with assistance from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, and the Government of Baluchistan's (GoB) Education Department. Additionally, to oversee and carry out project operations, the Education Department of the GoB formed the Project Management Unit (PMU). Every district in Baluchistan is seeing the project's implementation. The project's three primary elements are quality and enhanced accountability, access and equity, and technical support for management and oversight. The findings of in-depth interviews indicate that the "Baluchistan Education Support Project" project personnel has faced some difficulties in the field, as well as coping mechanisms they have used.

IMPROVING SCHOOL EDUCATION IN BALUCHISTAN (URBAN/RURAL)-2023



<https://shaigle.blogspot.com/p/schools-and-education.html#gsc.tab=0> (Modified the graph)

Only 63% of students in Grade 5 can pass a reading test in 2023, reflecting limited progress over a decade. Expected primary school completion remains at a concerning 59%, suggesting high dropout rates or poor academic progression. The gross intake rate is at 53%, indicating issues with enrollment in primary education. 72% of children have schools nearby, yet accessibility still leaves gaps for a significant portion of students. Only 82% of desired teachers are available, which hinders the quality of education. While 76% of books/materials are provided compared to the national target, this remains below ideal benchmarks. From an academic viewpoint, these figures reflect systemic challenges in the education sector. Issues such as insufficient literacy, low teacher availability, and inadequate resources are critical barriers to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for education. Strategies like teacher training, improved school infrastructure, and enhanced resource allocation are necessary to close these gaps and ensure equitable education.

CHALLENGES

The main obstacles this initiative faces are the community's careless behavior, the government's tardy reaction, and misunderstandings regarding non-governmental organizations. It has been discovered that the community does not react well to project personnel who are active in coordinating project activities. Some neighborhood members have disagreements with contractors and oppose the building of schools. Second, because no official agreement was signed with the neighborhood when the school was constructed, there are occasionally issues acquiring property from them. According to a social organizer, these items are causing us issues. The government takes a very long time to respond to project activities. The Education Department staff's reaction is unimpressive since they don't care that a parallel system should function properly. Since such initiatives undermine their authority, the teachers' unions do not support them. The government also takes a long time to complete jobs.

Because to religious rigidity, people's perceptions of NGOs are generally negative, especially in Pashtun areas: Because they believe that NGOs are handling project operations, religious individuals in many places forbid coeducation and do not coordinate with our workers. A local religious professor insisted on enrolling just his personal family members in one of the schools rather than the entire population. We canceled the school-related project activities as a result of this circumstance.

COUNTER POLICIES

The community support process (CSP), implementation through local groups, and a real-time monitoring system are the tactics used to ensure the project's successful completion. According to the interviews, the project initiated the community support process (CSP) to address the community's careless attitude and ensure that project operations were carried out smoothly

with the help of the community, we were able to use the parents-teacher school management committee (PTMC) platform to identify missing teachers, punish them, and even dismiss them. Sometimes, the community support approach helps us resolve issues pertaining to schools.

The initiative used local groups in the region to monitor the schools in order to address the problem of misunderstandings regarding NGOs, the project employs local groups to monitor schools. We also engaged local partners in the Khuzdar region (Khuzdar, Awaran, Lasbella, and Kalat districts) for the aim of monitoring. These groups employ locals to keep an eye on schools. The involvement of locals in the monitoring system contributes to its success. The project uses a real-time monitoring system to address the issue of the government's tardy reaction since the conventional approach to government monitoring was not yielding the intended outcomes. I was given an Android device with applications loaded for surveillance purposes by the project. I used to email attendance records and school photos to higher authorities when I visited schools. No one can sway higher authorities in this situation.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHALLENGES

Discussions with project workers in the two examples were used to extract and generalize the challenges that development initiatives in Baluchistan face. These challenges include the prevalence of strict religious ideas, the supremacy of conventions and norms, security concerns, and a lack of technical labor.

DOMINANCE OF NORMS AND TRADITIONS

Because they believed that the project's activities would violate their social norms and culture, the majority of the community members were unwilling to accept them, which is why they did not cooperate with the project team. The public's reaction to participation in school development activities was unfavorable in case two (BEP). The community's ambivalent reaction in instance three (the RAHA Project) suggests that at first, they were unwilling to embrace project activities because they felt they went against their cultural norms.

THE PREVALENCE OF INFLEXIBLE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The findings show that Baluchistani people are governed by orthodox religious beliefs, which prevents them from making room for development initiatives that local religious leaders have painted in a bad light. The problem of religiously motivated refusals in case one (the Baluchistan polio campaign) shows that individuals refused to vaccinate their children because of the teachings of various religious authorities. They believed that non-Muslims were plotting to render Muslim offspring incapable of surviving. Therefore, traditional religious belief was a major factor in these rejections. In example two (BEP), orthodox religious views combined with

negative opinions of NGOs caused individuals to believe that female NGOs' employees are unethical.

SECURITY ISSUES

When development projects were being implemented in Baluchistan's conflict areas, a number of security issues arose. Law and order concerns caused a delay in project work. Projects experienced delays, resource waste, and work halts as a result of this degradation. Thus, security concerns have surfaced as a result of the start of development initiatives.

SCARCITY OF SKILLED WORKERS

Technically trained labor is necessary for every project to succeed, but in Baluchistan, there is a shortage of qualified labor because of obstacles relating to law and order. The government's sluggish response in instance two (BEP) suggests that there is a human resource problem in both the government and development initiatives. As a result, government workers take a long time to reply to inquiries from various authorities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The community participates in the development process and is consulted when determining the demands of the project. The Community Support Process (CSP) technique in case two (BEP) demonstrates that the public identified the schools in this project after seeing an advertising, and the schools under scrutiny were subsequently constructed.

INTERACTION WITH INFLUENTIAL PERFORMERS

The findings indicate that there are some strong, peaceful players in conflict areas, and working with them might help project operations be completed successfully. The "engagement with religious scholars" technique in instance one (the Baluchistan polio campaign) demonstrated that, despite their formal lack of involvement, religious scholars were interested because they had a voice in society.

LOCAL TACTIC

According to the local approach, local people must be trusted and seen as participants in the development process in order to carry out development in conflict areas. The "community based vaccination" technique, which involved hiring locals to administer polio vaccines, helped to improve public opinion in instance one (Polio Campaigns in Baluchistan). Because of the subsequent rise in polio campaign coverage, this method has shown to be effective. The "implementation through local organizations" technique in case two (BEP) demonstrates how local NGOs and organizations may be successfully integrated for school monitoring in order to meet project objectives.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

It has been discovered that strategies different than the conventional ones must be used in order to carry out development efforts in Baluchistan's conflict areas. In instance two (BEP), a "real time monitoring system" was implemented, in which monitoring personnel were given Android smartphones loaded with applications so they could check schools instead of using the conventional method of government inspection.⁶ Recommendations for Policies

COMMUNITY BASED DEVELOPMENT

It is advised that the community's needs be met before launching any new initiatives. Community members are also expected to prioritize the identification of needs. Schemes should be created in accordance with the needs that have been recognized. Otherwise, plans that are imposed from without might make conflict in any region more intense. Project execution is made simpler when community members are consulted at the outset of the project. Additionally, programs based on needs reported by the community were more effective. These initiatives met their goals and benefited the neighborhood. These initiatives won't conflict with the community's cultural interests either. Therefore, community-based programs have shown more effectiveness in Baluchistan's conflict areas.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

First, a feasibility analysis should be conducted before starting development initiatives in areas of conflict. The project's compatibility with that society's culture and traditions should be evaluated. The goals and actions of the project shouldn't conflict with societal standards. Second, because religious concerns predominate in Baluchistan's conflict zones, research findings suggest that the project shouldn't harm the religious sensibilities of any faith, sect, or caste. Thirdly, awareness initiatives should be used to dispel societal misconceptions about the project. Last but not least, a project's performance will suffer if it does not have competent personnel to carry it out. Projects in troubled areas might attract skilled labor by offering attractive compensation packages and security.

LOCALIZED DEVELOPMENT

The local approach to development should be used while carrying out development projects in Baluchistan's conflict zones. It implies that since locals are familiar with the area, they should be employed first to do project work. Second, during the implementation phase, they will be useful in addressing local concerns. Thirdly, it will be a helpful instrument for encouraging a favorable view of initiatives in the community. Additionally, project managers might assign some of their responsibilities to local groups in localized development. This will facilitate the project's execution and improve the community's employment ratio.

INVENTIVE DEVELOPMENT

It implies that new and creative approaches should be employed in place of conventional ones while carrying out development projects in Baluchistan's conflict areas. It will assist community members, guarantee the project's timely completion, and help the initiative reach its goals. Task completion may be delayed as a result of the bureaucratic approach to development work. Therefore, certain innovative approaches should be adopted. For instance, in the Polio Campaign, a one-window operation was initiated rather than using the current bureaucratic channels, which resulted in a decrease in the number of polio cases. These instances demonstrate how creative approaches may be used to carry out development initiatives in conflict areas, which could aid in accomplishing project goals.

CONCLUSION

It is difficult to conduct development operations in conflict areas in a seamless manner. Projects carried out in these regions have certain difficulties, as development professionals worldwide are aware. Baluchistan also suffers from a worsening law and order situation, which makes it difficult for the country to prosper. The Baluchistan Education Support Project (BEP) and the Polio campaign in Baluchistan are two examples of instances that were chosen for examination. In order to overcome these obstacles, they implemented successful project execution methodologies. Ultimately, it is advised that community-based development, socioeconomic and political context evaluation, and localized and creative development be the main priorities when implementing development programs in conflict areas.

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