

Results by Districts:

The results presented below are mainly based on interviews of households conducted during Livelihood and Food Security Assessment (LFSA) in April/May 2017 in the four districts. Around 400 households were interviewed in each district and sample was drawn from all sub-districts (Talukas), both urban and rural, and arid and non-arid areas.

Tharparkar:

Of the 4 districts analyzed, Tharparkar is by far the worst affected district with almost all indicators used for the analysis indicating a severe situation. As an entirely arid district, Tharparkar is most impacted by the lean season as all agriculture in the district is rain-fed. The drought conditions in Tharparkar are found to be really bad at this stage as there has been no rainfall till date in 2017 and the rainy season in 2016, though abundant was late in its start pushing households further into a drought like conditions.

An analysis of all available evidence clearly indicates that Tharparkar is in Phase 4 indicating an Emergency situation. An alarmingly high proportion of households, 46% were found to have "Poor food consumption" and 38% of households were adopting "high coping strategies" as per the reduced coping strategy index to cover food consumption gaps and only 38% were meeting food needs without engaging in any coping strategies. The proportion of children eating minimum dietary diversity is as low as 16%. These food consumption gaps are manifested through very high Acute Malnutrition rates. As per a recent SMART survey, the GAM rate (Weight for Height) for the district is around 27% with almost 8% Severe Acute Malnutrition. These high wasting rates are corresponding with very high rates of Infant mortality

There is a big shift in the major sources of livelihood, compared with 6 months ago when 39% of households relied on agriculture wage labor to the current period when only 17% of households were relying on agriculture wage labor indicating the seasonality effect of that particular livelihood source. In comparison, the proportion of households that are relying on sale of livestock has increased which may be indicative of livelihood change and the distress selling of livestock as a coping strategy. There is also a small increase in the proportion of households relying on non-agriculture wage labor compared with 6 months ago.

The vulnerability of households is further aggravated by the lack of stocks of own production of cereals. Almost 60% of households had no stocks of staples available to them. There was also a small decrease in the *gowar* (Cluster beans) and Barley production due in part to a delayed 2016 monsoon impacting the production of rain fed crops. Therefore, there is a heavy reliance on markets, however remoteness is a major issue plaguing households in Tharparkar and around, as 49% have to travel more than 20 km to access the nearest market. The remoteness experienced also impacts access to health care as resident of Tharparkar need to travel 22 km on average to access the nearest health care facility thereby adding transportation cost to their cost of food and health.

In terms of livestock deaths, between 55 and 75% of households had lost goats/sheep in the previous 6 months. Deaths of larger ruminants were less common. As livestock ownership is a major livelihood and food source for households in the arid areas, the deaths of livestock will have serious implications for affected families.

Access to water is another major limiting factor for Tharparkar. Around 83% were using unimproved sources of sanitation while 50% were not using improved sources of water. Moreover, around 34% travel more than 30 minutes to access water.

The threat of the drought like conditions has pushed the government to restart wheat distribution which had been ongoing since the start of the drought like conditions in 2014 but had ceased in recent years.

Umerkot though classified as Phase 3 (Crisis) is very close to Phase 4, with 18% in the Emergency phase. However, in the absence of recent nutrition data, Umerkot is very close to Phase 4 and a slight deterioration would push this district into Phase 4. Additionally, around 20% of the population of the district is living in the desert areas which are quite vulnerable. Only 12% of children were consuming a diet of minimum dietary diversity which would lead to the assumption that the malnutrition rates in the district are quite high.

Around 86% of households were relying on unsustainable livelihood activities for their primary income sources. Sale of agriculture products is the most dominant form of income earning activity, however around 71% of households engaged in land cultivation are sharecroppers and tenants and are highly vulnerable. There are around 22% of households relying on a non-agriculture wage labor and as per a recent WFP market survey; the daily wage rate recorded in Umerkot is relatively higher compared to other districts.

Access to water is a problem in Umerkot with only 32% reporting to having water source on the premises. Only 61% having access to improved sources of water, leaving 39% accessing water from potentially unsafe water sources.

Jamshoro has results similar to Umerkot with close to 20% of population found to be in Phase 4. However, recent nutrition data indicating GAM rates above the critical emergency threshold, showing there is a critical situation emerging in the district, hence, the district was classified as Phase 4. Other prevailing issues in Jamshoro includes around 23% of households with moderate levels of hunger (in Phase 3) which is relatively high compared with other districts.

Financial access was a major limiting factor and around 71% of households had contracted debt in the last 6 months with an average debt of around 25,951. There is a very high dependence on non-agriculture wage labor with almost 40% of households relying on wage labor. This particular livelihood source tends to be the lowest income generating and the most unstable. Overall, Jamshoro is on the borderline of Phase 3 and Phase 4, with 20% of population in Phase 4 and GAM rates that are also indicative of Phase 4. The situation could therefore move easily towards improvement.

Sanghar:

Sanghar was classified in Phase 4, with around 36% of households found to have poor food consumption. Additionally, around 43% of households were experiencing moderate hunger, a figure higher than any other district. The proportion of households engaging in "High Coping" as per the reduced coping strategy index indicating that households have trouble meeting their food needs, was also high in Sanghar at 26%. The alarming situation is further reflected by the 30% of households adopting emergency livelihood coping strategies.

In terms of agriculture production, there was an increase in the area cultivated, but there was a dip in the expected yield for 2017, which would impact the household food security, especially for those households that work as share croppers and rely on the production for their livelihood. The decrease however is very small and may not have significant impacts

Livestock deaths were quite high in Sanghar, and around 60% of households reported to have lost goats/sheep in the last 6 months and 40% reporting to have lost their donkeys. The deaths of livestock have implications for food availability and for livelihoods of households.

The highest proportion of households at around 90%, rely on unsustainable livelihood sources in Sanghar making them more vulnerable to shocks and instability. The most prevalent livelihood source was wage labor, with around 33% of households relying on agriculture and non-agriculture wage labor. A recent WFP market survey indicated a daily wage rate of 350 PKR a month in Sanghar which was lower than the other districts. There was also 14% households that earned through sale of agriculture products, this is offset, however, by the proportion of households that were working as sharecroppers and tenants 73% and only 21% were owners, adding an extra layer of vulnerability. Around 71% of households in Sanghar had contracted debt to meet their household needs with an average outstanding debt of around PKR 27,864.

Access to improved water was somewhat better with 74% households having access to improved sources of water and 18% travelling more than 30 minutes to access water. 67% do not have access to improved sanitation and only 50% of houses are connected to a drainage system.