

Provincial Profile

- Kunarha -

1. Natural resources

Kunarha province, a rugged mountainous area is located in the northeastern part of the country and on the border with Pakistan. The provincial capital, Asadabad is 90 Km away from Jalalabad city and takes one and half hour by a taxi. An Indian company through the financial assistance from USAID is upgrading the road. Almost 80 Km of road is upgraded and work is going on other 10 Km.

Kunarha is endowed with lot of natural resources. There are more than 1000 gem mines in Pech Dara and Chapa Dara districts. The gems are extracted by locals without any proper government control. The gems extracted are Zamard, Lagor and Brog and are sold to Pakistan.

Kunarha is one of the four provinces of Afghanistan still having a significant cover of natural coniferous forests. According to Kunarha Department of Agriculture, Livestock and forests, Kunarha has 54,260 Ha of forest area and 3,8460 Ha of pasture land. During last thirty year these forests have indiscriminately cut and mainly sold to bordering Pakistan markets. Now even a large quantity of extracted timber is lying on road side and cannot be sold to outside markets due to government ban.

Kunarha River, which bisects the province flowing from northeast to southeast is major source of irrigation. The flow of water in the river is 2500 cft in summer and 17000 cft in winter. Three other major rivers i.e. Landay, Pech and Asmar, feed the Kunarha river. Pech and Asmar rivers join Kunarha river at Asadabad while the Landay river joins the Kunarha river at Barikot. A total of 27,375 Ha of land is irrigated by these rivers through 21 large communal canals from which many villages benefit. According to officials of Irrigation and water resource department in Kunarha, a detailed survey of all canals and reservoirs is done by FAO in 2002 but the results are not available yet.

A single dam in the province was constructed at Asadabad before revolution in mid 70 having a capacity of 700 Kilo watts but now only producing 200 Kilo watts of electricity. There are approximately 15-16 small hydro power stations having the capacity of producing 20-25 Watt of electricity. These hydro power stations are mainly constructed privately but recently some have been constructed through assistance from PRT.

Currently, most of the infrastructural investments in Kunarha is made by PRT, DAI by building schools, roads, small hydro power stations, retaining walls and canals. MADERA is the only NGO having longest presence in the province working since 1984 in Agriculture and Livestock sectors. DACAR has also the longest presence in the province working in water supply sector and have installed more than 627 wells in the province. Other NGOs which have recently started working in the province are Relief International.

Kunarha province has suffered a lot during the past 20-30 years due to its resistance against Russians and latter due to internal fighting. All the irrigation infrastructure, agricultural fields and forests have taken the brunt of the war. Security is still an issue in the province hindering most of the development activities. There is huge American presence in the province (6-7 bases) and still fight is going on between locals and American in some areas like Pech Dara.

2. Human Resources

According to an estimate more than 60% of the population migrated to neighboring Pakistan during the war. In 28 refugee camps in neighboring Bajur Agency of Pakistan only people from Kunarha lived and also a significant number of families were living in other parts of Pakistan. Recently most of these refugee camps have been closed and more than 70% of the migrated people having returned to Kunarha.

Gujar and Mushwani which comprises 5-10 % of the total population are the seasonal migratory group. Most of them are landless and are mainly involved in livestock rearing and move to summer pastures during summer and to the low lying areas of the province in area. They have traditional customary rights for access to land.

There is an increasing trend of movement from far off and inaccessible areas to cities and the provincial capital in search of better job opportunities and other facilities. One such example is that 50% of the population in inaccessible Pech Dara moved to Chaglsaria area in the province.

According to a survey done by DAI in 2005, there are 307 schools (239 for boys and 68 for girls) in the province with 100,000 students (35% female and 65% male). There are 21 high schools (19 for boy and 2 for girls), 27 middle schools (22 for boys and 5 for girls) and 244 primary schools (183 for boys and 61 for girls) and 15 religious schools (*Madrassa*) for boys. In addition there are 64 literacy courses for males and females. There is more inclination towards education in the province due to other limited livelihood options.

3. Agriculture

3.1 Overview

According to the Department of Agriculture in Kunarha, out of 24, 000 Ha of agricultural land 18,000 Ha is classified as irrigated and 6,000 Ha as rained fed and 9,000 Ha as waste land unsuitable for agriculture. During the war most of the agricultural lands were abandoned due to migration and irrigation structure destroyed but now the agriculture is slowly recovering during the last five years. There is a shift from traditional cropping to cash cropping, introduction of new crops and increased mechanization.

Irrigation system was well developed before war but is mostly destroyed during war either due to bombing or due to lack of maintenance. The major sources of irrigation are canals, springs and Karezes. According to estimates of Irrigation and Water Resources Department in Kunarha there are approximately 72 large and medium canals on Kunarha river out of this 21 can be classified as large and registered with Directorate. There are 120-150 springs in different parts of the province mainly in valley. Irrigation through Karez is only in Marwara and Shegal districts. According to an estimate 97 % of the irrigation is done through canals and the rest through springs and Karezes.

According to discussion with different sources in the province, the Kunarha has abundant water but this water cannot be fully utilized due to poor irrigation structures. Currently EIRP (Emergency Irrigation Rehabilitation Project) is working in the province and has Project Coordination Unit (PCU) in Jalalabad which is responsible for four eastern province (Kunarha, Laghman, Jalalabad and Nooristan). DAI and PRT is also contributing to the repair of the canals.

Sretaj Dam at Asadabad was planned before war in mid seventies to divert water of Kunarha river to Dast Ghambari in Jalalabad but could not be materialized due to war. The officials are pressing hard for revitalizing the project as it will produce a lot of electricity, bring a large area under irrigation and mitigate the effects of the floods. Another canal survey was done by MADERA in 2004 to from Marawara to Kama in Jalalabad but according to locals it could not go ahead due to international conflicts between different groups.

3.2 Crops

Two crops are grown on irrigated land. Wheat, maize, rice, sugarcane, lentils, barley, beans, cotton and vegetables like tomato, egg plant, okra, cucumber, onion, potato, radish, carrots and other are grown on irrigated land. On rainfed land mostly wheat, barely, mustard and watermelon are grown. There is an increased trend of growing beans and potato on high elevation near natural forests which is the main source of income for people living in mountains. The beans are sold in Asadabad at the rate of Rs.35/Kg.

Before war traditional crops like wheat, barely, maize, rice was grown. But in the last five years there is a major shift towards multiple cropping and introduction of new cash crops and varieties. The shift in crop pattern is mainly due to the knowledge brought from Pakistan by returnees and the recent extension and input support from different organization. DAI is the main organization which is promoting agriculture in the area. In 2005 DAI through Agriculture Department Kunarha distributed vegetable seeds and fertilizer to 15000 farmers in 6 districts. These farmers were also trained in vegetable growing and marketing. Similarly DAI provided improved wheat seed for 18,859 jeribs in 2005 in 15 districts and will provide wheat seed for 12840 jeribs in 11 districts this year There is an increased trend toward vegetable growing because of high return and market. According to an estimate vegetables grown on one jerib of land can fetch a price of 1, 00000 Rs.

The main market for the crops especially vegetables, beans and potatoes is Jalalabad where the crop fetch higher price than local market. Now a local market for crops and fruits has been established but it is not still fully operational. DAI is mainly helping farmers in marketing of crops. In 2005 DAI DAI through Directorate of Agriculture distributed 8000 bags and packing boxes among farmers in six districts of the province.

Fruit trees are grown on an area of approximately 30 Ha in the province. Fruits grown in the province are grapes, apricot, orange, walnut, persimmon, guava, plum and almond. People from outside come to buy it. Now DAI is helping the farmers in marketing of the fruits. For example DAI in 2005 trained farmers in packaging of grapes in Kona Khas District and encouraged them to sell it in Jalalabad instead of selling it locally. Recently a local market has been established in Kona Khas district centre to promote marketing.

3.3 Livestock

According to DAI estimates there 90,000 goats, 60,000 cattle, 140 camels, 1200 horses, 1000 mules, 1700 donkeys and 1,308,350 poultry in the Kunarha province. MADERA is in the process of head count survey for livestock.

People in the mountains especially Gujar and Mushwani keep goats herd. On average there 100 goats/household and it is the main source of their livelihood. Almost every household in the flat areas of the province keep sheep and cows for domestic consumption. The estimated number of cows and buffalo is 2 per household. Donkeys, horses and mules are kept by the households living in areas which are not accessible by road for transportation. Poultry is kept by almost every household (approx 5/household) for domestic consumption.

Livestock are used for meat, milk, wool, hides and skins production. Milk is processed into different products like butter, cheese, yogurt and other local products. Sale of live animals is very common. Wool and skins are mainly exported to Pakistan but in some parts of the provinces local products are made from wool and sold in Jalalabad or provincial centre. Cheese and butter are the milk products which are sold or bartered in the local market and Jalalabad. There was one commercial poultry farm in the districts which was closed due to influenza.

Before the war most of the people in Kunarha were engaged in livestock sector which provided a main source of income from them. During the last thirty years livestock sector has mainly suffered due to war and drought. Still there are no significant improvements in the livestock sector. There are eight active veterinary clinics in eight districts of Kunarha, 5 of them are run by government, two with the assistance of FAO and one by MADERA. FAO has started a veterinary privatization program and has trained doctors in different districts. MADERA is active in the province since early 80 in livestock sector. MADERA provides artificial insemination and animal feed through their privatization program in the district and provincial centre.

3.4 Fisheries

Kunarha has got enough water resources for fish production but unfortunately very less has been done in this sector. Only two private fish ponds are active in province, one established with assistance of PRT and the other one is private.

In Kunarha river only local varieties of fish are found. During the war the fishing was through electric current and use of bombs which brought a drastic decline in the fish population. Now this practice is banned and only fishing through nets is allowed.

3.5 Land tenure

According to an estimate more than 50% of the people living in Kunarha are landless. The land owning farmers can be identified in three categories: 10 % big farmers (having more than 10 jeribs of land), 30 medium farmers (having land between 2 and 10 jeribs) and 60% small farmers (having land less than 2 jeribs).

Sharecropping and leasing of land is also practiced. The sharecropping system (half:half) valid in the province is that all the inputs for crop production and similarly the production is equally shared by the sharecropper and owner. All the labour is provided by sharecropper. In Kunarha one jerib of irrigated land is leased for one year for 400 Kg of wheat or equivalent amount. Mortgage of land was prevalent before but now discouraged by religious leader.

3.6 Agriculture support services and input supplies

The Agriculture Department of Kunarha with the assistance of different organization is providing support services and inputs supplies to farmers. DAI who started working in Kunarha province since 2005 is providing training, improved wheat and vegetable seeds and packaging material and marketing advice to the farmers. ICARDA has introduced two varieties of wheat on 40 jeribs in 2005 , four varieties of rice and 16 varieties of mong bean in 5 districts of the province in 2006. According to the Agriculture department the results of wheat and mong bean are good but the results of rice are not much promising. GTZ introduced sunflower in 3 districts in 2005 and 2 districts in 2006 but the results are not promising because of the marketing problem.

3.7 Agriculture structures

Fifteen farmer cooperatives from 8 districts in the province are registered with Agriculture department and the registration of two is under process. Fifteen cooperatives have 1057 members having a total land of 3264 jeribs and the capital of the cooperatives is AFS 266650.

According to Agriculture department the establishing of cooperatives has started recently in the province but government plan is to introduce cooperatives during the next 12 years. The members of the cooperatives get preference in getting support and inputs distributed through department of agriculture or other organizations.

The process of cooperative formation is facilitated by Agriculture department as their extension workers in each district motivate farmers for cooperative formation. The cooperative is then registered with Cooperative Department which takes money or land as collateral.

3.8 Agriculturally related business

Establishment of local markets for fruits and vegetables which are not fully operational is a major development in promoting agriculturally related business. Currently the farmers are approached by outsider to purchase their product or the farmers sell their product to local market. There is more inclination towards selling their products in Jalalabad because of improved road where it can fetch good prices.

4. Other business activities

The main business activities mainly located in provincial centre that contribute to economy of Kunarha include a bakery, candy making factory, ice manufacturing, carpentry shops, cotton gins, flour mills. There are also oil processing plants for sesame seed, cotton seed and linseed. There are indigenous processing plants (Ghani) for extraction of Ghur from sugarcane.

According to a rough estimate more than 70% of people involved in agriculture and livestock sector, 10 % in government and NGO jobs and 10 % in business and the remaining 10 % migrate to Pakistan for unskilled labor or involved in other activities. The main local businesses are small shops, timber industry and sale of local agricultural products like beans, walnuts and gems.

Wood extraction is one of the main business activity but ban by government on timber selling to outside for the last two years. Major investment in timber business is made by outsider and the local people get employment and also small investments. The price of a coniferous scantling (8ft long, 12 inches wide and 6inches thick) is Rs. 2000 in local market. According to estimates 6738423 cft of extracted wood from Nooristan and Kunarha province is lying in Kunarha area now. A government committee comprising of members from ministry of commerce, interior and Agriculture have finalized the arrangements of disposal of extracted wood by negotiations with concerned people. The government has classified the timber into three categories i.e 1st class (price 500 Afs/cft), 2nd class (price 400 Afs/cft) and 3rd class (price 300 Afs/cft).

5. Security

According to the officials from different departments who were contacted for interview the security situation is good in the province except Pech Dara. The security is also not good in some other districts which are inaccessible. Currently the American forces presence is huge in the province. But according to Deputy Director of Agriculture, Kunarha is portrayed by outsiders as unsecured place but nobody can cite an example where a development worker has been harmed by the local people.

6. Physical infrastructure

The main road from Jalalabad to Barikot (170 Km) which bisects the province has been upgraded to Salarbagh (80 Km) i.e. 10 Km short of provincial centre and rapid work on going on the remaining portion. This road will open new marketing opportunities of local produce from different parts of the province. A net work of roads from provincial centre to other districts is existing and upgradation of the existing roads and construction of new roads is going on. The network of existing roads is mainly due to extraction of timber. According to a rough estimate 50% of the villages in the province can be accessed by road.

The dam in Asadabad and other micro hydro power stations in the valleys are the only source of electricity for the people in the province. The main sources of drinking water are rivers, springs and wells. According to UNCHR survey in 2002 for Asadabad District s “ 80% population is drinking

water from the river which is completely polluted. At the same time, the inhabitants can not access this source easily as some people need to walk 2-3 Km in order to reach the river.”

There are more than 13 health clinics at the district level and one hospital in provincial centre constructed by WHO in 2002. There is also one TB hospital at provincial centre. Most of the clinics and hospital provide basic medical facilities and vaccination and any serious cases are referred to Jalalabad or Peshawar.

7. Institutional constraints

Discussion with different government and NGO staff at the province revealed following constraints.

- Ban on poppy cultivation by government in last 2-3 years and farmers were promised of alternative livelihoods. But these promises were not fulfilled and people may revert to poppy cultivation which is now only taking place in inaccessible parts of the province.
- Lack of coordination between different NGOs working in the province and between NGOs and government departments.
- Lack of human capacity in government department as the more qualified people prefer to work with NGOs due to better salary packages.
- Complete financial dependence of government departments on donors and NGOs
- Government ban on disposal of already extracted timber which is now almost decaying. No proper policy and manpower for forest management.
- Negative image of security hinders the development activities in the area.
- Lack of trust on organizations who are new to the area..

8. Credit

The informal credit system is still strong where money is borrowed from relatives, friends and shopkeepers in time of need. In some cases when money is borrowed from a non-relative a small interest is charged but this practice is strongly discouraged now.

The microfinance program of MRRD is implemented by Relief international in provincial centre and Narang and Sarkanay districts.

9. Stakeholders

The following table gives a brief description of each stakeholder

Stakeholders	Rank	Comments
National authorities	2	Have presence in the province but not very active
Regional and local	2	Very weak and understaffed.
Regional and local organizations	3	Very few such organization exists except emerging NSP shuras which are very active
NGOs/CBOs	1	The NGOs and CBOs have played important role in development and the people have more belief in some NGOs which has long existence than government authorities.
Religious organizations	1	The people of the province are very religious and the religious leaders and institutions are highly respected
Traditional organizations	1	<i>Jirga</i> is one of the most strongest and oldest institution in the area
Commercial and business groups	3	Very few commercial and business groups.
Groups defined by beneficiary status, social analysis, rural appraisals or gender analysis	2	The society in Kunarha is almost egalitarian and strongly influenced by religion, so the rights of all groups are respected.
The press	3	Press is almost non-existent in the province

Donors	1	Donors have a strong role in defining different relations between different stakeholders and financially support it.
--------	---	--

10. Summary of key potential development opportunities

Following key potential development opportunities are recommended for the province and districts.

1. Following potential are present in irrigation sector.
 - The dam (Sre Taq band) which was planned before war both for irrigation and power supply should be revitalized. The recent plan to divert water from Kunarha river at Marawara to Kama should also given due consideration. The construction of new reservoirs should also be considered.
 - Repair of already damaged irrigation infrastructure on priority basis to increase agricultural productivity.
 - The desiltation and repair of already Asadabad dam.
2. In agriculture sector following potential are present.
 - Further strengthen the production of cash crops especially vegetables
 - Processing and storage facilities for surplus produce
 - Further encourage the production of fruits and especially the walnut which is the main product from the area now.
 - Further encouraging the production of beans and potatoes on the mountain slopes without disturbing the already fragile environment.
 - Soil conservation measures to improve the fertility of soil.
3. Livestock sector should be developed and especially a significant population of Gujar and Mashwani should be given support. The already small scale production of cheese, wool and wool products should be further developed on a large scale. The scientific management of summer and winter pastures through reseeding, control grazing and fencing should be given due consideration in order to increase the livestock population.
4. The extraction of gems in Pech Dara and Chapa Dara from more than 1000 mines should be streamlined and regulated so that local people should get maximum benefit from it.
5. The extraction of timber should be regulated through scientific harvesting and extraction. Local wood based industries to produce value added products from timber should be encouraged so that the local people should get maximum benefit from the timber industry. The already extracted timber should be disposed off as early as possible as it is rotting and both the locals and outside people who have invested money in it will suffer a great loss.
6. Further develop the already existing skills like carpentry, masonry and others through vocational training. The small scale industries like cotton gins and Gur making technology should be further developed.
7. The area is suitable for fish production due to abundant perennial water and establishment of small commercial fish farms. The production of already established two farms is promising..

Annex 1

Provincial Data Base

Province: Kunarha

Programmes/projects		Agency/donor	Approx Value US\$m	Comment, significance
No	Completed			
1	Seed distribution and water supply	Swedish committee	No Known	Still active in Eastern Afghanistan but stopped its activities in Kunarha.
2				
	Ongoing/planned			
1	Interventions in civil engineering, Agriculture, forestry, livestock, microfinance and NSP	MADERA	Not known	Working in Kunarha since 1984. Has expanded its activities recently.
2	Water and Sanitation Programme	DACAAR/BMCC	Not know	DACAAR started its activities in early 90 in Kunarha, Now two offices in Kunarha in two districts.
3	Alternative livelihood programme-Eastern region	DAI/USAID	Not know	Working in agricultural sector and infrastructural development.
4	NSP	MADERA and Relief Int.	Not known	Implemented in six districts by MADERA and in four districts by RI.
5	Microfinance	Relief international	Not know	Implemented in centre and two districts.
6.	Emergency irrigation rehabilitation project	World Bank	6 m for 4 eastern provinces	Irrigation structure repair.

Annex 2

Working methodology used:

A desktop research was done to collect the available information about the province. Discussion with knowledgeable people who either belonged to the province or have worked in the province was also useful.

The research team comprising of RRERS senior advisor and senior agronomist from DACAAR office Laghman visited the Kunarha province on 12 September, 2006. Based on discussion with the MADERA staff and DACAAR WSP staff key informants were selected. Open ended interviews were conducted with the officials of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water resources and MRRD departments. An interview was also held with MADERA staff to collect some of the missing information and cross check the information collected.

Security was a real concern during the field visit and unfortunately very less documented information is available about the province. Due to time limitation it was not always possible to meet other key informants for collection of more reliable data.

Annex 4: List of persons/agencies visited/contacted

Name	Position/agency	Topic discussed	Date
Shams ur Rehaman	Tech. Advisor MRRD	MRRD activities and projects working in the area	13 September,2006
Shah Jehan	Administrator, Irrig. & water resources	Irrigation systems, dams, projects	13 September,2006
Mursalin Sherzai	Deputy Director Agriculture Dept.	Agriculture	13 September,2006
Noor Uddin	Livestock specialist Agriculture Dept	Livestock	13 September,2006
Hafeez Ullah	Extension Worker Agriculture Dept.	Extension	13 September,2006
Qimat Gul	Forestry specialist Agriculture Dept.	Forestry	13 September,2006
Abdur Rahman	Programme Manager MADERA	General information about Kunarha and MADERA activities	13 September,2006
Tahir Stankzai	Forestry and Horticulture specialist MADERA	Fruits and forestry	13 September,2006
Hayat Ullah Sanai	Agriculturist MADERA	Agriculture	13 September,2006
Dr. Malang	Livestock specialist MADERA	Livestock	13 September,2006
Amanullah	Senior Horticulturist DAI	DAI activities and information about Kunarha	14 September,2006