MANCHAR LAKE: GENDER IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR WATER GOVERNANCE

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In collaboration with:

Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR)

Sindh Irrigation Department (SID)

PAKISTAN: THE WATER CONTEXT

- Pakistan is a semi-arid country with most of its water supply coming from the Indus River system
- It has the largest contiguous (adjoining) irrigation system which enables the country to have a mixture of agricultural and pastoral production
- Estimated population: 194 million
- The country will be facing water scarcity in 2030
- Water storage capacity is 30 days (compared to 600 days in Australia)

PAKISTAN'S GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WATER SCARCITY

- Due to socially constructed gender division of labour, typically women have a close ecological relationship with water through their productive and reproductive labour
- 2012-2013 Pakistan Labour Force Survey: Approximately 75% of total female employment depends upon agriculture and 84% of the women employed in the country are in the rural areas


Bhan
Ghulam Mohammad Solangi
Manchar Lake
Bubak
Sehwān
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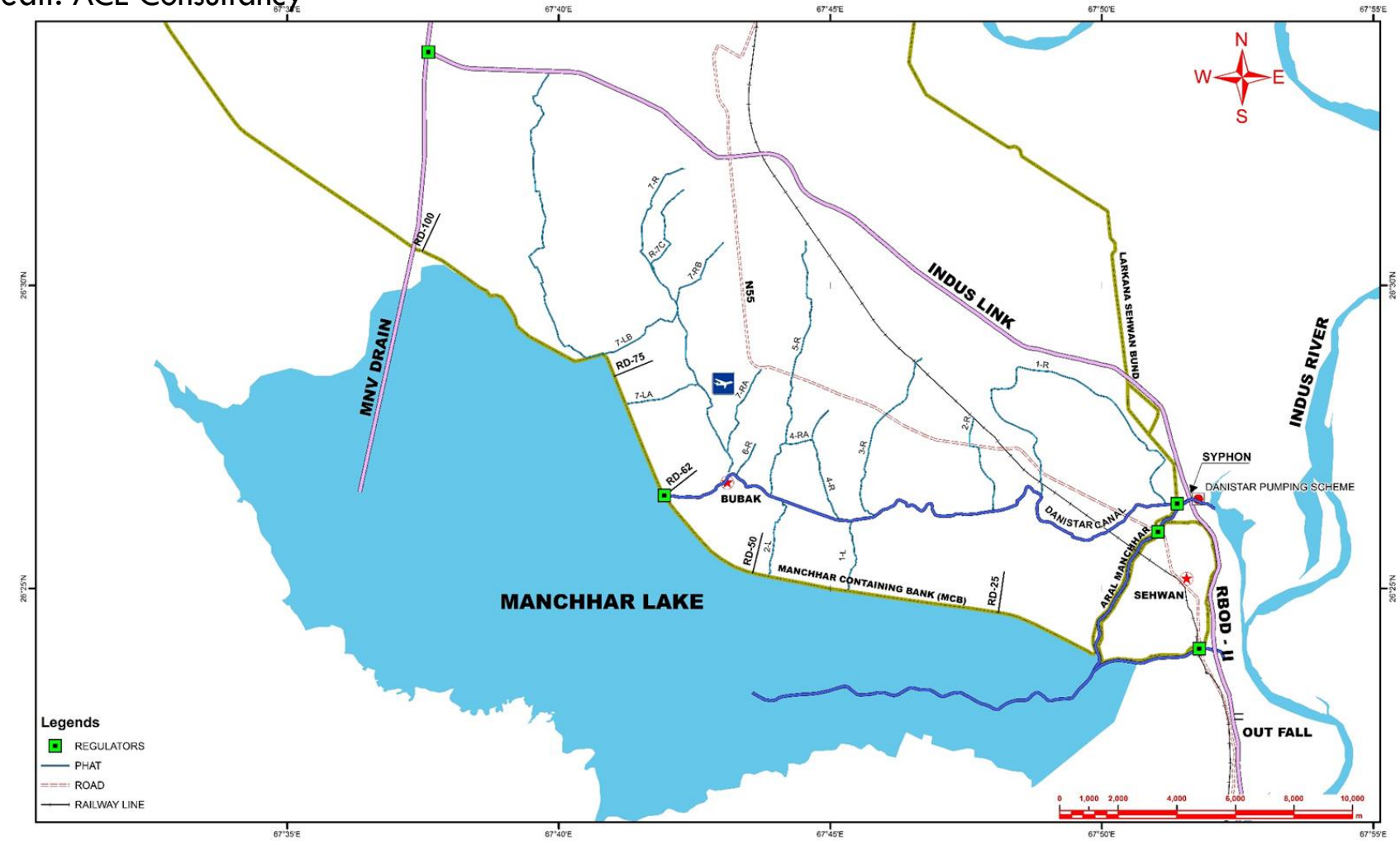
Google Earth

Credit: ACE Consultancy



Purpose of Manchar lake research

- To build gender awareness and qualitative research skills of one of the CSIRO's SDIP partners, the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR)
- To understand the linkages between environmental degradation and gender impact, and
- to use Manchar Lake as a case study of how micro-level gender impact and outcomes are related to the macro-level of national and provincial decisions about water and irrigation

Manchar Lake: before and after

When the lake was fresh

- Women had greater mobility, able to save up for daughters' dowries
- Earned enough money to perform the hajj or umrah
- Prosperous, with 20-25 fish wholesalers coming in to purchase
- Rich, diverse agriculture and diet

Current situation

- Those families with the means have relocated elsewhere
- Men go to Karachi or other places to do contract fishing or as labourers
- Early marriage or polygamy due to poverty
- Higher maternal mortality
- Poor health due to lake water quality – waterborne diseases common

CURRENT PROPOSALS AND PLANS

- Short-term
  - Shunting water
  - Establish monitoring system for water quality
- Long-term
  - Expedite the construction of RBOD-II so that effluent can be diverted to the Arabian sea
  - Rehabilitation of existing canal systems

SUGGESTIONS FROM NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PERSPECTIVE

- Priorities for the villagers: restoration of the area's flora and fauna
  - This will require rehabilitation of the Manchar lake water quality (i.e. from saline to freshwater)
- Improving WASH and waste facilities
- Dilution/ 'flushing' the lake
  - Currently an upstream lake, Hamal, is withholding significant amount of freshwater
- Any others?

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- For more information about SDIP https://research.csiro.au/sdip/gender/