JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal

ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

UNDERSTANDING POLICIES GOVERNING PULSES IN PAKISTAN: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLICY COHERENCE, INSTITUTIONS, AND FOOD SECURITY

Manzar Javed Ali*

[*]Manzar Javed Ali is a senior public policy and governance professional with over 20 years of experience in the Pakistan Administrative Service. His expertise includes public sector reform, industrial development, investment facilitation, and evidence-based policymaking. His research interests include Public Policy, Special Economic Zones, Strategic Infrastructure, and Sustainable Economic Development.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22269572

Keywords

Article History
Received: 28 June 2026
Accepted: 15 August 2026
Published: 31 August 2026

Copyright @Author
Corresponding Author: *
Manzar Javed Ali

Abstract

Pakistan's recurring weaknesses in the pulse sector are not so much due to the lack of policy, institution or agricultural research, rather it is due to weak governance and fragmented policies. Pulses are regulated at the same time as an agricultural crop, as a food, as an import, as a research crop, as a climate resistant crop and as a provincial development issue, but there is inadequate interdomains integration. As a result there are policies in favor of domestic production alongside incentive policies to crops competing with the pulses, liberal imports, weak seed transmission, and poor extension and divided institutional responsibilities. Thus, a comprehensive multi-level governance model must be in place, with a focus on both farmer profitability and consumer affordability, as well as productivity, trade resilience, nutrition and climate adaptation, such that it mitigates the risk of isolated commodity interventions from successful sustainable pulse-sector development (Government of Pakistan, 2018; Ministry of Commerce, 2025; Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, 2021; PARC, 2025).

Background and Rationale

Pulses such as gram, lentil, moong, masoor and black gram are an integral part of the food system and are important in Pakistan. They offer a relatively low-cost source for plant protein, and are especially significant for those families where animal protein is relatively costly. Pulses also have agronomic significance as part of crop diversification, nitrogen fixation, soil health, relatively low water requirement as compared to several major crops; and the capacity to withstand drought, flood, production hazards and abiotic stresses (Ullah et al., 2020; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2019). Yet, pulses seem to have a relatively weak foothold in the policy framework in Pakistan, both from the nutrition and agricultural value perspectives. Traditionally, agricultural policies have paid substantial attention to large crops like wheat, rice, sugarcane and cotton. Pulses, on the other hand, are impacted by a wide array of policies linked to agricultural production, seed development, research and extension, trade, tariffs, imports, market regulation, food security, adaptation to climate change and provincial agricultural development (Petersen et al., 2019; Government of Punjab, 2018).

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

In the context of Pakistan's reliance on imported pulses, the effectiveness and coherence of this policy framework remains to be questioned. Import and trade liberalization policies, which are designed to benefit consumers, can, for instance, lead to different effects on local production for producers and incentives to grow local production. Likewise, limited success of production policies can be due to the lack of improved seed, research, extension services, markets, credit, or price incentives (Petersen et al., 2019; Vanzetti et al., 2022).

Therefore, pulses' governance needs to be analyzed not just at the level of individual policies, but in the wider institutional and policy context in which pulses' governance is conducted.

Problem Statement

It seems that the Pakistani government does not have a coherent and comprehensive policy for the pulse sector. Rather, policies with an impact on pulses are spread throughout the agricultural production, trade, food security, research, seed systems, markets and imports, as well as provincial development programmes.

This disintegration may cause issues of policy coherence. Agricultural institutions can aim to boost domestic production of pulses, while trade policies can promote imports to supplement limited supplies of pulses, helping to keep consumer prices in check. While attention to policy, institutional support, research funding, procurement systems and market interventions for major crops may not be the same for pulses.

This is a central policy problem of just whether Pakistan can produce enough pulses. Instead, it's about the institutional and policy frameworks that affect the incentives for pulses production, import reliance, market volatility, farmer attitudes and food security.

Thus, there is a need to systematically qualitatively review the policies and institutions that govern pulses in Pakistan, their evolution, their goals and mechanisms, how they interact with each other and the implementation gaps that could be the reason for enduring poor performance in the pulses sector.

Research Aim

The study is designed to critically discuss the development, coherence, enforcement and effectiveness of policies related to pulse sector in Pakistan and its impact on domestic production, dependence on imports, price stability and food security.

Research Objectives

The study will:

1. Identify and map major policies, strategies, programmes, regulations, and institutional arrangements affecting pulses in Pakistan.
2. Examine how Pakistan's policy approach towards pulses has evolved over time.
3. Analyse the extent to which production, trade, food security, research, seed, market, and climate policies affecting pulses are coherent with one another.
4. Examine the roles and relationships of federal and provincial institutions involved in governing the pulse sector.
5. Identify implementation gaps and institutional constraints affecting policy outcomes.
6. Explore how policymakers, farmers, traders, importers, researchers, and other stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of existing policies.
7. Assess how the existing policy framework influences domestic production, import dependence, market and price stability, and food security.
8. Develop policy recommendations for a more coherent and sustainable pulse-sector policy framework.

Research Questions

Main Research Question

How have policies and institutional arrangements governing pulses in Pakistan shaped domestic production, import dependence, market stability, and food security?

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

Sub-Questions

1. What major policies, laws, strategies, programmes, and institutions govern pulse production and markets in Pakistan?
2. How has the policy framework governing pulses evolved over time?
3. To what extent are agricultural production, trade, import, food security, seed, research, market, and climate policies mutually coherent?
4. How are responsibilities for the pulse sector distributed between federal and provincial governments?
5. What institutional and implementation constraints reduce the effectiveness of pulse-related policies?
6. How do key stakeholders perceive existing policies and their effects?
7. Why has Pakistan remained dependent on imported pulses despite policies intended to improve agricultural productivity and food security?
8. What policy reforms could improve domestic production, resilience, affordability, and long-term pulse-sector sustainability?

Literature Review

Understanding Policies Governing Pulses in Pakistan

1. Pulses within Pakistan's Agricultural and Food Policy Landscape

Pulses play an important but relatively neglected role in the agricultural economy and food security system in Pakistan. The main pulse crops in the country are Gram (chick pea), mung bean (moong), lentil (masoor) and black gram (mash). Pulses are a source of relatively low cost plant protein, fibre, minerals and micronutrients to household's nutrition, they also contribute to sustainable agriculture as a source of biological nitrogen fixation and crop diversification (Ullah et al., 2020). Their significance is especially high in the context of a developing country like Pakistan where the price is an important barrier to access for most families to animal source proteins.

Yet, the pulse sector has traditionally been ignored in favor of the major crops over the years when it comes to policy. Wheat, rice, cotton and sugarcane have been given preferential treatment by various price measures, input subsidies, irrigation provisions, procurement and research spending and institutional measures. In contrast, pulses have been more likely in a less supportive policy environment (Petersen et al., 2019; Vanzetti et al., 2022).

This difference is important because agricultural policies don't only impact the pulses. Competing crops supports alter the relative profitability, risk, and land allocation choices of farmers. Wheat policies, for instance, can indirectly disincentive farmers from producing pulses without overt discrimination against production of the pulses (Petersen et al., 2019). Therefore, studying pulse policies needs to be linked to the study of the agricultural policy regime in general and pulse-specific policies in particular.

2. Production Stagnation and the Policy Problem

A major issue is the continuous demand-supply gap in the country for pulses. The authors of Ullah et al. (2020) list many constraints that lead to poor productivity of pulses such as inadequate crop-improvement programmes, low quality seed available, reliance on farmer-saved seed, drought and heat stress, diseases and pests, marginal soils, climate change, lack of appropriate machinery for the crop, post-harvest losses, and marketing problems.

A structural constraint of particular importance is the seed system. Ullah et al. (2020) found that the diffusion of certified and improved pulses varieties was not strong as about 80% of farmers used their own saved seeds. These restrictions indicate that productivity cannot be considered as only a farmers' decision; it is also a result of the efficiency of research, seed regulation, agricultural extension, investment and technology transfer institutions.

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

The Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) has institutional programmes for chickpea, lentil, mung bean and mash, which encompass a range of activities such as seed evaluation, certified seed production, research, training and dissemination of production technologies (Pakistan Agricultural Research Council [PARC], n.d.). However, the existing production demand deficit means that there are concerns about how well research is successfully translated into adoption at farm level.

The challenge is then not just agronomic, but also extends to other areas. Inappropriate policies and markets with poor functioning are important factors that limit the incentive and profitability of farmers, and biological and agronomic studies are not enough, according to Petersen et al. (2019). The low production of pulses has been observed and this is a point of departure for the present study which suggests that it is not only a technical agricultural problem but may also be due to the institutional and policy arena.

3. Unequal Policy Support between Pulses and Major Crops

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) project on the economic analysis of policies affecting pulses has made one of the most important contributions to the literature on pulse policy in Pakistan. Petersen et al. (2019) reviewed government policies impacting on pulse production, consumption, prices, trade, and producer profit. They have found that other commodity policies can significantly affect pulses.

Wheat procurement arrangements, fertiliser subsidies, pulse export restrictions, and relatively low investment in pulse research, development and extension were among the policies identified to have impacts on incentives in the pulse sector in the policy analysis (Petersen et al., 2019). These interventions made other crops, especially wheat, less risky, or more attractive, for producers. This could thus indirectly affect the expansion of pulse cultivation by having a negative impact on policies that have broader agricultural or food-security goals.

Further empirical evidence for this can be found in Vanzetti et al. (2022). They explored the implications of policy measures impacting the pulse sector of Pakistan using a partial-equilibrium model. They observed that policies favouring wheat may have negative impacts on the production of pulses where the relative profitability is changed. Their analysis indicated that a boost in the productivity of pulses would be more defensible than imposing protection on such imports.

This literature reveals an important conceptual issue: **policy incoherence**. A government may simultaneously seek to increase domestic pulse production while maintaining interventions that make competing crops economically more attractive. The problem is therefore not necessarily an absence of government intervention but a lack of alignment between interventions across different parts of the agricultural economy.

4. Research, Development and Extension Policy

Agricultural research and development (R&D) constitute another major theme in the pulse-policy literature. Pulse productivity is closely related to the availability and adoption of improved varieties capable of responding to climatic stress, pests, diseases, and changing production environments. Ullah et al. (2020) recommend greater investment in high-yielding, disease-resistant, short-duration, and climate-resilient varieties, alongside improved certified-seed distribution, conservation agriculture, appropriate machinery, and location-specific production technologies.

Pakistan has established institutional mechanisms for pulse research through PARC and the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC), together with provincial research institutes and agricultural universities. PARC's Pulses Programme includes national uniform yield trials, certified seed production, farmer training, research, and information dissemination (PARC, n.d.).

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal

ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

Government programmes have also attempted to improve productivity. For example, the federal **Promoting Research for Productivity Enhancement in Pulses** initiative brought together research and extension components and considered mechanisms for increasing producer incentives (Government of Pakistan, 2021).

Nevertheless, the literature suggests a potential disconnect between agricultural research, extension, seed multiplication, commercialisation, and farm-level adoption. Developing an improved variety does not automatically improve national productivity unless seed multiplication systems, extension networks, farmer awareness, financing, market incentives, and supply chains facilitate adoption. This indicates that pulse-sector performance needs to be studied as an **institutional system** rather than as a series of isolated technical interventions.

5. Trade Policy, Imports and Domestic Production

Another key aspect of pulse governance is trade policy. Pakistan has been facing difficulty in producing sufficient quantities of goods to satisfy local demands and it has been highly dependent on the international market. When domestic production is not growing and domestic consumption is growing, it is called rising imports (Petersen et al. 2019). The role of import policy is therefore important in ensuring the availability of domestic food and reducing the price of consumers.

It is a policy paradox, however, that trade policy brings about. Liberal imports can boost supply and help to keep consumers from facing shortages and high domestic prices, especially during poor domestic harvests. However, low-cost imports could undermine the price incentive to the domestic producers. Rather, tariffs and restrictions to favour domestic producers can lead to increases in consumer prices and reduce food accessibility.

Vanzetti et al. (2022) stress that reliance on import protection as a key strategy to boost domestic production of pulses is not advised. They estimate that productivity gains and policy reform of the distortions stemming from supporting crops that are in competition with pulses could yield better results than an import tariff on pulses. The reason is that it will help redefine the policy debate in terms of “Why is domestic production not competitive enough?” rather than "How to limit imports in Pakistan?

The difference is most notable with respect to food security. Policies that foster total self-sufficiency can result in an increase in costs for consumers if domestic production is not very efficient. However, over-reliance on international markets, on the other hand, can make Pakistan vulnerable to exchange-rate depreciation, global commodity-price fluctuations, supply-chain disruption and export restrictions by the supplier countries. The good policy framework, therefore, must strike a balance between the capacity of the domestic market and strategic positioning to international market participation.

6. Price Policy and Producer Incentives

Price linkages between farm, trade and food security policies. Farmers' intentions to grow pulses are in part related to the return prospects of these crops compared to other agricultural crops. The indirect impact of government measures on wheat prices, fertilizer prices, irrigation, credit availability, imports of wheat and inputs into the agricultural sector can therefore impact on pulse cultivation.

Policy distortions might decrease the relative profitability of pulses, as suggested by Petersen et al. (2019). However, importantly, their recommendations did not stand for merely copying the strategy of support of large crops by implementing a large government procurement or support price programme for pulses. Their work focused, however, on eliminating distortions and augmenting investment in research, development, extension and productivity.

This is a significant difference for policy design. Traditional solutions to low production could

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

include government procurement, subsides, or guaranteed prices. But such interventions can have fiscal costs, distort markets, storage issues, rent-seeking possibilities and misallocation of resources. One way to achieve this would be to move towards a more flexible policy framework that would lessen the structural limitations on production but still send clear signals to producers.

The question of the policy is not just one of whether farmers get "high enough" prices, but one of quality. The question is whether the overall package of agricultural, trade, input, research, market and price policies provides an adequate degree of predictability and competitiveness to the farmers for their resource allocation decisions for pulses.

7. Value-Chain Governance and Market Development

Increasingly more recent research has shifted away from a narrow production focus and adopted a value-chain perspective. The performance of pulse-sector is not only reliant on the farmers but also on the pulse-sector players such as the seed suppliers, aggregators, traders, processors, wholesalers, retailers, importers, research institutions, financial organizations, and government regulators.

This view acknowledges that a competitive pulse industry will not be assured by increased production. Productivity gains can translate into better incomes and consumer outcomes if market information, grading, storage, transportation, processing and value addition, access to finance, contractual relation and actors' co-ordination are taken care of.

The ACIAR-supported research has, therefore, focused on creating a policy package that will result in a more competitive and inclusive value chain for pulses in Pakistan. The sector is analyzed as a whole and endogenous and exogenous factors influencing competitiveness and inclusiveness are identified in this kind of work.

Recent development-policy efforts have supported this approach. The Asian Development Bank (2025) Pulse value-chain assessment is focused specifically on the chickpea, mung bean, mash and lentil, due to their importance to nutrition, food security, smallholders, market demand and import substitution. The report highlights the need to identify policy and investment opportunities that can rectify the inefficiencies at various points in the value chain.

The shift from production thinking to value chain governorship is big. It is recommended that future policy not just focus on expanding the cultivated land, or providing seed. Policies need to tackle the system from research through production, aggregation, processing, trade and consumption.

8. Food Security and Nutrition Policy

Food and nutrition security is another aspect of pulse policy. Pulses are an important source of plant based protein that are a relatively cheap source of protein and can be considered an important source for the diets of low and middle income groups. Therefore, policies that impact on the price of pulses can have distributional impacts. This results in a basic conflict between the goals of producer and consumer. An increase in domestic prices may stimulate the farmers' production but it limits the purchasing power of the less well-off consumers. Policies that seek to keep consumer prices low via imports, however, may have the effect of lowering producer incentives.

The policy question is thus: How to separate agriculture producer support from consumer social protection. Petersen et al. (2019) propose that savings made as a result of reforming agricultural distortions could be used for research and development as well as specific social-protection programmes. This way, the goal of an efficient agricultural production system is taken off the goal of protecting vulnerable consumers.

The overall food system approach is a supporting argument. Food security goes beyond the availability of food, to issues of access, affordability, acceptability, stability and resilience. This makes it necessary to develop an agronomic

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

policy that balances agricultural production and nutrition, poverty alleviation, trade, consumer protection, and climate resilience.

9. Climate Change and the Strategic Role of Pulses

Another layer of complexity in pulse governance is climate change. Drought, heat stress, variability of rainfall, floods and water scarcity are becoming increasingly a threat to Pakistani agriculture. According to Ullah et al. (2020), drought, heat, salinity, soil degradation are the important abiotic factors which limit the productivity of pulses.

Pulses also have traits that could be useful to a climate-smart agriculture system. They have nitrogen fixing properties that will lower the reliance on synthetic nitrogen fertilizers, and some pulse varieties have the ability to be used in rotation, intercropping systems and relatively water-limited production systems.

This provides a chance to transform pulses beyond being considered "minor crops" and instead as a part of climate change adaptation, sustainable agriculture and food system resilience plans in Pakistan. For this change to happen, however, there is need to improve the linkages between agricultural production policies and climate, water, research and food-security policies.

10. Institutional Fragmentation and Federal–Provincial Governance

One aspect of the current literature which has received little attention is institutional governance. Pulse policy is a multi-sector, multi-level policy. Federally, institutions have an impact on trade, tariffs, national food security, agricultural research, seed regulation and national development priorities while provincially they have a significant role in agricultural development, extension, markets and implementation.

This can lead to potential coordination issues because they are dispersed throughout the institution. The actions taken by one institution can have repercussions in another. The decisions made in trade may impact farm-gate prices and production incentives, for example through trade decisions for controlling inflation. In the same way, research programmes can create better technologies, which are not well coordinated with provincial extension and seed-distribution systems.

Federal–provincial coordination is particularly important in the context of the analysis of agricultural governance because of the 18th Constitutional Amendment of the Constitution of Pakistan that helped to strengthen the role of provincial governments in agriculture. A vertical and horizontal coordination between agriculture and food security and other sectors such as commerce, finance and research, in addition to other market and climate sector institutions is therefore needed to ensure a national approach to pulse sector development.

However, much of the existing literature on pulses focuses on either production constraints or on economic modelling without a systematic study of how these institutions relate. This is an important gap that can be fulfilled by qualitative research.

11. Emerging Recognition of the Need for a National Pulses Policy

The proposed research is timely due to recent developments. During August 2025, PARC Chairman Ghulam Sadiq Afridi explicitly pointed out the need to work on a national level on the development of a policy for pulses for the development of the sector, improvement of linkage between farmers and industry, import substitution and increased self-sufficiency (PARC, 2025).

More than just the recommendations made at the symposium could be of importance in this regard. Even though interventions impacting pulses are spread across different programmes, institutions and policy areas, the call for a national policy also acknowledge that this is not integrated through a comprehensive sectoral approach.

More recently, however, the government has been monitoring of individual pulse crops and production targets as well. In Pakistan, for

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

instance, gram dominates pulse area, and it is also the most productive crop, according to national planning documents, while mung bean and mash lag behind in area and productivity.

Thus, despite decades of agricultural intervention, the continuing call for a national pulse policy suggests that a fundamental governance question remains unresolved: **Does Pakistan possess a coherent pulse-sector policy, or does it govern pulses through a fragmented collection of agricultural, trade, research, food-security, and market interventions?**

Research Gap

The literature reviewed above provides valuable evidence on agronomic constraints, productivity, profitability, trade, imports, producer incentives, and the effects of individual agricultural policies. Ullah et al. (2020) provide a comprehensive assessment of production constraints and technological opportunities. Petersen et al. (2019) analyse the economic effects of policies affecting pulse production and trade, while Vanzetti et al. (2022) quantitatively evaluate selected policy interventions. More recent research and development initiatives have increasingly recognised value-chain competitiveness, inclusiveness, and food-system resilience as important policy concerns.

However, **three significant gaps remain**.

First, much of the existing literature approaches pulse policy from an economic or agronomic perspective. There has been comparatively limited qualitative investigation of how policies are formulated, interpreted, coordinated, and implemented by institutions and stakeholders.

Second, existing research gives insufficient attention to **policy coherence across sectors**. Agricultural production, wheat support, fertiliser policy, trade, imports, seed regulation, research, food security, climate adaptation, markets, and consumer-price management are often examined separately. Yet their interaction may be crucial in explaining actual pulse-sector outcomes.

Third, limited research systematically examines **institutional fragmentation and federal–provincial governance**. There is therefore insufficient understanding of how policymakers, researchers, provincial officials, farmers, traders, importers, and other actors perceive existing policies and why implementation gaps persist.

The proposed study addresses these gaps by adopting a qualitative policy-analysis framework combining documentary analysis. Rather than asking only which policies affect pulse production, it asks **how the overall policy regime operates, whether its components are coherent, how institutional actors implement and negotiate it, and how this governance system influences production, imports, prices, and food security**.

The study therefore shifts the analytical focus from individual agricultural interventions to the **governance of the pulse sector as an integrated policy system**.

Conceptual Framework

The study will use **policy coherence and institutional governance** as its principal analytical perspectives.

The causal framework is:

Policy Environment

Agricultural Policy + Trade Policy + Food Security Policy + Seed Policy + Research and Extension Policy + Market Policy + Climate Policy

↓

Institutional Governance

Federal Government ↔ Provincial Governments ↔ Research Institutions ↔ Market Institutions ↔ Private Sector

↓

Policy Instruments

Research funding → improved seed → subsidies/incentives → extension → tariffs/import rules → market regulation → storage → credit → price interventions

↓

Implementation

Institutional capacity → coordination → resource allocation → enforcement → stakeholder participation

↓

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal

ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

Producer and Market Responses
Cropping decisions → cultivated area → productivity → private investment → imports → marketing behaviour
↓
Sector Outcomes
Domestic Production | Import Dependence | Price Stability | Farmer Income | Consumer Affordability | Food Security

One particular analytical concept will be policy coherence. The study will examine if policies are reinforcing or if one policy may be counterproductive to another. For instance, a policy to promote domestic production of pulses could clash with short-term measures taken to boost cheap imports to manage consumer prices.

Methodology

The study will be of qualitative case-study nature with Pakistan's pulse sector as the main case and the other embedded cases will be gram, masoor, moong, and mash.

Document Analysis

A systematic policy-document review will form the foundation of the research. Documents may include:

- national food security policies;
- agricultural policies and strategies;
- federal and provincial agricultural development plans;
- pulse-development programmes;
- trade and tariff policies;
- import regulations and notifications;
- seed policies and regulations;
- agricultural research strategies;
- climate-change and climate-smart agriculture policies;
- federal and provincial budgets and development programmes;
- parliamentary and government reports;
- Planning Commission documents;
- Ministry of National Food Security and Research documents;
- Pakistan Agricultural Research Council publications;
- provincial agriculture department documents;
- Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reports;
- State Bank of Pakistan reports;
- FAO and other international-development reports.

Each document will be analyzed according to policy objective, policy instrument, implementing institution, target group, implementation mechanism, relationship with other policies, and reported outcomes.

Thematic Analysis of Pulse-Sector Governance in Pakistan

1. Context of Thematic Analysis

A review of Pakistan's food-security policies, agricultural strategies, federal and provincial development plans, trade and tariff policies, import regulations, seed legislation, agricultural research strategies, climate policies, budgets, parliamentary reports, Planning Commission documents, Ministry of National Food Security and Research publications, PARC material, provincial Agriculture Department documents, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reports, State Bank of Pakistan reports, and FAO, ADB, ACIAR and other international-development studies reveals a consistent pattern.

Pakistan does **not** suffer from a complete absence of policies relevant to pulses. On the contrary, gram, moong, masoor and mash are affected by a large number of policies and institutions concerning food security, agriculture, seed, research, climate, trade, tariffs, prices, markets, development expenditure and agricultural finance. The principal weakness is that these interventions do not yet operate as a **coherent pulse-sector governance system**.

The overall policy architecture can be represented as: **Food-security policy, Agricultural policy, Research policy, Seed policy, Climate policy, Trade and tariff policy, Provincial development policy, Market and price policy, Multiple institutions and programmes, Partial and**

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal

ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

sometimes conflicting incentives and **Production, import, price and food-security outcomes.**
The analysis below examines this policy system through seventeen governance dimensions.

2. Policy Objectives
Pakistan's policies affecting pulses contain several overlapping objectives.
Across national food-security policy, agricultural strategies and development documents, the principal objectives include:

- increasing agricultural productivity;
- improving domestic food availability;
- achieving crop diversification;
- reducing import dependence;
- improving farmer incomes;
- maintaining affordable consumer prices;
- promoting quality seed;
- strengthening agricultural research;
- improving climate resilience;
- increasing water-use efficiency;
- strengthening agricultural value chains;
- improving nutrition; and
- maintaining overall food security.

The National Food Security Policy recognises agricultural diversification and identifies pulses as relevant to dietary diversity and import substitution. Planning Commission documents set production and area targets for gram, lentil, mung and mash. PARC has a dedicated Pulses Programme and in August 2025 publicly called for a national pulse policy focused on production, marketing, value chains and import substitution (Government of Pakistan, 2018; Government of Pakistan, Planning Commission, 2024; Pakistan Agricultural Research Council [PARC], 2025).
However, these objectives are not always prioritised consistently. For example: agricultural objective is to increase domestic pulse production, trade objective is to keep imports inexpensive to protect consumers. Food-security objective revolves around maintaining availability and affordability. Farmer-incentive objective aims to ensure sufficiently attractive producer return. These goals can be counterproductive. So, the issue of the policy problem is not just that there are not enough objectives, but there are too many objectives with no clear hierarchy or process for dealing with trade-offs. Pulses are connected with a number of national development goals. But there is no clear hierarchy of the objectives of pulse-sector in Pakistan. Thus, it can be deduced that in Pakistan, there are several policies with regards to pulses, but none of these has a clear statement on how the profitability of farmers, their affordability, domestic production, imports and nutrition and climate resilience can be balanced (Government of Pakistan, 2018; PARC, 2025).

3. Policy Coherence
Policy coherence is a significant shortcoming in the governance of the pulse sector in Pakistan. Policy coherence is one of the major shortcomings in governance of the pulse sector in Pakistan.
There are many examples of this. Agricultural policies are not complemented by trade policies. Agricultural policies promote more domestic production and trade policy makes pulses imports cost-effective. The latter helps consumers, but may lessen domestic price incentives. Similarly, diversification and major-crop support also conflict. Agricultural and climate policies promote crop diversification while historic support structures favour wheat and other major crops. The Punjab Agriculture Policy itself recognised that wheat support can tie up land, water and other resources that could otherwise shift toward pulses and oilseeds.Research and markets may also differ, Government invests in improved varieties but farmers may not adopt them if output prices are uncertain. Seed policy and trade policy are also not harmonized. Farmers may be encouraged to invest in certified pulse seed but simultaneously fear that imported pulses will lower prices at harvest. Climate policy and agricultural incentives weaken each other. Climate strategies advocate diversification, water efficiency and resilient cropping yet major-crop incentives may continue to shape land allocation toward less diversified

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

systems. Food security and agricultural incentives are also not aligned. Consumer-oriented food policies favour lower prices. Producer-oriented agricultural policies require profitable prices. The result is a classic producer–consumer policy tension. Therefore, policy coherence is weak to moderate. Pakistan's pulse policies are individually defensible but insufficiently coordinated. The pulse-sector problem is not merely policy absence; it is policy interaction. Policies that are rational when viewed individually can generate contradictory incentives when combined (Government of Punjab, 2018; Ministry of Commerce, 2025; Petersen et al., 2019).

4. Institutional Fragmentation

Pulse governance involves a large number of institutions. At the federal level, Ministry of National Food Security and Research, PARC/NARC, NSDRA, Ministry of Commerce, FBR, Planning Commission, PBS, Department of Plant Protection, Ministry of Finance, and State Bank of Pakistan play role in pulse governance.

At provincial level, Agriculture Departments, agricultural research institutes, extension services, seed corporations, irrigation departments, crop-reporting services, market authorities and planning and development departments are mandated to run the pulses sector.

These institutions govern different elements of the same pulse system. For example: PARC conducts research, NSDRA regulates seed, Provinces are responsible for production and extension, Commerce/FBR regulates imports and tariffs, PBS administers statistics, SBP regulates macroeconomic and credit environment and Planning Commission determines development priorities. So the institutional architecture is not white, it's grey. The issue is that there are no Institutions that are consistently held responsible for overall pulse sector performance. The 2025 pulse policy call by PARC itself is quite indicative of the need for the recognition of this missing integrative layer. Capacity of institutions is strong. But institutional integration is feeble. Whole-of-sector governance in Pakistan is not clearly institutionalized, with many institutions having their roles in various parts of the pulse system (PARC, 2025).

5. Federal–Provincial Coordination

Federalism is a key aspect of the structure of agricultural governance. The devolved provinces have a significant responsibility for production programmes, research, extension, markets, agriculture development and irrigation (Government of Balochistan, 2021; Government of Punjab, 2018).

Federally, there are still significant food-security policy roles; in research coordination, seed regulation, tariffs, imports, trade and national planning. This results in a structural dependency. For instance: Federal government affects imports and tariffs which impact on farm-gate prices, while the Province increases pulse production.

The need for provincial input into the new seed regulatory system is recognized in the reforms of the National Seed Policy and NSDRA. Implementing provincial representatives are involved in Planning Commission reviews, emphasizing the importance of vertical coordination. However, there are several differences between provincial pulse strategies. Pulse programmes are relatively clear in Punjab. Market and price governance is a key focus of Sindh. KP integrates pulses into programmes of food security and climate. Balochistan ties them more strongly with the issue of water scarcity, subsistence and resilience. Institutionally needed, but operationally weak, federal–provincial coordination. The outcomes of each national pulse is achieved and shaped within a provincial agricultural system, but is very much influenced by the national level of trade, seed and macro-economic policy. This causes an intrinsic problem of vertical-coordination (MNFSR, 2024).

6. Production Incentives

Farmers use land based on their assessment of profitability and risk. The factors that affect their

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal

ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

decision include expected output price, expected yield, fertilizer cost, labor, machinery, water, financial cost and production risk, and seed cost. These variables change as a result of government policy. They can be less risky if they are used for wheat or other larger crops. Pulse prices may be impacted by imports. Seed policy has an impact on productivity potential. Agricultural credit is related to investment capacity. Extension has an impact on technology adoption. Expected yield is impacted by climate shocks. So, raising production with the mere announcement of a national target is not the solution to production of pulses. In the Planning Commission documents, there are numerous examples of instances where pulse area and output have not reached the targets, further emphasizing the need for incentives for farmers. Annual planning has tracked gram, lentil, mung and mash separately, but targets alone do not alter relative profitability (Government of Pakistan, Planning Commission, 2024).

Production incentives are inconsistent and weaker than policy ambitions suggest. **Pakistan sets pulse-production targets but has not fully aligned the economic incentives necessary to induce farmers to meet those targets.**

Research and Development

Research is one of the stronger parts of the pulse governance system. PARC operates a dedicated Pulses Programme covering chickpea, lentil, mung and mash. The programme includes germplasm, varietal development, national uniform yield trials, research, training and seed-related activities. Recent developments such as speed breeding indicate significant modernisation. The weakness is therefore increasingly not in capability of generating pulse technology but in transmitting research to farmers at scale (PARC, n.d.).

The relevant chain stretches over **research, variety release, breeder/basic seed, certified seed, extension, farmer adoption and productivity respectively.** Breakdowns downstream of research reduce the impact of scientific investment. **Research capacity is** relatively strong. But **Research-to-farmer conversion is** considerably weaker. **Pakistan appears to have a stronger research-generation system than research-diffusion system.** This can be termed the **research-to-farmer transmission gap**.

8. **Seed Availability**

Seed is one of the most serious structural constraints. The National Seed Policy 2024 and subsequent institutional reforms demonstrate government recognition of long-standing weaknesses in seed regulation, quality assurance, access to improved varieties, certification, private-sector participation and climate-resilient seed (MNFSR, 2024).

The Ministry explicitly described fragmented seed policies, constrained access to improved and climate-resilient varieties and outdated certification systems as structural challenges (MNFSR, 2024).

NSDRA's strategic objectives now include germplasm development, modern technology, stronger seed supply chains, regulation and improved farmer access. However, quality regulation alone is insufficient. Effective seed access requires **quality, quantity**, **availability** and **affordability.** The pulse seed challenge appears especially concentrated in multiplication and distribution. **Seed policy is** improving. However, **Seed availability:** still a major constraint. **Pakistan's pulse seed problem is not simply regulatory; it is a seed-system problem connecting research, multiplication, certification, distribution, affordability and farmer adoption.**

9. Extension Services

Extension represents the link between technology and farmer practice. Extension systems are found in the Provincial Agriculture Departments and technical knowledge is produced by PARC and research institutions. This can lead to a disconnect between federal/provincial research and extension and the farmer. In low-extension areas, better varieties and production techniques are not yet utilized. Pulse extension should include suitable varieties, sowing dates, seed rates, pest control, mechanization, water management, rotations,

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal

ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

harvesting and market information and climate advisories. Extension and production packages look fairly good in Punjab for the pulse crops. The use of digital agricultural platforms is growing, and KP is using them more and more. Pulse extension is included in larger crop programmes in other provinces. Extension infrastructure is available but intensity of extension uneven: Pulse specific. Extension institutions do exist in Pakistan but pulses have to compete with larger crops for extension, and have weak research–extension integration (Government of Punjab, Agriculture Department, n.d.).

10. Trade and Tariff Policy

Trade policy has two functions. It provides protection to consumers by providing availability of imports. However, it has an impact on farmers as a result of domestic prices. The nature of trade in Pakistan is largely towards pulses, indicating a relatively open trade regime, due to the need to meet domestic demand. This poses the main conundrum for trade policy: High import protection, which can increase prices for farmers and incentivize farmers to produce more, but can also increase prices for consumers (Ministry of Commerce, 2025; Petersen et al., 2019; Vanzetti et al., 2022).

Lower tariffs can enhance the affordability, but can also reduce domestic incentives. Overall, international studies, especially ACIAR studies, have warned against protectionist measures as the sole policy, and prefer more productivity increase. Trade regime is robust with respect to short term availability. Its Integration with agricultural development is low though. This is because while Pakistan has been using trade policy as an effective supply management tool, the use of trade policy to improve the quality of the pulses has been less clear-cut (Petersen et al., 2019; Vanzetti et al., 2022).

11. Import Dependence

Import dependence is one of the most visible symptoms of pulse-sector underperformance. The causal chain is **domestic demand, domestic production** and **imports.** However, import dependence creates several vulnerabilities: foreign-exchange exposure, exchange-rate exposure, international commodity-price risk, supplier-country risk, shipping and freight risk and imported inflation.

SBP reports make this macroeconomic dimension especially important. Exchange-rate movements can influence the domestic price of imported food even where tariffs are low. Import dependence therefore transforms pulses from an agricultural issue into a macroeconomic resilience issue. At the same time, complete self-sufficiency may not be economically optimal.A more realistic objective is strategic reduction of avoidable import dependence (State Bank of Pakistan [SBP], 2025). **Current model is** import-dependent for several pulses. **Preferred model may be** competitive domestic production plus diversified imports. **The appropriate policy objective is strategic supply resilience, not necessarily complete pulse self-sufficiency.**

12. Market Structure

International-development reports, particularly ADB and ACIAR, demonstrate that production is only one stage of the pulse system.The complete value chain involves: seed/input suppliers, farmers, aggregators, traders, processors, wholesalers, retailers and consumers. The ADB value-chain approach explicitly identifies chickpea, mung, mash and lentil as important to food security, smallholders, markets and import substitution (Asian Development Bank [ADB], 2025; Petersen et al., 2019).

This highlights several potential constraints: fragmented farm production, weak grading, storage limitations, processing costs, market concentration, weak farmer bargaining power and information asymmetry. **Market governance is** less developed than production governance. **Pakistan has historically approached pulses mainly as crops rather than as integrated value chains.** This

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal

ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

is gradually changing through ADB, ACIAR and PARC value-chain initiatives.

13. Price Stabilization

Price stabilisation is one of the most difficult governance problems. Pulses are simultaneously:farm commodities and essential consumer foods. Therefore, higher prices benefit producers but hurt consumers. lower prices benefit consumers but may discourage farmers. This is the central producer–consumer dilemma. PBS's regular monitoring of pulse prices provides a useful consumer-market surveillance mechanism, while provincial authorities also monitor stocks and prices.However, price stabilisation often relies on: imports, market monitoring and anti-hoarding action. Less attention is given to stabilising farmer expectations. A better system would distinguish consumer protection from producer incentive policy (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics [PBS], 2026).

Consumer price monitoring is relatively strong but **Producer price predictability is** weaker. **Pakistan monitors pulse prices more effectively than it stabilizes the incentive environment facing pulse growers.**

14. Climate Resilience

Climate policy increasingly provides a strong rationale for pulse development. National climate strategies emphasise on crop diversification, drought tolerance, heat tolerance, efficient water use, regenerative agriculture, soil health, and resilient seed. Pulses fit many of these objectives because they can contribute to rotations, biological nitrogen fixation, soil health, diversified production systems, rain-fed agriculture and water-efficient systems where agronomically appropriate. Yet pulses often remain an implicit beneficiary rather than an explicit climate-policy priority (Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, 2021; Government of Pakistan, 2023).

Climate-policy compatibility is very strong but **Pulse-specific climate operationalization is** weak. **Pulses have strong implicit climate-policy relevance but limited explicit climate-policy visibility.** This creates a case for reclassifying them from **minor crops** to **strategic climate-resilient food crops.**

15. Implementation Capacity

Across almost all document groups, a repeated pattern which emerges is good policy diagnosis but weak or uneven implementation. Examples include repeated seed reforms, recurring productivity targets, repeated diversification objectives, continuing research–extension concerns, continued import dependence and repeated federal–provincial coordination problems.Planning Commission's 2026 mid-year review explicitly emphasised the need to strengthen planning, monitoring and implementation mechanisms. This suggests that Pakistan's pulse-sector problem is increasingly an implementation-capacity deficit (Government of Pakistan, Planning Commission, 2026).

The challenge is not merely what should government do as the policy documents already answer much of that. The deeper question is **why have repeatedly identified solutions not generated sustained structural change? Policy design is** moderate to strong. However, **Implementation capacity is** weak to moderate. **Pakistan suffers less from a shortage of policy ideas than from difficulty institutionalizing and sustaining them.**

16. Farmer Incentives

Farmer incentives integrate almost every dimension above. A farmer evaluates **expected profitability, risk and market certainty.** Improved seed is valuable only if higher yield translates into higher income. Extension is useful only if recommended technologies are affordable. Research matters only if farmers can access the results. Imports matter because they influence expected market prices. Climate risk matters because it increases uncertainty. Credit matters because it affects working capital. Thus, farmer

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal

ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

incentives are the **final transmission mechanism** through which policy becomes production.

Farmers may face uncertain output prices, weak market power; climate risks, seed shortages, limited finance, machinery constraints and more attractive competing crops. **Farmer incentives are** fragmented and unstable. **Policy currently addresses individual constraints facing pulse farmers without fully managing their combined profitability and risk environment.**

17. Consumer Affordability

Consumer affordability is one of the strongest reasons government maintains an open pulse-import regime. Pulses are an important source of plant protein and an essential food item for many households. International-development evidence adds an important nutritional dimension.

FAO's recent analysis argues that Pakistan has insufficient availability of nutritious food groups, including pulses, relative to healthy dietary requirements. This suggests that pulse affordability should be treated as food security and nutrition policy rather than simply inflation management (FAO, 2026).

Policy dilemma is that protecting domestic farmers through high prices can undermine **consumer access.** Protecting consumers through cheap imports can weaken **farmer incentives.** Therefore, consumer protection should ideally rely partly on targeted social protection, productivity improvements and efficient value chains rather than permanently depressing producer prices. **Consumer affordability objective is** strong. However, its **integration with producer policy is** weak. **Pakistan's pulse policy tends to resolve producer–consumer tension through imports rather than through productivity growth plus targeted consumer protection.**

18. Food Security

Food security provides the overarching rationale for pulse-sector governance.The traditional framework consists of availability, accessibility, utilization and stability. (Government of Pakistan, 2018; FAO, 2026). The current governance system performs differently across these dimensions.

Food-security dimension	Current pulse-governance assessment
Availability	Supported by imports but domestic production remains inadequate
Accessibility	Imports and price monitoring help, but affordability remains sensitive to inflation
Utilization/nutrition	Pulses recognized as nutritionally important but not strongly integrated into agricultural priorities
Stability	Weak because production, climate and international-market risks remain significant

FAO's recent work strengthens the nutritional argument: Pakistan's agricultural system should not be evaluated solely according to cereal sufficiency, but according to whether it generates a healthy and diversified food supply.Pakistan's food-security architecture is stronger at ensuring short-term availability than at creating long-term pulse-system resilience (FAO, 2026).

1

9. Cross-Cutting Governance Gaps

Taken together, the seventeen dimensions reveal several recurring governance gaps.

19.1 Policy-Coherence Gap

Policies pursue legitimate but conflicting objectives without sufficient mechanisms for reconciliation.

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal

ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

19.2 Institutional-Integration Gap
Many institutions govern pieces of the pulse sector, but no single mechanism integrates the whole.
19.3 Federal–Provincial Coordination Gap
Production is substantially provincial while major trade, seed and macroeconomic instruments remain federal.
19.4 Research-to-Farmer Transmission Gap
Scientific research is stronger than the system that scales innovations to farmers.
19.5 Seed-System Gap
Quality regulation is improving faster than pulse seed multiplication and widespread availability.
19.6 Extension Gap
Extension capacity exists but pulse-specific services are uneven.
19.7 Target–Instrument Gap
Planning documents often contain production targets without sufficiently clear incentive mechanisms.
19.8 Planning–Budget Gap
Policy ambitions are not always traceable to pulse-specific development expenditure.
19.9 Fiscal-Visibility Gap
Pulse spending is often hidden inside broader research, seed, water or agriculture programmes.
19.10 Information-Integration Gap
Pakistan produces substantial data but production, price, trade, stocks and household information remain institutionally dispersed.
19.11 Credit-Attribution Gap
Agricultural credit is substantial but pulse-specific access is difficult to identify.
19.12 Market-Governance Gap
Production receives greater policy attention than processing, aggregation, marketing and value-chain governance.
19.13 Macroeconomic-Governance Gap
Exchange rates, imported inflation and credit conditions materially affect pulses but are weakly integrated into commodity policy.
19.14 Implementation Gap
Recurring policy prescriptions indicate weak institutionalization.
19.15 Climate-Operationalization Gap
Pulses fit climate-smart agriculture strongly but are rarely explicitly targeted as climate-resilience commodities.

The Central Structural Contradiction: The "Minor Crop–Essential Food Paradox"
One of the most important findings from the documentary analysis is the contradictory institutional identity of pulses. In agricultural statistics and planning they are commonly treated as **minor crops.** Yet in food-price and nutrition policy they function as **essential foods.** This creates what can be termed the: **Minor Crop–Essential Food Paradox**
The paradox operates as follows respectively: **minor-crop classification,** lower institutional visibility, weaker research/budget/extension prioritization, lower domestic productivity, import dependence, high food-security concern and essential-commodity price monitoring. Thus, pulses become important **after** production fails to meet demand rather than being consistently treated as strategically important **before** shortages arise.

Overall Governance Assessment
The complete documentary record suggests the following assessment.

Dimension	Overall assessment
Policy objectives	**Strong but multiple/conflicting**
Policy coherence	**Weak**
Institutional fragmentation	**High**
Federal–provincial coordination	**Weak–moderate**

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal

ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

Dimension	Overall assessment
Production incentives	**Weak–moderate**
Research and development	**Relatively strong**
Seed availability	**Weak**
Extension services	**Moderate but uneven**
Trade and tariff policy	**Strong for availability, weakly integrated with production**
Import dependence	**High/structural for several pulses**
Market structure	**Underdeveloped governance**
Price stabilization	**Consumer-focused/reactive**
Climate resilience	**Strong policy potential, weak operationalization**
Implementation capacity	**Weak–moderate**
Farmer incentives	**Uncertain/fragmented**
Consumer affordability	**High policy priority**
Food security	**Short-term availability stronger than long-term resilience**

Central Interpretation

The documentary evidence does not support a conclusion that Pakistan lacks pulse-related policies. Rather, it supports a more nuanced conclusion: Pakistan possesses a large but fragmented policy ecosystem governing pulses. Food-security, agricultural, seed, research, climate, trade, provincial development, market, statistical and macroeconomic policies all influence gram, moong, masoor and mash, but these policies are not consistently coordinated around a common pulse-sector strategy. The result is a governance system that is relatively capable of responding to shortages through imports and consumer-price measures, but less capable of creating sustained domestic productivity, stable farmer incentives, widespread seed adoption, integrated value chains and long-term resilience (Government of Pakistan, 2018; MNFSR, 2024; PARC, 2025; ADB, 2025).

Proposed Governance Framework

The documentary evidence suggests that an integrated pulse-governance model should contain seven connected pillars.

Pillar 1: Production and Farmer Incentives

- crop-specific productivity targets;
- agro-ecological zoning;
- predictable producer incentives;
- access to credit;
- Mechanization.

Pillar 2: Research, Seed and Extension

- climate-resilient varieties;
- breeder and basic seed;
- certified seed multiplication;
- extension;
- farmer feedback.

Pillar 3: Markets and Value Chains

- aggregation;
- grading;
- storage;
- processing;
- market information;
- competition.

Pillar 4: Trade and Import Management

- transparent supply-demand calculations;
- import calendars;
- supplier diversification;
- coordination with domestic harvests.

Pillar 5: Food Security and Nutrition

- affordable consumer prices;
- dietary diversity;
- targeted protection for vulnerable households.

Pillar 6: Climate and Natural Resources

- water productivity;
- climate-smart cropping;

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES
An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal

ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

- drought/heat resilience;
- pulse-based rotations;
- soil-health outcomes.

Pillar 7: Governance and Accountability

- national coordination mechanism;
- provincial implementation plans;
- dedicated indicators;
- integrated statistics;
- annual performance review.

Institutional Recommendation

The evidence supports creation of a **National Pulses Coordination Framework** rather than simply another time-bound development project. The arrangement could be coordinated by the Ministry of National Food Security and Research with representation from: **MNFSR, PARC/NARC, NSDRA**, **Planning Commission**, **Ministry of Commerce**, **FBR**, **PBS**, **provincial Agriculture Departments**, **farmers**, **seed companies** and **traders/processors/importers.** Its function would not necessarily be to control the pulse market. Rather, it would coordinate: **production forecasts**, **seed availability**, **research**, **provincial programmes**, **prices**, **imports** and **food-security outcomes.**

PARC's August 2025 call for a national pulse policy provides direct institutional support for such a direction (PARC, 2025).

Conclusion

The documentary analysis shows that the pulse sector is embedded in a complex and dynamic governance regime in Pakistan. The pulses have been recognized as a part of a national food-security policy which includes both dietary diversification and import substitution. Area and production targets are monitored on planning documents. PARC has on an ongoing basis had the capability to research and has requested a national pulse policy. This is in line with the objective of the National Seed Policy 2024 and the reform of NSDRA that aims to overcome the deficiencies in the seed system. Climate strategies encourage crop diversification and varieties that are resistant to climate change. Institutions of research, extension, seed and market and agricultural development are maintained by the provincial governments. Trade policy is a source of imports, PBS keeps an eye on production and prices, and exchange rates and agricultural finance, as revealed by SBP reports are key to imported inflation. However, these individual strengths are not just bound together by themselves into an effective pulse sector system. The root of the central governance problem is fragmentation with lack of integration. Hence the transition from: Pulse-related policies to pulse-sector governance must be made in Pakistan. This would link production incentives, agricultural research, seed systems, provincial implementation, markets and trade, climate resilience, farmer's profitability, and consumers' affordability and nutrition in one coherent framework. This change would enable pulses to be used not just as a small crop to be looked after every few years but as a key element of the food security, nutritional security, climate security and economic security of Pakistan (Government of Pakistan, 2018; Government of Pakistan, Planning Commission, 2024; MNFSR, 2024; PARC, 2025; SBP, 2025).

References

Asian Development Bank. (2025). Strengthening food security post-COVID-19 and locust attacks: Pulses value chain report. Asian Development Bank.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2019). The global economy of pulses. FAO.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2026). FAO analysis highlights strategic policy reform to narrow Pakistan's healthy diet gap. FAO.

Government of Balochistan, Agriculture and Cooperatives Department. (2021). Balochistan agriculture policy 2021–2030. Government of Balochistan.

ISSN (Online): 3006-2071 | ISSN (Print): 3006-2063
Volume 4 • Issue 4 • August 2026

Government of Pakistan, Planning Commission. (2024). Annual plan 2024–25. Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

Government of Pakistan, Planning Commission. (2025). Annual plan 2025–26. Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

Government of Pakistan, Planning Commission. (2026). Annual plan 2026–27. Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

Government of Pakistan. (2018). National food security policy. Ministry of National Food Security and Research.

Government of Pakistan. (2023). National adaptation plan Pakistan. Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination.

Government of Punjab, Agriculture Department. (n.d.). Pulses Research Institute, Faisalabad. Government of Punjab.

Government of Punjab. (2018). Punjab agriculture policy 2018. Agriculture Department, Government of Punjab.

Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination. (2021). National climate change policy 2021. Government of Pakistan.

Ministry of Commerce. (2025). National tariff policy 2025–30. Government of Pakistan.

Ministry of National Food Security and Research. (2024). National seed policy of Pakistan 2024. Government of Pakistan.

Pakistan Agricultural Research Council. (2025). National pulses policy is essential to achieving self-sufficiency, Chairman PARC. Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Government of Pakistan.

Pakistan Agricultural Research Council. (n.d.). Pulses programme. Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Government of Pakistan.

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. (2026). Sensitive Price Indicator reports. Government of Pakistan.

Petersen, E., Ghafoor, A., Harrison, S., Qasim, M., Rani, S., Sadozai, K., & Vanzetti, D. (2019). Economic analysis of policies affecting pulses in Pakistan: Final report. Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research.

State Bank of Pakistan. (2025). Governor's annual report 2024–25. State Bank of Pakistan.

Ullah, A., Shah, T. M., & Farooq, M. (2020). Pulses production in Pakistan: Status, constraints and opportunities. International Journal of Plant Production, 14, 549–569.

Vanzetti, D., Petersen, E., & Rani, S. (2022). Pulses policy in Pakistan: An empirical analysis. Pakistan Economic and Social Review, 60(1), 1–21.