

SYMPOSIUM

ON

UTILIZATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN PAKISTAN FOR SELF RELIANCE



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SEMINAR ON UTILIZATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN PAKISTAN FOR SELF RELIANCE

Key Note

It is now almost a regular feature of the Annual Session of the West Pakistan Engineering Congress that a Seminar is held with a view to assessing the development problems of the country and to find solutions thereof. Last year the subject of the Seminar was "Planning for National objectives" and it would be interesting to evaluate the progress achieved and the success of the policies pursued, considering the fact that we have not yet picked up the threads of a five year plan. We have as yet yearly plans and last years' economic progress seems to have taken us out of the woods, inspite of the devastation caused by the floods of August, 1973 and the stagnation that characterised the preceding two years. The revival of economy took place simultaneously with major structural changes in the economy following the government reforms in the fields of Industry, Land, Insurance, Labour Laws, Banking etc. and the international buoyant trade conditions.

This year's Seminar brings into focus the subject of "Utilization of the Natural Resources in Pakistan for self reliance." Unfortunately Pakistan is not gifted with all the natural resources as to be self sufficient and we have to make still greater strides in the agricultural and industrial sector to reach the stage of self reliance. World inflation, high wages, oil squeeze—all these give cause for concern. The object of the discussions to be followed now will be to find ways and means of attaining as much of self reliance as is possible within the framework of the present and projected development programmes. Recently all countries have been over-taken by the energy crisis and with our already limited fuel resources it is worth-while to assess in the light of the policies of the government presented in the papers at this Seminar as to how far we can continue to depend on our existing resources and how the potential sources of energy are to be developed and conserved.

Like the rest of the world, Pakistan is dealeagured by inflation. The rising prices of oil and food grains, shortages of production in the agriculture sector, increased cost of ferrous and non ferrous metals

have hit the common man and the industry so that the pace of development is not what it should be. The Western World is caught between the controversy about the Macro-economics and Micro-economics and our economy is at the mercy of these strategies. Our country is also wedged in between two specially hostile neighbours, one of which is heavily armed with more advanced technology including that of nuclear fission process. At home the self reliance in the defence system, requires that the production of industrial goods should be keyed to defence production. The man in the street is conscious of the energy shortage and the retarded industrial growth in Pakistan. Our present consumption of electric energy is one of the lowest in the world. It is estimated that the consumption level at 1000 K.W. hour/ per head, we require at least 35000 M.W. of installed capacity of electricity. The hydro, gas and coal reserves of Pakistan can yield 12000 M.W. of electric installed capacity. Therefore, in the next 25 years, it is only the nuclear energy which may come to our rescue and this brings in its wake, the manufacture of fast nuclear fuel and the training of nuclear power engineers.

Recently Rodu gas with high methane content (93%) has been discovered near Taunsa in D.G. Khan District. In the salt range, other minerals such as uranium, coal, gypsum and china clay as well as iron ore have also been discovered. We need developing proper statistics and the details of plans to attain as much self reliance as possible.

We have been importing large quantities of fertilisers from abroad to raise the agricultural production. More fertilizers have to be produced at home particularly Phosphate fertilizer and the availability of natural phosphate in Pakistan must be studied to assess where we are today. It is gratifying to note from Mr. Butt's papers that the demand for 3 new urea plants will be met by 1979 as the arrangements for installing three more Urea plants are being finalised.

There is a big gap between the demand and supply of essential material for the development programmes of the third world. The pattern of consumption has become so lop-sided that the priveleged countries obtain a dis-proportionate share of production leaving little for consumption in the poor countries. Thoughtless and short sighted pursuit of unrestricted production and consumption is depleting the natural resources of the developing countries at an alarming rate. The economy built up by them consumes enormous amount of energy and irreplaceable

resources of the world which place a great drain on the rest of the world. There is also some thought to be given in relation to the human greed which has been consecrated and made into a deliberate objective to the detriment of the third world. The affluent countries as well as the third world must simplify their life; the very basic process of human behaviour that has led to affluence must some-how be amended. This applies to the affluent section of our society with whom food, energy and foreign imported products are dis-proportionate to the consumption of the common man of the same necessities and luxuries of life.

In the realm of self reliance, consideration must be given to new techniques and technology. Conservation of water by lining of water courses, use of sprinkler irrigation and trickle irrigation are important fields in which the public sector and progressive farmers should give the lead to the less fortunate and backward looking farmers.

The failures and break down of big units can spell catastrophe. The wastage of Tarbela dam storage is the case in point. It should draw our attention to smaller storage such as the Sehwan Barrage and Manchar lake storage which can be constructed quickly with local talent and materials and would be nearer home for provinces. Likewise projects like the Thal reservoir (1.5 m.a.f.) with prospects of a bigger storage by use of summer surplus supplies for 2-3 months need greater consideration.

Apart from the material resources of Pakistan which will accelerate the pace of development for as much of self reliance as possible, there is the spiritual and ethical heritage of Tauheed, Ittaqa and Akhuwat (توحيد - اتقا - اخوت). A study of the history of the down-fall of Muslim empires and decay of the Muslim world will reveal that lack of unity and implementation of the concept of unity of God in all phases of life, spurning the principles and laws of life laid down by God and running away from Akhuwat of the Muslims of the world, led to the ruin of the Muslims. Where are we today in Pakistan? It is time to keep these three cardinal principles before us and assert ourselves in all ways of life with unity, faith, discipline and above all with (اخوت). These traits will make us absolutely self-reliant.

M. S. Minhas

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