

# ✓ Agricultural development in Pakistan

*Agriculture*

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The focus of the Government of Pakistan on agriculture is due to the central role played by greater agriculture or the food and fiber system in the economic development of the country. The Pakistan economy is a transitional agricultural economy that is slowly but consistently developing a more complex food and fiber system and a larger industrial sector. Besides, in relation to business development and expansion, a major part of national capital formation occurs within the food and fiber system.

In fact, the food and fiber system is a major force in economic development in Pakistan. Due to its historic origin, as the basis of the economy, it is now the source of labour for other industrial sectors, capital for new business revenue for the federal and provincial governments and exports that balance the imports required by other developing sectors. These key and important function make the food and fiber system the driving force of the national economy. It interacts with all other sectors using the resources of most other sectors as well as food and fiber for the household.

Currently, the Pakistan agricultural strategy is based on two goals; that of food self-reliance and full employment in the rural areas of the country. Food self reliance is a term coined to indicate the inclusion of trading as a means of maintaining the food supply. Rural full employment, on the other hand, is a well-known goal sought by every government of Pakistan.

The means of reaching the goals are through several

interrelated objectives which included increasing agricultural productivity through the adoption of yield enhancing farm practices, developing livestock specialization and modernization along with shifts to higher valued crops.

These two goals are developed in a general way as part of the national goals which are to formulate specific, monitorable targets for increasing national self reliance, supported by legislative safeguards, as necessary, especially in the areas of government finance, food, defence, export oriented manufactures and energy, and to implement a concrete programme of poverty alleviation, especially in the rural areas, to attain full employment and no ensure continued growth with stability.

The new goal of food reliance encourages trade through expanded production and export of farm commodities for which a comparative advantage exists. Importation and food products displaced by the expanded production of commodities with a comparative advantage is also required.

The concept is that more food is available to the domestic consumer because we have an advantage in the production of commodities as cotton and basmati rice when exported can be traded for more deficit products as wheat, sugar and oil than we could produce, if we reduced the production of cotton and basmati rice and replaced it with wheat, sugarcane and say soybeans, and

sunflower or rapeseed.

Food self-reliance compares to the earlier goal of self-sufficiency in food production. The concept was to produce all the basic food products in sufficient supply so that little if any had to be imported. Food self sufficiency was probably an impossible goal since it has not been obtained by any other developed or developing country. The goal of full employment

duction mainly from vertical expansion, effectively overriding the limitation of area expansion imposed by limited irrigation supplies, to bring about a major transformation in the in the productivity of the livestock sector to meet the growing demand for milk and meat and to contribute to the well being of less developed areas to develop a policy framework to solve fodder and feed deficiencies and improve

cultural sector to achieve a growth rate substantially higher than the population growth rate so that the sector can generate resources for sustained development of the economy with a high degree of self reliance, to diversify agricultural production and rural employment opportunities by giving more attention to high valued products like fruits, vegetables, oilseed, milk, meat and poultry and increasing their share in agricultural

G.D.P and to improve support price system and market mechanisms in order to make the system responsive to the needs of the small farmers with the ultimate objective of increasing his earnings.

The natural resources base in agriculture is envisioned as declining with major needs for reforestation, watershed and range management and other land and water conservation measures. Attention is also drawn to the degradation of the dryland areas and we are urged

to evolve an integrated programme for developing barani, revirine and mountainous areas as a part of long term programme to arrest environmental degradation and conserve the country's physical resources of forest, land and water.

The rural development objectives are directed towards developing the physical infrastructure and education of the rural areas in Pakistan where more than 70% of the population resides.

The present strategy of the government indicates that a healthy growth of the non-agriculture sectors cannot be achieved nor it can be sustained without a significant improvement in the rate of agricultural growth.

One of the basic objectives of an agricultural development strategy should, therefore, be to widen the options that are available to farmers to diversify their crops and also earn higher incomes. Such an objective, if accomplished, will also achieve many broader development goals. Equity objectives can also be more effectively met through agricultural development. There are no other alternative development strategies that can achieve these advantages of agriculture led development strategy.

The agricultural management is the need of the hour. It can be field management, zonal management or national management. Men of vision with dedication are needed to take agriculture on progressive path. The area suitability to crops should be determined on a priority basis and unsuitable crops should be disallowed to grow. It will also better the national yield figures for major crops.

The major crops yield can easily be improved by providing better inputs like seed and better education on the subject, a major role is to be played by extension services. Another area is livestock that cannot only fulfill national requirements but can also produce surpluses for export but need a better management. Poultry, bee keeping vegetables etc can also add to export list.

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in rural areas depends on more rapid growth in farming and agricultural business located in the rural areas. It also depends on the development of infrastructure to support industrialization and the development of agricultural business. Full employment at the rural areas level is also important to prevent migration and large-scale urbanization.

The objectives to achieve the material goals are to increase agricultural productivity so as to realize future increases in agricultural pro-

the genetic make up of livestock and to strengthen the institutional support and provide incentives for generating expert surpluses by encouraging crop specialization in the regions which have comparative cost advantages and resource endowment.

The goal of full employment in rural areas is more related to the objectives of modernization and shifting production to higher valued crops which are to accelerate the modernization of the agri-