

Environmental impact assessment

Environment.
27/06/04

MR Roedad Khan ("Cable car for Islamabad", June 19) has reminded the CDA that environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the proposed project is mandatory under the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act.

EIA is a study which identifies and quantifies the benefits as well as the adverse effects of a project. It also recommends mitigative measures to minimize the adverse effects. EIA is, in fact, a tool for the competent authority to facilitate his decision. It is for the competent authority to decide whether the

residual adverse effects after mitigation are acceptable.

Readers would be surprised to know that EIA has not been carried out even for large projects of national importance. For example, it was not done for the Kalabagh Dam project along with the feasibility studies, and Wapda, on its own, proceeded to the final design stage.

The correct procedure would have been to have carried out EIA along with the feasibility study and placed the same before the political decision-maker. Final detailed design should only have been started

after obtaining a decision from the government. But Wapda not only did not do this, but always cornered the government with only one project on the pretext that study of another site would take at least 5-7 years. This went on for 20 years. If Wapda had completed the study of a second site along with its EIA, both the options would have been available to the government and a decision would have been made long ago.

EIA was carried out for Ghazi-Barotha project through project consultants who evaluated its effects on the five villages locat-

ed on the left bank, totally ignoring 29 villages of the right bank, and concluded that 1,000 cusecs of water would be adequate for meeting the scavenging and washing needs of the five villages. Only time will tell how much damage will be caused by the drying out of the river-bed from Ghazi to Attock.

As regards the Islamabad cable car, it will be another implant on a structured city — a city which is rich and comfortable but without culture, materially advanced but soulless and artificial, assembled not grown, mechanical not organic, graded

and compartmentalized not homogeneous and without the vitality of the routed human culture. May Margalla Society enjoy the ride of the cable car.
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