

Rural areas take a turn for the better

Dawn

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Pake-Eco

LAHORE, Feb 13: A considerable socio-economic development was witnessed in the rural areas of the country during the five-year period from 1998 to onwards.

According to the Mouza Census Report 2003, the number of villages with electricity increased by 5.6 per cent, bricked streets by 16.8pc, tractors by 32.5pc, tubewells by 56pc, fish farms by 68.9pc, poultry farms by 72.2pc and improved water-courses by 32.9pc.

The number of villages within a radius of less than five kilometres from metalled roads has gone up by 6.8 per cent. Those villages using tubewells as main source of irrigation water has increased by 34.2 per cent, river or canal by 4.2pc.

The increase in electrification of mouzas was the highest in the Punjab closely contested by the NWFP.

The share of tractor further

expanded in the farming systems at the expense of draught animals.

Tubewells have come up in large numbers to meet shortages of irrigation supplies from canals or rivers and have eliminated wells and other minor sources of irrigation.

A remarkable increase in the number of poultry farms during the inter-censal period is indicative of the rapid development in the poultry industry.

The number of fish farms in the Punjab and Balochistan increased while it decreased in Sindh and the NWFP. Farmers could not spare water for fish farming because of drought and shortage of canal water from the available irrigation supplies in Sindh and the NWFP.

The availability of facilities which normally exist within mouzas and those available at some distance are the socio-economic development parameters of rural areas and have direct bearing on the well-being of the rural population.

The facilities are electricity, sources of irrigation and drink-

ing water, sewerage system, bricked streets, number of fish, poultry farms, tractors and tubewells, hospitals, population welfare centres, schools, colleges and linkage with metalled roads.

The following are parameter-wise details of the report compared with the corresponding data of 1998 Mouza census:

ELECTRICITY: The mouzas having electricity for domestic use in settled areas of Pakistan increased from 27,609 in 1998 to 29,149 in 2003.

The number of electrified mouzas increased in all the four provinces — the Punjab by 6.0 per cent, the NWFP by 5.6 per cent, Sindh by 4.5 per cent and Balochistan by 1.6 per cent.

TRACTORS, TUBEWELLS: The number of tractors and tubewells expresses availability of farm power of irrigation supplies to crops.

The number of operating tractors in the settled areas of Pakistan was 282,221 in 1998 which increased to 373,981 in 2003. This shows an increase