

Book Reviews

Farming in Pakistan.—By Muhammad Afzal, Pakistan Academy of Sciences, Islamabad. 1977. 277, pp.

In this book attempt has been made to deal with diverse areas of varied significance in agriculture. It begins with a description of the geography and rural set up of the country. In the introductory part of the book an account is given of the topography, historical land use in agriculture, cottage industries and the problems of the rural economy like uneven land distribution, tenancy, illiteracy and indebtedness. This description is useful as it provides an excellent background material for undertaking any analysis of the performance and potential of the agricultural sector.

The second part of the book includes, at some length, the position with respect to the physical resources such as soil, water, climate and irrigation. The author explains the availability and effect of these resources on farm productivity with a comparison of their performance in other countries of the world. The explanation highlights the shortfalls in the performance of resources and the impediments which prevent exploitation of their full potential. Moreover, the levels of inputs and outputs are compared in various ways to identify the impact of research accomplishments on the productivity of various agricultural enterprises. The chapter on irrigation presents useful information on the canal network of the country.

In the third part of the book analysis is presented of the institutional factors like agrarian reforms, agricultural extension service, cooperative farming and mechanization. Agrarian reforms that were introduced in India, Iran, Egypt, USSR, Japan and China have been analysed and their provisions of land-holding, tenancy rights and other incentives compared with those of land reforms in Pakistan. The administrative structure of local extension service is described in detail. The cooperative farming movement is discussed from the point of view of its necessity, planning and organization. To augment the emphasis of launching the movement on a wider scale, the cooperative farming project of the Guzira scheme in Sudan is explained to highlight the benefits of collective use of resources.

In the end, comparison is undertaken of the agricultural production, food and use of technology in Pakistan vis-a-vis other countries

of the world. The level of modern technology used and its impact on various aspects of agricultural economy is described. Moreover, account is given of the efforts pursued internationally in research to improve agricultural production and food supplies. It increases awareness of the reader about present and future food requirements of the country.

The other aspect of the book is the chronological enumeration of important events relating to agriculture and the large amount of numerical data. From this point of view, the book will serve as a useful source to ascertain historically the place and period of occurrences of various innovations and natural calamities affecting the agricultural sector. Large amount of data is presented to show the mutual effect of agricultural operations and various other factors. Thus, assessment is made of the effect on achievements in agriculture of measures and incentives that were successful and are expected to succeed in different countries of the world including Pakistan. One cannot but appreciate the amount of time and effort that must have gone into the collection of data on several aspects of agriculture.

While the book is organized to be a discourse on farming in Pakistan, it also serves as a source of reference for matters pertaining to the historical development of the rural economy in areas constituting present day Pakistan. On the whole, the book is a valuable addition to the literature on agriculture of Pakistan.

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