

Pakistan Society of Development Economists: Secretary's Report

On this occasion last year, I had reviewed the history, and aims and objectives of the Society. I had also outlined at some length the major activities undertaken by the Society since its inception. I feel no need to repeat what I had reported last year, especially because its account has been published in the 1985 Proceedings issue of the *Pakistan Development Review*. I would only submit that the Society, in the four short years since its creation, has grown from strength to strength and that by now it is a fully grown organization effectively achieving the objectives for which it was created. I am happy to report that the state of the Society is excellent with all-time records set this year in membership, in attendance at the Annual Meetings and in the breadth and scope of the issues addressed both in the Lecture Series in Development Economics and in the Annual Meetings. We now have a rich experience and a routine has been established which should be helpful in an efficient conduct of the activities of the Society in future years.

Membership

The membership of the Society has reached an all-time high level. It stands at 441 on August 12, 1986. Table 1 shows the growth in the membership of the Society since its inception.

The size of the membership appears small in absolute terms. It is, however, quite high if evaluated as a proportion of the total stock of Pakistani economists and

Table 1

Membership of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists by Categories and Years

Category	1983	1984	1985	1986
Regular subscribing Members:				
Pakistani	86	157	210	244
Foreign	9	15	19	26
Institutional Members:				
Pakistani	107	111	114	116
Foreign	50	50	52	55
Total	252	335	396	441

of economists from other countries working on Pakistan's economy. Also, the growth in membership has been rapid. It has almost doubled since 1983. An healthy increase of 11 percent in the membership was registered during the current year.

Lecture Series in Development Economics

The Lecture Series in Development Economics has made a steady progress. Professor Vernon W. Ruttan (University of Minnesota) and Professor Winfried von Urff (Technical University of Munich) delivered two lectures each in the general area of Agricultural Development during the current year. As always, the lectures were heavily attended by academics and policy-makers. The lectures along with the discussions that followed them are being processed for publication.

Annual General Meeting

In broad terms, the format and scope of the Third Annual General Meeting of the Society is similar to those of the previous two Meetings. There are some new features of the present Meeting which need to be noted, however. The number of papers to be presented and discussed is 35, which is much higher than the number of papers presented at either of the two previous Meetings. The number of contributors from outside Pakistan has increased over time. However, it is gratifying to know that the increase in the contributions from Pakistani social scientists has been relatively more pronounced. This healthy trend is largely due to the increased confidence of Pakistani scholars generated by the activities of the Society. The attendance at the Meetings has also shown a considerable increase. A small part of this increase is attributed to the increased membership of the Society. The more important factor behind the larger attendance is the increased willingness on the part of the members to participate more actively in the activities of the Society. The scope and range of issues discussed have also been widened. The role and status of women in Pakistan was the subject matter of an invited lecture. An audio-visual presentation of an action-oriented research project on urban slum development in Karachi by Dr Akhtar Hameed Khan was an entirely new type of contribution at the Meetings.

Media Coverage

This year the dissemination of the work of the Society through the various media channels reached unprecedented heights. This included an extensive news coverage on national television, radio and the newspapers and in-depth interviews of the President and a large number of renowned invitees to the Annual General Meeting, on the functioning of the Society and their perception of current development issues. Radio Pakistan, in addition to presenting special daily summaries of the proceedings, put on an exclusive forty-five minute national hook-up programme on the Annual General Meeting.

Directory of Economists

A Directory of Pakistani Economists has been prepared. So far 546 economists have been listed in this Directory. Copies of the Directory are placed at the registration desk. I hope the members are pleased with both the format and content of the Directory. If there are any suggestions for improvement, please let us benefit from them as we intend to revise and expand the Directory. We intend to present the Directory to the Governing Council of the Society in its next meeting for approval before its release and publication.

Publications

It is obligatory for the Society to publish proceedings of the Annual General Meetings. The proceedings of the Meetings have been published in special issues of the *Pakistan Development Review*. These issues have played a vital role in the growth and development of economic knowledge in Pakistan. I am indeed happy to report that the Proceedings issues have enhanced the standing of the *Pakistan Development Review* as a highly respected learned Journal. The published lectures in Development Economics have also been highly appreciated by both the academic community and the policy-makers.

A Vote of Thanks

Serving as Secretary of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists is a satisfying experience. Although demands on time are great, the professional rewards are equally great. Over the past four years, while serving as Secretary, I have made many friends. The members of the Governing Council and of the Executive Council of the Society have been extremely generous with their time and guidance, and I have learnt much from them. Professor Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi, the President of the Society, has always been very imaginative. I am amazed at how well he kept abreast of his manifold responsibilities and still always found time during the last four years of my term as Secretary to be innovative in his suggestions about what the Society should be doing. Organizing and conducting the Annual General Meetings is beyond the human reach of one single individual. I owe a great debt to a large number of my colleagues. Without the active help of my colleagues, it would have been an impossible task for me to continue to act as Secretary for longer than one year. The work of the Society is done in Committees. I am grateful to all the Chairmen of the Committees and their members for their unstinted efforts in making the Annual General Meeting a success. I am grateful in particular to Mr M. Afzal (Chairman, Reception Committee); Dr Sohail J. Malik (Chairman, Information Dissemination Committee), Mr Abdul Hameed (Chairman, Railway Reception Committee), Mr Ather Maqsood Ahmed (Chairman, Physical Arrangements Committee) and Miss Fizza Gillani (Chairman, Registration Committee).

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I would be failing in my duty if I do not mention the tremendous contribution made by Mr S.H.H. Naqavi, the Chief of Publications, for the timely publication of a tremendous amount of background material, the ever-smooth handling of the administrative management by Mr M.A. Hafeez, Acting Secretary of the PIDE, and the crucial contributions of Dr M. Ghaffar Chaudhry, Secretary-designate of the Society to the organizing of this Conference. The diligent secretariat work done by Mr Mohammad Afsar Khan, Mr Ashiq Hussain and Mr Naseer Akhtar went a long way towards the smooth organization of the Third Annual General Meeting.

A Look to the Future

The Society has undoubtedly played an important role in facilitating interaction between research scholars and policy-makers. It has created a large body of knowledge about the working of Pakistan's economy. It is vitally important that the Society not only maintain its good work but, where possible, improve its functioning as a catalytic agent for change in the economic profession. Bye-laws for holding an Essay Competition, awarding of Gold Medal to deserving Pakistani economists and conferring of Honorary Life Membership were framed at the time of the inception of the Society. The recognition of talent and proven performance on a continuous basis should improve the state of economic profession in Pakistan. I have no doubt in my mind that the management of the Society will take initiative in these areas and would always do much more than what the membership expects from it.