

Man-Made laws have Denied Pakistan its True Agricultural Potential

It is known that the Muslim Lands under whilst they implemented the laws revealed by Allah (swt) were the agricultural marvel of the world. At a time when Europe was stricken by starvation and famine, one of the factors that drew the crusaders to attack the blessed lands of Ash-Sham was their immense agricultural wealth to the point that the crusaders conceived they are going to the “land of milk and honey.” Moreover, during Europe’s Dark Ages, the Muslim Lands were an essential nexus for introducing essential crops and also the concept of summer irrigation to the West. As for the Indian Subcontinent, under Islam, it was an agricultural powerhouse, producing 23% of the world’s GDP, with a formidable export profile, inciting the greed of the British colonialists over the vast wealth in agriculture, particularly spices and condiments. However, when these revealed laws were replaced during the British occupation by man-made laws, there was a wide-scale famine within the same lands under this British Raj, leading to the deaths of hundreds and thousands through starvation. Until now man-made laws are implemented in the field of agriculture, denying Pakistan its true potential as an agricultural powerhouse.

With large tracts of arable land mostly fed by one of the world largest Indus River system, four distinct seasons, diverse landscape and large pool of semi-skilled labor force, Pakistan is gifted with immense agricultural potential. Agriculture has been a dominant source of growth and development for Pakistan’s economy. It feeds people, provides raw material for industry and is the basis of Pakistan’s foreign trade. It contributes nearly a quarter of the gross domestic product and over half of export earnings, employs nearly 45% of the labor force, and provides income to nearly two-thirds of the rural population. In addition to the main food commodities, agriculture provides raw material to agro-based industries and generates revenue through export of raw and finished goods. Pakistan's existing land is underutilized with millions of hectares of uncultivated land.

All of this is achieved, despite the lack of government support for the agricultural sector, with farmers being forced to use primitive farming methods, devoid of techniques to increase yield such as modern irrigation networks and engendering resistance to disease, as well as the lack of cultivation upon all arable land or reclamation of arable land reclamation.

Moreover, any growth in agriculture has had little effect on rural poverty. In fact, it has worsened. Man-made laws have led to the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few, as is the inevitable outcome of capitalism, despite several rounds of land reforms. Millions are without a means to earn a decent living to secure their basic needs and Pakistan’s rural population is a true case of starvation in the midst of plenty. That is why non-farm activities have become a substantial source of income for agricultural households, especially those with little land of quality or no land. Armies of rural people are forced to leave their villages to descend upon the cities in search of livelihood, only to end up sleeping on the streets and standing in long lines for poorly-paid menial labour jobs. Agricultural credit facilities in Pakistan add to the problems. The rate of interest on agricultural credit is high and loans are neither provided in time nor cater to total demand for loans. Farmers then feel compelled to borrow from informal sources at a very high rate of interest. It is a common saying about our farmer that *“he is born in debts, grows in debts and dies in debts.”*

Man-Made Laws Cause and Deepen Agricultural Under-Productivity and Rural Poverty

After the abolition of the revealed Shariah laws, Capitalism ensured the concentration of land ownership in the hands of a few. Though the British left, Capitalism remained and so

this concentration continues to be the dominant feature of Pakistani agriculture. A small percentage of rural households own over half of all cultivated land, whilst approaching fifty per cent of rural households are completely landless. Landless farm workers farm the land of land owners and then must pay rent to them, such that the majority of landowners are absentee owners just living off the rent. So, those who practically cultivate land benefit little of it, whilst those who own the land benefit immensely. The so-called “Green Revolution” of 1960s worsened matters, by allowing a small elite to take back previously leased lands and eviction of previous tenants. This further increased rural poverty and led to a flood of rural workers into the cities, in a frantic search for alternative livelihood. And what is left to fall in between rural workers migrating to cities and absentee land owners is gross under-utilization of Pakistan’s abundant agricultural lands.

No matter who comes to rule in democracy, the kufr colonialist laws it implements worsens the plight of the Muslims because democracy is not bound to implement the revealed laws of Islam. Thus, Benazir Bhutto’s government first introduced corporate farming in the late 1990s. It declared corporate farming an industry and approved 19 multi-national companies for business. A major boost to the policy framework came in 2001-2, when Musharaf’s government passed the Corporate Agricultural Farming Policy and Corporate Farming Ordinance, which provided a legislative basis, along with a series of tax breaks to potential foreign investors. The 2009 policy package announced by the Kayani-Zardari government offered competitive incentives to foreign investors in agriculture with the unprecedented release of vast tracts of state land to foreign investors, which continued under the Raheel-Nawaz government.

Under the current rulers these policies bring further unemployment, hardship and under-productivity. Whilst local farmers are crushed by heavy taxation on essential agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, seed, machinery, transport and fuel, foreign companies enjoy preferential treatment regarding ownership of land, import of machinery and equipment as well as remitting their profits back to their foreign states. Moreover, foreign companies will favour cash crops that are used in their own economies, rather than being concerned about food crops essential for Pakistan’s food security. Thus as a result of implementing colonialist policies, democracy will ensure that Pakistan’s local agricultural capacity will be usurped by foreign companies and Pakistan’s ability to feed and clothe itself will be undermined, making it more dependent on more expensive foreign imports.

Maximizing Land Cultivation and Rural Prosperity, whilst Securing Food Security

The return of the Khilafah will boost agricultural production and rural employment, thus increasing Pakistan’s food security and prosperity by restoring the Islamic land laws in the Indian Subcontinent. Uniquely, Islam strongly links the issue of ownership of the land with its cultivation. So regardless of whether the land-owner has large tracts of lands, or small tracts of it, he must supervise its cultivation personally. And the state will assist the owners in cultivation, whether through grants or through interest-free loans.

In its Introduction to the Constitution, Hizb ut Tahrir has adopted in Article 136, **“Everyone that owns land is compelled to use it, and those that require financial help are given money from the *Bayt Al-Mal* to enable them to utilise their land. If anyone neglects utilising the land for three years continuously, it is taken from them and given to someone else.”**

If the owner of land is unwilling or unable to cultivate his agricultural land despite assistance being offered, he is not allowed to hire it to another to cultivate it. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «أَزْرِعْهَا أَوْ أَمْنَحْهَا أَخَاكَ» **“Cultivate it or give it to your brother.”** (An-Nisa’i)

In its **Introduction to the Constitution**, Hizb ut Tahrir has adopted in Article 135, “**It is completely prohibited to rent land for agriculture, irrespective of whether the land was *Kharajiyah* or *‘Ushriyyah*. Likewise, temporary share-cropping is also prohibited. *Musaaqa* (renting trees for a portion of their yields) is permitted without restriction.”**

Islam encourages the revival of uncultivated agricultural land by granting ownership to the one who revives dead land to agricultural productivity. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «مَنْ أَحْيَا أَرْضًا مَيْتَةً فَهِيَ لَهُ» “**Whoever revives a dead land, it belongs to him**” [Tirmidhi].

Thus, in its **Introduction to the Constitution**, Hizb ut Tahrir has adopted Article 134, “**Dead land is possessed through its revival and fencing.**”

The Khilafah will abolish the foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Moreover, the Khilafah will free local farmers from the burdens of heavy taxation on agricultural inputs by restoring the just Shariah system of revenue generation, Kharaaj and Ushr, which is upon potential and actual agricultural production respectively. This will be an immense boost to food security as well as domestic prosperity as the Ummah enjoyed for centuries under Islamic rule. Thus today the Khilafah will prioritize the crops that allow its citizens to have their basic needs of food and clothing met completely, with excess production being used for foreign trade as part of building relations with other nations to carry the call of Islam to them. This in turn would mandate a state sponsored program to develop agriculture levels to standards that lead the world, including irrigation, fertilizer, disease prevention, arable land reclamation and new advances such as bio-fuels. It will establish strong pastures to support a surge in livestock availability.

In its **Introduction to the Constitution**, Hizb ut Tahrir has adopted Article 165, “**Development and investment by foreign funds within the State are forbidden. It is also prohibited to grant franchises to foreigners.**”

In its **Introduction to the Constitution**, Hizb ut Tahrir has adopted in Article 133, “**Tithed land (*‘Ushriyyah*) constitutes land within the Arabian Peninsula and land whose owners had embraced Islam, whilst possessing the land, before the Islamic State conquered them by Jihad. *Kharajiyah* land is all land, other than the Arabian Peninsula, which was opened by jihad, whether through war or peace treaties. The *‘Ushriyyah* land, together with its benefits, is owned by individuals, whereas the *Kharajiyah* land is owned by the State, while individuals own its benefits. Every individual has the right to exchange, through *Shari’ah* contracts, the tithed land and the benefits of Kharaaj land. All people can inherit these, the same as with all other wealth.”**

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Hizb ut Tahrir

Wilayah Pakistan