

- It took me 45 minutes to write these pages, from memory.

Date: _____ Pak-Affairs (2023) // MTWTFSS

Question No. 03

Having the largest population irrigation system in the world, the land of the sub-continent served as the main food supply basket for the British power for more than a century, but now Pakistan has to import food commodities. Discuss in detail the causes of agricultural decline.

(Answer)

Pakistan has such a remarkable irrigation system, but now it is under sheer burden. According to FAO, Report 2021, Indus; the sole irrigation system of Pakistan is the "second most under stressed" irrigation system of the world. Pakistan is an agrarian country, whose 37.4% population is still connected with agriculture as a profession, as per recorded in the

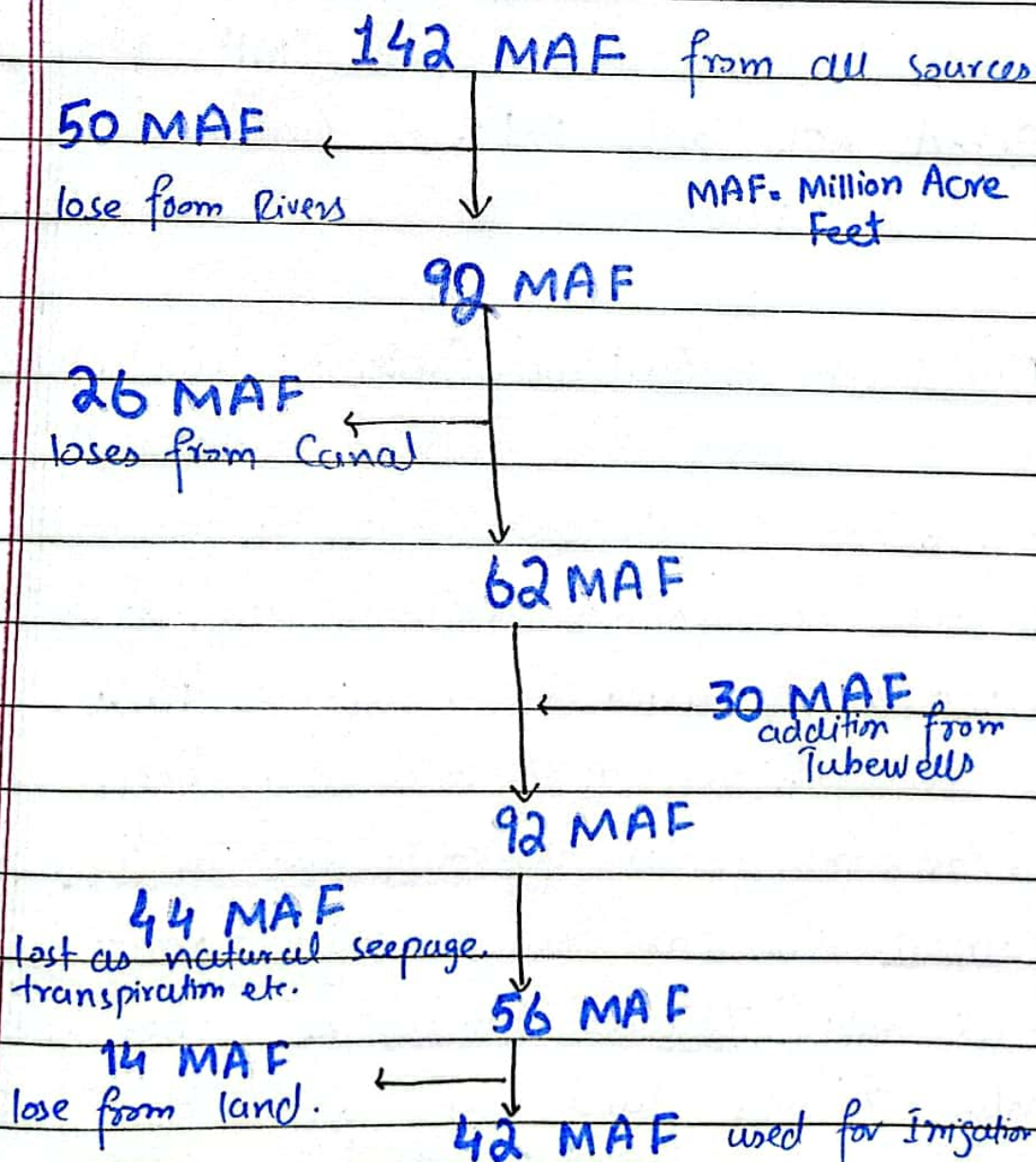
Pakistan Economic Survey of Pakistan 2022-2023. The condition of poor agriculture was not like that at the start of independence (1947). Pakistan's agriculture had contribution of **53%** of GDP in 1947-50. In 1960s, the green revolution happened and Research and Development was given the importance, which promoted the agricultural growth to **5.4%**. The same condition remained till the 2000s, where Pakistan used to export the Cotton Bales all-over the world but now, it imports **35%** of cotton need from other countries, and **77%** of wheat.

Reasons for the Agricultural Decline

There are multiple reasons for that poor condition of the agricultural decline, but few are stated as follows:

- Misuse of Water: As it was stated that Pakistan has largest irrigation system, but the fault at Pakistan's end is no care for these valuable resources. Water has been continuously wasted through different channels, leaving a slight share behind for the use.

Here is a flowchart below.



• Poor Canal System: The Canal system of the Pakistan is quite old and many canals have been clogged with mud and few are damaged, which reduce its efficiency.

• Poor Taxation: Pakistan's Agricultural Taxation is one of the causes of Agricultural decline. 60% of users of Canal system pay the due tax and it contributes as per **IMF Report 2015** only **0.1%** of the total tax of Pakistan.

• Outdated Agricultural System: Pakistan is still using the quite out-dated agricultural techniques. But the reason is the non-uniform accumulation of resources. According to a report, **45%** of the agricultural land has been under the control of only 2% of the farmers. Whereas the average farmer hold only 7 acres land. The owner of only 7 acre land can not afford

the modern agricultural techniques himself.

- Agricultural Dependency: According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2022-23, Agriculture contributes only **22%** of the **GDP**, whereas **37.4%** of total labor force of country is attached with agriculture. Country should find solution of this overburden dependency. In 1960, the total labor force attached with agriculture was **45%**, which reduced only to **37.4%**, whereas in the same time span China reduced its labor force from **60%** to **25%** by initiating other economic arenas.

- Poor Research and Development: As per the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2021-22, Pakistan contributes only a minor share of **0.11%** of agricultural wealth into Research and Development. As, there is minimal share in research so there is little progress in agriculture

- Poor Transportation: The roads from the villages to the agricultural economic arena are worst in condition and it requires ample time for the farmers to reach their products in markets. In addition to that, price-hike fuel price also creates hurdles.

- Floodings: Floods, either in the form of rain-flooding or outflow of waters from the water resources, have been a major cause of agricultural decline.

According to the "United Nation Organization," the floods of 2022 in Pakistan had provided the loss and damage of worth **\$30 Billion** to Pakistan.

Whereas the **World Bank Report 2022**, compared the floods of 2022 with floods of 2010 and declared the recent flood "four times disastrous" as compare to the previous one.

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• Wrong Policies of the Government: As the majority of farmers are illiterate and are unable to understand the bureaucratic and legislative language, therefore, they can not even record their protest against the government in fruitful way.

Anyhow, government has initiated steps like Asan Ujan Ketz Program and BISP Agricultural Loan, but there is much more to do in this regard.

Way Forward

⇒ Agricultural Decline can be improved through the proper policies of the government facilitating the agricultural sector.

⇒ More economic arenas should be established, so the agricultural dependency can be reduced.

⇒ Infrastructure should be established so, the hurdles of farmers to connect with

urban arena could be ~~it~~ reduced.

⇒ Investment in Research and Development can contribute in the progress of agriculture

Conclusions

Pakistan has always been an agrarian state. The people living here are quite emotional with the land and the profession of agriculture. The decline of agriculture has many causes ranging from the agriculturists to the government. But they can be improved by adopting the right measures. Pakistan has active and natural potential to grow as agricultural state, as ^{PBS} ~~MAPP~~ 2022 stated that only 24 million hectares out of 79 million hectares of agricultural land are being cultivated.

Governmental policies, like highlighting importance of agriculture and allotting land to farmers can improve the declining condition of agriculture