

PROPOSED CORPORATED AGRICULTURE IN PAKISTAN AND DANGERS INVOLVED

(Now being vigorously perused by the Government Agencies)

**BY
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A new idea has been floated to cultivate all waste lands in Pakistan by bringing foreign corporations, which would cultivate these lands by modern technologies by employing local labor, at attractive wages, train local people, pay local taxes, develop roads and communication net-works, and bring prosperity at nominal profits to themselves. This appears to be very attractive proposal especially as it does not involve any private land but there is a snag. Even for the existing irrigated lands, there is a shortage of water and there is no surplus water during the growing season of whole cycle of any crop. There is surplus water in the river Indus for 30-50 days a year and flows down the sea. The Punjab wanted this water to be diverted to their proposed Kalabagh Dam. This was opposed by Sindh, Baluchistan and NWFP. There are proposals for alternative sites in the name of power production, but these are also being opposed on the grounds that if water is stored for any length of time, it may harm the interest of riparian. This new proposal of corporate agriculture is simply a cloak to use river water without consulting any provinces. It is known that in the irrigated waste-land there is no fresh ground water. Even the saline ground water is in very limited quantities. Water required to raise the crop shall be pumped from the river, taken to various areas where small earthen storage dams will be constructed to supply water for cultivation year around. It will amount to a number of small Kalabaghs. The project therefore is much more dangerous than Kalabagh Dam.

Corporate agriculture has been introduced in some countries with horrible repercussions on the local environment, economy, labor and human health. None of these has benefited the local populace.