

# ***PAKISTAN ECONOMIST***

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Dec 20 - 26, 1999

Muhammad Hussain Panhwar was decorated with Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 1992 by the President of Pakistan for his outstanding services in the field of agriculture engineering. He was nominated in "Who is Who In the World" in 1987-88.

Beside various distinctions to his credit, he was elected as professional member of American Society for Anology and Viticulture in 1993-94. Born in 1925, Panhwar did his B.E from Sindh University in 1949 and his M.Sc in Agriculture Engineering from Wisconsin USA in 1953.

**M.H. Panhwar**, a prolific writer on agriculture has written 13 books on ground water in Sindh and Balochistan. He has also dwelt at length on the subjects of new fruits, nuts and industrial crops for Sindh and another important paper on "sustainable methods" in raising fruit crops and over 100 articles in different newspapers to his credit.

Panhwar who alongwith his wife Farzana Panhwar has devoted much of his time in research with a view to address the problems pertaining to agriculture growth specially within the climatic conditions prevailing in the Province of Sindh.

**PAGE:** Would you like to highlight the practical applications of your research work for growth of agriculture sector in Pakistan.

**PANHWAR:** Since fruit farming is commercially much more viable as compared to wheat, cotton or rice and other crops, currently all his lands have been utilized into fruit farms.

**PAGE:** What type of fruits you are producing at your farms.

**PANHWAR:** With a smile of confidence on his wrinkled face, Panhwar said that he has introduced new fruits and nuts in Sindh since 1980 by utilizing mostly non-synthetic fertilizer and pesticides which not only help healthy growth of plants but also enriches the soil.

It was really a pleasant surprise to see Cashew plants in full bloom at the farms. So far Cashew was grown by our neighbouring India, African countries and Australia. Cashew is generally smuggled into Pakistan and sold at Rs750 per kg at the retail stage. Panhwar has brought cashew plants from Australia and expects that the plants are in good health and would soon start commercial production.

Lychee: Another delicious and refreshing fruit which was so far cultivated in the province of Punjab. Panhwar has introduced five varieties of lychees from Australia and USA which are more rich in colour and taste. They are grown commercially and available in the market during the season.

**PAGE:** What about other fruits grown in your farms.

**PANHWAR:** There are plants of as much as 25 fruits and nuts . They have been brought into Pakistan from different origins such as Jojoba oil nut and Jatropha nut from Mexico, Buffalo-Gourd from Texas, Mango from USA, Brazil and Australias, Peaches, Plums, Thaahiti Lime, Graphe fruit, apple and Nectarines from Florida, Grapes, persimmon, Z. jujube, pear and Fig from California and Pomegranate from Spain and USA.

**PAGE:** What are the economic potentials of fruit farming in Pakistan.

**PANHWAR:** "Our personal experience shows that highly organised fruit and vegetable farmers with diversified crops and the latest technologies can increase the yields of existing crops by 3 to 5 times. This is possible only when inputs are increased and there is on the average one farm worker busy year around on each acre of land. Similarly the vegetable crops can absorb three times as many persons as area under the crop. There is also scope for floriculture, herbs and essential oils. There is unsaturated market for fresh and dried flowers. This has not been explored in Pakistan. Income from flowers per acre will far exceed fruits of all kinds and employment rate may also be 3-4 persons per acre. Laterly a huge market has developed for herbs. Thus changing cropping patterns, introducing new crops, adopting fruit culture, vegetable, floriculture, herbs and industrial crops will help to increase rural income and employment.

**PAGE:** Why Pakistan has to import wheat every year despite having enormously rich land resources?

**PANHWAR:** It is unfortunate that right from the beginning, it has not been given its due place in the national economy. The manufacturing sector has been remained on top of the government priorities. For example the prices of wheat and other agricultural commodities were kept low from the First Five Year Plan so that commerce and industry get cheap labour to establish their enterprises.

The price policy from 1950 to 1995 has given the farmers 40 to 50 per cent less than international prices.

Under the present Suport Price Policy there can not be any transition from subsistence farming into commercial farming, as the cost of the additional inputs will not be compensated by the additional returns from additional yields.

The net result of all this is the wheat production is lowered, wheat is imported at about double the rate as paid to the farmers and subsidised to the urban population. This makes

industrial labour available at cheap rates and enhances profits of industry but suppresses the rural and urban labour as well as the total agricultural regime.