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# **Electrification of villages**

*By*

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## ELECTRIFICATION OF VILLAGES

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The Government has been laying great emphasis on electrification of villages with a view to extend the facility of electricity to rural population. This is apparent from the fact that inspite of the shortage of power in the country the electrification of villages is continuing. The rural electrification contributes towards increased agricultural production, reclamation of water logged lands and saving in import of substitutes of electricity. For rapid national development and to achieve equitable distribution of socio-economic benefits from the Power Development Programme it is necessary to expand the scope of Rural Electrification in Pakistan. The pace of electrification which has been substantially accelerated is evident from the following data which shows the number of electrified villages year-wise for the period from the year 1971-72 to 1983-84 in the country:

Year	Villages electrified
1971-72	74
1972-73	315
1973-74	530
1974-75	846
1975-76	855
1976-77	854
1977-78	1606
1978-79	1246
1979-80	1306
1980-81	1181
1981-82	1701
1982-83	2188
1983-84	2325

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In accordance with the statistics available there are 43244 villages as per Census Report of 1972 in the country and 16955 out of these are electrified with percentage of electrification of 39.20 upto 30.6.84.

2. Electrification of villages is mainly Federal Government Programmes and WAPDA is the execution agency for the electrification of the villages. The Provincial Governments have the option for selection of villages for electrification according to their share of Federally allocated funds. The Punjab Government in the years 1981-82 and 1982-83 also contributed funds towards the electrification of villages. In the year 1983-84 when Sixth Five Years Plan was launched in the country the programme for electrification of villages in the country was quite extensive one, therefore the Punjab Government has continued allocating funds towards this programme from its own resources. There are different criteria and procedures being followed by the Provincial Governments in respect of the selection of villages for electrification in the Provinces. In Punjab the selection of villages is made in accordance with the criteria based on the population-cum-distance of the village from the existing 11 K.V. line.

3. On the receipt of information regarding allocations of funds and the number of villages to be electrified in the Province the quota of villages to be electrified is fixed tehsil-wise each year. In the year 1982-83 the Punjab Government for giving due weightage to the relatively backward areas devised a weightage formula for the fixation of quotas of villages to be electrified in tehsils. The quotas of villages in accordance with this formula is being fixed so that in the first phase the tehsilwise disparity of percentage of electrified villages is removed and percentage of electrified villages is brought up the level of at-least 63.89% in each tehsil of the Province. In this way the tehsils/districts in backward areas of the Province are getting more quotas of villages to be

electrified as compared to the Tehsils/Districts in the relatively developed areas. It was originally aimed that in the first phase i.e. the removal of inter-tehsil disparity of percentage electrification and then to bring the percentage of electrification to 63.89% was to be achieved in FIVE YEAR PLAN period and in the 2nd phase the electrification of all the villages in the Province was to be completed within a period of 10 years. On account of paucity of funds the requisite number of villages as were desired to be electrified under weightage formula are not being electrified annually, due to this the spans of the achievements laid down in this formula will be extended proportionately to the availability of the funds and those planned.

4. The Village Electrification Programme in the Province of Punjab is being formulated in consultation with the elected representatives in the Province. Only those villages are selected for electrification which are entered in the District Census Report as revenue estates. The distance limit for a village to become eligible for electrification is  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile generally. In case requisite number of villages according to quota is not available in a year in any tehsil then this distance limit is suitably enhanced so as to meet the quota. The lists of the villages falling within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile or the prescribed distance limit from 11 K.V. line are prepared in accordance with the priority of population as per District Census Reports and villages having maximum population in the list are selected for electrification according to the Tehsil quota. In accordance with the policy if a village consists of more than one abadies then considering the main abadi as a village, all other abadies having minimum 20 number of house and falling within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the main abadi or the 11 K.V. line should also be electrified with the village.

5. In the past WAPDA while electrifying the villages did not electrify these wholly with the result that in numerous cases one part or the other of the villages were left out un-electrified. In view of this situation the Punjab Government started

a separate programme from its own resources for the electrification of these left over abadies of the villages electrified since the year 1981-82. Apart from this a programme called Cost Sharing Programme of electrification of villages was also started by the Punjab Government since 1981-82. The funds for these two programmes are being provided by the Punjab Government from its own resources. The criteria for the eligibility of the left-over abadi of the already electrified village is that the abadi should be situated within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile distance from the main abadi of the village or the 11 K.V. line and the number of houses in that basti should not be less than 20. Under the Cost Sharing Programme of the Punjab Government the residents of the village are required to deposit  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of the total cost of electrification while  $\frac{2}{3}$ rd of the cost is borne by the Provincial Government.

6. WAPDA also electrified 900 villages in the course of which 518 in the Province of Punjab under Asian Development Bank Loan Project. The criteria for that was the Economic Internal Rate of Return (E.I.R.) based also on the population-cum-distance of the village from the 11 K.V. line