

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Currently, wood is the single most important source of energy in Swat District and it meets more than 90 per cent of the total energy needs. The overuse of forest wood is creating serious ecological problems for the district in the form of deforestation, soil erosion, mass movement, and increased sedimentation.

According to present estimates, about 52 per cent of the public sector expenditure and approximately a third of the GDP in Pakistan is spent on the energy sector. The process of energy planning, however, is a highly centralised activity and district and local level institutions are not playing any significant role in the process. As a result, the energy crisis in rural areas, and particularly in mountainous areas like Swat, is not adequately reflected in national level planning.

In addition, energy development and conservation programmes are not being effectively implemented. This applies to a wide spectrum of programmes, ranging from the enhancement of social forestry to the introduction of energy-saving devices, e.g., improved cooking-stoves.

This study has shown that the objective of effective implementation of energy planning cannot be achieved without decentralisation and community involvement. The country is fortunate that it has a wide network of local government institutions at the district and lower levels. However, the system can be effective only if these institutions are assigned their due role.

The existing energy planning capability of the district is very weak. It is extremely important to amend this state of affairs by strengthening the energy planning and management capabilities of district level institutions. This case study has suggested some measures that can be adopted by existing institutions to generate an adequate database. This information can be used for effective energy planning. The study also showed that community participation, generated through union council involvement, can produce feasible projects within the broad goals set by district planning.

The concept of an energy village is a possible approach the union council can take in exercising its role at a local level for project formulation through community participation. The model energy village is used here as a case to study the community mobilisation process in energy development activities, such as afforestation, energy plantation, establishment of micro-hydel, etc. It can also serve as a social laboratory for the investigation of social barriers and the attitudes of the local population which are preventing the adoption of improved energy devices and alternative forms of energy.