

REPORT ON IEEE INDO-PAK CONFERENCE 2005 ON 'IMPACT OF INFRASTRUCTURE REFORMS ON DEVELOPMENT'

IEEE Indo-Pak Conference 2005 on 'Impact of Infrastructure Reforms on Development' was held at Gulmohar Hall of India Habitat Center, New Delhi, India on February 19 & 20, 2005. 114 participants (38 Members and 76 others) registered for the conference. 9 came from the three Sections of Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad in Pakistan. Besides the inaugural session, there were three technical sessions on 'Power & Energy', 'Information & Communication Technologies', and 'Transportation'.



Souvenir being released to mark the inauguration of the Conference



A view of participants in the Conference at Gulmohar Hall of India Habitat Center

In the inaugural session spoke the distinguished personalities, like, M/s Ram Vinay Shahi (Secretary - Power, Govt. of India), Harbans Lal Bajaj (Chairman, Central Electricity Authority), Faqir Chand Kohli (ex-Chairman, Tata Consultancy Services), besides leader of delegation from Pakistan, Mr. Shaikh Imranul Haque (Karachi Section Chair), Conference Convenor, Mr. Raj Kumar Vir and IEEE Delhi Section Chair, Mr. Prakash V Ekande. In their addresses everybody praised for initiative in holding such Conference, particularly due to similarity of problems and issues being faced by both the countries in the process of development. It was hoped that under IEEE many more conferences of this type, may be focussing on a particular area each time, would be held in future in both the countries.

In the session on 'Power & Energy' as many as four papers were presented. Starting from the one on financing of power project after the establishment of feasibility, the session went through the development of generation and transmission systems with the opening of power sector to private entrepreneurs too in nineties and finally culminated in presentation on possible opportunities in power trading not only amongst various regions of the country, but also with the neighboring countries. Presenters were respectively from Power Finance Corporation, National Thermal Power Corporation, Power Grid Corporation and Power Trading Corporation. Giving background of power development of the country since independence while success stories were narrated, actions being taken to provide electricity for all by the year 2012 were highlighted. In the process prioritization of investment in power sector, regulatory mechanism, augmenting capacity through new addition as well as renovation and modernization and also development of renewable energy were touched. Achievement of economy in fuel consumption, reduction of commercial losses with the goal of enhancing efficiency, quality of services, attracting

investment with proper balancing in risk and asset management were the issues addressed. In this context use was made of the buzz words for the actions, like, Liberalization, Globalization and Privatization (LPG) to reduce political interference, monopoly, etc. leading to competitive market. Confidence was expressed on the fact that enabling provisions under Electricity Act 2003 would be in a position to achieve the reform in a full-fledged manner. While dealing on transmission system it was stated that with shortage and surplus scenario prevailing at the same time region-wise lead to the necessity of inter-regional power flow through the National Power Grid, which would be completed by 2012. Integrated development, environmental problems, resource crunch, joint sector as well as private sector route of investment under reform were the other issues talked about for the transmission development. On the trading issues related to power and energy on day-to-day as well as seasonal basis, comparison of growth in GDP in India with developed countries, synergy of pooling to meet growing demand not only within India, but also considering present scenario in neighboring countries were discussed mentioning steps to be taken.



Session - I on 'Power & Energy' in progress during the Conference



We made it – Delegates from Pakistan along with IEEE Delhi Section volunteers

In the session on 'Information & Communication Technologies' there were five presentations from Pakistan and India. With IT Policy and Telecom Policy coming into existence in 2000 and 2003 respectively in Pakistan, focussed deployment of technology had a multiplier effect. With the creation of host of regulatory authorities, IT enabled growth depended upon four pillars of communication, HRD, market creation (domestic and international), rules and regulations. With open-ended licensing regime, for 150 Million people, tele-penetration reached 2.97 while on mobile front 10 Million would be the figure by 2006. Cost of internet logging drastically reduced and Pakistan Education and Research Network was established with 155 Mb/s optical fiber backbone making it possible to establish virtual university too. Relevant laws had already been enacted. Opportunities were said to be existing between India and Pakistan on equipment, IT enabled services and Telecom Operators. Presentation from EMC² under information life cycle management, gave an overview of technologies, standards and solutions stressing the need of facing challenge of managing information having about 93 per cent in digital form, mismatch between information growth and resources availability. Microsoft's paper on building robust IT infrastructure highlighted critical dependence of society on IT with the growth and development of computer hardware, software and services. Technical revolution on computing power, connectivity, device proliferation and standards, with trustworthy computing under security, privacy, reliability and business integrity had built an important segment of infrastructure. In the

Indian context, under policy regulations and technologies, evolution of technologies, value addition, IP based services, multi-agency system, convergence of facilities with licensing objective enabling entrepreneur to push bright idea without any limitations were the key issues addressed. In the paper on techno-legal synergization for national development, complete overhauling of laws was said to be the need of hour. It should be commensurate with technical advances and knowledge economy. Therefore mere transportation of information would not be enough. Amplification, analysis, filtering, etc. of the same would also be required.

In the last technical session on 'Transportation', essentially three papers were presented from Indian Railways and their associated organizations. While dealing in the context of rapid mass transportation system in metropolitan areas, vivid account of necessity, development, challenges faced and solutions evolved were given on behalf of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation. Experiences gained were unique and could be used for the execution of similar projects in other big cities, not only in India but also in the neighboring countries. Railway Electrification was another area that was highlighted in another paper terming it as a boom for Indian railways for carrying goods as well as passengers from every part of the country. Progressive development with modernization, essentially based on evolution of communication technologies, had made transportation of information to and fro possible through internet as well as bi-directional communication while travelling in train. Accordingly Indian Railways Telecom System had been geared up to install equipment and devices to extend such facilities to passengers in phases.

IEEE Delhi Section on this occasion arranged a musical evening in the Delton Hall of IETE, Lodhi Road, New Delhi on February 19 for the participants in the conference. This was followed by dinner in honor of delegates from Pakistan at YMCA, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi. During their stay in India the delegates also utilized the opportunity to visit the city of Delhi as well as Agra.

Reported by

Dr. Subrata Mukhopadhyay

For & on behalf of

IEEE Delhi Section

February 28, 2005