



PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF GUEST, MR. GHAUS BUX KHAN MAHER,
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**SPEECH OF HONORABLE GHAUS BUX KHAN MAHAR
FEDERAL MINISTER FOR PRIVITIZATION
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN**

Mr. Pervez Akhter

**President Pakistan Society of Sugar Technologists, Mr. Shifaat Zaidi Chairmen
Organizing Committee, all office bearers of PSST, Distinguished Guest, fellow
delegates**

As-Salam-Alaikum

It is a matter of great honour for me to be here with you on the occasion 46th Annual convention of Pakistan Society of Sugar Technologists. This is the first time I am inaugurating this conference but I understand that PSST is technical body for providing technical support to the sugar industry. I also understand that PSST is highly organized body and are also holding workshops and conventions regularly to create awareness for improving the productivity of sugar. I appreciate PSST for their devoted services for the betterment of sugar industry.

Pakistan has 89 sugar mills, 46 in Punjab, 34 in Sindh and 09 in KPK. The installed capacity of these sugar mills is about seven million tons. However, the production of sugar cane is not matching with the capacity of mills because of low productivity. It may not be out of place to mention here that the sugar mills cannot survive without sugarcane, being the main raw material for the industry. Similarly the sugar cane growers cannot survive without sugar mills. Because they provide them with market both are interdependent. However, the relations between these two main stakeholders are not conducive because of several reasons. For instance, when the sugar cane crop is on high side, farmers suffer due to delayed payment by the producers as well as deduction from the cane. On the other side, when the production of sugarcane is on lower side, then the mills suffer because they have to pay more to obtain cane to keep the mills in operation. In such a situation, a third party, the middle man harvest more benefits by exploiting both the stakeholders. This not only disturbs the sugar industry but also the overall economy.

The cost of input has gone high and farmers need funds for the cultivation of September crop. I would appreciate that the sugar industry should look into this issue along with PSST and workout mechanism for establishing cordial relation between the mills and the growers and to eliminate the middle man. Pakistan has a billion rupees sugar industry and we would not like it to suffer but at the same time it is also suggested that sugar cane growers should also not be ignored. Sugarcane is a Kharif crop and there are other competing Kharif crops like cotton, corn, rice and sunflower which are not only short duration but also require less water and have more profitability. So shifting from sugarcane to other crops may not be good sign for the sugar industry. Now I would like to discuss some of the points regarding improvement of sugarcane yield and bio fertilizer.

In this regard, I would like to share with you that Federal Government supports the establishment of cane research and breeding institute at lower Sindh in district Thatta.

Currently, we are dependent on important fuzz to develop sugarcane varieties which may not acclimatize to our agro climatic condition. Therefore, the breeding institute at Thatta would help to produce its own seed for local consumption which would be more adoptable to our condition.

The sugar industry produces by-products like press mud which is rich in Phosphorus. If this press mud is distributed to the formers it would improve the soiled health. Therefore, I suggest that PSST and PASMA should sit with the MINFAL to work out a mechanism for processing pres mud into bio fertilizer and its distribution to the farmers and at affordable cost.

Another area of concerned in this sugarcane seed. With improved seed, yield could be increased by about 20%. Last year, the sugar mills have made deduction on certain varieties which according to them were of low recovery. This has sent wrong signal to the farmer's community to grow sugarcane. To avoid such a situation PSST and PASMA should examine the possibility of increasing the seed multiplication of improved varieties to improve per acre yield. This is in the interest of both the stakeholders.

I understand that out of the present around 89 sugar mills some are efficient while some are not. This needs an appropriate action by the PASMA and PSST together. Sugar industry is an important industry of Pakistan and is providing job opportunities in rural area. We want them to flourish but all the same time we also want them to be more efficient in today's globalized world, we have to improve our systems otherwise we will lack behind and would remain dependent on others. Pakistan has the capability to address its problems in sugar sector and PSST could play appropriate role and come up with some suggestions. The Last but not the least, we must diversify sugarcane crop because it is long duration crops and require water equal to a Tarbella Dam. Water is a scare and expensive resource. We must save it for other major crop like cotton and rice. Therefore, PSST must its role to diversify sugarcane crop by supplementing sugarcane with low water consuming sugar beet crop.

With this words, I would like to thank all of you and hope that the point raised and suggestion made will be given due consideration both by the PSST and PASMA to bring sustenance in our sugar production.