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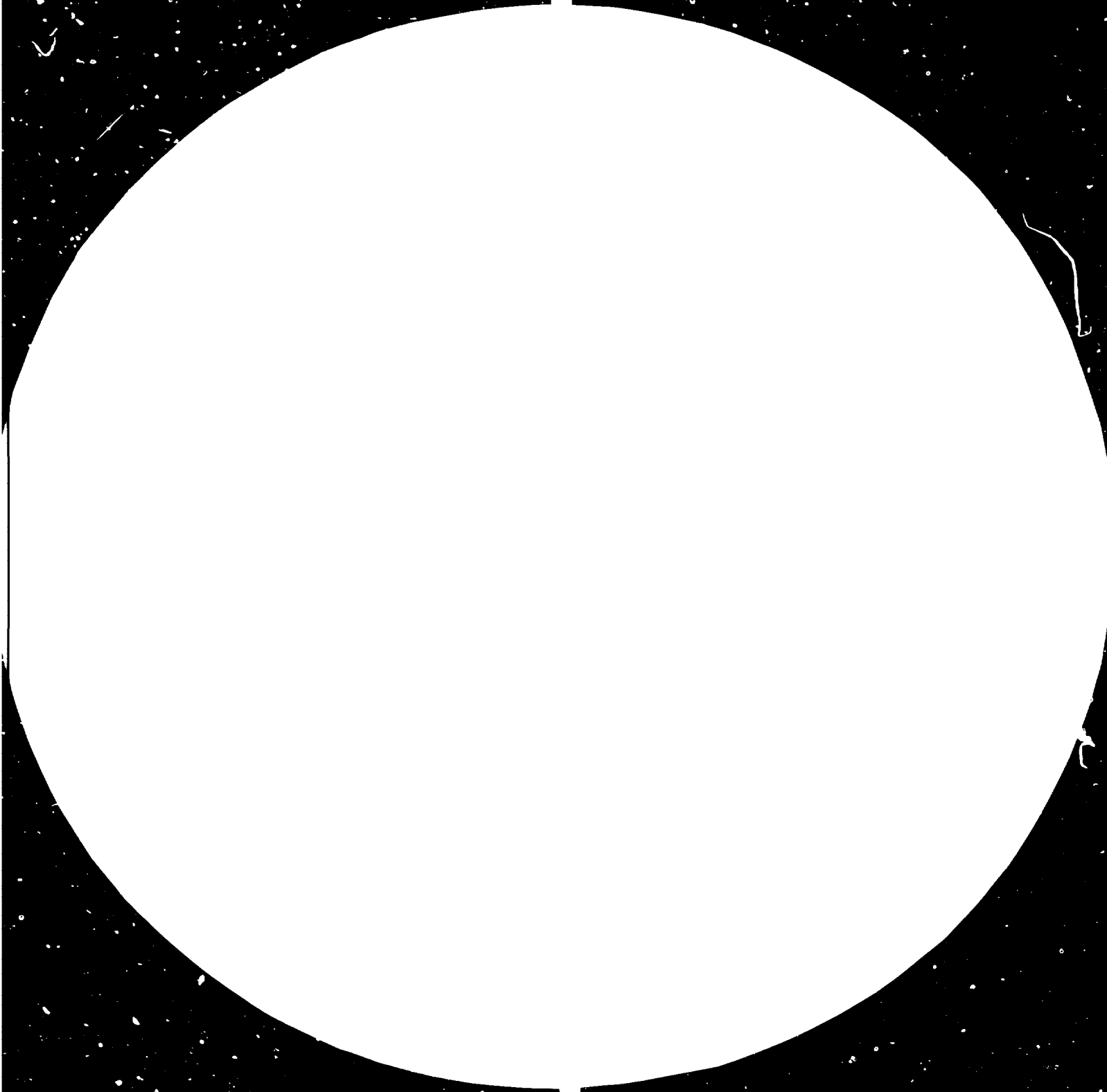
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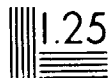
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WOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES IN PAKISTAN *

by

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Pakistan is a land of varied climates. It has snow covered peaks in the north and the arid deserts in the south. The total area of Pakistan is 796,095 square kilometres, out of which about 5 percent only are forests.

Although various forest development and afforestation projects have been implemented since independence in 1947, Pakistan is still facing shortage of timber. Therefore, a large quantity of timber is still imported. Pakistan being a developing country, the import of timber is a big burden on its foreign exchange.

The Government is encouraging the wood substitutes by supporting particle board and plywood industries so that the consumption of solid wood may decline.

2. CURRENT STATUS OF WOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES:

Sawmills:

The concept of sawmills in Pakistan is progressing rather slowly. At the present time only two sawmills are under operation; both are owned by the Government. A new sawmill with an afforestation scheme is under implementation in collaboration with the Federal Republic of Germany.

Furniture:

The present furniture and secondary wood processing industry in Pakistan is at the initial stages of development and modern mass production in this particular sector is not common. However, the demand for quality furniture and fixtures is rapidly growing in the urban areas.

The use of particle board, plywood, veneer, hardboard and melamine impregnated foils have increased manifold during the last ten years.

Large quantities of solid wood are still used in the furniture making industry. Except for a modest number of small and medium-sized mechanized units in the major towns, the entire industry is based on manual work and hand tools. This results in a high percentage of waste of the country's already meagre forest resources.

The species generally used are Shisham, Deodar, Kail, Partal, Cheer, Kikar, Vallnet. Shisham is used for furniture manufacturing and decorations whereas Kail and Partal are generally used for building work. Cheer is used in villages for roofing beams. Kikar is also used in villages for making bull carts and roofing beams. Vallnet is used for handicrafts. The availability of these woods is reasonable, but not sufficient for development purposes.

Veneer, plywood, particle board and blockboard (integrated plants)

All these wood-based panels are produced in eight factories. Only one veneer slicing factory is operating in the city of Peshawar. (There are ten plywood factories in the country: eight are integrated with other wood-based panels factories and two produce only plywood).

Particle board:

During the last five years, consumption of particle board in the furniture industry has increased by almost 70 percent. Five particle board factories are in operation in the country. The biggest factory, which produced particle board from bagasse has recently increased its capacity from 30 tons to 110 tons per day. It is producing quality particle board and hardboard while the other four factories are based on waste wood which, unfortunately, is in very short supply. The quality of the particle board is still to be improved to meet the internationally accepted standards. Before the installation of this factory, a large quantity of particle board used to be imported for meeting the increasing demand of the country.

Properties and use of glues:

The existing ten plywood factories have a capacity of over 30,000 m³ per annum. However, due to lack of raw material, hardly 70 percent capacity is being utilized and large quantities of plywood sheets have to be imported. The veneer needed for the plywood industry is manufactured at the plywood factories in the country.

Joinery production:

As for joinery, an exclusive section does not exist (except in two factories in the whole country). Plywood manufacturers normally produce flush doors, otherwise furniture manufacturers have included these as part of their production line.

Use of adhesives:

Urea formaldehyde glue is generally used in plywood and particle boards in different factories of the country. For furniture manufacturing, Hoechst Moblith glue is used which is available in different grades. Locally produced animal casine glues are also used in furniture industry.

Use of Plastics in furniture:

Till 1978, there were only two firms producing synthetic foams while at present five units are in operation and two more have been sanctioned by the Government. The development of this industry is mainly due to increase in demand of quality furniture by the urban population.

Recently, a factory has been installed in Baluchistan which is producing very good quality of melamine impregnated paper overlays. However, the use of this overlay in Pakistan is not very common. There are other five factories which are producing different qualities of foams which are generally used.

Furniture design:

There are two institutes (Pak-German Wood Working Centre in Peshawar and Swedish Institute in Karachi) which are running with the co-operation of the Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden respectively. They develop proper designs for mass production. The other factories make their individual designs but not for mass production.

Product development:

The Government is encouraging private industry to install factories on modern lines.

Furniture technology:

Furniture technology is in the stage of development. New factories with modern machines and equipment are being installed. However, manual work is still a common practice.

Surface finishing:

There is only one factory for this purpose. Modern equipment in this field is rarely available. Most of the work is done manually.

Technical problems:

Most of the work is done manually. Modern machinery is being installed throughout the country.

3. CONCLUSION:

The demand of the wood processing industry in Pakistan is increasing in almost every field. It is, therefore, essential that following steps be taken to accelerate the pace of progress:

- (a) More extensive afforestation programmes be introduced.
- (b) Modern methods of felling the logs in the forest be adopted to save the unnecessary waste.

- (c) Use of wood substitutes increased by educating and training the carpenters.
- (d) Institutes in various fields of wood technology be established in different parts of the country.

If Pakistan has to compete the international market, it still has to go a long way in the wood processing industry.



