

The Shariah Solution to Expensive Electrical Power is Making It Public Property of the Community

News:

Presiding over a party meeting of senior leaders at Model Town Lahore on 15th August, the PML-N President Nawaz Sharif has directed the governments of his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif in the Centre, and daughter Maryam Nawaz in Punjab, to work together to address the soaring electricity bills issue which is a must for the revival of the party. (*Dawn*)

Comment:

Unaffordable electricity is ruining the people and the economy of Pakistan. The solution is declaring electrical power public property, not renegotiation with the private owners of power producers. This issue has now become a major national issue. All segments of society are protesting against very high cost of electricity. The businessmen, traders, industrialists and farmers are demanding reduction in the cost of power, as now they are unable to meet its cost, whilst making profits. The problem is so severe that even the sitting prime minister admitted that the economy can't grow without curtailing the price of power.

It is astonishing that whatever the people pay in electricity bills, two thirds of it goes into capacity payments for the Independent Power Producers, commonly known as IPP's. Capacity payments are a charge which the state has to pay to an IPP, when the state does not procure electricity from it. There are many cases where the state has not procured a single unit from a particular IPP, but still it has paid billions of rupees in capacity payments. So now most of the economist, energy experts, traders, industrialist, farmers and politicians are putting pressure on the state to renegotiate contracts with IPP's in order to bring the price of electricity down.

However, the solution is not renegotiation with the IPP's. The root cause of this problem is democracy which implements capitalism. Democracy gave rise to a power policy in 1994, at the behest of the World Bank, that gave the way for private investors to enter through Independent Power Producers (IPPs) contracts. Currently, Pakistan has 46 IPPs. Renegotiation may bring some ease for a brief period of time. However, it will not resolve the issue of expensive electricity permanently. Private ownership of power generation will continue, as capitalism enforces freedom of ownership in the power sector. So as long as democracy remains, capitalism remains, and so the problem of expensive electricity will remain.

The solution to expensive electrical power lies in Islam alone. In Islam, power is the public property of the community (jamaah) as a whole. The entire community benefits from power or its price. Any profit is spent on the needs of the community. Ibn 'Abbas narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «الْمُسْلِمُونَ شُرَكَاءُ فِي ثَلَاثٍ فِي الْكَلْبِ، وَالْمَاءِ وَالنَّارِ» **“Muslims are partners (associates) in three things, in water, pastures**

