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EVOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION CONCERN IN
PAKISTAN

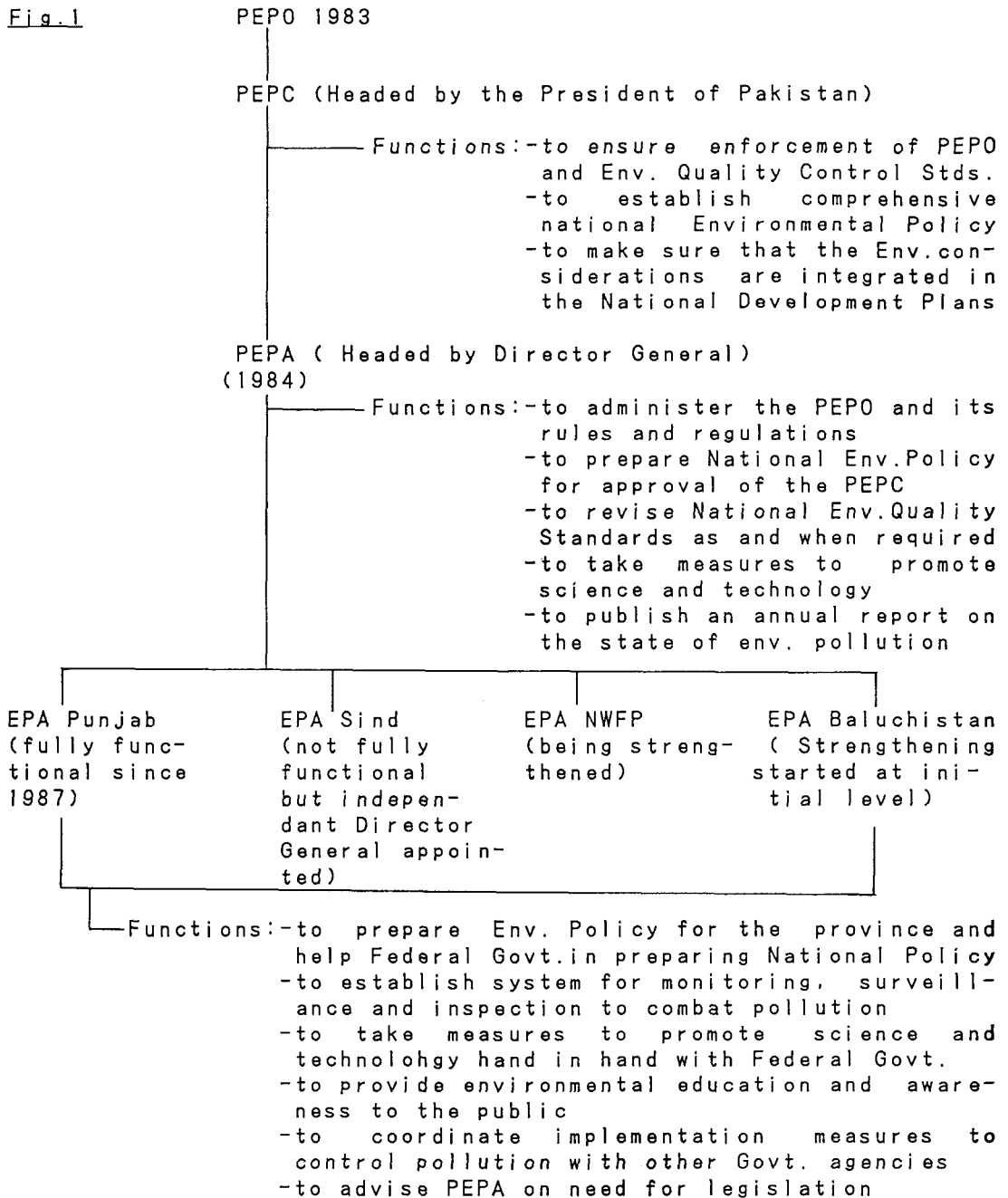
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INTRODUCTION: Pakistan is a federation consisting of four provinces namely Punjab, Sind, NWFP, and Baluchistan and three federally administered areas. Like many other countries of the world, it has witnessed rapid industrialisation since the past three decades. This, alongwith swelling growth in population and speedy urbanisation, has led to extensive exploitation of natural resources especially of land and water.

PRESENT STATE OF POLLUTION: Present state of environmental pollution in the country is depressing. Untill recently, industrial establishments were thought of only fulfilling country's commodity demands, providing jobs, and earning foreign exchange and little was anticipated pertaining to environmental pollution. There has been no or negligible treatment of industrial and municipal effluents. Indiscriminate disposal of industrial and municipal wastewaters has depleted all the major streams and drains especially in Punjab which is the biggest province of Pakistan. Pollution of rivers due to untreated effluents have led to pathogen transfer which can be clearly seen from the mortality rate of children which is about 140 per 1000. Major industrial clusters in Karachi, Sheikhpura, Kala Shah Kaku, and Faisalabad have become the focal points of pollution offering potential threat to human, animal and plant life. In addition, unlimited use of pesticides and fertilisers is further adding to the burden. Poor solid waste management is giving rise to unhygienic conditions causing diseases like malaria. Evidence shows that the most pressing problems in Pakistan are related to water pollution by municipal and industrial effluents and air pollution by industrial emissions. Air pollution from traffic is not so severe from the overall environmental standpoint although it touches the maximum permissible limits during peak hours in big cities.

EVOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION INFRASTRUCTURE: Feeling the gravity of the situation, an environmental protection ordinance called the Pakistan Environmental Protection Ordinance (PEPO) was promulgated in 1983. Section-3 of this Ordinance has provided for the establishment of Pakistan Environmental Protection Council (PEPC) which is a high powered body headed by the President of Pakistan. This council is assisted by a functional organisation at the Federal level named as Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (PEPA). However, the practical work of monitoring and enforcement of the Environmental Quality Control Standards is entrusted to the Provincial Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs). Provision of the PEPA and the Provincial EPAs was duly made in the PEPO 1983 and eventually all of these Agencies have already been created. Fig.1 shows the organisational infrastructure and the main functions of each organisation;

Fig.1



LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE HINDRANCES: Some of the main obstacles being faced are;

1. PEPO is not comprehensive. It requires amendments.
2. Env. protection needs are not integrated with national plans.
3. Institutional and administrative lack of enforcement of existing laws and inadequate coordinated efforts.
4. Inadequacy of financial resources.
5. Absence of environmental education and awareness in public.