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A Study Of Food Security In South Asia

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Abstract

Food security is defined as economic access to food along with food production and food availability agriculture in the SAR (South Asian Region) is caught in a low equilibrium trap with low productivity of staples, supply Shortfalls, high prices, low returns to farmers and area diversification all these factors can be a threat to food security South Asia still has the highest number of people (423 millions) living on less than one dollar a day. The region has the highest concentration of undernourished (299 million) and poor people with about 40 per cent of the world's hungry, it aims to identify issues relating to food security, the policy initiatives taken to tackle these issues evaluate these policies and suggest measures to overcome identified constraint in order to improve the food security situation in the South Asia.

Keywords : Food Security, Poverty, Climate change, Nutrition

Introduction

The last few decades have witnessed a sweeping change in the food production scenario to south Asia. India, the largest of the south Asian economies, is now largely self sufficient in food again and an emerging exporter 1) (Agarwal, B (2002 a) Are we peasants Too& Land rights and women's claims in India, Seeds, 21. 29) While the other countries of the region remain dependent on cereal imports, the per capita availability of cereals has increased in every country (with the exception of the Maldives) from the 1980 to date (FAO 2002). Yet endemic pockets of hunger remain, seasonal shortfalls are manifest and malnutrition is widespread across the region.

Food security is a complex issues and its definition has evolved over time. The question of food security has a number of dimensions that go beyond production, availability and demand for food. The initial focus on food security as a global concern was on the volume and stability of food supplies. In the 1974 world food summit, food security was defines as "availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic food stuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuation in production and prices".

An FAO report, August 2008, Defines food security in terms of the following four key aspects.

- * Food availability sufficient availability of food with the nation through domestic production, net imports (Commercial or food aid) and carry-over of stocks.
- * Food access - Individuals capability to purchase food and to be able to procure food through safety nets or availability.
- * Food utilization Consumption of food by the household in a proper form it also takes into account food preparation, storage and utilization food safety, nutritional safety and dietary balance.
- * Food vulnerability Vulnerability of the population to food insecurity due to physiological, economic, social or political reasons.

South Asian countries have seen high annual economic growth rate, but relatively low growth rates in agriculture during the period 1993-2006. These countries also witnessed

an increased high level at growth in food consumption, primarily due to high population growth (Source: World development growth 2008).

South Asian is home to nearly 40 % of the world's poorest people, those who survive on less than a dollar a day. India has the world's highest proportion of malnourished children, with 46% of its preschoolers underweight. Closely following are Nepal with 45% Pakistan with 38 % and Bangladesh with 37 % in Sri Lanka, 29 % of preschoolers are underweight a figure that may rise as the end of a decades long insurgency in the north and east improves survey teams ability to evaluate condition there.

Objective of the Research study

1. To study the Incidence of poverty and food Insecurity.
2. To study the status of agriculture sector in South Asia.
3. To Study the Inter-linkages between climate change and food security
4. To Study the women's contribution to household income and its impact of on food security and nutrition.

Methodology

To evaluator study has been undertaken on A Study of food security in South Asian. So for the study delves on the secondary data.

The data evaluation with necessary analysis and interpretation as follows.

South Asian countries have seen high annual economic growth rate but relatively low growth rates in agriculture during the period 1993-2006.

However despite the high growth rate food consumption, the region has the highest concentration of me poor and undernourished (299 million in 2003-WDR 2008) and account for 40 per cent of the world's hungry, An annual 1.7 per cent reduction in the prevalence of under-nourishment in the past decade has hardly made dent in the absolute numbers of the under- nourish something that remains a major cause of concern.

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Food security Indicators in South Asia.

Sr. No	Indicators	Bangladesh	India	Maldives	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
		2002-04	2002-04	2002-04	2002-04	2002-04	2002-04
1	Population (Million)	146.7	1065.4	0.32	25.2	153.6	19.1
1	Food Supply (Kcal/persen/day)	2200	2470	2066	2430	2320	2390
2	Numfer of undernourished (Million)	44	209.5	31.9	4.4	37.5	4.2
3	Peoportion of under-nourimment (%)	30	20	10	17	24	22
4	Dieatry energy onsumption (Kcal/persoo/day)	2200	2440	2560	2450	2340	2390
		2000	2000		1996	1999	1996
5	National poverty headcount, (% of populations)	49.8	28.6	-	42	32.6	25
6	Rural poverty headcount, (% of populations)	53	30.2	-	44	35.9	27
7	Urban poverty headcount, (% of populations)	36.6	24.7	-	23	24.2	15
		2000	1999-00		1995-96	1998-99	1995
8	Gini of income (%)	32	33	-	37	33	34
		1981-82	1990	1995	1995	1988	1986
9	Gine of dietary energy consumption (%)	18	18	14*	15*	18	19

Source : FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization)

Apart from the endemic poverty and poor nutritional status of South Asian countries, there are sings of deterioration in the agricultures sector of the region. This has added to the pressure on food supply and hence, worsened the food security scenario.

As seen in table below the agricultural sectors contribution to GDP in 2006 was very low as was the growth rate for the sector that year.

Status of Agricultural sector in South Asian

Sr. No	Countries	Value added as % of GDP in agriculture, 2006	Agriculture Grwoth rate(annual % growth 2006.)	Employment agriculture (% of total employ.)
1	Afghanistan	36	-	-
2	Bangladesh	20	4.94	51.70 (2003)
3	Bhutan	22	1.67	-
4	India	18	2.68	52.00 (2007)
5	Maldives	Not available	-0.65	17.30 (2003)
6	Nepal	34	1.19	66.40 (2001)
7	Pakistan	19	1.58	43.00 (2005)
8	Sri Lanka	16	4.71	33.50 (2004)

Source: World development Indicators, 2008.

Compounding problems on the food security, front are other factors such as declining productivity as reflected in the annual growth rate of yield for cereal and the diversion of land for the production non-cereal commodities whose demand has increased with changes in the consumption pattern yield for cereals has been on a constant decline in most of countries and in some of them, the growth is even negative, South Asian countries have consequently witnessed a sharp rise in the prices of rice and wheat posing a threat to the poor and vulnerable section of the population in these countries.

Average annual rate of growth of yields of cerals in South Asian countries.

Sr. No	Countries	1981-85	1986-90	1991-95	1996-00	2001-05
1	Afghanistan	-0.017	-2.71	0.12	-8.15	-
2	Bangladesh	2.77	4.33	-0.53	6.25	2.28
3	Bhutan	-1.02	-5.47	6.21	-0.85	-
4	India	4.17	5.59	2.3	1.39	0.63
5	Nepal	1.38	5.92	0.73	2.57	1.91
6	Pakistan	-1.41	0.15	2.26	4.14	3.98
7	Sri Lanka	2.58	-0.57	0.66	2.26	0.70

Source- Self computed from FAO data.

The productive potential of South Asia's rich geographical diversity holds promise in so far as its ability to mitigate these threats is concerned. But lack of political will, poor infrastructure lack of appropriate policy frameworks, low level of regional integration and severe bilateral conflicts have severally impeded effort to achieve food security in the region. The other issue that needs special attention is the

likely impact f climate change on agricultural productivity in South Asia and other parts of the world the South Asian region is highly sensitive to the consequences of climate change and is known to be the most disaster prone region in the world.

South Asia- Rates of consumer price inflation, 2008-2012.

Sr. No.	Countries	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
1	Afghanistan	26.8	-8.3	8.2	9.8	9.1
2	Bangladesh	9.9	6.7	7.3	8.8	7.5
3	Bhutan	8.8	3.0	6.1	6.8	5.8
4	India	9.1	12.4	12.0	7.5	5.0
5	Maldives	12.3	4.0	4.7	6.0	5.8
6	Nepal	7.7	12.6	9.6	9.6	7.5
7	Pakistan	12.0	20.8	11.7	13.9	12.0
8	Sri Lanka	22.6	3.4	5.9	7.4	7.3

Source: ESCAP (2011a), Based on national sources;IMF, International Finance Statics database (Washington, D.C.,August 2011).

At country level, High inflation rates are being experienced by most countries in south Asia. Pakistan has been experiencing double digit inflation for some years now. High inflation is becoming a major concern in India with adverse impact on its strong economic growth momentum and the people.

Inter Linkages between climate change ad food security.

Climate is the primary deters meant of agricultural productivity and, in this respect, climate and food availability are fundamentally interlinked. Following from studies linking climate change, agriculture and food security, climate change is expected to influence crop and livestock production hydrologic balances. Input supplies and other components of agricultural system.

In the light of analytical evidences and predicted impacts, climate change will affect food security throw its four dimensions.

Food production and availability climate affects food production directly through changes in agro-ecological conditions and indirectly by affecting growth and distribution of incomes and thus demand for agricultural produce.

* Stability of food supplies Fluctuation in crop yield and local food supplies will adversely affect the sterility of food supplies.

* Access to food- Falling real prices for food and rising real incomes over food last 30 years have led to substantial improvement in access to food in many developing countries. Possible food prices increases and declining rates of income growth resulting from climate change may reverse this trend.

* Food utilization climate change will affect the ability of individuals to use food effectively by altering the conditions for food safety and changing the disease pressure from vector, water and food-borne diseases, climate change may initiate a vicious circle where infections disease cause or compound hunger, which, in turn, makes the affected population more susceptible to those disease.

Conclusions

Conclusions regarding various aspects of the (Program) food security are given as follows.

1. South Asia has the highest number of people (423 Millions) living on less than one dollar a day.
2. Poor people with about 40 per cent of the world's hungry.
3. Malnutrition is widespread across the South Asia region.
4. India has the world's highest proportion of malnourished children, with 46% its preschoolers underweight.
5. South Asian countries have high annual economic growth rate but low growth rates in agriculture during the period 1993-2006.
6. The agriculture sector's contribution to in 2006 was very low.
7. Yield for cereals has been on a constant decline in most of countries and in some of them, the growth is even negative (Bhutan and Afghanistan).
8. Climate change will affect food security through its four dimensions.
9. The highest rates of consumer price inflation in Pakistan and the lowest in India in the year 2012.

Recommendation:

1. Policy makers should be priority to agriculture sector.
2. Micro finance should be ample availability for agriculture.
3. Governments programmes and steps taken for food security should be transparent.
4. Government should provide food at low private rate level to poor people.
5. Agriculture finance and food bank must be established for South Asian countries.
6. Alternative water sources made available through government scheme and policy to agriculture sector.
7. Government should provide ample food for malnourished children at free of cost.
8. Employment opportunities should be increased in rural areas of the South Asian countries.
9. Food prices should be controlled by the government.

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