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Food Security in South Asia and its Sustainability: Focus on India

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Selected Poster prepared for presentation at the International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE) Triennial Conference, Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, 18-24 August, 2012.

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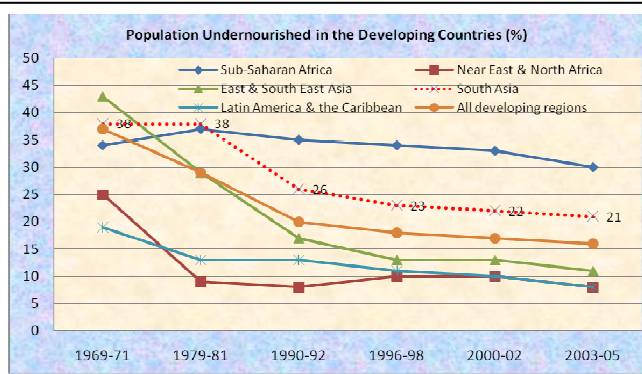
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Introduction:

- The key challenge for developing countries such as Asia, Africa and Latin America is to address the issue of food and nutritional security. Although the growth rate of food production has exceeded the population growth rate at the global level, a large number of countries are still plagued by food insecurity.
- There were 923 million chronically hungry people in 2007 and this number increased by 75 million over 2003-05 (FAO).
- High food prices have been an important factor contributing to the mounting figures of chronic hunger and FAO estimates that these high prices have plunged an additional 41 million people in Asia and the Pacific and 24 million in sub-Saharan Africa into hunger. This makes the task of bringing the number of undernourished to 420 million by 2015 even more difficult.
- The largest increases in the number of undernourished people in 2007 occurred in Asia and the Pacific and in sub-Saharan Africa, which together accounted for 750 million (89%) of the hungry people in the world in 2003-05.
- FAO estimates that due to rising prices, food security in developing countries is a serious, multi-dimensional problem, distinctively in South Asian countries.
- The *Agriculture Development Report 2008* ranked South Asia as the second most undernourished, malnourished and food insecure region in the world.
- Although South Asian countries (SAC) made impressive progress in food grains production during 1960s to 1980s, the dynamism in the agricultural sector has been lost recently due to technology fatigue leading to low productivity.
- Agriculture in the SAC is now entangled in a low equilibrium trap with low productivity of staples, supply constraints, high prices, un-remunerative returns to farmers & area diversification towards commercial crops. Such factors pose a threat to food security, as food production is unable to keep pace with population growth.

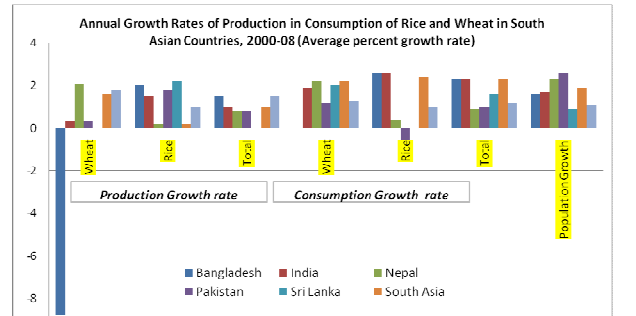
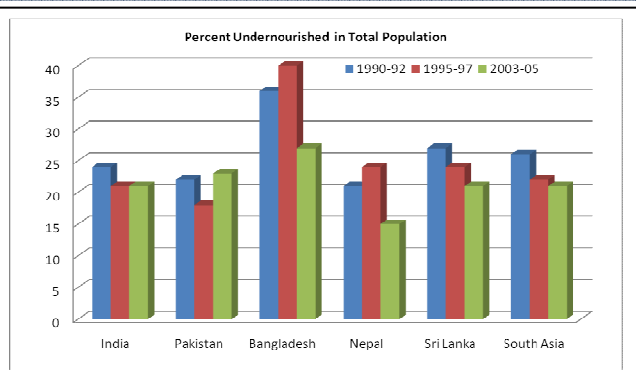
Food Security in Developed and Developing Countries



Objective and Method:

To study the magnitude of food insecurity in SAC and factors, which contribute to the agricultural sector being unsustainable, with special focus on India. The study is based on secondary data/literature and tabular analysis.

Food Security in South Asia

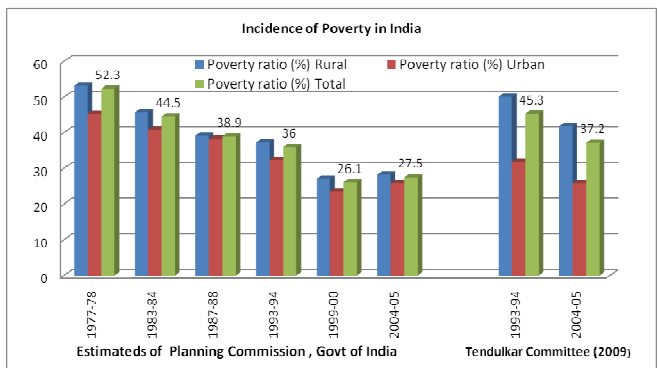


Is Food Security Sustainable in India?

- 2.4% of world area but supports over 16% population
- 0.5% of world's grazing area- account 18% cattle pop.
- The increasing resource degradation problems such as groundwater depletion, water logging, salinity & land degradation are likely to threaten food security.

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Food Security in India:



Govt. of India Initiatives for Enhancing Food Security:

- The Public Distribution System (PDS/TDPS)
- The National Food Security Mission
- The Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana
- National Horticulture Mission
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme

Broad Conclusions:

- Future growth of the agricultural sector holds the key to livelihood security, eradication of poverty, reduction in hunger, inclusive growth and sustainable progress of the economy of each of the nations.
- In the recent past, the growth of agricultural output has slowed down in most of the SAC and in other countries where growth is still reasonably higher, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain and sustain that.
- India is the most populous country of the SAC and under performance of the agricultural sector since the last decade is a major concern for policy framers.
- The situation is being further complicated by decreasing per capita availability of arable land & its unsustainability, which have begun to have an adverse impact on food production, compounding the challenge of meeting food demand.
- Despite increase in food production and mounting buffer stocks, there are millions of food insecure and undernourished people in India. Perhaps poor management and distribution has contributed to this problem.
- The per capita availability of food grains has fallen substantially during the recent past and may get aggravated with increase in population.
- Increasing productivity of food grains for which there exist great potential, along with an efficient distribution channel would greatly help to maintain the food security in the country.