



The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>
aesearch@umn.edu

Papers downloaded from AgEcon Search may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.

No endorsement of AgEcon Search or its fundraising activities by the author(s) of the following work or their employer(s) is intended or implied.



BOOK REVIEW

Comparative Agricultural Growth in South Asia

K. L. Krishna*

Kurosaki, Takashi (2017), *Comparative Economic Development in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh: Agriculture in the Twentieth Century*, Maruzen Publishing Company Limited, Tokyo, pp. xiii + 235, Japanese Yen 16,200.

The volume is a compilation of research papers by Professor Takashi Kurosaki for the Asian Historical Statistics Project at the Institute of Developing Economics (IDE) since 1995, its successor projects, and the PRIMCED (Poverty Reduction, Institutions, Markets, and Policies in Developing Countries: Toward a Theory of Comparative Economic Development) during 2010–15. Apart from chapter 1: Introduction and chapter 8: Conclusion, the book is divided into three parts. Chapters 2 and 3 fall under Part I, titled “Country-Level Analysis for India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.” Part II, “District-level Analysis,” is covered by chapters 4 and 5, and Part III, “Multi-Level Analysis with Farm-Level Information” covers chapters 6 and 7. A valuable feature of the book is the Appendix to Part I: “Compilation of Long-term Data for Areas Currently in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh c. 1900-2000.”

Professor Kurosaki has prepared his empirical material with meticulous care. His exposition of the issues in Parts I, II, and III is lucid and insightful. However, comparisons between the three countries is confined to Part I (chapters 2 and 3) and in the Appendix to Part I. Chapter 4 in Part II deals with land productivities and spatial crop shifts in West Punjab, and chapter 5 in Part II is concerned with spatial changes in agricultural production in contemporary India. Chapter 6 in Part III describes the cropping patterns at different aggregation levels in West Punjab, while chapter 7 deals with crops, livestock, and disasters in the North-West Frontier province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) of Pakistan. Contrary to what the title of the book declares, the comparison between the three major nations receives much less than half the space in the book. This review focuses on the comparative performance of the three countries.

* Chairperson, Madras Institute of Development Studies, krishna@econdse.org

The chief merits of the book are careful attention to data quality and clear exposition of the empirical findings derived on the basis of a sound analytical framework developed in the relevant chapters.

Chapter 8 neatly summarises (1) productivity and crop shifts in agricultural development, and (2) the empirics of agricultural development in South Asia. The chapter identifies areas for future work and presents the policy implications of the book. In chapter 2, “Long-term Agricultural Growth and Crop Shifts,” Kurosaki analyses the patterns of agricultural growth and the role of crop shifts in productivities in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan over the twentieth century and for the pre- and post-1947 periods, at different levels of aggregation (farm, district, state, and country). This feature distinguishes this study from earlier studies on long-term agricultural development in the three countries.

The main findings in chapter 2 relate to agricultural growth performance and four sources of growth, namely expansion in area, change in land use intensity, improvement in individual crop yields per acre, and crop shifts towards high value-added crops. The inclusion of the fourth factor is a unique contribution. A discontinuity between the pre- and post-Independence periods is observed in all three countries. Total value-added growth rates increased from zero or low levels to significantly positive levels, which were sustained throughout the post-Independence period. The improvement in land productivity accounted for most of the value-added growth.

Crop shifts contributed about one-third of the growth in land productivity, especially in periods of limited technological change and after 1947 in India and Pakistan. The shift in acreage towards high value-added crops made a substantial contribution even in Bangladesh.

On account of high population growth, the welfare gains from agricultural growth were limited and the pace of poverty reduction was slow in all three countries. In chapter 3, “Agriculture-Macroeconomic Linkage,” a long-term decline in the share of agriculture in GDP was observed in all three countries. Two structural changes were observed, the first between pre- and post-1947 periods in India and Bangladesh. The second structural change occurred in the 1970s and 1980s in all the three countries, when non-agricultural growth that occurred autonomously became the main engine of macroeconomic growth. The negative effects of bad policies and institutions were concentrated in areas currently in Bangladesh in the colonial period and in united Pakistan in the period between 1947 and 1971.

The absence of a growth linkage between agriculture and non-agriculture in the pre-1947 period is attributed to the nature of industrialisation, among other factors. The author suggests that the estimates of Sivasubramonian (2000) for the secondary and tertiary sectors be replaced by better estimates for a better understanding of

the long-term impact of economic development and economic institutions on economic performance.

The analysis in the book fills a big gap in the literature on comparative agricultural growth in the three major countries of South Asia. The analysis is rigorous, lucid, and comprehensive. The author deserves to be complimented for his insightful and painstaking effort.

REFERENCES

Sivasubramonian, S. (2000), *The National Income of India in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.