

Agriculture: Issues in The Global South Mainly Asia and Africa

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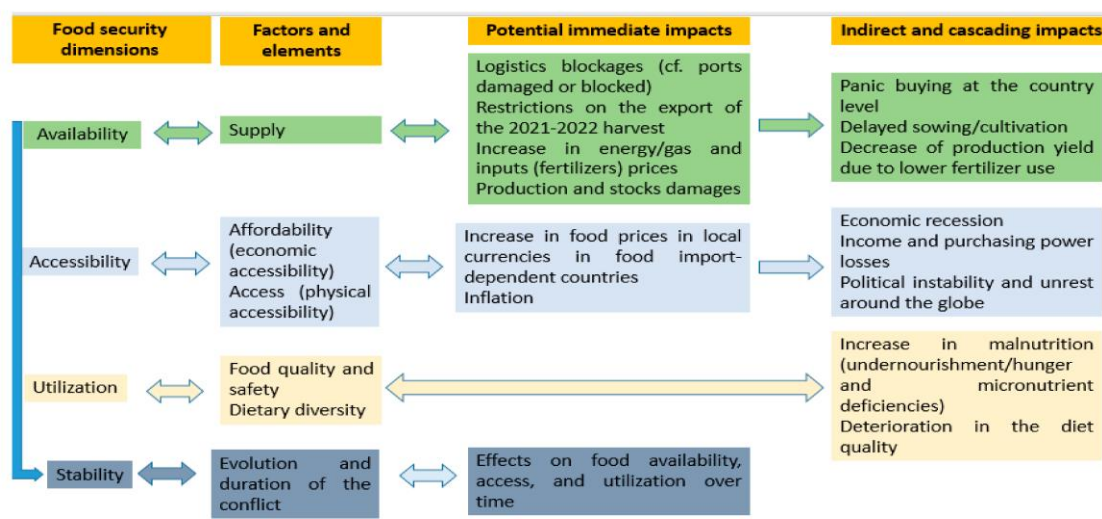
Introduction:

The Global South consists of those countries that are depicted as developing or underdeveloped which are mainly located in Asia and Africa. Carl Oglesby was the first person to have coined the term “Global South”. Global South encompasses the political, economic and geopolitical similarities among countries. Asia and Africa are different when it comes to the effect on their respective environments by factors such as climate and human influence. There are similarities in areas too such as the application of mixed cropping, integration of various forms of farming such as intercropping, livestock farming and so on. A variety of farming methods can be practiced on a small area of land in both these continents. There is a preference given to food crops instead of cash crops. The practice of fish farming yields great dividends in Asia and Africa since it is a money-making business. However, there are issues in these two continents when when it comes to a number of significant things. These are in the fields of food security, climate change, poverty, gender inequality.



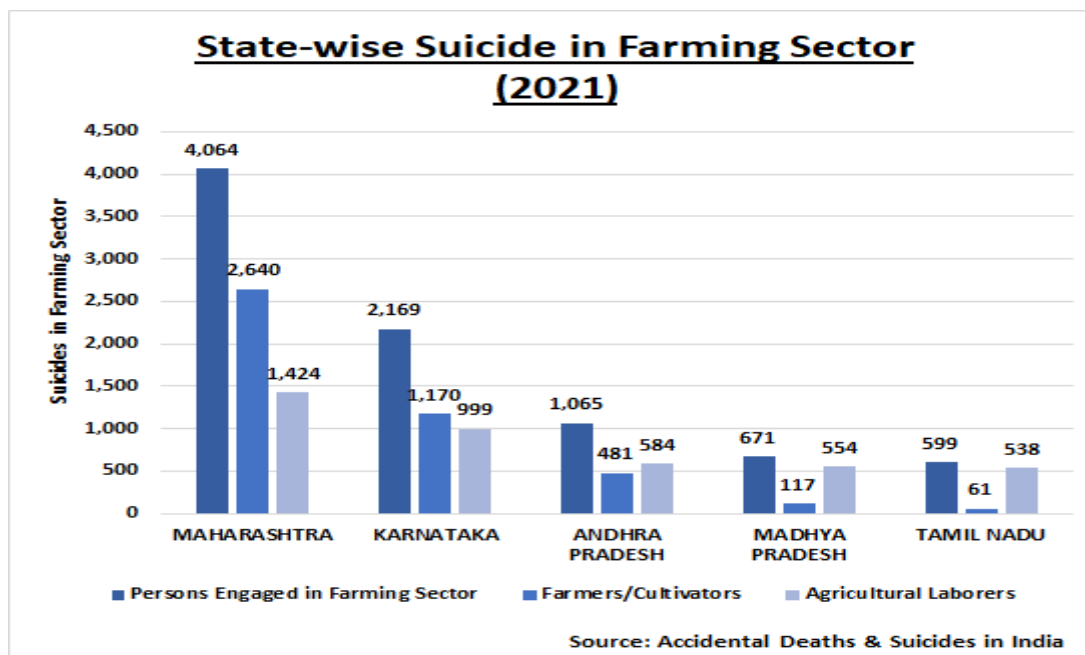
Food Security Issue in Asia and Africa:

There are millions of people who suffer due to the lack of food in Asia and Africa, this is a grave issue which is hampering development despite agriculture being a major activity. The two major factors for this development in recent years are the “Covid 19 Pandemic” and the war between Russia and Ukraine. Ukraine is often called a “breadbasket” with respect to other countries particularly in Asia and Africa because it is among the top 3 exporters of grains in the world. Ukraine and Russia together supply a quarter of the world’s wheat. Ukraine is also the fourth highest exporter of potato which is an important crop when it comes to countries in Asia and Africa as potato is relatively cheaper than other food sources. This war has greatly affected the food security of Asia and Africa. There is also a concern of food inflation which is inevitable in the case of less supply and more demand for a product. Asia and Africa mostly consist of developing countries and underdeveloped countries therefore, the pandemic is still having an effect even today because most of the focus during the initial waves of the covid virus was on the health sector which itself was weak and it still is weak even today which eventually led to the food sector to be neglected causing its downfall and making things worse for the food security parameter. Agricultural production, industrial processing and household consumption are the three areas where focus must be diverted in order to improve food security. An approach in which sustainable agriculture is practiced with an aim to improve food as well as nutritional security should be taken which will help in improving human health as a whole. The yield of crops has massive gaps in Asian countries, this is due to gaps in technology. China and Japan have the highest crop yields while Pakistan and Thailand have the lowest crop yields. Countries like India have tried to deal with food security by promoting nutrition rich millets in place of wheat but, this has a big disadvantage too because the yield is very less and it would not be enough to support the people and satisfy their hunger.



Climate Change and Agriculture in Asia and Africa:

Asia and Africa have a deadly problem with regard to availability of clean water. Climate change therefore, has an increased negative impact on these regions. Climate change leads to a destruction of people's lives and livelihoods. The "Ring of fire" is a region which also covers the Asian continent, climate shocks are a regular feature of this region which has led to mass starvation. Asia and Africa have almost more than 75% of the world's population and these people are mostly farmers who are marginal and small, climate change causes famines and droughts which have resulted in the increase in the number of farmer suicides over the years, particularly in the Asian country of India. There is also the problem of cold stress and heat stress, storms, cyclones and the increased incidence of pests and diseases which hamper the food security and lead to poverty. The productivity of crops such as wheat and corn have fallen in the recent years in Asia and Africa due to water scarcity, extreme weather conditions, diseases and pests of plants. Sahel which is located in Africa suffers from the problem of erratic harvests of more than 70% of cereal crops which is caused due to climate change according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Climate change also leads to an increase in the Carbon dioxide levels in plants which in turn leads to the plants having lower concentrations of iron and zinc which are micronutrients essential for proper growth and development of human beings and maintenance of the immune system. The crop yields are increasing in the poor nations causing widespread poverty and according to data by the Food and Agriculture Organization, by the year 2030, about 43 million people will live a life of poverty in the continent of Africa.



Poverty And Its Impact on Agriculture in Asia and Africa:

According to the Asian Development Bank, there are about 1.7 billion people in Asia who survive on a meagre amount of lower than 2 dollars per day. The world Bank has stated that in Asia, more than 320 million people live in poverty. In Africa, approximately 431 million people were suffering from poverty with a survival sum of around 1.90 dollars per day. This state of affairs has come to fruition based on a lot of factors such as poor governance, gender inequality, poor infrastructure, rampant corruption, widespread illiteracy and so on. Poverty is one of the main factors which affects agriculture and agricultural development in low- and middle-income countries. Illiteracy and poverty go hand in hand because when a person is illiterate then that individual does not even have the means to come out of poverty and poverty in turn leads to more illiteracy therefore, it is the government's responsibility to put forward relevant schemes in order to solve this problem of illiteracy and poverty. Poverty causes the small and marginal farmers to not have the financial stability to adopt new and advanced agricultural technologies. For example, in a small village in Lakhimpur which is a district located in the State of Assam in India, I am involved in an internship program in which I am associated with a host farmer named Manik Dutta. I had explained to him the benefits of adopting drip irrigation but, he did not have the financial capability to even think of adopting such a technology. This is the state in which farmers all over the continents of Asia and Africa are suffering.

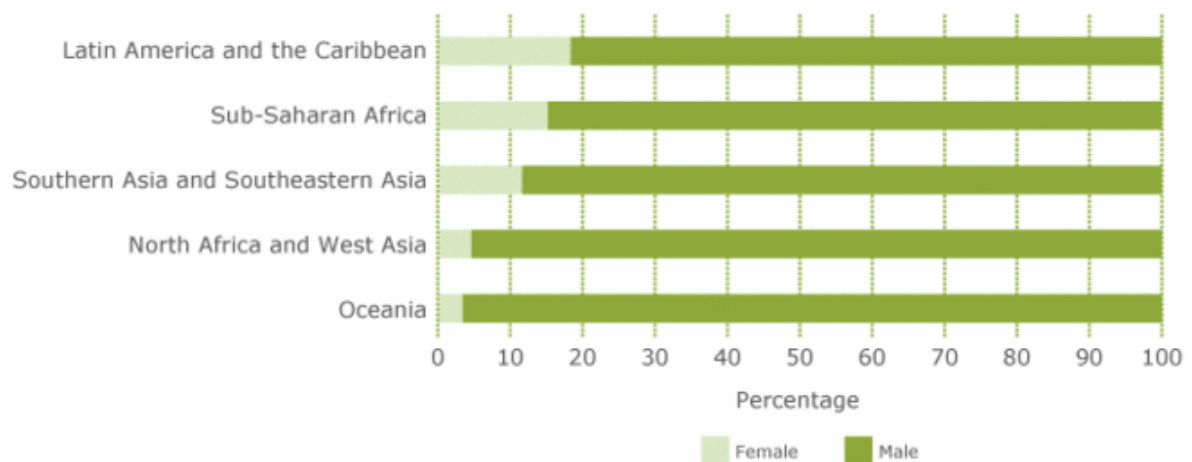


Gender Inequality and Impact on Agriculture in Asia and Africa:

In Asian countries, there has been improvements in gender equality over the years but, it is a very slow-paced development. The majority of the households are poor which include those associated with agriculture, they believe that only men are supposed to be the ones to work in the fields or be related to any kind of agricultural activity, women are mostly taught from a young age to learn and perform household chores and even if they are provided with education, they are told to get married so, the main problem in Asia is that women are brought up only to be married in the majority of the households while men are told to be the bread winners. This has a negative effect on agricultural development because in this manner the economic development gets slowed down. There has to be a change in the mindsets of people so that men and women are encouraged to participate in agricultural activities in order to increase the speed at which agricultural development occurs. Africa has a lot of potential as it has some of the world's fastest growing economies but there is widespread gender inequality. There have been stories of African women gaining success but, the majority are burdened by gender inequality. Men and women of Asia and Africa must work together to solve their problems and focus on agricultural development as agriculture is the major occupation of these

continents and if this is achieved in the future then Africa and Asia will be powerhouses when it comes to economic development and food production.

Share of male and female agricultural holders in main developing regions



Conclusion:

Agriculture has a vast amount of potential in Asia and Africa but, there are major problems blocking its progress such as gender inequality, poverty, climate change and food insecurity. There are solutions to these problems but, the people and the government have to work together as a unit in order to tackle these problems effectively in an efficient manner through schemes, education, raising of awareness. This will lead to a bright future for the world as a whole as Africa and Asia constitute a major amount of the planet’s population.

