



SOUTH ASIAN NETWORK FOR SOCIAL & AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Turning Point, August 2009 Issue, Vol. VI-VII, No.5

Foreword

SANSAD wishes all its readers a very happy and prosperous march towards realizing goals of equitable and just society. I would like to extend a very warm welcome to our readers to the August 2009 edition of the SANSAD Newsletter. In this issue, the focus of the month is to give an overview of the climate change events and the resulting distress migration phenomenon, from countryside to urban areas.

Great effort has been made to avoid or at least limit any political inferences, if any and all political views that appear in this publication are solely the opinion of the author and the author only. It is the intention of the author that issues highlighted in this and subsequent newsletters will spur the reader to greater action and become part of the global community for change. And again, we look forward towards your constructive comments, which are so valuable for us.

Kind regards,

Anil K Singh

Secretary-General

Analysis

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: CLIMATE CHANGE AND VILLAGE MIGRATION

The UN General Assembly in June 2009 approved its first resolution, pushed by 12 Pacific Island states, linking climate change to international peace and security.

Negotiations ahead of the G-8 summit in Italy in July 2009 failed to reach agreement to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2050 because of objections from China and India. Under the plan, industrial countries were to reduce their emissions by 80 percent by 2050.

Developing nations including China and India struggled midterm goals in 2020 and financial and technological help from industrial countries to achieve them, while industrial countries preferred to keep the focus on 2050.

G-8 leaders hope to agree to prevent world temperatures from rising from preindustrial levels by more than two degrees Celsius by 2020. Since temperatures have already risen by 0.8 degrees and will likely rise by another 0.6 degrees based on pollution already in the air,

major steps would have to be taken over the next 11 years to meet the goal.

Climate change is altering the living conditions and migration patterns in the South Asian Region. In particular, village farmers are the most affected target as they are directly dependent on natural resources.

The migration patterns have seen an increase due to the impact of Global Warming effects. This phenomenon leads to extreme climatic changes and unpredictable weather patterns that impede farmers to foresee stable harvests in long term basis.

South Asia possesses a fragile ecosystem because of its combination of highland and tropical temperature. This is why; mountain glaciers such as Himalayas may disappear, while the boreal will experience an increase in flooding.

In addition to this, the Asian countries are highly populated (over 3 billion of people) and the climatic changes will encourage the further competition for the already limited natural resources. Even more, severe storms and other extreme natural disasters will involve a large

number of migrants in a short and unpredicted time to refugees flows around the cities. The lack of infrastructure and planning schemes for accommodating farmers into this new situation is a constant and it needs the regional cooperation in strengthening the village quality of life.

Water Resources and Changing Crops

Climate Change is likely to generate a deep contrast between the arid and tropical areas. The reduction of seasonal rainfalls and the uncontrolled increase of floods will eventually affect the water control among farmers.

On the other hand, it is foreseen that the Himalaya glacier will vanish by 2035 and the rivers water volume will flood numerous crops mainly in India and Nepal. Floods will terminate with the cultivation of rice, essential for the Asian diet, and it will erode soil's fertility for other crops. Other rivers will see the contrary effect and they will dry up and become seasonal, for instance the Ganga and Brahmaputra Rivers.

Southern Asian monsoons which are main part of the agriculture water resource will grow in intensity and become less frequent. This will

damage some areas by destroying crops due to the rainfall strength while in other areas the damage will be its scarce frequency.

Sureshu, 34, farmer in Sultanpur Chilkana, Uttar Pradesh has pointed out that the main obstacle for the crops this year is the water resources. Uttar Pradesh is a natural gifted region with water; however, the recent scarcity of water has moved farmers to seek alternative means of income source such as stitching.



Uttar Pradesh Farmers attending self-help groups under DISHA, a non profit organization that aims to empower small scale farmers.

Source: Lenka Valacsaiova/ SANSAD 2009

Changes in Biodiversity in a Fragile Ecosystem

Agricultural biodiversity provides a number of benefits within production systems. These include benefits associated with production and

productivity, agro-ecosystem function, and human well-being. The 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment estimated that by the end of this century, climate change will be the main driver of biodiversity loss.

It is therefore very likely that climate change will affect the ecosystem services. This impact will be different for the different components of agricultural biodiversity.

There will be mismatches in response times to climate change between interacting species. This will lead to the loss of functional biodiversity and pollination as well as the capacity of nutrient cycling.

Temperature and Crops productivity

The rise of temperatures is affecting the production of non irrigated land that suffers from the increasing climate dryness.

Heat-related mortality derived by the greater diseases such as dengue and malaria, cyclones and floods will be intensified and eventually there will be an increase in the mortality rate among agriculture workers.

Environmental Refugees

Those farmers who migrated because of climate change reasons are considered to be “environmental refugees”. Consequently, this new trend in migration reduces the availability of jobs and incomes. UN University's Koko Warner estimated 24 million environmental refugees or eco-migrants in 2008, including 12 million to 17 million Bangladeshis and four million Filipinos who have moved over the past several decades from low-lying areas for environmental reasons within their countries.

In rural areas male out migration involved an increasing feminization and devaluation of agriculture. Environmental refugees seek job opportunities in nearby the city industries while spouses tend to remain in care of the abandoned lands.

In Pakistan, the key reason for migration to urban areas has been the limited opportunity for economic advancement and mobility in rural areas. The economic and political control that local landlords exercise in much of the countryside has led to this situation.

The urban migrant is almost invariably a male. He retains his ties with his village and his rights there are acknowledged long after his

departure. Even married migrants usually leave their families in the village when they first migrate. The decision to bring wife and children to the city is thus a milestone in the migration process.

Among the push and pull factors that have contributed in the recent village migration trend is the decline of the per capita share in agriculture land and the exhaustion of natural resources. Therefore it is essential to develop a sustainable farming that protects the quality of both crops and soil.

When Ukanana Suman, 27, was asked on whether she would move to the city for seeking better opportunities for her and her family, the answer was immediate: “I would go to the city if I could”. Even though Ukanana has all her children in school and satisfactory income from farming, the city is still seen as the best future for the next generations.

The city growth has pushed farmer’s decisions in leaving the village at the declining availability of natural resources.

Sustainable Land Management

To control the Climate Change impact on the increasing village migration, Professor Michael Stocking, University of East Anglia, Norwich,

UK has suggested in Global Synergies the concept of Sustainable Land Management.



Villager working while students arrive from schools in Sultanpur Chilkana, Uttar Pradesh.

Source: Lenka Valacsaiova/ SANSAD 2009

The global benefits of SLM include conservation of biodiversity, control of climate change and progress towards the Millennium Development Goals for human development and poverty alleviation.

For instance, the participatory compost experiment in Nepal that proved to be successful to solve solid waste problems as well as responding the market demand.

In achieving this global synergy, Mr. Stocking proposes to find cooperation with other focal areas, to relate SLM to global development agendas and to identify practical interventions to provide the necessary technology, soil quality and enhance production.

News from South Asia

Mapping development in South Asia

SAARC Development Goals, a report by South Asian Network for Agricultural and Social Development assesses the progress of South Asian countries, taking MDG targets as the benchmark. Providing a comparative analysis, the document serves a reference point to frame adequate policy responses.

Publisher: South Asian Network for Agricultural & Social Development (SANSAD)

Going by official data, the progress on health milestones in Nepal and Bangladesh, and income poverty in India, have been unprecedented. Driven by high rates of GDP and a buoyant global economy, the overarching goal of reducing poverty by half is well within reach of South Asia as a whole.

But in sharp contrast, the stark and growing inequalities and low levels of human development in the South Asia have revived a vivid debate on growth and the balance between wealth creation and redistribution.

The 13th SAARC Summit held in Bangladesh in January 2006, adopted the SAARC Development Goals (SDGs) for the period of five years from 2007-12. Taking into

consideration both the South Asian context and specificities and the relevant linkages with international goals such as the MDGs, the SDGs include 22 priority goals for the period 2007-2012, eight of which pertain to livelihood, four to health, four to education and six to the environment. Progress towards achieving these specific SDGs will also effectively determine the success the countries will have in combating poverty in the region.

As a part of this study, systematic cross-country views and the detailed analysis of latest data sets have been used a reference point. This will help countries to contrast their performances with those of others and make necessary adjustments in their approach to bridge the gap in developmental deficits.

The report provides a rich sketch of progress of SAARC countries on health, education and literacy, child and maternal mortality, attempts towards reduction of poverty, improving access to safe sources of water and sanitation, gender parity and women's empowerment as reflected in the trend values of indicators for the targets envisaged in SDGs.

<http://southasia.oneworld.net/resources/mapping-development-across-south-asia>

Price rise cut the pulse consumption

Due to spiralling prices, in 2009 the pulse use fall to less than 11 kg, according to the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Assocham).

"The reason was that no serious attention was paid to increase pulses production," the chamber said. Now with prices more than doubling in the last one year, pulses have become not reachable for the common people. Assocham, secretary general D.S. Rawat said: "While the pulses availability reflect a compound annual growth rate of 1.39 % for the last two decades, the population has increased more than 1.8 %."

The imports of pulses grew from nearly 173,000 thousand tonnes in 1980-81 to 226,000 thousand tonnes in 2006-07, due to the 0 % import tariff rates. India imports from Canada, Myanmar, Australia and the US.

http://www.aussieindolanka.com/news/india/business_finance/?newsid=70878&NewsDate=

A common stand on climate change

On 28th July, Bhutan and India discussed developing crops resistant to climate change, to keep agriculture apace with the treat of global warming.

Shyam Saran, the Indian prime minister's special envoy on climate change, said: "Bhutan and India share the Himalayas and

have the same reports on melting glaciers and lake formations that could seriously impact on agriculture and food security.

"We already experience untimely rainfall, flooding and drought because of rising temperature, which will have a great impact in the future," he said. Moreover, Bhutan depends on Indian's food items, particularly rice, so Bhutan might be affected as well.

The focus of the meeting was on constructing a global agreement to bring about a major reduction in greenhouse gas emission, which is seen as the main cause for global warming.

He said, Bhutan and India must first understand what was happening in the region and how to tackle the problems.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=13095>

Developing sustainable livelihoods

IUCN's Systematic approaches to livelihoods enhancement and diversification: A review of global experiences advocates effective integration of livelihoods. It says that cooperation among the agencies and communities is critical in achieving sustainable development.

The coastal inhabitants dependent on the marine resources often have to bear an excessive share of the responsibility for the external results that kept them in poverty, excluded them from policy making, changed access rights and invested.

Amongst development agencies working in coastal communities, there is a growing recognition of the need to integrate livelihood change processes and resource measures. They realize that integration must be more than simply appending social development to resource management initiatives.

<http://southasia.oneworld.net/resources/developing-sustainable-livelihoods>

Food Security Bill: No consensus yet on how to measure poverty

Planning Commission member Abhjit Sen argues that evaluation of poverty must be done on the basis of income rather than calorie intake. Despite the ruling United Progressive Alliance's commitment to bringing in a National Food Security Bill, government has failed to agree the actual number of poor.

Union Planning Commission member Abhjit Sen reasoned that if one factored in a calorie intake of 2,400 for rural and 2,100 for urban areas, then 80% of rural India and 64% of urban India would be below the poverty line.

“Thanks to the faulty criteria, even marginalised sections such as tribals and scheduled castes are denied the benefits of a BPL card because they own some land, or send their children to school. The legal exclusion of the poor from the system is a major assault on their right to food security,” AIDWA said.

A National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) study pointed out that the inclusion error was up to 25%, as the number of BPL cards issued was 9.7 crore, compared to 5.8 crore existing in the BPL category.

“The statistics emerge that only 49.1% of the poorest quintile possesses BPL cards,” said the committee chaired by NC Saxena in its report.

<http://infochangeindia.org/200907147831/Poverty/News/Food-Security-Bill-No-consensus-yet-on-how-to-measure-poverty.html>

Warning mobile messages at disasters

Texting short messages through mobile phones could help in early warning of natural disasters in the Maldives. The technology, cell broadcasting, helps to deliver messages simultaneously to multiple users in a specified area.

"In the case of the Maldives, if an early warning is introduced, it must be able to reach all of the outlying islands including tourists on resorts. With mobile phones quite ubiquitous, it may be an ideal time to introduce an emerging technology for public early warning," says the report, 'Mobile Cell Broadcasting for Commercial Use and Public Warning in the Maldives'.

It was prepared by LIRNEasia, a regional telecom policy and regulation think tank with expertise in disaster early warning, with support from the International Development Research Centre of Canada and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom.

Natasha Udu-gama, project manager at LIRNEAsia, told SciDev.Net that a pilot project to test the system is being considered.

The 1,192 islands of the Maldives are prone to a number of hazards, tsunamis, earthquakes, flash floods, thunderstorms, tornadoes and waterspouts, strong winds, and drought.

Similar plans for cell broadcasting already exist in Bangladesh and the Netherlands. In Sri Lanka has been the early warning system with cell broadcasting in place for two years.

<http://www.scidev.net/en/south-asia/news/mobile-messages-could-aid-early-warning-in-the-mal.html>

India could face drought if monsoon remains weak

Sowing has been massively affected for the kharif season. Although the rains have now covered all of the country, the meteorologists say that, as of July 1, rainfall has been 29% below normal.

Paddy has been hit the worst, sowing is down to 38 lakh hectares from an average of 51 lakh hectares this time of year.

When it comes to coarse grains, the situation is equally bad. At least 56 lakh hectares of land should have been sown. Instead, only 26.60 lakh hectares have been covered so far.

“This is due to lower water levels, delayed monsoon and an acute shortage of electricity,” said an official in the agriculture ministry.

According to the meteorological department, some rain and thundershowers can appear over the next few weeks, but they won't be heavy.

“The opportunity for planting most kharif crops (rice, coarse grains, soybeans, peanut, cotton and pulses) will be over by mid-July. If rains come soon, planting operations will pick up. Otherwise, the country could be heading for a severe drought,” says a report by the United States Department of Agriculture attaché in New Delhi.

<http://infochangeindia.org/200907107827/Agriculture/News/India-could-face-drought-if-monsoon-remains-weak.html>

India: Government will use its might to contain food inflation

Faced with overflowing granaries and rising commodity prices, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, said the government will do "everything possible" to put the lid on food inflation.

Central agencies like Food Corporation of India have buffer stocks of over 50 million tonnes of grain. Prime Minister notified that the government godowns were full with grain and that it would aim to avoid food inflation.

Prices of essential commodities like pulses, sugar and vegetables have skyrocketed in the past few months. The Prime Minister informed that the government was gearing up the public distribution to allay the impact of deficient rains.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/govt-will-use-its-might-to-contain-food-inflation/500750/>

Organic bacteria to control dengue

The Industrial Technology Institute of Sri Lanka introduced *Bacillus Thuriengensis* bacteria which is capable of destroying dengue, filaria and malaria mosquito larvae.

This environment-friendly and organic bacteria was developed by utilising 100 percent local expertise. It is a co-product by the ITI and Bio Power Lanka company.

According to the official of the Plant Research and Technology Unit of the ITI, Dr. Radhika Samarasekera, the pesticide composed of BT would target malaria, dengue and filaria larvae and the institute is in the process of developing the bacteria cultivation method.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/07/24/news31.asp>

\$19 Million for Reforestation Project

Bangladesh will be paid a donation of \$19 million for the reforestation of a wildlife sanctuary under a climate change mitigation project from the United States and Germany.

The funds will be used for the reforestation of Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, a major corridor for the movement of Asian elephants and home to an scarce timber species under threat.

Under the project, to be implemented over the next four years, trees will be planted to help restore 2,000 hectares of forest land and to decrease carbon emissions in the region.

The project will help restore the severely degraded sanctuary, raise awareness through public education, and create alternative income opportunities for over 125,000 people who live in communities in and around Chunati.

<http://planetark.org/wen/54215>

Sri Lanka refugee camps 'flooded'

Heavy rains in northern Sri Lanka continue to cause suffering at the vast government-run camps where internally displaced people are held. Heavy and sudden showers have caused havoc at the main complex of refugee camps at Manik Farm, home to some 230,000 people.

The UN humanitarian affairs office says one zone is under the water and in another is water polluted with sewage and soakage pits have collapsed.

The government is limiting access to the camps by aid agencies, journalists and other outsiders. So far this process has been going slowly, with the government insisting it has to screen all refugees for possible links to the Tamil Tiger (LTTE) rebels. Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa was quoted as saying that "LTTE terrorists masquerading as civilians" could resume attacks if released from the camps.

But opposition leader Ranil Wickramasinghe said the conditions in the camps were worsening - and so too was Sri Lanka's reputation as a result.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8206290.stm

SANSAD Previous Activities (July, 2009):

- SANSAD organized a meeting with Mr. Aksel Naerstad, the International Coordinator of More and Better from Oslo, Norway on July 28th, 2009 about the extreme situation of the current hunger and malnutrition among Indian farmers. Mr. Aksel Naerstad is in charge of International Planning Committee preparing food sovereignty draft which is going to meet on 14th October, 2009 at FAO head quarter in Rome.
- Publication of Book “SAARC Development Goals: Commitments and Achievements” on 30th July, 2009: In the last month, SANSAD published a book on Book release function of “SAARC Development Goals: Commitments and Achievements”, which is an attempt to highlight the slow progress of major South Asian countries in achieving the targets as inscribed in the SAARC Development Goals. The report documents that SAARC countries, including India, will not achieve the target of halving the poverty ratio and eradication of hunger in 2007.
- SANSAD organised a meeting on Commitments and achievements of SAARC on July 30th 2009 in India International Centre, new Delhi. Experts reviewed major commitments made by Heads of States of all south Asian Countries during different SAARC Summits and where they have reached so far. Discussion was centred around save of the commitments such as for setting up of SAARC Development Fund, South Asian Food Bank and SAARC University.
- A capacity building on South Asia climate change was organized by Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSA) in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 6th to 9th July, 2009, in which Mr. Anil K. Singh, SANSAD Secretary General participated.
- On 15th and 16th July, 2009 a national level constellation was organized by CANSA and OXFAM in New Delhi, India where SANSAD made a presentation on what SANSAD is doing and planning to do in the future related to climate change.
- A meeting about Climate Change was organized by Gene CAMPAIGN, Cecoedecon, IDS & FTN Campaign on 29th July, 2009 in which SANSAD participated.

SANSAD Upcoming Events (August 2009):

- SANSAD is planning to publish a paper “Deepening of democracy for development effectiveness in India: The Role of CSOs and the poor.” with IBON MANILA, Philippines.
- South Asia Peace Alliance has high requested SANSAD to meet students from Germany coming to India for one month and brief them about voluntary movement in India.

Book Review:

“BASICS OF ORGANIC FARMING”

by W. R. Deshpande

Published by ALL INDIA BIODYNAMIC

AND ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION, INDORE, M.P. 2009



India outspread in a large wide area with a diverse climate, vegetation, animals, soil or crops. The great heritage of plurality in languages and local dialects reflect to the impressive ancient period from 3500 BC to 712 AD, when the first Vedic culture was born in this subregion. The early civilization settled on the banks of rivers and was dominated by domestication of sheep and goats and a nomadic life in search of food. The process of agricultural development lifted the early ancestors from the hunters and gatherers to the top of the food pyramid. Most of the first steps in agricultural progress we find out in the ancient saints' Sanskrit language.

The publication accompany the readers through the path of the agricultural development from the early beginnings, to the recent impacts of synthetic chemicals since the 1950 and also establishes some relevant questions and advises, how to proceed in the future. The early agriculture was focused on ecological considerations, the practices were developed on autochthonic knowledge, experience, religious behaviour and community consciousness. The main points of the ancient agriculture consisted of mixed farm and crop to ensure a diverse yield, field rotations and cattle manure. The knowledge of the synthetic fertilizers and pesticides were unfamiliar to the Indian farmers until the end of the Second World War. The new ways of farming brought several agricultural government programmes increasing productivity on the one hand but caused numerous ecological erosions to the natural resources of the country on the other hand. Disproportionate apply of synthetic chemicals polluted the environment, adversely affected the health of humans and animals, increased the cost of production and forced farmers to obtain loans. With the modern methods of animal breeding has appeared also animal cruelty and unethical procedures of rearing.

The writer, Mr. Deshpande, brings solution in the Section II *Sustainable farming system*. He emphasize that the organic farming is an integrated system, based on conservation of natural resources, acceptance of soil as a living system and human being as a quality resource. This includes integration of crops, trees and livestock to recycle and reuse plant residue and animal waste for maintaining soil fertility and soil health. The farming system is based on integration of crops, animals, trees and various agronomic practices, planting material and nutrient plan which are based on protection and strengthening the plants against susceptibility to pest and taking the pests under control by botanical, microbial, bio engineered, fungal and viral pesticides. The livestock system is based on reproduction, feeding, management and veterinary medicines.

The author highlights in the Chapter 6 *Organic Food – Health, Safety and Trade* that organic food is naturally free from debasement and contamination and is therefore good for health. Further he analyses food and population are two sides of the same coin. At the beginnings of agriculture, the total world populations was around ten million, now it has reached to five billion and leading to extend to 10 billion in the near future. Population growth is not only the simply difference between the natality and mortality significantly affected by enhanced adult longevity. To maintain long term food security needs are production on sustainable basis, distribution through decentralized system and easy access to food through effective purchasing power. Whilst all intensive agricultural programmes could increase the food production to 212 million tons in 2001, the future demand is estimated to 260 tons by 2030. Mr. Deshpande is convinced, one of the important areas of increasing good production is replacing traditional plant breeding methods by organic methods.

In conclusion, this publication brings an exceptional first view to the organic farming for those interested in natural agriculture and healthy life. It clarifies in a simply way to common Indian farmers and the beginners all the agricultural issues and the necessity of organic farming.