

Global Food and Availability or Hunger and Accessibility?

The interlinkages and dependency of the factors of Supply, Distribution and Consumption in the Land/Food issue continue to fuel the argument regarding the a priori factor in accounting for the widespread prevalence of global hunger, writes Raana Haider from Cairo.

"FAMINE is like inna bi-ly hard to define, but by glaring enough when recognised."

Taylor, quoted in 'The famine syndrome: its definition for relief and rehabilitation in Bangladesh', B. Curry in Famine: Its Causes, Effects and Management, B. Robson, Gordon and Breach, New York, 1981.

In a world of potential food plenty, we have collectively failed more than one billion of our people."

Bellagio Declaration on Overcoming Hunger in the 1990s.

The interlinkages and dependency of the factors of Supply, Distribution and Consumption in the Land/Food issue continue to fuel the argument regarding the a priori factor in accounting for the widespread prevalence of global hunger.

Food Security has been defined by the World Bank as "the access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. The key elements are the availability of food and the ability to acquire it."

According to the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), nearly 800 million people in developing countries suffer from chronic malnutrition, including 200 million children under the age of 5 who suffer from a lack of protein and energy.

At the same time, the amount of foreign aid, both bilateral and multilateral given to poor countries for agricultural subsidies has decreased significantly from \$10 billion in 1982 to \$7.2 billion in 1992.

Further, the widespread destruction of marine resources and forest cover has reduced the share of the individual in arable farm land to .25 hectares. Land whether it is inherited, allotted, purchased or seized, is the most basic resource of agricultural production.

Global population is estimated to reach 8.7 billion people by the year 2030. The current population is estimated at 5.7 billion. In such a scenario, the number of people who suffer from chronic malnutrition will increase to 730 million by 2010, including some 300 million in

Sub-Saharan Africa alone. James G. Speth, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in a lecture on Food Security, Environment and Poverty in Bangladesh in 1994, highlighted the global dimensions of the problem by noting that: most hunger - 85 to 90 per cent - arises from silent poverty; only 10-15 per cent stems from famine and similar emergencies and that some one billion people - 20 per cent of the global population - live in households too poor to obtain the food necessary for sustaining normal work.

The various intensities of hunger range, singularly or in combination, from malnourishment to undernourishment to starvation and death. Malnutrition, state M Biswas and P Pinstrup-Andersen (eds.) in Nutrition and Development, Oxford University Press, New York, 1985, is the "insufficient intake of calories and protein caused primarily by the inability of low income households or individuals to acquire food at a given point in time and not by an absolute scarcity of food in the market. Only households with adequate income can meet their nutritional needs."

In Environment, by PH Raven, LR Berg and GB Johnson, Saunders College Publish-

Walker in Famine Early Warning Systems: Victims and Destitution, Earthscan, London, 1989, in other words, food deprivation in its extremest form is a problem of destitution, not just starvation and a discontinuation of 'normal' processes and not the result of any one event. The famine that killed in Sudan and Somalia is one kind of a famine. In this context, death is the finality but before that lies a long process of deprivation. This destitution or victim of the climate of poverty implies a vulnerability, a predisposition to weakening forces, processes and not simply singular events.

The essence of the argument has been captured by R V Garcia in Nature Pleads Not Guilty, Drought and Man, Vol. 1, Pergamon Press, New York, 1981. Fifteen years later, his argument that the critical food global situation is "a result of increasing fragility due to the action of socio-economic factors which increase their structural vulnerability," still holds. We are predisposed to attribute external factors, such as climate, population pressure and environmental problems. The emphasis is on the production/population ratio or on the misuse of the soil... even when the emphasis is shifted from production to distribution of food, the analysis remains

food. Some of these net exporters of food grain are host to large numbers of nutritionally deficient people. The widespread low level of nutrition in any number of countries in the South is not the result of these countries not producing sufficient food for the needs of its population, since the "surplus" is exported, but the direct result of the structure of production, distribution and trade," states Garcia (1981).

In such a situation exists the 'duality' of the agrarian system. On the one hand, the agrarian economy has to produce cash crops for export and foreign currency exchange earnings. On the other hand, the same agricultural base has to produce food for domestic consumption. The former requirement has come to demand quality land and subsistence agriculture has to settle for marginal land. The fruits of modernisation; mechanisation of agriculture and technological innovations have gone to cash crop production. Human muscle power continues to be the backbone of the subsistence sector of agricultural production.

According to (Garcia, 1981), "the modern agricultural subsystem is oriented towards exports and production of more sophisticated food for the urban elite and the 'traditional' - the 'poor' one - carries the burden

In an effort to break the inheritance of hunger pattern - the generational process of malnourishment, it is urgent to recognise that the foremost need is to provide purchasing power. This is a curative and long term solution rather than a piecemeal preventive shot term measure.

ing, 1993; they note that the average adult human must consume enough food to get approximately 2600 kilocalories per day (3000 kcal. per day for the average male and 2200 kcal per day for the average female.) Any consumption of less than the required kcal per day will result in undernourishment in any lengthy period of time and even death.

However, the total number of calories consumed is not the only measure of good nutrition. One can receive enough calories yet be malnourished if one is not consuming enough of specific, essential nutrients, such as proteins and vitamins.

Contrary to popular thinking, malnourishment is not a condition only prevalent among children in developing countries. Any human condition in which normal activity, work performance, adequate growth or recovery from illness, disease and the process of pregnancy and lactation is affected is a key indicator of malnourishment. And malnourishment, is an accurate indicator of the culture of poverty.

Food insecurity, in its severest form - famine - has been defined as "a socio-economic process which causes the accelerated destitution of the most vulnerable, marginal and least powerful groups in a community, to a point where they can no longer, as a group, maintain a sustainable livelihood." P

superficial as long as the distribution problems are taken to be those associated with transport and storage. Instead of those related to the accessibility of the food. The actual problem is the distribution of the means which make the food accessible to people. This has much more to do with the structure of property, employment and incomes than with transport. The food crisis is not the result of natural disasters, bad harvest years, or crop failures. The food crisis is the result of longer term process of marginalisation and destitution of hunger and malnourishment.

Amartya Sen in The Food Problem: theory and policy, Third World Quarterly, 4 (3), July 1982 identifies two sets of approaches to the 'food problem'. 'One group emphasises the natural sciences and engineering, and relates the food issue to technological issues of various kinds. The other group concentrates on social issues, including political economy and sees the food problem primarily in social terms. At the risk of oversimplification, the two classes of approach may be called 'nature focused' and 'society focused', respectively.

A frequently cited argument is that countries are running a losing battle in food production vis a vis the burgeoning population and thus, any crop failure will deplete limited reserve food stocks. However, many developing countries are now exporting

of the industrialisation process... support of the State, in the form of credits and investments, goes only to the former... thus the coexistence of the two subsystems and in particular, the permanence of the 'traditional' one is not due to the 'backwardness' of the population involved in it, but to the effect of State policies."

This argument is also valid for any analysis of the gender factor in agricultural production. Men are appointed as the agents and channels in the process of production and distribution of the surplus and resources which increase productivity and income. Credit, agricultural extension programmes, training sessions, the input of pesticides and herbicides, irrigation schemes and other innovations are much the purview of male farm workers. Women farm labourers frequently engage in subsistence farming for family consumption as unpaid family labourers without the benefit of cash returns or the benefit of technological innovations.

Easter Boserup argues that even the use of animals for land preparation and transport is always a male monopoly. Men perform the operation for which animals are employed, while women and children perform some or all of the tasks for which only human muscle power is used. (Easter Boserup, Population, the Status of

Women and Rural Development", in Rural Development and Population Institutions and Policy, G McNicol and M Cain (eds.), Population Council and Oxford University Press, New York, 1990).

Global economic liberalisation, in the form of the 'new face of capitalism' has forced more and more people below the poverty line. In Latin America alone, since the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) were implanted in the early 1980s, the number of people below the poverty line has increased from 130 million to 180 million. According to the President of the Inter-American Development Bank, implementation of SAP has in many cases, caused loss of the many social and economic gains achieved in the 1960s and 1970s. Class polarization has intensified with a twentyfold income differential between the richest and the poorest 20 per cent. Such a scenario is replicated in countries through out the world.

Worldwide, in 1991, countries with the poorest 20 per cent of the world's population enjoyed only 3.6 percent of the world income (down from 4.9 per cent in 1960), while the richest fifth enjoyed almost 64 per cent of world income. The disturbing picture of a highly skewed distribution of national income has manifested in the few rich growing richer and the masses of the poor getting poorer.

Development in the 1990s has created winners and losers by generating wealth for some and impoverishment for others. While the winners accumulate land, assets and power; the losers (such as peasants and pastoralists) are pushed onto less productive land. During crises, they are forced to trading their already meagre resources, in the form of land rights, labour power, and assets to the wealthy on unfavourable terms," remarks S Devereux in Theories of Famine, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hertfordshire, England, 1993. In this process, the 'two worlds' are thrown further apart, one in particular, increasingly marginalised. In such a global scenario, today's modern development is reinforcing inequality and not mitigating it.

In an effort to break the inheritance of hunger pattern - the generational process of malnourishment, it is urgent to recognise that the foremost need is to provide purchasing power. This is a curative and long term solution rather than a piecemeal preventive shot term measure. For this reason, cash for work is a better means to reduce poverty than food for work, since the 'similar' cash aid is required more than food aid.

Adequate food production is a necessary but not sufficient condition for adequate nutrition. Availability does not ensure accessibility. This expression is vividly borne out in the area of food security. The common bond of malnourished people is poverty. Mohammed Yunus, Managing Director of Grameen Bank, Bangladesh remarks, "non-availability of food does not mean that food is scarce in the market; we say it because I don't have the money to buy it. The most important factor is the buying ability, not the scarcity or abundance of supply of food items. And, this is what the poverty story is all about."

We are talking about - food, food, everywhere, but not a bit to eat anywhere.

WETLANDS

Bogged Down by Progress

Tropical rainforests get all the headlines, but as Pamosh Dhar reports from Hong Kong for Inter Press Service, the world's mangroves are disappearing at a much faster rate.



In the Malaysian state of Pahang, a 2,000 hectare eel farm cleared mangroves to expand ponds. Villagers nearby suffered water shortages and declining fish catch offshore.

In Bangladesh, businessmen have encroached on mangrove swamps and converted valuable paddy fields in the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta to cultivate shrimps for export. Seepage of salt water has destroyed crops, and the destruction of mangroves where fish breed has decimated fisheries.

Four years after the Earth Summit and 25 years after a special international convention to protect them, the world's endangered wetlands are on the brink of being wiped out.

Shrimp cultivation for export, real estate development, pollution and conversion to farmlands have destroyed mangroves, swamps and wetlands across the world, many say irreversibly.

Often found on coastlines, along river banks or estuaries, wetlands are fragile eco-systems much more vulnerable to human interference than rainforests or grasslands.

But they form a vital link in the food chain of fish, serve as habitat for many rare birds, mammals and plants and also function as a natural flood control mechanism.

But many degraded wetlands that the Ramsar Wetlands Convention 25 years ago designated as worth saving have been degraded further, while others have vanished completely.

Specialists of wetlands ecosystems, government officials and environment protection groups met in Brisbane last month to discuss a strategic plan to save what is left before it is too late.

The Strategic Plan for 1997-2002 will integrate wetland conservation with other environmental issues and help local people and villagers take the initiative to protect their wetlands.

The Ramsar Convention, named after the venue of the first global wetlands meeting in Iran 25 years ago, is no longer just a "bird conservation" treaty, WWF spokesman Sameswar Singh says. "It is on its way to becoming a much broader-based wetland conservation convention."

Wetlands are permanently or seasonally covered by water and are home to animals and plants which thrive on the wet conditions. They also provide drinking water, are suitable for some kinds of agricultural production and serve as important nurseries for fish.

Of added importance to local communities is the fact that wetlands often serve as a form of flood control by absorbing excess water during rainy seasons.

Every government which is a signatory to the Ramsar Convention is thus required to designate at least one such site to preservation. In Hong Kong, the Mai Po Marshes was only designated in 1995.

Both Britain, Hong Kong's present colonial power and China under whose rule the colony will revert to in 1997, are signatories to the Ramsar Convention and this has given environmentalists some hope for the future.

The main gripe of green groups is that ecological conservation has always run a far second to economic development in East Asia, and has resulted in major destruction to marshlands in the region.

Mai Po represents in a microcosm what is happening across East Asia: the wetlands are threatened by frenetic construction activity on the Chinese side, as well as by reclamation of the shoreline by the Hong Kong administration.

On both sides, water pollution from factory waste, farming and domestic sewage are all contributing to the demise of the wetlands.

Green groups hope that by increasing awareness of the importance of the marshes, by arranging school tours to the area, they can bring pressure on the authorities to protect wet-

lands. Worldwide, there are now 700 designated protected wetland sites. But many that became protected zones after the signing of the Ramsar Convention were already on the decline, and the WWF has reported little improvement in their existing conditions.

Since the turn of the century, Europe has lost two-thirds of its wetlands, including marshes, rivers and lakes. In the United States, more than half the wetlands have disappeared.

Many river experts blame the devastating floods on the Mississippi two years ago to the steady removal of wetlands along the river which deprived the river of a natural spill-over area.

Environmental groups say governments often regard wetlands as wasteland, and are the first to be filled over for real estate or industrial development.

"Most developing countries are in danger of following a disastrous course similar to the United States and Europe unless a concerted effort is made now to change direction," Singh says.

Unsustainable development practices have made wetlands fall prey to landfilling, water diversion, expansion of agriculture and in many cases, conflicts between park managers and local people.

At the Brisbane meeting, WWF urged member countries to the convention to adopt national policies to implement resolutions passed at international meetings.

Other recommendations included a call for letting local communities to help manage their wetlands, and for increases in contributions to a Wetland Conservation Fund.

Developing countries benefit from grants from the Fund to promote their wetland conservation programmes. The money comes from contributions from member countries and international development organisations.

Sunday 10th November

(All programmes are in local time. There may be changes in the programmes.)

BTV

3:00 Opening Announcement
Al-Quran Programme Summary
3:10 Sangeed 3:15 Song 3:20
Recitation from the Bible 3:25
Cartoon: Woody Woodpecker
3:50 Weekly Drama 4:50
Marami 5:00 News in Bangla
5:25 Sports Programme
6:00pm News in Bangla 6:30
Maader Jannyo 6:50 Open
University 7:00 The News 7:25
Barta Probaho 8:00 News in
Bangla 8:25 Parliamentary
News 9:00 Film Series: Akbar
The Great 10:00 News in
English 10:30 Parliamentary
News 11:00 Unnayan: Sangeed
11:30 News in Bangla 11:35
Monday's programme 11:40
Close down

BBC

6:00am BBC World News 6:30
India Business Report 7:00
BBC World News 7:25 This
Week 8:00 BBC World News
8:30 India Business Report
9:00 BBC World News 9:25
This Week 10:00 BBC World
Headlines 10:05 World Focus
Horizon 11:00 BBC World News
11:25 India Business Report
12:00noon BBC World News
12:20 Earth Report 1:00 BBC
World News 1:20 This Week
2:00 BBC World Headlines 2:05
World Focus : BBC Global
Report 3:00 BBC World News
3:30 Time Out: Floyd's American
Pie 4:00 BBC World Headlines
4:05 World Focus : Heart Of
The Matter 5:00 BBC World
News 5:20 Window On Europe
6:00pm BBC World Headlines
6:05 World Focus : Around
The World In 80 Days 7:00
BBC World Headlines 7:05
Breakfast With Frost 8:00 BBC
World News 8:30 Time Out:
Holiday 9:00 BBC World
Headlines 9:05 World Focus:
Horizon 10:00 BBC World News
10:20 Earth Report 10:30 Time
Out: Film 96 11:00 BBC World
News 11:30 Time Out: Jeremy

Clarkson's Motorworld 12:00mn

BBC World News 12:20 On The
Record 1:00 BBC World News
1:20 Window On Europe 2:00
BBC World Headlines 2:05
World Focus: Wheelie On
America 2:30 BBC World News
3:30 Time Out Tomorrow's
World 4:00 BBC World Report
inc World Business Report 24
Hours

CHANNEL V

6:00am Frame by Frame 7:00
Rewind VJ Sophia 8:00 Frame
by Frame 9:00 Big Bang
Weekend 10:30 Soul Curry
11:00 BPL Oye! 12:00 Mangla
Hai 12:30 First Day First Show
1:00 Rewind VJ Sophia 1:30
Speak Easy 2:00 Videocan
Flashback 3:00 Asian Top 20
VJ Trey 5:00 The Vibe
Weekend VJ Luke 7:00
Fashion Police 8:00 The Indian
Top 10 9:00 Launch Pad VJ
Sophia 10:00 Awards Special
VJ Ruby 10:30 House Of Noise
11:00 Rewind VJ Sophia
12:00 Big Bang VJ Alessandra
1:00 The Ride VJ Trey 2:00 By
Demand VJ Trey 3:00 Big Bang
VJ Alessandra

STAR PLUS

6:30 Voltorn 7:00 Aerobics Oz
Style 7:30 Aaah 8:30 Tara
Rum Rum 9:30 Chandrakanta
10:30 Tu Tu Man Man 11:00
Kalaidesco 11:30 Amul India
Show 12:00 The Road Show
12:30 India Business Week
1:30 Star Trak 2:30 Hindi
Classic Film Madhurai 6:00
Chattras Angers 6:30 Batman
7:00 The Simpsons 8:00 The
Adams Family 8:30 Lifetime 9:00
Reporter 9:30 Countdown Plus
10:30 Star Week 11:30
Dynasty 12:30 India Business
Week 1:30 Amul India Show
2:00 BBC Documentary 'All Our
Children' 3:00 Movie Classic:
The Outlaw 5:00 Theaters

STAR SPORTS

6:30am Live NBA Game Of The
Week Washington 9:00 World
Wrestling Federation Blast Off
10:30 Asia Sports Show 10:30



VJ Sophia On Channel V Today at 7:00 AM

Futbol Mundial 11:00 Live
Singer Champions Trophy '96
New Zealand vs Pakistan 2:30
Sports India 3:00 Live Singer
Champions Trophy '96 New
Zealand vs Pakistan 7:00 Golf
Cup Match II Teams 7:30 Golf
Prime Boxing 10:30 History of
the Macau Grand Prix 12:00
NBA Game Of The Week
Washington 1:30 Asian Classic
Snooker H/Ls 2:30 Golf Cup
Match II Oman vs UAE 4:00
Zilete World Spot Special

STAR MOVIES

7:30am Adventure: The Count of
Monte Cristo (Hindi Subtitles)
9:30 Comedy: Father and
Scout 15 (Hindi Subtitles) 11:30
Family: Andy Cobby's Incredibly
Awesome Adventure? (Arabic
Subtitles)

Bhajans 7:30 Maa 8:00

Mithological Hindi Film 10:00
Aap Ki Adalat 11:30 Siyaram
Cine Magic 11:30 Lakme
Khoobsurat 12:00 Beep Ke PG
12:30 Bourvita Quiz Contest
10:00 Namaste India 1:30 Asian
Siv Shop 2:30 English News
Ghar Aap Ka 5:30 Inaght
6:00 Colgate Gel Toodle Yo
7:00 Gane Anjane 7:30 Ad
Mad Show 8:00 Casper Kya
Scene Hai 8:30 Suno Suno
Tring Tring 9:00 Nirma Aahaa
9:30 9 Malabar Hill 10:00 The
Zee Horror Show 10:35 News
11:00 Index 11:30 Philips Top
Ten 12:30 Gopaljee 1:00 Mr
Mintoo 1:30 Umeed 2:00 Zee
Arabia 2:30 Zee Arabia
Intertainment TMM 5:30 Zee
Arabia Intertainment TMM

EL TV

6:30 Hasnate Hasnate 7:30
Ajeesha Dashtan 8:30 Froody It's
Aot's Choice 9:00 Ru-Bi-Ru
9:30 Fat Qor Fa 10:00 FAUJI
10:30 Song Yatra 11:00 Sorry
Men Lorry 12:30 Liberty Public
Demand 12:30 Casper
Number-1 1:00 Chehre 1:30
Moov Usha Uthup Show 2:00
Amar Prem 2:30 Money Game
3:00 Puroshchitra 4:00 Zandu
Balm Dance Mania 4:30 Hi Hi
Hi Hi 5:00 Peoples Club 5:30
Hee Hee Ha Ha 6:00 Hafta
Hafta 6:30 Dear EL 7:00 Yah
Dunya 7:30 Kai Bhi Aaj Bhi
1:00 Anurag 2:00 The Music
Show 9:00 Praful V3 9:30
Shatranj 10:00 Ru Ru Ru
10:30 Men Marzi 11:00 Anabi
12:00 Karz 12:30 Special 1:30
Dance Dance 2:30 Jugai Jodi
3:30 Parly Time

PTV

8:00am Tilawat Aur
Tarjuma/Hamd/Naat 8:20
Cartoon 8:30 Khabran 8:45
Film 9:00 PTV Encyclopedia
9:25 Khat Farahash 9:40 Sports
Clinic 10:05 PTV Gold 10:30
English Film: Darkwing Duck
10:55 Mast Mast Sanyo 11:00
Khabran 11:10 Sports Hour
12:05pm Biscoop 95/Qasmi
Hahani 12:55 Quran-e-Hakeem
1:02 Bismillah 1:15 Aaj Di

Kahani 1:40 Aaj Di Shaam 2:00

Kinara Ep-53 (Drama Serial)
2:55 Ghosial Writer 3:55 Karabar
4:15 Education 5:25 Raziq
9th 5:55 Zameen Per Zindegi
(Drama Serial) 6:25 Ajo
Courtas 7:00 English News
7:30 English Film 'Star Trek
Deep Space Nine 8:20 Hawwa
Ki Naam 9:00 Break for
Headlines News 9:20 Sur

DD 7

Tasvir (Pakistani Film 1947-95)
10:00 Khabarnama &
Commercial News 11:00
Pezzwan 11:35 Home Victim
New Serial 12:35 Music
Masters/Raag Rang 1:00 Khas
Khas/Khabran

9:30 M.V. Club Film 12:30

Surer Asar 1:00 Dhitang
Dhitang Bole 1:30 Movie Club
Film 3:30 Geet Sangeel 4:30
Bengali Feature Film 5:30
News 7:20 Binodan 7:30
Bangla Sambad 8:00 Serial
11:30 Sunday Ki Sunday 12:00
Hame Barker Kour 12:30 Pehli
Mulakat 1:00 Good Shot 1:30
Pehchan 2:00 Hum Se Barker
Gong 2:30 RAVEN 3:30 Gaana
Jaare Maane 4:00 Dekh

Sony ET

5:30 New Gaane Jaane
Maane 10:00am Aaj Ki
Khabran 10:30 Buddha
11:00 Taj Mahal Tak Dina Dina
11:30 Sunday Ki Sunday 12:00
Hame Barker Kour 12:30 Pehli
Mulakat 1:00 Good Shot 1:30
Pehchan 2:00 Hum Se Barker
Gong 2:30 RAVEN 3:30 Gaana
Jaare Maane 4:00 Dekh

5:30 New Gaane Jaane

Maane 10:00am Aaj Ki
Khabran 10:30 Buddha
11:00 Taj Mahal Tak Dina Dina
11:30 Sunday Ki Sunday 12:00
Hame Barker Kour 12:30 Pehli
Mulakat 1:00 Good Shot 1:30
Pehchan 2:00 Hum Se Barker
Gong 2:30 RAVEN 3:30 Gaana
Jaare Maane 4:00 Dekh

5:00 Jane Kaha Meira Jigar

5:00 Jane Kaha Meira Jigar
5:30 Ghaav 6:00 Dekh
Tamas Dekh 6:30 Aahat 7:00
Sindabb Bol 8:00 Cine Classics
Hindi Feature Film 11:00 The
Young And The Restless 12:00
Ghaav 12:30 Aahat 1:00
Fasae 1:30 Surt Wheel 2:00
Furniture 2:00 Premie 2:30
Mogai

Garfield by Jim Davis



Tom and Jerry

