from 40.7 gm to 47.1 gm per capita per day.

Despite our progress in food production, availability and consumption, food insecurity is widespread in Bangladesh. According to a recent study by the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations and World Food Program (FAO/WFP, 2008), nearly 45 per cent of Bangladesh's 145 million population is food-insecure (less than 2,122 kcals/person /day), and nearly one-fourth of the population (23.9 per cent) is severely food-insecure (consuming less than 1,805 kcals/person/day).

Studies have shown that the food security situation worsens during and after natural disasters such as floods, cyclones, tidal surge, etc. Economic shocks such as soaring prices also negatively affect the food security situation in the country.

Per capita consumption of the poor and well-off increased both in rural and urban areas. Though per capita consumption has increased, there are significant differences in terms of the access to food between the poor and well off households.

According to poverty monitoring surveys, poor households consume about 25 per cent less food in terms of quantity and about 20 per cent less in terms of calories, compared to the well off households at the national level.

This is really a major concern. Pragmatic policy intervention is a must to ensure economic access to food for all, particularly for the poor people of the country.

Climate Change: Predictions for Bangladesh Agriculture

Production of crops and other agricultural commodities depends to a large extent on the climatic conditions. Therefore, changes in climatic conditions will surely affect food production situation in the country.

It is predicted that a number of changes will be observed in Bangladesh due to the climate change. Rainfall pattern will change, while frequency and severity of floods, cyclones, drought, storm surges and heat waves will increase. Crop growing seasons will change in different regions of the country. Changes will also occur in water quality and quantity such as salinisation. Sea level will rise and, therefore, intrusion of salt-water will be prominent.

According to the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC (Climate Change 2007), following changes have been observed in climate trends, variability and extreme events:

- In Bangladesh, average temperature has registered an increasing trend of about 1°C in May and 0.5°C in November during the 14 year period from 1985 to 1998.2. The annual mean rainfall exhibits increasing trends in Bangladesh. Decadal rain anomalies are above long term averages since 1960s.
- Serious and recurring floods have taken place during 1998, 2002, 2003, and 2004. Cyclones originating from the Bay of Bengal have been noted to decrease since 1970 but the intensity has increased.
- Frequency of monsoon depressions and cyclones formation in Bay of Bengal has increased.
- Water shortages has been attributed to rapid urbanization and industrialization, population growth and inefficient water use, which are aggravated by changing climate and its adverse impacts on demand, supply and water quality.
- Salt water from the Bay of Bengal is reported to have penetrated 100 km or more inland along tributary channels during the dry season. The precipitation decline and droughts has resulted in the drying up of wetlands and severe degradation of ecosystems (Department for Environment, GoB, 2007).

A recent study conducted by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) titled "Changes in General Climatic Characteristics in Bangladesh" validated some of the predictions. The study has analysed annual and seasonal patterns of climatic parameters such as temperature and rainfall during 1971 to 2008 in different ecological zones of the country.

The study analysed data by splitting them into two segments (1971 to 2000 and 2001 to 2008), and compared the patterns of the climatic variables. Regarding rainfall, the study revealed a downward tendency in the drought prone ecological zone and variably increasing trends in the flood prone and tidal surge prone ecological zones. Regarding onset and withdrawal of monsoon, deviation from normal condition has been observed. Overall temperature, in terms of both maximum and minimum temperature, showed an upward trend across the country.

Another study by the CPD on "Climate Change and Rice Production in Bangladesh" has estimated the impacts of climate change (drought, inundation, salinity) on rice production in Bangladesh by 2030 in different rice growing seasons (Aus, Aman and Boro).

The study revealed that in a "normal year" by 2030, rice production (with the existing techno-