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AGRICULTURAL GROWTH AND INEQUALITY IN SOUTH ASIA**JASPAL SINGH****SR. RESEARCH FELLOW****NATIONAL CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS & POLICY RESEARCH
NEW DELHI****AMARJEET SINGH****RESEARCH ASSOCIATE****NATIONAL CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS & POLICY RESEARCH
NEW DELHI****HARLEEN KAUR****ASST. PROFESSOR****DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
SRI GURU TEGH BAHADUR INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY
NEW DELHI****ABSTRACT**

Agriculture is the backbone Sector of South Asian country which provides adequate food to prevent widespread hunger and starvation. However, food insecurity is aggravating day by day, resulting in more number of undernourished/malnourished persons in the world. In the present study discussed about growth performance and inequality of agriculture sector in South Asia.

KEYWORDS

Agriculture growth and Inequality.

INTRODUCTION

The antecedents of the modern level of Agricultural development in South Asia can be traced back several centuries. According to William Moreland, an erudite British agricultural officer the "idea of agricultural development was already present in the fourteenth century". There is considerable evidence to show that ancient and medieval rulers in South Asia invested to increase productivity, especially in organizing irrigation. However, that time, most contrary of the region under the British rule and it's unfavorable to rapid growth of the region. The commercialization of agriculture along with higher land revenue imposed by the colonial administration had a fissiparous effect on rural society and sowed the seeds of dualism in agriculture. On the one hand, it created a need for more working capital funds, which compelled the subsistence farmers to fall into debt. In consequence, widespread impoverishment and recurring famines in poorly endowed and un-irrigated areas became a feature of the British period owing to increasing cultivation of cash crops in preference to food crops and the needs of the growing population.

The huge gap between the South Asia's rich and its poor has made trends in South Asia inequality a matter of much interest. South Asia is without comparison the region in the world where most poor people live. Despite massive progress, the range remains great in South Asia – from fast-growing economies to some of the poorest countries in the world with weak states. The number of people in South Asia living on less than USD 1 a day has fallen from 34 per cent in 1990 to 19 per cent today¹. Economic growth has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. But behind the impressive results in the large growth economies – in particular to India and the growth countries in South Asia - great inequality still exists between poor and rich. Massive poverty and growing inequality — both between the countries and within the countries — can halt development in South Asia. Social tensions, increased instability in the region and in the individual countries are also among the possible scenarios. Failure to act to reduce poverty could prove to be Asia's Achilles heel.

In the recently generalized historical coincidence of neoliberal free-market policy trends with accelerating global economic growth and inequality, South Asia stand out as world regions with distinctive histories of imperial inequity. The rise of South Asia shows that globalization does not work the same way everywhere. In South Asia historical dynamics of imperial territorialism generate inequities that fit global patterns through their absorption and mediation of capitalism. Economic reforms that brought Asia into global leadership ranks express imperial forms of power, authority, and inequity whose long histories need to be understood to make sense of South Asia and global capitalism today. The pace of development in agricultural sector has been miserably low as compared to GDP growth rates². The South Asian region is highly sensitive to the consequences of climate change and is known to be the most disaster prone region in the world³. Rising global temperatures are likely to lead an eastward shift in monsoon circulation which could result in more rainfall over the Indian Ocean, Myanmar and Bangladesh but less over Pakistan, India and Nepal. With unstable natural behavior, agricultural sector is more intensive sector and development and living standard of the people directly depend on the sector.

OBJECTIVE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

- (1) To analysis agriculture development in South Asian countries
- (2) To analysis the agriculture growth trend and inter country variation in South Asian Countries

AGRICULTURE ECONOMY IN SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES

South Asia region is covering 5137190 sq. km. area, 1653 million population and 450 Million US \$ of GDP. India is a big country which covered 64 percent of geographical area, 74.8 percent of population and 81.3 percent of the share of GDP of the region. Maldives and Bhutan are very smallest countries which covered less the 1 percent of geographical area, population and GDP of the region. About 23.24 percent population of the world is living in South Asia region and occupied only 2.62 percent of the world GDP. The economic development of the region based on agriculture sector because about 20 percent of GDP of the region added by the scoter and Majority population in South Asia lives in rural areas, depending on agricultural activities as their principal source of income and employment⁴. Share of rural population in total population varies between 66% in Pakistan to 86% in Nepal. Except for Maldives, share of agriculture in total GDP varies between 16.5% - 40% (approx.). In Maldives, less than 3% of total GDP is contributed by agriculture. Due to low productivity of agriculture, per worker income in agriculture is low and, as a consequence, the proportion of population living under poverty is quite high⁵. Agriculture farming in South Asia is dominated by small holdings i.e. average size of holding is below 0.5 hectare in Bangladesh, below 1.0 hectare in Sri Lanka and Nepal. In India, average farm size is 1.41 hectare. Pakistan is much better endowed with land resources (average farm size is 3.0 hectare). Except Pakistan, holdings below one hectare account for more than 60% of total farm holdings. Cereal and pulses are the main staple region-wide. Per hectare yield of main staples in all the countries is however lower

than world average. Growth rate in productivity is also low. Agricultural output growth has slowed down in most of the countries and, in other countries where growth is still at reasonably high level, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain that. Despite the high potential, agricultural productivity is getting stuck at low level and increase in productivity requires increased use of inputs. This is lowering efficiency of production and diminishing profit margins.

TABLE 1: AREA, POPULATION AND GDP IN SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES (2010-11)

Name of the country	Area km ²	Share of area	Population in million	Share of population	GDP million US \$	Share of GDP
Afganistan	652,225	12.7	29.82	1.8	16,631	0.9
Bangladesh	147,570	2.9	154.7	9.4	105,402	5.6
Bhutan	47,000	0.9	0.74	0.0	1,397	0.1
India	3,287,590	64.0	1237	74.8	1,537,966	81.3
Maldives	300	0.0	3.384	0.2	1,433	0.1
Nepal	140,800	2.7	27.47	1.7	15,108	0.8
Pakistan	796,095	15.5	179.2	10.8	164,792	8.7
Sri lanka	65,610	1.3	20.33	1.2	48,241	2.6
Total	5,137,190	100.0	1,653	100.0	1,890,970	100.0

Source: World Bank data book, 2012

DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The study is based on secondary data which is collected from published source such as World Bank meta data book and Agricultural Statistic at a glance India. The time period of study is 1980-81 to 2011-0-11. The conglomeration of variables are rural population, population density, cereal yield (kg/hect.), Agricultural machinery, tractor per 100 sq. km arable land, agricultural land percentage of land area and Agricultural irrigated land (per cent of total agricultural land). The study used Compound growth rate for observed the performance of selected indicators.

Annual compound growth rate computed by using the following formula:

$$Y_t = AB^t$$

Where,

Y_t = variables under the study in t^{th} period,

t = time variable,

A = constant (intercept)

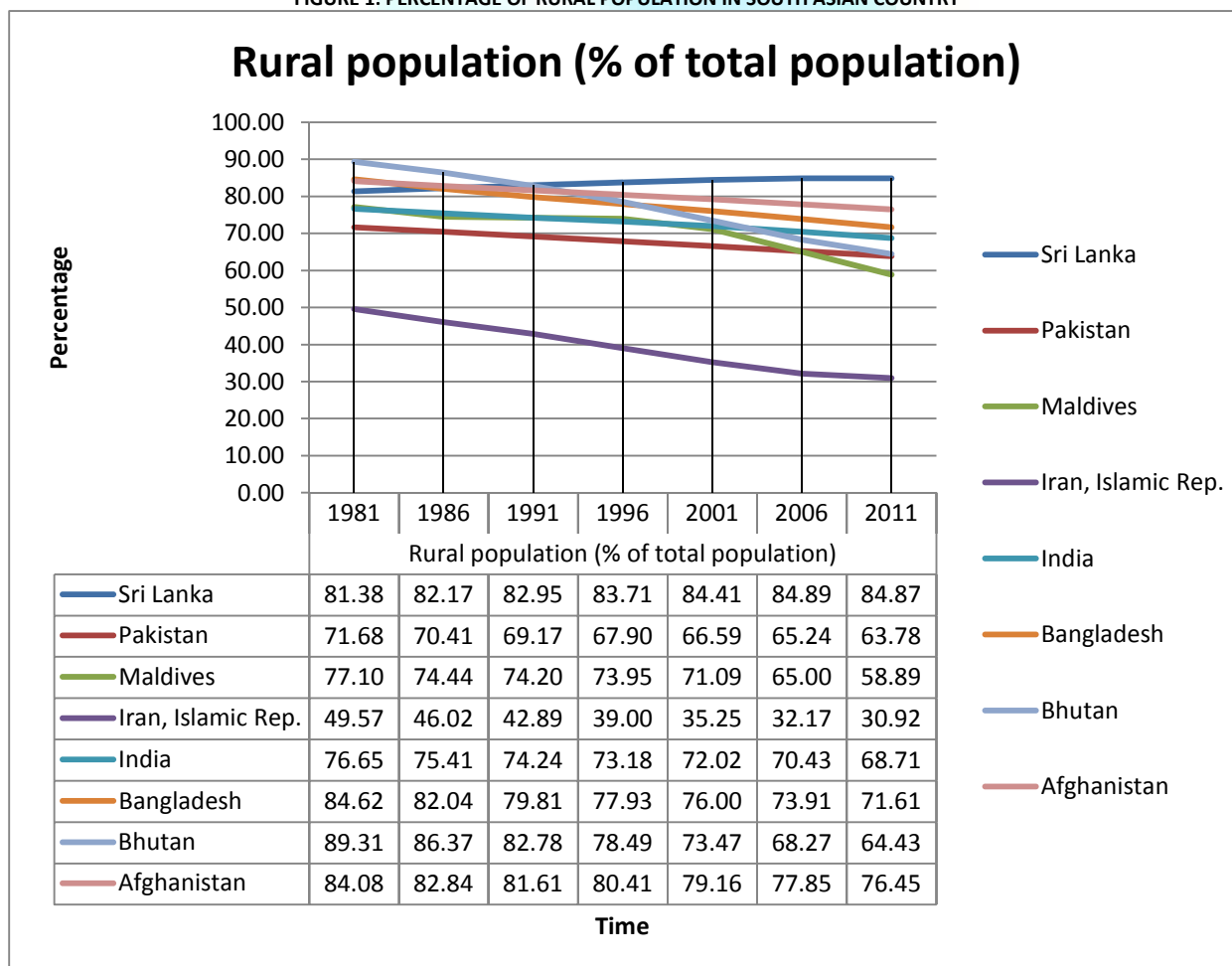
$B = (1+r)$ = constant and

r = compound growth rate.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 reveals that the percentage of rural population to total population for the South Asian countries of the region. It can be seen from the figure that highest percentage of population living in rural areas of Bhutan and followed by Bangladesh in the year 1981. On the other hand, Iran, Islamic rep. and Pakistan are comparative high urbanized countries in same year. During the study period all countries moving toward urbanized except Sri Lanka which increase rural population percentage 81.38 from 1981 to 84.87 in 2011.

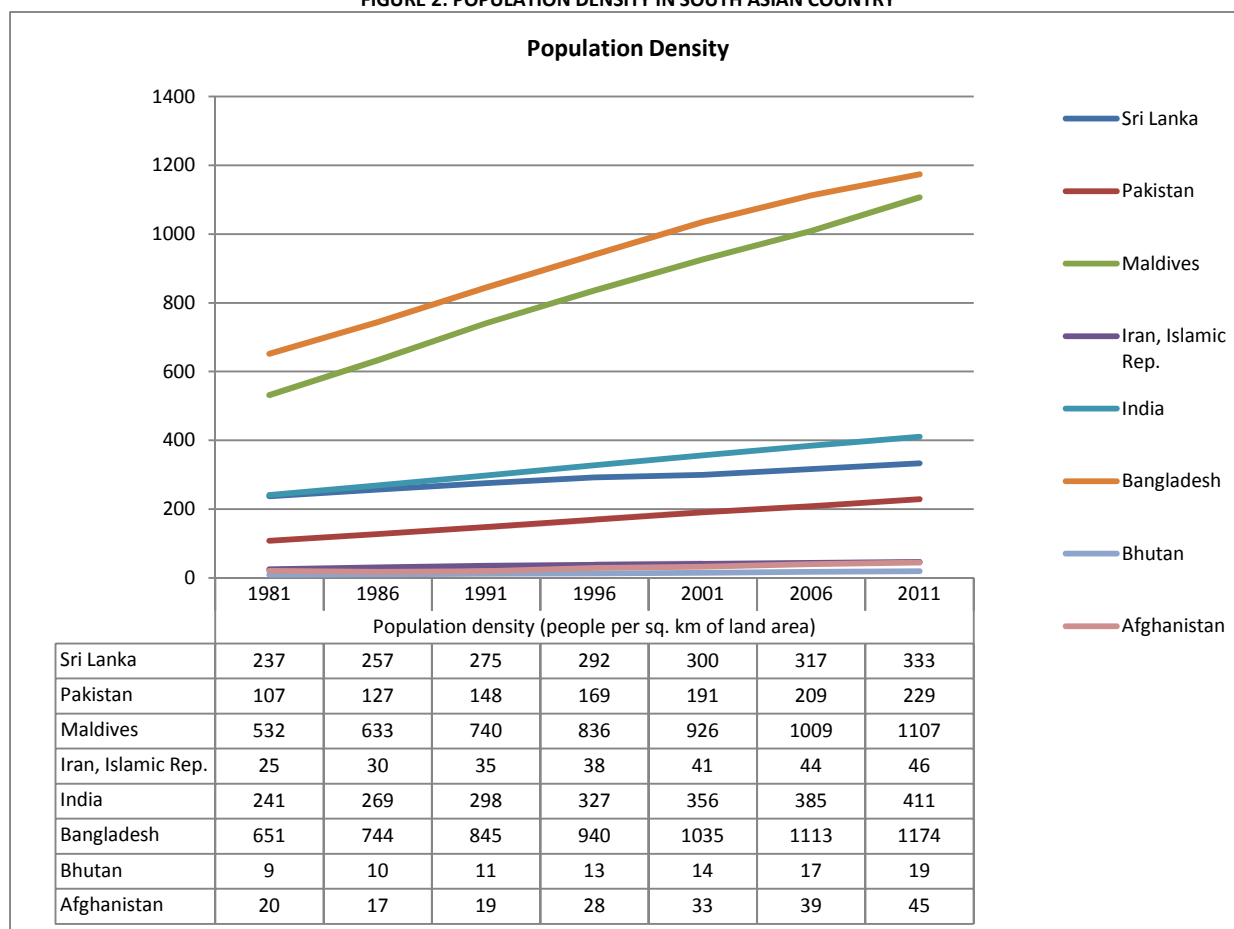
FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF RURAL POPULATION IN SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRY



Source: Data collected from World Bank Meta data and computed by authors.

Population density is presented in Fig. 2 at selected points of time for South Asian countries. Bangladesh and Maldives were high population density countries with the statistics 651 and 532 persons per sq. km. area in 1981 and 1174 and 1107 person in the year 2011 respectively. On the other hand, Bhutan, Afghanistan and Iran was very low population density ie. 9, 20 and 25 persons per sq. km. area in 1981 and also low (19, 45 and 46 persons per sq. km. a rea) in the year 2011.

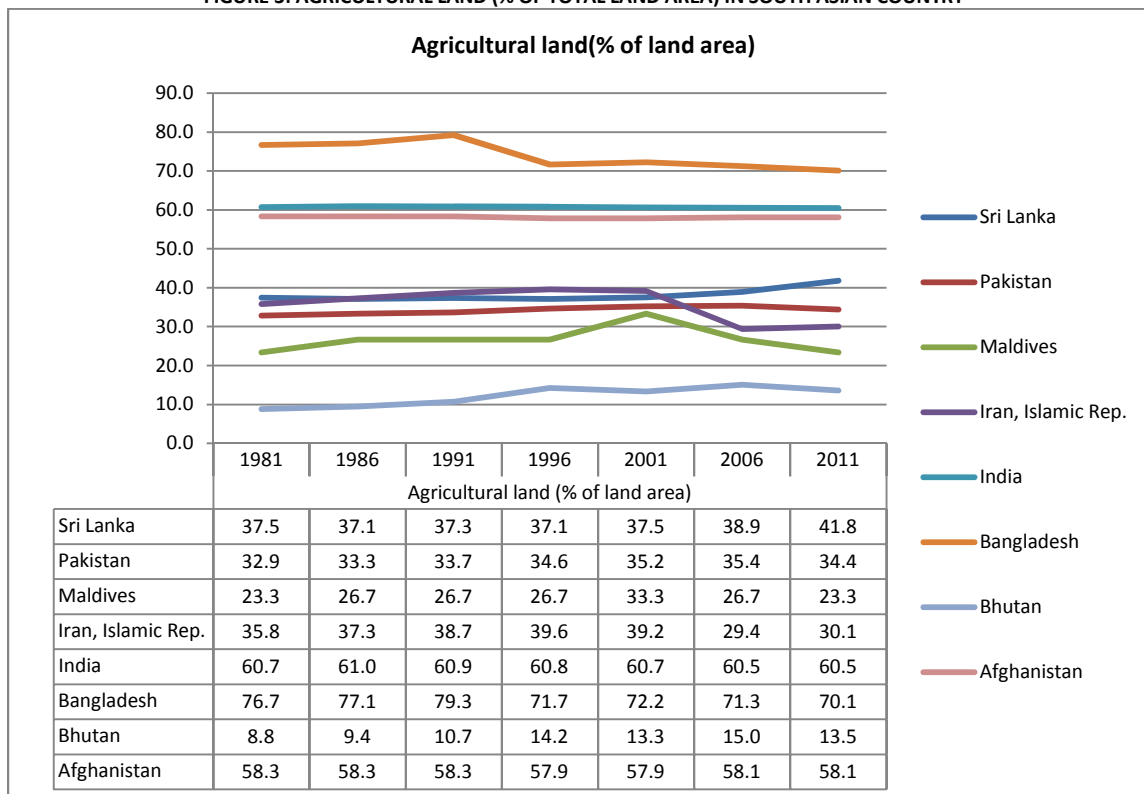
FIGURE 2: POPULATION DENSITY IN SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRY



Source: Data collected from World Bank Meta data and computed by authors.

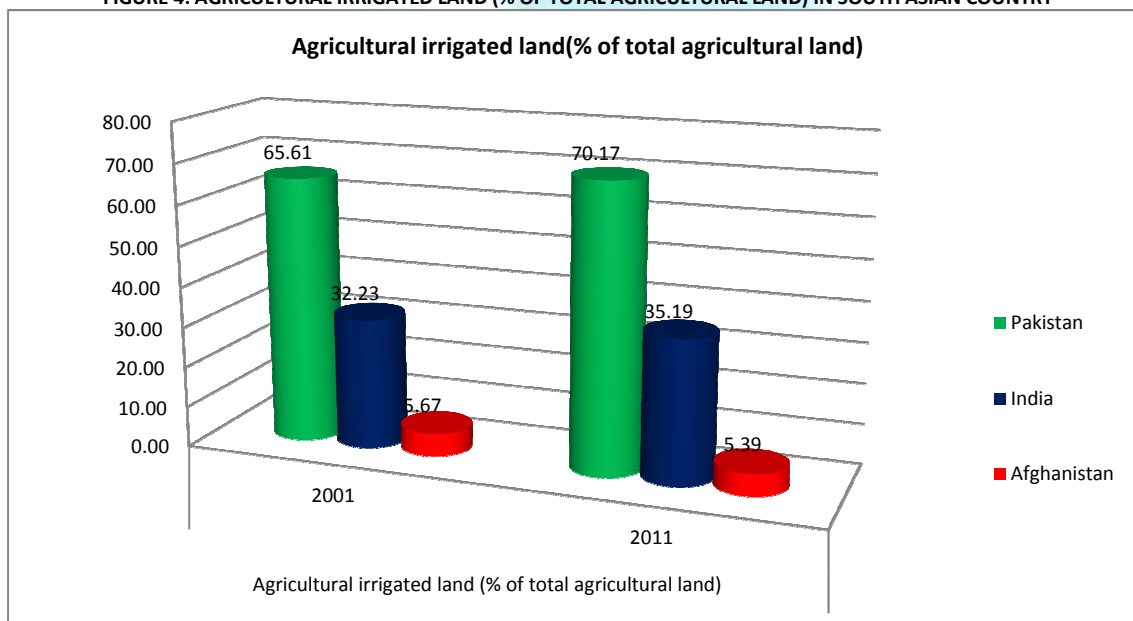
Figure 3 reveals that the area under agriculture is 76.7, 60.7 and 58.3 per cent of Bangladesh, India and Afghanistan respectively in the year 1981 and it is important to mention that the almost same statistics were found in the year 2011 except Bangladesh. On the other hand, increasing trend found of agriculture area for the country of Bhutan which were just 8.8 per cent in 1980 and raised 13.5 per cent in 2011. Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Iran and Maldives are the countries which covered about 23 percent to 40 percent area under agriculture and almost same result found during time period 1980 to 2011.

FIGURE 3: AGRICULTURAL LAND (% OF TOTAL LAND AREA) IN SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRY



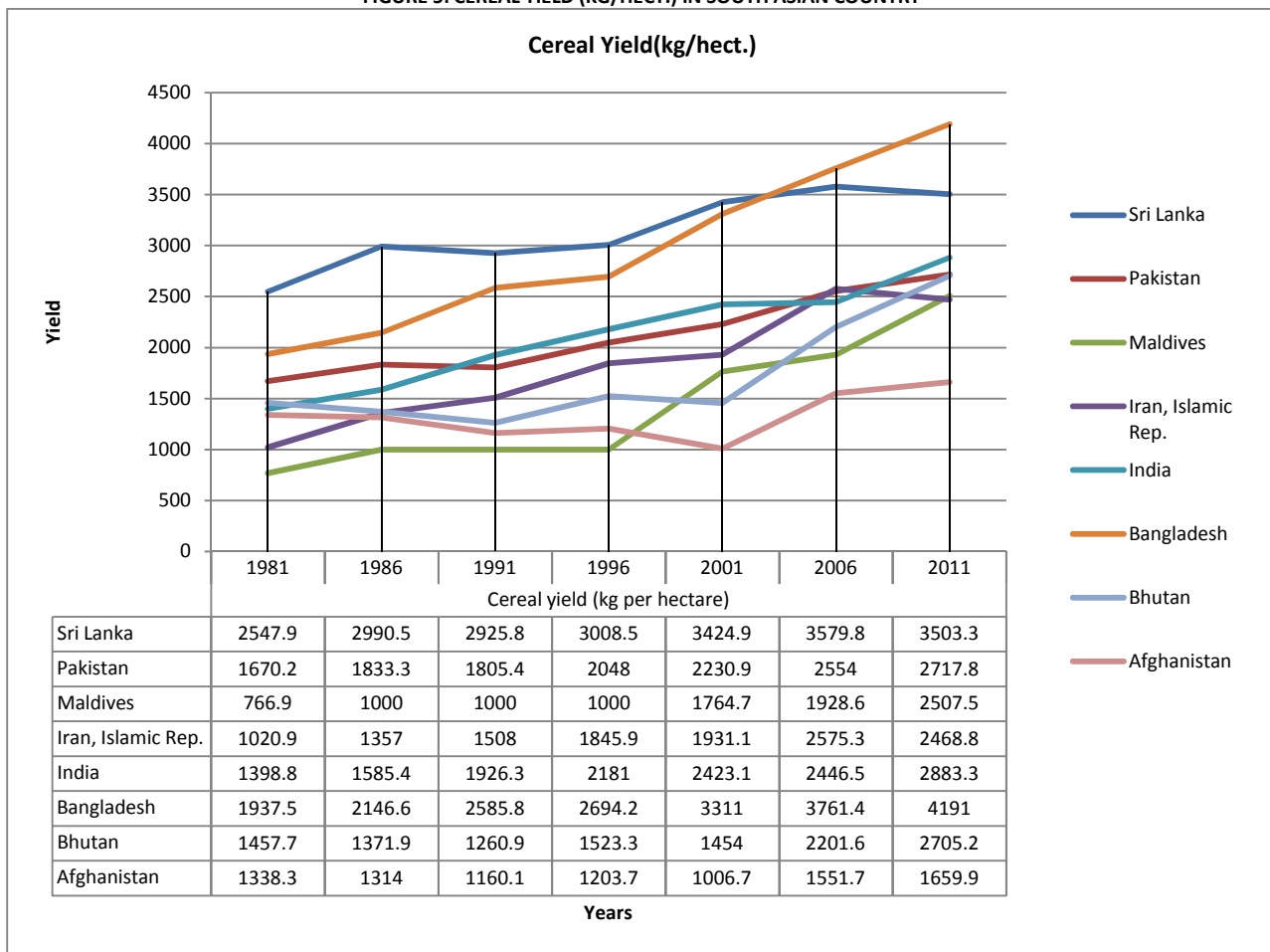
Source: Data collected from World Bank Meta data and computed by authors.

FIGURE 4: AGRICULTURAL IRRIGATED LAND (% OF TOTAL AGRICULTURAL LAND) IN SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRY



Source: Data collected from World Bank Meta data and computed by authors.

FIGURE 5: CEREAL YIELD (KG/HECT.) IN SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRY



Source: Data collected from World Bank Meta data and computed by authors.

It is not unimportant to mention that yield of agriculture crops dependent upon land elements, availability of good quality of soil and water, favorable climate circumstances and R&D. It has been observed the increasing trend of cereal productivity per hectare in south Asian Countries during 1981 to 2011. It is clear from figure 5 that the Sri Lanka on the top in cereal productivity with the statistics 2547 kg/hectare in the year 1981. In 2010 Bangladesh leads to the top rank in cereal productivity with 4191 kg/hectare in 2011. On the contrary, lowest productivity was observed in Maldives' in 1980. Nevertheless, miracle jump of cereal productivity is recorded which rose from 766 kg/hectare to 2505 kg/hectare from 1981 to 2011 in Maldives. It is not fatuous that inter country variation in cereals yield was decreased from 38.5 percent to 26.5 percent from 1980 to 2011.

Mechanized penetration is generally found in Pakistan, Iran and India. On the contrary, it is observed that lowest number of tractors per square kilometer in Afghanistan. Surprised results were observed that the highest productivity of cereal with only 1.2 tractor/100 sq km in Bangladesh.

FIGURE 6: TRACTOR PER 100 SQ. KM. AREA OF ARABLE LANDS IN SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRY

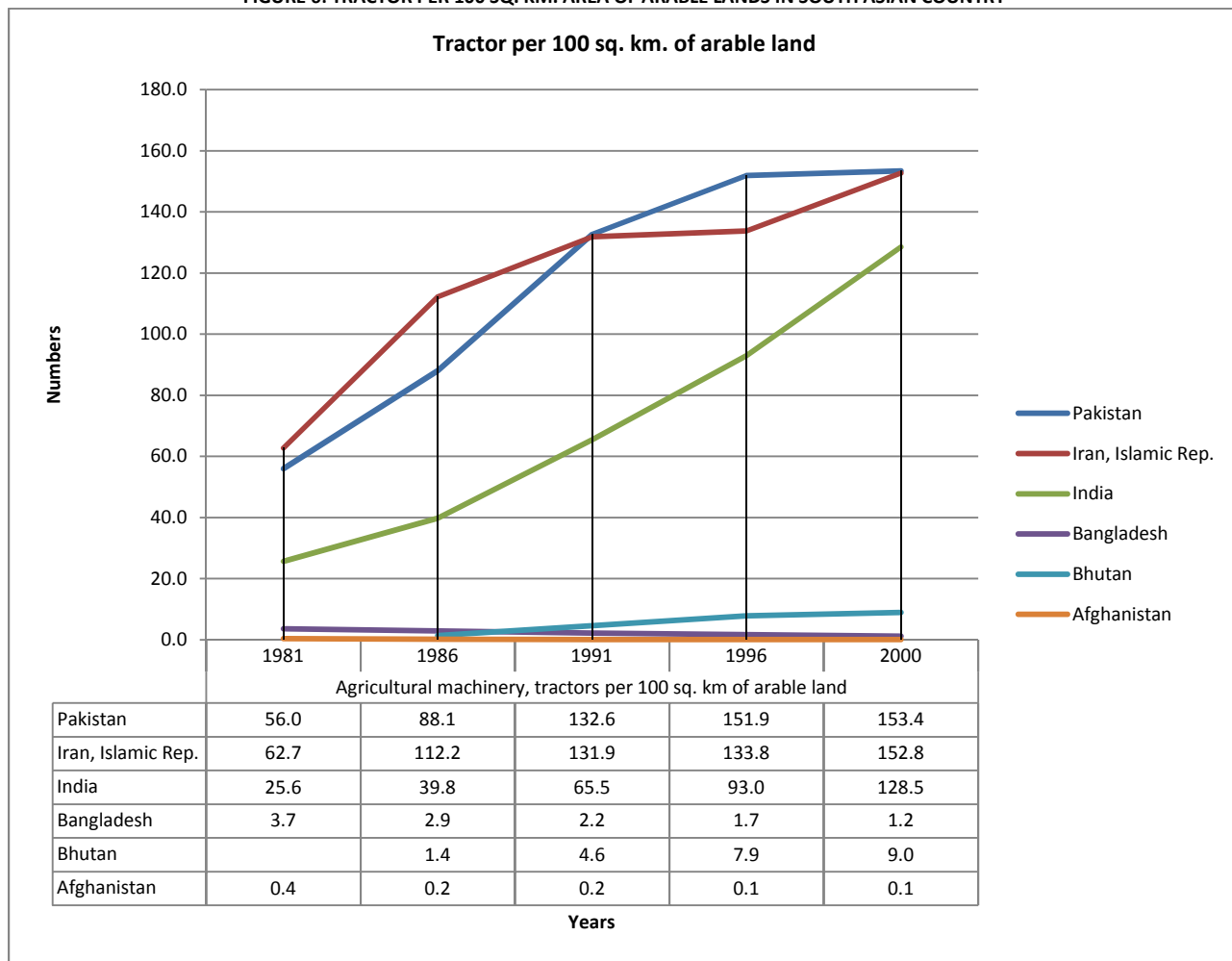


TABLE 2: ANNUAL COMPOUND GROWTH RATES OF SELECTED VARIABLES OF SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES FOR SELECTED PERIOD OF TIME

Indicator/ Country	CAGR time period	Sri Lanka	Pakistan	Maldives	Iran, Islamic Rep.	India	Bangladesh	Bhutan	Afghanistan
Rural population (% of total population)	1981-90	0.21	-0.39	-0.47	-1.58	-0.35	-0.65	-0.82	-0.33
	1991-2000	0.17	-0.38	-0.43	-1.94	-0.30	-0.49	-1.19	-0.30
	2001-11	0.06	-0.43	-1.87	-1.30	-0.47	-0.59	-1.30	-0.35
Population density (people per sq. km of land area)	1981-90	1.59	3.63	3.70	3.98	2.40	2.91	2.63	-0.44
	1991-2000	0.85	2.54	2.27	1.52	1.80	2.05	2.45	5.40
	2001-11	1.05	1.84	1.80	1.21	1.43	1.27	2.74	3.15
Area under cereal production (hectares)	1981-90	-0.44	1.01	-14.87	1.76	-0.37	0.13	-1.91	-2.48
	1991-2000	-0.42	0.35	32.75	-2.11	0.00	0.47	-1.54	-1.14
	2001-11	3.71	0.93	-0.15	2.18	-0.12	0.90	-3.32	3.02
Cereal yield (kg per hectare)	1981-90	1.58	1.13	1.64	3.52	3.62	2.57	-1.22	-1.50
	1991-2000	1.59	2.14	5.84	2.50	2.32	2.50	1.44	-1.41
	2001-11	0.23	1.99	3.58	2.49	1.75	2.38	6.41	5.13
Cereal production (metric tons)	1981-90	1.14	2.16	-13.47	5.35	3.23	2.70	-3.10	-3.94
	1991-2000	1.16	2.50	40.51	0.34	2.32	2.99	-0.12	-2.53
	2001-11	3.95	2.95	3.42	4.72	1.63	3.31	2.88	8.30
Agricultural machinery, tractors per 100 sq. km of arable land	1981-90	na	10.29	na	8.95	9.96	-4.97	na	-11.34
	1991-2000	na	1.69	na	0.77	7.79	-6.37	8.87	-0.58
	2001-11	na	0.67	Na	6.10	0.98	1.23	-1.18	-0.50
Agricultural land (% of land area)	1981-90	-0.03	0.26	1.34	0.88	0.04	0.33	2.01	0.00
	1991-2000	0.04	0.45	2.26	0.13	-0.04	-0.93	2.21	-0.07
	2001-11	1.09	-0.23	-3.50	-2.62	-0.03	-0.30	0.14	0.04
Agricultural irrigated land (% of total agricultural land)	2001-11	na	0.67	Na	6.10	0.98	1.23	-1.18	-0.50

Source: Data collected from World Bank Meta data and computed by authors.

Table 2 reveals that the annual Compound Growth rate of selected variables in South Asian countries for period of 1981-90, 1991-2000 and 2001-2011. Growth of percentage of rural population is decreased in all countries except Sri Lanka where it found positive growth rate during all selected periods of time. Again, it is noticed the density of population were increased during all selected time periods except in Afghanistan where it decreased at 0.44 rates during 1981-90, nevertheless, it again sharply increased the growth 5.40 rate during 1991-2000. Furthermore, area under cereal production is decreased in Sri Lanka during 1981-90 to 1991-2000; in the next decade growth rate is 3.71 per cent. Area under cereals is decreased in first period at 14.87 growth rates, it increased at 32.75 rates during 1991-2000 Maldives. In the case of Bhutan the area under cereals growth rate is decreased during all periods of time. The next indicator is yield of cereals, the growth rate of said indicator is increased of all the countries except Bhutan and Afghanistan during the three sub period of time. Again, it is found that the yield of cereals growth rate is 6.41 and 5.13 per cent in Bhutan and Afghanistan respectively during 2001-2011. Moreover, the production of cereals is increased in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, Iran and Bangladesh during all selected decade. On the contrary, growth of production of cereals decreased at 13.47 in first decade in Maldives due to decreased the. Cereals production is decreased in Bhutan and Sri Lanka due to decreasing the yield during 1981-90 and 1991-

2000. Again, increased growth rate were recorded in last decade due to yield. Percentage area under agriculture to total area is increased in India, Pakistan, Iran, Bangladesh and Maldives, while the positive growth recorded for the countries Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Bhutan in the last decade. Moreover, the percentage area under Irrigation to total area under agriculture growth rates is positive for the Pakistan, Iran, India and Bangladesh, on the contrary, the negative growth rate were observed of Bhutan and Afghanistan in during 2001-211.

CONCLUSION

With augment of population the study found that density of population is increasing in Asian countries. Still low density was found in Bhutan, Afghanistan and Iran. At the same time countries moving toward urbanized except Sri Lanka. Area under agriculture is 76.7, 60.7 and 58.3 per cent in Bangladesh, India and Afghanistan respectively in the year 1981 and same statistics were found in the year 2011 except Bangladesh. Pakistan on the top rank in irrigation, while one third area irrigated has been observed in the case of India furthermore it is observed that meager percentage (5.57) in Afghanistan during 1980 to 2010. Again, it has been observed the increasing trend of cereal productivity per hectare in south Asian Countries during 1981 to 2011. Although, increasing the trend of machinery in all countries, however surprised results were found that Bangladesh lead to top rank in cereal production with 1.2 tractor/100 sq km in Bangladesh. It is not fatuous that inter country variation in cereals yield was decreased from 38.5 percent to 26.5 percent from 1980 to 2011.

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