

**STATE RESPONSE TO PROBLEM OF FOOD  
INSECURITY IN TAJIKISTAN, 1991-2001**

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "STATE RESPONSE TO PROBLEM OF FOOD INSECURITY IN TAJIKISTAN, 1991-2001" submitted by me in the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of "MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY" is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

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## CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*DEDICATED TO MY PARENTS*

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ADB	ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
ASSR	AUTONOMOUS SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC
FANTA	FOOD AND NUTRITION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
FAO	FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
GBAO	GORNO-BADAKHSHAN AUTONOMOUS OBLAST
GDP	GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT
HDR	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX
NEP	NEW ECONOMIC POLICY
NGO	NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
ODA	OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT AID
SIPRI	STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE
UNDP	UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
WB	WORLD BANK
WFP	WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

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## **Chapter – 1**

### **Introduction**

Scientific and technological advances have changed the capacity of state to meet the needs and necessity of the people. Unfortunately the state has failed to meet the needs and aspirations of the people. Food insecurity is one such domain where state has failed miserably. It refers to a 'situation where all the people of a state do not have physical, social and economic access at all times to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life' (Food and Agriculture Organization 2006). Since the World Food Conference in 1974, due to food crises and major famines in the world, the term 'food security' was introduced and it has been developing since then.

The evolution of food security approach has basically followed three phases: (Giraldo 2008: 4).

First one was theoretical explanatory framework for food crises since the time of Malthus (late 18<sup>th</sup> century) until 1980s, when Indian Economist Amartya Sen gave his 'Food Availability Decline' approach. This approach conceived famines as shortages of food per capita, motivated by natural factors like drought, floods, earthquakes and other calamities that undermine crops or demographic factors i.e. vegetative growth that goes beyond the supply (Giraldo 2008). At that time, it was assumed that adequate production will be enough to ensure availability of food in the market as well as in the houses.

But it became evident that mere production is not enough for food security as purchasing power decides access to food, as Amartya Sen demonstrated later in the second phase of food security approach. Sen stressed that the output of the food per se was not sufficient, and people needed access to that food to gain entitlements. The Indian scholar argued that people could be food

insecure even when there was no general food shortage (Sen 1981: 131-155). For example, Bangladesh suffered a famine in 1974, even though that was the year of peak food production in the country. Problem was that although there was plenty of food available, millions of people, particularly agriculture laborers lost their wages and hence, their purchasing power.

Another Indian scholar M S Swaminathan observes that ‘mere availability and access does not alleviate food insecurity if people do not utilize food properly’. It can be because of ‘inadequate nutrition education and food preparation among the masses, improper food habits and eating disorders, or poor health, such as intestinal parasites from unsanitary water’ (Swaminathan 2001: 1). So, while Amartya Sen talked about individual entitlements to food in the concept of food security, Swaminathan drew the world attention towards nutrition intake by people and added this new dimension to food security. In 1996 during the World Food Summit in Rome, where the definition of food security got a holistic meaning:

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO 2006). This definition emphasizes the multidimensional nature of food security which includes availability, stability, access, utilization of food.

Tajikistan, the poorest Central Asian country part of former Soviet Union has experienced food insecurity ever since it became independent in 1991. The literature available on the state of food insecurity in the country mainly consists of reports and surveys conducted by UN organizations like World Food Programme, Food and Agriculture Organization and United Nations Development Programme. Apart from that, there are World Bank reports that indicate poverty level in the country. The roots of the food insecurity in Tajikistan lie in the colonial policies pursued by the Tsarist regime in the 19<sup>th</sup> century which were vigorously followed by the Soviet leaders in the region. ‘Cotton-monoculture’ was encouraged in the region at the expense of grain production. Robert A. Lewis (1992) says that ‘state pressure to increase cotton production has



caused a virtual monoculture in the region with lack of proper cotton alfalfa rotations. Overemphasis on cotton production has also limited the ability of the region to produce food.' Lewis substantiates it with the following data. In 1940, 106,000 hectares of land was under cotton cultivation which increased to 320,000 hectares by 1988. In the stark contrast, the land under grain cultivation which stood at 567,000 hectares in 1940 was reduced to 151,000 hectares in 1988 (Lewis 1992: 142). The policy of 'regional specialization' followed by the Soviets was very exploitative and has been called 'colonialism' of Central Asia by N.A Abdurakhimova (2005). He says wealth from this region was confiscated; valuable raw materials were exported and under pressure from goods from Russia, local crafts went into decline and were forced to seek new economic niches, while the traditional ways of life and value system collapsed. Michael Rywkin (1990) argues that one of the chief accusations leveled against the Tsarist economic policy of Central Asia was that the latter had transformed the areas into 'a cotton appendix of Russia', in the same way as the British policy in Egypt was also directed at pushing cotton production at the expense of grain. But, the Soviet government not only followed the same policy, it has done so even more decisively. By the end of the Soviet Union, Central Asia was producing 92 percent of the total Soviet cotton and accounted 17 percent of the global production. In Tajikistan, cotton was the major agriculture product and 11 percent of Soviet cotton came from it (Heath 2003: 149).

The reasons mainly responsible for the food insecurity in Tajikistan are – Soviet policy of cotton-monoculture, improper use of irrigation resources, mountainous topography of the country which leaves only 7 percent of land useable for agriculture, stagnation in the Soviet agriculture in its last years, rapid population growth rate, civil war that rocked the country after its independence and delay in land reforms due to it. Rapid population growth has created rising demand for food products but the local agriculture has shifted away from food production to cotton production. Rural population in Tajikistan in 1951 was 1,130 thousands which increased by 184 percent to 3,204 thousands in 1987 (Lewis quotes Goskomstat figures on page 149, 1992) Tajikistan experienced a population growth of more than 3 percent during the three decades from 1960 to 1990 under the Soviet rule.

The available literature does not directly deal with the genesis of the problem of food insecurity in Tajikistan, especially in the historical context of Tsarist and Soviet policies that are responsible for present day crisis in this country, which also happens to be the poorest Central Asian country. So, the importance of this thesis lies in the fact that it tracks the historical roots of the food insecurity and decreasing sown area for grains in Tajikistan. After studying these issues in detail, this work will focus on the economic and agricultural situation of Tajikistan after its independence and what were the circumstances when the government launched land reforms to tackle the falling agricultural output in the country. It will also look at the response of the other states and non-state actors in helping the country in tackling the situation of food insecurity and what are the reasons behind Tajikistan's failure to tackle the situation effectively even after its independence. Overall, this work takes a comprehensive view at the reasons of food insecurity in Tajikistan and how the state government and other international players have responded to it. There in lies its importance. Through the following questions, this study will seek to fill in the gaps in the existing literature on the situation of food insecurity in Tajikistan:

What are the causes behind the food insecurity in Tajikistan? This includes the historical causes like cotton-monoculture introduced by the Soviets in the country, lack of scientific methods to be used in agriculture, natural calamities and reasons that have affected food situation in independent Tajikistan like the civil war.

What has been response of Tajik government and international community to the prevalent food insecurity in the country? We will examine why the situation has not been under control despite the fact that Tajikistan launched land reforms in mid-1990s. There are shortcomings in the land reforms which will be studied.

What is the change after Tajik government and international organizations have started taking the curative and precautionary measures to address food insecurity? This will include study of impact of land reforms and food aid in Tajikistan in tackling food insecurity.

The research method used for this work is case study method. Both primary and secondary sources have been used while doing this research. Numerous sources have been accessed, mainly the reports on food situation in Tajikistan. Yearly reports from World Food Programme, Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nation Development Programme have been used. Quantitative analysis like graphs, tables and figures are there to make things simple. The books, mainly focusing on Soviet times have been accessed.

After this introduction chapter, the second chapter will focus on theoretical concepts in food security. Though concerns at the international level regarding it have been since after the First World War, but as a term, food security emerged in 1970s due to international food crises and famines at that time. This chapter will look at the linkages between food security and human security. The chapter also focuses on inter-linkages between food security at individual, national and local levels and how can food insecurity be a cause of instability in a country.

Third chapter traces the reasons behind the food insecurity in Tajikistan. It studies the nature of the Tsarist and Soviet regime and its impact on food situation in Tajikistan. One of the main reasons why the Tsarist Russia conquered Central Asia in 19<sup>th</sup> century was its search for a secured source for cotton supply to its textile mills, as Civil war in the United States prevented cotton delivery to Russia (Kort 2004: 36). Once Central Asia had been conquered, the Soviet regime started 'cotton-monoculture' here. Unfortunately, the agriculture sector started declining in Tajikistan and the country became dependent on food imports from Russia and other republics. There was overall stagnation in the Soviet economy in 1980s which intensified along with effects of perestroika. Inflation was very high in Tajikistan and food prices were out of reach of the poor people. Rapid population growth created rising demand for food products.

In chapter four, land reforms and their impact on agriculture in Tajikistan has been discussed. A number of laws and decrees were passed by the Tajik government to increase the Gross

Domestic Product (GDP) which decreased by more than half between 1992 and 1996 (FAO 2000). In context of Central Asia, the basic vision underlying the land reform efforts has been that rural production would become efficient within the market system if individual farmers and agriculture workers were given new incentives. During the Soviet regime, the agriculture had started to stagnate in 1980s. There were no personal incentives for the farmers working on the large state farms. It was thought that a land reform establishing the private ownership, changing the ownership structure and tenure would provide the conditions under which these farmers could be motivated to increase the agricultural output. They would also have stake in increasing the production. Regime change in Tajikistan after the fall of Soviet Union brought with it a faith in the advantages of private ownership and the market system and attempts were made to make agriculture work efficiently in a market economy (Kudat et al. 2000: 3). This reasoning was behind the dismantling of the large state or collective farms and distribution of land and farming resources to the individual. The chapter will study what have been the positive impacts of the land reforms in Tajikistan and what have been the main reasons for their failure. It also deals with foreign aid being given to Tajikistan and why this aid is not bearing desired results.

In the last chapter, the present author has made certain observations regarding the continued food insecurity situation in Tajikistan. In Central Asian context, the food insecurity is a problem whose genesis goes back to Tsarist imperial policies which were pursued with great interest by the Soviet regional planners. In the regional planning of Soviet Union, Central Asia was responsible for growing cotton. As the time passed, grain production in the region was sacrificed for cotton production. After the fall of USSR in 1991, poorest of Central Asian states, Tajikistan could not control its agriculture output and it fell by more than half during 1992-96. The land reforms initiated by the Tajik government are faulty and there is need to fill the gaps in land reforms to increase food production (ICG 2003: 4).

## CHAPTER - 2

### **Theoretical Aspects of Food Security**

Food is necessary for human survival, apart from water and air and there has always been a struggle in human societies in ensuring that all people have access to adequate food to lead a healthy life. In international relations, there have been institutional efforts right from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century under the aegis of the League of Nations to promote 'freedom from want' i.e. providing people access to food. The concept of food security also remains inherent to Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. At the theoretical level in the international relations, it was in 1981 that the scholars started debating regarding 'widening' of the security agenda to include non-traditional security threats like climate change, food security, drug-trafficking and terrorism. Needless to say, the security paradigm during the Cold war was dominated by the traditional notion of security, meaning safeguarding the territory and sovereignty of a country through military means and there was very less space for widening this paradigm to include other types of security in it.

Security was conceptualized and narrowed down to a largely military focus due to the pressure of a nuclear arms race which was marked by rapid, sustained and strategically important improvements in technology (Buzan 1997: 2). One of the main scholars who advocate 'widening' of the security paradigm, Barry Buzan further stated that the decline of military-political security issues at the centre of security concerns was started by the growing "securitization" of two issues that had traditionally been thought of as low politics: the international economy and the environment in 1980s. It was due to the issues such as biodiversity, climate change, resource depletion and pollution that the environment was being securitized. There was relative decline of American economy and the process of liberalization was increasing and along with the rise of Europe and Japan as economic powers, there was simultaneous securitization of economy in international relations.

Apart from these concerns, there was growing focus on security of an individual as a unit opposed to the earlier approach which treated the state as a unit. The end of cold war saw the emergence of middle powers such as Japan and Canada who propounded the concept of 'human security' on the international scene. Olof Palme Commission report had put forward the concept of common security way back in 1982. "Security is a process as much as a condition and one in which the participants are individuals and groups – popular and political opinion" wrote Olof Palme in his introduction to the report. One year later in 1983, Richard Ullman wrote about extended or redefined security. Historian E H Carr in 1945 had argued for a 'system of pooled security' in which the main focus was on the security of the individual (Rothschild 2007: 4).

The threat of environmental degradation has been constantly highlighted by scholars in their attempts to redefine security as they argue that it poses a threat to the ecosystem or to human well-being across nations. Since this threat transcends particular states and conceptions of national security, the need is being expressed to widen the security paradigm (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007: 93). Those who argue for the widening of the security concept include Ullman (1983), Ole Weaver (1993) and Barry Buzan (1983, 1991). Attempts are going on to broaden the neorealist conception of security to include a wider range of potential threats, ranging from economic and environmental issues to human rights and migration issues. The theoretical targets that are being targeted by the 'wideners' are the conceptualizations of security (state security) and threat (military force) and the assumption of anarchy (security dilemma) that have been main characteristic of neorealist concept in security studies (Walt 1991: 212).

The neo-realist approach, which has been advocated by structural or neo-realists such as Barry Buzan, mainly argues that the 'straitjacket' militaristic approach to security used to dominate the concept of security during the cold war. Since it was a simple minded approach, it led to the underdevelopment of the subject. Military threats in Central Asian region are less important when compared to other non-traditional threats to security, which are – food security, drug-trafficking and environmental degradation (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007).

According to Emma Rothschild, security concept when extended has four main forms. First, the concept of security is extended from the security of the nations to security of groups and individuals, which is essentially a downward extension from security of nations to that of people. Individuals are at the focus here. Second, it is extended from security of nations to the security of the international system or of supranational physical environment which is an upward extension. It is important to take the international system in the security domain, as non-traditional security threats cut across national boundaries. Third, concept of security is extended horizontally as well. There is no need to build vertically on the military security only. Since different entities like individuals and nations cannot be expected to be secure or insecure in the same way, so the concept of security is therefore, extended from military to political, economic, social environmental, or human security. Fourth, the political responsibility of ensuring security is itself extended: instead of giving it to a single state, it is vested in nation states, including upwards to international institutions, downwards to regional or local governments and sideways to non-governmental organizations to public opinion and to the press (Rothschild 2007: 2). In the traditional military-political understanding of security, survival is at the top. Threats to survival determine if a development or issue can be termed as international security problem. Threats and vulnerabilities can arise in any area, whether it is military or non-military but in order to be counted as security issues, they have to meet strictly defined criteria that distinguish them from the normal run of the merely political (Buzan 1997: 13). 'Securitization' as Weaver used ensures legitimate use of force but more broadly it also raises the issue above normal politics and into the realm of 'panic politics' where departures from the rules of normal politics can be seen which are used to justify secrecy, additional executive powers and activities that would otherwise be illegal (Buzan 1997: 13).

The critical or postmodernist approach to human security advocates a broad concept of security which goes beyond military determination of threats. This approach states that state must be not be the primary referent of security and instead, a wide range of non-state actors, such as individuals, ethnic and cultural groups and NGOs must be at the focus of security. Ken Booth argues that human security is more important than state security (Booth 1995: 4). According to him, states and governments must no longer be the primary referents of security because

governments which ideally should be guarding their people have instead become the primary source of their insecurity, rather than the armed forces of a neighboring country (Booth 1994: 5). Throughout this debate on widening the concept of security, traditionalists have been fighting back by reasserting conventional arguments that keep military security at the top of the agenda. According to Mearsheimer, alternative approaches to security have provided neither a clear explanatory framework for analyzing it nor have they demonstrated their value in concrete research (Mearsheimer 1995: 92). Stephen Walt has given probably the strongest statement against the traditionalist position, arguing that security studies are about the phenomenon of war and it can be defined as ‘the study of the threat, use and use of control of force’. He argues that:

“runs the risk of expanding ‘security studies’ excessively, by this logic, issues such as pollution, disease, child abuse or economic recessions could all be viewed as threats to security. Defining the field in this way would destroy its intellectual coherence and make it more difficult to devise solutions to any of these important problems (Walt, 1991: 212-213).

What is clearly visible is that role of state is less important in the new security agenda than in the old one. It still remains central, but no longer dominates as the exclusive referent object. Human security places the individual at the centre of security instead of the state. It does not abrogate the security of a state, which in turn, can protect its people. Since the main aim of the state is to protect its individuals, it should recognize threats to them beyond violence and military threats. Human security does not explain threats but recognizes new ones together with their interdependence. These threats include both, unstructured violence like the violence emanating from environmental scarcity or migration as well as violence inflicted by natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, in addition to threats by the states themselves (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007: 14).

In 1994, human security was first identified by the United Nations Development Programme and it sought to broaden the traditional notion of security based on military balances to a concept that included ‘safety from chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression as well as protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life’. Human security seeks to make life



worth living, hence, aims at well being and dignity of the individuals. For example, poverty is a threat to human security not because it can induce violence which threatens the stability of the state but because it is a threat to dignity of individuals (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007: 9). So, human security implied economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security, according to the UNDP report. There is no universal definition of human security today. It simply shifts the focus of security of states from military threats to safety of individuals and communities. The 1994 UNDP Human Development Report recognizes threats to human security in seven components: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political. About food security, it says hunger and famine are threats to it. Since human security is a multi-dimensional concept, it requires adoption of a pragmatic approach on part of state to maintain the state (Alkire 2003 quotes King and Murray on page 15).

The concept of human security also signifies a paradigm shift in the concept of security in international relations. The concept of 'paradigm shift' was given by Thomas Kuhn in 1962 in 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions'. According to him, scientific revolutions consist of emergence of a paradigm that challenges, defeats and eventually displaces the previously accepted view. A paradigm is a collection of beliefs shared by scientists, a set of agreements about how problems are to be understood. His idea was that science does not evolve gradually towards truth, but instead undergoes periodic revolutions which he called paradigm shifts. Paradigm and theory resist change and are extremely resilient, hence crisis provide the opportunity to retool and loosen rules for normal research. (Kuhn 1962). Human security also represented an ethical and methodological rupture with the existing concept of security that is mainly state-based. The 'security of what' debate has raised ethical questions about the end goal. It also seeks to achieve security in a different way, where actors need to cooperate among themselves to ensure human security (Chenoy and Tadjbakhsh 2007: 20).

The need for a new paradigm is necessitated by changing nature of armed conflicts and global threats where there is need to shift focus from states to individuals (Bajpai 2001: 14). Intra-state

conflicts have replaced inter-state conflicts in the post-Cold War world and some state, especially weaker ones have been unable to protect their citizens. The works of Mahbub Ul Haq and Amartya Sen have given a new sense to the idea of human security. Their works represent a methodological rupture in theories of development and economic growth. They suggest that the best strategy to increase national income is not to accumulate capital but it should be done by developing the people. Human security similarly claims that the best way to achieve security is to increase that of the people (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007: 21). Human security approach builds on linkages between the individual and global security in a new world order: a threat to the individual is seen as a threat to the international security.

The debate on broadening the concept of security takes place in the context that various human insecurities are interrelated and there is need to link human rights and development with security. There exists a connection between human rights and the human security. One of the motivational forces behind the human security is that what most of the experts will consider being the basic foundation of human rights (Alkire 2003: 38). Hampson (2001: 27) argues that while it is difficult to fully and perfectly collapse the notion of human rights onto that of human security but both of them are founded on the similar foundations of universality, dignity, interdependence and focus on the individual Kaldor and Beebe (2010) say that there is need to look at security from a different perspective.

There are some commonalities between human security theorists and radical, critical and feminist theorists. For all three, the individual is the prime referent of security his security is rated above that of the state. They are committed to social and economic justice and base their postulates on rights, development and equity. Radical theorists advocate social change, challenge the status quo and build strategies for counter hegemony. While radicals and feminists remain useful critiques of traditional international relations, they do not present a complete alternative to realists (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007: 92). Food security is widely seen as one of the components of the human security concept. Apart from air and water, food is basic to human survival. In recent years, people in many countries have had less access to food due to rising

food prices. Population growth, urbanization, climate change, increase in food prices and changing diets are driving food security world over. (Hulse 1995: 13). Efforts to address global hunger and malnutrition by improving food production, supply and trade began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century under the aegis of League of Nations and the International Institute for Agriculture (Hulse 1995: 13). The League of Nations committee on nutrition during the mid-1930's made this observation:

“The movement towards better nutrition in the past has been largely the result of unconscious and instinctive groping of men for a better and more abundant life. What is now needed is the conscious direction towards better nutrition. Such direction constitutes policy. Nutrition policy must be directed towards two mutually dependent aims: first, consumption, bringing essential foods within reach of all sections of world community and second is supply” (League of Nations, 1936-37). These efforts were boosted during the Second World War (Hulse 1995: 13).

President Roosevelt convened UN Conference on food and agriculture in May 1943, whose roots can be traced back to his ‘State of the Union’ address in 1941 where he described and favored his vision of a world founded upon four freedoms, which included what he called ‘freedom from want’. The 1943 conference had the specific aim ‘to consider the goal of freedom from want in relation to food and agriculture’. This conference recognized that freedom from want meant a secure, an adequate and suitable supply of food and began discussing for an organization that could address the persistent challenge of hunger in the world that led to the creation of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on October 16, 1945. Roosevelt’s four freedom’s speech was instrumental in bringing Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and it recognized the right to food of individual all over the world. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights was entered into force in 1976 which went beyond recognizing the right to food as a human right. It referred to ‘freedom from hunger’ with the understanding that states would protect people’s life by acting to keep people away from starvation and hunger (McDonald 2010: 16). The term ‘food security’ has been undergoing evolutionary process ever since it first originated in the mid-1970s, when the World Food Conference (1974) defined it in

terms of food supply - assuring the availability and price stability of basic foodstuffs at the international and national level:

This definition emphasized on production driven approach i.e. mere production is enough to ensure food security as purchasing power decides access to food. It was demonstrated by Noble laureate economist Amartya Sen. He stressed that the output of the food per se was not sufficient, and people needed access to that food to gain entitlements. He has argued that people could be food insecure even when there was no general food shortage (Sen 1981: 131-155). For example, Bangladesh suffered a famine in 1974, even though that was the year of peak food production in the country. Problem was that although there was plenty of food available, millions of people, particularly agriculture laborers lost their wages and hence, their purchasing power. Due to severe flooding in Bangladesh that year, they could not afford to buy food and so suddenly they faced starvation. Sen's 'entitlement approach' to hunger and famine basically focuses on people having or not having enough command over food which should be seen distinct from the situation where there is enough food to be eaten or not in terms of supply. Later, M S Swaminathan said that mere access and availability are not enough and there is need to ensure proper utilization of the food as well (Swaminathan 2001: 1). It was only in 1996 during the World Food Summit in Rome, where the definition of food security got a holistic meaning:

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2006).

Since the concept of food security is multidimensional, there is a relation between food security and development. United Nations documents measure development by life expectancy, adult literacy, access to education, as well as people's average income, which is a necessary condition of their freedom of choice. In broader sense, human development incorporates all aspects of individuals' well-being, from their health status to their economic and political freedom.

According to the Human Development Report 1996, published by UN Development Programme, 'human development is the end - economic growth a means'. There is no doubt that economic growth increases a nation's total wealth and thereby, it enhances its potential for reducing poverty as well. But, there may be greater costs involved in this growth and it might be achieved at greater costs of higher inequality, unemployment, weakened democracy, loss of cultural identity and overutilization of resources which will be needed by the future generations, which leads to underdevelopment. This kind of development is unsustainable, one which can not continue for long and ignores the interests of not only the present generations but that of the future as well. Underdevelopment is dangerous and conflict prone and there is urgent need to securitize development to avoid conflict. In post-Cold War era, conflicts are no longer predominantly between nations but within states. New wars broke within states after the end of the Cold War and in the period from 1990 to 2001, there were 57 different 'major armed conflicts' in 45 locations around the world (Teodosijevic, 2003, quotes SIPRI 2002 report on page 1).

There is no official record of casualties due to civil war in Tajikistan, but various estimates say that it ranged between 50,000 to 1, 00,000 in the span of five years (1992-97). Development in Tajikistan is not up to the mark and it needs immediate attention of the state government and the international community. Widespread poverty in the country has fuelled a major drug-trafficking business. Health, education and governance have been neglected and there is need to tackle corruption which is undermining all efforts to improve living standards and stability (ICG 2003: 32). In Tajik political set-up, the power is vested in the hands of the President and people have little or no rights and there is definitely lack of grievance redressal mechanisms in the country. This explains why infusing food aid cannot address food insecurity. Aid and food aid can solve the problem in short-term, but it cannot challenge the power-status-structure in the economy that controls access to and allocation of productive resources, which is vital in eliminating the food insecurity in long-term. Food aid creates a dependency syndrome among the farmers and kills communal effort to solve a problem and destroys self-help ethos. So, food aid is not a long-term solution to food insecurity but it may help in food insecurity caused by natural calamities like floods, earthquakes etc in the short run (Mukherjee 2004: 20).

According to World food Summit Programme, “A peaceful and stable environment in every country is a fundamental condition for the attainment of sustainable food security.” Apart from its implications on domestic stability, food insecurity could destabilize regional security. The policy to curb food export in order to secure national food supply and security in one country could have a negative impact on other countries. The evolving conceptual framework of food security has brought to light a wide range of interconnected issues that need to be addressed beyond the problem of supply and demand. These issues are connected in a ‘domino-effect’ to each other and it is important to take care of all to ensure overall food security. Being closely connected to the issue of health, poverty, gender, governance and economy, the issue of food security is a part of the multidimensional aspects of human security. Rising world food and energy prices have meant more expensive imports and higher food inflation in domestic markets, especially in context of poor countries like Tajikistan. Due to this new situation, the paradigm of food security seems to be shifting to traditional concept of greater self-sufficiency in food grains rather than relying on cheaper imports (Khor 2008: 2).

There are linkages between food insecurity at local, national and international level. At international level, ‘the world should be able to produce enough food grains to meet its growing demand and there must be beneficial trade in food products at affordable prices so that poor and needy nations can supplement their deficit in food production through cheap imports’. The concept of food security at national level ‘requires each nation to produce enough for its requirement and to have sufficient foreign exchange earnings if its comparative advantage lies somewhere else. In absence of it, a country becomes dependent on foreign food aid’ (Jha 2003: 8). Food security at national level is not ‘sufficient to make sure that all people have access to food. People may not have the purchasing power to buy food. Poverty becomes root cause of hunger and malnutrition in this case’. Food insecurity at local level has linkages to the international level, especially in the context of Central Asian region. Food insecurity in Central Asia and its impact on the regional human security demonstrate that the entire region faces this threat, as its roots can be traced in the ‘cotton-monoculture’ introduced here during the Soviet rule, which not only destroyed soil fertility here but also led to depletion of water resources.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Central Asian states faced similar security challenges as in nation-building, economic and social reconstruction and one of the serious problems of drug trafficking. These countries underwent a process of de-industrialization and there was widespread decline in employment and wages. Since these countries had transitional nature of the economies, this meant that there was economic depression in the region and people felt poverty, and when people needed it the most, governments withdrew crucial forms of support due to lack of funds (Chenoy and Tadjbakhsh 2007: 213). In effect, Central Asian states were 'weak' during that time as the political, economic and social indicators were not good which led to poor condition of human security in the region.

The worst form of a weak state is one that cannot assure its basic functions of governance for its population and instead uses its remaining forces and infrastructure to threaten its own population. It is important to distinguish between two types of weakness here: intentional and unintentional. In the intentional category come the 'unwilling states' that have the capacity to provide good governance and protect their people from human insecurities but they withhold this responsibility. These are the states where people fear official security forces, the state and the police, where corruption is rampant and riches are not distributed intentionally, and where dictatorship prefers to strengthen their own subsistence (Chenoy and Tadjbakhsh 2007: 172). In the second category of 'incapable states' are those states that have lost their capacity, either by man-made practices, such as wars and globalization etc or by the perpetual risk of natural disasters. A weak state is the one which cannot exercise its primary function of social control and therefore fails in its duty to protect and care for its citizens, who live in inhuman conditions of poor health and education, broken infrastructure and human rights abuses. Weakened states are characterized by lack of capacity (both political and economic) and resources. In a weak state, the 'freedom from want' perspective is perhaps the most lacking due to lack of economic resources and political will to implement it. Politically, there is lack of legitimate governing institutions for effective administration in weak states. In economic arena, they struggle to carry out basic macroeconomic and fiscal policies and suitable environment for economic growth. Finally, in social domain, weak states fail to meet the basic needs of their population by making

even minimal investments in health, education, infrastructure and other social sectors (Patrick 2006: 29).

Tajikistan is an example of a weak state along with the other Central Asian states. These states were economically exploited by the Soviet Union for its own industrial and agricultural needs. Tajikistan was part of the 'cotton-monoculture; policy of the Soviet regional planners, who used Central Asian states to grow more and more cotton. As a result, these states were dependent on grain supplies from Moscow to fulfill their own food needs. Tajikistan faced severe economic and political problems after the fall of Soviet Union. Under the pressure of resource constraints, the government had to withdraw from its responsibilities in the sphere of economy, environment and health. Collapsing output, soaring inflation and cutbacks on social expenditures plunged people into poverty. Tajikistan was ranked 20<sup>th</sup> from bottom by World Bank 2005 report 'Governance Matters', categorizing it as a weak state. Poverty and unemployment have led to rise of drug-economy in the country (Pomfret 2006: 70). The social welfare indicators fell steeply in Tajikistan after fall of Soviet Union and since there was already dominance of cotton cultivation in the country, the food situation worsened as inflation and poverty rose. It is in the backdrop of such a scenario in Tajikistan that we will study the response of Tajik government to the food insecurity in Tajikistan. Loss of soil fertility due to excessive mono-culture cultivation like cotton, lack of irrigated land areas, presence of hilly areas in most parts of the state, apart from transitional political-setup are the major problems faced by Tajikistan. Thus, the main task is how to develop an economy which can meet the minimal expectations of the people in terms of meeting the basic needs of the population like food. That is why food security is assuming significant importance for this country, which is one of the poorest nations among former Soviet republics.



## CHAPTER – 3

### **Agriculture and Food Situation in Tajikistan under Soviet Union**

The issue of food security has gained importance in the Central Asian region as a whole. When we look at the agricultural and economic policies undertaken by the Soviets in the region (Lewis 1992), it became clear that the food security problem in the region started developing under the Soviet rule. In Tajikistan, this was aggravated by the mountainous topography of the country. Only 7 percent of the total land is arable here. Rapid population growth, inadequate supply of water for irrigation and extreme weather conditions were also responsible for inadequate food production in Tajikistan.

The origin of food crisis in Central Asia can be traced back to pre-Soviet days. Two forms of agriculture existed here: sedentary farming mainly based on irrigation, and livestock herding. The main grain crops were wheat, barley, and sorghum. Some dry farming of grain occurred in hilly areas and rice was grown where surplus water was available. A variety of vegetables and fruit were grown, especially melons, apricots, and grapes. Farming techniques were primitive and crop rotation was rarely present in the region. Russian interest in the Central Asian area increased in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and its expansion southward in the region was driven by a variety of motivations. The primary ones were probably economic in nature as Russia desired to control the trade in the region and establish a secure source of cotton for its textile industry (Kort 2004: 36). The ongoing civil war in the United States hindered cotton delivery from Russia's primary supplier, the southern United States and it was the main reason why Central Asian cotton assumed much greater importance for Russia. The industrial revolution in 20th century in Russia resulted in emergence of a huge market for cotton (Abazov 2006: 46). Russia also saw the British Empire as a potential threat, which had a long established base in India and was expanding its empire northward. They were also concerned about their countrymen, mainly settlers on the steppe, who had been captured by Turkic tribes and sold into slavery. The Tsarist

economic policy in Central Asia has been criticized on the grounds that it had transformed this region into 'a cotton appendage of Russia'. The Soviet Union not only followed this policy but did it even more decisively (Rywkin 1990: 46).

There are other reasons for conquest of this region like strategic, etc. Resources, wealth and the valuable raw materials from this region were taken away and exported to Russia. (Abdurakhimova 2005: 136). It is not only due to the Tsarist interest but also because of certain historical factors that have contributed to the growth of cotton trade in Tajikistan in particular and Central Asia in general. Due to certain external exigencies, Tsarist Russia started looking at Central Asia as an alternative supply base for cotton. In 1913, cotton accounted for 56.5 percent of the total value of gross production (143 million roubles). There were 30 enterprises of cotton-seed oil-pressing industry, whose gross output in 1915 was estimated to have been worth 12.4 million roubles (Abdurakhimova 2005 quotes Skobelev on page 138). The cotton growing centre was Farghana oblast where the area sown to cotton accounted for one-third of all irrigated land. The quantity of raw cotton exported from Central Asia to Russia kept on increasing from year to year. Exports rose from 873,000 poods (1 pood = 16.38 kg) in 1888 to 14.5 million poods in 1908 (Abdurakhimova 2005 quotes Gubarevich-Radobylsky on page 138). Apart from showing interest in production of cotton, the Tsarist authority also showed interest in mass production of alcohol in Central Asia. Unfortunately this was resented by the native population as it was antithetical to the local customs. This demonstrates that the Tsarist authority used Central Asia as a place for sourcing raw material (Radjapova 2005: 149).

Due to excessive cultivation of cotton, this region faced serious food shortage during the First World War. This happened because grain supply from Russia was totally cut-off (Park 1957: 330-31). Food shortage is one of the main reasons for accentuation of Basmachi movement in Central Asia. The formation of socialistic state did not result in improvement in the food production situation in Tajikistan. This is basically due to the fact that the New Economic Policy (NEP) had permitted the specialization of agricultural production (Bernard 1966: 178). This policy of NEP though had some positive connations as it aimed at equitable regional development; however, it failed to achieve desired results (Pallot and Shaw 1981: 55). This is

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basically due to following reasons: Firstly, the economy of Central Asia was a separate economic zone during Soviet rule and it showed features of a developing economy. As the, the primary products like cotton, iron ore, oil and natural gas that were produced here were exported out of the region and processed elsewhere in Russia. Secondly, Central Asia was not self-sufficient in food items as it was increasing cotton production at the cost of grains and became dependent on Russia for food imports (Birgerson 2002: 139).

One interesting fact that needs to be highlighted here is that there was a marked increase in the production of cotton products. This is due to the fact that cotton generated enough foreign exchange reserves for the country (Heath 2003: 149). Apart from this, during the seventy years of Soviet history, the economy of Tajikistan was modernized and integrated into the Soviet economy. However, the economic development in Tajikistan was oriented to Soviet, rather than local, needs. As in other southern Central Asian republics, with which Tajikistan formed a single economic unit within the Soviet Union, specialization in cotton monoculture undermined grain production and animal husbandry. Tajikistan became an autonomous Soviet socialist republic within Uzbekistan in 1924. Formed in eastern Bukhara, Tajikistan inherited an extremely backward economy. The fact that in 1924-24, the area under crops (not including Khujand okrug) was 46.12 percent of the 1914 level, the wheat harvest 51.8 percent, cotton 50.2 percent and the numbers of livestock 51.1 percent is indicative of backward nature of Tajik economy. In 1924-29, the first large scale industrial enterprises were built in Tajikistan. Specifically, in 1926-28, cotton cleaning mills were built in Jillikul, Kurgan-tepe, Kulab, Farhar, Khujand, Regar and Dushanbe. (Dinorshoev 2005: 286).

The Bolsheviks who followed 'socialist model of development' made no radical change in traditional land relations and rural structure in Central Asia after the 1917 revolution (Baransky 1956: 40). Subsequently, though, they seized the feudal estates of the immigrant and native landlords through the forcible take over of grains, cattle and other means and forces of production. This evoked a great deal of opposition and to quell that, Lenin enforced a newly devised policy of land reorganization, called the 'New Economic Policy: NEP' from 1921-27, which however, was neither 'Capitalistic' nor 'Socialistic' in a strict sense (Kaw quotes Wheeler

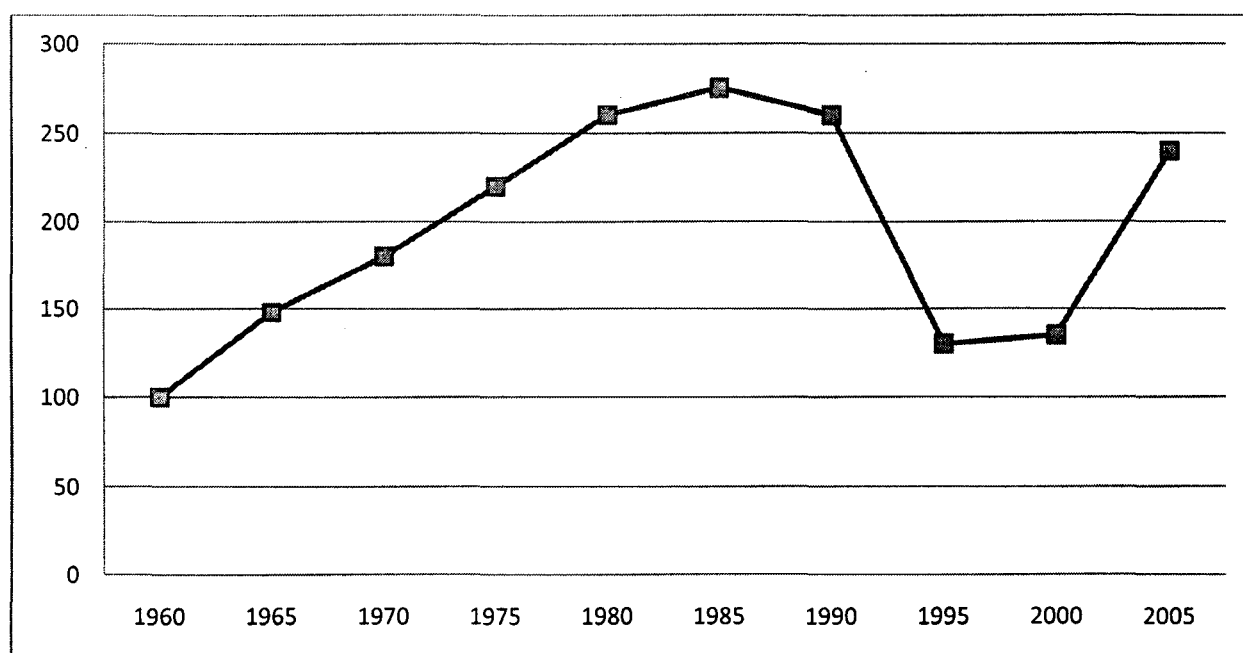


on page 45). It was rather a compromise between the two, a sort of amalgamation of the capitalistic elements into the Soviet structure. Under NEP, large landed estates were eliminated and were given as common property among working people for joint cultivation in large scale cooperative farms and each such farms paid fixed tax in cotton, grain etc to state (Kaw quotes Wheeler on page 45)

During the period before World War II, Tajik agriculture was largely collectivized in 1930s under the central leadership of Joseph Stalin and there were dramatic increases both in the area under cultivation and in irrigation. It symbolized a drastic transformation from 'Capitalist' to 'Socialist' order. Collectivization basically meant bringing the land under state control and it was an important step that was to shape the structure of Tajikistan's rural economy for decades to follow. But, because of Tajikistan's economic backwardness, presence of feudal patriarchal and tribal relationships, collectivization here fell well behind other Central Asian republics and proceeded slowly. Collectivization also included technological advances in agriculture and enhanced use of machinery while working on land to make up for the backward nature of the agricultural sector in the country. In 1930, machinery and tractor stations were set up, by the end of 1932, there were 18 of them with a total fleet of 1,085 tractors and other farm machines. In general, collectivization strengthened the economic foundations of the Soviet rule in the countryside and to suit their interests.

There was imbalance in the geographical distribution of the industry in Tajikistan as more than half of it was concentrated in the republic's capital while the mountainous regions were left behind, since these areas were economically and socially backward. There were inherent biases in the nature of regional development in the Soviet period. This imbalance in the country's economic development and distribution of industry became one of the causes of political and economic crisis in the republic in late 1980s and 1990s (Dinorshoev 2005: 288). After witnessing economic development in 1960s and 1970s, the production started declining. Agriculture development in Tajikistan shows four distinct stages (Figure 1) – Intense Soviet growth up to 1980, stagnation during 1980-90, transitional decline in 1991-97 and recovery since 1998 (FAO 2008). Though more and more land was being brought under cultivation in the country, there

was failure to secure rapid increase of yielding capacity through technical re-equipment of enterprises, rational use of equipment, quality of training given to skilled workers in Tajikistan and hence, many upland farms remained unprofitable (Dinorshoev 2005: 293). These problems kept piling up and led to agriculture stagnation the Soviet Union in 1980s. From the food security perspective, it is important to see that the push towards a cotton-monoculture got major boost in the period after World War II in Tajikistan as there was a general trend toward converting grain lands to cotton cultivation. The total area of agricultural lands planted in grain in 1986 was one-third of what it had been before the Russian revolution of 1917.



**Figure 1.** Growth of agricultural production in Tajikistan, 1960-2005 (GAO in percent of 1960).  
Source: FAO: 2008.

The Soviet policy to push for cotton production at the expense of grains is evident from the fact that in 1913, the area under cotton cultivation was 27 thousand hectares in Tajikistan which rose to 313 thousand hectares by 1986. During the same period, the area under grain cultivation came down from 438 thousand hectares to 151 thousand hectares in 1986. The cotton yields were further increased by construction of extensive networks of irrigation canals and improvement of cultivation techniques, as well as greater use of fertilizers and insecticides (Lewis 1992: 171). An impressive irrigation network, canals, and reservoirs were built to serve cotton production. As a

result, the region had become one of the world's biggest cotton producers, with Uzbekistan alone producing and exporting as much as four million tons of cotton annually. However, this development has had disastrous effects on the environment. The region's two major rivers--Amu Darya and Syr Darya--were almost fully diverted for cotton irrigation. As a result the water level in the Aral Sea, which is fed by these two rivers, fell by seven meters in twenty years, from 1964 till 1984. Not only the land under cotton increased in Tajikistan but production of raw cotton also increased from 0.17 million tons in 1940 to 1 million tons in 1980. In the latter years of Soviet Union, Tajikistan produced 11 percent of all the cotton produced in the Union (Heath 2003: 149).

Another important trend in the nature of food production in Tajikistan was decline in water supply. Due to excessive cultivation of cotton, there was increase in the demand for water supply which also affected the agricultural production. As per a report of the United Nations, about 98 percent of all agricultural lands in Tajikistan are eroded (approximately 75 percent from water erosion and 25 percent from wind erosion; UNECE 2004). Experts believe erosion affects 60 percent of irrigated land. Grain sowings have also declined dramatically across the Central Asian region and in Tajikistan in particular. Apart from the decline in crop yields as a result of salinization of irrigated lands and water, however, the yields have also fallen due to decline of soil quality from the cotton mono-culture (Lewis 1992: 145).

There has been rapid population growth in Tajikistan under the Soviet rule but the food production in the republic kept decreasing due to overemphasis on cotton production. This growth in population created rising demand for food products but the local agriculture kept shifting away from food production to cotton production. Rural population in Tajikistan in 1951 was 1,130 thousands which increased by 184 percent to 3,204 thousands in 1987 (Lewis quotes Goskomstat figures on page 149, 1992). Tajikistan experienced a population growth of more than 3 percent during the three decades from 1960 to 1990 under the Soviet rule. This rapid rate of population growth is a primary reason why the Central Asian region has been unable to produce enough food to feed its people (Lewis 1992: 149). Since agriculture in Tajikistan is

dominated by cotton production and there was a sharp rise in the production of cotton, one can notice growing population pressure on the economy. By 1987, Central Asia was a large net importer of most food products, except vegetables and fruits. Warmer climate, cultural factors, mountainous regions and religious factors in Central Asia may certainly cause different demand for the type and amounts of food consumption here, compared with other parts of former Soviet Union. But, the great gap that existed in per capita consumption between Central Asia and the entire USSR must primarily reflected lower food availability rather than lower demand (Lewis 1992: 171). State pressure to increase cotton production created a 'cotton-monoculture' in many Central Asian regions and it also led to severe shortage of the fodder needed to increase animal production.

Cotton monoculture means focusing on a single crop at the expense of all other agriculture products and it led to some negative influences on the agriculture in Tajikistan as well. Farmers became extremely dependent on the decisions of agriculture institutions dominated by the central command in Moscow, as they were not free to decide what to grow in the farms. This reliance made farmers vulnerable to external shocks. (Abazov 2006: 47). Looking at the phenomenon of limited amount of arable land in Tajikistan due to its mountainous character, the high figures for cotton production show the presence of the 'cotton-monoculture' here which had marketing ties through Moscow. The country was so dependent on cotton production that schoolchildren and urban workers were routinely diverted into fields to assist in the harvests (Batalden 1997: 168).

As per a study conducted by the IMF, the per capita food consumption in 1990 in Tajikistan was 2,700 calories which was very less compared to 3,500 calories in Ukraine. Well over half of the households in Tajikistan had monthly per capita income of less than 100 rubles in 1988 (IMF 1991: 203). The overall food situation in the Soviet Union during its last years, which was not satisfactory and the newly independent nations after 1991 inherited this problem. Poor climatic conditions have been the long-standing weakness of the Soviet agriculture but experts have generally explained in terms of system-endemic features of the centrally planned economies. (Nello 1992: 866). Since 1990 the whole of the Tajik republic has faced political upheaval. This

basically is an upshot of the policy of 'perestroika' started by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987 to reform economy and social structure. This also contributed to the worsening of the food situation in Tajikistan. The Soviet Union traditionally operated along well established principles – state ownership of means of production, central planning and priority for military-industrial complex, fixed prices and salaries. Poor were protected from hunger and people with moderate incomes enjoyed basic comforts (Rywkin 1994: 150).

From the above analysis of the Tsarist and Soviet planning and policies in Central Asia and Tajikistan, it becomes clear that the roots of the food insecurity in Tajikistan lie in the colonial policies pursued by the Tsarist regime which were vigorously followed by the Soviet leaders in the region. A level of specialization amounting to a monoculture has been criticized both in the West and in the Central Asian region itself. It has been argued that in addition to causing extreme dependence on the rest of the Soviet Union, it was highly labor intensive, caused periodic disruptions to labor force and was both, agronomically and ecologically unsound (Heath 2003: 149). By the end of the Soviet Union, Central Asia was producing 92 percent of the total Soviet cotton and accounted 17 percent of the global production. In Tajikistan, cotton was the major agriculture product and 11 percent of Soviet cotton came from it. While the area under cotton cultivation kept increasing, the one under grain cultivation kept decreasing. In 1940, 106,000 hectares of land was under cotton cultivation which increased to 320,000 hectares by 1988. In the stark contrast, the land under grain cultivation which stood at 567,000 hectares in 1940 was reduced to 151,000 hectares in 1988 (Lewis 1992: 142). The immediate fallout of cotton specialization was a high dependence on imported food and agricultural products from the Soviet Union for the Central Asian states. . The centre versus periphery relationship has often been used to describe regional differences in Soviet Union with the periphery marked by continued economic stagnation and the centre normally enjoying good growth (Dellenbrant 1986: 11). Tajikistan was one of the backward countries of the then Soviet Union. The peripheral location, difficult geography and poor infrastructure were all serious obstacles to economic and industrial development and the food production was ignored due to exploitative economic planning of Soviet rule. Although a series of economic reforms and counter reforms were made under various Soviet administrations, the economy remained state-controlled, centrally planned, and



highly specialized by region. Tajikistan's role in the Soviet economic system was essentially to process local raw materials like cotton. As the Soviet Union disintegrated, there was no central 'protective' organization that could take care of the economic and political needs of the Central Asian states (Tadjbakhsh and Cheney 2007: 182). Their economies were in poor condition and they faced the challenges of nation building and economic and social reconstruction. The situation was particularly bad for Tajikistan as it was one of the poorest states during the Soviet rule. In 1991, the standard of living slipped below already low levels experienced during the Soviet era. Before independence, the Central Asian Republics were economically interdependent on each other and on the Soviet Union. The 1990s marked a new phase in the development of agricultural sectors of the economy in Tajikistan. The transitional character of the society had a deeper impact on political processes of this republic. The uncertain socio-political situation had a deeper impact on the agricultural production as well as capacity of the transitional state to govern. This had a deeper impact on the food production and the strength of the republic's governance character in the post-Soviet phase.

## **Chapter – 4**

### **State and International response to Food insecurity in Tajikistan**

The Soviet economic policy initiated by 'New Economic Policy' resulted in massive surge in production of agricultural products. However, in the Central Asian context, instead of agricultural products, the Soviet policy makers chose this region for production of cash crops like cotton. This contributed to a paradox where production of cotton increased and agricultural products dwindled. Tajikistan is also not exception to the above mentioned paradox. Due to overemphasis on 'cotton-monoculture' in Central Asia, expansion of irrigation had become limited due to inefficient use of water. This also limited the capacity of the region to produce food and per capita consumption of many food products was at the lowest level under the Soviet rule (Lewis 1992: 172).

After its independence, Tajikistan was facing an agrarian and economic crisis due to the transition from Soviet command economy (Mandler 2010: 2). Things were further complicated by the eruption of civil war in the country in 1992 that lasted till 1997 and continued to hit the economy and the food situation. Tajikistan's per capita income of \$ 480 in 1992 was 55 percent of the Soviet average. The average national income accounts suggest that real consumption may have declined in 1991 and 1992 by 22 percent and 40 percent respectively (Ghasimi 1994: 6). When Tajikistan was part of Soviet Union, there was modest inflation rate of 4.4 percent and prices were repressed in 1990, but they started to accelerate later. The initial round of price liberalization in 1991 led to inflation rate of 95.1 percent in the poor country. In January 1992, Tajikistan experienced an inflation rate of more than 200 percent in that month alone, as the economy was under stress. In terms of retail prices, there was inflation rate of about 1400 percent in 1992. In 1992 and 1993, prices increased more than 20 times, measured in terms of Consumer Price Index. There were massive floods in the springs of 1992, which along with the civil war hit the economy hard. It was further accentuated by absence of an all powerful state like Soviet

Union which used to give necessary funds and help to the Tajik economy. Stability especially in terms of politics was needed in Tajikistan before it could start market-oriented economy, but the civil war took away that opportunity from the newly formed Central Asian state. The war also repelled the foreign investors who would have liked to invest in Tajikistan as there was political uncertainty in the country. The war had severe repercussions, with between 60,000 to 100,000 killed, some 600,000 displaced and a further 80,000 who fled (FANTA 2003). Around 37,000 hectares of agricultural land was lost and public services like education and health were majorly affected. To add to the woes, industrial output fell less than 50 percent of the 1990 levels due to floods and civil war. Civil strife and political turmoil killed about 50,000 Tajiks and nearly 150,000 sought refuge in other countries (Ghasimi 1994: 11).

Conflict influences food insecurity and its most direct effect is displacement of people, disruption of food production, people get cut off from market links and relief food and it also leads to loss of employment and livelihoods. The large number of people affected in Tajik civil war and high inflation confirm it. The economy came under a lot of pressure. The end of the Soviet era resulted in cessation of subsidies from Moscow and supply of raw materials and inputs from former Soviet republics. Since there was pressure and lack of resources, many former Soviet states withdrew from their responsibility in economic, environment and health sectors (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007: 212). Tajikistan also had to initiate measures to ensure food supply. The rate of unemployment increased without any hope of protection from the central government. The dominance of cotton combined with the rapidly growing population made it difficult for Tajikistan to meet domestic consumption requirements for some basic foodstuffs, especially meat and dairy products. The civil war impacted the farmers who suffered due to breakdown of supply and distribution channels, loss of infrastructure and irrigation systems, emigration of skilled professionals and breakdown in system for monitoring and control of production resulting in corruption and diversion of capital and assets. By 1995, the collapse of agriculture production combined with the poor harvest of previous year led to food supply crisis and dramatic increase in wheat prices. Tajikistan needed to import 600,000 metric tones of wheat per year but lacked the financial resources to pay the market prices. (Action Against Hunger 2001: 68). The loss of export production, coupled with general poverty, makes it difficult to

purchase imported food. Through the mid-1990s, agricultural output continued to decline as a consequence of the civil war and the awkward transition to a post-Soviet economy. By 1995 overall production was estimated at about half the 1990 level, and shortages continued in urban areas. Besides the civil war, low prices for agricultural products and a shortage of animal feed contributed to the decline. According to a FAO study, the share of agriculture in Tajikistan's GDP was 36.7 percent in 1995, which came down to 25.1 percent in 1998.

The devastating civil war fought between 1992 and 1997 not only crippled much of the already struggling Tajik economy but it also dealt a severe blow to its aging infrastructure. A newly-independent country that was on the way to market-oriented economy and political reforms was severely hit by the civil war. Tajikistan could not launch economic reforms in time after its independence, unlike the other Central Asian economies, which launched reform in the agricultural sector as early as 1991. Tajikistan started efforts for economic reform from 1993-94, as it was delayed by the civil war. Always the poorest of the former Soviet republics, social development and economic indicators came down further from the beginning of the 1990s due to the civil war. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) decreased by more than half between 1992 and 1996 (FAO 2000) and although it began to rise slowly after the General Agreement was signed, GDP per capita in 1998 was only USD 215. It is as per World Bank study, one of the poorest post-Soviet states. Mounting foreign debt has been a major problem for development of the economy in the country. By the end of 2002, this debt stood at whopping USD 982 million which is about 82.7 percent of Tajikistan's GDP (IMF 2004: 9). Tajikistan's agricultural land was collectivized in late 1920s and 1930s and was divided into state farms (sovkhozes) and collective farms (kolkhozes) during the Soviet period. Both the types of farms were large (typically more than 1,000 hectares) and were kept under the close supervision of the state which set production plans and received monthly reports on their operations. Such changes led to increase in agricultural output in the country and unfortunately, the farmers lost their hereditary rights to land and their cultural and traditional ties declined (Kaw 2006: 48). The farmers were exposed to 'command-system' of economy and were deprived of 'choice of free production' and gave preference to cotton production over grains. The overall agricultural situation in the Soviet Union started to decline in 1980s which continued in post-Soviet years in Central Asia in general

and Tajikistan in particular. The transitional decline in Tajik agriculture began in 1990-91 with the disintegration of traditional Soviet agricultural system. As the system of price and supply controls broke down, prices of inputs rose faster than procurement prices and poor farmers could not afford to purchase inputs on the scale they could in the past under Soviet Union. (Kaw 2006: 48; USAID 2004: 7 )

It was in this background of agriculture and economic crisis in the country that the Tajik government launched land reforms to tide over the situation. Agriculture land is at the centre of reform agenda in any country making transition from an agrarian economy to market-economy. In Tajikistan, the dissolution of Soviet agricultural system after 1991 and decline in agricultural production pointed to the need for land reform (USAID 2004: 7). Tajikistan's nationwide land reform initiative was a significant step aiming to transfer State-controlled farmland into private hands to increase overall production. The move was recognition of the fact that restructuring agriculture was key to empowering mostly the rural population, improving food security, generating incomes and reducing poverty (Nissen 2004: 4). Besides, the country's leaders knew that the government's limited funds could not continue to subsidize the costs of fertilizers, seeds and equipment for unprofitable farms, as the economy was deteriorating. Radical and rapid change in the relations of ownership and property in the countryside were experienced by the former Soviet Union twice over the course of the last century. First was after the 1917 revolution, which resulted in an era of nationalization of agricultural land which culminated in formation of state and collective farms under Joseph Stalin in 1920s and 1930s. The second wave of change in land rights in Central Asia took place since the early 1990s. With the growing crisis of socialist economies resulting in fall of agricultural output, various attempts to reform the agriculture sector were made even before the political transformation of the regimes began in the region. Regime change here after the fall of Soviet Union brought with it a faith in the advantages of private ownership and the market system and attempts were made to make agriculture work efficiently in a market economy (Kudat et al. 2000: 3). It was thought that a land reform establishing the private ownership and change of tenure would provide the conditions under which producers would be motivated. They would also have stake in increasing the production as shift is made from 'central' or 'command' economy to 'free market economy'

(Kaw 2006: 1). Hence, keeping this thing in mind, reform in Tajikistan was conceived primarily as the dismantling of the large state or collective farms and distribution of land and farming resources to the farmers. Individuals were owners of land holdings and agriculture production and the risks of decision-making were taken away from the state towards the individual producer (Abdel and Salil 2009: 168). In context of Tajikistan, these reasons were important as the country was in economic and agricultural shambles. The gross agricultural output was declining every year. Land was the driver to reduce poverty and food insecurity in rural areas, given the fact that agriculture is prevalent economic structure of the country (Caccavale 2007: 1). There were two options to increase food production in Tajikistan, cutting back on cotton production and diversifying crops or improving production on existing land through restructuring, more access to credit and better irrigation (International Crisis Group 2003: 4). Due to its hot climate and good irrigated valleys, Tajikistan is naturally suited for cotton cultivation. During land reforms, the country began to diversify its crop production into wheat but that did not lead to major reduction in areas sown to cotton, though the cotton production shrank from 9,00,000 tons in 1980s to 5,00,000 tons in 2000 primarily due to drop in yields (Lerman and Sedik 2008: 10).

The first legal acts on farm structuring in Tajikistan were issued in 1992 but they remained ineffective due to civil war and earnest land reform began in 1995 only with a presidential decree allocating additional land to household plots. Land reforms have changed Tajikistan's agriculture from the Soviet dual system of large-scale farm enterprises and tiny household plots to three types of farm structures with sizes ranging from small household plots, mid-sized dekhan farms to remnants of large corporate farms (FAO 2008: 24). Despite the reforms, land in Tajikistan remains exclusively state's ownership as per the Article 13 of the 1999 constitution. Land can not be privatized but land use rights can be transferred to individual or private use. In 1992, with the passage of law 'On Dekhan Farms' and 'On Land Reform', the land reform process started in Tajikistan. 'On Dekhan Farms' established the right of every citizen to create an independent peasant (dekhan) farm, primarily from district's reserve land. It divided traditional farm enterprises during Soviet times (kolkhozes and sovkhoses) into individual, inheritable units which needed to be certified by proper documentation (Caccavale 2005: 6). The other law 'On Land Reform' defined motives and aims of land reform in Tajikistan. It further

added that the farm enterprises should be structured into other organizational forms such as dekhan farms, lease share enterprises and agriculture cooperatives. Next in line were detailed provisions on organization of dekhan farms which were approved in October 1993 laying down procedures for the allotment of the land to a dekhan farm.

**Table 1.** Main legal acts relating to land reform and farm reorganization in Tajikistan:

DATE	DOCUMENT	FUNCTION
5 Mar, 1992	Law No. 594	On Land Reform – Laid down goals of the land reform in Tajikistan
15 May 1992	Law No. 421	On Dekhan (Peasant) Farm – Divided sovkhozes and kolkhozes into individual, inheritable units.
1 Oct 1993	Government Resolution No. 99	Organization of Dekhan (Peasant) Farms - laying down procedures for the allotment of the land to a dekhan farm.
6 Nov 1994	Constitution of Tajikistan, Article 13	'Land...and other natural resources are in exclusive ownership of state...'
9 Oct 1995	Presidential Decree No. 342	Allocation of 50,000 hectares to household plots
25 June 1996	Presidential Decree No. 522	Reorganization of agricultural enterprises - Legalized the establishment of dekhan or private farms which were independent of the kolkhoz.
1 Dec 1997	Presidential Decree No. 874	Allocation of 25,000 hectares to household plots – To ensure better access to land
22 Jun 1998	Presidential Decree No. 1021	On Ensuring the Right to Land Use - Land Use Certificates and Land Passports were introduced to confirm an individual's right to land use.
4 Feb 1999	Government Resolution Nos. 29, 30	They established and simplified procedures for registration of land use rights in order to cut red tape.

**Source: Lerman and Sedik 2008: 25**

Land to these farms was to be allocated from the state reserve or from the local farm enterprise for their reorganization. This resolution was the first document that operationalized the concept of land reform in Tajikistan (Lerman and Sadik 2008: 4).

Household plots were at the centre of the land reforms to increase peoples' access to land. In October 1995, 50,000 hectares of arable land were transferred from farm enterprises to household plots which increased the area of arable land in household plots considerably from 8

percent to 15 percent of the total (FANTA 2003: 4). Previous forms of farming were allowed to continue only if they were profitable, else, it was to be structured in a more advanced and different form. In December 1997, an additional 25,000 hectares of land was allocated to household plots which raised the area of arable land in household plots to 18 percent of the total. The June 1996 Presidential Decree “On reorganization of agricultural enterprises and organizations” is considered to be important for establishing the right of individual workers in farm enterprises to land shares. It legalized the establishment of dekhan or private farms which were independent of the kolkhoz. Although dekhan farmers do not legally own their land, but they are given full hereditary rights and need to pay taxes and can make their own decisions regarding cultivation and land use (Action Against Hunger 2001: 59). It also establishes an individual’s “unconditional right” to withdraw a land share from a farm enterprise without any approval from the management. Land Use Certificates and Land Passports were introduced next in June 1998. They are the documents that confirm an individual’s right to land use. Both dekhan farmers and operators of household plots have the right to obtain these certificates. Two Government Resolutions adopted in February 1999 aimed to cut corruption and red tape in government organs. They established and simplified procedures for registration of land use rights (FAO 2008).

## **IMPACT OF LAND REFORMS ON AGRICULTURE**

The way in which rural households are able to access the land greatly influences agricultural productivity, the environment sustainability of farming and ultimately the living standards of the farmers. During Soviet period in Central Asia, the access to land by farmers was limited as the farming was carried out by salaried workers on state owned farms and decisions were taken by farm managers dictated by central government plans from Moscow (Behnke 2008: 173). As was the case in all other former Soviet republics, Soviet agriculture in Tajikistan, was characterized by total dominance of large collective and state farms, which controlled 99 percent of agricultural land and 96 percent of arable land in the pre-independence era. There exist examples of both, collective and family farms and amongst the latter many degrees of security of tenure.

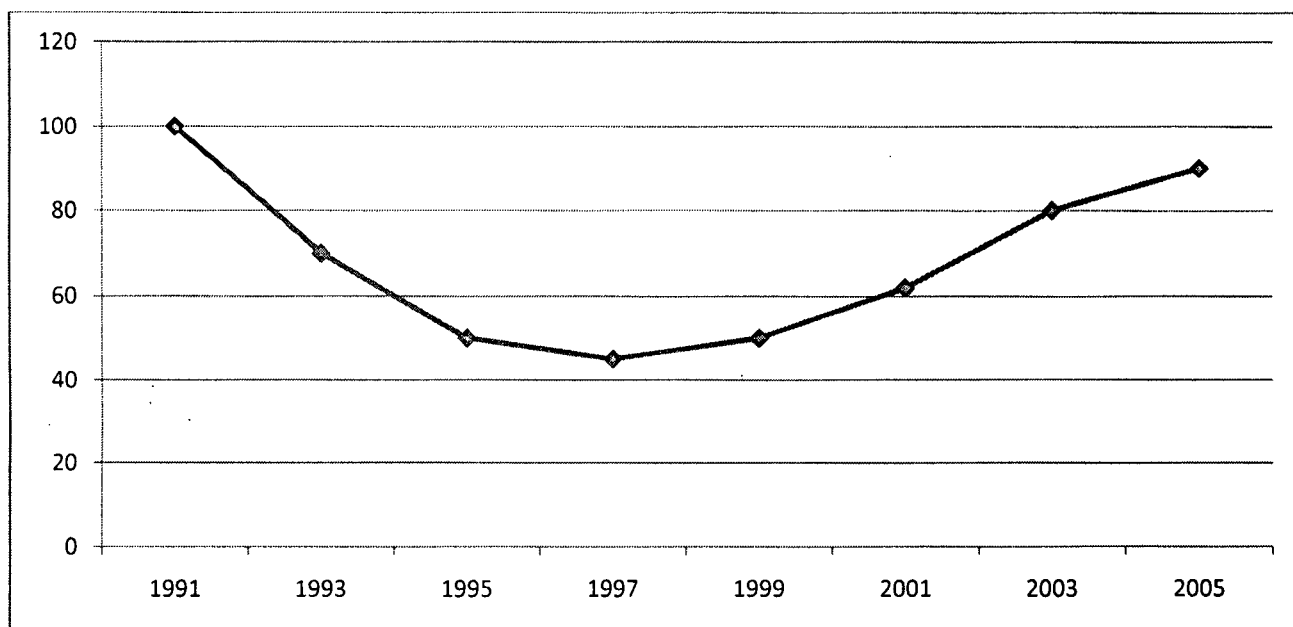


Land reforms assume significance in Tajikistan as it is a food insecure country with high population growth having lowest irrigated land to population ratio in Central Asia (In 2004, Tajikistan had 0.1 hectares of arable land per capita as per the State Committee). The main and direct consequence of the Tajik land reforms has been the faster decline of former Soviet state farms after 1995. The share of agricultural land in corporate farms – the successors of former collective and state farms – began to shrink, dropping steadily from the Soviet level of 99 percent to 35 percent in 2006. Most of this land shifted to new farm structures, dekhkan farms, which control close to 60 percent of agricultural land, substantially more than what remains in corporate farms. Between 1998 and 2006, agricultural land in dekhkan farms grew from 300,000 hectares to nearly 2.5 million hectares (Lerman and Sadik 2008: 30). The remaining 5-6 percent of agricultural land is in household plots, which have increased their share many-fold from the traditional 1 percent in the Soviet period. There was a doubling in the land area allotted to private household plots by Presidential Decrees in 1995 and 1997. These decrees increased land area in them from 86,400 hectares in 1993 to 130,400 hectares in 1996 and further to 170,400 hectares in 2000 (FAO 2008: 28).

The main objective of land reform in all transition countries is to increase the incomes and the well-being of their large rural populations which rely on agriculture for a substantial part of the family budget. Agricultural production started to recover in 1998 as the land reforms started to bear fruits and brought Tajikistan's agriculture back to pre - transition levels by 2006. Land reform was to a great degree responsible for this agricultural growth by expanding the stock of land at the disposal of household plots and dekhkan farms. The main share of the growth in this recovery is due to growth of production in household plots with some growth coming from newly formed dekhkan farms (FAO 2008: 30). A number of new farming units also came up in the republic and by 1999, there were 10,207 individual farming units which accounted for 716,000 hectares of land allocated to them. In addition, 78,000 individual farmers were producing agricultural crops, mainly grains, on 90,000 hectares of marginal and wasteland (Amirov 2000: 198). As of January 1999, the Ministry of Agriculture's system had included 358 collective farms, 9 interfarm units, 10,000 individual farming units, 35 leasing farming units and 33 agricultural cooperatives. After continuous decline till 1997, the gross agricultural production

started to rise from 1998 and it has grown at an annual average rate of 9 percent from 1997 to 2006. It was part of the overall economic recovery in Tajikistan due to improved political and economic situation. This economic recovery was led by land reform but, it was also ably supported by improved political situation, favorable cotton and aluminum prices in international market, strong regional economic growth in Central Asia as a whole, good flow of remittances from migrants abroad and the increased support from the international community (Asian Development Bank 2006: 7). The increase in productivity has led the recovery of agricultural production in Tajikistan, even though agricultural land has remained constant. There has been increase in area devoted to grains with a subsequent decrease in area under cotton cultivation. In 2000, grains were sown in 48.8 percent of the total area while the cotton was sown in 27.6 percent of the total area. There has been increase in the area under horticulture crops (potatoes, vegetables and melons) as well. They constituted 5.9 percent of the total sown area in 1990 which increased to 7.7 percent in 2000 (FAO 2008: 39).

Percent of 1991



**Figure 3.** Decline and recovery of agricultural production in Tajikistan, 1991-2006 (GAO in percent of 1991, calculated in constant 2003 prices).

Source: FAO 2008

The expansion of horticulture as a reliable source of food in Tajikistan was triggered during the civil war and this trend has continued even after the end of it. Apart from increase in agricultural output, there has been increase in aggregate value of livestock production in Tajikistan which grew by 137 percent between 1997 and 2006, a rate of 10 percent per year (Lerman and Sedik 2008: 41). Composition of the agricultural output changed considerably since land reforms led to change in cropping patterns. Contribution of crops to Gross Agricultural Output increased from 60 percent to 80 percent (ADB 2006). Though the crop yields have increased considerably since 1997-98 but, overall, they remain low by regional and international standards. Wheat production increased mainly due to Presidential lands that allocated 75,000 hectares of land to household plots. Total cotton production in Tajikistan in 1988 was 963,8 thousand tones, in 1997 it was 353,3 thousand tones and in 2004, it was 557,0 tones. Wheat production was 381,3 tones in 1988, 559,4 tones in 1997 and it was 891,6 tones in 2004. This increase in wheat production was mainly fuelled by the increase in land under household plots. The output of these household plots increased as well, apart from increase in land under them. From 1999 to 2003, the household output increased by 56 percent and it contributed to 51 percent to overall agriculture growth during this period (FAO and ADB 2006).

Households have had an increased access to land due to the land reforms and this has been a good improvement in Tajikistan's agriculture. The highest level of individual land access to long-term land rights is in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO). Here, almost 100 percent of households have received a private share with a small percentage of renters. In Khatlon region which is dominated by mountains, 80 percent of households have physical access to some kind of agricultural land apart from kitchen and presidential land which has been possible through either privatization or renting. In Rasht, the percentage of households with access to land other than household plots is 41 percent. In cotton growing areas in Khatlon, the figure stands low at 10 percent and in Isfara, it is about 2 percent (Behnke 2008: 179).

The first major problem with the land reform in Tajikistan is that it is incomplete. A large portion of agricultural land still remains unoccupied by unreformed farms. 35 percent of agricultural land still remains in agricultural enterprises and an additional 20 percent remains in collective dekhans, according to State Agency for Surveying Cartography and Land Use. There has been a financial crisis in Tajik agriculture. Agricultural enterprises and collective dekhans currently face a debt crisis which has been caused by a lack of profits and continued bank lending regardless of credit-worthiness. Though the debt crisis is mainly limited to farms growing cotton, but, has become general problem of enterprises and collective dekhans. No agricultural enterprise is able to conduct normal buy and sell farming operations when it is burdened by overdue debt (Lerman and Sedik 2008: 49).

Secondly, the performance of the early reforms was hampered due to the civil war in the country. In 1996, Tajikistan's GDP was just 30 percent of its 1988 level and the agricultural output and economic growth dipped low compared to other Central Asian states. The land was also greatly oriented to the benefit of the formerly powerful Soviet rural magnates than the actual growers (ICG 2003: 7).

Thirdly, there are differences in critical factors like access to land, irrigation, access to inputs and livestock. Allocation of presidential land has made positive difference to food security of both rural and urban households. In poverty conditions, such land is important source of food for many families and a saving grace. Access to land by households was limited by lack of cultivatable land, national economic priorities and local political relationships (Action Against Hunger 2001: 72). Poorer households generally had the least secure tenure arrangements, worst quality land and small land areas under their cultivation. Some households did not receive any land during the reforms and they are likely to cultivate rain-fed land on steep slopes which lose fertility quickly and go out of production (Behnke 2008: 199). At the same time, there is lack of inputs like fertilizers, high-quality seeds, tools, fuel and pesticides. Farm machinery (tractors, pumps, sprays etc) is unavailable, inoperable or unsuitable for use in small plots by farmers. Having been used since the Soviet period, the farm machinery was out of commission, there was

lack of maintenance and non-availability of spare parts (FAO 2000: 6). It is also unsuitable to be used on small plots, since the machinery was made to be used in large size Soviet fields. Farmers' access to fertilizers during the late 1990s was constrained by relatively high prices vis-à-vis low purchasing power and there has been lack of scientific seed multiplication programme of consequence in the country. Most households were unable to purchase high-quality feed for their livestock, which could increase their milk yields and improve the health of the animals and hence the cash income of the family as well, ultimately improving the food security of the concerned household (Ibid).

Fourthly, the managers of agricultural enterprises and dekhon farms are often compelled to plant cotton. Dekhan cotton farmers have much less freedom of decision than other dekhon farms, regardless of the specific organizational form. Intervention of regional governors is quite pervasive for cotton growers and virtually nonexistent for other farms. Administrative interference lowers overall incentives and as a consequence cotton-growing farmers make lower profits and achieve lower family incomes which affects their food security in turn (Lerman and Sedik 2008: 49).

Fifthly, regional differences in degree and fairness of land reform can be directly related to the quality of land and thus the vested interests amongst the former sovkhoz or kolkhoz bosses and the government representatives in keeping control over it. In GBAO, small areas make commercial farming difficult and in Khatlon, few valuable cash crops can be grown since there is lack of proper irrigation. Lowland Khatlon is a major cotton producing area and farming is controlled by the cotton investment companies there. Rasht is highly mountainous (Behnke 2008: 186).

Sixth, the land reforms have failed to focus on agriculture advisory services which are considered to be promoter of productivity. These services are poorly developed in Tajikistan and available expertise has little economic effects. Research and advice have been identified as

potential boost to Tajik agriculture and agronomists and farmers have welcomed it (IMF 2009). The innovations in agriculture are massively limited and hindered as farmers' potential to act and decide independently is itself limited. Communication and joint decision-making is hindered even at the local level by interests of state and local elites. They closely monitor farm innovations. Private dekhon farmers and smallholders are kept under pressure through economic dependencies and ambiguous land tenure rights (Mandler 2010: 7).

Seventh, mountainous topography of Tajikistan and lack of arable land has been creating food insecurity in the country and the positive results of land reforms are undone by this big challenge. The mountainous nature of the small republic means that only 7 percent of the land is usable for agricultural purposes. Alai and Pamir mountains dominate its topography and over half of the country is over 3000 meters in elevation. Climate conditions are continental and there is extreme temperature difference between seasons. Areas with an altitude of 2500 meters or higher are always classified as mountainous (FAO 2000: 21). Food security in mountainous areas is hindered by difficulty in access to main markets, transportation and other linkages.

Lastly, farmers are not aware of their land rights and vested interests exploit this ignorance of theirs for their own benefits. The whole process is dominated by bureaucracy and vested interests. Local authorities can withdraw land and redistribute it to other farmers and this process is likely to be misused given the political and economic interests linked with the issue. Since it leads to tenure insecurity, it prevents people from necessary investments of capital and labour in order to increase their productivity. This ultimately defeats the main purpose of the whole process of land reform in Tajikistan, which was started to provide incentives and land to individuals to enhance productivity (Caccavale 2007: 7).

## **ROLE OF FOREIGN ACTORS IN IMPROVING FOOD INSECURITY IN TAJIKISTAN:**

Tajikistan has been receiving considerable food aid from other states and non-government organizations as well apart from the United Nations. Since the government started concerted efforts towards the land reforms and the market economy, foreign aid has subsequently grown from around USD 100 million a year in 1997 to well over USD 270 million in 2006 (Aminjanov et al. 2009: 3). Like many other developing countries, Tajikistan has confronted many challenges related to complicated foreign aid structure as each donor has different approach, method, resources, vision and plans. Before 2002, humanitarian and food aid assistance to Tajikistan accounted to close to 50 percent of all the Official Development Aid (ODA). From 1991 to 2006, IMF has given the aid amounting to USD 168.3 million to Tajikistan, Asian Development Bank has given USD 149.5 million, World Food Programme has come up with USD 55.2 million while the UNDP has donated USD 39.2 million (OECD-DAC database). Data on private non-government aid is limited and has been available to Tajikistan after 2002 only. The total amount reaches a respectable USD 60 million a year mainly coming from US funded sources like United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and bilateral aid projects being implemented by international NGOs like Aga Khan Foundation and Action Against Hunger.

Studies demonstrate the fact that there are four major constraints blocking effective implementation of foreign aid in Tajikistan:

First, there is no single exclusive agency to deal with foreign aid and which can coordinate issues between the donors and government, advice donors on priority sectors and see overall implementation of foreign aid. Secondly, there is lack of capacity and necessary skills to effectively manage the international aid. The country does not have professionals in this area and no Tajik university trains for these skills. Thirdly, there is lack of clearly defined and detailed legal foundation and bylaws to guide the process of attraction. Lastly, there are financial

constraints as the government does not take adequate steps to fully finance all those involved in aid coordination (Aminjanov et al. 2009).

When it comes to food aid, most agencies and donors consider that the time for food aid is well past and extended association in this aspect would be counter-productive. Structural issues like poor agricultural policies, deforestation, soil erosion and overgrazing etc have diminished possibilities of food crops and are the new problems now. Tajikistan is clearly moving away from a situation that requires a relief response to the one that can slowly build self-reliance through a combination of humanitarian assistance and development programmes (FANTA 2003: 21). There is need to look for sustainable solutions than merely focusing on free distribution of food aid, which has a danger of creating dependency culture and undermining farming for food crops (Mukherjee 2004).

To conclude, when we look at the land reforms, there is no doubt that they have led to increase in the total agricultural output in Tajikistan and food production to improve the food insecurity situation that the country witnessed during some last years of the Soviet Union and its initial years after independence. However, critical issues still remain which should be addressed by the Tajik government, the prime among them being improving irrigation services, better access to land and agricultural services, highlighting the importance of local and state elites in farmers' decision making about their crops. State and international non-state actors have come forward to help Tajikistan in food insecurity but the country lacks a single organization that can oversee the implementation of the overall foreign aid in priority sectors. While long-term food aid may create dependency and may also be harmful for food production, there is need to focus on sustainable production that can help the households in the longer run.



## **CHAPTER – 5**

### **Conclusion**

Since the annexation of Central Asia by the Tsarist colonial master, this region was transferred into a supply centre of cotton for raw materials. The status of this region has also not improved much since then. The region used to supply cotton and earn foreign exchange for the entire Soviet Union. Tajikistan has also experienced the same since its occupation by the Tsarist force and the problem is still haunting it. Apart from growing production of cotton at the cost of grains in Tajikistan, what is also visible is growing scarcity of water resources. These two elements have played an important role in creating havoc for Tajikistan in the post-Soviet phase. As per a study by FAO (2000), there is a growing decline in the production of food grain in this state. The growing decline in food production has also contributed to the declining life standard of the masses as well as their health security.

The growing cultivation of cotton and scarcity of water resources has proved to be catastrophic for the economy of Tajikistan. Apart from this, the Tajik government has also failed miserably in implementing the land reform policy. This is one factor hindering the growth of agricultural products in the country. Secondly, most of the technologies that are currently used in Tajikistan are quite obsolete. This too is hindering production of agriculture products. The state has also failed in providing assistance to the farmers in terms of monetary and technical assistance. Unless improved measures are taken, the food crisis looks quite grim in Tajikistan.

The agriculture practices lack scientific outlook and the farm machinery is outdated. This machinery is unsuitable for small plots, as it was made during Soviet times to suit large collective fields. The government had initiated land reforms in 1996 but they have not been able to provide access to land to all the farmers, which is crucial to ensure household food security.

There is need to take corrective steps to plug in loopholes in the implementation of the land reforms and induce scientific practices in the agriculture to increase grain yields.

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