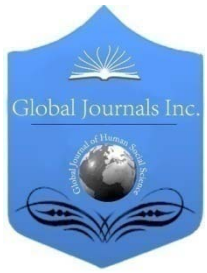
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Food Security Status in Bangladesh: An Analytical Overview

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Food Security Status in Bangladesh: An Analytical Overview

Sanjoy Kumar Saha [α], Subrata Saha [σ] & Partho Sarathi Laskar [ρ]

Abstract- Food is a basic human need for human survival. To achieve Millennium Development Goals, food security has become top most concern for Bangladesh. This paper examines performance, challenges and policies in food security in terms of availability, access, and absorption or nutrition. Specifically, this paper focuses on the progress in supply side of food in terms of availability at the national level and how far has Bangladesh progressed in attaining access to food and nutrition requirements at the household level. The paper argues in favor of strengthening the role of various social safety net programs, increasing subsidy in agriculture sector and enhancing purchasing power of the people food security production and availability of food grains. This paper has also given attention on the effect of inflation on price of food grains. The paper concludes that Bangladesh should target self-sufficiency in food grains production to satisfy domestic demand in normal production years.

I. Introduction

To achieve food security at national level, Bangladesh adopted policies designed to increase rice production with the objective of achieving rice self-sufficiency. According to 15(a) of the constitution of Bangladesh it shall be a fundamental responsibility of the state to secure its citizens to the provision of basic necessities of food. As the government has started to inspire agricultural research and development, irrigation and rural road infrastructure, liberalized private sector and imports of pumps for tube-well irrigation in the late 1980s and also able to import food grains to relief pressure on domestic production. As a result Bangladesh has made impressive progress in agriculture sector in the last three decades and Bangladesh per capita food grain production exceeded the target level of 454 grams a day for the first time in 1999/2000 and then again in 2000/2001, with only small volumes of rice imports. This is a tremendous achievement owing to its small territory and huge population and this was achieved through agricultural mechanization and modernization. It cannot be denied that Bangladesh has come a long way ahead in achieving food security and has witnessed steady growth in the production and consumption of food grains. However, recent hike in the prices of agricultural commodities especially rice and wheat has posed a major threat on food security. In the span of little over three and a half year four major cyclones and several floods have struck Bangladesh. In 2007 it was cyclone Sidr- the meanest hurricane of all time, And in 2009 the infamous cyclone Aila, are the most devastating seen by the people of Bangladesh. In rice production, Bangladesh saw a massive loss to the tune of 1.5 to 2.0 million tons. And post Sidr, Bangladesh got huge amount of foreign aid by various donor agencies and countries. In addition to it, many of the rice exporting countries have imposed restrictions on exports.

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II. Data and Methodology

Data used in this exercise were obtained mainly from the BBS documents namely Yearbook of Agricultural Statistics, Statistical Yearbook and Statistical Pocketbook of Bangladesh. Some unpublished data were also obtained from the office of the Director, Agriculture Wing, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and the Department of Agricultural Extension. Total food grain production in the respective years for the districts was arrived at by adding production of individual varieties of rice and wheat. For the purpose of determining surplus/deficit status, however, net production data were used by deducting 10 percent as seed, feed and wastage from gross production. Population of the districts and for the country for the years 1995-96, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 were obtained from the Statistical Pocket Book of Bangladesh (various issues).

III. Progress towards Food Security

With a per capita gross national product (GNI) of $700 in FY2010, Bangladesh is considered as a developing country. Nonetheless, over the past 3 decades, the country was able to achieve near self-sufficiency in rice production, overcoming its food deficiency. However, during the second half of 2007, twin floods and a destructive cyclone in Bangladesh severely affected the food security of about 25 million people. The condition was further aggravated by the escalation of food grain prices brought about by rising international prices. Being a net food importing country, Bangladesh had to deal with soaring international

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prices, which eventually caused a significant increase in domestic prices. Considering that about 40% of the population is under the upper poverty line and 25% is below the lower poverty line, a 50% price increase in rice can significantly reduce the intake of the poor. The surge in food prices severely affected the purchasing power of poor and vulnerable people, exposing them to hunger and malnutrition. Consequently, an additional 2.5 million households or 12 million people have fallen below the poverty line in 2008; according to a study by the Center for Policy Dialogue. The study likewise confirmed that from January 2007 to March 2008, people below the poverty line experienced an income erosion of 36.7% because of higher food prices. The government is therefore faced with the challenge of strengthening its safety net programs to enable the poor and its vulnerable population to cope with increases in food prices and to ensure adequate food supply (Supporting the Safety Net Programs for Food Security in Bangladesh).

The *Government of Bangladesh* (GoB) considers agriculture, food security and nutrition to be major priorities. The Government considers the fight against food and nutrition insecurity a key strategy for Bangladesh to become a middle-income country. The election manifesto of the present Government, as well as relevant constitutional provisions, provides the latest evidence of this commitment. Over the last 40 years rice production in Bangladesh has been tripled (ref-1). Government declares 2021 as the year of achieving food security. To achieve this goal govt. targets to build up nine food storages which capacity will be 8.34 lac mt. To improve food security situation country investment plan was initiated which provides a strategic and coherent set of 12 priority investment programs to improve food and nutrition security in an integrated way.

Table 1 : Per capita dietary energy supply (DES) and proportion of under nutrition in total population

Year	Dietary energy supply (kcal/person/day)	Proportion of undernourishment (%)
1990-92	1960	38
1995-97	1930	41
2000-2002	2170	29
2005-2007	2250	27

Source-FAO 2010

Bangladesh has achieved significant progress towards improving food security by a 11% decrease in the proportion of undernourished between 1990-1992 and 2005- 2007 down to 27% (Table-1). However, mainly due to population growth, the number of undernourished actually increased from 54.2 in 1995-97 million to 41.7 million in 2005-07. According to the assumed population of 181.4 million in 2015, attaining the MDG hunger target implies that the number of undernourished people must decrease to 31.8 million. Meeting the WFS (World food summit) hunger, i.e. reducing the number of undernourished to 19.65 million by 2015, implies that the MDG1 target needs to be overachieved with the proportion of the undernourished brought down to 11%. Correspondingly, Per capita dietary energy supply (DES) increased from 1960 kcal/day in 1990-92 to 2250kcal/day in 2005-07, and prevalence of under-nourishment in total population decreased correspondingly from 25 to 20 percent (Table 1). Between 1992 and 2005, poverty headcount ratio has fallen down from 56.6% to 40%. Despite the national level food security and strong economic growth, the total number of undernourished people has not declined in recent years. The World Bank and GoB-UN in their respective reports on MDGs, put the target of 34% children being underweight as non-attainable at present rates of progress. Thus, while adequate production and income growth at the national level are necessary, these are not sufficient for eradicating under nutrition and poverty. Specific measures must, therefore, be adopted to address the different components of comprehensive and effective (household and individual level) food and nutritional security.

Here the status of food security in Bangladesh is explained in terms of three conditions of food security: Food availability, access to food and food utilization and safety.

a) Food Availability

Availability of food depends on production, import and food aid. Though Bangladesh is on the threshold of achieving self sufficiency in food production yet world wide trend in food aid is decreasing. We have calculated SSR in monetary terms and found that for rice and wheat combined the ratio is 99.13 and 99.29 for year 2006 and 2007 respectively. Yet when the price was increased in the international market enough volume for import was also scant.

i. *Domestic production*

Food grain production, particularly rice production has doubled in the last two decades with the use of Green Revolution technology (high yielding

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varieties, fertilizer, irrigation and pesticide) coupled with growth of institutional infrastructure and a positive shift in public policy and market forces. As a major staple, rice occupies 71 percent of the gross cropped area and accounts for over 94 percent of food grain production. Its contribution to total per capita calorie and protein intake is 74 percent (Hossain et al, 2004). Rice thus occupies the centre stage of food security and continues to draw major attention of the Government for further increasing the production.

Remarkable progress has been made in rice production during the last ten years. In 1994-95, rice production was 16.83 million tons, which has steadily increased to 26.19 million tons in 2003-04 (Table 2). Rice production estimated for the year 2004-05 is 25.16 million tons. Wheat production also increased from 1.25 million tons in 1994-95 to 1.91 million tons in 1998-99. It then started declining and the production has come down to 0.97 million tons (estimated) in 2004-05. Similarly, pulses and oilseed production steadily declined mainly because of the loss of areas under these crops to Boro rice and other remunerative winter crops. Production of vegetables and fruits has increased, but at a slow pace from 1.21 million tons and 1.41 million tons in 1994-95 to 1.61 million tons and 1.55 million tons in 2002-03 respectively.

Table 2 : Domestic production (gross) trend of food grains, potato, pulses, oilseeds, vegetables and fruits (1994-95 to 2004-05)

(000' m. tons)

Year	Food grain		Potato	Pulses	Oilseeds	Vegetables	Fruits
	Rice	Wheat					
1994-95	16833	1245	1468	535	480	1214	1414
1995-96	17687	1369	1492	524	471	1254	1431
1996-97	18880	1454	1508	525	478	1290	1418
1997-98	18862	1803	1553	518	482	1306	1403
1998-99	19905	1908	2762	499	476	1526	1359
1999-00	23067	1840	2933	394	406	1529	1357
2000-01	25085	1673	3216	377	394	1472	1406
2001-02	24300	1606	2994	355	392	1599	1467
2002-03	25190	1507	3386	345	369	1605	1547
2003-04	26189	1253	4855	332	286	6133	1619
2004-05	25157	976	5948	527	566	7278	4600

Source: BBS, DAE

But the production of vegetables jumped to 6.13 million tons in 2003-04 and 7.28 million tons in 2004-05 according to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE). Fruit production has also jumped to 4.60 million tons in 2004-05. Spectacular success has been achieved in the production of potato. It has made a quantum jump from 1.47 million tons in 1994-95 to 5.95 million tons in 2004-05 (Table 2). Production of non-cereals such as pulses, oilseeds, vegetables and fruits, which are the chief sources of protein, mineral and vitamin, still remains far below the actual requirements, making it difficult to provide balanced diet for all. Fish production increased from 1.17 million tons in 1994-95 to 2.10 million tons in 2003-04 (National Fish week-2005). The current per capita intake of animal protein is less than 2g per day against the FAO recommendation of 28g per day (GOB paper 2005).

ii. *Growth*

Crop sub-sector growth has been highly unstable varying from – 1.7% in 1994- 95 to 1.67% in 2003-04 (Bangladesh Economic Review, 2004). The highest growth rate of 8.1 percent was registered in 1999-00, followed by 6.4 percent in 1996-97 and 6.2 percent in 2000- 01. This shows that it is possible to enhance growth of crop agriculture with appropriate use of production inputs under favorable climatic conditions.

iii. *Per capita availability*

In estimating the per capita availability of food items, BARC based its calculation on the population size of 119, 130 and 139 million for the year 1994-95, 1999-00 and 2004-05 respectively and the per capita food intake figure published by BBS in 2003 (Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2000).

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Table 3 : Production and availability of major food items (1994-2005)

Food Items	Production(million tons)			Availability(gm/capita/day)		
	1994-95	1999-00	2004-05	1994-95	1999-00	2004-05
Cereals	18.08	24.91	26.13	374	472	464
Potato	1.5	2.93	5.95	32	57	108
Pulses	0.53	0.39	0.53	11	8	10
Oilseed	0.48	0.4	0.56	10	8	10
Vegetable	1.21	1.53	7.28	21	24	108
Fruits	1.41	1.36	4.6	24	22	68
Fish	1.17	1.66	2.10*	27	35	41*
Meat	0.48	0.7	1.06	11	15	21
Milk	1.52	1.7	2.14	35	36	42
Egg(million)	2400	3990	5625	2.76	4.2	5.54

*Source: BBS, DAE, DLS, DOF, BARC; * 2003-04 figure*

Accordingly, per capita availability of cereals (rice and wheat) has been found to increase from 374 gm/day in 1994-95 to 464 gm/day in 2004-05 (Table 3). Sharp increase in per capita availability of potato, fruits and vegetables is seen in the last two years, while the per capita availability of pulses and oilseeds has remained stagnant or declined. Availability of meat, milk and egg has also increased as shown in Table 3. Fish availability increased from 27 gm in 1994-95 to 41 gm in 2003-04.

iv. *Import*

For the sake of convenience, public import and food aid data are taken together for discussion as the volume is not large compared to domestic production and private import. Import of food grains either by the private sector or by the public sector does not follow any pattern or trend (Table 4). It depends on the gaps in production created by flood damage or damage due to other natural disasters (of course, private sector import can be affected, if the Government imported stock is sold in the open market at a subsidized price). Table- 4 shows that with gradual increase of private sector import, public sector import of food grains has decreased. Public sector import is expected to level off with further increase of private sector import which is more likely to happen in the future. In the domain of import either by the Government or by the private sector, quality, price and timing of import are important parameters that need to be taken into account in ensuring food security.

Table 4 : Food grain Imports in Bangladesh

(000 m. tons)

Fiscal year	Food aid arrival			GOB commercial			Total GOB import			Private commercial			Total national import		
	R	W	T	R	W	T	R	W	T	R	W	T	R	W	T
1995-96	1	743	744	490	351	841	490	351	841	650	200	850	1141	1293	2434
1998/99	59	1174	1233	345	429	774	345	429	774	2660	820	3480	3064	2423	5487
2001-02*	8	493	501	0	0	0	0	0	0	118	1171	1289	126	1664	1790
2004-05*	27	262	289	72	30	101	72	30	101	1196	1786	2982	1294	2078	3372
2007-08	82	177	258	292	0	292	292	0	292	1681	1235	2916	2055	1411	3467
2010-11	6	157	163	1264	777	2041	1270	934	2204	291	2818	3109	1561	3752	5313

Source: Food Department

Note: R - Rice W - Wheat T – Total

**including Food Aid wheat receipts for Direct Distribution by USAID Projects.*

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Table 5 : Food grain Production and Requirement 1971-72 to 2020 (000' MT)

Year	Mid-Year population (million)	Food grain requirement	Production				Net total Production	Import+ Donation (Rice + Wheat)
			Rice	Wheat	Maize	Total		
1971-72	72.60	12019.73	9774.0	113.0	2.2	9889.20	8744.03	1220.00
1975-76	79.90	13228.33	12560.0	215.0	2.0	12777.0	11297.42	1493.00
1979-80	87.60	14503.15	12539.0	827.0	1.0	13367.0	11819.10	2782.00
1985-86	100.30	16605.78	15041.0	1060.0	3.00	16104.0	14239.16	1200.00
1990-91	111.00	18377.28	17785.0	1004.0	3.00	18792.0	16615.89	1577.00
1995-96	122.10	20215.01	17687.00	1369.0	32.00	19088.0	16877.61	2427.00
2000-01	131.50	21771.28	25085.00	1673.0	149.20	26907.20	23791.35	1554.00

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and Ministry of Food (MOF)

Note: (i) Food grain Requirement is calculated @ 16 Ounce (453.66 gm) per day per head from 1971-72 to 2020.

(ii) Net Total Production is calculated by deducting 11.58 % of total Production for seed, feed & wastage as per study on 'Seed, Feed and Post Harvest losses' Ministry of Food (MOF).

(iii) Population as per Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) estimation.

(iv) Projected Production of Rice, Wheat, Maize as per DAE estimation.

(v) Figures for 2005-06 as per Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) estimation.

v. *Current availability and gaps*

The total requirement of cereals in 2004-05 is estimated to be 23.03 million tons, based on 487 gm/capita/day consumption (BBS Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2000) for a population size of 139 million.

Table 6 : Demand-Supply Balance of Selected Essentials

(Million tons)

Food Items	2006-07 Aggregate Supply*	Aggregate Consumption Demand**	Demand-Supply Balance
Food grain	213.75	235.83	-22.08
Potato	52.77	25.56	27.21
Lentil	1.31	6.17	-4.86
Spices	16.96	25.73	-8.77
Onion	9	13.46	-4.46
All Vegetables	93.06	134.78	-41.72
Brinjal	13.01	9.37	3.64
Potol	1.22	6.64	-2.42
Pumpkin	2.16	8.18	-6.02
Karala	1.05	6.99	-5.94
Okra	1.46	7.84	-6.38
Tomato	5.8	2.21	3.59
Lal shak	2.32	14.83	-12.51
Puishak	2.27	9.54	-7.27

*DAE Statistics; ** Based on PPRC April, 2007 Consumption data and inclusive of 10% markup to accommodate non-household and unforeseen demand.*

Against this, production of cereals (cleaned rice and wheat) in 2004-05 is estimated at 23.52 million tons after deduction of 10% for seeds, feed and wastage, showing a surplus of 0.49 million tons. Potato production is reported to be surplus by 1.01 million tons. Gaps between requirement and production of other important food crops and livestock products are wide. According to BARC estimate, the current deficit (2004-05) of pulses and oilseeds are 1.12 million tons and 2.26 million tons respectively. Similarly, shortage of vegetables and fruits is estimated as 2.24 million tons and 2.70 million tons respectively. The national deficit of milk and meat is 10.38 million tons and 4.95 million tons respectively, and of egg is 8645 million (DLS, 2005). The present national requirement of fish is estimated at 2.30 million tons, showing a deficit of 0.20 million tons (DOF,

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2005). These gaps are likely to widen by 2015, if appropriate policy and development interventions are not taken with urgency.

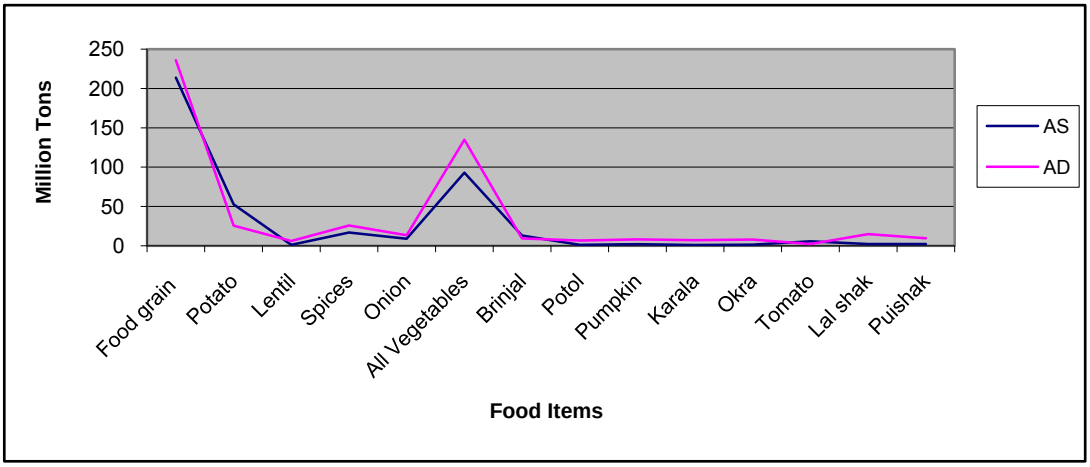


Figure 1 : Aggregate Supply (AS) vs. Aggregate Demand (AD)

From the very beginning of the figure-1; it is caught sighted that the demand and supply of food grains in 2006-07 is in imbalanced situation. There is a poor capability of our nation to meet the current demand due to the insufficient of production. From the view point of potato it is much better in production. From the figure here is enough doubt in the issue of food security where it shows that the vegetables production among all the items is not adequate to satisfy the current demand. Therefore, price hike climbing up due to the shortage of production than its demand. It is really a matter of stun and awe for our nation.

b) Access to food

Food security is a function not only of availability of food, but also of the purchasing power of the people. It is therefore important that every household should either have capacity to produce adequate food for all the members, or have the purchasing power to acquire it. It has to be appreciated that a country may be food surplus, but all its citizens may not be enjoying food security, as some may have no purchasing power.

Agriculture sector contributed to about 22% of total GDP, out of which crop sector shared 73%, fisheries 10%, livestock 10% and forestry 7%. Bangladesh has been hit by a doubling in the price of the main staple, rice, in the past years and many low paid workers say that they have been forced to have only one meal a day. In terms of loss in income, the results show that the poorest households are hardest hit by rising food prices in both urban and rural areas. Across all income groups, landless households are on average worse affected by high food prices. In Bangladesh, where land distribution is not as equitable and rural households have more limited access to land, the impact of rating food prices is negative for most households.

According to latest Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES 2000) of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) the malnutrition problem is desperately serious for the poorest 14% of the rural population consuming fewer than 1600 calories per capita per day, levels barely adequate for survival. Another 10% consume between 1600 and 1800 calories per day, while roughly 23% consume more than 1800 calories but less than the minimum caloric requirement set in Bangladesh at 2122 per day. It has been evident that increased domestic production, supplemented by imports and overall public food management contributed to relatively adequate availability of food at national level over the recent past years. Food security at household level is closely linked with poverty. These poverty and food security problems are massive, with approximately half of the population lacking the resources to acquire enough food and consequently remaining below the poverty line.

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Table 8 : Poverty situation in Bangladesh as measured by the cost of basic need (CBN) Method

Locations	Percent of Population below poverty line					
	Upper poverty line			Lower pov erty line		
	1991-92	1995-96	2000	1991-92	1995-96	2000
National	58.8	51	49.8	42.7	34.4	33.7
Rural	61.2	55.2	53	46	38.5	37.4
Urban	44.9	29.4	36.6	23.3	13.7	19.1

Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2000, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

i. *Price Trend*

Prices have been rising in Bangladesh over time particularly during the last few years. In 2000-01, the year to year annual inflation rate based on consumer price index (base year 1995/96=100) has been only 1.9 percent. Since then the inflation rate is steadily rose to 7.2 percent by 2003-04. Food prices began to rise much faster compared to non-food prices (Economic Survey, 2007).

As rice dominantly constitutes the food basket of our population, price of rice influence the other commodity prices. During 1995-96 to 2003-04, the average annual wholesale price of coarse rice remained stable at around Tk. 1200 per quintal. Since then it began to rise sharply. The annual average price was Tk. 1474 in 2004-05, Tk. 1580 in 2005-06 and Tk. 1700 in 2006-07. During 2007-08 the monthly price rose steadily from Tk. 1994 in July 2007 to Tk. 3095 per quintal in September 2008. The average monthly wholesale price of wheat moved in a similar fashion from Tk. 1495 in July 2007 to Tk. 3075 per quintal in September 2008. This was three tomes the average annual price of wheat in 2004 which was Tk. 1017 per quintal. All these price variations reflect partly the depleting stocks of food and the rising prices since 2004-05. Other food prices particularly those of edible oil, milk and sugar as well as pulses which are largely imported had increased several folds. The following tables show the price trend of major staples; rice and wheat and some essentials like Potato, Sugar, and edible oil (Soybean) in Bangladesh. The following tables show that rice price increased significantly in 2007 and 2008 later decreased in 2009 yet higher than the price level in 2007.

Table 9 : National Average (Month wise) Price of Coarse Rice

Month	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	Wholesale	Retail	Wholesale	Retail	Wholesale	Retail	Wholesale	Retail
January	1536	16.3	1647	17.6	2757	28.9	2294	24.4
February	1576	16.7	1714	18.2	2771	29	2172	23.2
March	1589	16.8	1735	20.4	1923	30.6	2013	21.6
April	1594	16.9	1917	20.3	3182	33.2	1814	19.6
May	1590	16.8	1858	19.8	2836	29.7	1883	20.4
June	1540	16.4	1830	19.4	2888	30.2	1793	19.5
July	1561	16.6	1871	19.8	3121	32.6		
August	1583	17	2014	21.3	3076	32.2		
September	1587	16.6	2104	21.7	2990	31.3		
October	1602	17.1	2124	22.3	2923	30.7		
November	1623	17.3	2187	23.2	2665	28.2		
December	1593	17.3	2326	24.8	2460	26.1		
National Yearly Average	1581	17	1944	21	2799	30	1995	21
variation with previous period	_	_	22.96	23.53	43.98	42.86	-28.72	-30

Source: Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM)

The average wholesale price of coarse rice is increased by 22.96% from 2006 to 2007 and the average change of wholesale price is the maximum in 2008 (Figure-2). As the impact of the increasing trend of price from 2006 to 2007 the average change of retail price of coarse rice has been increased by 23.53% and the percentage change of retail price is highest in 2008 after then it slow down in the next year. From January to February wholesale price increased rapidly and from March to May it is nearly consistent in Figure-2. During June it falls down From July to November it is started to increasing in 2006. In 2007 it is increasing till to the end of the year except the month of May, June and July. In 2008 the price of coarse rice having the positive trend to

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increasing till August except March, May and June and from September it is declining. There is a positive relation between wholesale and retail price of coarse rice.

Table 10 : National Average (Month wise) Price of Wheat

Month	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	Wholesale	Retail	Wholesale	Retail	Wholesale	Retail	Wholesale	Retail
January	1414	14.9	1848	19.4	3017	31.3	2096	23.1
February	1407	15	2144	19.8	3088	32.1	2123	22.7
March	1377	14.7	1880	19.7	3028	33.2	1684	18.8
April	1420	15	1867	20.1	2923	31.1	1472	16.5
May	1457	15.3	1856	20.1	2918	31.1	1486	16.2
June	1466	15.6	1892	20.4	2902	30.7	1508	16.5
July	1484	15.6	2021	21.8	2969	31.3		
August	1496	16	2328	24.5	2971	31.2		
September	1551	15.6	2372	25.2	2900	30.5		
October	1577	17	2582	26.9	2847	29.8		
November	1517	18	2706	29.4	2644	28		
December	1800	19.3	2781	30.3	2287	24.5		
National yearly average	1497	16	2190	23	2875	30	1728	19
Variation with previous period	-	-	46.29	43.75	31.28	30.43	-39.9	-36.67

Source-Department of Agricultural marketing

Wheat price followed the lead from rice price increase and the wheat price is increased around 45% both for wholesale and retail price types in 2007 later it increased in lower rate around 30% in 2008. Though 2009 started with price decrease yet the level is higher than the price level of 2006.

c) Utilization /Absorption

Food absorption in the body is a major problem in rural areas as well as in urban slums. In the words of AmartyaSen and Jean Dreze, 'the capability to be nourished depends crucially on other characteristics of a person that are influenced by such non-food factors as medical attention, health services, basic education, sanitary arrangements, provision of clean water, eradication of infectious epidemics and so on'. This can be termed absorption food insecurity when the body is not in a position to absorb the nutrients from the food taken, due to factors mentioned above.

i. *Food consumption*

Average per capita daily intake of major food items (in group) in the country was 886.2 grams in1991-92, which increased to 913.8 grams in 1995-1996 but it reduced to 893.1 grams in 2000. Inrural area average food intake was 878.1 grams in 1991-92, 910.5 gram in 1995-96 and 898.7grams in 2000. In urban area food intake reduced over the years. It was 938.40 grams in 1991-92, 930.80 grams in 1995-1996 and 870.7 grams in 2000.

In 1985-86 average calorie intakes was 2191 K.cal in 1988-89, it increased to 2215 K.cal in 1991-92, it further increased to 2266 K.cal but in 1995-96 it dropped to 2244 K.cal and again dropped to 2240 K.cal in 2000.

In the rural areas, it was 2203 K.cal in 1985-86, increased to 2217 K.cal in 1988-89, further increased to 2267 K.cal in 1991-92, slightly reduced to 2251 K.cal in 1995-96, but increased to 2263 K.cal in 2000. But in urban area, the intake of calorie shows ups and downs over the periods. It was 2107 K.cal in 1985-86, increased to 2183 K.cal in 1988-89, further increased to 2258 K.cal in 1991-92, but sharply reduced to 2209 in 1995-96 and further reduced to 2150 in 2000. Apart from being calorie deficient, the Bangladeshi diet is very unbalanced. About 75% of energy comes from cereals when according to FAO the proportion ideally should be around 55%. Protein intake during 1985-86 to the year 2000 moves within the range 62.50 grams to 64.96 grams with a high intake of 64.96 grams in 1995-96 to a low 62.50 grams in 2000.The intake over the years ranges between 61.88 grams to 64.45 grams with a low intake of 61.88grams in 2000 and a high intake of 64.45 grams in 1995-96 in the rural area, but in the urban area, the intake ranges between 64.96 grams to 68.27 grams with a low intake of 64.96 grams in 2000 and a high 68.27 grams in 1988-89.

IV. Conclusion

Food availability, food access and food absorption are not separate phenomenon but are interlinked. Food production is linked to livelihood access and food consumption. Livelihood access in turn influences the demand for food and better prices and production thereof. Better livelihood access also leads to improved living standard, better education, better knowledge on health and hygiene, etc. Ensuring food security would continue to be a major challenge for Bangladesh in coming years. To meet this challenge, Bangladesh must increase its domestic production so that availability of food increases substantially. As a net

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food importing least developed country, Bangladesh may also put forward its concerns and demand for food aid to the WTO. Bangladesh in the past has been successfully able to increase food production and consumption of all segments and hopefully Bangladesh will also be able to meet the current challenges.

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