

Statistical Evaluation of Agricultural Development in Asian Countries

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Abstract: This paper discusses aspects of agricultural development as not being pre-determined but as a continuous process of improvement of crop and livestock production. In most Asian countries agricultural developmental programs are in place to enhance the productivity of crops and improve rural welfare which is dependent on the progress and growth of agriculture. A composite index based on an optimum combination of indicators has been developed to estimate the status of agricultural development in different Asian countries.

About 39 countries in Asia contribute to most of the agriculture produced and are included in the study. The agricultural sector plays a very important role in enhancing the level of living of people in these countries although the structural transformation that is taking place in some of the countries is reducing their dependency on the agricultural sector as new jobs are created for the rural population. In this study 26 indicators were used to estimate the level of development and a statistical procedure was developed for combining the effects into an aggregate index of development.

The following four broad conclusions emerged from the study:

1. China is the most developed country in agriculture of the 39 countries;
2. Wide disparities in agricultural development were found among different countries;
3. The level of development was categorized into four stages: high, high middle, low middle and low. Results showed that about 40 per cent of the population of the 39 countries lives in a high level developed country, 46 percent lives in a low middle level developed country; and 2 per cent lives in a low level developed country, and
4. To enhance agricultural development of less developed countries, it would be useful:
 - to examine and evaluate the level of development at the micro level by giving
 - location-wise specific recommendations for improving agricultural productivity.