

Asian Green Revolution in Rice

Sharing lessons

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Background

- Two types of production system: a) upland, mix and swidden, b) lowland, wet paddy system
- Lowland paddy system anchored all tropical Asian civilizations
- Many lowland farms cultivated for hundreds to thousands of years

Pre GR conditions

- Height of the Cold War
- Dominance of landlordism
- Strong social movements / insurrections
- Stronger shift of populations from food production
- Food shortages occurring in many countries

Main Characteristics of GR

- Breeding for non-photosensitive types, short-term and stature, high response
- Shift to 2 crops per year
- High input; massive irrigation systems, high nutrient inputs, and inputs for pest and disease management

Positive Outcome

- Increased production per hectare and per farmer
- Significantly reduced food shortages at the macro level
- Dominance of intensive and market oriented production

Negative Outcome

- Diverse farmers' varieties displaced by new varieties bred for intensive systems
- Genetic uniformity and vulnerability
- Dependence on external inputs
- Farmers lost control of agricultural science and technology

Dis-empowerment & the 3 types of Tenancy

- Land tenancy
- Market tenancy
- Technological tenancy

Unsustainability

- Corporate and institutional innovation losing race with new problems
- Intensive and market driven intensive production destroying resources
- Marginalization of farmers meant loss of farmers' innovation

Alternatives

- Sustainable agriculture especially LEISA and organic approaches
- Strengthening of farmers science and technology
- Struggle for agrarian reforms, market and trade issues
- Struggle for social justice and reforms

Farmers' Empowerment

- Sustainable agriculture alternative is linked to socio-economic and political reforms
- Alternatives need to be developed along empowering pedagogical processes
- Alternative centers of power need to back-stop sus-ag alternatives
- Local, national and international struggles are needed