

'HUNGER RISK FROM CLIMATE THREAT'

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Degradation - GHGs, Ozone Depletion and Climate Change

Bleak outlook:The number of Indians at risk from hunger in 2030 is expected to be 73.9 million.R.V. Moorthy

India's food production could drop 16% and the number of those at risk for hunger could increase 23% by 2030 due to climate change, says a report by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) on climate change and food systems.

These projections are part of a model that was used to evaluate the impact of climate change on aggregate food production, food consumption (kilocalories per person per day), net trade of major food commodity groups, and the population at risk of going hungry. IMPACT, as the model is called, simulates national and international agricultural markets.

It was developed with inputs from scientists from the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers (CGIAR) and other leading global economic modelling efforts, the report notes.

The number of Indians at risk from hunger in 2030 is expected to be 73.9 million in 2030 and, if the effects of climate change were to be factored in, it would increase to 90.6 million. The aggregate food production index will, under similar conditions, drop from 1.6 to 1.5.

On a positive note, climate change will not impact the average calorie consumption of Indians and this is projected to remain roughly the same at 2,600 kcal per capita per day by 2030 even in a climate change scenario.

Baseline projections indicate that global food production will grow by about 60% over 2010 levels by 2050 in the context of climate change. Production and demand are projected to grow more rapidly in developing countries due to projected growth in population and incomes.

However, the long-term impacts of COVID-19 and other current geopolitical factors have not yet been incorporated in these projections. Diets are also shifting toward higher-value foods, including more fruits and vegetables, processed foods, and animal-source foods, outside of high-income countries. Meat production is projected to double in South Asia and West and Central Africa by 2030 and triple by 2050. Despite this growth, per capita consumption levels in developing countries will remain less than half of those in developed countries.

However, regional differences in access to food mean that nearly 500 million people are projected to remain at risk of going hungry. Globally, about 70 million more people will be at risk from hunger because of climate change, including more than 28 million in East and Southern Africa, the report added.

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