

Food security is a challenge for the next century. Despite the commitment shown to provide food to the needy by the high level representatives of the two world conferences on food security problems, the distribution pattern of food which is in no way equitable, is the aspect that needs proper attention. The declining agricultural productivity especially in those countries where the population is swelling at a higher rate, and where there are a very few other options of income generation has aggravated the situation. South Asia is one such region where almost half of the world's poor live and has the lowest per capita income in the world, as such maintaining food security in the region seems more difficult.

Nepal, a South Asian country, which ranks eleventh amongst worlds' poor countries has been ranked to be in the fifty ninth position in terms of Food Security Index. Despite the initiation of planned development in 1956, and high priority given to agriculture sector, the latter, leaving apart some infrastructural development, has failed to perform well. For various reasons crop productivity has

remained low, so also the access to food for whatever produced. The distribution infrastructure such as roads, markets are also inadequate.

It is in this context, Mr Govind P. Koirala and Dr. Ganesh B. Thapa who are the agriculture researcher and agricultural policy analyst respectively, are rightly placed

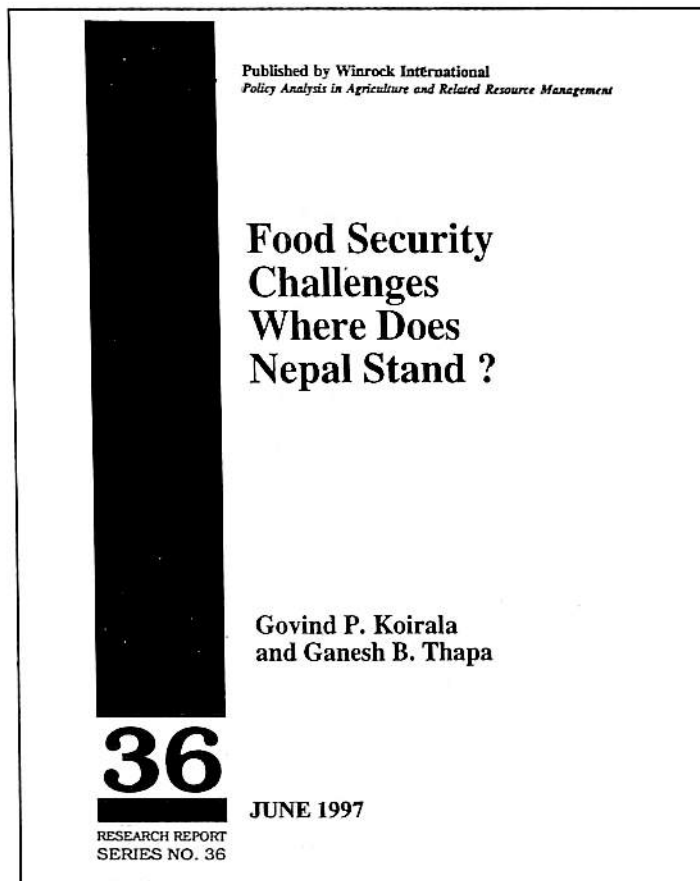
to this book. Also, how the flow of food grains to India could be minimised to the required level, how the policy could play a role on the existing practices of land-use / land reform and maximise production, and in what ways farmers could be attracted for increasing productivities of their land, and above all, how shall they be protected against the profit seeking middlemen, etc. seem to be forgotten. Nonetheless, the six points cited by the authors as the future direction for the food security are, no doubt valid, but not an easy task.

Last, but not the least, for a plant researcher/forester serving the forestry sector of this country for a long period, a bit of disappointment to note was that, despite the vital role that forests play in increasing agricultural produ-

ctivity in Nepal, nothing has been mentioned in this worth reading book.

Credit also goes to Winrock International for its publication.

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to produce the monograph such as this. They have done an appreciable job of pooling together the scattered information on various aspects of food security. While analysing Nepal's past efforts to tackle food security, the authors have however, rightly blamed some of the government policies *as acting in the opposite direction*, few solid suggestions on their part might have added more value