

The Continuing Saga of Poverty Reduction and Food Security in the Philippines

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Abstract : The economic growth experience of the Philippines is one of the fastest in Asia. However, the said growth has not yet trickled down to every Filipino. This is evident to agricultural-dependent population. Moreover, the contribution of the agriculture sector to GDP has been dwindling while large number of labor force is still dependent on a relatively small share of GDP. As a result, poverty incidence worsened among rural poor causing hunger and malnutrition. Therefore, the existing agricultural policies in the Philippines are pushing to achieve greater food production and productivity to alleviate poverty and food insecurity. Through a review of related literature and collection and analysis of secondary data from DA, DBM, BAS - CountrySTAT, PSA, NSCB, PIDS, IRRI, UN-FAO, IFPRI, and World Bank among others, the study revealed that Philippines is still far from its goals of poverty reduction and food security. In addition, the agricultural sector is underperforming. The productivity growth of the sector comes out mediocre. The common observation is that weakness is attributed to the failures of policy and institutional environments of the agriculture sector. The policy environment failed to create a structure appropriate for the rapid growth of the sector due to institutional and governance weaknesses. A recommendation is to go through institutional and policy reforms through legislative or executive mandates should take form to improve the implementation and enforcement of existing policies.

Keywords : agriculture, food security, policy, poverty

Conference Title : ICPPSS 2016 : International Conference on Public Policy and Social Sciences

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : June 20-21, 2016