

Apart from times of disaster and strife, such as flooding in Bangladesh and the civil war in Afghanistan, the countries of South Asia are now able to feed themselves. The Green Revolution started 40 years ago, bringing high-yield crop varieties and irrigation techniques. With approximately half of the land area under cultivation, South Asia produces a cereal yield of, on average, 2,400 kg per hectare – so much that countries such as Pakistan and India are exporters of cereal, amongst other food crops. Indeed, India harvests about 70 million tons of wheat a year. In 2000, the Government of India kept back about half of their 44 million tons of food-grain stocks and exported the remainder at subsidized prices, including 25,000 tons to Bangladesh.<sup>3</sup>

The decline in infant mortality reflects better nutrition and health practices, as well as a demographic shift. Although population growth is slowing, South Asia is experiencing something equivalent to Canada's baby boom: a demographic youth bulge. While our baby boomers are aging, children (ages 0-6) are 15% of India's population, and those now in the young adult group (16-24) are about 25%. This youth bulge will command a greater say on such issues as economic globalization, world peace, and the environment. The implications for Canadian trade can best be summed up by the potential market: India's middle class is 200 million strong – and growing.



CIDA Photo: Nancy Durell McKenna

*Who is the pulse supplier of choice in Pakistan? Canada, that's who. Export of Canadian pulses has risen from less than \$1m in 1997 to over \$11m in 1999.*

**Did you know**

**that India is the largest producer in the world of some foodstuffs, exporting tea, rice, wheat, and other products?<sup>4</sup>**

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