Describe and explain any two factors that influence agriculture in a continental or sub-continental region you have studied (2010 Q 5C)

India is a sub-continental region I have studied. It is located in the continent of Asia. The countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan are often referred to as the Indian sub-continent. 65% of Indians work in the primary sector, many working in agriculture.

A factor that affects the development of agriculture in India is climate. India has a monsoon climate. There are three seasons due to changes in air pressure. Mid-June to September is a hot, wet season. This occurs when low pressure brings rain clouds from the south-west over the Indian Ocean. These cause heavy rainfall which sometimes results in flooding. Tropical cyclones are common and can cause serious tidal waves which cause destruction. This is called the South-West Monsoon and it brings 75% of India’s annual rainfall. October to February is cool and dry. This is caused by low pressure and it brings a dry northeast wind. There is some rainfall but not as much. This is called the retreating monsoon. March to mid-June is hot and dry with land temperatures sometimes exceeding 45 degrees celsius. Humidity levels are high and rise and the warmest temperatures are always recorded in this season. India depends on the monsoon for its crops. If the monsoon rainfall is anything out of the ordinary such as too low or too heavy it will affect the crops. If it is too heavy, it can cause flooding and destroy the crops. If it is too little, the plants will die in the ensuing drought. This would leave the people starving. A regular and reliable monsoon is vital for agricultural needs as without it the crops would fail and the agriculture sector would collapse.

The Green Revolution impacted agriculture in India hugely. It was set up by governments worldwide to improve the agricultural sector in many developing countries. Farming practices needed reform if these regions to become self-sufficient in food production. This was established in India in the 1970s mostly because the population was increasing at an unsustainable rate of 1.5% a year and there was an increase in the demand for food. The Green Revolution introduced processes such as irrigation, genetically modified foods, education in agriculture, fertilizer, pesticides and high yielding crops such as different forms of rice.
and wheat. Over the following years, crop production per hectare increased and the food supply outweighed the current demand for it. This meant the Green Revolution was a resounding success. However it only benefitted areas that could afford the new technology such as Punjab and Haryana. Overproduction has also caused the market price to fall considerably which means people don’t get as much profit for their produce. However these reforms helped solve some agricultural problems in the 1990s. However, 25% of the region’s best farmland is still owned by 5% of the farmers which is unfair. The land of large estates needs to be redistributed among the peasants so they can make a living. This coupled with the mechanisation putting people out of their jobs and the fertilizers polluting the soils shows that the Green Revolution has had some problems too.