

Issues and Challenges of Food Security in India

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ABSTRACT

The millions of people around the world suffer from hunger and malnutrition. In 2007, the United Nations (UN) estimated about 850 million people worldwide who suffer from malnutrition. It also estimated that African and Asian continents have 799 million undernourished people, most of them living in developing countries. The main cause of this problem is food insecurity. India has over 120 million people and the second most populous country in the world. To feed this population farmers are working very hard for centuries. Well, we have achieved self-sufficiency in food production; the majority of the Indian population does not get enough food or balanced food. Due to the increase in average cereal production per capita consumption of cereals is satisfactory, but there is a decrease in consumption per capita pulse. Production and consumption of fruits and vegetables is relatively low. Until now, specific efforts are not been taken to improve the production and distribution of vegetables at an affordable cost in both urban and rural areas. Food insecurity is a condition, where very less food is available for the household member. In such situation, the food intake of household members is reduced and their normal eating pattern is disrupted because the household lacked money and other resources for food.

1. INTRODUCTION

Food security has emerged as a fundamental issue at global level since the global food crisis of 2008. Now, investment in agriculture, food, and nutritional security is a prime concern for every nation including India to achieve the objective of development. Food insecurity is detrimental to development because food insecure people always prioritize food and sustainability of their own lives over everything else. India has failed to achieve the objective of food security at national level despite self-sufficiency in food grains. High economic growth rates of Indian economy have failed to improve food security in India. A large section of Indian population is suffering from malnutrition and inadequacy of food grains. Malnutrition in India is a serious dent on its development. Food security has emerged as an important element of poverty alleviation in the country.

DEFINITIONS OF FOOD SECURITY

According to the Organization for Food and Agriculture. Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for active living and healthy life.

According to the European Crop Protection Association. Food security often refers to food availability and an individual's access to food. A person can be considered "food secure" if they do not live in hunger or fear of starvation. In addition to hunger and starvation, food security can also

refer to the availability of a sufficient nutrition to ensure a healthy diet, avoiding the health impacts of malnutrition.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the issues of food security in India.
- To anticipate the challenges of food security in India.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on the secondary data which have been collected from Books, journals, articles, and internet sources etc.

ISSUES OF FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA

- **Hunger, Malnutrition and Poverty:** Hunger is referred to food deprivation and it is caused by insufficient food energy consumption. Malnutrition results deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in the consumption of macro and micro nutrients. Malnutrition may be outcome of food insecurity or it may be related to non food factors such as: i).Inadequate care practices for children ·ii). Insufficient health services and · an unhealthy environment. While poverty is undoubtedly a cause of hunger, lack of adequate proper nutrition itself is an underlying cause of poverty (FAO, 2003).
- **Urban Food Insecurity:** Urban centres have expanded and proliferated haphazardly. Due to larger opportunities in industrial urban areas, there has been phenomenal expansion of national population growth, as well as rapid rural- urban migration. This has caused a large stress on the fragile socio-economic infrastructure in the cities. Consequently, congestion, chaos, pollution is the order of the day in cities. Slums and congested habitations have caused epidemics and other health hazards including infections. Safe and uncontaminated food and water has become luxuries in cities and has added a new dimension to food insecurity in urban areas.(Atherya, 2010). ESCAP (2007) notes that the urban poor often suffer health problems as a result of unhealthy living condition and this prevents the proper utilization of food, in particular the absorption of the necessary nutrients.
- **Rural Food Insecurity** Inspite of rising food production and availability, the intake of nutritious food and minimum caloric intake in the rural population has declined. Despite declining absolute poverty in most regions of the country , deprivation and misery and squalor have risen causing food security in rural regions.(Ali, Rehman and Husain, 2012).In studies of Swaminathan (2000), and Dubey (2001), evidence shows that almost 46 % of rural families have deficient caloric intake which necessitates recalculation of the new poverty line.
- **Failure of Public Distribution System (PDS):** Khara (2011) presented in her paper that the Public Distribution System of India is not without its defects. With coverage of around 40 crores BPL (Below Poverty Line) families, a review of the PDS has discovered the following structural shortcomings and disturbances: The major snag in PDS system has been the delivery of poor quality food grains in the ration shops. Superior quality food grains are sold in the open market at a premium through the back door. Unscrupulous and

bogus fair price shop owners have issued duplicate and illegal ration cards in the open market and so the deserving underprivileged customers are denied.

CHALLENGES OF FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA

- **Crop Diversification:** Owing to remarkable approaches by ICAR, the objective of food security has been achieved by the nation in the successive years of green revolution. Further the agricultural scientists has accentuated on implementation of crop diversification as by motivating the farmers for bringing in the cultivation of cotton, chili and sunflower and also diversifying the production of rice and wheat to oilseeds and pulses that would yield less quantity of irrigation, high profits as compared to field crops.
- **Bio-fuel and Medicinal Plant Cultivation:** The another challenge for the country is the diversification in the cultivation of field crops like maize, wheat to Bio-Fuel and Medicinal Plants like Ashwagandha, Sarpogandha and Jatropha. The concept of diversification primarily came from United States and other European, Asian and African Countries of the world. The cultivation of sugar and other field crops for the production of ethanol is undoubtedly considered to be a gigantic challenge in case of food security. In several instances it has been observed that in South part of India, the state Tamil Nadu is enthraling an alarming step in this case. The recorded cultivation has found to be increased from 46ha to 9020 ha from year 2000 to 2010(Dev and Sharma, 2010).
- **Climate Change:** The changing climate is the another challenge that came forward in case of food security , as it has unusual consequences on the production of food grains in the country. The stumbling blocks like the low/ heavy rainfall, extreme high/low temperature has it influence in form of drought (due to less moisture) or floods (due to high moisture) and all this hazardously effect the crop production and vis-à-vis farm net income of the country. The climate change has vital effect on both good production and socio-economic aspects through the remarkable changes in land utilization pattern and also water resource availability. These critical upshots can be removed only through the integration of bio-physical and socioeconomic aspects of food system.
- **Mismatch between Water Demand and Availability:** The major constraint in the path of future agricultural growth and food security is the negative relationship between demand and supply of water. Globally it has been observed that annual demand for water is about 2.4 percent as compare to supply. About 20% of the globally cultivated area is irrigated, utilizing an estimated 70% of the global water use for fulfilling the expectation of high yields. But this is not proved as a relevant step in this case, as it cause lesser yield owing to the access of squat quality seeds (Brahmanand 2013)
- **Agricultural Prices:** The lack of remunerative prices for the end products, distress sale, high cost of cultivation accompanied by the unreasonable market prices, alliance of all these act as a challenge in the lane of food security. Yes, it is true that the thought of globalization has brought openness in trade, but it is incapable to ensure healthier market prices. Thus, there is amneed to regulate agricultural price policy for the welfare of marketing community that would helpful in facilitating food security in India (Ghosh, 2013).
- **Production of High Yielding Varieties:** With the changing climate scenario, the new varieties of field crops are another big confront for food grain production. The poor harvest index has been computed in case of pulses and oil seeds (Gustafson, 2011) This challenge can be achieved by introducing plant breeding programmes, employing modern

biotechnology techniques and also by making farmers attentive for availing the information and utilizing the new techniques of production.

- **New Trends of Globalization:** The introduced new trends of globalization akin to technology of faster communication, transport, high growth in service sectors, has resulted in challenges of inequity among various sections of the society, unenthusiastic competition among entrepreneurs. As a consequence these restrict the poor farmers to access the available facilities and also discouraged the globalised world and this indirectly have amplified the food insecurity in the country.
- **Special Economic Zones:** Special Economic Zones have been promoted to stimulate industrial and economic activities. In SEZs many advantages and inducements are given to firms, but setting up of SEZs have displaced farming activities. Land and farmers are dislocated having deleterious consequences for food security of the country.
- **Capital Investment:** The percentage share of capital investment in GDP for agriculture has been stagnant in recent years. Although, in Five Year Plans, the capital expenditure has shown improvement, however it has been noted that from year 2007-08 to the agriculture sector giving firm contribution to GDP (Economic Survey, 2010-11). The real challenge is to enhance the capital investment both from public and private sector
- **Encouragement to Horticulture Products:** For ensuring the food security, it is not only important to increase per capita availability of food grains but also providing right quantities of food items in the plate of common man. An encouragement is required for horticulture products for increasing per capita availability of food items and also ensuring food security (Economic Survey, 2010-11).
- **Infrastructure Requirements:** The facilities of ware houses, roads and transports and markets should be on priority for the government. In agriculture sector encouragement to PPP model will ensure faster development of infrastructure.
- **Conservation:** The emerging challenge is the policy of conservation. The laws related with Climate flexibilities, agriculture, management of agricultural waste, building carbon sequestration of soil and overall natural resource management is immediately desirable.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Over the two decades of rapid growth of the Indian economy, the urban economy is generally perceived as having done very well. However, high urban economic growth need not by itself imply improved living standards for all urban residents. In particular, the recent and continuing phenomenon of rising food prices reminds us that considerable sections of the urban population may face serious food insecurity even while the urban economy grows rapidly.

5. REFERENCE

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