

Food Security in India: Challenges and Suggestions

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Abstract

Most of the people all over the world are suffering from hunger and malnutrition. The reason behind this problem is food insecurity. For a healthy and active life, food security access to enough food by all the people at all time. At present time India is developing country and its income, infrastructure, percapita income has also developed. But the problem is that faced by India is food management and its distribution. The Public Distribution System (PDS) of India plays an important role in reducing food insecurity by acting as a safety net by distributing essentials at a subsidized rate. Food security will exist when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient and nutritious food that meets their food preferences for an active healthy life. Country like India having 21.92 per cent people living below poverty line and about one- half of all children are malnourished so in this perspective food security should be an extraordinary significance for a nation. The Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021 ranks India at the bottom with 101st position out of 116 ranked countries with a GHI of 27.5, which the index characterized as “Serious” food security situation. This study demonstrates the term Food Security and its scenario in Indian context and this report quite disturbing because India is one of the largest producers of food in the world.

Keywords: Food Security, Food Security in India, Challenges, Recommendations.

1. Introduction

Food security is multi-dimensional concept and it is one kind of fundamental human rights. For overall development of the country's economy as healthy people contribute more to the economy with their higher level of productivity and efficiency, removal of hunger and malnutrition among the people is not only desirable but also necessary. Food security is not to be viewed only in terms of procurement and distribution of food, but also in terms of food production, people's livelihood and overall management of food economy. India is the largest number of hungry people in the world with over 200 million people. The Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021 ranks India at the bottom with 101st position out of 116 ranked countries with a GHI of 27.5, which the index characterized as “Serious” food security situation.

The existence of food security problem is not merely confined to rural areas but also extends to urban areas. To reduce this continuing problem, Government did introduce some major programmes such as Public Distribution System (PDS), the Integrated Child Development System (ICDS), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGS), Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) etc. This major programme fails to penetrate in every section of the society and hunger continues to thrive among the poor people. This disappointment in the failure of this programme can mainly be attributed to the prevalence of inequality among the society, unsuccessful delivery of public service, pathetic liability system. In this situation National Advisory Council (NAC) drafted a new

“Food Security Bill” in 2010 which considered as the biggest ever experiment in the world for distributing highly subsidized food for any government through a “right based” approach. National Security Bill after much debate and analysis was passed and became a law on 12th September 2013. According to this act, Food Security is defined as the availability of sufficient food grains to meet the domestic demand well as access, at the individual level, to adequate means of food at affordable price.

2. Food Security in India

The total food Production in India has increased at a much faster pace than the population during the last

Few decades. The green Revolution started in the late 1967-68 was a noteworthy watershed resulting in phenomenal increase in the production of agricultural crops especially in food grains that has changed the food security situation in India. Wheat crop among the food grains drew maximum benefit from the green revolution which tripled the wheat in production over the next three or four decades while the production of cereals doubled in this period and consequently reduced by over 50 per cent both food insecurity and poverty in the country.¹ In India, food security is embodied under the Direct Principle Of State Policy (DPSP) as exemplified in the consumption in India, 1950. Article 47² states, “The state shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and, in particular, the state shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medical purpose of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health”.

The reason behind food insecurity and hunger in India are complex. Some research indicates that high rates of migration from rural to urban areas play a role, as evidence by the concentration of economic gains in urban areas, and the significant changes to the contribution of agriculture sector to GDP. The adverse effects of climate change are also an emerging contributor to food insecurity, with uneven weather patterns and increasing droughts to blame for uneven growth and production of food stock. The most recent Global Hunger Index (GHI) report 2021 ranks India at the high end of the serious category as India continues to perform poorly in addressing hunger and malnutrition; currently one in three Indian children is stunted representing one third of the world’s stunted population and one five is wasted.³

3. India’s Performance in Global Hunger Index

Every year all the countries of the world, Global Hunger Index (GHI) is prepared by International Food Policy

Research Institute (IFPRI), Washington. The GHI ranges from 0 to 100, where 0 stands for no Hunger while 100 stands for all children died before the age of five, whole population is undernourished and all the children younger than five are underweight.

Table:1 Performance on Global Hunger Index (GHI)

Year	India’s rank in GHI	Out of total No of Countries	Scores
1990	-	-	30.6
2007	94	118	25.03
2008	66	88	23.70
2009	65	88	23.90
2010	67	84	24.10
2011	67	81	24.20
2012	65	79	22.90
2013	63	78	21.30

2014	55	76	17.8
2015	80	104	29.0
2016	97	118	28.5
2017	100	119	31.4
2018	103	119	31.1
2019	102	117	30.3
2020	94	107	27.2
2021	101	116	27.5

Source: IFPRI Global Hunger Report, IFPRI, Washington D.C.

Higher the score, worse in condition. Values less than 4.9 reflect “Low Hunger”, Values between 5 and 9.9 reflect “moderate hunger”, values between 10-19.9 indicates seious, values between 20-29 indicates “Alarming” hunger Problem.

1. Puja Mondal, 8 Major Economical Impact of Green Revolution in India, Retrieved from <http://www.yourarticlrlibrary.com/green-revolution/8-major-economical-impact-of-green-revolution-in-india/20952/>

2. The constitution of India, 1950, Article 47, Universal Publications (2015)

3. George Neetu Abey, McKay Fiona, The Public Distribution and Food Security in India. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 3 September 2019.

4. India's Food Security Challenges

The backbone of national prosperity and wellbeing is food security. The health of any action directly linked to food security. Food security may defined as availability of food and access it. For a healthy and active life, food security access to enough food by all the people at all time. Accordingly, all of us including govt. policies seriously need to redesign in order to meet the present demand and fill the gap of existing system in order to ensure food security to every citizen of the country.

The challenges India faces to meet its Food Security are as follows:

- i. **Climate Change:** Climate change affected the agricultural land use and production due to less availability of water for irrigation and other factors. There is a climate change in India due to rising temperature and extreme events on the food production systems impacts agricultural growth adversely. According to some various reports, Climate change would result in the availability of water and extreme events of flood and drought. There is strong need to changes in institutions and resources to tackle the natural hazards.
- ii. **Crop Diversification:** There has been great emphasis on implementation of crop diversification in recent time. The Price of Food grains like rice and wheat are no encouraging and farmers ended up with very low return. By concentrating on the other crops the farmers were encouraged to earn higher returns. The creation of decentralized food grain bank in each block would enable the villagers to get subsidized food. This concept will improve the delivery of food grains and reduce corruption.⁴
- iii. **Land Fragmentation:** Fragmentation of land is widespread in India and it is believed that fragmented nature of land holding plays a vital role in explaining low levels of

agricultural productivity. Increasing Population has led to reduction in availability of land. Therefore there is a need for shift in land use and cropping pattern.

- iv. **Quality seeds and planting material:** To make available quality seeds having good genetic potential at an affordable price and across the country to the farmers to enable them harvest maximum yield in the given agro-climate conditions.
- v. **Mismatch between water demand and availability:** There is vast temporal and spatial variation in rain fall and water availability in the country. Majority of water is available during monsoon period and that too, through few spell of intense rainfall. The average rainfall in India is 1700mm. The demand for water for various purposes is increasing due to population growth, industrialization and urbanization. Presently agriculture sector is using about 83% of water resources, but due to demand from other sector availability may decline to 68% in 2050. Hence, mismatch between demand and supply of water.⁵
- vi. **Agricultural marketing:** Another critical and crucial challenge is supply chain management in agricultural marketing in India. Farmer's access to market is hampered by poor roads, excessive regulation and poor market infrastructure. Hence steps must be taken for betterment of agricultural marketing by allowing private sector and foreign direct investment to improve the marketing and agricultural produce in India.

4. R Prakash Upadhyay and C Palanivel, *Challenges in achieving Food Security in India*, *Iranjan Journal on Public Health* retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3481742/>
5. P.S. Brahmanand, A.Kumar, S.Ghosh, S.Roy Chowdhury, R.B. Singandhupe, R. Singh, P.Nanda, H. Chakraborty, S.K. Srivastava and M.S. Behera, *Challenges to food security in India* retrieve from <http://www.currentscience.ac.in/volumes/104/07/0481.pdf>
6. Jain. Shaleen, *Food Security in India: Problems and Prospects*, *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development Agency, Canada*.

5. Recommendations

There is need to shift the existing system from expensive, inefficient and corruption to cheap delivery of requisite quality grains in a transparent manner. Some recommendation are mentioned as follows-

- To avoid fluctuations in prices and prevent distress selling by small farmers, future market can be encouraged. The present system market by input subsidies and high MSP should be discontinued.
- Inter-state movement, stocking, exports of food grains should be restricted. Free trade will help make-up the difference between production and consumption needs, reduce supply variability, increase efficiency in resource use and permit production in regions more suited to it.
- Food programme should be introduced in education. To achieve cent per cent literacy, the food security need can be productively linked to increased enrollment.
- Modification of food scheme or food policy should be needed and work on it.

- The FCI can be gradually dismantled and procurement decentralized through the creation of food grains bank in each block of the district, from which people may get subsidized food grains.
- The government, through investments in vital agriculture infrastructure and encouraging use of latest techniques, motivate each block to achieve local self-sufficiency in food grain production.
- The focus on accelerate food grains production on a sustainable basis and free trade in grains would help create massive employment and reduce poverty in rural areas. This will lead to faster economic growth and give purchasing power to the people.

Hence, India can achieve food security in the real sense and in a realistic time.

6. Conclusion

As I conclude that, According to The Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021 ranks India at the bottom with 101st position out of 116 ranked countries with a GHI of 27.5, which the index characterized as “Serious” food security situation as well as this report is quite disturbing because India is one of the largest Producers of food grains in the world. The Food Security concept is based on two sub-concepts; food availability and food title. And the performance, challenges and policies in food security in India have been examined in terms of availability, accessibility and utilization.

7. References

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