Causing the impact the impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition on the development of effective policy responses to address pandemics such as hunger and malnutrition

Jinesh Soni[1], Prof. (Dr.) Sanjaya Choudhury[2]

[1]Research Scholar, Deptt. of Law, Bhagwant University, Ajmer, Rajasthan
[2]Professor, Deptt. of Law, Bhagwant University, Ajmer, Rajasthan

Abstract

Many countries are facing rising levels of acute food insecurity, reversing the gains of years of development. Even before COVID-19 caused income loss and disrupted supply chains, chronic and acute hunger was on the rise due to a variety of factors, including conflict, socio-economic conditions, natural hazards, climate change and pests. The effects of COVID-19 led to a severe and widespread increase in global food insecurity, affecting vulnerable households in nearly every country, the effects of which are expected to continue in 2022 and possibly beyond. This brief is on growing food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and the World Bank's responses so far. To provide insights to address the food and nutrition security implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and to inform preparations for the 2021 United Nations Food System Summit. In March 2020, the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Safety and Nutrition (HLPE) studied the impact of COVID-19 on food safety and nutrition.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Food Safety, HLPE, Food System Summit, Panel, Experts etc*.

1. Introduction

Although global food prices remain generally stable and the outlook for global supply remains favourable, domestic food price inflation is rising in most countries. The poorest countries saw a sharp rise in food prices in September 2021, reaching the highest level since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Agricultural Commodity Price Index stabilized in the third quarter of 2021, but is up 14% from January 2021 levels. Maize and wheat prices are 44% and 38% higher, respectively, and rice prices down about 4%, compared to pre-pandemic (January 2020) levels.[1]

The primary risks to food security are at the country level: high retail prices, coupled with low incomes, mean that more and more households are having to cut back on the quantity and quality of their food. Many countries are experiencing high food price inflation at the retail level, reflecting labor shortages, sharp increases in the price of fertilizers, currency devaluation, and other factors. Rising food prices have a greater impact on people in low- and middle-income countries because they spend a greater part of their income on food than people in high-income countries. Rapid phone surveys conducted by the World Bank in 72 countries show that a large number of people are running out of food or reducing their consumption. Low caloric intake and compromised nutrition threaten poverty reduction and health gains and can have lasting effects on young children's cognitive development. According to the United Nations report on the state of food security and nutrition in the world, between 720 and 811 million people went hungry in the world in 2020. Given the median of the estimated range (768 million), about 118 million more people suffered chronic hunger in 2020 than in 2019. Using a separate indicator that tracks year-round access to adequate food, about 2.37 billion people (or 30% of the global population) lacked enough food in 2020 – an increase of 320 million in just one year. COVID-19 is estimated to dramatically increase the number of people facing acute food insecurity in 2020-2021. The WFP estimates that 272 million people are already at risk of being food-insecure in the countries where it operates. Acute food insecurity is defined as when a person's life or livelihood is in immediate danger due to lack of food. Hunger was on an upward trajectory even before the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated existing impacts from extreme climate events, conflict and other shocks to economic opportunities.[1]

The food security and nutritional risks of these dynamics are serious. According to the latest report on Food Security and Nutrition (FAO et al., 2020), even before the outbreak of the pandemic, about two billion people faced moderate or severe levels of food insecurity. Since 2014, that number has been climbing, an increase of 60 million in five years. The COVID-19 pandemic is undermining efforts to achieve SDG 2. The complex dynamics triggered by lockdowns aimed at controlling the disease are leading to a major disruption in food systems, leading to a dramatic increase in hunger. The most recent estimates indicate that between 83 and 132 million additional people (FAO et al., 2020) – including 38–80 million people in low-income countries that depend on food imports (Torero, 2020) - As one will experience food insecurity. direct result of the pandemic. At least 25 countries, including Lebanon, Yemen and South Sudan, are at risk of significant food security deterioration due to the secondary socio-economic effects of the pandemic (FAO and WFP, 2020). In Latin America, the number of people in need of food assistance has nearly tripled in 2020 (UN, 2020a). Food productivity may also suffer in future, especially if the virus is not controlled and lockdown measures continue[2].

2. As COVID-19 impacts food security and nutrition

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease and there is no evidence that food is the carrier of its transmission (ICMSF, 2020). However, the virus and measures to contain its spread have had a profound impact on food security, nutrition and food systems. Also, malnutrition (including obesity) increases the chances of being vulnerable to COVID-19. Initial and ongoing uncertainty about the nature of the spread of COVID-19 led to strict lockdown and physical distancing policies in place in many countries. These measures caused a severe slowdown in economic activity and disrupted supply chains, highlighting new dynamics with wide-ranging effects on food systems and people's food security and nutrition. Below we outline these dynamics. We then highlight how these trends are affecting the six dimensions of food security proposed by HLPE in its 15th report—Availability, Access, Use, Sustainability, Agency and Sustainability—which is the Right to Food (HLPE, 2020) are required to be ensured.[3]

3. The impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition in 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic is a health and human crisis that threatens the food security and nutrition of millions of people around the world. Millions of people were suffering from hunger and malnutrition even before the virus hit, and unless immediate action is taken, we could see a global food emergency.

The pandemic affects us in a time of enormous global challenges. We need to tackle all the food security and nutrition dimensions of this crisis. Measures to control or mitigate the outbreak of COVID19 are already affecting the global food supply chain. Border restrictions and lockdowns, for example, are slowing harvesting in some parts of the world, leaving millions of seasonal workers without livelihoods, while also hindering food access to markets. Meat processing plants and food markets are being forced to close in many places due to the severe COVID-19 outbreak among workers. Disruptions in the supply chain and fall in consumer demand have resulted in farmers burying perishable produce or dumping milk. As a result, many people in urban centers now struggle to access fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy, meat and fish.[4]

Global markets for staple cereals remain strong; After a good harvest in 2019, stocks of most staple food items are adequate. Yet much of the world's population gets its food from local markets, and food security and nutrition remain susceptible to disruption. High levels of unemployment, loss of income, and rising food costs are also making access to food difficult for many. In some countries, the prices of basic food items have started rising at a time when people have less money in their pockets. Before the start of this pandemic, more than 820 million people were already identified as chronically food insecure. The latest figures show that the food security of 135 million people was classified as at crisis level or worse. This number could almost double before the end of the year due to the effects of COVID-19.4 Similarly, the number of children under five who are dwarfed is now 144 million. This is more than one in five children worldwide.[5] The number of children classified as wasting is currently 47 million. By the end of May, 368 million school children were deprived of the daily school meals they depend on. The pandemic could push some 49 million people into extreme poverty in 2020.[5] Actors in all parts of the food system are affected by this pandemic. The deep global economic shocks caused by COVID-19 will impact the cash flow and financial liquidity of producers, small and medium agri-business financial institutions, reducing production capacity, limited market access, loss of remittances, job losses and unexpected losses and due to medical cost. The pandemic came at a time when food security and our food system were already under stress. Conflict, natural disasters, climate change, and the arrival of pests and plagues on an intercontinental scale preceded COVID-19 and were already undermining food security in many contexts.[6] For example, in East Africa, people face a "triple threat" of mutually crippling disasters as ongoing heavy rains attempt to tackle locust swarms amid the COVID-19 outbreak . The COVID-19 pandemic also raises alarm over the urgent need to transform the world's food systems. Globally, food systems continue to be drivers of climate change and the environmental crisis facing the planet. Food systems contribute about a third of all greenhouse gas emissions and contribute significantly to the loss of biodiversity.[7]

4. Ensuring better protection for vulnerable and marginalized food system workers and farmers disproportionately affected by the crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly revealed that food system workers are critical to the response to an emergency. However, despite being essential workers, food system workers often lack labor rights, as legislation in this area is weak in many countries (Yashnew, 2018). Given the extent to which food systems depend on different types of labour, from small-scale family farm workers to food processing workers, to migrant agricultural workers, it is essential to ensure that all food system workers, including migrant workers, are be allowed. Clear and protected rights within the law at the national level, in line with internationally recognized standards. This includes safe working conditions and paid sick leave, access to social security and adequate living conditions that ensure their safety and well-being, including migrant workers (World Bank, 2020). Expanding access to social security including health insurance, transfers to reduce income loss and measures to support production (such as seed distribution) to small-scale farmers are critical to reducing their vulnerability (FAO, 2020d) . Such protection will strengthen the resilience of food systems to confront crises such as COVID-19.[8]

5. Strengthen and coordinate policy responses to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food systems and food security and nutrition, including at the international level

HLPE's Report 15 emphasizes that the urgent and worsening situation as a result of the COVID-19 crisis "calls for measures to reform food systems to make them not only more resilient to crises, but more equitable and inclusive." Strong and dignified, regenerative, healthy and nutritious, as well as productive and prosperous for all" (HLPE, 2020b). Yet until now, there has been a lack of international policy coordination and response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition. Epidemics clearly reflect the interconnected nature of food systems with health systems, economic systems, and environmental systems, and as such, policy responses require coordination across different governance systems – including at the international level – which Addresses the ways in which the crisis is affecting food security and nutrition. The CFS is an internationally articulated and appropriate policy coordinating body leading the development of the global policy response to COVID-19 and its impact on food security and nutrition.[9] In 2009, the World Committee on Food Security (CFS) reformed to make it a more inclusive international governance body, aiming to become the leading body in establishing international norms and guidance on food security and nutrition policy (McKeon, 2015). To fulfill this role, a core function of the CFS is to facilitate the sharing of national experiences among its members, as well as to develop guidelines that outline best practices for achieving the FSN goals have a role.[10] The CFS has established guidelines for monitoring CFS decisions and guidance (CFS, 2013), and as such can serve as an important focal point for information on policy responses to the impact of the pandemic on FSNs , so as to better facilitate policy coordination among different countries. Governance between regions and governments.[11]

6. Result Analysis

The results of this study are divided into four global themes: i) the impact of COVID-19 on food security; ii) Food insecurity and coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic, iii) Food relief and emergency assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic, and iv) The impact of COVID-19 and food insecurity on health and wellbeing. Most participants in the study expressed that families from low socioeconomic backgrounds and disadvantaged communities, such as those working on daily wages and relying on remittances, had experienced increased food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants used a variety of strategies to meet their food needs during the pandemic. Community members experienced favoritism, nepotism and favoritism from local politicians and officials during the distribution of food relief. Food insecurity among low-income and disadvantaged households has affected their health and well-being making them more vulnerable to COVID-19 infection. Interpersonal factors such as weak family support systems, lack of support from friends or peers, limited food storage at home and food habits during the COVID-19 pandemic were linked to food scarcity among participants in our study. This may be due to the increasing number of migrant workers returning to India during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected the flow of remittances thereby sensitizing family members to economic needs that are critical to the food security of families are necessary.[12] In this study, households whose major source of income was foreign remittances experienced hunger and food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The rapid growth of remittances over the years suddenly slowed down during the pandemic resulting in poor family income conditions in India. This result is similar to the most recent survey report by the Government of India which showed that nearly one-fourth of migrant labor households in India had received inadequate food consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation can be explained by the evidence that one in three households in India depend on foreign remittances for their livelihood. Lockdowns imposed in most countries around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in migrant workers losing their jobs or delaying their payments, directly affecting the food security of their family members.[13]

All five of these factors in the socio-ecological model act at different levels, but also interact with each other to influence the health and well-being of populations. This study showed that different forms of mental health problems and gender violence were seen in communities, especially in families that had weak resilience to economic shock during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our findings are comparable with similar results from a study in neighboring India where cases of mental health problems, gender-based violence and child abuse suddenly increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, the findings of a previous study conducted during the post-earthquake period in India also showed a high prevalence of anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation among vulnerable groups of the population. Thus, persistent mental health issues and poor well-being among vulnerable groups during COVID-19 can lead to long-term adverse mental health outcomes. This has highlighted the need for effective mental health services at the community level, as at present, India's healthcare system lacks adequate provision of mental health services.

7. Conclusion

The World Bank's experience with Avian Influenza shows that cross-sectoral, coordinated investments in human, environmental and animal health (the "one health" approach) are a cost-effective way of managing risk and controlling diseases at source. Animals are the source of more than 70% of emerging infectious diseases (EIDs) in humans. Transmission of pathogens from animals to humans and EID is increasing in a rapidly changing environment, with deforestation, land-use change and rapid population growth increasing the exposure of humans to animal-borne diseases. Under the World Bank Group's first COVID-19 package of funding, countries can invest in long-term prevention, such as stronger veterinary services, disease surveillance and food security. In India, for example, the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Project will improve disease surveillance systems in humans and animals and health information systems across the country. In China, a new project will improve risk-based surveillance systems for zoonotic and other emerging health threats. It will strengthen the capacity for risk assessment, diagnosis and monitoring of human, animal and wildlife diseases. It will also improve the protocol for sharing of information between the agencies concerned. The food security and nutrition of millions of people are threatened by the COVID-19 crisis, many of whom were already suffering. A major global food emergency is drawing near. In the long term, we face potential disruptions to the functioning of food systems, with serious consequences for health and nutrition. With concerted action, we can not only avoid some of the worst impacts but do so in a way that supports the transition to more sustainable food systems that are in better balance with nature and that support healthier diets. There are - and thus better health prospects - for everyone.

8. The future of the 2021 Food System Summit is now

The Food System Summit in 2021, and its preparation process, provides a significant opportunity for governments and all stakeholders to mobilize multi-stakeholder action, for inclusive dialogue and for short-term socio-economic response and medium-term priorities. "Building to Change." Stakeholders should leverage the introductory process as an important platform for creating a better and quicker approach to the complex task of transforming food systems. It could be a rallying call to re-commit the 2030 agenda in the region and accelerate progress towards the SDGs more broadly. The current pandemic has exposed our fragility, but also the interconnected nature of our world. This underscores the need to work together to tackle global challenges. Multi-stakeholder collaboration is needed at all levels, and there are many experiences and practical approaches to working together – even in a crisis where time is of the essence. The international community provides many such tools. The Food Systems Summit in 2021 will provide an opportunity for action, but many other existing institutions are serving as spaces within which actors can organize and coordinate actions. Multi-stakeholder platforms that ensure effective representation and voice of all stakeholders can help mobilize a rapid and innovative response to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the agriculture and food sectors.

9. Recommendations

Support the development of agroecology curriculum in agriculture schools in different countries. Include support for individual and community responses, such as home and community gardens. Invest in advanced regional market infrastructure at the regional, national and local levels. Consider adopting stronger regulation, including a competition policy, to empower small and medium agricultural food enterprises (SMEs) to participate in national, regional and global supply chains. Recognizing the role of the CFS as a key body in coordinating an international governance response to the impact of COVID-19 on the FSN. Develop a global campaign to educate and inform the public on nutrition-sensitive practices to prevent and manage COVID-19 infections at household and individual levels. Involve food system activists and agricultural producer organizations in COVID-19 decision processes at the national and international level. Implement mechanisms to protect farmers and small farm producers from uncertainties and loss of income, such as specific insurance, transfer and input distribution. Ensure that food systems workers have full protection from hazards and risks (personal protective equipment, distancing measures, clear

health and safety guidelines, paid sick leave, adequate sleep, eating and sanitation facilities, quarantine shelters In terms of).

10. Limitation and Strength

The study captured lived experiences related to the effects of COVID-19 on food insecurity among low-income and disadvantaged households during the peak phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in one of India's poorest provinces. The study included opinions and experiences from diverse participants, which provided useful evidence for its immediate impact during and after the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. However, the results of this study need to be interpreted in light of some limitations. First, this study captured qualitative aspects of food insecurity in terms of community perception and experiences for food availability, availability and use, and therefore could not determine the level of food insecurity status. 2 expose. Since many people have lost their jobs or stayed at home due to the lockdown and expressed their expectation for emergency assistance from the concerned authorities.

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