

An article on issues, challenges and policies in food security in terms of availability, accessibility and affordability in India

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Abstract - This idea of "Food Security" encompasses a wide range of topics. When all people, at all times, have the means to obtain and prepare adequate, safe, and palatable food that allows them to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle, we say that food security has been achieved. The study analyses the present food security policy in India, as well as the issues and problems encountered in this sphere. The author conducted a thorough literature research and provided a concise summary of the results pertinent to the paper's topic. In this study, we outline a number of different approaches and protocols. This document describes the problems and obstacles related to all aspects of food security, including the availability, accessibility, and cost of food. It was determined that poor policy is to blame for the failure to guarantee food security and lessen hunger. Despite the government's best efforts, there is still a need to address food insecurity.

Keywords - Policies, Security, Food Security, Health, Affordability

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INTRODUCTION

Food security, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is the state in which all people have physical, social, and economic access to adequate, safe, and nourishing food that meets their dietary needs and food choices in order to live an active and healthy life at all times. In other terms, food security is the circumstance in which everyone has access to food. This access must be maintained for the rest of their life.

In accordance with Article 21.1 of India's Constitution from 1950, the right to eat is one of the most fundamental human rights. The importance of providing food security in a country like India cannot be overstated, given that 21.9% of its population lives below the poverty line and more than 50% of all children are underfed. Food "security" refers to both the availability of food and the means to purchase it. Here, "accessibility" refers to not just availability but also cost. Food availability, food access, and food usage are the three components that make up what the World Health Organization calls "food security."

Surprisingly, "the stability of the first three aspects of food security throughout time" was included as a fourth component by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Consequently, there are several aspects to consider while ensuring a nation's food supply. One-third of India's population is believed to be living in extreme poverty, and more than half of all children are undernourished, making food security a top priority.

Concerning food security in India, only a small number of serious problems have been identified. These include I the right to food campaign, (ii) Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Agricultural Trade Agreement, (iii) global warming, (iv) pervasiveness of food insecurity and poverty despite abundant supplies, (v) the establishment of a streamlined public distribution network, and (vi) A Bill To Ensure Food Safety And Stability For All Americans. These significant challenges have put India's food security in jeopardy. Cost, availability, and efficiency are examined in relation to food security in this article.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study specifically answers the following queries:

1. What are the strategies India is using—and has used—to achieve food security?
2. What are the present problems and obstacles affecting food security for all Indian citizens, and what can be done to address them?

In this paper, we will highlight the issues and strategies related to food security and availability after providing a brief overview of the theoretical literature on those topics. In order to attain food and nutritional security in India for the overall development of an individual as well as sound and sustainable development of the Indian economy, In this paper, we examine a range of issues pertaining to food security in India and offer some potential remedies to these problems.

Food security: from concept to practise

Due to changes in government policy thinking, the concept of food security has developed gradually over the past few decades. This issue was first recognised as a global one at the 1974 World Food Conference in Rome, where it was stated categorically that "Every man, woman, and child has the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition in order to develop fully and maintain their physical and mental faculties (...)." This means that all countries, especially the wealthier ones and others in a position to contribute help, have a common aim of eradicating global hunger.⁵

During 1983, the FAO focused its efforts on studying food availability, primarily through the lens of a definition that takes into account the predictability of both supply and demand for food. The World Bank published its seminal study on poverty and hunger in 1986 (World Bank, 1986), which included a chapter on the changing nature of food insecurity over time. Sen's Theory of Famine^[6] reinforced this by emphasising the impact of individual rights on the availability of food in the forms of production, labour, commerce, and transfer. The World Food Summit (1996) defined food security in terms of accessibility, availability, use, and stability, all of which contribute to the complexity of the concept. More than 40 countries have constitutional provisions guaranteeing citizens the right to food, and the FAO projects that an additional 54 countries will follow suit over the next decade.

At its core, the notion of food security is comprised of the subconcepts of food availability and food title. The former is worried about the food supply on a local, national, and even international basis. Having the means to provide for one's own subsistence is what the later term alludes to.⁸

These are the most important factors or conditions for achieving food security:

Food availability: Sufficient food is physically available if it can be produced or imported in sufficient quantities. This term describes the "supply side" of food safety.

Food Accessibility: It's the right of every person to be able to buy the foods they need to maintain a healthy and well-balanced diet.

Food Utilisation/use: Utilization, in the broadest sense, refers to the processes through which an individual optimises their health by using the nutrients available in their diet.

Food Security in India – Schemes and Policies

In recent decades, India has boosted its overall food output at a rate that has far outpaced its population growth. The Green Revolution in India, which began in the latter half of the 1960s, was a pivotal moment that dramatically increased crop yields, notably of cereal grains, and subsequently altered the country's precarious food supply. In particular, wheat benefited greatly from the Green Revolution, which caused a tripling of wheat output over the following three to four decades. Overall cereal production also doubled during this time, which helped cut food insecurity and poverty by more than half.⁹ The Constitution of India from 1950 includes the Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP), which guarantees everyone access to safe and nutritious food. "The state shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the 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 purposes, of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health," it says in Article 47¹⁰.

A recent study estimated that 58 million individuals have broken the cycle of poverty as a result of this increase in energy availability. Even though India has come a long way to improve its food security, the situation is still pitiful. In 2014, India's food security status remained in the "alarming" range on the Global Hunger Index compiled by the International Food Policy Research Institute. It is ranked #55 out of 120 countries worldwide. Inflation is making life increasingly difficult for low-income Indians by driving up the price of food. Pulses and edible oils are in low supply, adding to the burden, thus the government must import them. Further compounding farmers' difficulties are factors such as climate change, shrinking farmland, and a dearth of irrigation systems. Furthermore, the availability of food and agricultural expansion needs careful analysis because they are the driving forces behind food safety. Public Distribution System (PDS) food distribution is also an important element of government support. When it comes to guaranteeing people have access to nutritious food, The National Security Bill, Social Protection Programs, Vocational Training Programs, and other similar initiatives are all included here. Food security programmes have been successful thanks to the involvement of third parties such as non-governmental organisations, civil society groups, the commercial sector, and international organisations.

Availability of Food in India

The term "availability" is used to describe the actual presence of the required quantities of a food item.

What this translates to is "enough," or enough for the given situation. The foundation of food security is the ability to produce enough food to meet demand. It might be said that a major condition for achieving food security in India is the enhancement of food availability. There are several factors that contribute to the availability of food in a given area, including agricultural production, transportation, storage facilities, and surpluses or imports. Taking into account both exports and imports, we may estimate the net availability of food production. It is a significant accomplishment that, in the decades after independence, India has developed the capacity to produce all of its own grain. As a result of the green revolution, domestic food grain output has risen dramatically and steadily, making food imports almost unnecessary save in cases of catastrophic tragedies or crises such as hunger, drought, and serious crop failure¹².

Total grain production, net grain availability, net grain availability per capita, and food prices are all interconnected with one another and with food security. In the table below, we present 13 values for the net food grain availability per capita from 2009 to 2013.

b	Food grains(grams per day)
2009	444.0
2010	437.1
2011	453.6
2012	450.3
2013	510.8

It is obvious that fluctuations in output cause fluctuations in hunger. Food grain supply in India has dropped dramatically on a per capita basis. Differences in food production as a result of climatic change, population expansion, crop diversification, etc., cause shifts in the net availability of per capita food grains.

Government officials in India have attempted many measures to boost grain harvests. The policies in question are things like

RASHTRIYA KRISHIVIKASYOJNA (RKVY)

The RKVY plan was launched in 2007 to provide a comprehensive framework for the growth of the agricultural and ancillary industries. Since its conception, the project has undergone implementation throughout two plan periods, with significant results (11th and 12th). States are encouraged to boost their public investment in the agriculture and related

industries by means of this plan. As of 1st November 2017, Rashtriya KrishiVikas Yojana (RKVY), formerly known as the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (State Plans), would continue for three more years, from 2017-18 to 2019-20, with a total budget of Rs.14 billion. This decision was made by the Cabinet.

National Food Security Mission (NFSM)

The National Food Security Mission, launched in 2007-08, aims to increase food production by 10 million metric tonnes of rice, 8 million metric tonnes of wheat, and 2 million metric tonnes of pulses by the end of the XI Plan. This will be accomplished through increasing agricultural area and productivity, restoring soil fertility and productivity, creating jobs, and boosting the economy at the farm level. Through the end of the XII Plan, an additional 25 million tonnes of food grains, including 10 million tonnes of rice, 8 million tonnes of wheat, 4 million tonnes of pulses, and 3 million tonnes of coarse cereals, will have been produced as part of the Mission, which will continue throughout the entire 12th Five Year Plan. 15. Increased harvests of rice, wheat, and pulses were achieved thanks to the mission's success. The Mission's goals for the 12th Five Year Plan period include the production of 25 million metric tonnes of food grains, comprising 10 million metric tonnes of rice, 8 million metric tonnes of wheat, 4 million metric tonnes of pulses, and 3 million metric tonnes of coarse cereals. The State's experience and criticism have led to substantial changes in strategy, norms of financial assistance, and programme execution, all of which are reflected in the current operational regulations.

Goals were established to increase food grain production by 13 million tonnes, including 5 million tonnes of rice, 3 million tonnes of wheat, 3 million tonnes of pulses, and 2 million tonnes of coarse cereals, and the 12th Plan was extended from 2017-18 to 2019-20 to align with the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) period.

INTEGRATED SCHEME OF OILSEEDS, PULSES, MAIZE AND OILPALM (ISOPOM)

The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation has launched the following Centrally Sponsored Schemes under TMOP&M, all of which have helped to enhance the country's supply of oilseeds, pulses, maize, and oil palm: There are presently five agricultural development initiatives: the Oilseeds Production Programme, the Pulses Development Programme, the Accelerated Maize Development Programme, and the Oil Palms Development Programme (OPDP) In order to allow states more leeway in implementing the programmes based on a regionally differentiated approach, to encourage crop diversification, to bring a more focused approach to the programmes, and to account for Planning Commission recommendations, the aforementioned four schemes were combined into the Centrally Sponsored Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses,

Oil Palm, and Maize (ISOPOM) as part of the 10th Five Year Plan. As of 2004.05.17, ISOPOM, or the Integrated Scheme for Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm, and Maize, will be in effect.

PradhanMantriFasalBima Yojana

(PMFBY) is a government-backed initiative that Prime Minister Narendra Modi first unveiled on February 18, 2016. to provide crop insurance to farmers. It was designed to replace the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and the Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS) while retaining the positive aspects of both. This was done in keeping with the One Nation-One Scheme principle (shortcomings). The plan's goals are to lower farmers' premium costs and speed up the payment of their entire crop insurance claims.

Protecting farmers from economic devastation in the case of crop failure is a primary goal of PMFBY, which is why it works to guarantee farmers a stable income year-round. The Scheme covers all crops for which past yield information is available and for which a sufficient number of Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) are being conducted as part of the General Crop Estimation Survey (GCES). General insurance firms with which the government has contracted will carry out the plan. The relevant State Government will hold a bidding process to select an IA to carry out the necessary tasks. Loanee farmers opening a Crop Loan/KCC account for specified crops must participate in the system, whereas all other farmers can choose whether or not to open an account. The Ministry of Agriculture is in charge of the program's management.

As a result, insurance companies have pocketed thousands of crores in payments owed to farmers.¹⁸

FOOD ACCESSIBILITY IN INDIA

Nobel laureate in economics and Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen argues that "individual access to food, not the overall quantity," rather than total food production. By "food access," we refer to both the financial and logistical means by which an individual may procure nutritious food. Being able to afford food is crucial for the poor to feel secure. The government of India has implemented a number of feeding programmes, such as the Public Distribution System, the Integrated Child Development Scheme, and the Mid-day Meal Scheme, for the benefit of the country's poorest citizens.

• Targeted Public Distribution System

The government launched this programme in 1997 to guarantee at least some families in the country had access to food on a monthly basis, and so far 72 lakhs tonnes of food grains have been distributed, or around 10 kg per household.

• Midday Meal Scheme

Since 1995, this initiative has been implemented in schools with the goal of improving students' diets and retaining more of them.

• Antyodaya Ann Yojana

A plan to provide food at a rate of Rs. 2 per kilogramme and the identification of the lowest of the poor is considered.

The government implements these programmes so that low-income families have an equal opportunity to buy food at subsidised costs. Access to healthy food is a priority for several government programmes, including the National Food for Work Programme, the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), and the SampoornaGrameen Rozgar Yojna.

National Food Security Act, 2013: A Landmark

The universal right to food and nutrition, which includes a base set of benefits that should be enjoyed and progressively expanded upon until full food security is realised for all people in the country by the year 2050, supports the stated goal of the National Food Security Act of ensuring all citizens' economic and social access to sufficient food at all times. From infancy through old age, the human life cycle is documented. Cereals, including rice (at Rs. 3 per kg), wheat (at Rs. 2 per kg), and coarse grains (at Rs. 1 per kg), are included in the 5 kilos per eligible person per month that can be purchased under the law. defining characteristics of this legislation

- Seventy-five percent of rural families and fifty percent of urban people would get five kilogrammes of food grains each month at prices of Rs.3, Rs.2, and Rs.1 per kilogramme for rice, wheat, and coarse grain, respectively, for three years after the law is approved.
- Eligibility rules are ultimately decided by each states.
- In addition to receiving a maternity bonus of at least Rs. 6,000, expectant and nursing mothers are guaranteed a healthy "take home ration" of 600 calories per day for the length of their pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Feeding all children between the ages of 6 months and 14 years old, free of charge, is a priority.
- The legislation aims to give women more agency.
- The federal government will help the starved state when there is a nationwide scarcity of food grains.

For the next six months, the federal government will safeguard the states' current food grain allotment.

- A food security stipend is provided by the state government in the event that staple foods such as grains are unavailable.
- There will be changes made to the way government-funded aid is dispersed.
- For the purposes of ration card distribution, the senior female member of the home (if

she is 18 or older) is considered the head of the household.

- Redress mechanisms at the state and district levels will be in place, and
- The provisions of the Act shall be implemented and monitored by state food commissions.

Bill Evaluation: This bill has been called the "largest ever endeavour in the world for supplying considerably cheaper food by any government using a right based approach" by the Indian Ministry of Agriculture's committee on Agriculture cost and Prices. As a consequence of adopting this strategy, more Indians are signing up for the Targeted Public Distribution System, the country's primary domestic food distribution programme. In all likelihood, the NFSB's yearly budget of Rs. 1,20,000 crore understates the true cost to the government. Due to its antiquated infrastructure, leakage, and inadequate administration, the current food security complex of procurement, stocking, and distribution, which NFSB maintains, would raise the scheme's operating expenses.²¹

Criticism of the NFSA

- Despite not explicitly stating so, this Bill gives the impression that the government is the greatest purchaser, distributor, and vendor of all cereal grains and grains for human use. Because of market corruption, farmers' ability to do business and negotiate compensation would be diminished.
- The measure does not limit the movement of food grains across borders.
- The Bill does not set a deadline for the varying accomplishments.
- Meals served at midday and self-help groups have not been provided for.

Food Utilization in India

Proper food use involves both the family's consumption of food and each member's capacity to absorb the nutrients included in that food. Consumers' food consumption is reliant on

- I. their capacity for storing and digesting food
- II. their expertise and experience in the kitchen.
- III. The rules for dividing up meals between relatives.
- IV. a person's level of vitality, which can be diminished by factors including illness, dirty living conditions, a lack of clean water and sanitary facilities, and inadequate or no access to healthcare facilities and professionals.

This is the column that ensures there will be enough money to cover everyone's healthy choices. After 30 years of the Integrated Child Development Scheme being in place in India, as many as 46% of the country's young people still suffer from chronic malnutrition (ICDS). More over half of Indian women (55.3% to be exact) are anaemic, and 35.6% of Indian women are undernourished, owing to rising prices, as shown by a low body mass index (35.6%).²²

By examining the aforementioned metrics, it appears that even if India is self-sufficient in cultivating food grains, achieving food security is still a long way off.

CHALLENGES OF FOOD SECURITY

India has the following obstacles in its efforts to provide food security:

- **Climate change**

Due to less available water for irrigation and other causes, climate change is predicted to impact agricultural land usage and productivity. Increasing temperatures and the frequency and severity of extreme weather events have had a negative influence on India's food production systems, hence dampening agricultural expansion caused by climate change. Climate change, according to a number of studies, will amplify both the temporal and geographical variability of water supply and the severity of floods and droughts. To combat climate-induced natural disasters, it is crucial to address shifts in institutional capacity and availability of resources.

- **Crop Diversification**

Agricultural scientists have recently placed a strong focus on implementing crop diversity. The farmers who grow staples like rice and wheat are seeing relatively low returns on their investments. Farmers were urged to diversify their cropping efforts in order to increase their income. The peasants may get subsidised food if a decentralised food grain bank was established in each block or district. This idea will streamline the distribution of staple foods while also cutting down on unscrupulous practises.²³

- **Mismatch between water demand and availability**

Rainfall and water availability across the country vary greatly across time and space. During the monsoon season, most of the water is accessible, and even then, only through a few bursts of heavy precipitation. Rainfall in India averages around 1170 millimetres per year. Population increase, industrialization, and urbanisation all contribute to a rise in the overall demand for water. Presently, agriculture consumes over 83% of available water; however, this percentage may drop to 68% in 2050 as demand from other sectors increases. In this way, there is a discrepancy between the two.²⁴

- **Land fragmentation**

There is considerable land fragmentation in India, and this is thought to be a key factor in the country's low agricultural production. Over the decades, land availability has diminished as a result of rising population. It has been increasingly common to

convert farmland to other uses in order to make room for urban expansion, which has resulted in land fragmentation and decreased agricultural output. This calls for a change in agricultural practises and the way land is used.

- **Quality seeds and Planting material**

The seed industry has a challenge in meeting the needs of farmers all throughout the country by providing them with cheap access to high-quality seeds with high genetic potential so that they may achieve optimum yield in the given agroclimatic conditions.

- **Agricultural Marketing**

The administration of the supply chain is another major problem in agricultural marketing in India. Farmers face a number of difficulties, such as inadequate transportation networks, too much government oversight, and a dearth of consumer markets. In order to increase agricultural production and marketing, India must take initiatives to enhance agricultural marketing by welcoming private sector and Foreign Direct Investment.

- **Globalisation**

While improvements in areas such as technology, transportation, communication, and the expansion of the service sector have emerged from globalisation, the phenomenon has not been without its share of difficulties. It's undeniable that globalisation has worsened conditions for domestic framers and producers by increasing interdependence and competitiveness in the global market.

CONCLUSION

This document provides a quick introduction that emphasises the commonly used notion of food security. Food security revolves around the interconnected ideas of food availability and food ownership. The former is concerned with the availability of food on different scales, such as regional, national, and worldwide. The latter is defined as "the ability of an individual or family to obtain food"²⁵. Food availability, accessibility, and use have therefore been analysed, along with the performance, difficulties, and policies pertaining to food security in India. It is important to recognise the interconnectedness of these three concepts. Nutritional status in the home might improve when more food is easily accessible. As a result, the percentage of people going hungry among the poor has dropped dramatically, and the number of people living in impoverished homes has dropped by a similar percentage (26 percent). Increased work opportunities in labor-intensive industries can improve people's ability to get nutritious meals. There is more to the issue of malnutrition than just a lack of food availability. Rather than a lack of food, the food crisis

in India may be traced back to problems with distribution. India faces a variety of challenges in its efforts to ensure its people always have enough to eat. Soil degradation, undulating terrain, and a wide range of soil types (including deteriorated, infertile, acidic, and alkaline) have not helped things. Add to that an increase in population and a dearth of educational and occupational opportunities, and you have a perfect storm for agricultural failure. India's dependency on the monsoon and the use of day labourers, whose pay varies depending on the season, both work against the country's efforts to achieve food security. Family income determines how much food can be afforded, and inflation adds fuel to the fire. The Public Distribution System's (PDS's) inefficiency has hampered its ability to provide cheap food to the general public.

Problems in achieving food safety and alleviating hunger are rooted in poor policymaking. Food and nutrition security in India has been addressed by a number of government initiatives, including the Public Distribution System (PDS), Food and nutrition accessibility can also be improved through self-employment and national employment generation schemes. The National Food Security Law establishes a programme to distribute subsidised food to low-income Americans. As far as experiments go, this one could be the biggest ever.

India offers a wide variety of government initiatives. Nonetheless, the prevalence of hunger and malnutrition remains high. There are flaws in both the program's blueprint and its execution. This allows reforms to turn their attention to creating more effective methods of delivering public services. It is widely acknowledged that improved governance is essential for the efficient operation of food-based programmes. There has to be a social mobilisation, community involvement, and decentralisation oriented strategy. These policies need to be implemented more effectively through the establishment of suitable institutions. To sum up, India has faced a significant difficulty in the form of food insecurity at the local level while making great efforts to ensure that food is readily available throughout the country.

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