

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT 2013 OF INDIA: AN ANALYSIS

Dr. Sonali Sajjan*

ABSTRACT

Food insecurity could be a situation of limited access to safe and healthy food, while food security refers to a situation when 'all people, in the slightest degree times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for a full of life and healthy life'. The National Food Security Act (NFSA) of India aims to supply subsidized food grains to approximately two-thirds of India's 1.25 billion populations. The introduction of this Act in 2013, marks a serious paradigm shift from a welfare based to a rights based approach to deal with food insecurity. This text attempts to know the effect of NFSA on food security outcomes in India. It attempts to research the origin of right to food discourse and factors behind perpetual failure in food security outcomes by applying food security measurement framework. The article then focuses on the persistent failure in redressing childhood under nutrition. The article concludes that the policy must look beyond subsidized grain assistance for ensuring the nutritional security of individuals of India.

Keywords: NFSA, Food Insecurity, Nutritional Security, Security Outcomes.

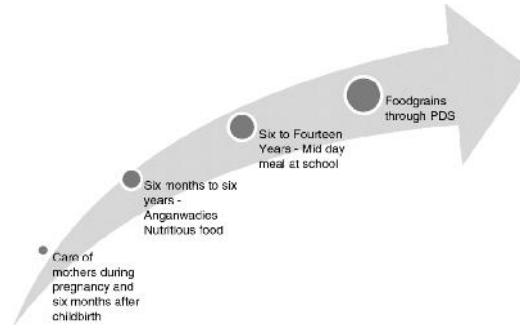
Introduction

Food is the first among many basic human needs, and it's for this reason that "the right to food is recognized in several instruments under law." Food security is alleged to exist when all people, in the least times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for a vigorous and healthy life. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were intended to end hunger and poverty, failed to realize their objectives by the deadline of December 2015. All member countries met on 25 September 2015 to review and rewrite the goals, which included a renaming to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Food security is at the core of these goals, which have been defined as 'the physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food by all people, all the time to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an energetic and healthy life' (World Food Summit, 1996). During this context, India had implemented the National Food Security Act (NFSA) in 2013. This review critically examines the difficulties and problems in implementation of the Act and provides possible solutions. The very fact that India has crossed 67 years after Independence, true is admittedly a matter of grave concern and requires immediate attention. The Key priorities of the government of India under the present Five-Year-Plan (2012–2017) are ensuring 'Faster, more Inclusive and Sustainable Growth'. This includes improving the performance of agriculture and diversifying produce yet as reducing vulnerabilities of small and marginal farmers with special specialise in women and other disadvantaged groups. It also includes improving targeting, cost efficiency and nutrition effectiveness of the nationwide food-based social safety nets, namely the Targeted Public Distribution System, the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS), which is targeting mothers and young children and also the Mid-Day-Meal Scheme (MDM). The targeted public distribution system (TPDS) and therefore the mid-day meal scheme (approximately 120 million children are signed up) are two large government food distribution schemes in India. The misuse of resources and mismanagement of the programme was widespread and have become well-known. Problems of misappropriation of those programmes continue and therefore the government is unable to realize its goals. As a results of the inefficiencies of operations and entrepreneurial inabilities, majority of beneficiaries of the resources invested by the govt. don't seem to be the target population.

* Ph.D., Department of Commerce, Magadh University, Bodh-Gaya, Bihar, India.

The Role of NFSA in Protecting Basic Health and Education

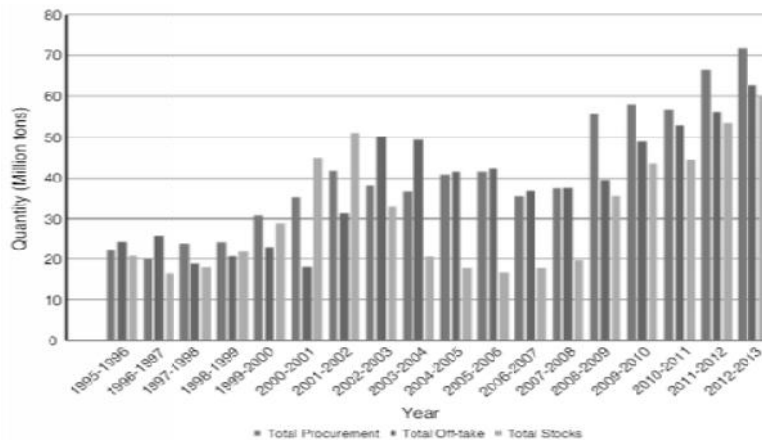
As per the National Family Health Survey 2005–2006, 33% of girls and 28% of Indian men had a body mass index (BMI) below normal. Additionally, 46% of kids below three years are underweight, 20% of youngsters under five years are malnourished, and altogether 40% of kids are chronically malnourished. Furthermore, 69% of kids aged 6–35 months had anaemia, and 56% of married women aged 15–49 years, 24% of married men within the same age bracket, and 58% of pregnant women were also anaemic (NFHS-3, 2005-06). India ranks 75th out of 109 countries on the multidimensional poverty index, standing far below its BRICS's (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) counterparts.



As per the HUNGAMA (Hunger and Malnutrition) survey, 42% of children are underweight and 59% have stunted growth. Additionally, 30% of the population faces food insecurity in India (Hunger and Malnutrition Survey, Nandi Foundation, 2011). Feeding the malnourished is an infinite challenge that needs synchronizing technical intervention with sustainable intensification, precision agriculture, and post-harvest storage technology. The NFSA also has to be properly managed at the varsity level because teachers engaged in implementation of the Act complain of their under-performance in teaching. Many children from rural schools remain absent in agricultural seasons for helping their parents in cultivation and allied activities. This further increases the gap between children on the register and children who are actually present, making school inspections of higher authorities a mockery. Also, children remain empty adequate calorie.

Problems of Inadequate Production

Agriculture has been the backbone of the Indian economy, and even today it accounts for 54.6 per cent of the full employment in India. The policies of British geared toward extracting the utmost possible revenue from the farmers and paid scant attention to improving the agricultural productivity. The Permanent Settlement of 1793 created a replacement class of landlords and sub-agents who were far off from the cultivators and interested only in maximizing rents for themselves and their colonial masters. The destruction of traditional handicrafts by British forced several artisans into agriculture for a living. This increased the pressure ashore, reduced productivity and impoverished the cultivators and led to food shortages and a number of other protests against the British.



Source: Own computation on the basis of data available with FCI and Department of food and public distribution, India (1995-2013)

In the Deccan riots of 1875–1879, the peasants of Pune, Satara and Ahmednagar districts had revolted against country because of the increasing agrarian distress, resulting from poor agricultural prices, heavy taxation by the government and also the local chieftains and a way of political powerlessness of the farming class that upheld the establishment with their hard labour. Similarly, the Pazzhassi Raja in Kerala had also revolted against the East India Company, for dictating the costs, furthermore because the merchants with whom the trade was to be dispensed, leading to a long-drawn war between the East India Company and also the Raja, between 1793 and 1805. India has also suffered several famines that have killed countless people. Within the Great Bengal Famine of 1769–1770, nearly 10 million (or about one-third of the then population of Bengal) are believed to own perished. Famine Occurred Between 1788 and 1794. In another famine that occurred between 1788 and 1794, an estimated 11 million people may have died within the Deccan. After Queen Victoria assumed paramountcy over India, following the primary War of Independence of 1857, there have been several famines during which countless Indians died. Notable among them were the Upper Doab Famine of 1860–1861, that killed nearly 2 million Indians, and therefore the Great South Indian Famine of 1876–1878, within which nearly 5.5 million Indians died in British-controlled territories. Closer to modern world, while the globe had been witnessing the holocaust of the Jews in Germany, a silent holocaust happened in Bengal, where nearly 5 million Indians died within the Great Bengal Famine of 1943–1944, since all the grain produced in Bengal had been diverted to British soldiers overseas and also the war effort. Though many others had ruled India before the British, starvation deaths had never been recorded. Perhaps, this could result to the actual fact that no records were kept apart from the laudatory accounts of the rulers or travellers. Nonetheless, India had always been portrayed as a chic country exporting not just jewels, textiles and luxury items, but also home to the much sought-after spices, which made Europeans seek shorter sea routes to India. The actual fact also remains that the share of the Indian economy had plummeted, from 24 per cent of the globe economy within the Mughal era, to a mere 2 per cent in 1947. By then, the famines and also the food shortages had become a recurring feature.

Conclusions

The PDS could be a cornerstone of presidency policy responding to nutrition and food security. However, it's riddled with inefficiencies that decrease its capacity to effectively distribute food to those in need. The PDS might not be able to eliminate the problem of malnutrition and childhood morbidity or mortality in India, but it can reduce the degree of hunger in India if implemented effectively. Integrating the PDS with other interventions including those who will increase transparency and accountability may increase its potential to understand every citizen's right to nutritious food while propagating physiological state.

References

- ✧ Government of India. *Annual Report 2018-2019*; Department of Food and Public Distribution, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution: Delhi, India, 2019.
- ✧ Joshi, P.K. Pathways to Improve Food Security and Reduce Poverty in Emerging India. *Agric. Econ. Res. Review* 2016, 29, 171–182.
- ✧ Kishore, A.; Chakrabarti, S. Is More Inclusive More Effective? The 'New Style' Public Distribution System in India. *Food Policy* 2015, 55, 117–130.
- ✧ Ranganath, V. Food Security: Issues and Concerns. *Iup. Law Rev.* 2015, 5, 7–13.
- ✧ Sarkar, A.N. Global Climate Change and Confronting the Challenges of Food Security. *Productivity* 2016, 57, 115–122.
- ✧ Upadhyay, R.P.; Palanivel, C. Challenges in achieving food security in India. *Iran. J. Public Health* 2011, 40, 31–36.

