

Hunger and Food Security during the COVID - 19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The COVID - 19 pandemic is currently the world's most major health threat, raising significant human challenges; one such issue is food insecurity. The corona virus pandemic has moved the whole world to a halt and has impacted almost every country. India has taken a positive approach to limiting COVID - 19 has spread throughout the country, Beginning March 25, 2020; the country's 1.3 billion residents will be subjected to a national lockdown. COVID - 19 cases are rapidly increasing, raising serious concerns about the disease's latent capacity to spread and cause harm. This pandemic has adversely impacted the poor and helpless in society.

This article analyzes India's hunger and malnutrition during the COVID - 19, as well as the subsequent shutdown and aftermath. Food insecurity has become common as a result of the economic downturn and job losses. There are also fears that this may have long-term consequences on the population's nutrition. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the public distribution system for mid-day meals, are examples of nutritional programmes, and Anganwadis (rural childcare center) should continue to supply rations and meals to recipients at their homes as crucial services.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the COVID - 19 pandemic has already affected all four pillars of food safety. Food insecurity has become common as a result of the economic crisis and loss of employment. The subsequent lockdown in India to prevent disease spread and social contact has disrupted economic activity and resulted in massive unemployment in the informal sector.

Growing the PDS to include pulses and oils, localized purchases, School meals and the ICDS provide global nutrition care, as well as extended monetary transfers through social security programs are all examples of how huge volumes of food can be used to provide a universal service. Despite the COVID – 19 related pause, we continue with paragraph emphasizing In order to alleviate The Indian government must properly integrate official and non - governmental efforts to address India's food anxiety and hunger rates.

KEYWORDS

COVID-19, Lockdown, Hunger, Food security, Food safety, Malnutrition, PDS

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INTRODUCTION

We share our perspective on the COVID - 19 pandemic, and are one of the world's most significant humanitarian disasters. It is expected to cause in this article: food insecurity.¹ We begin with a worldwide overview of hunger and food insecurity, then go on to low and middle income countries to examine the issue, as well as India.² We explore the impact of COVID-19 on human lives and hunger, as well as the consequences for food insecurity, nutritional status, and productivity.³

The new Corona Virus Disease was first discovered in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, and was named "COVID - 19" after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a pandemic.⁴ The COVID - 19 pandemic has brought the entire world to a halt and has impacted practically every country. India has taken a proactive approach to preventing the range of COVID - 19, ordering a worldwide lockdown beginning March 25, 2020, for its 1.3 billion people.⁵ India's ability to cope with the COVID - 19 outbreaks, as the world's second most populous country, is expected to have a significant impact on the worldwide pandemic's future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As a result of the global new coronavirus pandemic and the consequent economic slump, global food poverty issues have increased. Food availability and accessibility have been affected as a result of quarantine procedures, social distancing norms, lockdowns, border closures, and other supply and distribution networks. Thousands of migrants attempted to return to their homes by travelling across highways. On March 24, nearly immediately after the lockdown was declared, highlighting the migrant problem.⁶ While various governments responded by distributing cooked meals at feeding centers and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) assisted, the severity of the problem prompted relief efforts across the country.⁷ The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates changes in food supply and demand.⁸ It warns of a global "food crisis" if nations do not protect people from starvation and malnutrition. The United Nations has also advised that the COVID - 19 accident may result in global "food shortages."⁹

The country's malnutrition situation, particularly among children, may be worsened in the long run if people's food consumption is badly impacted.¹⁰ While India's general malnutrition statistics have improved slightly in the last decade or two, hunger and malnutrition remain excessively high.³ There are also issues that this may have long-term impacts on the population's nutrition. In this scenario, government assistance through programs like the PDS is critical. While these initiatives have made some contributions to there are still huge

gaps in giving individuals with food and financial help. The Public Distribution System (PDS) has been the primary answer to food insecurity, which is discussed in full.¹¹ No public information or scientific studies are currently available because the subject concerns a recent period. Given these conditions, it is expected that this paper will add to the discussion of certain critical issues concerning India's food systems that require immediate attention, as well as give some study directions for the future.

METHODOLOGY

A focused research databases search to find literature; a look for acceptable summaries, theories, and conceptual works detailed in books, grey literature, and handbooks; we conducted an overview of the research conduct by Food and Scientific Reports, social and economic development in attempt to uncover the condition under hunger and food security during COVID - 19 pandemic. A literature search was done systematically of various journals indexes such as PubMed, EMBASE, Google scholar and others. Major search terms were COVID - 19, Lockdown, Food security, Hunger, PDS, and Malnutrition.

DISCUSSION

Food Security was a Major Issue during the COVID - 19 Pandemic

The global and national food systems have been shocked as a result of the COVID - 19 pandemic's impacts. The shock is largely the result of poor prevention measures, and how governments and communities respond to and prepare for it will determine its characteristics and intensity. The pandemic might have a direct influence Lower food supplies and higher food prices are the effect of changes in food supply and demand.

"Everyone should have physical and economic access to appropriate, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food at all times for an active and healthy life," according to the World Food Program(FAO, 1996). Food security is a term that can be defined in four ways based on this definition: Food availability Access to food on both a financial and a physical level, food consumption, and the long-term stability of these three aspects are all things to think about.¹²

COVID - 19 Impacts on the Agricultural Sector

Agriculture, which employs roughly 1 billion people worldwide, is at the heart of many developing countries. Agricultural product production and transportation are being impacted by pandemic prevention initiatives. Agriculture is a long process which requires from planting to nurturing to harvesting to exporting the finished product, there is a lot of work involved. In agricultural systems, the degree of dependency on each manufacturing

source may vary massively, exposing farmers and plant-holders to increases in input costs. COVID - 19 is affecting some agricultural and supply chain disruptions. According to preliminary reports, the shortage of migrant workers is causing some harvesting activities to be stopped. As logistics are disrupted and efforts to prohibit the corona viral disease from spreading continue, a number of related industry sectors are now being impacted.

Agricultural activities and supply chains are exempt from the government's lockdown guidelines, which are correct. Therefore, implementation issues that result in labor and price drops must be addressed. Farmers and agricultural workers, as well as any social protection measures designed to solve the problem should be part of the government's assistance package. A more extensive aid package is needed for small poultry and dairy farmers due to their acute input supply and market access issues caused by the pandemic.

Food Supply Chains

Supply chains are being disrupted as a result of transportation issues and other issues. Wheat, vegetables, and other crops have seen lower prices, but consumers are still paying more. As logistics are disrupted and efforts to inhibit the transmission of the viral infection continue, a number of related industry sectors are now being impacted.

Disruptions in food supply networks and production exacerbated problems and increased food anxiety in countries during the COVID - 19 pandemic, as well as a drop in earnings and remittances.¹⁴

The majority of countries' farming methods are cheap labor and the pandemic will impose increased pressure on output because to labor shortages. Exporters, farmers, consumers, and logistics in the food supply chain are all affected by labor shortages.¹⁵ (Due to travel limitations, illness, and social distance norms) - Particularly for food goods where workers must be close by.¹⁶ Export limitations and import restrictions should be avoided by the government in order to promote commerce.¹⁷

Food Demand

Impacts on the supply side are also felt on the demand side.¹⁸ Demand risks, on the other hand, are mostly limited to developing countries, where people may not have enough savings or they are highly susceptible because they rely on imported food and spend a large percentage of their income on food. South Asians, Middle Easterners, and Africans from Sub-Saharan Africa are most vulnerable. COVID - 19 will trigger a food demand shock by reducing purchasing power and making economic access more challenging, leading in widespread job and income loss for informal sector workers.

As the number of lockdowns has increased, so has the need for food and e-commerce delivery to the home. This is a trend that should be supported and fostered.¹⁹

India's Welfare Architecture's Role

The lockdown's sudden onset resulted in a massive migration of affected workers almost immediately. Government support measures to help individuals navigate the pandemic induced distress were critical, as observed around the world. The country's existing welfare system plays a vital role in this scenario. This crisis and its aftermath provide a chance to reconsider the role of India's social assistance systems and entitlement based legislation.

Architects and urban planners are focusing on adding more sustainable architecture to the cities as our country reopens in stages. Several architecture institutes in India are promoting the relevance of "green architecture" to students seeking a Bachelor of Interior Architecture to help fuel this trend. New technology and unique concepts in Indian urban design are required to create facilities that are more secure, durable, and healthful. These structures must have a high livability index and be easy to access for people of all ages.

Every rural household was guaranteed 100 days of on-demand Labour under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). Every child was granted access to primary learning under the Right to Education Act (RTE). With the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, the government focused on basic education and health care. As a result, the RTE and the National Rural Health Mission were introduced (NRHM). The PDS, as well as Integrated Child Development Services, such as the universalization of prepared mid-day meals in schools and early childcare services, are examples of the PDS are examples of these initiatives (ICDS), were increased as a result of the Supreme Court's intervention in the right to food case. The current crisis has highlighted the importance of this welfare system in ensuring people's social security. The government's relief measures announced thus far under the PMGKY and the Atmanirbhar Abhiyan provide supplementary transfers and create a temporary buffer by leveraging existing programmes like the PDS, Jan Dhan, social security pensions, and MGNREGA, to name a few. This period has also shown the programmers' weaknesses and opportunities for improvement in order to attain better human development outcomes. As a result, PDS interventions and child feeding programmes are discussed in the following sections.²¹

Public Distribution System (PDS)

According to the Act's Schedule, the NFSA provides 5 kilograms of food grains (rice, wheat, and millets) per head to 75 percent of The PDS reaches half of the rural population and half of the urban

population at reduced costs (Rs. 3 / kg rice, Rs. 2 / kg wheat, and Rs. 1 / kg millets). The FCI is a federally run organization, distributes food grains to the states.¹¹ Prior to the NFSA; state governments were given quotas based on the state's poverty ratios, which were used to identify Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. There were significant exclusion and inclusion problems in the process for identifying BPL households. The current NFSA approach, which identifies priority households, has resulted in significantly higher BPL coverage is lower, especially in rural parts of poorer states. Many states, including Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Chhattisgarh, provide subsidized food grains to a much higher number of people than the NFSA covers. However, there are still exclusions, which have become even more notable in the present pandemic emergency, as the central government's assistance package, It was only for individuals who were covered by the NFSA, and included free food grains. The government is currently distributing Individuals with ration cards under the NFSA will receive an You'll get an extra 5 kg of grains (and 1 kg of pulses) as part of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) (for the period April to November 2020). Later in May, the Indian government stated that as part of the Atmanirbhar package, An additional 8 crore migrant workers are expected to receive 5 kg of free grains and 1 kilogramme of free dal for two months if they do not have ration cards. Even in normal circumstances, there are several reasons for support of universalizing the PDS since it ensures a minimum of exclusion errors, reduces leakages, and contributes to food safety in general.²² In Tamil Nadu, for example, any household that is "ordinarily resident" is eligible for a ration card. According to research, Tamil Nadu, along with Chhattisgarh, a state with "near-universalization," In the PDS, it has one of the lowest leakage rates. The number of stocks held in the Food Corporation of India's god owns is another reason for broadening the PDS's scope as a favored policy option in the current situation. While food grains distributed through the PDS help to alleviate hunger and improve nutrition safety, the amount of grains distributed is insufficient. Furthermore, given the magnitude of job and income losses, nutritional diversification is negatively impacted. Even in normal times, Indian diets are predominantly cereal-based, with just a small percentage of children and adults eating meals that meets the nutritional requirements set out by national and international nutritional guidelines Nutritional improvement programmes may be able to solve this issue, at least in part. Other than the PDS, the NFSA offers entitlements such as free meals for children under the age of 14 through anganwadi centers and mid-day meal.²²

CONCLUSION

The corona virus pandemic has made a significant impact on the lives of millions of individuals and occupations around the world. Food spending

accounts for a large amount of the poor's total expenditure, hence low income has had an impact on food intake as well. In perspective of this, this article examined some of actions taken by the government to improve public's ability to obtain food safety. The PMGKY included a variety of food and money transfer measures, all of which were dependent on existing individuals receiving benefits under various schemes.

Different countries' containment measures and limitations are likely to exacerbate food insecurity, particularly in food insecurity and newly industrialized countries. Since the pandemic began to spread across countries, universal food supplies and costs have also been affected. In comparison to, the whole of the country India's COVID - 19 outbreaks is a one of a kind difficulty; the country's enormous population and informal economy have made lockdown restrictions particularly difficult. Governments at the state and national level have attempted to respond to the challenge by implementing new social protection programs and modifying existing systems; however, in order to keep markets operating and poverty at bay, this has to be the start of something. As events unfold, policymakers must be prepared to enhance support services with a future move to prevention and transformation. Governments must act quickly to strengthen their agriculture sector's abilities by introducing new risk management programmes and upgrades, as well as by providing financial or food aid to meet people's basic needs. These schemes contain weaknesses as well, things must be dealt with. The first is that none of these services are widely available, and there is no effective way to reach out to individuals who have been forgotten.

Although the lifting of the lockdown, the economic slump and the spread of the epidemic continue. As a result, the topic of universal coverage and higher benefits remains relevant. More research is needed to see how these programs can help vulnerable households achieve some basic economic and food security. In order to achieve this, more transparency is required; with Data relating to all of these initiatives will be made public, allowing for joint independent evaluations.

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