

Food Security: A Silent Solution To Insurgencies And Deprivation In India

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“It is important for people to realise that we can make progress against world hunger and it is not hopeless -- David Beckman

Abstract: A stable and peaceful socio political and economic atmosphere contributes positively to the economic development of any country. But most often this peaceful and stable atmosphere is not always attainable due to instability and insurgencies of various kinds. Their underlying root causes of insurgencies and deprivation are invariably to be found in political, socio-economic, or religious domains. Among the socio-economic domain poverty is a major root cause behind every agitation. Poverty and resulting starvation is the root cause of Crime, theft, child labour and even prostitution in world around. Ensuring food security is an effective and silent weapon to eliminate poverty and thereby insurgency.

Index Terms: Food security, Insurgency, Deprivation, Social Safety Net

A stable and peaceful socio political and economic atmosphere contributes positively to the economic development of any country. But most often this peaceful and stable atmosphere is not always attainable due to instability and insurgencies of various kinds. Insurgencies do not emerge in a vacuum. Their underlying root causes are invariably to be found in political, socio-economic, or religious domains. Among the socio-economic domain poverty is a major root cause behind every agitation. Famine and starvation create the conditions for extremism around the world. When we analyze the insurgency movements and revolutions in different part of the World, we can see that poverty is a major factor in the culmination of these incidents. There were evidences in history that shows how Governments were overthrown over the Question of Food. In French revolution hungry mob was moving towards the Versailles palace demanding ‘Bread’. In Russian, Chinese or any other revolutions we can see the visible presence of starvation and poverty as a major cause for the outbreak of revolt. From time immemorial food is a sensitive factor which set fire to the conflicts.

Poverty and resulting deprivation has an important role in determining the morale of and individual and society. Poverty and resulting starvation is the root cause of Crime, theft, child labour and even prostitution in world around. The persistence of child labour is a threat to the progress and prosperity of a nation, qualitatively and quantitatively. It deprives children from their basic right to live especially right to education and push them to cycles of poverty. As per 2011 census, the child labour in India is 10.1 million with 4.5 million girls and 5.6 million boys. As per the reports of International Labour Organisation (ILO 2016) there are 152 million child labour around the world, among them 32.8% are in India. In India child labour is found mainly in northern part of the country especially Bihar, Rajasthan and Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, especially in brick factory, agriculture, fishing, domestic services, hotels etc. Children are also the victims of sexual exploitation and even production of pornography. Poverty and resulting erosion of values for subsistence is a major factor that push more women and young girls in prostitution. Vulnerable sections such as Dalits, tribes and backward sections are mainly going for prostitution in India.

There are many evidences in Indian history that shows how economic deprivation led to insurgency movements in India, especially northeastern part of India. For example, famine caused by bamboo flowering and the accompanied explosion of rat population in Mizo Hills in early 1960 set the stage for an armed insurrection in the state of Mizoram. When we analyze the available data we can see that the so called red corridor stretching from UP to Andhra Pradesh and insurgency affected North eastern part of India is the most poverty affected areas in our country with low Per capita income and standard of living. This clearly indicates that insurgency is a by product of poverty. And insurgency can be wipe out through eradicating poverty. Ensuring food security is an effective and silent weapon to eliminate poverty and thereby insurgency.

Of India's population of 1.3 billion, about 800 million - more than 60% - are poor, many living on the margins of life, lacking some or all of the basic necessities. Despite various socio-economic welfare activities undertaken by India govt. after independence, majority of the people still lack adequate shelter, sanitation, clean water, nutrition, and health care and job opportunities. There is a growing concern that unless this situation is addressed, our economy cannot progress with peace and harmony.

Ensuring food security to vulnerable and depressed is an effective mechanism for eliminating deprivation and insurgency in any country. Food security can be defined as a situation where in all households has physical and economic access to adequate food for all members. The concept of food security is based primarily on certain fundamental human values aimed at protecting humanity from the scourges of famine, hunger and malnutrition.

Food security has been a major developmental objective of India since Independence and we were successful in achieving self sufficiency in food grain production to a greater extent after mid 1970's due to the adoption of Green Revolution. But

this achievement of food grain security at the macro level has not percolated down to the household's level where the level of food insecurity is high, which exists due to non access sufficient and safe nutritious food and wide inequality in the accessibility and affordability of food.

The problem of food insecurity in India is a complicated issue, which has resulted poor access to livelihood and essential infrastructure like primary health, education etc. The vulnerability to food insecurity in India arise not only due market driven factors like rise in food cost ,shortage of food grain production and increase in consumer price index and but also due to other shocks like rapid environmental degradation, frequent natural calamities and inequitable distribution of resources. In addition to this the government has declared a large part of the land as forest area for conservation which also adversely affected food security especially among tribal people. In India, children and adults are vulnerable to malnutrition because of low dietary intakes, infectious diseases, lack of appropriate care and inequitable distribution of food within the household (Kumar et al. 2013). Market driven factors are incapable of solving these issues. Food insecurity can lead to lower cognitive ability, diminished work performance and substantial productivity losses. All of these can hamper the growth and development of national economy

How to Ensure food security

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to the sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (Food and Agriculture Organisation, FAO, 1996) .Food security can be assured by adopting mechanism that ensures the availability ,accessibility and appropriate use of food.

1. Food availability can be ensured through enchancing food production and productivity as per population growth . This can be achieved through

a) Crop diversification and Inter Cropping

Crop diversification is essential to meet the nutritious dietary needs of the people. Instead of cultivating single crop like wheat or rice, the cultivation of non-cereal crops such as oil seeds, fruits and vegetables etc need to be encouraged. Inter cropping enable the farmers to produce variety of crops at a time with minimum or zero marginal cost .As a sustainable agricultural mechanism ,inter cropping has the twin benefit of promoting food security and maintaining environmental quality.

b) Encouraging organic farming

The use of agriculture out put produced by using chemical fertilisers and other chemical inputs have created a host of health problems among the people. Also,the indiscriminate use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides have deteriorated environmental quality ,which is a threat to sustainable food security. The promotion of organic farming will help to reduce the hazardous health consequences of using agricultural crops produced by using chemical fertilisers and retain environmental quality .Even though yield from organic farming may be low as compared to chemical intensive agriculture ,it can be compensated by cost economy of inputs. For example the rearing of milch cattle for milk by farmers will not only increase their income but also reduce the cost of production by using cow dung and urine as organic manure and generation of biogas and compost. Organic farming will help to get fresh fruits,vegetables and other items without adulteration for people which are very essential for nutritional security. Authorities should take special initiative to promote organic farming through Kudumbhasree,NREGP workers , academic institutions as a part of Social service activities etc.

c) Quick access to Farmers friendly Credit and insurance packages.

Since agriculture is a biological operation it is prone to various kinds of risk arising out of natural calamities like flood draught, fire etc. Also most of the Indian farmers are poor, so that they cannot modern and high expensive cultivation techniques. In order to solve this problem , farmers should be provided with adequate and cheap credit facilities & insurance package to cover agriculture risk through a network of commercial banks ,cooperative banks and primary credit cooperative societies.

d) Promote ICT enabled farming technique or e-Agriculture

Application of information and communication technologies in the field of agriculture ensures timely and accurate agriculture information services to farmers that are helpful to productivity enhancement. Various models and aaps have emerged in the last 10 years utilising computers, handsets, mobiles laptops, etc. for transferring essential agriculture and marketing information including commodity prices, weather advisories, innovative technologies, soil testing, Govt. schemes and subsidies, etc. These are done by government agencies, Agricultural universities, NGOs, private enterprises, etc. However, the awareness levels and the willingness of farmers for adoption of new technologies are very low. Some of the ICT innovations are PGR portal, *krishi* ,crop insurance mobile app,Agri-market mobile app,crop insurance mobile app,RiceXpert etc. The use of ICT tools in agriculture will reduce the magnitude of asymmetric information among farmers

e) Rainwater harvesting and interlinking of rivers.

Major parts of our country have been facing continues failure of monsoon & consequent deficit of rain fall over the last few years. Also , due to ever increasing population of India ,use of ground water has increased drastically leading to constant depletion of ground water level causing the wells and tub wells to dry up. In some places excessive heart waves during the summer create a situation similar to drought. It is imperative to take adequate measures to meet the drinking water needs of

the people in the country besides irrigation & domestic needs. By interlinking Indian rivers we can overcome the shortage of water for agriculture purpose

f) Promotion of home Garden

The concept of home gardening helps to access good quality of food items that can be easily grown improving the nutritional status, particularly women and young children. As a result of this intervention, the average household income increased and also the nutritional intake. Using community leaders through a group approach will indirectly ensure community participation and will add to the success of the concept

g) Effective Safety net Intervention by Government

Safety net programmes, which are the key component of social protection and poverty reduction strategy of government in any country, have the capabilities to address multiple deprivations caused by food insecurity. Social safety Nets are pump primers of an economy which help the marginalised sections of the community to come out of adverse shocks by providing unconditional cash or in kind support. Every year 1.6% of GDP is spend for social safety Nets by low and middle income countries .But what is surprising is that 55% of world poor are not yet covered by a safety net (WFP 2018).

Safety Nets can address the problem of multiple deprivation caused by poverty and thereby protect the isolation of poor from main stream, their powerlessness and inability to benefit from the provision made for their participation in local governance and preparation of development plans (RaoVM2007).It helps in the empowerment of poor to progress towards productivity and economic viability to new livelihood opportunities. It will enable the households to make better investment in future especially in human capital (Grosh et.al2008) A well designed safety net may also promote high risk/high return private investment and prevent adverse welfare outcome (such as pulling children out of school) during periods of acute shocks or crisis(Dev et.al2007). If effectively implemented the social safety net can produce considerable long term positive impact on living standard of households which will reduce future reliance on social safety net which in turn will reduce the fiscal burden and responsibility of the Government (Narayan et.al2015) In addition to direct outcome, an effectively implemented safety net strengthen social net working and participation in social events, which are the indirect outcome of a social transfer (Siddiki et.al2014)

The proper functioning of Social safety nets depend a great deal on the institutions implementing the programme including the local government bodies, elected representatives and grass root level bureaucracy and relevant institutions/agencies channeling the fund as well as the activeness of targeted communities themselves(Dev et,al 2007).If effectively implemented and well executed, social safety nets have the potential to sustain impacts beyond the economic sphere, such empowerment, social inclusion, cohesion gender equity ,state society relations and even social resilience.

In India, after independence, the country has implemented wide variety of safety net programmes, to address various issues of vulnerability from childhood to till the senescence of a person which are executed through various departments of Government of India. Under different Five Year Plans many schemes were either launched or strengthened that gave special focus to education, health care, nutrition and sanitation. National Food Security Act 2013 which made the Right to Food a Legal Right took a life cycle approach by including a cluster of social safety net entitlement which ensures access to adequate quantity of food at affordable price for attaining food and Nutrition security in India.

Among the food based safety net intervention of the government ,three programmes ,namely ,Mid Day Meal programme, Public distribution System and Integrated Child Development programme are successful in ensuring food security among poor and marginalised .In addition to this as direct demand driven programme National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme(NREGP) has wide reach among poor especially marginalised women.

Public Distribution System in country play a significant role in wiping out poverty by distributing essential commodities at subsidised price through a network of ration shops. Edible commodities like rice, wheat, sugar etc are provided to different categories of target people

Mid Day Meal Programme, World's largest Food Based Social Safety Net Programme was introduced by Government of India in August15th 1995 to wipe out class room hunger and for promoting Universalisation of primary education by enhancing enrolment, retention and attendance rates and also improving nutrition and health status of school going children . As per the data released by Department of School Education and literacy-Government of India, during the year 2018 around Ten crore children benefited from hot cooked nutritious food in 11.34 lakh schools all over country

In India, Cooked meals are provided to children in all working days with different menu on each day to meet the nutrition status of students, even though there is marked variation in the items provided in menu in different states depending up on their food habits.

One of the main objectives of MDM is to enhance the nutritional level of school going children and to facilitate the healthy growth of the children. Also universal and nutritious food would be a significant step towards The Right to Food(Drez ,J and Goyal 2003,Khera R 2006,Karunakaran et,al2015).For Upper Primary Classes the Programme aims at providing 700 calories and 20 grams of protein with150 grams of food grains (rice/wheat) each children in all school days and 450calories 12 grams of protein for students of Lower Primary classes. Cooked meals are provided to children in all working days with different menu on each day to meet the nutrition status of students, even though there is marked variation in the items provided in menu in different states depending up on their food habits. In order to attain the prescribed nutritional content as of December 2019 , the menu of MDM consist of 100gm of food grains,20 gm Pulses ,50

gm vegetables and 5gm of oil and fat are provided to students of LP classes and 150gm of food grains, 30 gm Pulses 75 gm vegetables and 7.5gm of oil and fat for students of UP classes .

In addition to the prescribed menu most of the schools are providing Milk, egg/banana, and other nutritious items once or twice in a week Regularly .There is also the provision inclusion of locally available vegetables and other items in the menu as per the preference and taste of the children. As a part of School Health Programme, some Schools (States like Kerala, Karnataka etc) are providing micro nutrients like Iron, Folic Acid and Vitamin A to children in association Health Department. This clearly indicates the effort made by the government to intervene in the nutritional security of school children whose, health and nutritional status is crucial in shaping the quality of manpower of a nation. But the problem here is that nutritional outcome are not measured and recorded in most of the schools.

The mid day meals provided in school put an end to the phenomenon of class room hunger. The report of Programme evaluation organisation of planning commission (2010), public report on basic education and centre for equity studies New Delhi highlighted that Mid Day meal has been successful in eliminating class room hunger because children are provided with cooked meals and they enjoyed varied menu and the menu may vary between different states and district. For example in Kerala rice is provided every day Green Gram or vegetable curry, in Rajasthan hogri is served every day, Karnataka boasts the best menu: apart from rice and sambar, children enjoy vegetables, pongal, lemon rice, and even sweets like Kshira. Some poor household described the meal as festival food. The programme helped to lessen the possibility of under nutrition in a number of drought affected area. In addition to this, poor households headed by landless labours and widow value the assurance of one free meal wholesome meals a day for their children (Drez, J and Goyal 2003). In tribal area where many children go to school on empty stomach, the contribution of MDM is crucial. The Directorate of public Instruction Govt. of Kerala reported that 97.71% of school children benefited from MDM scheme in Kerala during 2016-17.

MDM has played a significant role in socialisation among children. Study conducted by National Institute of public cooperation and Child development in Madhya Pradesh, Evaluation study of MDM by planning commission and an empirical study of MDM schemes in Orissa etc. reported that MDM has created a platform for children of all economic and social back ground to take meals together and there by achieving the objective of social equity. Children eat at a common place in their respective school premises and there by establish cordial relationship, mutual understanding, healthy friendship and emotional unity among children, even though there are some cases of caste wise discrimination reported from schools in northern part of the country (Avinash et, al 2013).

MGNREGP has been successful in generating employment to rural unskilled workers in the country to a greater extent. Total Employment Under MGNREGA in India in 2016-17 was 72.3 Million which increased to 76.7 million in 2017-18 As a right based demand driven programme, MGNREGP has been successful in generating employment and thereby enhancing livelihood security of poor families. It increased the purchasing power of rural poor and has huge positive impact on the expenditure of families like improvement in housing condition, creation of household assets. It also helped them to provide better health and educational facilities to their children. (PACS, Dheeraj 2017, Sharma, A 2012). The programme had strong positive multiplier impact on income production and employment in rural area. In addition to this the opportunity get employment during lean season decreased distressed migration of rural people to other area in search of job (Hirway et al 2011)

Threat to Food Security

There are so many limits to ensure food security in a country like India ;They are

1. Rapid growth of population
2. Global warming climate change which negatively affect agricultural production
3. Corruption and loopholes in PDS which leads to efficient distribution of food products
4. Commercialisation of agriculture which gives more preference to cash crops than food crops
5. Indifferent attitude of the public towards agriculture innovations

Conclusion

Food security is an effective tool for eradicating poverty and resulting deprivation and thereby restricting people from indulging in insurgencies of various kind. The National Food security Bill which was passed in the Parliament in mid September 2013 is an important effort to ensure that the majority of India's population has access to adequate quantity food at affordable price. The introduction of the bill has brought back to the concept of food security. But the financial and distributional cost of implementing the bill may entail significantly higher burden to the govt. This is estimated to be 3% of GDP

Ensuring food security ought to be an issue of great importance for a country like India where more than one-third of the population is estimated to be absolutely poor and one-half of children are malnourished in one way or another. Poverty leads to insurgency and insurgency ultimately it negatively affects production which further leads to poverty, and this vicious circle continues and it ruins the economy and peaceful atmosphere of the country. Obviously one cannot look at the question of food security in isolation from the larger question of human security. We need to create a condition for ensuring human security of each and every community as well as individual in India

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