

FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA: POST COVID-19 EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

In India, over ten million COVID-19 cases have been reported to date. India is the second most affected country in the world after the United States of America, fortunately with significantly fewer recorded deaths. The worldwide spread of covid-19 created several socio-economic humanitarian problems, like food insecurity, poverty, lockdown, and unemployment leading to the global scourge of hunger. This article discusses the implications of the COVID-19 lockdown on India's current economic status, as well as India's ranking in the “global hunger Index” ranking and analysis on hunger-related statistics for Indian children and women. The Indian government took numerous complementary steps to prevent COVID-19-related deaths while also addressing food insecurity and hunger in the short, medium, and long term. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial adverse effect on the people, very little is known about its impact on poverty and food insecurity in poor settings where resources are insufficient to meet these households' needs. As a result, there is a need for concerted efforts among health experts and policymakers to identify both short- and long-term solutions that can be used to address this issue through collaborative advocacy efforts with stakeholders such as local communities, governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, international bodies, and donor countries. Finally, this paper presents lessons learned and recommendations for strengthening systems in order to create a stronger education sector and close the gap between India's education policy's reality and ambitions. Finally, the article emphasizes the importance of the policy initiative by the central government carefully balancing state and non-state interventions in order to reduce India's food insecurity and malnutrition rates despite the devastating after-effects of COVID-19.

Keywords: *Food Security; Covid-19; Hunger; Malnutrition.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In India, more than ten million cases of COVID-19 have been reported to date. India is the second most affected country in the world after the United States of America, fortunately with significantly fewer recorded deaths. The worldwide spread of covid-19 created a situation that caused significant economic problems, job losses, and unemployment levels that are higher than before the pandemic. Although there has been some progress towards recovery, the impact of the

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ongoing crisis continues to be felt across the globe (Mandal, Srinivasan & Naidu, 2020; Sharma et al., 2019). In addition, India's food insecurity has increased due to the lack of work available due to the crisis and its consequences on poverty levels, nutrition, physical well-being, education, employment, health, and social inclusion.

Since covid-19 broke out, food insecurity has become one of the biggest concerns of India. According to UNFPA, hunger rates have increased by 25% from 6 million people in 2018 to 8 million people in 2019. Hunger remains an issue of concern for nations around the world. While there is no single explanation for poor nutrition, it is estimated that malnutrition is responsible for up to 9% of all deaths around the world. Even small countries like Singapore face similar challenges, with the country reporting 10 times more population than India.

Apart from food insecurity, other determinants of poverty in this region have also contributed to issues related to malnutrition, including climate change, undernutrition, poor health, and famine. Climate change causes prolonged droughts and floods that directly affect agricultural production through loss of water and productivity through erosion into streams (Srinivasan R, Hegde Rajendra, Srinivas S., Niranjana K.V, & Maddileti N. (n.d.) 2022). Low temperatures as well as extreme weather conditions such as heavy rains cause mass droughts and lead to crop failures, leading to widespread low nutrition. Over 2 billion people face food insecurity in developing nations which in turn affects 1 in four Indians. In addition, poor diet and inadequate sanitation contribute to malnutrition and stunting. In addition to poor sanitation practices, Indian policymakers have failed to prioritize nutrition due to corruption within their ranks. Such factors result in food insecurity as well as malnutrition. (Srinivasan R, Hegde Rajendra, Srinivas S., Niranjana K.V, & Maddileti N. (n.d.) 2022

Additionally, since the onset of the pandemics, access to clean drinking water, hygiene, and sanitation became a challenge for millions. Due to financial constraints, policies on sanitation and clean drinking water have not been rolled out yet. As a result, poor hygiene practices and unsanitary conditions persist, resulting in disease outbreaks such as diarrhoea, cholera, dysentery, and respiratory infections (Pandey, 2012; Shriya & Goyal, 2015). Poor sanitation facilities and hygienic drinking water have resulted in reduced quality of life and the ability to

maintain social connections with others. All of these issues contribute to the increase in food insecurity rates within society.

II. HOW IS FOOD INSECURITY A PROBLEM?

The World Bank defines food insecurity as “a state of severe food shortages due to poor or worsening nutritional status or inadequate access to appropriate and affordable energy- and shelter-related services or information.”

1. According to WHO, over 2 billion people rely on some form of food assistance around the world.
2. Despite the availability of sufficient food and other essential needs, some areas in Africa and Asia have been plagued with an increase in instances of starvation or undernourishment such as South Sudan, Nigeria, Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Somalia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and others.
3. Research has indicated that more than half a billion people worldwide suffer from malnutrition.
4. Around 1.6 billion children are malnourished according to reports from the United Nations Children Fund reports.
5. These figures are not only alarming, but also cause for concern since most poor regions of the world lack even basic health care and sanitation systems.

III. HOW SHOULD THE WORLD ADDRESS GLOBAL ISSUES REGARDING FOOD INSECURITY?

The current international strategy to combat food insecurity focuses on improving the global economy, ending extreme poverty, and ensuring universal access to quality nutrition in all countries. However, this cannot be achieved without addressing structural causes such as poverty, gender equality, and climate change. Sustainable development goals 3 and 13 call on national governments and key organizations to address these challenges to achieve lasting solutions to social problems. Countries that are currently experiencing high levels of food insecurity must take urgent actions to end this social issue. International policymakers should

join efforts to ensure that all parts of the world are fully involved in achieving sustainable development. Through shared experiences and common resources, policies can be developed and implemented at the continental level to reduce the chances of falling into food insecurity and malnutrition.

In this section, we look at the concept of food insecurity, its causes, effects, and possible ways to overcome them. We then look at the different approaches that the international community can adopt towards tackling food insecurity, what they cost and benefits, and the roles of each country in achieving the achievement of sustainable development goals. Finally, we look at the specific steps that countries may need to take to effectively implement their strategies. By doing so, the success of sustainable development can be ensured across the globe.

IV. WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF FOOD INSECURITY?

The term ‘food insecurity was first used by the World Health Organization in 1992 to refer to “a situation where people who lack adequate physical or mental ability to gain access to food have difficulty meeting their dietary needs because they often lack the money to buy food. As a result of economic conditions and social trends, many people in urban and rural economies have been pushed into precarious situations such as homelessness, unemployment, or forced migration. Studies indicate that about 45% of small farmers experience financial constraints and have been compelled to sell large amounts of produce to make ends meet. (Brahmanand, P. S., Kumar, A., Ghosh, S., Chowdhury, S. R., Singandhupe, R. B., Singh, R., Nanda, P., Chakraborty, H., Srivastava, S. K., & Behera, M. S. (2013)

The problem of poverty in developing countries, especially among women, is well documented. Around 75% of women living in low- and middle-income countries depend exclusively on agriculture for survival, while only 34% are literate. These statistics are alarming, especially when it comes to rural communities where the numbers of illiterates reach 60%.⁸ Studies have shown that the female population represents nearly 70% of global poverty, making it the largest contributor to the problem. In 2015 study by Oxfam indicated that 30-40 million girls are malnourished. Around 800 million children are stunted, which means they do not know how to eat. Many women are denied jobs or have trouble learning proper English. Women are more likely to be victims of sexual violence and child marriage than men. (Brahmanand, P. S., Kumar,

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The root cause of this problem lies in historical oppression and poor farming practices. Farmers are reluctant to leave fertile land because of fear of famine and disease. In response, women leave farms, abandoning family farming, and moving closer to cities in search of better opportunities. They hope that there will be more job opportunities for themselves as well as for their families, while taking advantage of government aid programs. Moreover, those who leave their lands experience higher mortality rates, food insecurity, and poverty. Although agricultural production has increased significantly since 1960, this fact has not translated into lower prices of crops and the provision of adequate food to citizens. Most farmers still find it difficult to pay for their crop and often resort to debt instead.

In recent years, there have been advances in medical research, which have led to a better understanding of the causes of diseases and disorders that lead to death. There are several factors such as the genetic composition of genes, the amount of protein consumed by an individual, and other vital elements that contribute to the occurrence of particular diseases. With greater knowledge of epidemiology, public policies are being put in place to decrease the incidence of malnutrition, which would lead to more food security for societies. However, it is important to understand that food insecurity is not limited to the consequences of the pandemics, rather, it continues to impact on human rights, human dignity, and fundamental freedoms of people in their day-to-day lives.

V. WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF CLIMATE CHANGE?

Climate change is a complex global issue because it affects our daily activities and our water supplies. Scientists say that it affects temperature patterns, rainfall levels, wind speeds, air pollution, polar circulation, sea ice, ocean acidification, water pollution, biodiversity, and ecosystem conditions, leading to species extinction including flora and fauna, wildlife, habitats, plants, rivers, lakes, oceans, soils, groundwater, and biodiversity. Other studies indicate that climate change harms global food systems as food demands increase when temperatures rise above pre-industrial levels. Researchers attribute these changes to the following reasons: drought conditions, insect infestation, flooding, wildfire, and soil erosion resulting from melting glaciers.

For example, in 2010, Bangladesh experienced record floods and tropical cyclone conditions. Such events led to massive loss of farmland and livestock.

One key factor that contributes to climate change is deforestation and forest degradation. Deforestation has had devastating impacts on both the environment and natural resources, particularly rainforests. Poor land management is another significant reason for deforestation and habitat destruction. According to FIFRA, 50% of degraded land in Bangladesh contains species of trees, shrubs, bushes, grasses, fungi, and lichens. There are almost 18 million hectares that have been turned into wasteland since 2000.

Climate change also has negative impacts on the environment through droughts, hurricanes, and cold weather conditions that affect plant growth and distribution. Droughts and flood conditions have negatively affected the breeding grounds of several animals including wild pigs and ground squirrels. Flooding has resulted in the mass stranding of fish in the Rhine and Danube Rivers, as well as affecting the supply chain of meat-producing animals such as turkey and pheasant. On the other hand, cold weather conditions have impacted the production of vegetables and fruits. High temperatures, for instance, have brought heavy rains that devastate farmers. The dry and hot conditions have killed billions of trees and bushes and led to widespread desertification. As a result of this effect, millions of acres of forests have been lost, causing a reduction in tree diversity of approximately 80%.

The extent of land degradation by human activity has led to serious consequences on the environment. More than 27% of the total land area in India is degraded today. If the same trend continues, India is likely to face severe environmental problems such as increasing evaporation, deterioration, damage, and scarcity, as well as water shortages due to depleting underground sources.

VI. HOW HAS CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTED PEOPLE AND FOOD SECURITY?

It is quite evident that climate change is having a detrimental impact on world health and the environment. The phenomenon of changing climates can cause the disruption of agricultural cycles in major countries, as well as alter the geographic conditions of food production. According to NEPCC, climate change can influence crops, hydrology, fisheries, the climate effects on vegetation and ecosystems, the hydrological cycle, and marine organisms. The impact

of climate change can include drought, heat waves, floods, and storms. All these disruptions in food supply chains have significant implications for food security. The effect of climate change on people and food security includes an increase in cases of malnutrition, which can be attributed to environmental changes, poor nutrition education, and inappropriate farm management.

India faces multiple crises simultaneously. With nearly two million active cases of coronavirus infections, India's fight against COVID-19 has been ongoing for almost nine months while the effects of the global pandemic continue to pose threats to the economic and health sectors. Though government officials argue that the pandemic is better managed compared to other deadly diseases, its implications are devastating. Many families will go hungry this year as they struggle with financial constraints. Thus, food insecurity remains a major concern in India given the impacts of the pandemic, particularly on social relations to individuals, communities, and the country as a whole. Consequently, the post-COVID-19 economic conditions will further increase the threat of food insecurity across rural areas and marginalized communities by deepening socioeconomic disparities.

India's response to COVID-19 has been slow-paced, however, there are indications that the country may see growth in food supply during the initial months after the pandemic and this can only translate to improved nutrition. However, experts warn that the future lies uncertain despite initial strong indications of economic recovery amid hopes that the pandemic is going to end soon because of global cooperation and international help (Patel et al., 2012). Therefore, food insecurity continues to have long-term impacts on human societies, resulting in negative consequences for both economic and social development. (Dev, S. M., & Sharma, A. N. (2010, October 4)

As mentioned earlier, the world experienced severe impacts of the pandemic. In addition, India's economy suffered greatly with GDP falling from \$ 4.2 trillion last July to \$ 3.4 trillion in October. Despite such a large fall in economic activity, the country remained successful in controlling the disease spread. To date, more than 97,000 deaths caused by COVID-19 have been reported, with a cumulative total of over 500,000 cases in the entire world. Countries like Australia and New Zealand saw food disruptions in the wake of Covid-19 related deaths and suffering, resulting in food insecurity among vulnerable populations. Such events were

documented by UNESCO in May, where the World Food Programme warned about the economic effects of governments halting services to vulnerable populations (Sharma et al., 2019). The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) said while food systems are expected to recover, there is still a need to support and enhance the resilience of food systems to mitigate risks of disruptions. For instance, farmers across the nation have responded to the disruption of income from national markets by planting more seeds, reducing deforestation, and increasing rice production. Similarly, there have been efforts to feed vulnerable populations, many of whom live below the poverty line. One of the key strategies was to ensure the provision of free or reduced prices. The move benefited thousands of families facing food insecurity. (Dev, S. M., & Sharma, A. N. (2010, October 4)

While most countries responded well to the pandemic and recovery was supported by global solidarity, India faced serious challenges such as food insecurity and malnutrition. Given the severity of the pandemic and the economic slowdown, policymaking did not reflect that much in response to the epidemic. This prompted calls for addressing issues such as poverty, food security, and nutrition. The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) had been triggered by excessive consumption of fossil fuels, causing enormous damage to the environment. Recent research has shown that climate change, combined with unsustainable agriculture, has had “extensive impacts on food systems that are already strained”. It was clear to us that the current state of affairs is not sustainable as we cannot afford to leave any space for further deterioration. Consequently, various measures have been taken to address the root causes of poor nutrition that have been caused by climate change and industrialization. One such strategy is reforestation. Unlike past instances of forest removal, many of which led to extinction and extinction in wild habitats, this move by India helps local communities develop as they gain land for farming activities that reduce carbon emissions. Reforestation creates biodiversity, improves soil moisture, and contributes to food production. The concept of ecosystem restoration has been coined by scientists, who believe it can improve the overall performance of different systems.

VII. ROLE OF UN IN FOOD SECURITY AND AGREEMENTS WITH THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT

The main aim of this research paper is to investigate the role of unions in food security and agreements with the Indian government. It will also look at whether some issues arise as a result of bargaining with the UN. Also, it will look at how different types of contracts affect relations between UN and farmers. Finally, it will give some recommendations on how to resolve some issues concerning bargaining. Therefore, based on the above discussion, we can conclude that it is indeed worthwhile to engage in trade relations with other countries especially those who have similar cultures with the host country. This approach will not only benefit other countries such as India but will also put the burden of poverty back on the shoulders of the poor farmers. Several benefits will be derived from doing business with India. One of which is increased revenues of approximately \$1 trillion annually for many years to come. Many people worldwide aspire to do business with India. When a company has, its market there is bound to profit as a consequence. For example, when China started doing business in India, they started buying Indian cotton. They were able to get cheap prices and so this allowed them to grow rapidly in size. (Dev, S. M., & Sharma, A. N. (2010, October 4))

Another advantage is that due to reduced customs duties these companies were making huge profits. A further advantage is that most Chinese suppliers were already doing business with other neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, etc. Thus, a foreign investor would have no difficulty gaining access to large markets within their borders which would make it very easy to gain entry into large tracts of land or to enter new areas. A fourth benefit is that it helps to provide jobs to millions of Indians. Most jobs in India happen to be in agriculture, especially the field of poultry farming. These jobs have been particularly hard hit by job losses during times of high inflation. This has prompted us to support organizations such as “Farmers Protection” that work to make sure that farmers have the resources they need to survive. If they do not, then they are forced to sell their farms just like their homes which in turn puts them and their families under severe financial pressure. There are thousands of Indian households that rely on food-producing countries not just for income but also as a source of nourishment from the year-round. (USDA para 4) The majority of these households happen to be small-scale farmers who struggle to secure enough feed to keep them alive through the harsh winters and hot summers. Due to the lack of adequate funds, a lot of them resort to selling their farms for quick cash and this brings about an immediate problem. Even though the Indian government was

established to guarantee minimum prices since wheat supply is limited farmers tend to cut back on supplying for fear of losing the crop that they are producing. (USDA para 5) On top of that, the growing demand for rice makes exports of rice extremely costly. So, to maintain their survival, farmers have resorted to taking out loans from traders/unions (USDA para 6) thus limiting what little they have left in terms of money. The impact of this in today's global economy is devastating. Because agriculture was once an important sector of the global economy, it now contributes much less than ever. Today, most people working in today's global economies depend upon agricultural products for their survival. It's no wonder then those farmers aren't giving up hope. The loss of any crop creates immense problems for a farmer. Without enough money they aren't going to pay off their debts – it hurts so bad. To avoid getting caught, the farmers often take out loans from trading unions or from banks to cover their expenses. Although this may seem like a great deal, it causes a lot of pain and hardship for a small farmer. In addition to dealing with debt, farmers now have to decide which varieties of grains they want to sell to buyers. Not knowing what kind of grain to acquire can leave them scrambling around trying to find the right places with the least possible expense.

Another issue is the weather. India has monsoons that make life unbearable. Furthermore, even when things are not really bad, the monsoon season does bring rain so that crops can die and farmers have no choice but to wait until spring to harvest their yields. Now there is still another factor that needs to be considered. According to the World Bank website, one in four of India's children cannot find employment due to insufficient primary education. This is caused by several reasons such as family backgrounds, low economic status, health issues, discrimination, lack of opportunity, etc. (World Bank para 1).

If India became part of our international trade, there would be plenty of potential benefits. A further benefit to Indian agriculture is that it is a key ingredient to our food supply in the form of pulses and dry grains that are widely used in processed food and snacks. In addition to these, agriculture can assist in creating hundreds of new jobs in India and possibly abroad. As we look towards the future, many people believe that India can become the next big thing when it comes to exporting food to other countries. We should get to know where these foods are coming from and therefore take steps to ensure that we control our food supply. By engaging in trade relations with the Indian government, we will be able to improve our chances of success. In my opinion,

one of the best methods to start an intensive relationship through international trade is simply through the establishment of partnerships between private businesses and the public sector. Through trade relationships, we will be able to expand our market and to get our products into even more countries around the globe in the process of achieving higher levels of growth, stability of the consumer society, and also better standards of living.

The issue of food insecurity is an important aspect of the region's development, as most families have limited access to adequate eating and nutrition, which affects their ability to meet basic human needs. As a result of hunger, many children lose out on education, malnutrition affects millions of people all around the world. Therefore, governments must consider appropriate ways to improve food security and achieve sustainable growth across nations and regions. However, various challenges hinder such efforts. For example, poor distribution of income and access to health care can prevent countries from being able to address the problem effectively. Additionally, food scarcity also poses significant threats to human resources due to labor shortages and increased demand in some markets, especially in developed countries. This paper focuses on two major agreements signed between India and the United States in September 2014. One agreement aims at improving the availability of healthy food options to underserved populations in the country. The other agreement provides support for research into new nutritional products and ingredients that will be manufactured in India by American companies.

VIII. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN INDIA AND US THROUGH TRADE AGREEMENTS

The U.S.-India Bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was signed between the United States and Indian officials on November 22, 2014. It gives both countries freedom to cooperate on trade issues. According to the signing of the treaty, this agreement "aims to provide economic benefits to each party without creating barriers to trade" (Narayanan, S 2022). Moreover, "this transaction enhances confidence and transparency within the U. S. supply chain management system". Furthermore, according to Sudha Narayanan, through its provisions of multilateralism, FTAs are effective at reducing trade-related concerns as well as helping developing countries like India to develop their economies. The following section explains how FTAs help to reduce trade barriers and boost local business investment in terms of foreign exchange earnings on Indian exports. In

2011, Indians, in particular, received numerous proposals to acquire American foodstuffs, although they were not ready since they did not have enough money for the purchases of these foods (Bolman, 2013). Consequently, in 2012, Obama signed a bilateral free trade agreement with India. Thus, by doing so, they can benefit from the US market but also work together to gain access to American businesses for future economic recovery. After discussing the possibility of joint ventures or partnerships, Obama asked his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, to “provide [him] with concrete commitments over four years that will lead us to open our land and waters to Americans” (Patel, Gupta, Shah, Sharma & Gokhale, 2015, para. 2). These three agreements signed by the government of the United States and India aim at sharing economic opportunities and addressing trade and tariff barriers. While the FTAs do this, they also strive towards common goals. They focus on protecting the interests of small businesses, fair wages for workers, and improved conditions for investors (Patel et al., 2015). In addition, it is the goal of the FTAs to promote democracy and public opinions as an integral part of international cooperation. Both sides expect them to maintain mutual respect for political freedoms and democratic institutions. Finally, they value the sovereignty of different states in terms of their individual decisions and positions. Overall, the FTAs have several objectives. First, they seek ways in which to increase trade access while ensuring no barriers or delays in trade. Second, they help to create more jobs in the industries in sectors such as agriculture as well as manufacturing. Lastly, they seek ways in which to better American consumers’ experience. Therefore, if implemented properly, the FTAs would serve as one of the key pillars in promoting global prosperity at the same time helping developing nations like India to take advantage of opportunities and thrive.

On April 26, 2017, President Donald Trump signed another trade agreement with India. Unlike the previous FTAs, this one contains specific elements aimed at facilitating investments. It includes clauses that allow businesses to operate on Indian soil to offer higher quality products and services (Bolman, 2013). Moreover, “it removes restrictions on imports and limits duties on imports” (Bolman, 2013, p. 2). In particular, in line with Trump’s pledge before the election for making India great again, he issued an executive order in March 2018, which allowed them to remove the import duty on US products in India once every ten days, until June 30, 2018, and for any goods exported to India to receive tariffs of 5 percent (Narayanan, Sudha 2022). Further, the

FTAs between the United States and India contained certain requirements that had been created to ensure investments in India. Specifically, the FTAs required approval by the World Bank and IMF on the condition that they do not affect the viability of businesses. Also included are the WTO rules where there is to be a clause ensuring equal treatment of foreign and domestic firms as well as the creation of minimum standards of quality and safety for products and processes (Bolman, 2013). Lastly, the FTAs contain the National Company Law Tribunal system, where cases are transferred to the tribunal until the case gets decided upon (Bolman, 2013). By doing so, this process ensures that businesses get fair compensation following the law. Finally, the FTAs contain various sections for farmers, which has helped to alleviate problems related to crop loss. Similarly, the implementation of the FTAs has reduced the number of instances of food waste in India. The last section deals with the protection of natural lands as an essential component of sustainable growth. Overall, India got its first FTAs with countries such as Canada and Mexico which in turn led to a big market for India. Furthermore, because of their high quality, both Canada and Mexico have benefited greatly from the Indian economy (Patel et. al., 2015). The reason why India has benefitted so much from its presence in the global marketplace can be explained by the fact that, despite the increasing consumption of food and energy, India still ranks fourth after Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the Philippines in the ranking of the highest rate of unemployment in the world. Hence, having good relations with other countries helps to promote the concept of self-reliance and the need for developing countries to invest to grow economically.

IX. CONCLUSION

From the case study, it has been evident from the discussion that the effects of the pandemic continue to have far-reaching consequences not only to public health but also to our economies, especially in terms of food insecurity. Furthermore, food insecurity is seen to have lasting repercussions as it can result in malnutrition, poor mental wellbeing, lack of proper employment opportunities, and deteriorating food consumption patterns among vulnerable populations. The impact of the pandemic, combined with current economic uncertainties and social problems like gender inequality, poor infrastructure, environmental degradation, and poor sanitation, has also revealed existing vulnerabilities in both developed and developing countries. Currently, there is no single solution to food insecurity but rather needs to be addressed holistically from multiple

angles. Unfortunately, there have been few attempts made since the start of the pandemic to tackle the underlying issues involved in food insecurity. Since then, there has been a lot of debate over the issue, but no concrete steps have been undertaken given the seriousness of the problem. (Narayanan, Sudha 2022)

India is expected to rise as a major centre for agrarian production and exports under the Belt & Road Initiative (B&RI) deal. Despite what is said about B&RIs being associated with increased competition and tensions, the initiative has led to positive effects on India's farmers, thereby boosting rural employment opportunities and enabling small scale farmers to attain market autonomy and market orientation. However, despite rapid industrialization and improved infrastructure, India remains dependent on agriculture for its primary supply of food and cash. Hence, by leveraging upon the benefits of technology transfer, food and agricultural processing industries, farmers might be better positioned to compete domestically and globally on equal terms. If we want to achieve food security and prosperity, then we need to start supporting the rural economy. While there will always be obstacles in the way, efforts must continue to promote development and equality in rural areas. We must move forward with initiatives to eradicate poverty, hunger, and malnutrition to empower the masses and eliminate poverty while guaranteeing progress for a more just and equitable post-Covid society.

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