

# **Sustaining Food Security in a Globalized World: Unpacking the International Relations**

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## **Abstract**

Sustaining food security in a globalized world is a complex issue that involves various aspects of international relations. To unpack this topic, we must first understand the concept of food security and its significance in today's world. Food security can be impacted by supply chain interruptions brought on by political unrest in some locations, both locally and possibly globally. Food security may be impacted by peace and stability, both of which are greatly aided by international relations. In a globalized world, maintaining food security necessitates a thorough strategy that takes into account many facets of international relations. We may endeavor to guarantee food security for everyone at all times by encouraging collaboration, supporting sustainable practices, and embracing creative solutions.

This paper examines the right to access to food in a globalized world, legal norms and socio-legal implications on international relations.

**Keywords:** Sustainable, Food Security, International Relations, Human Rights, India.

## **Introduction**

Sustaining food security in a global scenario is a significant challenge due to the adverse impacts of climate change on agriculture and food systems. Climate-smart, climate-resilient agricultural techniques must be adopted by farmers and policymakers. This covers conservation agriculture, the use of crops resistant to drought, and enhanced irrigation methods. Mitigating greenhouse gas emissions can aid in lessening the effects of climate change on food systems and agriculture. Reducing food waste, using renewable energy sources, and improving animal management techniques can all help achieve this. Research and development expenditures are essential for creating new crop types, enhancing soil health, and creating climate-smart technology. This can increase production and help farmers adjust to changing climate conditions. Governments, businesses, and civil society groups may work together to address the problems of food security and climate change through collaborative partnerships. This covers the creation of value chains that are sensitive to climate change, enhanced financial accessibility, and the encouragement of equitable growth.

Programs to increase the capacity of farmers, extension agents, and legislators can contribute to increased food security and climate change resistance. This involves promoting gender equality, improving information access, and offering training on climate-smart agricultural methods. In the event of global climate change, policy frameworks that support climate-smart agriculture, lessen food waste, and provide access to financing can aid in maintaining food security. This involves creating national policies for adapting to climate change, encouraging sustainable farming methods, and putting social protection initiatives into action.

### **The Concept of Food Security**

Food security exists when all individuals have reliable access to enough affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food to sustain a healthy life. Food security is crucial for individuals, communities, and countries to thrive and develop. Without access to an adequate and nutritious food supply, individuals are at risk of malnutrition, hunger, and other long-term health consequences. In addition, food insecurity can contribute to social unrest, economic instability, and environmental degradation.

According to **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**:

*“a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”*

**United Nations’ Committee on World Food Security**, defines food security as:

*“all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.”*

There are four main pillars of food security:

- availability,
- access,
- utilization, and
- stability.

Availability refers to the physical existence of food and the ability of a country or region to produce enough food to meet the needs of its population. Access refers to individuals’ ability to obtain and afford sufficient food. Utilization encompasses the consumption and utilization of food to meet individuals’ dietary needs. *Lastly*, stability refers to the reliability and predictability of the food supply.

Achieving food security requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses the complex interplay of factors that contribute to food insecurity, including poverty, inequality, climate change, conflict, and inadequate infrastructure. Governments, civil society organizations, and international agencies all have a role to play in promoting food security through policy development, investment in agriculture, disaster preparedness, social protection programs, and sustainable development initiatives. Food security is a fundamental human right and a key component of sustainable development. By addressing the root causes of food insecurity and implementing effective solutions, we can build a more resilient, healthy, and equitable global food system for all.

### **Major Causes of Food Insecurity**

The global food and energy crisis is hitting with alarming speed and force, challenging the global village and the global food insecurity jeopardize the lives of millions of people in vulnerable conditions. The following are the major causes of food security:

1. **Conflict:** Currently, conflict is the main reason causing the world's hunger. Living in war zones accounts for more than 60% of the food insecure population. People are forced to evacuate their homes due to conflict, sometimes leaving behind their main source of income. Communities are further polarized by conflict, and farmers may give up on long-term farming practices out of concern that, should they be forced to relocate, they will never be able to reap the rewards.
2. **Climate change:** After years of stasis, the number of hungry people worldwide increased by about 40 million between 2015 and 2018, with Sub-Saharan African nations hit by drought seeing the biggest increases. Certain places have been severely affected by a rise in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters, which has destroyed crop yields and reduced the amount and quality of food that populations can access.
3. **Population Growth:** By 2050, the UN predicts that there will be around 10 billion people on the planet. Food production and accessibility must increase in tandem with the population's continued growth. Sadly, we have already seen in population-boom nations that the distribution of resources such as croplands and water supplies can lead to scarcity, which results in food insecurity.
4. **Unemployment and Poverty:** People with little financial resources may find it difficult to afford food purchases on a regular basis and may reside in areas with limited availability of reasonably priced, healthful food options.

## Future Consequences of Food Insecurity

When individuals lack access to the food they require to live fully, it is known as food insecurity. The following are the future consequences of food insecurity:

- a. **Malnutrition:** For people who are food insecure, malnutrition can be a fatal reality. This is due to the misery that goes along with it as well as the possibility that it will make the impacted people more and more food insecure. Malnutrition-related weakening of the muscles and cognitive problems can make it nearly hard for those who are affected to get better or even to continue making a living.
- b. **Stunting:** A child is prone to experience stunting if they do not obtain enough nutrients, especially in the first 1,000 days after conception until their second birthday. As a result, their well-being and chances for the future will be permanently harmed, and they will not grow psychologically or physically to the extent that they otherwise would. Food insecure nations all too often deal with this problem. *For instance*, in Liberia, which is among the six most hungry countries in the world according to the Global Hunger Index, almost one-third of children suffer from stunting.
- c. **Mental Health Problems:** According to a recent study on food insecurity in Ethiopia, people who experience it are more prone to experience anxiety and despair. The cumulative impact on psychological and physiological well-being presents a dismal picture of the standard of living for individuals experiencing food insecurity.
- d. **Chronic health conditions:** A long-term health condition may make it more difficult for a person to work and make a living wage. Additionally, they could have to pay high medical expenses.
- e. **Insufficient availability of affordable housing:** It might be difficult to have enough money left over to buy food, even if you manage your finances and savings carefully. This is because paying for a place to live can be very expensive.
- f. **Racism and discrimination:** Because of systematic discrimination and poverty, marginalized communities those of color, LGBTQ people, and persons with disabilities are more likely to experience food insecurity.
- g. **Well-being of Individual:** Social exclusion, shame, and stigma can result from not providing for basic requirements like food and shelter.

## **Food Security and Sustainability**

Food security and sustainability have a nuanced and intricate relationship. Food security and sustainability are mutually beneficial, on the one hand. Sustainable farming methods that increase output, cut waste, and preserve resources are necessary to achieve food security. However, by encouraging sustainable diets, lowering food waste, and aiding smallholder farmers, food security may also improve sustainability. But there are trade-offs and conflicts between sustainability and food security as well. For instance, raising agricultural production to satisfy the world's expanding food demand may result in negative environmental effects including soil erosion, deforestation, and water pollution.

## **Food Security in a Globalized World: Unpacking the International Relations**

A number of factors, including population growth, climate change, natural disasters, conflicts, trade policies, technological advancements, economic development, poverty, inequality, cultural practices, and political instability, have made food security an increasingly urgent issue in recent years. Food security has evolved into a multifaceted, intricate problem in today's globalized world, requiring an all-encompassing strategy from a range of stakeholders, including governments, businesses, international organizations, civil society, and local communities.

Food security is closely related to international politics, which is the cooperation and rivalry of states to guarantee food supply, affordability, and accessibility for their citizens. Trade regulations, international governance, humanitarian assistance, and geopolitical conflicts are important facets of international politics that affect food security. Trade agreements with other countries have the potential to help or hurt food security. Free trade agreements can enable nations access a greater range of food goods by facilitating the flow of agricultural products. Trade restrictions and protectionist measures, however, may restrict the supply of food, raising costs and harming those who are already vulnerable. International organizations that create global standards, foster collaboration, and handle issues related to food security are the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and Food and Agriculture Organization, among others. While ineffective global governance can result in inefficiencies and policy gaps, effective governance can assist establish a stable environment for food production and distribution. The delivery of humanitarian aid can be impacted by international politics during times of crisis, such natural catastrophes, armed wars, or adverse economic periods. Governments and organizations may intervene to help afflicted communities with food, but

the scope and efficacy of this aid may be impacted by political factors like budgetary restrictions or geopolitical interests.

The security of food can be impacted both directly and indirectly by political disputes and tensions between countries. Embargoes or sanctions imposed on certain nations, for example, have the potential to impede commerce and restrict access to vital food supplies. Conflicts and instability can also affect agricultural output and distribution, resulting in shortages and price increases in food-producing countries. Global food security is shaped by a complex interplay between international politics and other factors. Food security for all may be ensured by the global community working together to alleviate geopolitical concerns, promote equitable trade policies, and develop collaboration.

### **How do international relations shape Food Security Outcomes?**

International relations play a significant role in shaping food security outcomes. Here are some ways in which impact of international relations on food security:

- *Trade policies:* International trade policies can impact food security outcomes by determining the availability and affordability of food. Trade barriers such as tariffs, quotas, and subsidies can make it difficult for some countries to export their agricultural products, leading to food shortages and higher prices for consumers.
- *Aid and development assistance:* International aid and development assistance can help to improve food security outcomes in developing countries by providing resources for agricultural development, infrastructure, and emergency food assistance. However, aid can also have unintended consequences, such as creating dependency and undermining local agricultural production.
- *Diplomacy and conflict:* Diplomatic relations between countries can impact food security outcomes by promoting cooperation and collaboration on issues related to agriculture and food security. Conflict, on the other hand, can lead to food insecurity by disrupting agricultural production, destroying infrastructure, and causing displacement of populations.
- *Climate change and environmental policies:* International agreements and policies related to climate change and the environment can impact food security outcomes by determining the extent to which countries are able to adapt to the impacts of climate change and mitigate its effects on agriculture.
- *Intellectual property rights:* International intellectual property rights agreements can impact food security outcomes by determining the availability and affordability of

agricultural technologies and inputs, such as seeds and fertilizers. These agreements can also impact the ability of farmers in developing countries to access and use these technologies.

- *Humanitarian interventions*: In times of emergency, such as natural disasters, famines, or conflict, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can be vital in supplying food help.
- *Assistance and advancement*: Global assistance and advancement initiatives have the potential to enhance dietary stability in underdeveloped nations. These initiatives frequently include financing for agriculture and food production, infrastructural improvements, and technical support.

What are the implications of food security for international relations and development?

## **Conclusion**

Food plays an essential role in performance and well-being. Apart from its physiological necessity, food is also a source of pleasure. Since, both biological needs for food and psychic satisfaction from food vary considerably among and within populations, coming up with precise, operationalizable measures of food security have proved problematic.

Sustaining food security in a global climate change scenario requires a multi-faceted approach that involves adaptation, mitigation, research and development, collaborative partnerships, capacity building, and policy frameworks. These strategies can help in building resilience to climate change, improving productivity, and ensuring food security for all. Food security, a crucial aspect of global well-being, is significantly influenced by international relations. It is influenced by factors such as climate, technology, and socio-economic conditions. However, international relations play a pivotal role in shaping the global food system. International relations shape food security outcomes through a variety of mechanisms, and policymakers must consider these impacts when developing international policies related to agriculture and food security. Food security is a complex issue that transcends national borders and is deeply intertwined with international relations. Addressing food security challenges requires a collaborative approach, involving governments, international organizations, and civil society. By fostering positive international relations and promoting policies that support sustainable agriculture, food trade, and development, we can work towards a more food-secure world.

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