

Food Crisis - Global Priority

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Abstract

The magnitude of the food problem, the multiple negative consequences it has, both domestically and internationally, have led to increasing concerns for identifying the causes and ways to solve it. The COVID-19 pandemic will have lasting effects on people and nutrition, health, economies and food systems around the world. Mankind risks a food crisis, according to the FAO. The states of the world, whether they are developed or developing, must find viable solutions in order to be able to feed their populations and thus threatened by one of the most difficult crises in history. The planet is facing an unprecedented challenge, and meeting one of people's basic needs must be a global priority. The paper aims to sound the alarm about the dramatic consequences that the pandemic has on the planet through extremely low access to certain categories of food, to meet a basic need, the need for food.

Key words: globalization, sustainable development, population, hunger, malnutrition

J.E.L. classification: Q01

1. Introduction

In today's world, globalization seems to be beginning to be redefined, according to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. It is obvious that the concerns of the states of the world are changing, and the feeding of the world's population, continues, if not, even becomes one of the priority points that must be on the agendas of all countries. The food problem tends to worsen, being a factor in destabilizing international life.

The discrepancy between food resources, solvent demand and nominal global demand is transposed through deep economic and social disparities between developing and industrialized countries, between poor and rich.

2. Theoretical background. The content of the food problem

The size of the food problem is determined by the proportions of hunger (starvation), malnutrition (malnutrition) and malnutrition around the world.

Hunger is the general state of physical deprivation of food. Malnutrition is a quantitatively inadequate diet, while malnutrition means very high-quality deficiencies, namely foods that do not contain protein and, in general, nutrients. (Dumitrescu, 1998, p.71)

There has been a strong polarization of food consumption worldwide: on the one hand, about two-thirds of the world's population, mostly in developing countries, is experiencing hunger and malnutrition, while on the other hand, a minority, located mainly in industrialized countries, consumes above normal norms.

The persistence of the phenomena of hunger and malnutrition has negative and profound implications:

- ✓ the physical and mental development of the individual is impeded, diminishing his productive capacity, the efficiency of the participation in the accomplishment of the different activities;
- ✓ social implications. Most of the population affected by the famine is in rural areas. Hunger is one of the causes of the phenomenon of migration to urban areas, with all the problems it causes (increasing unemployment, increasing unhealthiness etc.);
- ✓ has serious political implications for the affected countries. Often, at the origin of social tensions, of increasing political instability, are the protests, the actions of the population affected by hunger. On the other hand, if food needs increase and domestic production cannot meet them, they are in the form of food aid or under commercial conditions. There are cases in which suppliers have imposed political conditions, even going so far as violations of the prerogatives of the national sovereignty of the beneficiary countries.

Is the world food problem conditioned by natural phenomena (drought, floods, desertification) or by the demographic "explosion"? (Dumitrescu, 1998, p.72)

Of course, the influence of natural factors cannot be denied. Lately, the desert has advanced, in some regions of the globe, by 10 km per year. The onset of the food crisis coincided with very poor harvests due to acute drought in large areas of the globe.

Nor can the impact of population growth on food needs be ignorant. Not coincidentally, famine has become acute in a country like Bangladesh. Due to population growth, the need for food by 2044 will increase by 70%.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the real cause of the precarious food situation in developing countries is the backwardness of agriculture and, in general, the economy of most of them. The relationship between underdevelopment and the precarious situation of food in the world is direct. In the final analysis, the size of the gross domestic product per capita is what determines the proportions of calories and protein in the daily diet.

The current situation in many developing countries is also generated by some internal factors (Puiu, 2010, p. 39), a wrong direction of agricultural policy. There are many developing countries that have mechanically adapted foreign methods of economic growth, neglecting agriculture, the development of traditional crops, the stimulation of agricultural producers. In this way, dependence on the outside world increased, with the young states soon becoming net importers of agricultural products.

Only subsistence agriculture will not be able to satiate the masses of poor people. The development of the last decades has taken place mainly in industry, services or urban centers. Today, more than half of the world's population, over 7.7 billion, live in cities. The fact that all people must eat and that food does not grow in city buildings has long been ignored. Under these conditions, states will have to focus on intensive agriculture, in which productivity is determined by mechanization and automation, in order to succeed in producing and feeding growing populations.

3. Eradication of hunger - goal of sustainable development

As early as 2015, the UN adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which provided a universal agenda with clear and measurable objectives. The 2030 Agenda includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and an action plan for the next 15 years, to eradicate extreme poverty, combat inequality, injustice and protect the planet by 2030. Goal 2 of this agenda addresses exactly to eradicate hunger, ensure food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Achieving this goal by the 2030 target date will require a profound change in the global food and agricultural system, especially in the current pandemic.

Insufficient access to food resources, determined by economic causes is the main cause of hunger, a phenomenon faced by a large part of the Earth's population. The effort to improve population nutrition will contribute to progress in many areas of sustainable development.

The need for more equitable, resilient and sustainable food and health systems has never been more urgent. In the context of Covid-19, malnourished people have weaker immune systems and may be at higher risk of serious illness due to the virus. Good nutrition is an essential part of a person's defense against Covid-19. Nutritional endurance is a key element in preparing society to

combat the threat. Focusing on nutritional well-being provides opportunities for creating a link between public health and equity, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Worldwide, 821 million people suffer from food shortages. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), about one in five people in the developing world does not eat properly.

In the context of the pandemic, border closures, the supply chain and trade disruptions have restricted people's access to sufficient, diverse and nutritious food sources, especially in countries severely affected by the virus or already facing high levels of food insecurity, he warned. DO IT.

The World Food Program (WFP), a permanent body within the United Nations system, warned in April 2020 that after the coronavirus pandemic, another phenomenon will hit the planet's population due to the economic crisis: hunger. Restrictions on transport, significant losses in tourism and the fact that migrants no longer send money to relatives contribute to the famine that would follow.

The director of the World Food Program (WFP), David Beasley, has warned governments that the world will face a coronavirus epidemic and a famine, affecting 36 countries. He drew attention to the consequences of the wars in Yemen, Syria and South Sudan, the locust invasion of East Africa, natural disasters and climate change, and said Covid-19 had caused not only a pandemic but also a global humanitarian crisis.

In a pessimistic scenario, famine could take over 30 countries or more, given that 10 of them have more than 1 million people on the brink of starvation. The World Food Program has identified 55 countries at high risk of starvation in its annual report released in April 2020, warning that they will not be able to cope with the impact of the virus due to the fragile health systems they have. Ten countries have been selected as being particularly at risk after suffering the worst food crises last year: Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Nigeria and Haiti.

David Beasley says that while there are still no catastrophic famines, we must prepare and act to avoid facing a famine of biblical proportions that could come in a few months. He advised governments to raise money for aid and funding for logistics networks to distribute food and protective medical equipment where needed.

4. Global Hunger Index (GHI)

The inequitable distribution of hunger in the world is not only linked to poverty, but also to politics or power.

The prevalence of malnutrition - the percentage of the population without regular access to adequate calories - has stagnated since 2015, but the number of people who are hungry has actually increased to 821 million from 785 million in 2015, according to FAO.

At the international level, a Global Hunger Index (GHI) is calculated, which is a tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger globally, regionally and nationally. GHI scores are calculated each year to assess progress and effects in combating hunger. GHI is designed to raise awareness and understanding of the fight against hunger, to provide a way to compare hunger levels between countries and regions, and to draw attention to areas of the world where hunger is highest and where it is needed. Extra effort to eliminate hunger is greatest.

GHI scores are calculated using a three-step process that relies on data available from various sources to capture the multidimensional nature of hunger (Figure no. 1).

First, for each country, the values are determined for four indicators:

- ✓ Malnutrition - the share of the population that is malnourished;
- ✓ Acute malnutrition - the share of children under five with too little weight for their height;
- ✓ Chronic malnutrition - the share of children under five with a height too low for their age;
- ✓ Infant mortality - the mortality rate of children under five years of age.

Figure no. 1 Composition of the Global Hunger Index (GHI)



Source: <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/about.html> [Accessed 1 June 2020]

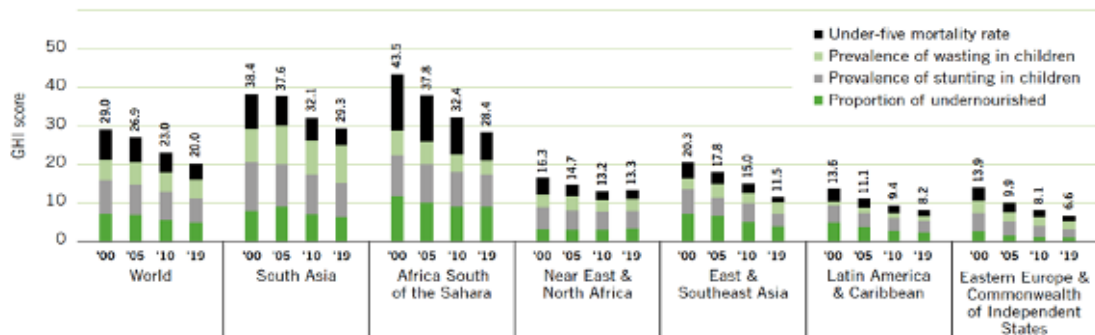
Second, each of the four component indicators is given a standardized score on a 100-point scale, based on the highest level observed for that indicator on a global scale in recent decades.

Third, the standardized scores are cumulated to calculate the GHI score for each country, with each of the three dimensions.

A value of 0 would mean that a country has no malnourished people, no children under five with chronic and acute malnutrition, and no children who died before their fifth birthday.

At the regional level, South Asia and South Africa have the highest GHI scores of 2019, at 29.3 and 28.4, respectively (figure no. 2). These scores indicate severe levels of hunger. In contrast, GHI scores in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Latin America and the Caribbean, East and Southeast Asia, as well as the Middle East and North Africa range from 6.6 to 13.3, which shows a low or moderate level of hunger.

Figure no. 2 Evolution of the Global Hunger Index (GHI) from 1990 to 2019 (global and regional)



Source: <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/about.html> [Accessed 1 June 2020]

The GHI of 2019 showed a certain degree of optimism, but the pandemic of 2020 totally changes the forecasts. There are many reasons for concern: the Covid pandemic - 19, the number of undernourished people in the world is growing, extreme weather events endanger food production and food security, many countries are in the midst of violent conflicts.

In these situations, it will take ingenuity, perseverance and dedication to achieve SDG 2, respectively, Zero Hunger.

The right to food is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights before other rights.

Theoretically, feeding the entire world would not be a problem today. In the current global system, a good distribution is unfortunately not possible.

5. Conclusions

Agriculture has come a long way in the last century. More food is being produced than ever before - but the current model is unsustainable, and as the world's population is rapidly approaching 8 billion, modern food production methods will need a radical transformation.

The world has made great strides in reducing hunger, despite the world's growing population. But it is a long road and no country can achieve ODD2 - Zero Hunger, if it acts alone. If we want to see a world without a hungry population, by 2030, governments, citizens, international government institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector must work together to invest, innovate and create sustainable solutions.

COVID-19 affects the health of the world's population. But it will determine, in addition to the economic crisis, a food security crisis if appropriate measures are not taken. The world is already facing food and nutrition security challenges.

It is extremely important to ensure the normal flow of global trade and to make full use of the international market as a vital tool for securing food supply. International organizations such as the UN, the World Trade Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund must urge countries not to use COVID-19 as an excuse to use trade protectionist policies.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the world was facing the most difficult crisis since World War II. "The crisis created by the coronavirus pandemic is not a financial crisis like the one in 2008, but a human one, but with major economic implications."

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