

## **Economic Reforms and Food Security: Rationale for State Intervention in India**

V. BIJUKUMAR\*

### **Abstract**

*In the twenty first century, the world is witnessing various technological advancement, however, it fails to address food security to millions of the poor putting a larger question mark on human security. The food insecurity leads to malnutrition among children, pregnant women and socially marginalized sections, etc. In the age of economic liberalization, food security is adversely affected by the withdrawal of state in developmental expenditure and the entry of market forces in the agriculture and food sectors. In fact, India's failure to prioritize socio-economic democracy over political democracy created infirmities in achieving food security.*

**H**uman security emerged as an important theme in the contemporary world. It is largely discussed in the context of democratization, human rights, globalized markets and neo-liberal economic development. Traditionally security is viewed as a state-centered focus on national security and is viewed as prevention and resolution of violent conflicts. Amartya Sen argues that promoting human rights and addressing multiple deprivation and social inequalities are at the core of protecting human security (Sen, 1999). According to him, lack of individual human security is the absence of income and deprivation. Social exclusion created by income and deprivation is thus considered to be a serious hurdle in the way of human security. In the era of globalization, human security is debated by policy makers, nongovernmental organizations and various movements which stand for alternative politics. Accordingly, globalization generates a sense of insecurity, underdevelopment and poverty. It affects individual's freedom to live in dignity and right to democratic participation.

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\* V.Biju Kumar (vbijuk@yahoo.co.in) is Associate Professor in Centre for Political Studies Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

All over the world, poverty is considered to be the greatest challenge to human security. Poverty leads to insecurity of individual, groups and community. Extreme poverty not only leads to lack of basic security and capability deprivation but also leads to relative deprivation and conflict leading to emergence of conflicts. Poverty thus deprives of basic capabilities and creates human insecurity. Amartya Sen sees that “poverty must be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities, rather than merely, as lowness of income” (Sen, 2000: 87). In the broader context, Jean Dreze argued that “the right to food needs to be linked to other economic and social rights relating to education, work, health and information, which together hold the promise of radical change in public priorities and democratic politics” (Dreze, 2004: 1723).

In the recent past, food security emerged as a constituent of human security reaffirming the commitment to reduce poverty and hunger among human beings. The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.<sup>1</sup> Food security ideally means population lives free from starvation and hunger. It is based on access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. Food is essential for freedom and developing capability. It is argued that “the issue of food security is understood not in terms of how much food is produced but, rather, whether and how those in need gain access to that food” (Pritchard, 2014: 4). Food security involves three aspects - food availability, food access and food use. Firstly, sufficient quantities of food should be available on a consistent basis. Secondly, the accessibility of food depends on people within a particular region or country receives or gain access to the foods. Food use means appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation. Food access involves having sufficient resources to obtain appropriate foods for nutritious diet. Food security aims at accessing healthy food and optimal nutrition for all and is basically related to the accessibility of food. The acceleration of domestic food production does not solve the problem; only increasing purchasing power among the people can.

In democratic regimes food security helps in eradicating poverty and enables citizens to access democratic rights. In other words, healthy citizens are considered to be the backbone of any democratic regime. Food is essential for building a healthy individual and citizen in a country, personal and intellectual development of the citizenry. In democracy, access to food is a precondition for the enjoyment of all other rights. Moreover, food is essential for bringing

socio-economic democracy. Food is a basic entitlement for human beings and the lack of entitlement lead to food deprivation. Lack of food, leads to a situation of economic deprivation that would further aggravate social deprivation. In ensuring human security, state is regarded as the primary agent. State intervention makes the availability of food grains to the people, increases food production and ensures food to the needy through PDS. The political survival of a democratic state is often determined by its ability to feed its population.

### **Indian Situation**

The political journey of the Indian state began with a 'trust with destiny' speech of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India on the midnight of 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1947, underlying the need for 'ending poverty and ignorance and disease and equality of opportunity'. Though, the newly adopted constitution does not specifically emphasize the right to food, Article 21 of the Indian Constitution provides right to life with dignity. Right to food is thus construed as a part of the right to life. In fact, other rights are meaningless, if there is no emphasis on the right to food. In the aftermath of independence, India adopted a developmental state which played decisive role in providing welfare for the poor. The state intervention through planned mechanism aimed at addressing the security of the people through allocation in developmental expenditure.

The Nehruvian commitment to modernization through industrialization and establishment of a socialist pattern of society gained momentum in the development process of India. Nehru thought that centralized planning with the active intervention of the state and heavy industrialization would solve most of the problems faced by India in the nascent stage of its development. However, in the 1960s, food security became a pertinent issue in the aftermath of the American decision to stop wheat to India under the PL 480. This issue raised the doubt about India's ability to feed its population and achieving food self-sufficiency. The political response to such challenge was the green revolution, the application of technology in the production of food grains. In the Green Revolution, the government intervention in food security began with adoption of technology in agriculture, High Yielding Varieties (HYV) seeds to address the problem of food shortage. In order to achieve the objectives of increasing food production and improving food availability, the government's intervention sought in food security which include, price assurance to producers using the system of minimum support prices,

implemented through obligatory procurement, inter and intra year price stability through open market operations, maintaining buffer stock, and distribution of food grains at reasonable prices through the public distribution system (Chand, 2005: 1055). It also marked the government's direct intervention in food markets in India such as public procurement of food grains by giving support process for farmers, storage of food grains creating buffer stock operations, public distribution system, intervention of government in trade such as the 'legal controls on hoarding and other aspects of internal trade and restrictions on external trade' (Swaminathan, 1996: 1665). Moreover, the institutional mechanisms put into place include: Food Corporation of India (FCI), network of Public Distribution Units and the Commission on Agricultural Cost and Prices for suggesting Minimum Support Price (MSP) for good grains. In this context, the Green Revolution was considered as a milestone in achieving food security in India.

Though Green Revolution increased the production of food grains, it did not bring food security for the vast majority of the people due to the lack of supportive mechanisms. The government's commitment to alleviation of poverty rather remained a political slogan and instrument of political mobilization. For instance, Indira Gandhi's 'garibihatao' emerged as a central mobilisation strategy of the Congress to recover from the crisis in the late 1960s. As result, poverty remains a key factor in the socio-economic life of the people and the vast majority of people are still under the vicious circles of poverty and hunger.

### **Food Security in the Era of Liberalization**

The economic reforms of 1991 can be considered as a defining event in the development history of India. These economic reforms were intended to reduce the fiscal deficit and to achieve a high rate of growth through fiscal austerity measures. It brought radical changes not only in all sectors of the economy, but also marked a departure from the past as it altered the time-tested goals of Indian development policy such as growth with justice, social responsibility and accountability, equity and self-reliance, etc. As a result, the basic thrust of public policy in terms of subsidies, poverty alleviation, safety net programmes, unemployment schemes, etc., were altered. New concepts like liberalization, privatization and globalization gained wider currency in the realm of economic policy. But the most important development in the reform process was the redefined role of the state vis-à-vis the market in development. In other words, the reform process renewed commitment to

market and altered the positive role of the state as an instrument to bring out social change and as the agency for providing social security measures. The state was, thus, no longer considered as an instrument for achieving the welfare of the people, which was left to free market competition.

Like any other sectors of the economy, market forces are entering into the food sector in India causing a serious challenge to food security. In 1994, when the trade liberalization extended to agriculture, the Government lifted a number of quantitative restrictions on imports, simplified trade measures and reduced public interventions in domestic markets. On the export liberalization, it resulted in rising food prices and declining food accessibility for poor people, while important liberalization was threatening to wipe out millions of small producers by destroying domestic markets. The state intervention in procurement and distribution of food grains is losing. On the other hand, the Multinational Corporations are engaging food especially fast food. In the context of economic liberalization, the political commitment to eradicate poverty is stalled by economic discipline and the craze for accelerating economic growth. Under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the central government curtailed the allocation for Public Distribution System (PDS). It is to be reminded that PDS emerged as an instrument of poverty alleviation and the goal is to intervene in market at various stages such as procurement of food grains by giving adequate minimum support price to farmers and distribute to the poor through PDS. However, in the liberalized era, food subsidy which intended to achieve food security was considered as a heavy burden on country's exchequer and a wasteful expenditure. In 1997, in pursuance of new economic policy, the government abandoned the universal PDS and introduced the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) with the intension to reduce the benefit of PDS to really deserving people. Under the renewed scheme, the allocation of food grains was confined only to the people Below Poverty Line (BPL). In other words, the intension of the government was limiting the benefit of the PDS only to the poor and excluding the rich and affordable sections, the Above Poverty Line (APL) to the market prices from the purview of PDS. According to Utsa Patnaik, "economic reform policies of expenditure cuts and trade liberalization, along with targeting, by inducing demand deflation on the one hand and administratively excluding poor from the PDS on the other, have reduced a functioning PDS to a shambles before over very eyes and gravely undermined the little food security that the people had" (Patnaik, 2007: 107).

In the 1990s, when the Congress government at the Centre took number of initiative to bring economic discipline, most of the state governments ruled by the regional parties incorporated competitive populism of food security in its agenda (Bijukumar, 2004: 174). The promise of food security is an instrument of political mobilization in India, particularly the regional parties. These state governments felt that as they were the most accessible level of government for the people, it was they who had to face the discontent of reform and they feared that it would erode their mass base. They were of the view that economic policies were a threat to its political future and even for the survival of the state governments. When the central government withdrew their subsidies, the state governments were forced to substitute their own food subsidies to supply subsidized food grains to the poor, and price incentives to the farmers. Even, the Congress party ruled state governments were forced to adopt certain measures to counteract the ill effects of economic reforms when its counterpart at the Centre was advocating against populism. For example, in Karnataka, the Congress government of Veerappa Moily in 1994 reduced the prices at which PDS outlets in the states sold rice and wheat. The additional cost for the state exchequer was Rs. 420 million. In Andhra Pradesh, the government promised Rs. 2 per kg rice scheme and this enabled the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), a regional party, to win the 1994 assembly elections. The Janata Dal government under H .D. Deve Gowda in Karnataka announced an extended state-level subsidized rice scheme, at a cost of Rs. 2.2 billion per year, five times more than the amount which the previous Congress government under Verappa Moily had offered to the people.

### **Poverty Line and Food Security**

The introduction of TPDS brought the debate on identifying the poor and non-poor. Since 1990s, number of criterion were adopted by various individuals, organizations and committees to identify poverty line. The methodology for estimation of poverty followed by the Planning Commission has been based on the recommendation made by experts in the field from time to time. In December, 2005, Planning Commission constituted an Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Suresh D. Tendulkar, the former chief of National Statistical Commission, to review the methodology for estimation of poverty. The Tendulkar Committee submitted its report in December 2005 and computed poverty line and poverty ratios for 2004-05. Tendulkar methodology is estimated at Rs 33.33 in cities and Rs 27.20 in villages per day, per person (Government of India, 2009). Any one spending more than

this amount on food and other goods and services is not poor. However, the Tendulkar committee recommendations on poverty have generated lot of political controversy. In response to augmenting criticisms from many quarters, in June 2012, the Planning Commission constituted an Expert Group under the Chairmanship of C. Rangarajan to review once again the methodology for the measurement of poverty. The Rangarajan Committee is deliberating on this issue and is expected to submit its report by middle of 2014. It is an irony that without waiting for the Rangarajan Committee Report, the Planning Commission based on the 68<sup>th</sup> Round National Sample Survey Data brought out the poverty estimates for the year 2011-12 as per the recommendations of the Tendulkar Committee.

The Planning Commission at various points of time claimed that rural poverty was declining in India. The Planning Commission's affidavit clarified that the official poverty estimation methodology is based on the Tendulkar Committee Report (2009) (i.e., Rs. 32 per persons per day in urban areas and Rs. 26 per persons per day in rural areas. In fact, the Planning Commission by lowering the criteria for poverty declared poverty has declined. The official poverty lines are anchored to a fixed commodity basket corresponding to the poverty line (Rs.49.09 per person per month at 1973-74 prices for rural areas and Rs.56.64 for urban areas). The suggested rural commodity basket by the Expert Group contained 2400 kcal per capita per day in rural areas and the urban food basket had 2100 kcal per capita per day in 1973-4. For subsequent years, poverty line is updated with consumer prices.

In India poverty is defined not in terms of calories intake. The accepted calorie norm is that 2100 calories per person per day in Urban Indian and 2400 calories (later reduced to 2200 calories) per person per day in rural India. In fact, for the sake of argument one can say that poverty has come down while hunger has increased. Both rural and urban average daily intake of energy (calories) and protein have been declining. The average daily rural/urban energy in take was 2020/1946 calories in 2009-10, compared to 2221/2089 calories in 1983. The decline is primarily owing to the decline in food grains consumption, since staple grains remain the main sources of both energy and protein for the population. On the other hand, the go downs of Food Corporation of India are filled with food grain stock. It is estimated that in June 2011 public food stocks were a mountainous 82 million tons in excess of buffer norms.

The UPA government's estimate of poverty as per Tendulkar's criteria

was 29.8% for 2009-10, whereas the World Bank's estimate (where the criteria in spending less than 1.25 US dollars per day) was 32.7% in 2010. The UNDP estimate was 29.8%, similar to that of the government. The World Bank believes that India's poverty ratio will reach 23.6 per cent by 2015. UN Development Goals report believes that India's poverty ratio will come down to 22% by 2015 which would mean a fall from 51% in 1990 to 22% in 2015. The Twelfth Five Year Plan projects a 10 per cent reduction in the poverty ration (2% per year) to less than 20% (19.8% be precise) by the end of the Plan. It is a contradiction that when the Government, World Bank and UNDP highlight the reduction in poverty during the reform period, the government passed the much proclaimed Food Security Bill aimed at poverty reduction.

### **Agrarian Crisis and Food Insecurity**

The growing agrarian crisis has serious implications for the food security in India. The three basic parameters of food security such as availability, accessibility and affordability are under attack due to the dismantling role of the state and the augmenting entry of the market forces in the agriculture sector. During the course of economic reforms, India witnessed a cut in farm subsidies, irrigation, electricity, fertilizer, pesticides, etc. Moreover, institutional credit facilities to farmers have been curtailed. The complexities of acquiring credit from governmental financial institutions forced the farmers to approach informal credit networks often with high interest have implications for agricultural production. Since 1990s, the deceleration of growth rate in agriculture due to the dwindling cases of public investment in agriculture resulted in the reduction of food production which adversely affected the availability of food. There is a growing food insecurity where women and children and the socially marginalised sections are worst affected. The lack of access to food leads to growing incidents of malnutrition especially among the marginalized groups such as Dalits and tribals. The growing incidents of food insecurity lead to children underweight. According to Ghosh, "the average daily intake of protein by the Indian population decreased from 60.2 to 57 grams in rural Indian between 1993-94 and 2004-05 and remained stable at around 57 grams in the urban areas during the same period" (Ghosh, 2010). When there is growing increase in poverty, malnutrition the FCI godowns are overflowing and spoiling food grains. In a reply to an RTI query, the FCI accepted that as much as 1, 94, 502 metric tonnes of food grains worth cores of rupees was wasted in India due to various reasons between 2015 and March 2013. Interestingly, poverty and starvation deaths reported

in various parts of India, FCI is wasting food grains.<sup>2</sup>According to Utsa Patnaik, the very large increase in the inequality of access to food in India is the outcome of the two sets of processes – absolute decline in real incomes and hence loss of purchasing power through unemployment and income deflation for a substantial section of the population, and targeting in the PDS (Patnaik, 2007: 102).

Another impact on liberalization which has serious repercussions on food security is the shifting in cultivation pattern from traditional food crops to cash crops. In the age of neoliberal policies, the total area under food grain cultivation has been falling. The farmers are shifting to the cultivation of cash crops to earn more foreign exchange earnings for their products. All these generate a great concern in the realization of food security. The entry of corporate business in agriculture is another trend since the 1990s. On the one hand, there is increasing prices of food grains, the farmers are really getting less remuneration that in fact, affect the access to food. The lack of adequate remuneration to their products leads to increasing incidents of farmers' suicide. The Structural Adjustment Program further raised the gap between MSP (domestic prices) and international prices. In many cases, the government's procurement price was less. It is observed that "reducing or closing down the PDS would be a direct threat to procurement as well, as there would remain no incentive to procure" (Sinha, 2015: 18). Further, it is argued that "though CACP was required to take into consideration the international price situation, this aspect was never given any weight while arriving at the level of MSPs. In general, the MSP was lower than international prices" (Chand, 2005: 1055).

The integration of domestic economy to the global economy worsened the agrarian situation. In terms and condition of WTO agreement, in which India was a signatory in 1995, developing countries like India have to enforce three reforms – market access, domestic support and export subsidies. Free market access means removal of quantitative restriction on goods coming from other countries. The removal of quantitative restrictions and free import of agricultural product to Indian market adversely affect the domestic food production. While in developed countries the subsidy on agriculture is amounting, pressure on developing countries to scrap subsidies on agriculture. In the recent past, the BJP-led NDA government's slogan of 'Make in India' further proved to be anti-agricultural and pro-industrial and business oriented. The government's effort to spread red carpet to industrial business in India through number of policy initiatives and incentives would further alienate the

farming sector in the developmental process. The Land Acquisition Bill of the government has rampant implication for the agricultural sector as the farmers are losing their land and livelihood which ultimately leads to shortage of food production.

### **Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction**

When government claims that India achieved impressive economic growth in the recent past and subsequent reduction in poverty, the emerging reality would be contrary to this argument. The modest growth rate achieved in the recent past could not translate into checking food inflation as the prices of essential food grains are sharply rising causing a grave concern for the poor people. Although there is significant decline in the prices of crude oil in the international market, the government could not slash down the prices of essential commodities. It is estimated that more than 80 per cent of rural households in India had a daily per capita of consumer expenditure of Rs.50 or less in 2011-12. This was also true of 45 per cent of all urban households. The per capita availability of food grains was 164 kg per year in 2012, which is below the figure in 1991 when per capita availability was 186 kg per year. The Global Hunger Index ranked 120 countries out of which India is positioned at 55<sup>th</sup> position. The growing income disparities, the widening gap between rich and poor and asymmetrical distribution of resources have implication for food security. In such a situation, the growing food insecurity leads to food deprivation which would adversely affect citizens' capacity to effectively participate in deliberative institutions.

### **National Food Security Bill 2013**

Perhaps, the most radical steps to ensure food security in India was the National Food Security Act, 2013 of the UPA led Congress Government. The Bill seeks "to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto". Priority households are entitled to 5 kgs of foodgrains per person per month, and *Antyodaya* households to 35 kgs per household per month. The combined coverage of Priority and *Antyodaya* households (meaning "eligible households") shall extend "up to 75% of the rural population and up to 50% of the urban population". For children in the age group of 6 months to 6 years: an age-appropriate meal, free of charge, through the local *anganwadi*. For children aged 6-14 years, one free mid-day meal every day (except on school holidays) in all government and

government-aided schools, up to Class VIII. For children below six months, “exclusive breastfeeding shall be promoted”. For children who suffer from malnutrition, meals will be provided to them free of charge “through the local *anganwadi*”. Every pregnant and lactating mother is entitled to a free meal at the local *anganwadi* (during pregnancy and six months after child birth) as well as maternity benefits of Rs 6,000, in installments. In addition to the core provisions, it envisages the revitalization of agriculture - agrarian reforms through measures for securing interest of small and marginal farmers; increase in investments in agriculture, including research and development, extension services, micro and minor irrigation and power to increase productivity and production; ensuring livelihood security to farmers by way of remunerable prices, access to inputs, credits, irrigation, power, crop insurance, etc. and prohibiting unwarranted diversion of land and water from food production. The Food Security Act along with the MGNREGA, made some effect on the everyday life of the people of India. Though MGNREGA is an employment guarantee program for the rural population, it is closely related to food security as it increases the purchasing power of the people.

### **Shanta Kumar Committee Report and Food Security**

The food security legislation is a flagship program of the UPA – II government. After coming to power, the BJP led NDA government showed its discomfort with the legislation and diluted the spirit of the legislation. For instance, the BJP-Shiv Sena government in Maharashtra curtailed the food subsidy for the supply of subsidized food grains to 1.75 core people in the State.<sup>3</sup> However, the BJP’s attitude to food security manifested in its approach to the Shanta Kumar Committee recommendations. The Eight Members Committee headed by Shanta Kumar, former Cabinet Minister set up in August 2014 to recommend the restricting of beneficiaries of the food security. The report was prepared under the guidance of the Prime Minister’s Office which submitted the report on January 2015 to PM recommended reforming the food subsidy.

The Report recommended revisiting the policy of MSP, deregulating the fertilizer sector by directly transferring Rs. 7000 per hectare as subsidy to the farmers. It is to be reminded that FCI came into existence in the mid-1960s in the midst of food crisis faced by India. Since then, the FCI emerged as the key public institution to manage the food procurement and ensure food security in India. The Committee viewed that the government’s food

subsidy bill can come down by over Rs. 30, 000 crore a year by reducing coverage of beneficiaries to 40 percent under the food law and outsourcing major work of FCI to state governments and private players.

Another recommendation, the cash transfer scheme – food security allowance in cash in lieu of PDS entitlements - is another bolt to food security in India after the TPDS. It would endanger the goal and philosophy of universal PDS. It not only affects the food entitlement but also the production, procurement and storage process. The farmers who are getting minimum support price in over production seasons are the worst affected as the procurement of food grains no longer required when cash transfer takes place. It is argued that “cash transfers will not protect people against inflation, especially in the context of fluctuating and generally high food inflation” (Sinha, 2015: 19). The DBT is yet another stumbling block to universal PDS as it adversely affects the food security in India. PDS is depending on other allied activities such as procurement and storage. While the government claims that DBT can avoid leakages of commodities distributed in PDS, there are certain difficulties in the DBT such as targeting and identification of beneficiaries, access to banks, etc. Dipa Sinha argues that “given the vulnerability of livelihoods, indebtedness, increasing commercialization of basic education and health services, the poor have a need for cash and there is no guarantee that the money can be used or kept aside for a time when there is no food available. The PDS plays a role in filling this gap” (Sinha, 2015: 18). Interestingly, the government’s move to dismantle of the universal PDS through the Cash beneficiary scheme can be seen in the larger context of opening of retail sector for FDI. Cash may flow to corporate sector and often people prefer other consumer goods rather than food grains. Moreover, it often leads to the purchase of readymade food which further boost to retail business sector.

The Committee’s recommendation to stopping food grain procurement by FCI irked its ally, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) led government in Punjab. The SAD government in Punjab asked the Centre to reconsider its decision of stopping food grain procurement by FCI which was adversely affecting the farmers. It is argued that “the Centre’s move of stopping procurement of food grain from states like Punjab could prove to be very harmful for state growers as they could be denied of appropriate prices of their crops (in the wake of FCI’s absence from the Market)”.<sup>4</sup>The vehement protest amongst the opposition parties came from the DMK chief Karunanidhi, who asserted that it would pave way for closure of public distribution system in a state like

Tamil Nadu. According to him, the state government would have to spend more for the rice subsidy. In his opinion, “it would force the state government to spend an additional Rs, 1,000 crore for food security. The Centre should reject the recommendations and ensure food security for the people”.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the government argument is that farmers would not lose if private companies are allowed to procure food grains from them. Replying to a question in Rajya Sabha, Ram Vilas Paswan, Minister of Consumer Affairs Food and Public Distribution allaying the apprehension that “farmers will not lose if private companies are allowed to procure”<sup>6</sup>. Amidst protest, the Food Ministry rejected the Shanta Kumar Committee’s recommendation to cut the number of beneficiaries under the food security law to 40 per cent of the population against the current 67 percent.<sup>7</sup>

The Shanta Kumar Committee recommendations pose a threat to PDS as it is witnessing the retreat of the state and entry of market forces in food security. It’s not only destroying the state intervention in distribution, but also procurement and storage system, giving way to market forces. It is clear indication that the government’s failure to tackle hunger and malnutrition and eliminate the PDS in the country. The growing private sectors’ role in food grain procurement is yet another bonanza for corporate business and scarce attention to farming community and poor of the country.

### **Conclusion**

Though India could emerge as a potential force in the global arena and its growth rate accelerated impressively since 1990s, after the forty years of Hindu rate of growth, death related to poverty and hunger shamed the political idea of India. In the course of sixty-eight years of its magnificent journey, India averted Bengal famine like situation. However, there is the need to address reconciling growth with justice by adopting a redistributive strategy aimed at alleviating poverty. Food security which emerged as one of the ways to address poverty is based not only on the availability of food grains, but also on increasing the purchasing power of the people. The lack of purchasing power however adversely affects the consumption and nutritional levels of the people. Food security can be strengthened through public distribution system, decentralization of procurement and effective implementation of food for work programme. However, targeting the beneficiaries to avail food security and rising the prices of food grains is mocking the spirit of food security in particular and human security in general.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup>See, United Nations. 1975. Report of the World Food Conference; Rome, 5-16 November 1974. New York
- <sup>2</sup>“FCI admits 1.94 lakh food grain wasted between 2005-13”, *The Hindu*, February 12, 2014.
- <sup>3</sup>“Maharashtra cuts food subsidy for 1.7 crore people “, *The Indian Express*, January 18, 2015.
- <sup>4</sup>“Stopping food grains buying by FCI to be harmful for farmers: Punjab Government”, *The Economic Times*, February 27, 2015.
- <sup>5</sup>“Reject Shanta Kumar Panel Recommendations: Karunanidhi”, *The Hindu*, January 25, 2015.
- <sup>6</sup>“Farmers will not lose if private players procure food grains: Government”, *The Economic Times*, March 3, 2015.
- <sup>7</sup>“Food Ministry Rejects FCI Committee’s suggestion on Food Law”, *The Economic Times*, March 4, 2015.

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