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Title of Ph.D. thesis: Food Security Law in India: An Endeavour to tackle the problem of hunger through Legislation

FINDINGS

This work deals with, *inter-alia*, the right to food, which is a basic human right, which guarantees people the right to feed themselves with dignity. This implies that a country has sufficient food available, people have the means to access it, and it adequately meets the individual's nutrition requirements. It therefore protects the right of all human beings to be free from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. Traditionally speaking, it did not entail that governments had an obligation to hand out free food to anyone and everyone who wanted it, nor did it entail that everyone had a right to be fed. However, what it meant was that in cases where people were deprived of access to food for reasons that are beyond their control, the right to food necessarily entailed that the Government had to provide food directly.

It has often been seen that endeavours of the State are often hampered by practical difficulties, and the task of ensuring a world free from the scourge of hunger remains a daunting proposition even to this day. Scholars and specialists working in this area aver that the achievement of this basic human right is, more often than not, missing from the agenda of policymakers and that there is a palpable lack of political will because of the lesser visibility of work done in these areas when compared to work done in other sectors of the economy like infrastructure growth or increase in industrial production.

Historically, Indians have laid a great deal of importance on growing food in abundance. However, the distribution of foodgrains among the populace has always been the responsibility of either the King or the State. The occurrence of a series of famines in British India points to the fact that distribution of foodgrains did not take place in a proper manner during this period, and it is here that the imbalances began to

creep into the system for the very first time. The rapid elimination of famines since independence is certainly an accomplishment when compared with the experience of many other developing countries. However, millions of Indians are still plagued by chronic hunger and malnutrition. In this backdrop, the challenge of ensuring food security for the masses, is indeed a formidable one, and is therefore, one of the foremost concerns of governmental policy.

The author has seen during the course of his study that various definitions of 'food security' restrict themselves to the provision of adequate affordability of foodgrains to all or substantial segments of the population. However, predictability is also important. The greater the speed at which foodgrain prices increase or their supply dwindles in the markets, the greater would be the speed with which they take consumers, producers, and governments by surprise. Today, when the economies of the world are more closely linked with each other than ever before, global grain production and international trade are necessary evils and need to be factored in at all times, so that necessary measures can be taken in advance.

In the view of this researcher, future strategies should involve the following focus areas:

- At the global level, there is an urgent need to augment production and increase buffer stocks in order to cater to problems like reduced production and failure of rainfed agriculture.
- At the country level, improving access to imports at affordable prices would certainly help to tackle the problem of food insecurity.
- At the household level, there is a need to ensure food security by increasing the income of the resource poor by means of various employment generation schemes, and providing subsidised foodgrains for the poor and other disadvantaged sections of society like the disabled, the *Dalits* and the *Adivasis*.
- At the household level, there is a need to curtail intra-household disparities and ensure greater access to foodgrains for women and children.

Brief Profile of Ph.D. scholar

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Details of Papers Presented and Published pursuant to requirements under University Ordinance:

- 1) Parikshet Sirohi, Genetically Modified Crops: Neither Poison nor Panacea in Usha Tandon, Mohan Parasaran and Sidharth Luthra (eds.), *Biodiversity: Law, Policy and Governance*, pp 155-177 (Routledge, Abingdon, 2018).
- 2) Parikshet Sirohi, "Right to Food in India with Special Reference to the Role Played by Indian Railways in Ensuring Food Security in the Country", pp 19-25, *International Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. VII, Issue-II, 2015.
- 3) Parikshet Sirohi, "The Role of Genetically Modified Foods in Tackling the Problem of Hunger: The Indian Perspective", pp 256-269, *Society and Politics*, Vol.-5/No.-1/2015.