

Letter from the SICA Chair

Dear readers, I am excited to bring to you our second special issue of this year on 'Global Food Insecurity.' According to the United Nations World Food Program, 345 million people are currently faced with acute food insecurity across 82 nations across South Asia, Africa and parts of Latin America. The majority of the populations threatened by lack of food are women and children.

Malnourishment and lack of food are among the greatest challenges faced by a large proportion of the world population. Thus, the UN declared zero hunger as the second Sustainable Development goal by 2030. While this goal is ambitious, the COVID-19 crisis, the war in Ukraine, climate change, growing inequality, and poverty have further exacerbated the problem of food insecurity globally. Given the nature of this complex issue, our special issue brings perspectives from various parts of the world, including Africa, South Asia, and the US. You will access eight papers, of which 4 are research ideas, two practitioner perspectives, and two policy briefs.

The first paper in this series examines the impact of food insecurity in Kenya's urban areas during the pandemic. The authors, Vescovi and Baer analyze factors that lead to food insecurity and discuss various policies implemented to alleviate the challenge of food insecurity in the urban region of Kenya. While this study is focused on Kenya, several

countries around the globe can draw parallels to similar challenges and implications of food insecurity. In another study in the region, the author, Dr. Keba Sylla, argues that the problem with food insecurity in the Sahelian region that separates the Sahara Desert to the north and the savannas to the south stem from rainfall deficits since the early 1970s. Investing in proper land management practices, modernizing agriculture, and promoting economic and political stability in the region are a few solutions offered by the author to combat the problem of food insecurity in the region.

Three papers in this issue focus on South Asia to counter the challenge of food insecurity. The study in Pakistan by Siddique and Salman utilizes a case study approach to examine a food bank, RIZQ foundation. The authors provide the readers with a framework embedded in collaborative governance to address food insecurity in the region. The remaining two papers are policy briefs, one focused on the impact of COVID on the mid-day meal program in India authored by Dr. Arumugam, and the other compares India's food distribution and food security schemes Bangladesh during the pandemic. Strengthening the Public Distribution System (PDS) in India and consistently monitoring the Food Friendly Program in Bangladesh are strategies highlighted by both Arumugam and Chawla.

One does not associate food insecurity with the developed world, however, as demonstrated by Monahan in his research paper, food access is a problem in the US and Canada. The challenge is significant in higher education

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institutions in the US as demonstrated by Ringenbach. According to estimates, one-third of college-going students out of the 20 million are food insecure. This global challenge needs a multi-prong approach including performance monitoring and reporting of the Feed the Future initiative by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) highlighted by Jansen et al. of the U.S. Government Accountability Office. Authors offer a combination of policy interventions and solutions in this series to combat one of the most serious concerns of modern times, food insecurity. My hope is that all the papers in this series will help broaden our perspectives and understandings of this wicked problem. Let us all join in this fight to address one of the basic needs of human existence, access to food.

*--Meghna Sabharwal, Ph.D., SICA Chair and
Professor, The University of Texas at Dallas*