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HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY SITUATION IN SLUM AREAS OF FAISALABAD

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Food Security as an issue became prominent in 1970s and has been a topic of considerable attention since then. It is a global menace, the intensity of which may differ from nation to nation. The facts and figures show that Pakistan is a food sufficient country. The proportion of undernourished population was 24% during 1989-91, dropped to 19% during 1995-97 and then again rose to 24% during 2002-04. But during 2007-08, it has become a major problem in Pakistan. Therefore the current study was conducted to investigate into the food security situation in slum areas of Faisalabad. The major objectives were (i) to estimate the extent of food insecurity, (ii) to delineate the role of women in food security and (iii) to document the present food security strategies of household. For this purpose 100 respondents were randomly selected from slum areas of District Faisalabad. A reasonable number of respondents indicated that they have knowledge about the balance diet but they have limited resources to provide a balance diet for their families. Majority of the respondents were not satisfied with the quality of their food. A major proportion of the respondents suffered from Diarrhoea caused by drinking water. Therefore, it is need of the day to devise facilities to ensure easy and in-time access of quality food on affordable price to the masses.

Keywords: Food security, resources, household, slum areas, low income

INTRODUCTION

In the present world, the human society has to face a number of social, economic, security and food security problems. These include over population, drug addiction, health problems, environmental pollution etc. But now-a-day food security is a critical problem confronted by the whole world. Thousands of people are food insecure in many countries of the world. Food security means "assuring to all human beings physical and economic access to basic food they need" (Thomson and Metz, 1997).Food security is recognized world wide as a basic human right. By analyzing food security situation, we can estimate the economic as well as social condition of a country as it is a true reflection of economic and social development of a country. It can be analyzed at different levels such as national/regional individual and household level. At national level, food security means a satisfactory balance between food supply and food demand at reasonable prices. Changes in the food security can be identified over time by rising prices. These will affect the poorest first, as they spend a higher proportion of their incomes on food. The imbalance between food demand and supply due to the rise in prices means that there are some households which are food insecure because they lack entitlement to food. Therefore, they have no way that they express their full need for food in the market place. Therefore, the market mechanism indicates the national level of food security. At the individual level, food security may be defined as "an individual is food secure if his or her food consumption is determined by the claim of individual on household food resources. This may be affected by individual earnings, assets and individual's position in the household.

Food security has been defined by FAO (1996), as a situation when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food, and to meet their dietary needs and food preference for an active and healthy life. The three dimensions underlying this definition are adequacy of food (effective supply), ample access to food (i.e., the ability of the individual to acquire sufficient food or effective demand), and reliability of both supply and access (equity of food distribution). A minimum level of health status that converts food intake to support a healthy body is another essential condition for the achievement of food security. From this definition, a close link between poverty and food insecurity is obvious. Poverty is the largest cause of food insecurity and food insecurity will contribute to the perpetuation of poverty.

The household level of food security is the most important because household is a basic economic unit that determines the levels of consumption by the individuals. Food security at household level means that household members have access at all times to enough food for an active healthy life. For widening the concept of household food security, it is essential to define food security. Food security means that " a household had limited or uncertain availability of food or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways i.e. without resorting to

emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other unusual coping strategies" (Economic Research Service, 2000).

It is obvious that food security at one level does not imply food security at other level.

A country which is food insecure will almost certainly contain groups of population which are secure and many countries which are food secure at national level will contain groups of population who suffer from server food insecurity.

Despite the fact that in the last decade global community has focused its attention on agriculture and food, the problem of food insecurity continues to exist rather has increased. Most of the developing countries are facing this problem. Today, 800 million people of the developing countries are chronically underfed and one third of the world's children are undernourished. With the growing world population the recent figure of 5.7 billion is expected to rise to 8.3 billion by the year 2025 (FAO, 1998).

Food security situation in Pakistan

Due to potential agriculture Pakistan has achieved an admirable level of food security in many dimensions. Agriculture in Pakistan enjoys a special position because it is a largest sector of the economy generating above 20.9 percent of Gross Domestic Products (Govt. of Pakistan, 2007).

Pakistan is not a food insecure country. It generally has the economic ability to import the required food (Food import costs less than 20 percent of the exports).Average food consumption is 150 kg per person per year of cereals and pulses in total with a minimum of about 130 kg in 1961 and maximum of 162 kg in 1993. Per capita availability, however, fell to 140 kg in 1995 and marginally went up to 145 kg in 1996(FAO , 1996). Total Food availability (inclusive of cereals, pulses, sugar milk, meat, eggs and edible oil) measured calories per day, has increased from 2078 in 1949-50 to 2546 in 1996-97 and is estimated to go up to 2715 in 1999-2000. This level of availability after deduction of 10 percent loss amounts to 10-15 percent margin over the requirement. Such a margin would imply that a significant portion of the population would not have access to adequate food (FAO, 2000).

However, if determined and well targeted actions are not taken to improve food security situation, this will worsen the situation. Food security is thus the greatest challenge faced by the world community. The challenge is more critical for low income and food deficient countries. Achieving sustainable increase in food production may be solution to the problem.

The present study is designed to investigate the food security problems of the people living in slums areas of Faisalabad with the objectives given below. It is hoped that information generated by this study would provide a base line for planners, social workers and administrators for making their policies and programs concerning food security problems.

OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To estimate the food security in slum areas of Faisalabad.
- To asses the role of household/women in food security.
- To document the present food security strategies of households.

The following methodology was used to achieve the objectives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Keeping in view the importance of the study topic one should preferably collect data from all cities of Pakistan. However, it was difficult to conduct field work in all cities due to time and resources constraints. Therefore Faisalabad was chosen for primary data collection. A sample of 100 respondents was selected through simple random sampling technique. Two slum areas were selected namely Allama Iqbal colony and Nawaban wala in Faisalabad city. From each selected slum area 50 respondents were selected randomly. A well structured interviewing schedule consisting of open-ended and close-ended questions was prepared in the light of research objectives. Pre-testing was done to examine the work-ability of the interview schedule. Descriptive and Bi-variate analyses of data were carried out. Statistical test such as Gamma and chi-square tests were applied to examine the relationship between variables. The major findings of the study are presented in this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data in Table 1 shows that a half of the respondents (50%) were illiterate. Twenty percent of the respondents got education up to primary level, eight percent of the respondents were matriculate and only two percent reached up to intermediate level. In other words as the level of education increased, the percentage of respondents decreased. It shows a specific trend in slum areas where people are poor and do not afford going school after a specifical of schooling.

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents according to their socio-economic characteristics

Characteristics	
Education	**Frequency/Percentage**
Illiterate	50/50
Primary	20/20
Middle	10/10
Matric and above	20/20
Monthly Income (Rs.)	
1000-3500	39/39
3501-6000	32/32
6001-8500	10/10
6001-8500	10/10
8501^{+}	19/19
Family Size	
1-6	25/25
7-12	63/63
13^{+}	12/12

According to table majority (63%) of the respondents had 7-12 family members. Family size of 25 percent of the respondents was 1-6 members. Those respondents whose families had 13-18 members were 12 percent. This is another characteristic of the slum areas that people live here have generally large/very large family size.

Table data indicates that more than one third (39%) of the respondents were those whose monthly income was between Rs.1000-3500, while 32 percent earned Rs. 3501-6000 per month. Ten percent of the respondents had Rs.6001-8500 monthly income. Other 19.0 percent respondents' monthly income was Rs.8501 and above. In other words a majority (71%) of the respondents had less than Rs.6000 monthly income which has been announced as the minimum income by the present Government.

Table 2 indicates that a majority (67%) of the respondents had knowledge about balanced diet. But a majority (72%) of the respondents could not afford balanced diet.

Similarly a majority (67%) were buying low cost food where it may be said that the majority of the respondents bought low cost food because of their low purchasing power. The findings are supporting the results reported by Chatterjee (1998).

It is further clear from table a major proportion of the respondents i.e. 46 percent spent Rs. 1801-3300 on their food, whereas the respondents who spent Rs. 350-1800 on their food were 20 percent. In other words a majority (66%) of the respondents were spending Rs. 350-3300 on their food.

Table 2. Distribution of the respondents according to their responses

Response	Frequency/Percentage
knowledge about Balanced diet	
Yes	67/67
No	33/33
Capacity to afford balanced diet	
Yes	28/28
No	72/72
Buy low cost food	
Yes	67/67
No	33/33
Income they spent on food (Rs.)	
350-1800	20/20
1801-3300	46/46
3301-4800	20/20
4801+	14/14

Table 3 indicates that 49 percent of the respondents reported that they bought flour weekly, 36 percent bought flour monthly and 15 percent were used to buy flour daily, A majority (74 %) of the respondent bought rice when they had need for it, 24 percent bought rice monthly. More than one third (36%) respondents informed that they bought cooking oil daily, while 33 percent bought weekly and 31 percent bought monthly. A majority (64%) of the respondents bought pulses when it was needed, 26 percent bought monthly, 9 percent used weekly and only one percent used on daily basis. About 40 percent of the respondent reported that they bought chilies and salt monthly, 31 and 30 percent respectively bought weekly while 29 and 30 percent of the respondents bought chilies and salt daily.It is clear from Table 3 that more than one third (36%) bought sugar monthy, 31 percent weekly and 30 percent bought daily. If we see the trend of tea among the people then it is obvious from the data that about 37 percent of the respondents bought tea monthly, 30 percent bought weekly 29 percent daily and only 4 percent who never used tea. The percentage respondents who bought spices monthly were 36 percent, 2 percent bought weekly, 25 percent bought daily while less than one fourth (17%) respondents never used the spices.

The information in Table 4 shows that 100 percent respondents were daily users of flour. More than one third of the respondents (36%) informed that they used rice after every fifteen days. The percentage respondents, who used rice once in a week and once in a month was almost equal i.e. 20 percent. Similarly the respondents who used rice daily and who used

Table 3. Distribution of the respondents with regard to their pattern of buying different eatables

Patterns of buying Eatables	Never use	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	When it is needed	Total
	F/P	F/P	F/P	F/P	F/P	F/P
Flour	-	15	49	36	-	100
Rice	1	-	1	24	74	100
Vegetables	-	97	3	-	-	100
Ghee/ Cooking oil	-	36	33	31	-	100
Pulses	-	1	9	26	64	100
Chilies	-	29	31	40	-	100
Salt	-	30	30	40	-	100
Sugar	-	33	31	36	-	100
Tea	4	29	30	37	-	100
Spices	17	25	22	36	-	100

Table 4. Distribution of the respondents according to their pattern of using various eatables

Pattern of using Eatable	Daily	Once week	Twice week	Thrice week	Once in two week	Once a month	Never used	Total
	F/P	F/P	F/P	F/P	F/P	F/P	F/P	F/P
Floor	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	100
Rice	6	20	11	6	36	20	1	100
Vegetables	23	2	6	69	-	-	-	100
Pulses	-	27	27	36	6	6	-	100
Meat	2	39	9	3	23	23	4	100
Eggs	2	12	8	10	2	23	43	100
Fruits	13	27	29	7	11	11	22	10

thrice in a week was equal i.e. 6 percent only. The respondents who used rice twice a week were 11 percent. Majority (69%) of the respondents used vegetables three a week while 23 percent used vegetables daily. About 39 percent of the respondents used meat weekly, 23 percent used meat after fifteen days and once in a month and 9 percent used meat twice in a week. Less than one fifth (17%) used meat once a week, 3 percent thrice a week and only 2 percent used meat daily. About 23 percent of the respondents used eggs once a month, 12 percent once a week, 10 percent thrice a week and 8 percent twice in a week. Those respondents who never used eggs were 43 percent, 23 percent used eggs once a month, 12 percent used once a week and only 2 percent were daily user. Less than one third (29%) of the respondents informed that they used fruits twice a week, 27 percent used once a week. The percentage respondents who used fruits once in 15 days and once a month were almost equal i.e. 11 percent. About 13 percent used daily and 22 percent never used the fruits.

The role of income in determining quality of food

The value of chi-square shows a highly significant association between income of the respondents and buying low cost food. The gamma value shows positive relationship between these variables. In simple words, a high proportion of respondents into low income were buying low cost food as compared with people with high income. Therefore, it is concluded that household income has a positive association with buying quality food. In other words, high income is a determinant of buying high cost food.

Table 5. Association between income of the respondents and buying low cost food

Income	Buying low cost food		Total
	Yes F/P	No F/P	
1000-3500	30/76.9	9/23.1	39/39
3501-6000	25/78.1	7/21.9	32/32
6001-8500	5/50.0	5/50.0	10/10
8500^{+}	7/36.8	12/63.2	19/19
Total	67/67	33/33	100/100

Table 6. Association between income of the respondents and capacity to afford balanced diet

Income	Capacity to afford balance diet		Total
	Yes F/P	No F/P	
1000-3500	8/20.5	31/79.5	39/39
3501-6000	25/21.9	7/78.1	32/32
6001-8500	3/30.0	7/70.0	10/10
8500^{+}	10/52.6	9/47.4	19/19
Total	28/28	72/72	100/100

CONCLUSION

It has been concluded that a half of respondents in this study were illiterate and most of them have low income and large families. Majority of them had knowledge about the balanced diet, but they had limited resources to provide a balanced diet for their families, and majority of them was not satisfied with the quality of their food. Keeping in view the above findings, it is not illogical to say that Poverty and illiteracy are the major obstacles in the provision of a balanced diet and in the way to gain food security.

Policy implications

The following steps should be taken to improve the food security situation in slum areas of Faisalabad

- As the costs of the food items are some what high, so the people can not afford the balanced diet due to their limited resources. There is a need that govt. must keep a check on the prices of these items and efforts should be made to reduce the inflation that is mostly created artificially.
- Food security depends upon available income. But the wages of the laborers, living in slum areas are very low. It is suggested that Govt. and other employers must increase the wages at least according to the recent announcement by the present Govt.of their employees to enhance their access to balanced food.
- Stocking and adulteration are also major hurdles in the way of accessing food security as people are not satisfied with the quantity and quality of their food. Efforts should be made by the higher authorities to get rid of stocking and adulteration.

Acting upon these measures, we can minimize the prevailing situation and the access of the households to secure and balanced diet can be increased reasonably.

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