

Event Report of the Interactive Workshop

Food Security in India: The Interactions of Climate Change, Economics, Politics & Trade



(Participants at the interactive workshop at Hotel Ashraya International, Bengaluru on 26th October, 2016)

Wednesday, 26th October, 2016

Bengaluru, Karnataka

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International

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Background

1. An interactive workshop titled, 'Food security in India: The interactions of climate change, economics, politics and trade' was organised at Hotel Ashraya International in Bengaluru, Karnataka on 26th October, 2016.
2. The objectives of the workshop was to:
 - To disseminate key findings from the work packages in the project related to food security in Karnataka
 - To discuss definite issues which govern the food security scenario in Karnataka in the context of climate change and agricultural trade
 - To generate discussion on the role of various social safety nets in deciding food security at household level



3. The local stakeholder event was held under the project titled, 'Food security in India: The interactions of climate change, economics, politics and trade (FOODSEC)' funded by the Research Council of Norway (RCIN). Other partners involved are National Institute of Consumer Research (SIFO), Norway, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), New Delhi. Consumer Rights Education and Awareness Trust (CREAT) was CUTS's strategic partner

in Karnataka for the FOODSEC project.

4. The event was attended by around 15 participants from Bengaluru and other parts of Karnataka comprising of representatives from the government, farmer organisations, agricultural university, research institutions and non-governmental organisations in the domains of agriculture and food security. The background note, agenda and list of participants is enclosed as annexures in this report. Session-wise discussions are noted in the following sections.

Inaugural Session

5. Y. G. Muralidharan gave the welcome address and mentioned the purpose of the workshop. This was followed by a round of self-introduction by the participants present in the workshop.

6. Veena Vidyadharan presented the outline and explained the work packages covered under the FOODSEC project. She also shared the key findings under the four work packages and requested the participants for their opinion and suggestions for policy level implications of the project findings.

Session 1: Scenario of climate change and agricultural markets in Karnataka

7. R. Sidappa Shetty chaired the first session and elaborated on how livelihoods are directly impacted by climate change impacts. He shared his experiences working in agro-forestry among women and tribal communities in Karnataka. He said that most importantly data collection as well as generation play a key role in assessing policies relevant for reducing the proportion of poverty in rural areas. In addition to this, quality of food that is being consumed is strongly influenced by the number of members in the household too.
8. Prakash Kammardi presented his suggestions on combating the agrarian crisis and food security. He also shared a presentation on agrarian crisis and food security. He also mentioned that drought has played a serious havoc, causing farmer suicides with as many as 140 of 176 taluks in the state being declared drought-hit by the government in 2015. Along with drought, un-remunerative agriculture and mounting debts have also been cited as reasons. He mentioned that the management of agricultural surplus in the market is the problem and importing produce from other states and countries will not solve access to food issues in Karnataka. Kammardi also stressed on the importance of addressing agriculture as a viable income source for farmers. He explained the close interaction of production and distribution of agricultural produce in determining security of food access at the household level.
9. M. Shivamoorthy presented key learnings on the topic of impact of climate change on food security of Karnataka. He said that with the changing food habits and market conditions, farmers prefer wheat or rice in most parts of the country. In most agro-climatic regions, farmers have stopped cultivation of millets which are suitable to a particular agro-climatic region. He mentioned that productivity losses of 50-45% has been predicted in major crops of Karnataka like Rice (rainfed and irrigated), Maize, Sorgam, Red gram, Potato, Soyabean, Ragi and Sugar Cane (in some districts). He also suggested various adaptation measures like agro-forestry, increasing the spacing between plants and rows, adoption of drip irrigation, sericulture, animal husbandry and increasing the area under minor millets as efficient to combat climate change impacts.

10. C. Yathiraju addressed the various issues related to drought in the aspect of food security. He said that currently drought management is mostly through relief measures rather than adaptation and risk reduction and pointed out that the use of local varieties of food crops like jowar and ragi will be helpful to secure food security in the drought prone areas of Karnataka. He also shared his insights from the grassroots about the drought situation in Karnataka. He also mentioned that the state government



has been quite inefficient when it comes to adopting a state-wide drought plan. He suggested that the various departments in the state as well as the national government should work in sync with each other to attain a sustainable impact.

11. M. Lord Savariraj also shared his organisations work on sustainable and organic agriculture and current agricultural market scenario. He also mentioned the importance of creating attention around groundwater being over-used for irrigation purposes.

Session 2: Role of institutional mechanisms in assuring food security in Karnataka

12. Susan Mathew presented the household level survey findings from Bihar and Karnataka as part of the FOODSEC project. A common suggestion from the stakeholders at the workshop was to avoid comparison between the results for the two states since the agro-climatic as well as social scenario was quite diverse in Bihar and Karnataka.

13. M. S. Tara pointed out that a comprehensive sectoral approach is required to reflect the issues related to food security. She also shared that the quantity as well as quality of food provided through the Public Distribution System (PDS) in Karnataka has improved tremendously in recent years. She also pointed out that the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) facilities has helped in eliminating food adulteration and related leakages for the government sponsored MDM and ICDS schemes.

14. B. V. Hemlatha (Assistant Director, Mid-Day Meal, Karnataka Education Service, Government of Karnataka) provided a brief outline to the participants on the statistics and schemes associated with the mid-day meal scheme in government and aided schools in Karnataka.

15. Y. Mariswamy (Coordinator, Samajik Parivartan Andolan) also shared his field level experiences dealing with public programs on food security among vulnerable and backward caste in Karnataka. Being a welfare state, it is the duty of government to take measures to reduce hunger and food insecurity of its people not a charity, he added.

Way Forward

1. Y. G. Muralidharan concluded the workshop by thanking all the participants. Veena Vidyadharan informed the participants about the advocacy meeting in New Delhi and the project advocacy brief which would incorporate the discussions from this meeting too.
2. Based on the feedback from the discussants and the panellists, CUTS team will be working on respective research outputs and finalising for wider dissemination.

Annexure 1: Background note & Agenda for the workshop

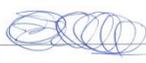
The background note and agenda for the event can be accessed here: <http://www.cuts-citee.org/FOODSEC/Events.htm>

Annexure 2: Press Release for the event

The press release for the event can be accessed here: <http://www.cuts-citee.org/FOODSEC/media.htm>

Annexure 3: List of Participants

For contact details of participants, please email: sma@cuts.org

<p style="text-align: center;">CUTS International Stakeholder Consultation on Food Security in India: The Interactions of Climate Change, Economics, Politics & Trade Venue: Ashraya International Hotel, 149 Infantry Road, Bangalore Wednesday, 26th October, 2016</p> <p style="text-align: center;">REGISTRATION</p>			
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