

# *Weekly Livelihoods Update*

14 May 2019

- ✚ **Hidden Hunger, Burdened Women** – Reminiscent of poverty debates, serious under nutrition in India risks becoming a measurement quibble, unless we talk about unequal development gains and the answerability of governments towards less empowered citizens. Based on the simple counting of food consumed by 240 households and conversations with women, this article explores the contrast between local knowledge of what constitutes a “good diet” and the deficient meals consumed by people in Odisha, a state in eastern India. Effective interventions need to look beyond “maternal responsibility” and address entitlement uncertainties and gender inequality, in order to ensure essential nutrition and good health of vulnerable groups such as women and children. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/19/special-articles/hidden-hunger-burdened-women.html>]
- ✚ **Understanding Deprivation and Well-being of Households with Children** – A World Bank report on the “State of the Poor” estimated that the regional share of the poor in India to the world poor increased from 22% in 1981 to 33% in 2010 (Olinto et al 2013). As per the National Sample Survey (NSS) 2011–12, more than 269.3 million Indians or 22% of the country’s population are living below the poverty line (BPL). According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2011) report on inequality in emerging economies, income inequality has doubled in India since the early 1990s. The Gini coefficient of consumption expenditure in rural areas rose from 0.26 in 2004–05 to 0.28 in 2011–12 and in urban areas it was at an all-time high of 0.37, rising from 0.35 for the same period (Jha 2013). Inequality measures look distressing; with the disparity between rural and urban income widening as per the World Bank (2012) data. As per the NSS, 2011–12, more than a quarter of the total Indian rural households are poor and about 83% are in the poorest quintile, which is twice as many as in the highest one. Moreover, large disparities remain among different social categories, thus pointing to challenges in access to opportunities, inclusive service delivery, etc. About 70% of all households in India raise children. With such a large share of households with children, addressing poverty and its disparities in comparison to households without children remains critical. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/19/notes/understanding-deprivation-and-well-being.html>]
- ✚ **Product Differentiation to Tackle Farm Distress** – The discourse on Indian agriculture has been dominated by farm distress leading to politics of competitive

support offers. Several schemes have been pitched, such as the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, the Nyuntam Aay Yojana (NYAY), and the Rythu Bandhu scheme of Telangana or the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) of Odisha. The unifying principle of these schemes is income or livelihood support for the farmers or poor households. Being formulated as income transfer, these schemes are in the spirit of a social safety net. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/19/commentary/product-differentiation-tackle-farm-distress.html>]

✚ **Employment Scenario and the Reservation Policy** – It would be an understatement to say that the decision by the Narendra Modi government to introduce the 124th amendment to the Constitution has taken people by surprise. The proposed bill (now law) that sought to amend Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution to provide for the advancement of “economically weaker sections” (EWS) was passed almost unanimously in both houses of Parliament without much debate. Introduced in the run-up to the general assembly elections of 2019, this “pro-poor” amendment provides for 10% reservation in jobs and educational institutions to economically backward sections in the general category (International Business Times 2019). [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/19/notes/employment-scenario-and-reservation-policy.html>]

✚ **90% Of Jobs Created Over Two Decades Post-Liberalisation Were Informal** – Of around 61 million jobs created in India over 22 years post-liberalisation of the economy in 1991, 92% were informal jobs, according to an IndiaSpend analysis of National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data for 2011-12, the latest available, released in 2014. Liberalisation was expected to formalise India’s largely informal agrarian economy, with labour moving from agriculture--the largest employer--to the organised industrial sector. The formal and informal sectors are distinguished based on size of workplace and accompanying government regulations on working hours, hiring and firing norms, rights of association, minimum wages, and other aspects. [For further reading: <https://www.indiaspend.com/90-of-jobs-created-over-two-decades-post-liberalisation-were-informal/>]

✚ **When Food Kills** – A recent research review published in the medical journal The Lancet says as many as 11 million people died worldwide in 2017 as unhealthy diets led to cardiovascular diseases and cancers. But what about India? "About 60 per cent of all deaths are caused by non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, heart conditions and some types of cancers. And most of these are linked to a new villain known as bad diet," says Dr V. Mohan, who has specialised in diabetes care for

nearly three decades and is the Co-founder of Dr Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre. According to him, the highest level of carbohydrate consumption in the US, the UK and Canada is less than the lowest level seen in India, which amounts to around 200g per day. In fact, the highest level of carbs consumption in India could be 400g a day or more as 75 per cent of the total food intake contains carbohydrates. This should ideally be 40-45 per cent, says Dr Mohan. The rest of the diet should include proteins (to be raised from an average consumption of 10 per cent to 20-25 per cent through vegetable proteins), green leafy vegetables for vitamins, iron and other minerals, and healthy unsaturated fats found in all types of nuts, flax seeds, vegetable oils and fish. [For further reading: <https://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/the-break-out-zone/when-food-kills/story/341455.html>]