


# Ideological, social, political and economic barriers to nutritious diets

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P-MAC 2023



Violence in the context of food  
creates physical, psychological, social,  
economic, spiritual ill health and is  
not merely physical wounds and  
injuries.

# Forms of violence in the context of food

- Coercion
- Manipulation
- Erasure
- Imposition
- Segregation
- Discrimination
- Gas-lighting
- Fragility
- Mis-information
- Abuse of law
- Silence
- Collusion/enabling



# National Family Health Survey 2019-20 –children <5 years in rural areas, India

- Stunting (less than expected height for age) 37.3%
- Undernutrition (less than expected weight for age) 33.8%
- 9.4% women and 4.0% men have a Body Mass Index (BMI) less than 18.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup>

Stunting and undernutrition are more in children of marginalized communities.

# Malnutrition in children and adolescents

(Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey 2016-18)

## Deficiencies

- Vitamin A – 18 -22%
- Vitamin D - 14 - 24%
- Zinc - 19 - 32%
- Vitamin B12 -14 - 31%
- Folate – 23 – 37%.

# (Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey 2016-18)

- Only 6% children and adolescents received a minimum acceptable diet
- Among 2-4 year old
  - 5% consumed vitamin A-rich foods the previous day.
  - Eggs (16%) and flesh foods (1%) were the least commonly consumed food groups
  - Only 21% were fed an adequately diverse diet containing four or more food groups.
- Only 9% children age 6-23 months received iron-rich foods



# Diversity of food = A minimum of 4 major food groups

1. Cereals/millet (ragi, rice, wheat, jowar, maize, barley, rye etc.)
2. Milk/dairy
3. Meats/poultry/fish/eggs (Sometimes eggs can be a separate category)
4. Pulses/legumes (dals, peas, channa, grams, soya etc.)
5. Fats/oils
6. Vegetables/fruits



# Nutrient dense animal source foods

## (Based on science not ideology!!)






# Nutrient dense foods are..

- Based on science, not prejudice
- Have most essential nutrients
- Good quality, bioavailable, easily digestible proteins
- Better quality vitamins, minerals, fats, essential fatty acids and other nutrients
- Lesser phytates, fibre and tannins than plant based foods
- Cultural/traditional
- Sustainable
- Supports traditional livelihood and economy – pastoral community/farmers
- Less dependence on corporates
- Far superior to fortified foods and ‘lab based meats’ (which are unicellular, additive/chemical/antibiotic dependent glops)
- Muscle, fat and blood are highly evolved over centuries. They CANNOT be replicated in labs.

Serious objection on record

P-MAC note on food  
transformations should not  
place red meats next to  
sugar as unhealthy foods



A large, faint, stylized olive branch graphic is positioned diagonally across the slide, extending from the top left towards the bottom right. The background is a textured, light beige color.

The idea that food systems need to  
be transformed rather than  
protected, supported, encouraged,  
preserved, validated is a cause for  
concern

# How caste intersects vegetarianism

- Deep rooted, inter-generational prejudice that 'vegetarian' food and therefore vegetarians are pure, clean, *sattvic*, hygienic, touchable, calm, compassionate, of higher thinking, deserving of privileges/positions/power, allies of white folks. Myth of a 'vegetarian' India reinforced by Western academicians/Eat Lancet Commission etc.
- In contrast, 'non-vegetarians' or meat eaters are dirty, polluted, contaminated, unhygienic, untouchable, lustful, violent, aggressive, criminal. Fit for hard labour, 'unclean occupations', undeserving of higher education or 'white collar' jobs, *tamasic/rajasic* foods



# Is India vegetarian ?

## Data | How many Indians eat meat?

Data from the National Family Health Survey-5 show that in over half of the 30 States/ UTs analysed, **more than 90% of the population consumed fish or chicken or meat daily or weekly or occasionally**

April 07, 2022 05:12 pm | Updated April 15, 2022 06:33 pm IST

VIGNESH RADHAKRISHNAN, JASMIN NIHALANI, REBECCA ROSE VARGHESE

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But new research by US-based anthropologist Balmurli Natrajan and India-based economist Suraj Jacob, points to a heap of evidence that even these are inflated estimations because of "cultural and political pressures". So people under-report eating meat - particularly beef - and over-report eating vegetarian food.

Taking all this into account, say the researchers, **only about 20% of Indians are actually vegetarian - much lower than common claims and stereotypes suggest.**

**Hindus, who make up 80% of the Indian population, are major meat-eaters. Even only a third of the privileged, upper-caste Indians are vegetarian.**

The government data shows that vegetarian households have higher income and consumption - are more affluent than meat-eating households. The lower castes, Dalits (formerly known as untouchables) and tribes-people are mainly meat eaters.



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News / India / Dalit man killed with rods, stones in Pune by family of upper caste girl over affair

**20-year-old Dalit man smashed with rods, stones, killed in Pune by family of upper caste girl over affair**

A 20-year-old Dalit man was hacked to death by the family members of an upper caste girl he was in a relationship with. Viraj Vilas Jagtap was abused and also spat on as he lay bleeding on the road.

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Premium


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**17-year-old Dalit youth not allowed to enter temple, shot dead by upper caste men for arguing**

Crime

Mirror Now Digital

Updated Jun 09, 2020 | 06:16 IST

Updated Jun 09, 2020 | 06:16 IST



SIGN IN

News / Crime / Dalit man killed for filling water from handpump in Rajasthan, 3 arrested

**Dalit man killed for filling water from handpump in Rajasthan, 3 arrested**

Police have arrested three men for killing a Dalit man in Rajasthan's Soorsagar for filling water from a handpump.

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Home / Cities / Bhopal / MP: Dalit man beaten to death for 'touching food'

**MP: Dalit man beaten to death for 'touching food'**

Chhatarpur Superintendent of Police Sachin Sharma said: "The three were friends known to each other and were drunk while on their outing, during which a fight broke out over food and the two attacked Anuragi."

By: Express News Service  
Bhopal | December 10, 2020 08:52 IST

NewsGuard

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News / India / 19-year-old student dies by suicide over caste-based harassment by college authorities in TN

**19-year-old student dies by suicide over caste-based harassment by college authorities in TN**

A 19-year-old student in Tamil Nadu's Nagapattinam died by suicide after the college authorities allegedly used casteist slurs against her over non-payment of fees.

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THIS STORY IS FROM DECEMBER 3, 2021

**Pithoragarh: Dalit man killed for 'eating with upper caste people', case lodged**

PREM PUNETHA / TNN / Updated: Dec 3, 2021, 08:13 IST

ARTICLES



Pithoragarh: Dalit man killed for 'eating with upper caste people', ca...

Food waste crisis



# How caste intersects vegetarianism

- Rich 'vegetarians' access more diverse, nutrient dense foods (also malnourished). Cheap vegetarianism (predominantly cereals and millets) pushed on the poor.
- Food imposition
- Based on prejudice not science
- Disproportionate control of (mis)information (doctors, scientists, academicians, researchers, 'policy' makers, counselors, teachers, faculty, religious leaders etc) – what caste/class/religion/gender??

# How caste intersects vegetarianism

- Policies, instead of a nutrition perspective is framed from ideological, political, caste, religion, and now climate perspective.
- Focus goes on single nutrient deficiencies – fortification pushed as a panacea/need for importing pre-mix, shorter shelf life. What about sustainability/environment/costs/culture/food sovereignty etc.??
- Unscientific laws, meat bans, segregation, criminalization, discrimination as public interventions implemented by elected representatives, law makers





## **CRIMINALIZING LIVELIHOODS LEGALISING VIGILANTISM**

The Adverse Impact of the Karnataka Prevention  
of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Act, 2020

DR SYLVIA KARPAGAM

SIDDHARTH K JOSHI

- Farmers depend on livestock for milk/agriculture. (bank on hooves)
- Transporters take the cattle to slaughterhouses from where the meat is bought by butchers, who in turn sell the meat to consumers, hotels, small eateries, street vendors etc.
- Hides which are sold to the hide merchants are salted and cured and later sold to agents for manufacture of leather products.
- Parts such as the intestine, bones and hooves may also be sold to pharma companies etc.
- Apart from the meat, economic activity from cattle includes hides and skins; bones for processing into gelatin, ossein, di-calcium phosphate; casings from the intestines; horns and hooves; blood for the pharma industry; meat and bone meal; tallow and pet foods.



Law banning slaughter of cattle passed overnight, during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic and draconian lockdowns, it gave no opportunity for people to prepare in any way for the effects of the new Act.

The Act converts what was, for generations, a legal trade, into an illegal one, without making any alternative provisions either for livelihood or nutrition.

The penalties and punishments have been steeply enhanced for contravention of any provision of the new Act. There are strict provisions of imprisonment of not less than 3 years and upto 7 years on conviction, with heavy fines

# Veerasangaiah, Farmer's union



*“All this makes farmers appear like criminals. Even if there is a small issue, cases are filed on us, we are charged fines and the cattle are taken away. This will definitely affect the milk production in the state. The government doesn't seem to understand this. If something is not done immediately to change this situation, we will not even need these departments like Veterinary and Animal Husbandry. The farmers will be destroyed by then.”*



**Cattle market at Devara  
Hipparagi in Vijayapura,  
Karnataka, India**



**Tannery**



**Butcher's Association, Karnataka**



**Curing unit in DJ Halli lying vacant**



# Growing criminalization/lynching of meat eaters.

*The phrase 'He was eating beef so what's wrong with him being killed' is completely normalized.*

## INDIA NEWS

### 8 held for 'lynching' three alleged cattle thieves

Two of the men, who allegedly were trying to steal cattle, died on spot. The third is undergoing treatment. They all are from Baniapur, Bihar.

**Mob Lynching: A New Form of Hate Crime**

### Spate Of Lynchings Target Minorities, Especially Muslims, In India

August 19, 2019 · 5:04 AM ET



### Spectre Of Mob Lynchings Continues To Haunt India Amid Lacklustre Laws

Lynching is not defined as a crime under the Indian Penal Code. In 2017, NCRB collected data on cases of mob lynching, hate crimes etc. But it was observed that the data was unreliable.



**Five arrested for lynching Muslim couple for allegedly carrying 'beef'**

by News Desk · May 25, 2019





Home › Economy › India's beef exports rise under Modi govt despite Hindu vigilante campaign at...

Economy

## India's beef exports rise under Modi govt despite Hindu vigilante campaign at home

There was a decline in beef exports in 2015-16, coinciding with first mob lynching over beef eating but they have recovered since.

**SANYA DHINGRA** 26 March, 2019 11:30 am IST

Comes from the larger culture of criminalizing meat eaters, classifying not just foods but even those eating those foods as pure/impure, polluted/unpolluted etc. this culture of criminalization is then further used to valorize vegetarianism.

## IIT Bombay is just the latest among India's elite colleges promoting food casteism

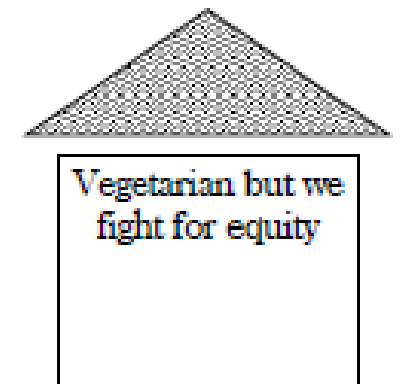
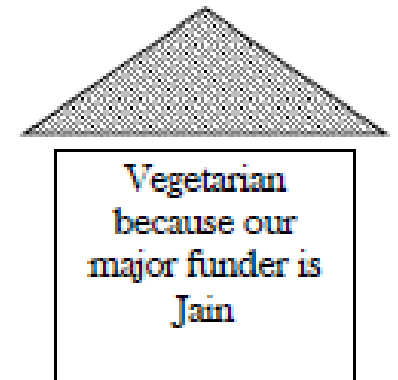
### EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

Liberal 'Hindu' newspaper reiterates no-meat policy in office, sparks debate on vegetarian fundamentalism

No non-veg meals for Air India economy class passengers



## Eating policies of NGOs





# Government mid-day meals as the focus of ideological and political agenda - Akshaya patra/International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

- Cultural/ideological imposition (Sattvik vs tamassik)
- Nutritionally Inadequate quantity and quality
- Violation of norms
- Corruption
- Capture of state power
- Homogeneity



ISKCON's sanitised version of the caste system does not foster progress of the lower castes

Priyanka Kavish

Religious Indoctrination Through Midday Meals  
[Bhumika Jain](#) 09 May 2019

Akshaya Patra imposing vegetarian food mono culture on children

**Storm in Akshaya Patra: How much to trust philanthropy's hybrid model?**

The New Indian Express

**“Consumption of eggs (3eggs/ week) is recommended in view of several nutritional advantages”**

National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad

*“Good quality protein is derived from milk, fish, meat, poultry and eggs.”*

National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad

*“Be sure to include protein-rich foods, especially animal-source foods such as eggs, meat, chicken and fish at least once each day, or as frequently as possible.”*

UNICEF

**“Eggs are impure. Practice of Krsna consciousness is process of making ourselves pure. Hence eating eggs has opposite effect. Which is why eggs are not to be eaten. Hare Krsna.”**

**International Society for Krishna Consciousness**

*“Egg itself is flowing out of the uterus as a menstrual byproduct. I donno how can u eat something like that. When fertilized it become a chick. when not fertilized just likes human beings it flows out of the body of female like a menstrual flow. Does it appeal you? would you still like to eat it? Jai Sri Krishna.”*

ISKCON



# Will Western dietary guidelines undo the damage already caused?

- Allowing corporates and multinationals to make dietary guidelines?
- Not challenging blatant conflict of interest?
- Criminalising saturated fats and opening the market for 'fat-free' processed junk foods that destroyed food sovereignty?
- False messaging about healthy cholesterol such as in eggs and meat
- Bringing on a spate of corporate induced obesity, non-communicable disease, malnutrition, unhealthy eating



[Nutrients](#). 2018 Jun; 10(6): 780.

Published online 2018 Jun 16. doi: [10.3390/nu10060780](https://doi.org/10.3390/nu10060780)

PMCID: PMC6024687

PMID: [29914176](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29914176/)

## Dietary Cholesterol and the Lack of Evidence in Cardiovascular Disease

[Ghada A. Soliman](#)

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### Abstract

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Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death in the United States. For years, dietary cholesterol was implicated in increasing blood cholesterol levels leading to the elevated risk of CVD. To date, extensive research did not show evidence to support a role of dietary cholesterol in the development of CVD. **As a result, the 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans removed the recommendations of restricting dietary cholesterol to 300 mg/day.** This review summarizes the current literature regarding dietary cholesterol intake and CVD. It is worth noting that most foods that are rich in cholesterol are also high in saturated fatty acids and thus may increase the risk of CVD due to the saturated fatty acid content. The exceptions are eggs and shrimp. Considering that



Biotech & Health

# Bill Gates wants Western countries to eat 'synthetic meat'; Meatable has raised \$47 million to make it

Jonathan Shieber @jshieber / 6:32 PM GMT+5:30 • March 23, 2021

 Comment



TFN

US UK EUROPE ASIA AFRICA INDIA MIDDLE EAST

## Bill Gates-backed lab-grown meat startup Upside Foods becomes a unicorn, nets \$400M Series C



BY KARIA ELIAS · APRIL 21, 2022 · 4 MINUTE READ · NO COMMENTS



# Language of appropriation?

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK

NATURE POSITIVE

GAME CHANGING

Strong evidence

opportunity

stakeholder

global  
transformation

global solution

Sustainable

zero hunger

scientific  
boundaries

Interconnected

Scientific targets

DEBATE

common  
framework

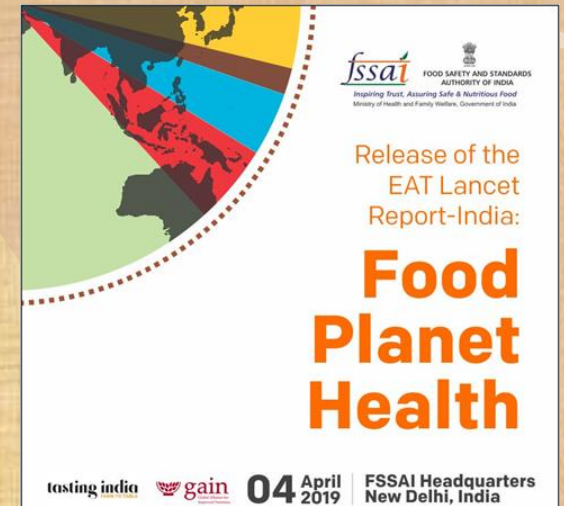
sustainable food  
systems

dialogue



# Eat Lancet Commission

- **Climate discourse now becoming the overarching discourse in food policy making**
  - Nutritionally deficient homogenous diet
  - Unsound science
  - Elitist/billionaire/corporate led
  - Predominantly vegan/plant based ideology
  - Kills diversity/local cultures
  - Increased dependence on corporates



**Glamorous billionaire who funded study telling people they must only eat a quarter of a rasher of bacon a day to save the planet is slammed as hypocrite for jetting around the world in her £20m private PLANE**

- Gunhild Stordalen, funds a campaign to save the planet by reducing meat consumption globally

## EAT at the UN Food Systems Summit 2021

Our Founder and Executive Chair Dr. Gunhild Stordalen is appointed a leading role at the UN Food Systems Summit



# EAT LANCET COMMISSION – projects India as a model !!

*“India can show the world how traditional diets high in seeds, nuts, vegetables, whole grains and legumes can provide sustainable nutrition without wrecking the planet,”*

Professor Johan Rockstrom, director, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany.

*“If we can make this (\*Eat Lancet\*) happen in India, we can make this happen anywhere in the world. This country is important because the world looks to India for leadership.”*  
Lawrence Haddad, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

*“This is where I think India has got such a great example. A lot of the protein sources come from plants. So I think India has an example that they can show the world”*  
Brent Loken, Science Liaison Officer, EAT Foundation



# Which part is the model??

- Anemia??
- Stunting??
- Undernutrition??
- Vitamin B12 deficiency?
- Zinc deficiency?
- Chronic hunger??
- Starvation deaths??

**Anaemia is the biggest cause of disability in India, worst in BRICS**  
Iron-deficiency anaemia in India is rampant among children below the age of 3 (78.9%); women (55%); men follow at 24%

**Death of an infant shows cruelty of starving in a country of food abundance**

**In India, 8.8 lakh children under five years – highest in the world – died in 2018, says UNICEF**  
The report, which was released on Wednesday, pointed out that malnutrition caused 69% of under-five deaths in India.

NATIONAL

**India fares poorly in hunger index**

Are these really “policies” or ‘decisions” or ‘bad decisions?

- Evidence based/Scientific?
- Representation/diversity  
(especially for food and in the  
Indian caste context)?
- Accountable?
- Without devious agenda ?



# Take home messages

- Putting the burden of climate control on individuals and communities, especially the poorest is unethical.
- Corporates and elites should aim to control their contributions to climate change (Air travel, fuel/ electricity consumption, food waste, digital gadgets, importing/exporting foods)
- Discussion on red meat should be grounded in science rather than ideology and emotion
  - Enteric methane is a part of a natural carbon cycle and different warming pattern than carbon dioxide
  - Livestock efficiency can be improved/Livestock not only emits but also sequesters carbon
  - Foods should be compared based on nutritional value.

- Accept that India is NOT a vegetarian country. Enable better access to animal based foods that are locally grown and suitable to the traditional/cultural eating practices. Promote Dairy, lift cattle slaughter bans, modernize meat/poultry/fish rearing, transport, marketing processes (but not corporatize),
- Consult local communities and identify local solutions rather than billionaire corporate led solutions.
- Bringing in diversity, representation at policy making is crucial if we want to break the caste/corporate nexus that is creating havoc for the country on multiple fronts.





# Thank you