

The Survey On Food Politics Of India

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Abstract

Objectives: My objective of this paper is to know the meaning of food politics of India in relation to philosophy of food. There are many issues regarding food politics in India, which I discuss in this paper. I also discuss the literature review of food politics.

Subjects: It basically focus on Philosophy Subject. But as name suggest (Food Politics), it is related to Political Subject also.

Methodology: I use analytical method to know the scenario of food politics of India. I also took help of many articles and books that discuss food politics scenario of India, in last one year.

Discussion and Result:In discussion I discuss the status of food politics of India. For the discussion I took the help of case study of food politics of India. The result of this paper is that according to me people and as well the country is responsible for the miserable condition of food politics of India. cases on food politics of India.

Conclusion: I try to reach to a conclusion that how food politics of India is linked with food security.

Recommendations:

For removing food shortages government needs vibrant agriculture systems, increase amount of production and equal distribution of food given to everyone. Farmers need to be aware of the resources and technologies.

Keywords: Food Politics, Philosophy, India, Food Security

Introduction

The Philosophy of Food is a very important issue for philosophers. It contains many branches like food metaphysics, food epistemology, food ethics, food technology, food politics and food identity. As everyone knows, food is an essential part for both human and non human existence. But I limit myself to food politics in this discussion. Food politics is referred as the political aspects of the production, control, regulation, inspection, distribution and consumption of food. When seen from the philosophical point of view it means philosophical inquiry within food realm that is linked with politics, because government and corporation influence our food choices. Food choices of an individual have become political. The political realities affect the national and international food systems and individual choices of taking the food.

According to me, there are many issues of food politics because food politics affects almost every field of philosophy like food metaphysics, food epistemology, food ethics, food identity and food technology. But mainly it affects food ethics, culture, economical background of an individual and environment also. I am trying to investigate that what are the relations and differences between these issues. First, I give the brief introduction of these fields and then show the relationship between these fields and food politics. I also discuss the main political issues of food such as hunger, malnutrition, global trade, labeling and marketing, vegetarianism, food rights and food production and consumption. Food metaphysics refers to the inquiry of what it food. In this, we refers to the food as nutrition, food as nature, food as culture, food as social good, food as spirituality, food as diet, food as commodity and the list is very long. Basically, food metaphysics shows the nature of food

and how people treat food according to their individual perspective. Food epistemology refers to the inquiry of how do we know it is food. In this, we refer to food consumption and from risk it goes to trust, how practical reason is used to know our “food ways”. Food ways refers to the study of food production and consumption-the culinary practices of what a group eats and what it means. Food ethics refers to the inquiry of what should we eat, is it wrong to eat meat, what should we do about world hunger. In this, we discuss about the responsibilities towards self and others, food virtues, vegetarianism and animals, agriculture and environmental ethics. Food identity refers to the inquiry of are you what you eat. In this, we discuss whether identity and diet has any connection.

If we will properly think then we can analyze that Dietary preference are indeed a part of who I am individually, and who we are collectively. It also refers to the issue of gender, which is taken as an example to show that how poor labor class people are not given equal food quantity. Food technology refers to the inquiry of should food be natural. This includes animal biotechnology, genetically modified food and functional food. Animal biotechnology applies recombinant DNA techniques to animals. Genetically modified food is plants and animals that have been altered using recombinant DNA technology. Functional food is a food based product that has added ingredients believed to provide health benefits.

Now I discuss the connections between food politics and these fields. When seen from the political philosophy point of view, these fields of food metaphysics, epistemology, identity, biotechnology and ethics are affected by the political factor that indicates our Government. See the issue of hunger, malnutrition which is a part of food ethics, but this part of food ethics is handled only by our Government. Our Government policies of food affect our society, culture and individuals. The distribution and consumption of food is referred as an integral part of food politics. Government and political parties impact effects all the fields that is discussed

above. For making more money, market reduces the standard of distribution and consumption of food. This also effects environment, agriculture and economical background of individuals. I discuss about hunger and malnutrition issues by showing case study. Food politics allocate losses/gains from state action in food and farming sectors and political action taken to impose/block new governmental regulations. Food politics important issues are global trade and labeling and marketing. The book named as *The Philosophy of food* says that “Trade and globalization of agriculture are increasingly internationalizing the politics of food”. For industrialized nations, trade liberalization is good helpful for farmers but for poor countries it creates poverty for farmers because commodities becomes subsidized. It has been said that local farmers cannot produce cheap foods. Globalization replaces local diet by “Western diet” and “Western diet” gives obesity and heart disease. The fast food intake also increases. All these type of things provides benefits to government, and political parties.

Food labels and advertising are affected by food politics. Producers of the food items do not disclose the ingredients properly which are placed on the food packets. Consumers are not aware about what to eat and what to purchase. Because of food politics, lack of information is provided to consumers. The limitations on marketing and labeling should be there for the betterment of food. Capitalism and materialism are arisen because of wrong deployment of food politics.

The important role played by following in food politics are consumers, farmers, agriculture inputs industry, activist groups on food safety and quality and retail supermarket chains. According to me, the politics of food is changing because nowadays consumers ask for food with greater freshness, nutritional value improvisation and reduction of the use of synthetic chemicals. We also see increased demand in organic food.

Many articles and books were written on food politics. I discuss many philosophers view on food politics. Marion Nestle was a

nutritionist and a professor of New York University. She was a policy advisor of the Department of Health and Human Services. She wrote a book named as *Food Politics: How the food industry influences Nutrition and Health*. She wants to show the

way through which the food industry uses politics, government, marketing and children to sell more food which indirectly is converted into eating more.

David M. Kaplan was the editor of the book named *The Philosophy of Food*. David M. Kaplan is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at the University of North Texas. He is currently the Director of the Philosophy of Food project at the University of Texas. In this book, he discusses the philosophy of food. He tries to aware the readers about the issues of food. He also tells us that philosophers like Plato, Roman Stoics, Epicurus and Seneca, Locke, Rousseau, Voltaire, Marx and Nietzsche discusses about food politics. Their food politics includes the various aspects of food production and consumption. He discusses the fundamental philosophical inquiry regarding food which I have already mentioned in form of food metaphysics, etc.

The Encyclopedia of Food and Agricultural Ethics was edited by Paul B. Thompson and David M. Kaplan. *The Encyclopedia of Food and Agricultural Ethics* provides the overview about food and agricultural systems of production, distribution and consumption that are regarded as an important aspect of food politics. Paul B. Thompson is a professor in the Department of Philosophy, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA. This Encyclopedia includes the view of Plato, Nietzsche, Rousseau, Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism on food.

Buddhist Perspectives on Food and Agriculture Ethics article was written by David R. Loy, Department of Philosophy, Boulder, CO, USA. Buddhist teachings illustrate situations in which how food is prepared and consumed. Buddhist teaching says that a vegetarian diet is essential for everyone and we should not kill or harm

animals. It teaches that vegetarianism reflects the value of non- violence but see the irony, Buddhist monks had to follow a vegetarian diet in their monasteries but outside, where they begged for their food, they had to accept anything that was given to them, even meat or fish. This shows the politicizing of food.

Colleen Taylor Sen wrote another article named as *Hinduism and food*. Hinduism is regarded as the world's third largest religion after Christianity and Islam. According to Hinduism, Purity of thought depends on the purity of food. The Emperor Ashoka Maurya (304-232 BCE) gave political boost to vegetarianism and said that vegetarianism shows that highest "purity" and "status" of an individual. He prohibited animal slaughter and meat consumption in his empire. Brahmins were very particular about their foods and also advised others to do not accept food from someone who are outside their caste. Brahmins segregated food on the basis of caste this shows the politicizing of food. She wrote one more article name as *Jainism and Food*. Jainism was given by Mahavira (599-527 BCE) whereas Buddhism was given by Gautama Buddha. Jain texts contain detail lists of what can and cannot be eaten and five things are absolutely forbidden for all Jains like meat, fish, eggs, alcohol and honey. They also provide the rules about how long foods can be kept before eating. Jainism and Buddhism oppose the increasing power of the Brahmins performing animal sacrifices. It has been said that in India, most Jain and Hindu vegetarians are not vegans because the need for the nutrients in milk products was so important. According to some Jains, cows are killed when they stop producing milk. In production of milk also, we can see the food politics.

Foucault and Food article was written by Chloe Taylor, Department of Philosophy of University of Alberta, AB, Canada. Michael Foucault was a French Philosopher. For him diet is regarded as the techniques of the self which helps us to have an ethical relationship with oneself. He regards diet as a target of disciplinary power.

Nietzsche and Food article was written by Robert T. Valgentli, Department of Philosophy, Lebanon Valley College, Annville, PA, USA. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844 – 1900) was a German Philosopher. For him, diet and gastrointestinal health, was important for his philosophical notions of an individual's or culture's health. He opposes vegetarianism. For him, nutrition is also important. "How to become what you eat" is an important point of Nietzsche's meditations on digestion. He said that culture and food system are always attached. So, whatever politics on food is conducted, it will affect our culture and life-physical also.

Plato and Food article was written by Daniel Silvermintz, School of Human Science and Humanities, University of Houston, Clear Lake, Houston, TX, USA. Plato (429-347 BCE) was regarded as the philosopher of the Western intellectual tradition. He discusses about food politics in his book named as *Plato's Republic*. He said that the diet of the citizens is very important, but because of disorder of political regimes and state, individual's food and diet is affected. The state agenda is not to provide healthy food to individuals. They make individuals entirely dependent for food on the state. He favors vegetarianism. He was against the state political agenda enforced upon food. Right to food is gone because of food politics.

Rousseau and Food article was written by Kelly Oliver, Department of Philosophy, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, USA. Rousseau was a political philosopher. Jean Jacques Rousseau was very concerned with food and diet. According to him, a wholesome diet leads to a wholesome character. He gives more important to a vegetarian diet. He said that "we are what we eat" like savages eat wild animals, that is why they are wild and civilized men eat cultivated grain, that is why they become cultivated. He said that freedom to eat should be given to everyone, but because of the society and state pressures, we are bound to eat what they give us. His main motto was that if we eat good food, we become good people.

Karl Marx was a political philosopher who also discussed the food politics. He wanted to show that a food shortage in the country is not because of natural disaster or of huge population. He said that no society is possible without capitalism and capitalism is applied to food as well. According to him, the problem lies with the distribution of food. People go hungry, because they do not have enough money to purchase the food that is produced. The political parties have no concerns for the peoples who suffer or died because of shortage of food. There is sufficient production of food to feed everyone, but wrong distribution of food is managed because of capitalist interest of making money and Government political parties vote banks. If we want to stop them, then we have to remove the system itself.

The book '*Food Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*' was written by Robert Paarlberg. He discusses in this book the overview of food politics, consumption and future of food politics. According to him, the distinctive feature of food politics includes social contestation about food and political competition to shape the actions of government. Food politics is driven by both material interests and values of society norms. Food and farming are used for material welfare. Food politics is in favor of industrial development. Food prices become high, so that the political issue can be formed during elections. This time of situation affects everyone starting from poor to rich. Hunger, malnutrition, lack of accurate distribution and consumption of food is caused. Every culture is affected from this situation. The future of food politics will ruin farmers, increases hunger, poverty and loss of health.

Methodology

My methodology of this paper is analytical. I took the help of many books and papers for writing this research paper. Analytical method means to analyse the problem by using our skills of thinking and mind.

Discussion and Results

In discussion I discuss the status of food politics of India. For the discussion I took the help of case study of food politics of India. In Madkheda, India (MP), the children in a remote central Indian villages, waits for the two small flat pieces of bread and scoop of boiled potato curry, and this is regarded as the full meal for them for that day. Those children are regarded as the malnourished children's across India, because they are depended upon government- run program which serves lunch five days a week. Egg was suggested as a key source of protein, should be given to these malnutrition children's but Chief Minister of that state rejected this idea by saying that "eggs will not be introduced" till I am the chief minister. He was vegetarian, that is why he favors milk and bananas. He was imposing the ides of Hinduism, on these people.

The government of the neighboring state of Maharashtra, banned cattle slaughter and beef sales, because to establish Hindutva ideology. Many lower- caste and non-Hindus was largely affected by this decision because beef is cheaper than chicken, goat or lamb.

It has been said that Indian cuisine is not homogeneous because food habits and eating practices differs because of caste, religious and regional lines. 80% of Indians are non-vegetarians but government enforces the citizens to become vegetarian. Government wants to establish their ideology that is why they raise the prices of non-vegetarian food, so that people will purchase vegetarian food only. Government overlooks the nutritional benefits of non-vegetarian food.

In March 2015, the Maharashtra government banned beef, and it affected Dalits and Muslims largely. The government also banned the consumption of meat for eight days during Jain community monasticism. It shows the food politics seen at social, political and economical level.

In October 2015, Lal Manohar, Chief Minister of Haryana said that if Muslim wants to live in this state, then they have to leave the eating of beef. But when this issue becomes politicize then he denied this statement. According to me everyone has a right to eat whatever they like to eat, so no boundations

should be there. Politicians should not do their dirty politics on the basic need of the food.

In September 2015, the case of Dadri near Ghaziabad was highlighted in which, a man was killed because he was eating cow meat, but it was not true. He was a Muslim and was eating meat only, but some other person rotate wrong information by saying that he was eating cow meat. The Hindus Brahmins, got hurt because they worship cows, so how anyone can eat them. Those Brahmins killed that man because of the rumor and does not interrogate the actual case. According to me, how anyone can kill other person, on the basis of belief system. No one has a right to kill anyone. Politicians more highlighted this issue, for seeking the attention of the public. We know that at the time of Ambedkar, shudra were not allowed to eat prashad in temples. Shudras were boycott, from eating food. They used to eat the dead animals meat, and were also denied the proper food.

The result of this paper is that according to me people and as well the country is responsible for the miserable condition of food politics of India. How one can deprive someone from eating on the basis of caste and religion? It shows the inhuman behavior. The political parties are already aware of these issues, but never turned up for the help. Government does not want the proper allocation of food distribution that should be provided to everyone.

Conclusion

In this section, I try to analyze the question that how food politics of India is linked with food security. I have already discussed what food politics is, but now I discuss what food security is. Food security means to protect, secure and maintain the good quality of food. For the philosophical justification, we need to know, that whether governments have the obligation to protect food security.

Food security should provide sufficient, safe and nutritious food to everyone, so that everyone should be able to live healthy lives. If this will not happen, then food insecurity will be raised. Food insecurity provides

poverty, economic crises, poor governance, hunger and poor agricultural infrastructure.

India's New Food Security Program was issued so that people below poverty line can use their ration cards to purchase subsidized basic foodstuffs. But this program has many limitations because it provides limited quantities and also includes basic grains in terms of rice and wheat which is regarded as too expensive for poor class. When the elections are around government reduces the food prices and provides false promises to the farmers. So, one can see that how food politics is related with food security issue. I am not

blaming the particular government who is in the power but the system working before and after the system working before and after the Independence.

Recommendations

For removing food shortages government needs vibrant agriculture systems, increase amount of production and equal distribution of food given to everyone. Farmers need to be aware of the resources and technologies. India is regarded as Knowledge should be given to farmers for their upliftment. Farmers have become the equipment of interest making.

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