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An analysis of the policy process of the Indian National Food Security Act of 2013 in relation to Urban Food Insecurity

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Food Policy

March 2020

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04/06/2020
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Abstract

Background. This thesis explores the Indian National Food Security Act of 2013 (henceforth NFSA) as an expression of Indian food policy, with specific focus on the extent that Indian urban food security was understood, considered and addressed during the policy formation of the NFSA. The NFSA seeks to provide up to 50% of the entire urban population access to the Public Distribution System (PDS). How such figures were agreed upon, and if other urban-focused entitlements were considered in the policy design, is of significance, to not only assess whether the NFSA adequately addresses the full range of urban food insecurity, but to also bring forward the motivations and interests of the policy-makers themselves.

Methods. With the overall research objective to elucidate the role that urban food security played in the policy process of the NFSA, three research questions (RQs) arose to identify: RQ1. The main dimensions of urban food insecurity in India, and the urban planning and policy context; RQ2. The main actors involved in the policy process of the NFSA, and the extent to which urban experts were consulted; RQ3. The degree to which urban food security was considered, understood and represented in the policy formulation of the NFSA. Walt and Gilson's Policy Analysis Triangle was utilised as the conceptual framework, situated within the broader tradition and approach of critical food policy analysis. The research adopted a multi-method approach, using 26 elite semi-structured interviews as the primary data source, and conducting analysis of official policy documents and transcripts of the Lok Sabha debates as secondary data sources. Research was primarily conducted in Delhi, within circles of academics, civil society activists, bureaucrats and experts in think-tanks, to map out and understand how and if entitlements focused on urban food security changed during the NFSA's formulation and the extent that it garnered attention up to the final Act.

Findings. The research analysis suggests that urban food security received limited attention during the formulation of the NFSA, with more focus on a broad food security approach, only differentiating between the urban and rural food insecure through eligibility. There is further evidence of long-standing urban neglect within poverty alleviation policies and a dearth of urban food security discourse within national urban programmes. This is further compounded by policies that affect the urban poor negatively, such as slum demolishment, displacement and illegalisation of slum-dwellers, as well as poor statistical evidence and understanding of urban food security by key policy-makers. The earlier drafts of the NFSA included comprehensive entitlements for the most vulnerable groups in urban areas, indicating that key actors in the policy process showed an understanding and concern towards urban food insecurity. Due to the tensions and negotiations between policy-makers, coupled with the possible undue influence of a key policy-maker, the potential of the NFSA in addressing urban food security was limited.

Discussion. The findings suggest that urban food security was not of particular focus for the policy-makers involved in the NFSA, yet the initial draft of the Act, due to the influence of key academics, civil society activists and former bureaucrats within the National Advisory Council (NAC), contained substantial entitlements for urban vulnerable groups. The excising of these entitlements may have substantially weakened the potential of the NFSA to address urban food insecurity, even if perfectly implemented. Ultimately, the influence of growth-focused, economic rationalism among key governmental policy-makers tempered the vast and wide-ranging initial draft, streamlining it so that the content was ultimately only expanding upon existing policies and programmes rather than any novel approaches. More research is needed to more clearly identify and problematise the influence of commercial interests in the legislative branch, as well as to analyse the implementation of the NFSA, for its potential successes or failures.

Conclusion. The thesis concludes that key reforms in urban governance and planning, implementing a multidimensional framework in identifying the urban poor, as well as reintroducing the removed entitlements would significantly strengthen the response to urban food insecurity in India. A more robust nutrition security approach would also greatly benefit the urban food insecure. The broader implications highlighted by this thesis is that continued urban neglect, exacerbated by systemic policy failures in addressing urban poverty coupled with the wholesale adoption of economic rationalism, will be a growing crisis for India as its urban populations grow, with little evidence that its existing programmes and policies are suited in addressing the highlighted issues, and sufficient evidence that continued food insecurity will persist despite rising living standards and rising incomes.

Key Words: Food Security; Urban Food Security; Food Policy; Indian Food Security; Urban India

Acknowledgments

This thesis would not have been possible without the tireless effort of my primary supervisor, Tim Lang, to inspire, encourage, support and motivate. I have only gratitude, respect and appreciation for such a dedicated supervisor, who was always insightful, constructive and helpful. I would also like to thank my first secondary supervisor, David Barling, as well as the subsequent secondary supervisor, Corinna Hawkes, for their insights and honesty. The work that this thesis entailed was made possible thanks to their guidance and structure and they all have left their influence on me as a person to improve and strive to do the best one can.

I give thanks to all the interviewees who gave their time and effort to sit and discuss these topics with me, with special thanks to Harsh Mander who encouraged the direction the thesis took and enabled the access into the academic and civil society components of the food policy space in India.

I am incredibly grateful and indebted to my family, who have always supported and motivated me. I love you all, to my mother who read the entire thesis, and my father who enabled the thesis to even occur through his extensive network of contacts in India, and my sister who has always been supportive: Thank you. Thanks to Ceyhun Güngör, reliable friend and colleague, whose very presence, exemplified by hard work and dedication, inspired me to emulate those qualities. This journey would have been far less colourful without you. Thanks to Niklas, Nils and Mariia for your constant support throughout the entire process, and for your belief. Thank you as well to Alvin Thomas, Rajesh Kumar, Sunita John, and Ruth for their tireless help and support, and to my dogs Spot and Blachan for keeping me sane.

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Acronyms

AAY	Antyodaya Anna Yojana (Scheme for the Poorest of the Poor)
BMI	Body Mass Index
CES	Centre for Equity Studies
CPR	Centre for Policy Research
CSE	Centre for Science and the Environment
CURE	Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence
EGoM	Empowered Group of Ministers
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
FPS	Fair Price Shops
GoI	Government of India
HRLN	Human Rights Law Network
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
IGC	International Growth Centre
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
Lok Sabha	India’s Lower House of Parliament
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDMS	Mid-Day Meal Scheme
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	Minimum Support Price
NAC	National Advisory Council
NFSA	National Food Security Act
NFSB	National Food Security Bill
NIUA	National Institute of Urban Affairs
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organisation of India

NFHS	National Family Health Survey
PAT	Policy Analysis Triangle
PDS	Public Distribution System
PHRN	Public Health Resource Network
PIL	Public Interest Litigation
PMEAC	Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council
PMO	Prime Minister’s Office
PUCL	People’s Union of Civil Liberties
WHO	World Health Organisation
WFS	World Food Summit
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

Chapter One: Food Security from the International to the National

This chapter presents the broad policy setting within which the research was framed. It reviews food security in India, introduces key policies into which the NFSA was introduced in 2013. This is the focus of the thesis.

1.1 Subject and Scope of Research

The National Food Security Act of 2013 (henceforth NFSA) converted a range of food-oriented schemes and programmes to legal entitlements, and broadened access to 50% of India's urban population and 70% of its rural population, encompassing 845 million people. The thesis sets the subject and scope of the research project as exploring the extent to which urban food security in India was understood and considered among Indian policy-makers involved in the policy process of the NFSA, in terms of how urban food security was addressed during the NFSA's various, different iterations and what interests and tensions were at play that led to the final Act as passed by the Lok Sabha in 2013.

As such, the thesis sets out to conduct a policy analysis of how and whether the policy-makers involved in the NFSA considered urban food security during the policy process, and if there were tangible, identifiable reasons why the urban eligibility of the NFSA was set at 50%, and if there were specific entitlements for urban food security earlier in the policy process. The thesis utilises the broad approach of critical food policy analysis, as championed by the Centre for Food Policy, City, University of London, utilising the specific framework of Walt and Gilson's Policy Analysis Triangle to explore the context, content, actors and policy process of the NFSA in relation to urban food security. The purpose is to deepen the understanding of considerations embedded within the NFSA. The thesis objectives are to contribute to the understanding of:

1. The **context** of urban food insecurity and whether the needs of the urban food insecure were understood, considered and represented by the actors involved (broadly labelled as policy-makers, including experts, politicians, and Members of the Lok Sabha).
2. The role of the **actors** involved in the formation of the NFSA (broadly labelled as policy-makers, including experts, academics, politicians and Members of Parliament).
3. How these policy-makers interacted, their tensions and conflicts, and if this had an effect on the **content** of the NFSA regarding the target urban population.

4. The decisions made during the **policy process** regarding the inclusion or exclusion of vulnerable urban groups, particularly of urban slum-dwellers, the homeless and migrant labourers.
5. If the literature on the dimensions of urban food insecurity matched the perception of policy-makers, and if these dimensions were at all addressed in the various iterations of the NFSA.

It should be noted that the thesis does not attempt to judge the achievements or the impact of the NFSA. The law has been slowly implemented throughout the country in the six years since it passed through the Lok Sabha (India's Lower House of Parliament). While initial data have shown an overall positive impact so far (Drèze, 2017), it is yet too early to judge how successfully it will be implemented and what its impact has been. With the long-term consequences of the Act too early to fully evaluate, instead this thesis takes a look at how the Act was developed and how it was formulated, applying the Policy Analysis Triangle developed by Professor Gill Walt (Walt & Gilson, 1994; Buse et al, 2005; Walt et al, 2008) within a broader critical food policy analysis approach to investigate the policy process of the NFSA, the context of urban food insecurity in India, the extent to which policy-makers considered urban food security during the policy process, and what decisions were taken in shaping the content of the NFSA, as compared to its earlier drafts, that may have affected urban food security.

This thesis does not focus on rural food security. The decision was taken that, while rural food security is of great importance and focus within the Indian food policy discourse, urban food security warranted attention for this thesis due to transitions occurring in India, with ever-growing urban areas and unmanaged urban growth. Furthermore, the Act takes a strong consideration of the urban population in its scope and eligibility, with a lack of explicit justification as to why. Part of the interest in the research process was to explore a different aspect of Indian food security, wherein rural food security has been explored and expounded on extensively in the works of the Indian government, think-tanks, academics, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and both national and international institutions, with the scale of depravity and hunger found in rural areas well-documented (Drèze & Sen, 2013; Shukla et al, 2010; Swaminathan, 2009; Planning Commission, 2009; NREGA, 2005). The thesis' focus is not to downplay or ignore rural food security, but to highlight that urban food insecurity is not of any less of a concern to a country that is quickly urbanising. Understanding urban food insecurity is the first step in creating actionable policies that help reduce urban vulnerabilities, where often the attitude towards urban food insecurity is to transpose the issues facing the rural food insecure to urban areas.

Furthermore, a conscious decision was made in this dissertation to not go in detail regarding the complexities of Indian culture, particularly that of caste, ethnicity, gender and religion. While caste is a complex, multifaceted issue that still plays an active role in marginalisation and discrimination, particularly but not exclusively in rural areas (Mahadevan & Suardi, 2012; Drèze & Sen, 2013), and is deeply embedded in Indian culture and society, the NFSA itself does not discuss caste or religion in any detail, and the scope of caste and religion in food security could be a thesis in itself. Similarly, religion is also complex and multifaceted, and also contributes to systemic discrimination and inequality. The decision was thus made to discuss socio-economic poverty in general terms, with the academic research done on the role of caste in urban vulnerabilities and urban food insecurity limited (Mahadevan & Suardi, 2012; Thorat & Lee, 2005), with a greater focus on caste in academic research related to labour, education, health services and general poverty (Bhalotra et al, 2010; Gang et al, 2008). Caste is recognised as a factor in its role in shaping the socio-economic situation of the poor and their continued marginalisation and discrimination.

Lastly, a detailed look at the different states in India is also outside the scope of this dissertation. It is recognised that food security varies quite significantly between the different states of India (Gulati et al, 2012; Himanshu & Sen, 2011; Saxena, 2013), yet the focus of the thesis is on a national-level policy that is implemented across the country, which led to the decision not to go into depth on any specific policies below the federal level. State policies regarding urban food security are referenced in the thesis, as well as the role of state governments in urban governance and urban planning, but the focus remains on India as a nation and policies at the national level.

Having established what this thesis is not, let us now turn our attention to what this chapter is. This chapter provides the foundation and setting of the research by introducing the core concerns surrounding food security, its framing, how it is interpreted, and the language used to express these concerns. It also introduces terms of food security that will be utilised throughout the dissertation. The following sections thus explores how the framing of food security in an international policy context has influenced developing countries in their own food security legislation, as well as the role that framing and language of a neoliberal and productionist consensus has played in the neglect of urban food security, due to its historical focus on raising agricultural production to ensure supply, and the subsequent transformation of the food security term within economic rationalism to view food security as predominantly a function of income.

Furthermore, the specific history of Indian food security will be laid out, with a literature review of the discourse surrounding food security. This chapter helps locate the NFSA as the latest of a long line of policy interventions on food security in India, tracing its roots back to the British Raj and the establishment of the Indian state in 1947. The thesis seeks to investigate if the NFSA expresses anything new in policy terms in relation to urban food security, and this chapter provides the core understanding of international food security discourse related to the national level.

The chapter briefly introduces different arguments and approaches in how the issue of food security is analysed and understood, laying out the different approaches that can be taken theoretically at analysing food security, and how it relates broadly to India. Chapter Two then focuses more specifically on a literature review of urban food security and the content and context of the NFSA. The Food Security Discourse

1.1.1 Shifting Definitions of Food Security

Food Security may seem to be a straightforward concept that can be intuitively understood – ‘food’ and ‘security’ are both broad labels that evoke certain meanings, but due to its simplified term it can be interpreted and understood in many different ways (Lang et al, 2009; Mechlem, 2004; Shaw, 2007). It has remained a nebulous concept, acquiring different meanings over time and has ”evolved, developed, multiplied and diversified” (Maxwell, 1996); ‘Food Security’ has approximately 200 varying definitions based on a review in 1992 (Smith et al, 1992), as well as 450 different indicators (Shaw, 2007; Mechlem, 2004; Jarosz, 2011). A google search of the term ‘food security’ yields around 23 million hits. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) also state that food security is a contested term that is used flexibly, with differing definitions utilised in research and policy usage (FAO, 2003).

Food Security as a broad, visionary concept has plenty of credence, and may be why it has been so readily picked up by public and media discourses, as well as within academia, research and policy creation – it is such an easily identifiable term that while individuals may have many different interpretations, it is almost instantly understood and easy to communicate – though mostly it is the ‘spirit’ of food security (Carolan, 2013) than the actual defined term that people understand it by. In many ways, food security is defined as whatever the person defining the term believes how a food secure world should look like. As such, international and national institutions have had shifting definitions of food security that have shaped policies and altered previous policies to the vision that the current administration or direction they believed food security should be taken in.

As the term ‘food security’ can be widely interpreted and politically biased, it functions as a “consensus frame” (Mooney & Hunt, 2009), which means that food security as a term has broad consent, resonates strongly, and is hard to position against (nobody would argue against ensuring food security for the poor). It is thus utilised to make diverging claims that can come into conflict. Due to these varying policy positions and differing interests, a “fractured consensus” (Maye & Kirwan, 2013) has been created, where large variations in intents and outcomes are seen when food security is invoked (Mooney & Hunt, 2009). This fractured consensus is so named due to the agreement that food security is an important objective, but disagree on how this objective should be achieved, or even what that objective entails (Maye & Kirwan, 2013). ‘Food security’ as a term seems to suggest not only what to do (‘secure’ food), but what the end goal should be (‘secured’ food), as well as function as a simplified catch-all term and a theoretical framework.

1.1.2 The Language of Food Security

The narrative-creation and framing surrounding food security produces different interpretations and meanings to issues (Lang & Barling, 2012), and previous underlying ideological narratives and commitments of policy-makers, politicians and scientists can lead to certain ‘policy solutions’ that exacerbate the issues identified through data. Framing is a discursive tool, borne out of Goffmanian sociological and social constructionist social psychology that structures the way reality is perceived and communicated (Candel, et al, 2013; Luckman, 1967). It is interested in how people interpret and communicate issues and attach meaning to it. As such, ‘reality’ is socially constructed, and policy-makers utilise framing in policy formation so that policy issues are portrayed in a way that supports particular interests (Candel, et al, 2013). Tomlinson (2011) furthers the Goffmanian use of frames and keys, arguing that in food security there are ‘flat’ keys and ‘sharp’ keys. ‘Flat’ keys reinforce the status quo and the accepted food security narrative, particularly the productionist paradigm and the neoliberal agenda of export-oriented agriculture in developing nations (‘cash crops’), while ‘sharp’ keys are critical of this agenda and promote alternative sustainable agriculture, food sovereignty and democracy, and other concepts that are critical of the current system. ‘Flat’ keys are more accepted in the dominant narrative (Tomlinson, 2011). This is framing and counter-framing, where the dominant frame of food security has a counter-frame of food sovereignty (Candel, et al, 2013). The language of food security can be argued to obfuscate this reality rather than illuminate it, but as 'soft' and 'sharp' keys exist within the policy discourse, there is space for discourse and disagreement.

There is a clear gap between institutional language regarding food security and that of academia and civil society. The language of the free market has found itself embedded in government agencies, think-tanks, and international institutions (Davies, 2014), leading policy-makers and politicians to consider citizens as 'consumers', while the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the World Bank frame food security issues in economic terms – 'market efficiency' of rural areas, 'boosting wages/income' and 'creating more livelihoods' through 'economic growth and progress' (von Braun, 2007). Terms such as 'hunger' and 'starvation' are considered emotionally loaded, and technical terms such as 'food insecurity' and 'malnutrition' are often utilised instead (Kent, 2005). Furthermore, institutional food security thinking prioritises 'scientific analyses', as well as bio-technology, genetic engineering, and technological solutions, and attempts to derive legitimacy and position itself as lacking in bias by dealing with 'scientific solutions'.

This contrasts with the approach from food sovereignty movements and other civil society movements, which are framed as being outside the realm of scientific analysis due to their rejection of GMOs and industrial agriculture (Jarosz, 2014). Academics and civil society often talk instead in terms of human beings and opportunities – 'food democracy', to promote 'greater inclusion' and 'social justice' (Kent, 2005); their perspective takes the angle of the rights of people and attempts to cater to that intangible link between human welfare and betterment of living standards, enhanced through access to food. These disparate ways of utilising language to speak of similar problems reflect the huge gap in how food security is framed by different institutions.

Framing is relevant in understanding how the language of NFSA developed, and how the priorities of the NFSA were agreed upon by policy-makers. With a strong influence by academia and civil society in the policy process of the NFSA, the language was strongly dominated by rights-based language and the right to food, derived from the Indian constitution enshrining the right to life and the broader rights-based framework championed by the United Nations. Due to competing actors in the drafting process, framing the NFSA from almost completely different perspectives, the framing of the discourse surrounding the act was dominated by financial concerns, as will be discussed in more depth in the findings in chapter six. Understanding that 'Food Security' as a term is contested, and that there are paradigmatically dominant conceptualisations of the term that influence policy, is a necessary foundation to understand the contested nature of the NFSA and how it was formulated.

1.1.3 Historical Development of Food Security

To better situate the NFSA in its international context, this section will give a brief overview of how food security as a term developed in the international policy space. As covered in the previous sections, food security is a highly contested term, and the language used within the context of food security can vary widely. The following section looks at the United Nations, in particular the Food and Agricultural Organisation, and the World Bank, and how they have shaped the international discourse on food security, and thus also influencing the food security discourse in India. The current accepted definition of food security was settled at the 1996 World Food Summit where the Rome Declaration on World Food Security was adopted (Mechlem, 2004):

‘Food Security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels, is achieved when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.’ (FAO, 2002).

This definition has been operationalised by the United Nation’s four pillars of food security (FAO, 2009):

1. Availability: to ensure that there is sufficient production and distribution of food at all times.
2. Access: to ensure affordable food, as well as the allocation of food, in a way that suits preferences of households and individuals.
3. Utilisation: to ensure that food is of sufficient quality to eat, as well as that food, once eaten, can be properly absorbed by the body. This includes access to healthcare, sanitation and nutritional education.
4. Stability: to ensure that there is a stable supply of food over time to respond to climatic shocks such as drought, natural disasters and crop failure, as well as economic shocks such as food price spikes.

These four pillars of food security reflect the growing complexity associated with food, with periodic global food crises drawing concern and bringing together world leaders, experts and policy-makers to discuss and coordinate responses to perceived food insecurity (Shaw, 2007). These shifting definitions are part of this development and refinement of what ‘food security’ is. Raising caloric intake was the priority for governments across the world in the aftermath of World War Two, with international agencies that were founded at the time having a predominant focus on the availability of food, and thus on food production (Shaw, 2007). As a result, the initial definition of food security was to ensure the “availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs…to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption…and to offset fluctuations in production and prices.” (FAO, 2002).

The FAO explicitly expanded its definition of food security in 1983 to include ”security of access to supplies on the part of all those who need them” (Mechlem, 2004), as well as “ensuring that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food they need”. This explicitly made food security about a balance between supply and demand, moving away from an almost purely productionist mentality to also include the food security of people to access food. Food security thus became foremost an issue of access to food (Maxwell, 1996). This move was a consequence of Amartya Sen’s seminal work *Poverty and Famines* (1981), in which he argued that it was not a lack of available food that caused food insecurity, but that the individual’s food security depended on access to food. Sen argued that the most important form of access would be through the establishment of entitlements to ensure sufficient food, and through improving incomes and livelihoods. This discourse arose out of Sen’s data showing that even when there were sufficient national food supplies, food security for the individual was limited or non-existent, and that during famines and crises, national food availability per capita was no lower than other years. Sen argued that hunger was a result of the marginalisation of the poor, and emphasised access to food as a way of food security rather than increased agricultural production (Sen, 1981). This access, Sen argued, should be as a legal or social entitlement, and not purely down to economic means, with his perspective that economics should be a social rather than a purely mathematical and monetary science vindicated by being awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1998.

This social perspective on food security has dominated the approach Indian food policy has taken in attempting to lower rates of undernourishment. Sen specifically outlined three forms of entitlements that could be accessed – i) own-production and natural resource entitlements, deriving food security through the ability to grow food and maintain livestock; ii) wage-labour and income-based entitlements, where food security is met through incomes and employment; and iii) exchange-system entitlements, wherein food security is satisfied through access to poverty relief and food policy programmes (Sen, 1981; Pritchard, et al, 2014). India has particularly focused on exchange-system entitlements, creating a broad range of food policy programmes that include the Public Distribution System (PDS) and the Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDMS). This will be covered in more detailed in later sections and chapter two.

Due to this renewed focus on access, food security as a term became part of wider developmental issues that specifically focused on economic access. While Sen's arguments took a nuanced approach to the concept of access, the simplified interpretation was that the poor in developing nations needed better economic access to ensure their food security. Consequently, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic policies in the 1980s had a significant impact on food security in developing nations (Jarosz, 2011), leading the food security discourse to a further policy shift towards Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and an emphasis on increasing wages for the poor as the solution to food insecurity (Jarosz, 2014). Their economic-based perspective coincided with food being increasingly treated as a commodity throughout the 1980s, emphasising resolving food insecurity through increasing incomes, and focusing on economic growth and market dynamics. The globalised food system and economic incentives were seen as sufficient in solving issues relating to hunger (Jarosz, 2011; Jarosz, 2014). This 'growth-led development' in addressing food security (Dréze & Sen, 1989; Dréze & Sen, 2013), where the rationale is that growing the economy will benefit the food insecure, increasing their purchasing power and being able to provide for themselves, individualises systemic problems and relies on the market, potentially excluding other approaches in addressing food insecurity, such as a multi-sectoral approach that focuses not only on the economy as a means of ensuring food security, but also in particular sectors, such as public health, sanitation, clean water and education (Deaton & Drèze, 2009).

The World Bank and IMF promised conditional loans to developing countries based on certain criteria those countries would have to fulfil, SAPs, which were aimed at reorienting the economies of developing countries to the global market, encouraging privatisation of government assets, and reducing or removing trade barriers and tariffs. The argument was that this would improve the economies of the targeted countries and foster positive economic growth, but the literature on the failure of SAPs in developing countries is vast, outlining how short-term growth was depressed as the policies were implemented, and long-term growth was either negative, had no impact, or only limited growth (Joyce, 2004). The evidence was so clear that the IMF and World Bank subsequently admitted that certain policies did not work; Indeed, even countries that saw eventual economic growth saw inequality rise and poverty indicators increase, with living standards declining from before the implementation of the SAPs (Cornia et al, 1987). The flawed policies of the IMF were exacerbated by the failure of countries in managing their economy, although the IMF as a monitor of implementation also failed to provide sufficient oversight from corruption and mismanagement of the targeted nations (Joyce, 2004). A seminal study by UNICEF, *Adjustment with a Human Face* (Cornia et al, 1987), showed that children's educational levels and nutrition levels had fallen in many developing countries that had taken World Bank loans, with slowed investment rates and poorer prospects for economic growth. These misguided policies worsened situations across developing countries, leading the 1980s to be described as the ‘lost decade of development’ (Shaw, 2007), seeing a widening gap between rich and poor countries, economic conditions stagnated or declined, with absolute poverty increasing and indicators of poverty becoming more prevalent – more hungry, malnourished, lacking proper water, sanitation, housing, education and jobs (Shaw, 2007).

Maxwell (1996) argues that the development of food security in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as in the greater developmental field, had moved from a modernist discourse to a post-modern discourse. Postmodernist language emphasises complexity, diversity, and interpretation, framing issues as having no clear solutions and no right answer and seeing food security as a collection of individuals who all have different needs, priorities and needing separate solutions (Maxwell, 1996). This, he argues, allows postmodernist policy-makers to abdicate governments from responsibilities and allow the markets to respond to supply and demand, and create policy responses, borrowed from many other fields, to specific food insecurity situations rather than through an overarching vision. This approach also prioritises livelihoods of the individual, allowing the household choice. Lucy Jarosz (2011) argues that this scaling of food security was heavily politicised, and the neoliberal approach to food security from the mid-1980s individualised food security heavily, placing the emphasis on the poor and hungry to be part of a nation’s economic growth. This vision of ensuring food security entailed increasing wages to afford food, and promoting the participation, particularly of women, in household food security through knowledge sharing and utilising the women’s role as a mother and head of the household. This, Jarosz (2011) argued, made cultural and social inequities more difficult to deal with, and the World Bank thus overlooked systemic factors in poverty and hunger, instead focusing more attention on the individual level and how individuals and households could cope with food insecurity.

FAO’s work on food security also contributed to the increasing complexity by elucidating three varying types of food insecurity – chronic, seasonal and transitory – and devised different methods to deal with all three types (Jarosz, 2011; Shaw, 2007; Mechlem, 2004). Chronic food insecurity was associated with low incomes and overall structural poverty, seasonal food insecurity tied with the vagaries of weather patterns and subsistence agriculture, and transitory food insecurity was associated with periods of pressure due to natural disasters, economic collapse or conflict (FAO, 2003).

Nutrition became an increasingly important topic within the food security discourse through the 1990s, as micronutrient deficiencies was better understood and seen as an avenue of hidden hunger, even where there was sufficient overall food consumption. Anaemia from iron deficiency, vitamin A deficiency, and iodine deficiency were highly prevalent, and only recently has become more understood (Shaw, 2007). Even to this day, two billion suffer from iodine deficiency, iron deficiency (with around half leading to anaemia) and millions with vitamin A deficiency, prevalently in developing countries and particularly in India (World Bank, 2019). This understanding of nutritional deficiencies contributing to poor health and malnutrition led to the development of the third pillar of food security, utilisation.

While utilisation falls under the four pillars of food security, nutrition security can be viewed as distinct from food security in its focus, in particular within the discourse in India on food security (Mander, 2013; Pritchard et al, 2014). As an example, Sub-Saharan Africa has less food per capita than South Asia, but incidences of malnutrition and undernutrition are higher in South Asia (Kent, 2005; Drèze & Sen, 2013). Nutrition security focuses on the prevalence of diseases, proper sanitation and hygiene, and micronutrient deficiencies (Kent, 2005), and is considered a separate, if related, concern than food security, particularly in the context of India, where most policies labelled food security have been oriented towards direct food distribution and economic incentives to farmers and agricultural innovation, with only a recent introduction of nutritional security concerns under the food security umbrella towards women and children (Aggarwal & Mander, 2013).

The development of ‘stability’ as a fourth pillar of food security arose from environmental concerns as a consequence of industrial agricultural policies and worries over population growth in developed countries, when they were first seriously discussed and put forward as obstacles to hunger reduction in the 2000s (Shaw, 2007). In the context of India, the discourse surrounding food security has not moved much further than Sen’s arguments on access. Governmental food security programmes and policies have dominated the conceptualisation of food security in India, with environmental concerns being approached separately, in a different cycle and more closely associated with agricultural policies and programmes, which are placed in separate policy silos, as will be explored more in chapter two.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were launched at the Millennium Development Summit in 2000, with its primary goals eradicating hunger and extreme poverty. Nations pledged to halve global levels of hunger by 2015, increase education, and promote gender equality, among other goals. No concrete specifics were discussed in how those targets were to be achieved, rather more as a general approach that nations should adopt, yet it gave food security unprecedented political momentum and attention. However, Fukuda-Parr & Orr argue that the MDGs were framed in such a manner to simplistically emphasise production and supply, and ignore the complex socio-economic dimensions of hunger, such as iniquitous access (Fukuda-Parr & Orr, 2013).

A desire to revisit the terminology of food security was brought forward by the Committee for World Food Security in 2012, with the aim of standardising terms related to food security and nutrition as well as repositioning nutrition within the broader food security framework (FAO, 2012), a tacit acknowledgment of the failure of the 'four pillars' approach of availability, access, utilisation and stability. However, the World Food Security Summit in 2008 brought forward what has become two main targets for the 21st century's institutional food security: increasing food production by 50% by 2030, and doubling food production by 2050 to feed the world (Maye & Kirwan, 2013). This was further emphasised by the World Economic Forum's New Vision for Agriculture in 2009 and the G8 Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in 2012. These targets were shaped by prior ideological commitments and an acceptance of the current framing of food security, leading to a stagnant response. As it stands, the productionist mentality remains firm, as the primary concerns on the international stage remain increasing agricultural production, with growing concerns of environmental destruction and climate change, while broadly discussed and debated, insufficient in challenging the status quo approach.

1.3 Food Security in India

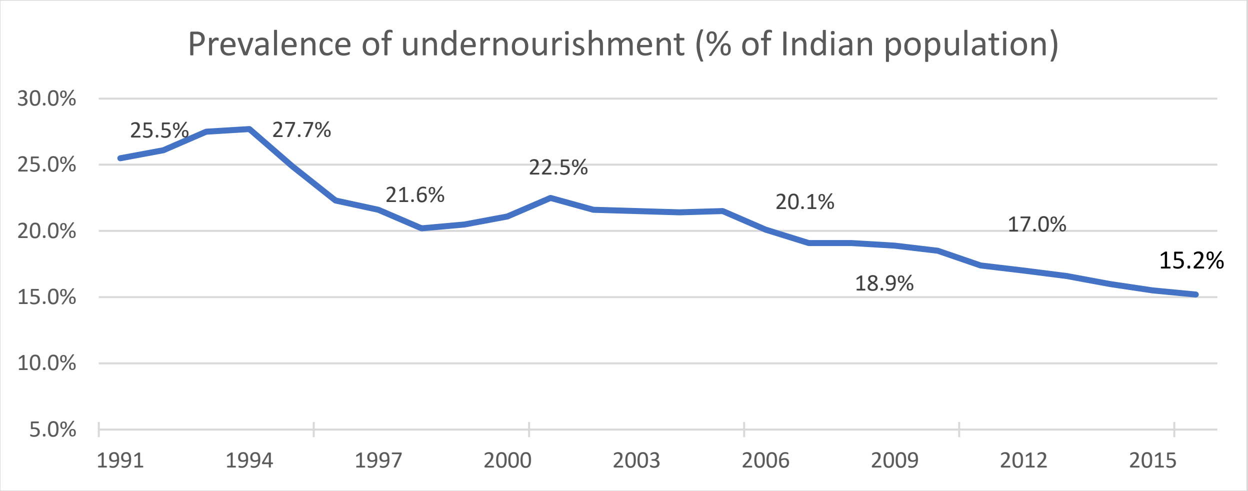
As the last section has established, international food security has been shaped into focusing on the four pillars of availability, access, utilisation and stability of food, and the framing of policies on the global level have led to a focus mainly on increasing availability through increased agricultural production and supply. Further ideological biases have resulted in the focus of food security on raising incomes to ensure economic access on an individual and household level, in essence trusting the market to be able to resolve food insecurity. This section will cover how India has interpreted these four pillars of food security, and India's main food-related policies. First, the history of Indian food policy will be outlined, and policies addressing the availability of food is looked at, as ensuring food security through increasing agricultural production via the Green Revolution was an initial pressing priority for the Government of India. Then attention will be turned to policies addressing access to food, the primary mechanism being the Public Distribution System (PDS), wherein grains are purchased by the government and redistributed at subsidised costs throughout the country. Policies on utilisation are introduced, where the government has predominantly focused on children and women in terms of providing nutritious meals. Lastly, a brief introduction to the Minimum Support Price system is given to address how the Government of India ensures food stability.

Utilising this global food security lens of the FAO's four pillars, we can simplify the complex programmes and policies surrounding food security in India to four major points in how India has attempted to deal with its food security issues (Sharma & Gulati, 2012):

- Food Availability through the adoption of industrial agricultural practices and heavy early investment in agricultural services, named the Green Revolution.
- Food Access through food distribution for vulnerable groups via the Public Distribution System (PDS), as well as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 (NREGA), which provides 100 days of paid work every year as the right to work.
- Food Utilisation through nutritional education and health intervention to deal with child malnutrition, nutritional deficiencies, as well as child and maternal health. The main policies have been the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) and the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP).
- Food Stability through domestic price stabilisation policies, such as price support policies like the Minimum Support Price (Sharma & Gulati, 2012).

While on paper it seems that India has addressed these issues directly, despite significant strides in the reduction of undernourishment in the late 1990s, the 2000s was characterized by slow to minimal reduction in undernourishment. The prevalence of undernourishment is 15.2% in the Indian population (see figure 1.1), although that only accounts for those who are chronically hungry, and not those who may still face food insecurity without hunger, such as seasonal or temporary struggles to afford food. One fifth of the Indian population, 195 million people, are considered living with chronic hunger, (Mander, 2012; FAO, 2014).

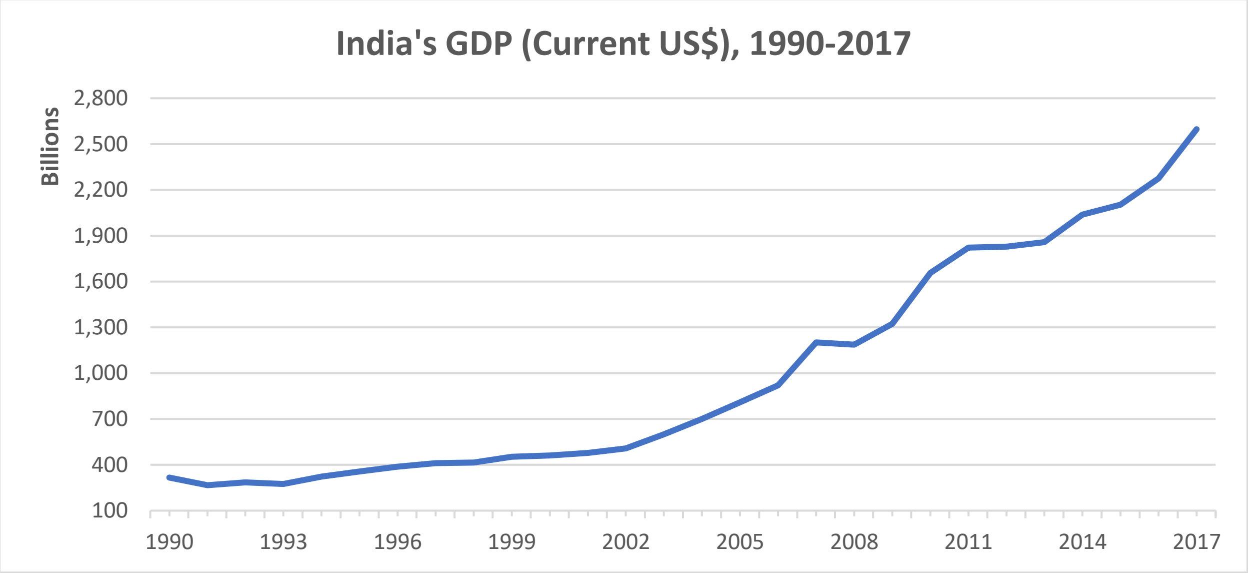
Figure 1.1 Prevalence of Undernourishment by weight as % of total population (India), 1990 to 2016



Source: World Bank, 2018

While rates of undernourishment have improved year on year, it has not done so at a pace befitting of India's economic growth (see figure 1.2), having missed both the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of hungry and the 1996 World Food Summit goal of halving the absolute number of hungry by 2015 (FAO, 2014; Pritchard et al, 2014). India's economic growth since the 1990s after the Government of India adopted neoliberal economic policies has failed to reduce the absolute number of poor and hungry at the same pace that other countries, faced with similar economic growth, have succeeded in doing. This has led India's high levels of undernourished to be dubbed the "enigma of India", its inability to adequately deal with food insecurity despite high economic growth (Pritchard et al, 2014).

Figure 1.2 India's GDP in current USD, 1990 to 2017



Source: World Bank, 2018

The 1990s heralded "two decades of dizzying economic transformation" (Pritchard et al, 2014), yet the economic growth has been shown to have been strikingly iniquitous, with almost 80% of the population almost completely excluded from the formal economy that has been reliant on the urban, educated service sector (Pillay, 2009; Pal & Ghosh, 2007; Drèze & Sen, 2013); only 20% of the population are in the 'organised', or formal, sector, i.e., those who pay taxes, have written contracts, and are waged and salaried, creating what Pal and Ghosh (2007) call "islands of prosperity". 'Vulnerable' employment, defined as unpaid family workers and workers who do not have written contracts, make up the 'unorganised', or informal, sector. The official drivers of economic growth have been skewed towards the highly educated population, where the main jobs are in the service sector such as IT. The majority of the formal sector is thus found in urban areas due to the proximity of adequate infrastructure; the urban informal sector is large too, consisting all the way from small-scale manufacturing and factories down to manual labourers, street food vendors, migrant workers, rag pickers, rickshaw pullers, etc (Mander, 2012). While there has been a substantial increase in employment as the economy has grown, for the marginalised this employment has consisted of casual, low-paying and insecure employment in the informal sector (Pal & Ghosh, 2007; Pritchard et al, 2014). India has lagged behind comparatively in terms of industrialisation, unlike the underpinnings of China's growth, and instead the formal economy in urban areas has instead focused heavily on providing a service-oriented economy, which has meant that there has lacked significant drivers of cheap labour for industry, leaving huge swathes of the population within agriculture, and the necessity for education for formal employment without the existence of universal education has meant rising inequality and, for many people, stagnant wages (Pal & Ghosh, 2007). Furthermore, agricultural investment and growth has also stagnated, meaning the transition has been highly unequal and skewed towards urban dwellers (Pal & Ghosh, 2007). Lastly, despite the label of 'islands of prosperity', the formal and informal economy are closely and tightly linked. Indeed, growing inequality stems from the ability of the corporate sector to derive between 40-80% of their workforce from unregistered labourers (Harriss-White, 2014), co-existing with the legal and registered workforce. Estimates place two-thirds of the Indian GDP to be derived from the informal economy, although as the informal economy by its nature finds itself unregulated by the state or working outside its laws, there is little official acknowledgment by policy-makers (Patnaik, 2012; Chakrabarti et al, 2008). The informal economy in India is not a transitory phenomenon, rather a feature of Indian capitalism, with little indication that the informal economy will be absorbed into the formal economy. It should be noted that while poverty found in India, as well as exploitative and unfair working conditions, are within the informal economy, not all of the informal economy is poverty-stricken or disorganised (Harriss-White, 2014).

With these issues in mind, India's rapid economic transition has seen per capita income increase significantly, and poverty levels have continued to decline despite methodological issues in terms of poverty lines and continued (and rising) inequality (Pingali & Khwaja, 2004). However, rates of malnutrition and other indicators of undernutrition remain steadily high, a reflection that despite India's economic transition, hunger is still a reality for many (Pritchard et al, 2014; Saxena, 2013).

The emphasis on economic growth in terms of solving food security, however, is not the dominant narrative in India, in part due to the fact that economic growth has not "solved" food security in the last two decades, and iniquitous economic growth has further compounded the vast inequalities that exist, making the plight of the marginalised and living with chronic hunger as pressing as ever (Mander, 2013; Pritchard et al, 2014). As such, the Indian government's approach to food security has been to directly provide subsidised food and nutrition to vulnerable groups through policies of direct food distribution and nutritional schemes for women and children. The National Food Security Act of 2013 is one of the policy responses to the failures of the existing implemented policies. However, the NFSA only deals with food access and, to a lesser degree, food utilisation, as food availability and food stability are outside of its remit, operating on a far narrower term of food security. Agricultural concerns have been historically silo'd into the Ministry of Agriculture as a separate focus, with the term 'food security' mainly utilised to refer to direct food distribution and limited nutritional intervention. Despite these existing policies and rapid economic growth, indicators of malnutrition have not changed, with a lack of progress in improving nutrition for children and declining nutritional intake for adults (Sharma & Gulati, 2012). As such, let us turn to food policy in India more specifically.

1.3.1 The Historical Development of Food Policy in India

Food Security after Independence

Due to India's troubled history with famines and millions living with chronic hunger, the state has approached food security with utmost importance, at least rhetorically. Ensuring that its citizens can eat has been high on its priority since its independence from the British Empire, although its record in actually delivering on its policies has been poor (Pal & Ghosh, 2007; Drèze & Sen, 2013). India achieved independence in 1947, albeit at a high social, economic, political and cultural cost with the partition of India and Pakistan. In the chaos following partition, the newly formed Indian government under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru sought to unite the Indian subcontinent, subjugating the many princely states around India and wrestling control of non-British territories in the subcontinent such as Goa and Pondicherry from foreign rule (Caldwell, 1988). With this backdrop of social unrest and political chaos, Nehru's government was primarily concerned with establishing legitimacy and sovereignty, and one of the major components of sovereignty is the ability of the state to adequately feed its citizens (Vernon, 2007). This meant that an important aspect in the early establishment of a secular, democratic India was raising agricultural production as a means of national independence and self-sufficiency.

India was initially heavily reliant on imports, particularly food aid from the United States, throughout the 1950s and 1960s (Mujumdar & Kapila, 2006). Lessening this dependency on imports and ensuring sufficient agricultural surpluses to respond to climatic shocks and procuring enough food to feed its population were on the top of the agenda, desiring non-alliance and not wanting to side with either the United States or the Soviet Union. Within two decades, the government was committed to and invested heavily into realising what was named the 'Green Revolution,' which can be simplified as a series of technological innovations within seed modification and agricultural inputs and equipment, but encompassed cultural changes as well. Financial support for Indian farmers, coupled with substantial purchases of high yield cereal crops, dramatically increased agricultural production and increased buffer stocks, eliminating the need to rely on cereal imports or foreign food aid, providing India with self-sufficiency and seeing an end of two decades of reliance on food imports (Pritchard et al, 2014). This was one of the more successful policies of the Indian government in terms of reaching its goal of self-sufficient production, placing a heavy emphasis on a productionist approach and a wide-scale adoption of the technologies that the Green Revolution brought, although it did not necessarily translate into greater food security for the segments of society suffering from chronic hunger.

The reliance on the monsoon seasons to bring rain meant that the Indian subcontinent has been vulnerable to droughts and widespread crop failures throughout its history (Ambirajan, 1976). The new Indian administration vowed to seriously tackle and eradicate famines and did, sharply reduced famines in the beginning of the 20th century (Drèze, 1986; Acharya, 2009). This success has been attributed to different reasons, depending on the perspective of the analysis. Dev and Sharma (2010) and Pritchard et al (2014) argue that the advent of the Green Revolution, with the adoption of new technology and increase in efficiency and yields of cereal crops, led to a massive increase in production (see figure 1.3 below) and thus the reduction of famines. Drèze (1986) and Sen (1981), however, had argued that there was sufficient production of food during the worst of the famine years, and that the years following independence actually saw a decrease in food production than in the preceding years, with no resultant famines (Drèze, 1986). Instead, they argue, that the implementation of famine relief policies and government intervention policies dealt more properly with famine than the policies of the British Raj, coupled with a general increase of living standards and livelihoods for rural Indians, which had stagnated during the Raj, ensured not only a more robust response to famine but also prevention of famine conditions (Drèze, 1986; Drèze & Sen, 2013). These distinct views reflect the different approaches and analyses that have occurred when looking at Indian food policy, showing that the same outcome, reduced famines, can be looked at in many different ways.

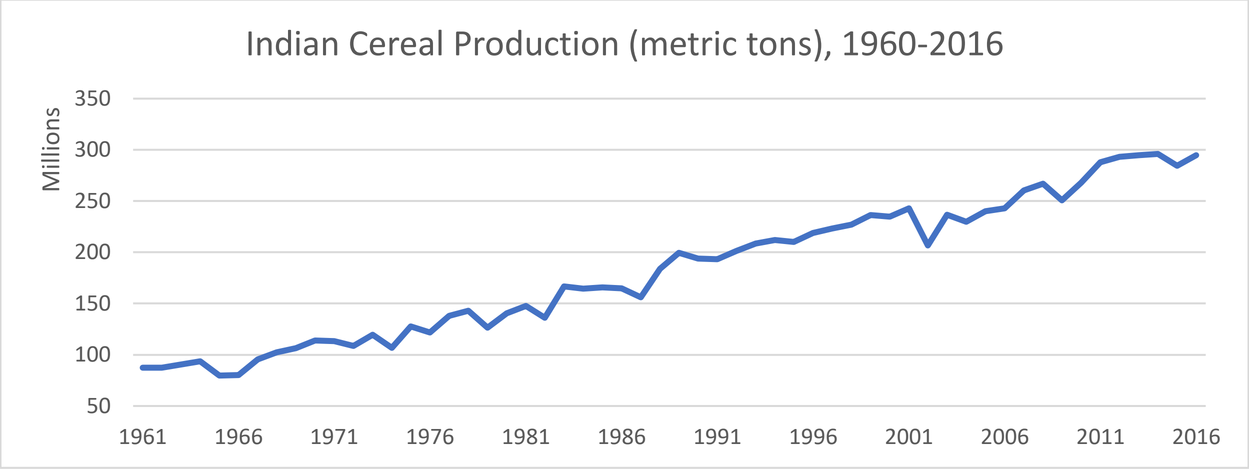
Food Availability through the Green Revolution

As established, the intensification of agriculture as a necessary component to keep up with growing populations was the policy approach that was heavily promoted internationally in the 1940s, as it remains. The Green Revolution created the capability of a nation-wide PDS that could, in theory at least, bring food to those who needed it the most (Pritchard et al, 2014), and was thus inherently important to the development of Indian food policy, as well as to national self-sufficiency. Initially, this Green Revolution was implemented in the three northern states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, with Punjabi farmers in particular taking to the new seeds and agricultural technologies (Pritchard et al, 2014). With government support, agricultural yields increased dramatically in Punjab, as well as to a lesser degree in the other states.

Ultimately, as Jean Drèze (1986) has argued, institutional efforts in investing in agricultural technology, research and extension services, and importantly credit support, rural infrastructure, and strengthening food and agriculture institutions were central to making the Green Revolution such a success in India. Food output rose, but the rate of agricultural growth slowed somewhat after economic liberalisation in the 1990s, which critics have argued is a consequence of the shifts in policy focus to primarily expenditure reduction. Agricultural investment and support to agricultural services have declined, which in turn has led to slowed agricultural growth (Swaminathan & Bhavani, 2013), with no yields above 300 million metric tons since the 2014 peak. This has been compounded by a general trend of shifts in attitudes towards farming as a profession being more frequently seen as having no real future and poor remuneration (CSDS, 2015). This reflects a broader agricultural and rural livelihoods crisis that the Government of India faces, and which has only been addressed piecemeal through policy, as will be briefly covered in the following sections.

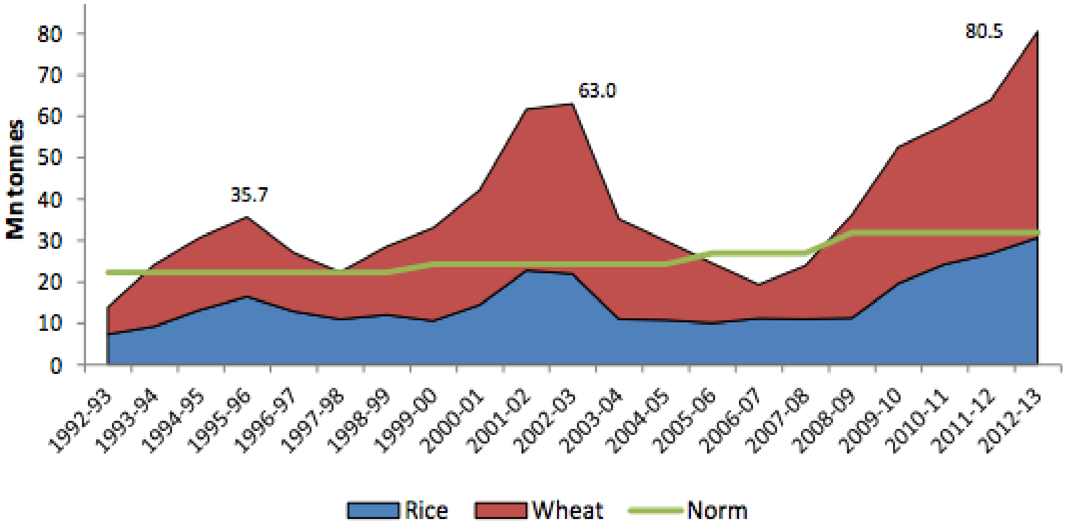
In 1994, 60% of employment was in agriculture, and as of 2013, the agricultural sector holds 47.2% of total employment (and is in constant decline) (World Bank, 2018) Following the prevailing trends, and from information gathered from farmers across India, the trend away from working in agriculture will increase, with farmers reluctant to have their children work within agriculture due to low incomes, low levels of government support, and the constant worry of irregular weather cycles (CSDS, 2015). As farmers do not see their employment as profitable or with a future, they want their children to pursue other careers – while younger farmers do not see a future for themselves if they stay in rural areas (CSDS, 2015).

Figure 1.3. Indian Cereal Production in Metric Tons, 1960 to 2016



Source: FAO, 2018

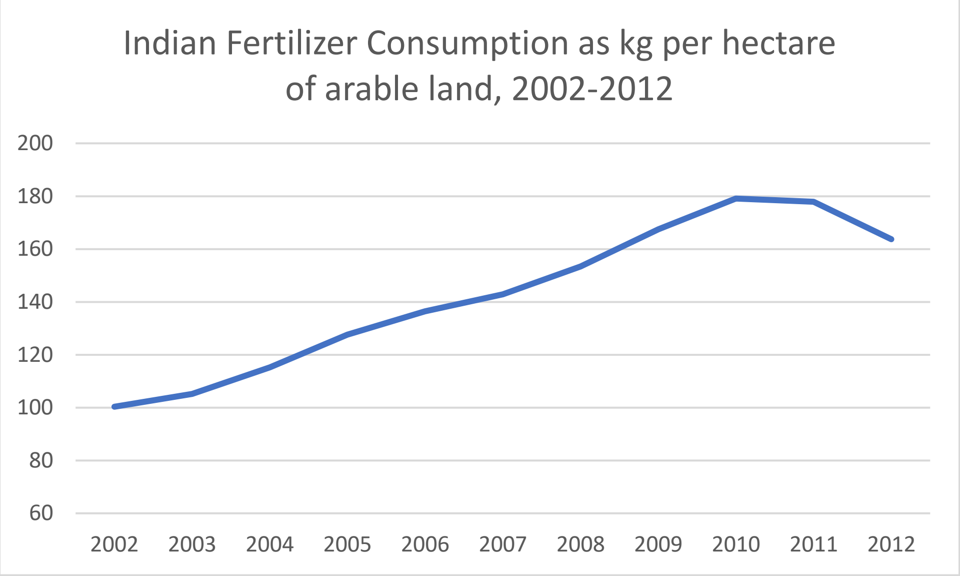
Figure 1.4 Food Corporation of India Cereal Stocks in Million Tons, 1992 to 2013



Source: Gulati et al, 2012

A policy trend of having a large buffer stock, a consequence of changes in the Public Distribution System during the 1990s, led to record amounts of grains kept in buffer stocks (see figure 1.4 above). While absolute numbers of hungry did not decline from the 1970s to the 1990s, the high population growth meant that in relative terms hunger had, at the least, not worsened (Saxena, 2013). Despite a massive rise in agricultural production, this did not translate into greater food security for the Indian poor. Massive logistical issues in transporting the grains, poor investment in infrastructure, existing cultural discriminations against the socio-economic poor, marginalised castes, minority religions and women and a lack of educational improvements meant millions continued to suffer chronic hunger (Mander, 2012; Pritchard et al, 2014). Furthermore, the Green Revolution came with serious long-term environmental and social consequences. The environmental destruction wrought by industrial agriculture, coupled with the unregulated manner in which inputs were utilised, has led to a dire situation of diminished water aquifers, plummeting biodiversity, soil degradation and fertility loss; 90% of all annual freshwater withdrawal is for agriculture, which has led to, as an example, tributaries of the Ganges drying up, and necessitating deeper and deeper drilling for water (Dasgupta & Sirohi, 2010; Shiva, 2008). Due to the high cost of entry for farmers, farm ownership has become increasingly concentrated, and crop failure or a poor harvest could mean bankruptcy and default on bank loans, with farmer suicides having seen a significant rise in the last decade (Dev & Sharma, 2010; Pritchard et al, 2014). The Green Revolution was in part motivated to stabilise rural areas politically and decrease social unrest, yet the environmental disruption have led to new sources of conflict and unrest (Shiva, 2008). Furthermore, the initial huge increase in yields at the outset of the Green Revolution tapered off in the 1990s, and agricultural growth stagnated as yields became increasingly dependent on raising input levels (Dasgupta & Sirohi, 2010). Figure 1.5 below presents ten years of fertiliser consumption, reflecting how the over-utilisation of fertiliser has been a crutch for agricultural growth. Attempts at educating farmers about the harm to the natural environment that over-use of fertilisers causes has stabilised fertiliser consumption, but it is still liberally used, despite the crops not needing such generous amounts. At its peak in 2010, 180 kg of fertiliser was used per hectare of arable land.

Figure 1.5 Indian Fertiliser Consumption as kg per hectare of arable land, 2002 to 2012



Source: World Bank, 2018

While this intensification has been a technical success when measured through yields and output, the Green Revolution has been heavily criticised by academics who argue that this approach has exhausted the environment and locked Indian agriculture into an over-reliance on methods that are ultimately harmful, not only on an environmental level, but also socially and culturally, with potentially large ramifications for the political order (Rayner & Lang, 2012; Ericksen et al, 2009; Shiva, 2008). The conceptualisation of 'food security' in India underplays and often excises the negative externalities of its agricultural system, yet these cannot be side-stepped or ignored in the long-term (Shiva, 2008). Godfray et al (2010) argue that this environmental degradation is a primary driver of food insecurity, now and in the future, and dealing with environmental degradation and climate change are vital components in ensuring future food security. The Indian state, on the other hand, have been far more concerned with access, as the next section will make clear.

Access: The Public Distribution System

In 1950, soon after independence, the Indian government established the Public Distribution System (PDS), a food distribution model that was first put in place during the British Raj as an urban rationing system (Planning Commission, 2005); initially the PDS was exclusive to urban areas but subsequently and incrementally the PDS was expanded to rural areas suffering from chronic food shortages. The PDS was to become the primary food security strategy and poverty reduction tool for the Indian government, contributing to household food security by providing subsidised prices on grains, edible oils and other essential commodities, aimed at moderating the open market (Chand, 2005; Chand, 2007). It has grown to become the largest such food distribution network in the world (Gulati et al, 2012). Up until the 1990s, the PDS was considered to have a substantial urban bias, with the majority of Fair Price Shops (FPS) and distribution systems in urban areas (Kumar et al, 2014). Since the 1990s, policy developments have shifted focus and makeup of the PDS significantly.

The policy developments of the PDS, which the policy design of the NFSA reveals to be the focal point of Indian food policy, can be divided in to three main phases of ‘change’ (True et al, 2006; see table 1.1). The first ‘change’ is in the transformation of an urban ration system put in place by the British Raj into a universal PDS, which endured until the 1990s. The second ‘change’ was the radical departure from a universal system to a targeted system, a consequence of long-standing criticisms and faults within the PDS and ideological changes within Indian governance towards lowering government expenditures and subsidies. The third ‘change’ occurred not too long after the institution of the targeted PDS, in 2013, through pressure from the judiciary and public activism, as well as factions within the Indian government, who emphasised a rights-based approach to food policy. The third departure took the form of the National Food Security Act of 2013.

Table 1.1 Timeline of Changes in the Public Distribution System, 1950-Onwards

Timeline	External Factors	Internal Factors	Changes
1950-1990	• Green Revolution expands agriculture, increasing yields and production • International discourse on food security pressure Indian government to ensure reduction of food insecurity	• Famines and starvation during British Raj, motivating politicians to ensure this does not occur again • Framework of Ration System from British Raj • Political discourse oriented towards ensuring food security for the poor.	• Universalisation of PDS • Establishment of key Food Security institutions – Food Corporation of India (FCI) and Agricultural Commission of India (ACI)
1990-2013	• IMF and World Bank pressure through Structural Adjustment Programmes as consequence of loans • Public discourse critical of corruption, inefficiencies in PDS	• Political discourse re-oriented towards lowering government expenditure, cutting subsidies • Failure of universal PDS to sufficiently reach the most vulnerable enables alternate discourse for a targeted system	• Targeting of PDS • Establishment of Below-Poverty-Line (BPL) and Above-Poverty-Line (APL) Framework • Necessitates criteria for eligibility, further political differentiation of target population
2001-Onwards	• Right to Food Campaign, and broader public discourse, pressure government to deal with food insecurity • Failure of targeted PDS in dealing with food insecurity due to corruption and inefficiencies	• Supreme Court of India rule constitution ensures right to food • Political manifesto of ruling party to ensure re-election promises Right to Food Act • Tensions within ruling party between neoliberal economic perspective and rights-based perspective	• Establishment of National Food Security Act of 2013 • Expansion of PDS to two-thirds of population – 50% of urban and 75% of rural • Removes BPL/APL framework, but still necessitates eligibility criteria • No changes to food distribution mechanisms

Source: Author

From 1966 the PDS became universal, albeit more in theory than in practice. Consequently, from 1969 onwards, the central government procured large surpluses of cereals that were then distributed to state governments across India, stored in nation-wide warehouses (Pritchard et al, 2014). The PDS had grown to such an extent that the Food Corporation of India (FCI) was created to manage and redistribute cereal stocks the government purchased, and the Agricultural Prices Commission (APC) was created to set minimum prices for cereal procurement.

With more than half of all cereal crops produced in Punjab purchased by the state, an imbalance was created that continues to this day – the northern states became grain exporting while other states became primarily grain importing, meaning that spatial inequalities increased between farmers in the northern states and the grain importing states that struggled to establish its own agricultural economy (Landy, 2009). Landy (2009) argues that this early system was largely successful, despite the drawbacks, when considering the political utilisation of the PDS as a tool to promote national integration. The flow of grains from the northern states to the rest of the country, and the influx of migrant workers to the northern states, helped achieve a semblance of national unity. Vandana Shiva (2008) argues instead that the approach taken undermined alternative forms of agriculture, failed at lifting the living standards of farmers adequately and instead deepened inequalities between large land-owners and small-scale farmers, pushing millions of the rural population to migrate away from their ancestral homes and forced to take exploitative and vulnerable work elsewhere.

The next large policy change to the PDS, after four decades of the policy trajectory of universalisation, came during the 1990s. Opposition to the PDS grew throughout the 1980s from allegations of corruption, glaring inefficiencies and high operational costs of maintaining the programme (Planning Commission, 2005). The growing political pressure at the time, coupled with this pressure from the public discourse (through journalists, economists, politicians and segments of the public), ensured that the government deemed the cost of the PDS being too high, as well as further mounting evidence from food security experts and academics that the universal approach was inefficient and wasteful (Himanshu & Sen, 2011; Deaton & Kozel, 2005). These were also in line ideologically, as there were also wide-ranging economic reforms that were simultaneously underway. While the policy image of the PDS was under threat in the public discourse, political desires to reduce government expenditure has been argued as the more influential factor in the change (Chand, 2005). The operational difficulties the PDS faced in distributing food to the poor and marginalised who needed it the most – specifically those vulnerable due to deep cultural inequalities such as caste, gender and religion – gave credence to the idea of a targeted system, ostensibly aimed at the poorest and most in need, first piloted in 1992, and fully implemented in 1997 (Chand, 2005; Guha-Khasnobis & Vivek, 2007). Targeting, it was argued, would be able to deliver food to those most in need more efficiently, as well as have the benefits of being a cheaper and streamlined system.

Studies done since, however, have leaned in favour of universalism, with the evidence showing that the targeted approach had inadvertently created a more complicated bureaucracy with poor oversight, which in turn increased leakages, making it more inefficient and expensive (Drèze & Khera, 2010; Himanshu & Sen, 2011). The studies also showed that in states that had independently instituted a universal PDS, the bottom quintile consumed from 50% (in Tamil Nadu) and up to 68% (in Karnataka) of their grains through the PDS, while in states that remain with a targeted PDS, only 2% (in Bihar) to 6% (in Uttar Pradesh) received their grains from the PDS (Saxena, 2013). The evidence collected among the PDS systems in different states had firmly shown that the best run PDS had been those states with universal or near universal systems (Himanshu & Sen, 2011).

The targeted PDS saw a significant reduction of food subsidies due to the broader liberalisation of the Indian economy and governance in the 1990s, essentially crippling the PDS in certain states. In part due to international pressure from the World Bank and the IMF as a result of India accepting SAPs during the 1980s, the Indian government's broad reforms of the economy entailed a further desire to reduce government expenditure, particularly of its expenditure on food. They achieved this by raising food prices to fit the economic cost of running the Food Corporation of India (FCI), which was responsible for the procurement and distribution of foodgrains. Another significant change in the targeted PDS was a new methodological formulation to identify those eligible. Households were grouped into 'Above Poverty Line' (APL) and 'Below Poverty Line' (BPL), with only BPL households eligible for subsidised food.

The ultimate aim of the reforms was to reduce government expenditure and make the system more efficient, but the government had promised the politically influential farmers' lobby to not decrease the amount of grain purchased and, coupled with the integration of the agricultural sector with the global market, was forced to increase the purchasing price to match the international market (Gupta, 2008). Consumers, particularly in rural areas, could not afford the high food prices that resulted (Pal & Ghosh, 2007), and an estimated one-fourth of India's annual production of grains accumulated in buffer stocks

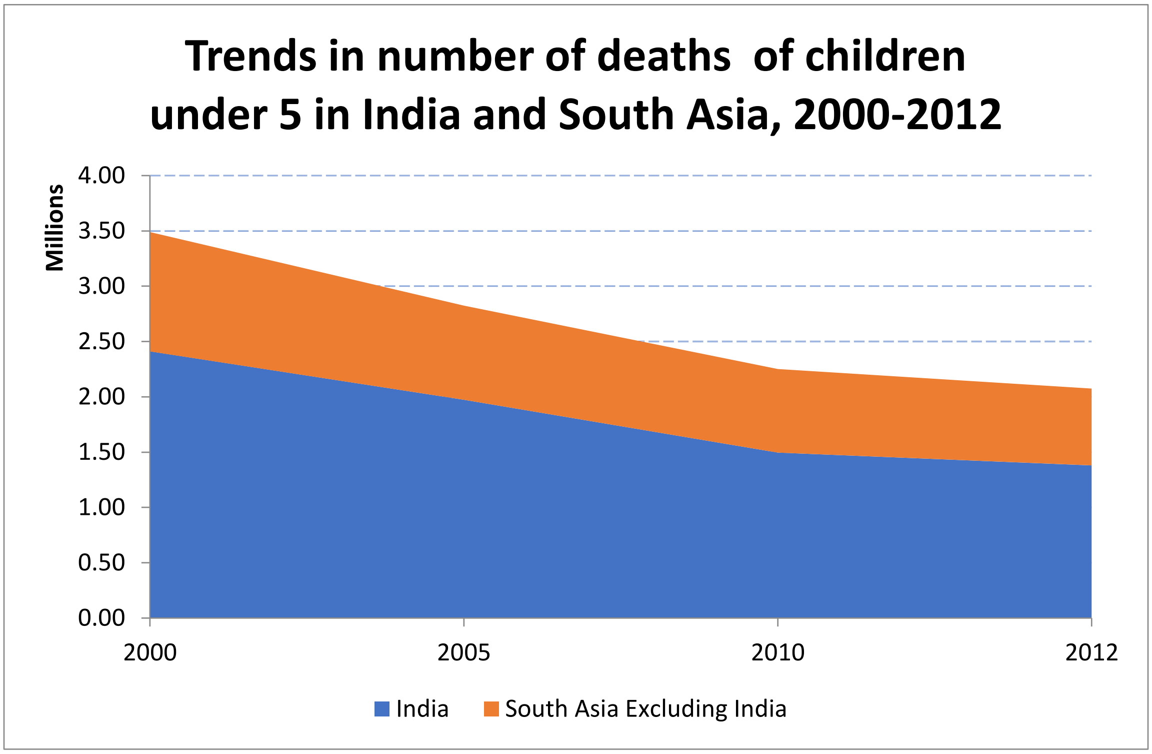
(Chand, 2005; Chand, 2007). The consequences of this was that food prices for APL households doubled, while BPL households saw food prices rise by 80% in the same period, leading to a decline in food purchases through the PDS (Pal & Ghosh, 2007). The consequences of the policy decision to increase the MSP above global market rates caused the paradox of surplus grains yet reduced per capita consumption (Chand, 2005: Saxena, 2013), and the goal of reducing food subsidies by increasing the cost of food and limiting who could receive them were unravelled by the increased cost of grain purchasing and storage. These fundamental issues led to the formulation of the National Food Security Act of 2013, which is primarily a food distribution law.

Utilisation: The Focus on Women and Children

Global indexes on human development and hunger have predominantly focused on the nutritional status of children, such as IFPRI's Global Hunger Index, of which three of the four dimensions of hunger are: the prevalence of wasting of children under five, the prevalence of stunting of children under five, and child mortality, which are considered largely attributable to undernourishment (Saxena, 2013). The predominant data in India in terms of food security comes from measurements of stunting and wasting of children under five and data on calorie consumption (NSSO, 2011). This is for good reason, with children part of the most vulnerable segments of society in terms of food security due to their dependency on others for their well-being. Chronically undernourished children perpetuate the poverty cycle as their mental and physical growth is hampered.

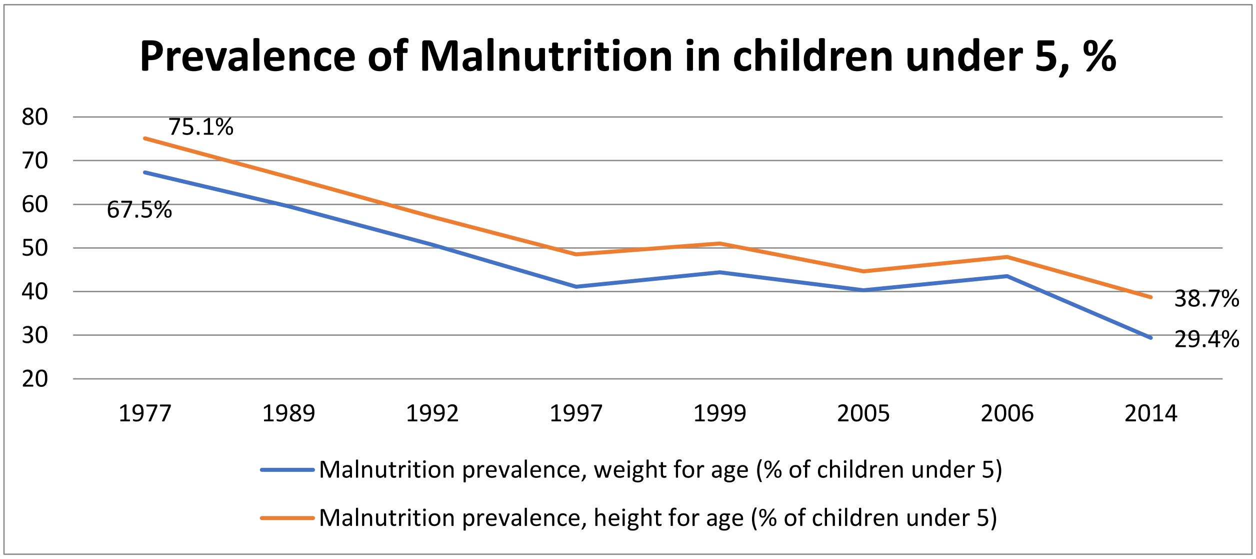
Globally, almost 200 million children under five are underweight and stunted due to a lack of food; of those, 42% are Indian (Mander, 2012). It is estimated that half of all deaths of children in India are directly related to malnutrition (HUNGaMA, 2011), with an estimated rate of child malnutrition within India at 38.7% (FAO, 2014) (see figure 1.7). In 2000, 2.4 million children under five died in India, by 2012, the number had been lowered to 1.4 million children dying annually (see figure 1.6). Noteworthy is that the rate of decline of under five deaths slowed in 2009, and the decline has flattened out since. In 1967, 67.3% of all children under five were malnourished. By 2014, that number had declined to 29.4% of all children under five. Due to the booming population, absolute numbers have risen. After a seemingly sharp decline in malnourishment in children under five up until the late 1990s, the 2000s were characterised by slow overall decline; 28% of all births are low birth weight babies as of 2006 (World Bank, 2014).

Figure 1.6 Trends in number of deaths of children under five in India and South Asia, 2000 to 2012



Source: FAO, 2014

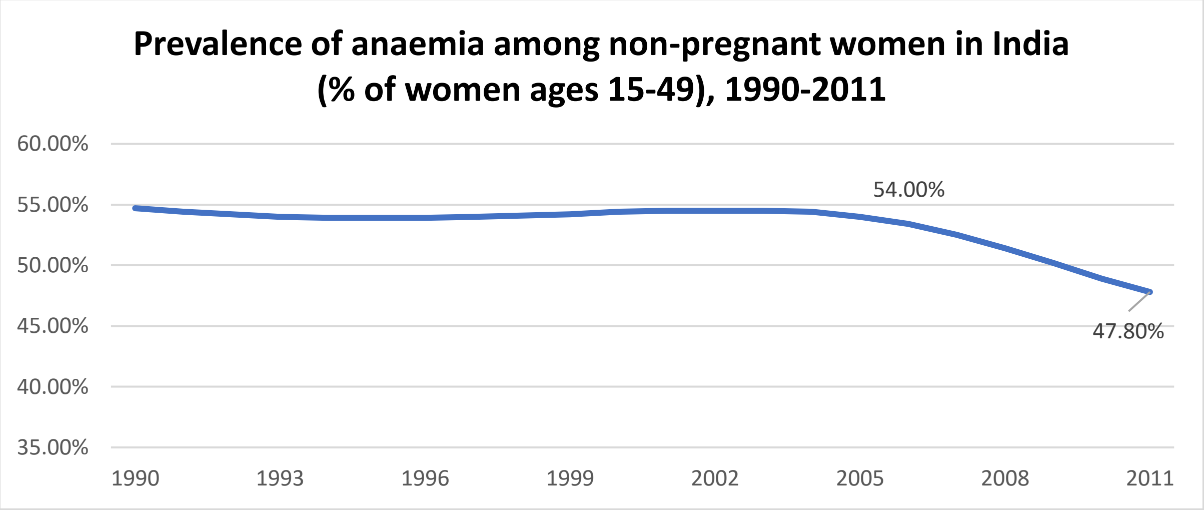
Figure 1.7 Prevalence of malnutrition among children under five in India, height for age and weight for age, 1977 to 2014



Source: FAO, 2014

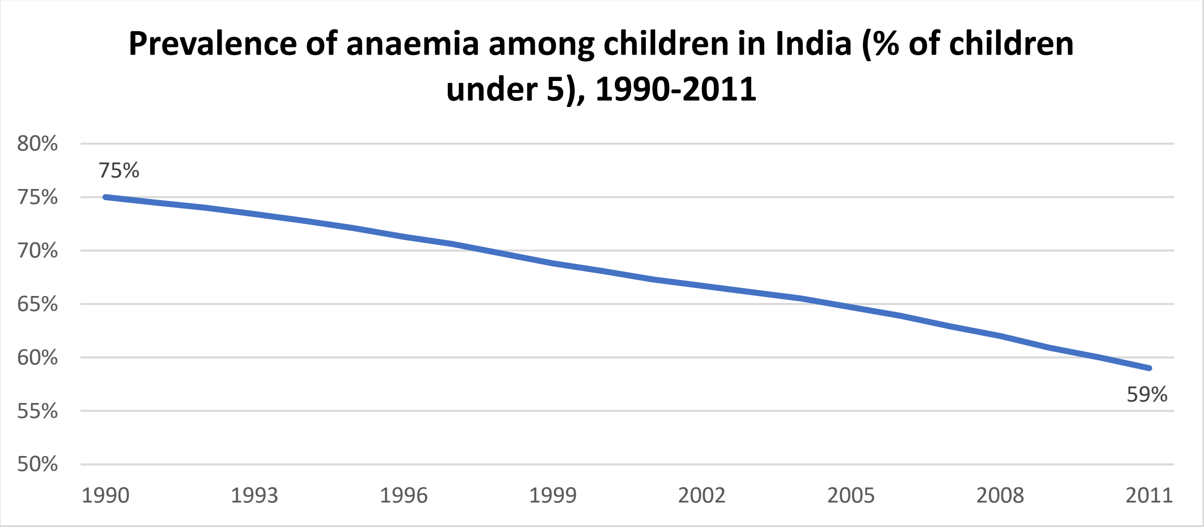
The health of a child is often heavily dependent on the health of the mother, and the ability of the mother to adequately ensure her child's nutrition. Levels of micronutrient deficiencies are significantly high in India, particularly among women. Poor nutrition in child-bearing women has important consequences in the developmental stages of the foetus, particularly important in the formation of the brain and its development – physically and mentally. Children of women who are malnourished or suffering from micronutrient deficiencies have shown to be more likely to be stunted, wasted, underweight and, in extreme cases, mentally inhibited (Mander, 2012). The continued lack of adequate nutrition in the growing child can also be severely debilitating in terms of the child's future potential. A little less than half of all women in India suffer from anaemia (see figure 1.8), and roughly 60% of all children under five as well (see figure 1.9). Furthermore, variations in body mass index (BMI) are the most extreme in women based on the National Family Health Survey-3 in 2006-2007, with 50% of women having both high BMI and low BMI. While 19.8% of women in urban areas had low BMI, 28.9% of women had high BMI in urban areas. Figures from the latest survey has not yet been fully released, but preliminary data from a handful of states seems to indicate that these figures have not changed substantially (NFHS-4, 2016).

Figure 1.8 Prevalence of anaemia among non-pregnant women in India (% of women aged 15 to 49, 1990 to 2011)



Source: World Bank, 2014

Figure 1.9 Prevalence of anaemia among children in India (% of children under five), 1990 to 2011



Source: World Bank, 2018

Specific policy approaches in India towards improving nutrition for women and children have taken multiple avenues, with several different schemes and programmes, most notably the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). The ongoing failure to properly address child nutrition and maternal health was recognised by the NFSA through the incorporation of some of these entitlements as legal rights, the only such entitlements that are distinct from those related to the PDS. The relevance of utilisation as a pillar of food security in India is precisely due to the inclusion of entitlements for the nutritional well-being of women and children. Table 1.2 lays out the schemes and entitlements that specifically target women and children, when they started and who is responsible for managing the policies.

Table 1.2 Health and Nutrition Schemes and Entitlements for Women and Children

Government Scheme	Provision	Year Founded	Responsible Ministry
Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)	General services for children and mothers in terms of healthcare, preschool education and food, aimed at reducing malnutrition, poor health and gender inequalities	1975	Ministry of Women and Child Development
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya	Educational facilities for girls who belong to specific castes and tribes in specific regions	2004	Ministry of Human Resource Development
Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS)	School meal programme to increase nutrition for school-aged children, providing free meals in government schools. Most successful scheme in India, reaching 300 million children daily since 2005 (Guha-Khasnobis & Vivek, 2007).	2004	Ministry of Human Resource Development
National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS)	Women are provided 500 rupees for first two live births to support their nutritional needs.	1995	Ministry of Women and Child Development
Janani Suraksha Yojana	Scheme aimed at reducing maternal and infant mortality through the promotion of institutional delivery, women are entitled to 1,400 rupees regardless of number of births.	-	Ministry of Women and Child Development

Source: Author

Stability: The Minimum Support Price

Stability of food prices are dealt with through price stabilisation policies, such as price support policies and managed trade environments (Sharma & Gulati, 2012). The Government of India, as part of the PDS mechanism, provides what is called a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for specific agricultural commodities. A third of all cereal production is purchased by the central government, half of all marketed surplus of wheat and rice; several states already see the government as the predominant purchaser of cereals, including agricultural-heavy states such as Punjab and Haryana (Gulati et al, 2012). Price stability is a core consideration of the government of India, with the goal to be provide both better remuneration for farmers and better prices for consumers when purchasing their wares, although the high procurement of grains by the government has been indicated in driving up market retail prices (Basu, 2011; Svedberg, 2012). The MSP system has a further unintended consequence that specific types of grains are incentivised for growing in favour of other crops, which has and will lead to inflated prices and an imbalance in the supply and demand of food (Gulati et al, 2012). Increases in the MSP and the subsequent price advantages of selling to the government at the MSP instead of on the global market, which is pegged lower, has resulted in the FCI buying more wheat and rice than it can adequately manage, simply because it had no option but to buy whatever is offered at the MSP (Radhakrishna & Reddy, 2002). Furthermore, this has mainly benefited farmers from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, where the existing infrastructure due to the Green Revolution offers avenues for farmers to sell to the FCI, while farmers from other states often do not get the option to sell at the MSP (Radhakrishna, 2002). While the PDS is a significant food distribution system, the majority of food is still distributed through food markets (Harriss-White & Heyer, 2014). The MSP, while having a deleterious effect on grain incentivisation and its potential in skewing prices, its effect is almost immaterial compared to the amount of food that is distributed through markets, which have a far more noticeable role to play on future production decisions; on producing and reproducing inequalities and exploitation; and on extracting economic and material resources from agriculture (Harriss-White & Heyer, 2014).

The MSP scheme remains in place, much like the PDS, and while there are no specific entitlements in the NFSA regarding the MSP, analysts suggest that due to the broadened scope for distribution, this will require the government to continually increase the MSP, both to cover the increasing costs of production as well as an incentive (Gulati et al, 2012).

1.3.2 Theories of Food Security: Framing and Approaches

Due to the (sometimes stark) differences in academic, global institutional and civil society backgrounds, the language used and the perspectives brought forward from analysts can differ significantly. The result of these differing narratives and multitude of ways of framing reflects underlying disagreements on how best to address the challenge of food insecurity and even what focus food security should be emphasising (Ericksen, et al, 2009). Different actors value different outcomes, and thus have different meanings and policy outcomes dependent on framing and context. The commonly accepted definition of food security as used by global institutions has been criticised by some academics and civil society organisations as being too narrow, too focused on agricultural production and solely concerned with the plight of the hungry and malnourished that it overlooks important aspects of global food security that needs an integrated approach to solve, such as the environmental aspects of food security as well as public health consequences of overconsumption (Lang & Barling, 2009; Ericksen et al, 2009). Others have argued that the notion of food security has become so broad as to be almost meaningless (Carolan, 2013). In India specifically, food security has been shown to be much in line with the international conceptualisation of the term, with the caveat that food security specifically focuses on direct food distribution and, to a lesser extent, nutritional security. As such, this thesis retains the term, not least since it is built into the NFSA. This following section thus explores how academia and civil society have interpreted the development of food security and the scope that food security encompasses outside its international institutional definition. Many of the views have significant overlap, taking different points of focus as complementary and overlapping rather than exclusive or competing.

The Political Economy of Food Security

The Political Economy perspective views food security through the theoretical lens of food systems and power– looking at the entire value chain of agriculture, from production through to processing, packaging, transportation and consumption of food commodities, and linking these multiple activities with political, economic and social dimensions, and who gains or loses within system dynamics (Carolan, 2013; McMichael, 2009). This is done to highlight how food security is influenced by the processes that lead food to be produced, distributed, sold and consumed, and how politics and policy considerations for food security are shaped by the food industry (McMichael, 2009; Lang & Heasman, 2004). The focal point of political economy perspectives is thus on the complex interactions between many commercial, governmental and civil society actors, taking a historical perspective to explain the relationship between institutions and food systems (McMichael & Friedmann, 1989). McMichael and Friedmann outlined ‘regimes’ to describe predominant modes of how the food economy operated in its historical context, and how food and agriculture contributed to the development of the global capitalist economy (McMichael, 2009), while Lang and Heasman (2004) outlined ‘paradigms’ to similarly describe how the global food system operates, with the dominant one of the past 70 years being the Productionist Paradigm, the driving force being on the logic of increasing productivity and higher yields of agricultural production. In the view of Lang and Heasman (2004), two further paradigms are battling out to hold supremacy and replace the Productionist Paradigm as a consequence of recognised negative externalities: the Life Science Paradigm that puts emphasis on technological innovation and bio-engineering to address the failures of the Productionist Paradigm while still maintaining high agricultural production, and the Ecologically Integrated Paradigm, which recognises the mutual dependencies and symbiotic relationships of the environment, agriculture, and public health, aiming to operate more holistically and less medicalised than the Life Science Paradigm while seeking to address the same failures (Rayner & Lang, 2012).

A major argument in the political economic perspective is that while traditionally the state has had a major role in shaping and governing food policy and food systems, decision-makers and primary influences have increasingly shifted towards international governance institutions and private actors, such as multi-national corporations, civil society organisers, and private standard setters, in food policy administration (Lang & Barling, 2009; Henson & Humphrey, 2009). This has occurred with states taking a ‘soft governance’ approach to food policy. Even then, not all states have equal influence, and developed nations such as the United States have had disproportionally more influence than other nations. One such case is private regulation over the food system seen through private standard setting in the food supply chain, such as fair-trade, which may effectively bypass legally-binding rules on agriculture standards set by the WTO (Henson & Humphrey, 2009).

In the Indian context, this type of analysis highlights the growing significance of the capitalist agricultural production, not least spurred by the Green Revolution, the growing corporate influence on the food system in India, juxtaposed with the heavy influence and control the government of India plays within food policy and food distribution, as the largest single purchaser of grain in India (Patnaik, 1986; Mooij, 1998). The political economic approach suggests the contradictory tendencies in India’s food policies, pushing and pulling between economic rationalism and populist politics, and has been used to explain the continued hunger, exploitation of workers, and environmental degradation with the influence of corporate control in the food supply chain, alongside large-scale programmes and schemes for food distribution and nutritional programmes for women and children (Mooij, 1999). Critics argue that the role of the market in India has been to further exploitation and reproduce inequalities and move capital out of agriculture (Ali Jan & Harriss-White, 2012) and the PDS has been ripe for corruption and exploitation due to the large amounts of money involved, the lack of oversight, and hamstrung bureaucracy.

Ecological Perspective on Food Security

While the political economic perspective on food security focuses on political, economic and social processes in the food system, ecological perspectives on food security focus on the pressures that the food system exerts on the environment, and on the feedback loops wherein weakened ecosystems undermine the food system, and adds further pressure on food availability and land use. Whereas the political economy perspective has a long history, the ecological perspectives are relatively new to food policy analysis, arguably came to the fore with the 1987 Brundtland Report (Brundtland, 1987), and new policy initiatives such as the 1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UN, 1992).

Ecological and environmental analyses have grown exponentially over the decades. There is now a range of perspectives, from institutional research to academic analysis of food systems. Arguably, the two primary foci in the last decade has been, for institutional research, in understanding the effects climate change will have on the food system, trying to make it more resilient, and for academic research, the extent that industrial agriculture contributes to climate change, arguing for the need of reform or adjustment to a more ecologically sustainable agricultural model. The underpinnings of the ecological perspective have been to bring public awareness to the realities of finite resources and attention to general environmental degradation caused by food system processes (Ericksen et al, 2009). However, ecological perspectives within food policy can range from concern that climate change will disrupt food production and thus food availability (Wheeler & von Braun, 2013), to neo-Malthusian fears over population growth and an inevitable apocalyptic collapse of the entire food system and modern civilisation (Ehrlich & Ehrlich, 2012; UNEP, 2009). While ecological perspectives are broad, they generally try to bring a holistic understanding of the impact food systems have on the environment, from processing, packaging, transportation and consumption. While food availability has increased, it has been at the expense of the environment.

The ecological alternatives to the current food system are aimed in particular at limiting the potential environmental impact on food security in developing countries already suffering from high levels of malnutrition, with the understanding that as climactic shocks and unstable weather become more frequent, food inequalities will increase, and malnutrition and under-nutrition will worsen over time as poorer populations become more vulnerable (Ericksen et al, 2010; Wheeler & von Braun, 2013). Environmental change as it occurs will have significant repercussions for the global poor in accessing stable food supplies, safe water, ensuring sufficient agrarian incomes, and general health (Wheeler & von Braun, 2013).

While the United Nations acknowledges the climatic limits on agriculture and raise several issues that face the future of food security, such as water stress, actual implemented policies by governments and global institutions are slow in taking this into account (Wheeler & von Braun, 2013; Ash et al, 2010). The specific relationship of climate change and agriculture has been only given recent attention and concern, with the upswing of published documents on food security and climate change after 2008 (Wheeler & von Braun, 2013). Despite this, the focus of scientific research has mainly been on how climate change affects agriculture, rather than how food systems affect climate change and environmental degradation (Ericksen et al, 2009).

There is a general agreement that further research is needed in understanding exactly how food security will be affected by climate change and environmental degradation (Wheeler & von Braun, 2013; Ericksen et al, 2009; Ericksen et al, 2010). Yet the evidence is clear that climate change will be, if not already is, a force of inevitable disruption and change to the functioning of the food system. For India, its agricultural successes have been from 'mining' the environment, and the ecological perspective applied to India would place climate change and the environment paramount to its food security concerns. However, the discourse within India has managed to separate the arguments of environmental destruction and industrial agriculture from food security and food distribution.

As a key example, the NFSA makes no mention of climate change, ecological destruction, or even of agriculture beyond the necessity of growing more grains to cover its broader distribution. Environmental concerns have thus been siloed into the agricultural domain, with food distribution policies divorced from the reality of environmental pressures on agriculture. Furthermore, Indian cities have been ranked the consistently worse in the world for pollution and due to poor infrastructure in terms of sewage, rivers (particularly near cities) have become highly polluted (Dasgupta & Sirohi, 2010). Compounding this issue is a lackadaisical policy approach to garbage management, coupled with a generally uneducated populace, resulting in vast fields of rubbish that are burned off or left to rot and pollute the ground (Gupta et al, 2015).

As a result, India is now seeing a dramatic environmental transition, with great loss of biodiversity, multiple species on the brink of extinction (compounded by poor conservation work and illegal hunting), tributaries drying up, the overconsumption of groundwater, and poor soil health in the states with advanced agriculture (Shiva, 2008). The very structure of the NFSA necessitates an expansion of agricultural production, while cities grow and encroach on the surrounding land, yet 'food security' in India is generally divorced from environmental perspectives.

Nutrition and Public Health Approaches to Food Security

Nutrition has become an increasingly important topic within food security, with the better understanding of micronutrient deficiencies as an avenue of 'hidden hunger', even where there is sufficient overall food consumption. It has long been important in Indian politics, with high rates of anaemia from iron deficiency, vitamin A deficiency, and iodine deficiency highly prevalent (Shaw, 2007). Even to this day, in the developing world an estimated two billion suffer from iodine deficiency, iron deficiency (with around half leading to anaemia) and millions with vitamin A deficiency (Andersson et al, 2012). Simple solutions, such as iodine-fortified salt becoming prevalent, has led to a staggering decrease of iodine deficiency, yet other deficiencies have not been able to be properly addressed (Shaw, 2007). Urban areas in both developed and developing countries have also seen a rise of nutritionally deficient obesity, becoming an issue in both developed and developing countries. This is, however, not considered part of the institutional food security definition, nor of concern for food security within the context of international and national institutions; rather, obesity is viewed as a concern for public health (Carolan, 2013).

While recent definitions of food security cover nutritional aspects, nutrition security can be seen as distinct from food security in its focus. As an example, Sub-Saharan Africa has less food per capita than South Asia, but incidences of malnutrition and under-nutrition are higher in South Asia (Kent, 2005; Drèze & Sen, 2013). As food security focuses heavily on production and supply, nutrition security has been put forward by institutions such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a significant area of focus. Nutrition security focuses on the prevalence of diseases, proper sanitation and hygiene, and micronutrient deficiencies (Kent, 2005). Its focus is almost exclusively on developing nations, as developed nations are considered to have nutrition security, despite high rates of malnutrition through overconsumption of foods lacking in nutrients (Rayner & Lang, 2012). Furthermore, countries that suffer high levels of obesity, overweight, and obesity-related non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, are widely considered ‘food secure’, overlooking the role of public health in defining food security (Carolan, 2013). Academics looking at public health and nutrition in food security would argue that an over-abundance of food should not, in itself, be grounds for food security, but also equitable distribution of food, with issues such as food deserts common in socio-economically poor areas in developed countries (Carolan, 2013; Rayner & Lang, 2012).

As the continuation of food policy focused on growing, producing and distributing ever-more food, the initial positive effects on public health throughout the early 20th century from the industrialisation and technologisation of agriculture began to diminish (Fogel, 2004; Rayner & Lang, 2012). The ‘nutrition transition’, coined by Barry Popkin in the 1990s, describes a trend of increased animal fats and refined carbohydrates, such as sugar, in the dietary makeup of developed and industrialising countries, and the increase of obesity, overweight, and related non-communicable diseases such as coronary heart disease (CHD), diabetes and certain cancers. This nutrition transition has mirrored the proliferation of processed, calorie-dense but nutrient-poor foods and the marketing of high fat foods, a result of food systems focusing on cheaper commodities that can be marketed and sold in a multitude of ways, and the increased importance of supermarkets in providing for diets in developed countries. Changing lifestyles that have become more sedentary, cheap fossil fuels that have enabled the production and distribution of cheap food, and the reduction of trade barriers in developing countries have made the nutrition transition a hallmark of the ‘Western’ diet and ubiquitous in dietary changes of modernising countries, particularly in urban areas. Policy responses to the nutrition transition have been generally poor, as while it has raised significant concern at the international level, particularly with the WHO and the UN, these institutions can only advise member states to act, in a policy area where the food industry has not only more leverage, but have generally resisted regulation and intervention, and where governments have prioritised trade over public health (Rayner & Lang, 2012; Baviskar, 2018).

The nutrition transition is illustrative of the shifting areas of power in policy decision-making, and the ineffectual responses by global institutions to food crises, both over- and under-consumption. More than two billion people are considered overweight or obese, outweighing the number of people living in hunger, and both are affected by the logic of markets and economic access to food. While the nutrition transition in developing countries could be utilised as an argument for the success of the private sector in reducing the amount of absolute hunger around the world, and there were palpable improvements towards the Millennium Development Goals, it relied entirely on an industrial agriculture system that contributed to worsening public health (McMichael & Schneider, 2011).

The nutrition and public health approach is thus a complex, multi-dimensional framework that puts the lens of food insecurity on malnutrition, over- and -under consumption, and micro-nutrient deficiencies while acknowledging the environmental, political, social, cultural and economic factors that shape the food system. As such, this approach considers two major dietary shifts having occurred in India over the last few decades. The first major change, predominantly at the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s, was the shift to ‘superior’ macronutrient foods, shifting from a grain-heavy diet to a more diverse diet with more expensive foods, such as vegetables, fruits and animal-based proteins, for all income groups, though primarily middle-to-high-income groups (Pingali & Khwaja, 2004; Saxena, 2011). The second major shift, from the 1990s onwards, was the increasing ‘globalisation’ of the Indian diet, which followed the hallmarks of the nutrition transition in other developing countries, with an increased consumption of proteins, fats and sugars (Pingali & Khwaja, 2004; Popkin et al, 2001). This has entailed a significant transition in food consumption patterns in India, with specific emphasis of changes in urban areas. Per capita expenditure on food has fallen as incomes have increased, consistent with other countries undergoing high rates of growth (Popkin et al, 2001). Increased urbanisation and increasing affluence has meant that aspirational lifestyle preferences, to more ‘Westernised’ diets, have been the major driver of the nutrition transition in India (Pingali & Khwaja, 2004; Bhaviskar, 2018). Processed food has become increasingly common, regardless of socio-economic status.

While food trends along socio-economic lines have become increasingly disparate, with the undernourished and poorest of the poor cut off from the trends of the rest of society (Saxena, 2011), grain consumption has declined for all economic groups, a consequence of increased incomes and availability of a diverse range of foods, overall calorie consumption has declined for lower socio-economic groups. The traditional *dal* (a lentil dish) and rice still a daily staple for millions (although the lentils, the rice, the cooking oil, and the spices may be of superior quality (Saxena, 2011)). However, one of the most fundamental, albeit subtle, shifts in eating habits has been the increased consumption of wheat, and the reliance on wheat as a staple grain for breads (Pingali & Khwarja, 2004; Singh, 2017). Rice and millets have historically been the staple grains throughout India, but the Green Revolution brought cheaper, readily available wheat throughout the country. While in the beginning this entailed an increase of *roti* (flatbread) consumption, with the globalisation of diets this meant an increase of white bread, noodles, cookies, cakes, and other wheat-based products (Menon, 2015).

Furthermore, processed foods have also taken a local flavour, predominantly being aimed at making it easier for the consumer to access cheaper options. One such significant example of processed foods with local flavours is *maggi* noodles, a Nestlé product that has achieved 90% market share in India and has become an incredibly popular urban food product, as street food and among students (Baviskar, 2018). The shift towards globalised diets has been both obvious and subtle. The most obvious has been the influx of fast food restaurants such as McDonald's and KFC, but also the proliferation of soft drinks such as Coca-Cola. Even preferences for non-native fruits, such as apples, have increased in the last decades (Pingali & Khwarja, 2004).

While the direct evidence of the nutrition transition seems clear, the indirect evidence, based on indicators of health, malnutrition, and incidences of obesity, diabetes, and other diet-related non-communicable diseases, have also occurred. India is in a unique situation where obesity and obesity-related health problems, primarily heart disease and diabetes, have become increasingly common while many millions live with chronic hunger. India has more than 50 million people suffering from diabetes, as well as 20 million obese, thus being the one nation with the highest prevalence of obesity and metabolic syndrome (pre-obesity) (Deloitte, 2011). More than half of all reported deaths in India in 2008 were due to non-communicable diseases; half of those were attributed to cardiovascular diseases, accounting for around one-fourth of all deaths (Deloitte, 2011). Rates of cardiovascular disease is estimated to be rising by 9.2% annually and have specifically gone up significantly for people aged between 25-69 to 24.8% of the population suffering from cardiovascular disease. Reduced physical activity, unhygienic and overcrowded living conditions, higher exposure to pollution and high stress levels are, apart from poorer diets, all potentially contributed to this increase. Smoking has also increased, with an estimated 14% of the population smoking daily. There are genetic factors in the high numbers of non-communicable diseases, although environmental triggers and shifting diets play crucial roles. Furthermore, an overall decline of mortality due to infectious disease, and increasingly sedentary, urban lifestyles, have also contributed to the increase of mortality rates due to NCDs (Bloom, 2011). The problem is not limited to the economically well-off (or even to urban areas), with the urban poor facing a ‘double burden’ of acute diseases as well as an increased incidences of chronic diseases. Calorie consumption is lower in urban than in rural areas, a result of half of urban populations belonging to self-employed, casual labour households (Swaminathan, 2010). The urban poor suffer from not only long-term material deprivation, high levels of stress (worrying about their children, about their next pay check, etc.) and unhealthy living conditions, but are also more prone to drink and smoke, with the highest rates in India of both among the lowest income quintile (Deloitte, 2011). The urban poor thus find themselves “in a nexus of underdevelopment and industrialisation” (von Braun et al, 1993), poverty-related infectious disease and malnutrition, urban-related cardiovascular and mental disease, and social instability and insecurity disease, such as alcoholism, drug abuse and venereal diseases (Von Braun et al, 1993). Malnutrition (either undernourishment or overconsumption) aggravates and is aggravated by other diseases, particularly infectious diseases. These are exacerbated by overcrowding and pollution, as well as sociocultural disruptions of rural migrants moving to large cities, creating psychological and mental issues, though this has not been empirically studied in any sufficient form (von Braun et al, 1993). The majority of the overweight in India are found in urban areas, and their needs have not been addressed except through medical intervention once they have already reached a more advanced stage of ill health. Many of the urban poor may also have particularly poor diets due to the proliferation of processed foods and fast food from hawkers; the homeless in particular do not have access to cooking sites or cooking expertise (Mander, 2011). The rise of calorie dense and nutritionally light processed foods in cities has contributed to a belief that people are food secure in urban areas, although even overweight people suffer from a form of malnourishment. India is facing the double burden of under-consumption and over-consumption, a situation developmental sociologist Raj Patel (2009) characterises as ‘stuffed and starved’: a public health catastrophe with no clear solutions.

While it should be acknowledged that the NFSA does have significant entitlements around nutrition security, it is exclusively concerned with malnutrition and under-nutrition of women and children, in particular pregnant and lactating women. While there is clear evidence that intervention is necessary, the NFSA fails to take a broader nutritional approach in its other entitlements, almost exclusively focusing on grains.

Right to Food Approach to Food Security

Perhaps no phrase is more commonly used in the food security discourse in India than the ‘right to food’. The foundations of the right to food approach lie in the broad goals embedded in the 1947 UN Declaration of Human Rights, and the concept of the right to food has existed longer than the formulation of food security (Mechlem, 2004). The general statement found in the UN Declaration of Human Rights has expanded greatly since, perhaps becoming most specific with the FAO’s 2004 Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food. The FAO (2009) asserts that

“the protection of human rights through constitutions is the strongest form of legal protection as constitutions are considered the fundamental or supreme law of the land…every law in a country must conform to the constitutional provisions and, in cases of conflict, the constitutional norm will always prevail.” (FAO, 2009, pg. 11)

The right to food approach is based on a moral imperative, on dignity and social justice rather than merely on economic access or food availability, and thus takes a more ‘human-centred’ focus rather than an economic focus. Raising awareness of the rights of the population is a key fundamental of realising a rights-based policy framework, built on “participation, empowerment and social change” (Chapman, 2005).

The right to food approach thus complements the food security goals of reducing hunger and malnutrition with considerations of dignity, rights acknowledgment, transparency, accountability, and empowerment concerns (Mechlem, 2004). This rests on a commitment to the value of human dignity, viewing the individual as an agent of change who can hold governments accountable and seek compensation for violations of their rights. The right to food approach conceptualises policies to be based on obligations of the state that become increasingly more precise and specific and remain consistent around the concept of rights, rather than imprecise, vague policy goals that are often redefined or reinterpreted (Mechlem, 2004). The right to food is thus an objective in itself, rather than merely a means to achieve food security, and is part of a larger rights-based approach to development that aim to implement all human rights obligations that states have committed themselves to through the UN human rights laws (Mechlem, 2004).

In the case of the NFSA, it can be interpreted as translating constitutional rights as argued by the Supreme Court (as will be explored in chapter two) into justiciable legal entitlements, which was a potentially powerful move in ensuring those rights being upheld by the government. However, there are three main actors in a rights-based approach (Kent, 2000):

- The holders of entitlements (the people)
- Those with the duty to provide the entitlements (the government)
- A neutral institution that, in case of violation, enforces the right (the judicial system)

As it happens, all three main actors may have points of failure where rights cannot be upheld. For example, if the holders of entitlements are unaware of their rights, they would not know that they can claim them. If the government is unable to fully provide those entitlements, due to corruption or lack of political will, and the judicial system is unable to enforce those rights and force the government to provide them, then the right to food is only useful on paper. As such, while enshrining the right to food into law creates the foundation for the provision of entitlements, as was done with the NFSA, this is not sufficient in actually providing those rights, if at any stage the main actors are not made aware and do not fulfil their obligations.

The right to food presupposes obligations of the state and the rights of citizens to three main sources, focusing more on modes of production and distribution than food production by itself – i) self-production, ii) access to income-generating activities, iii) social protection, either informally through communities or through redistributive mechanisms (De Schutter, 2010). The right of food is thus closely related to right of access to resources, the right to work, and the right to social security.

From its inception, the NFSA has set out to make the right to food a legal right, allowing action to be taken against the Indian government if it fails to provide its selected population with adequate food. Yet these wider policy pronouncements could be seen as irrelevant as Indian policy discussion assumes the importance of the right to food. On the one hand, it is enshrined in the constitution of India; the Supreme Court of India, as well as the adherent Right to Food Campaign and the majority of academic discourse around food security in India, shares this right to food approach. Yet on the other hand, that it had to be put into law suggests the ‘right’ may not have been realised. Since Sen’s analysis, many see raising citizens’ awareness of their rights as key to food security (Drèze, 2005). Others have noted that the ‘empowerment’ of citizens to put pressure on governmental and other actors is essential if all Indians are to realise their right to food (Alston & Tomasevski, 1986). Unless normalised in everyday culture and reinforced in the media, the ‘right’ may simply be rhetoric. As such, the debate around and coverage of the NFSA was significant, but since the Act became law, there has been less media attention. Indian democracy is viewed by some experts as being confined in a ‘vicious cycle of exclusion and elitism’ (Drèze, 2005), and the consequences of this answers the Indian paradox of continued food insecurity despite high economic growth – as large sections of the population are excluded from participation in the democratic process, public policy does not reflect their aspirations or priorities (Drèze, 2005). Furthermore, a growth-led development mindset also excludes alternative approaches to food security that may better address specific, underlying causes of food insecurity, such as a sectoral approach focused on key sectors such as sanitation, public health or education, where the rights of the citizens can be strengthened through a multi-sectoral approach (Deaton & Drèze, 2009). There is little awareness, acknowledgment or knowledge by many citizens in India of their rights, and millions remain unaware of their legal entitlements, how to claim them, and who to turn to if those rights are violated (Kent, 2005). This is a key missing component to realising the right to food in India.

1.4 Summary

This chapter has covered the general concept of food security, from how it is framed, defined, and utilised. Food Security is thus shown to be an aspirational term that is hard to ‘disagree’ with, but leaves it open for different interests to shape how food security is applied and what it means. The international food security discourse has gone through a series of changes, from a predominantly productionist, government-focused approach to a differentiated, postmodern approach that focuses on economic access on the individual level and the proliferation of agribusiness.

Some academic theories of food security have also been presented, to highlight how different perspectives can view ‘food security’, leading to different types of analysis and outcomes. The academic field on food security is both broad and complex, raising contemporary pressures, from politics and economics, the environment, nutrition, and rights. While those presented here are not exhaustive, they give insight into the many different avenues that food security can be interpreted and understood.

India, in turn, has been influenced by this global discourse and shift, explored through utilising the FAO's 'pillars of food security' framework, but has also its own unique history of food security since its independence, marked by the unique challenges facing India post-independence. This chapter thus also provides a broad context for the NFSA. The focus can now become more specific, turning to the Indian policy landscape, urban India, and the NFSA.

Chapter Two: The Indian Policy Landscape & Urban India

After establishing the global discourse on food security, how the global discourse applies to India, how Indian food policy has broadly developed over the decades in part due to the global framing and understanding of the term, and broad alternatives to the commonly accepted discourse, this chapter will turn to the specifics of India's poverty relief policies and how Indian policies have historically been developed, contextualising India's food policies in its broader context of programmes and interventions. Following that, the chapter explores the specifics of urban India and urban food security, to elucidate why urban India is the focus of the research, after which the chapter explores the content of the NFSA, how it developed historically, its main points of criticism, and problematises its content regarding urban food security. This chapter seeks to establish the literature that was drawn upon during the primary research phase of interviews and the findings chapters.

2.1 Policies in Context – How policies and programmes have developed in India

Food security, as made clear in the previous chapter, is a complex and diverse term (Maxwell, 1996), and can be defined in multiple ways; it can be understood and analysed from varying perspectives, all looking at the same issue but producing different accounts of what food security should be. While it is hard to derive one focused narrative when food insecurity is an inherently complex and multi-faceted issue, and while choosing what to focus on can be a helpful tool in analysis, an integrated approach to food security may be easier to theorise than to deliver, and simplifications in policy structure and policy design occur out of necessity (Lang & Barling, 2009). To understand how these occur in India, a literature review of Indian politics and policy formation will now follow.

One cannot speak of Indian food policy without recognising the context of broader programmes and policies in India, and how they have developed. A key term to understand is *mai-baap sarkar,* a term used in bureaucratic parlance to describe the Indian state as, literally, 'the government of mother and father' (Samaddar, 2010). This term is used to elucidate the nature of governance that the Indian state has historically followed, both the central government as well as many of its state governments.

The approach is two-fold: primarily, it is a paternalistic approach to governance, framing the position of the politician and the state as benevolent caregivers of the poor. This has mainly been characterised by wide-ranging schemes and programmes for education, poverty alleviation, hunger alleviation and general health – some analysts call this the 'service delivery' paradigm (Menon, 2013) within the framework of the Indian constitution. This paradigm has been heavily criticised as token welfare schemes and programmes and predominantly oriented to be interventionist rather than reformist, looking to help citizens after the fact rather than prevent citizens from needing help (Sinha, 2013; Pritchard et al, 2014). Furthermore, they have generally been heavily skewed towards the rural poor, with schemes oriented towards the urban poor more education-based and, some analysts have argued, aimed at 'civilizing' the poor to better fit modernised urban areas than to help bring them out of poverty (Menon, 2013; Mander, 2012). Schaffer outlines a 'donative reality' that some governments approach policy, where the government sees itself as a benevolent caregiver, a "pretendedly non-political view of public policy" (Schaffer, 1984). India is a clear example of a 'donative discourse', as outlined by Jos Mooij (1998), who has analysed Indian food policy as stemming from a dominant discourse of charity and generosity of the government that has only recently been challenged by the right to food approach. This donative discourse is fundamentally different to the welfare policy approach, where the state sees its duty to provide for its citizens, rather than that the state is a generous, paternalistic entity (Mooij, 1998).

As the donative discourse has dominated the service delivery paradigm, the early 2000s saw the rise of the rights-based paradigm seeking to challenge the idea of a benevolent, paternalistic state. The reasons why are many, with the service delivery paradigm lacking a systemic approach to poverty and hunger alleviation, with many of the schemes entailing everything from giving out free clothing to gatherings of the poor, to promising cheap food and pensions in stump speeches and campaign promises (Sinha, 2013). While the sentiment may have arisen from a genuine sense of empathy, compassion or concern for the poor, the approach has been one of dictating terms to the poor, and instead of investing in development that could help reduce overall poverty, the money has instead been used to seduce voters with populist promises and token gifts. Welfarism in India can thus be viewed as a series of political promises and quickly drafted schemes with poor rates of implementation (Menon, 2013).

The second characteristic of *mai-baap sarkar* has been the lack of negative consequences to politicians who utilise their position of power for personal gain, that is to say, the protection of the corrupt.

Individuals with influential connections, corrupt officials and criminals, would have their cases stalled or dismissed. This marriage of paternalistic charity disguised as welfare and the lack of punishment towards corrupt officials meant that poverty reduction was never seriously attempted as an institutional norm, except in the southern states of India where the government culture was more rooted in democratic processes (Sinha, 2013; Singh, 2017). The PDS forms a significant part of government subsidies and has been a primary avenue of corruption, leakages and exploitation of the poor who seek eligibility to the PDS and other programmes (Overbeck, 2016).

These multitudes of schemes and programmes that have come out of central and state governments raise several major issues. One is awareness. Research has shown that there is a general lack of information among the target audiences regarding what the schemes do and how they can benefit, as well as how to claim provisions under the schemes (Pritchard et al, 2014). Awareness of even the basic Minimum Support Price scheme is relatively low, with only 38% of respondents to a farm survey aware of the existence of the system (CSDS, 2015). This lack of awareness is compounded by the major issue of implementation. It is all well and good to have a policy on paper, but without the actual implementation throughout the nation, citizens will not be able to access these schemes. The lack of a systemic approach to poverty alleviation and high levels of corruption has meant that implementation of schemes has been highly inconsistent, varying widely across states and districts, and often at the whim of the local government. The issue of implementation comes down to oversight, accountability and political will, and while steps have been taken to improve these aspects, implementation rates of programmes remain poor (Saxena, 2013; Mander, 2012). The last major issue that should be noted is one of efficacy. It is important to clarify that these schemes and programmes have had an impact on the lives of the poor, and it would be a simplification to characterise them as purely unsuccessful or otherwise flawed – these programmes have their place, with both positive elements as well as significant issues. The evidence is clear that schemes and programmes, despite their major flaws, do provide a certain level of poverty relief for millions of individuals (Athreya et al, 2010), but the efficacy of government schemes and programmes are hampered by the bureaucratic system in place in India, with several layers of complex bureaucracy and administration, as well as endemic corruption and inefficiencies. The increase of technologisation and computerisation of these systems may have substantial benefits, but the entrenched, Kafkaesque bureaucracy need deep reforms before meaningful change can occur.

Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 below list the main schemes and programmes introduced by the central government that are oriented towards poverty relief. Table 2.1 gives the schemes that exclusively target the rural population and Table 2.2 shows schemes that are available for both the rural and urban population, while Table 2.3 shows the schemes exclusively targeting the urban. These tables can be interpreted to show a long-standing rural bias, if slight, in poverty relief programmes, with nine rural-specific programmes, nine nationwide programmes and five urban-specific programmes. These are merely a list and are not aimed to evaluate the efficacy, reach or implementation of each scheme.

Table 2.1 Central Government Schemes Exclusively Targeting the Rural Population, 1950-2013

Government Scheme	Provisions	Year Launched	Ministry Responsible
Gramin Bhandaran Yojana (GBY)	Aims at promoting grading, standardization and quality control of agricultural produce, and creation of storage capacity in rural areas for farm produce and agricultural inputs.	2007	Ministry of Agriculture
Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)	Financial assistance for rural poor for housing construction	1985	Ministry of Rural Development
Livestock Insurance Scheme	Cattle insurance, financial assistance to improve livestock produce.		Ministry of Agriculture
National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)	Legal guarantee for 100 days of unskilled manual work annually, at the minimum wage	2005	Ministry of Rural Development
National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)	Organising the rural poor into self-help groups and promoting self-employment, developing livelihood options for the poor	2011	Ministry of Rural Development
Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)	Creation of road connectivity to unconnected villages	2000	Ministry of Rural Development
Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)	Development of agriculture and subsidisation to reach 4% annual agricultural growth	2007	Ministry of Agriculture
Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)	Employment and food security provisions for poor rural areas, subsumed by the NREGA in 2006	2001	Ministry of Rural Development
Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)	Initiative for sustainable incomes in rural areas, providing self-employment through self-help groups. Establishes self-help groups and provides financial assistance. Subsumed by the NRLM.	1999	Ministry of Rural Development

Source: Author

Table 2.2 Nationwide Central Government Poverty Relief Schemes, 1950-1913.

Government Scheme	Provisions	Year Founded	Responsible Ministry
Annapurna	Food security for senior citizens not covered by the National Old Age Pension Scheme, given 10 kg grains free every month. Mainly for the isolated, rural aged.	1999	Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)	Food security for the 10 million poorest identified, receiving 35kg per household per month in subsidised grains. Subsumed into the NFSA.	2000	Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)	General services for children and mothers in terms of healthcare, education and food, aimed at reducing malnutrition, poor health, and gender inequalities	-	Ministry of Women and Child Development
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya	Educational facilities for girls that belong to specific castes and tribes in specific regions (mainly rural)	2004	Ministry of Human Resource Development
Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS)	School meal programme to increase nutrition for school-aged children, providing free meals in government schools,	2004	Ministry of Human Resource Development
National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)	If the primary income earner dies, the family receives 10,000 rupees	1995	Ministry of Rural Development
National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS)	Women are provided 500 rupees for first two live births	1995	Ministry of Women and Child Development
National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)	Pensions for citizens aged over 60 who are destitute	-	Ministry of Rural Development
Public Distribution System (PDS)	The world's largest food distribution system (Svedberg, 2012), allocates mainly cereals but also cooking oils, pulses and other basic household necessities to households that meet certain criteria, such as being under the poverty line	1950	Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

Source: Author

Table 2.3 Central Government Schemes Exclusively Targeting the Urban Population

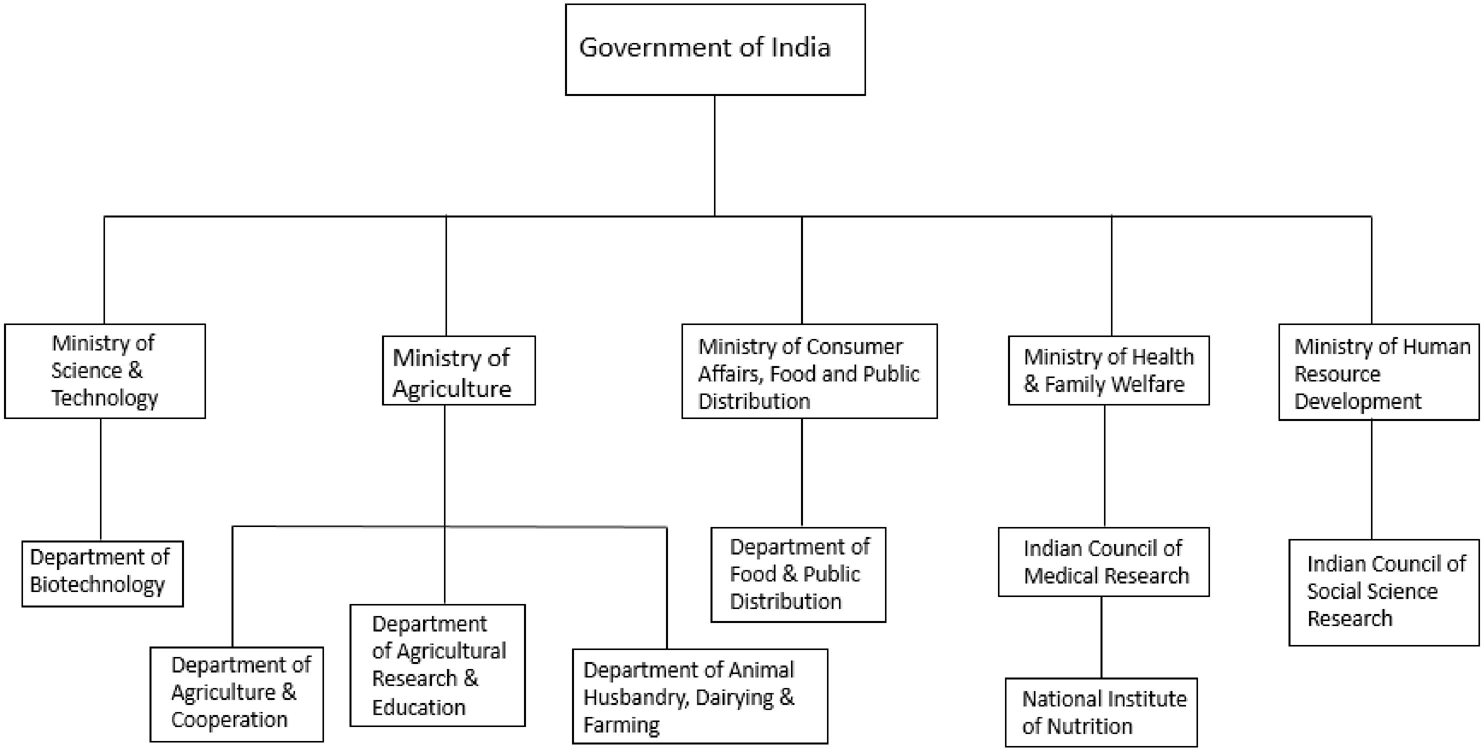
Government Scheme	Provisions	Year Founded	Responsible Ministry
Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)	Aimed at improving infrastructure and quality of life in cities; 67 eligible cities. Umbrella programme that covers smaller schemes	2005	Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation
National Slum Development Programme	Funds allocated on the basis of urban slum population, aimed at improving urban infrastructure and access, as well as housing. Subsumed in BSUP after 2012	2006	Ministry of Urban Development
Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP)	Comes under the JNNURM. Aimed at improving access to basic services such as water and sanitation	2012	Ministry of Urban Development
Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY)	Attempts to create appropriate housing and infrastructure for slum dwellers and address the cause of slums. Aims for slum-free India by 2022	2013	Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation
Swarna Jayanta Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY)	Employment-oriented scheme that provides skill development opportunities and encourages self-employment, with the goal to improve livelihoods for the urban poor	1997	Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation

Source: Author

Figure 2.1 maps out the stakeholders of Food Security Research within the Government of India. This mapping reveals that neither rural nor urban ministries are included in research that are labelled relating to food security, and the focal points of food security research are within agriculture, husbandry, biotechnology, public distribution and nutrition. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution is the central institution that oversees the primary delivery mechanism of food security, while the Ministry of Agriculture is the primary institution developing agricultural innovations and biotechnology, with this being primary research targets within the food security umbrella term (Government of India, 2011). These government institutions have little overlap and rarely work together, even the agricultural institutions and biotechnology institutions. Their remits are separate, and they act accordingly. As these programmes are siloed, there is very little to no overlap between the different institutions, and the lack of dialogue and policy sharing has meant certain policy approaches that may have significant impact on other areas are left separate.

Furthermore, there are a host of government bodies and non-government stakeholders in the food security sphere in India, listed in figure 2.1 and tables 2.4 and 2.5. These institutions relate to food security in different forms, with the majority of non-government stakeholders focused on agriculture, though also nutrition and health, and are predominantly international organisations, although not exclusively. However, there are hundreds of civil society organisations in India, many of which cannot be addressed. Indian food security stakeholders are siloed in different ministries, all with different focal points within food security. Of the seven listed institutions, four of them relate to food security only in a tertiary sense, specifically the Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Relief, Ministry of Urban Development and the Planning Commission. These ministries deal with broader issues of health, housing and poverty relief programmes, while the Planning Commission functions broadly in the planning, evaluation and analysis of programmes. The four other institutions listed implement, maintain and administrate food security-related programmes, such as the Ministry of Human Resource Development, which fund the Mid-Day-Meal Scheme, and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, which run the Public Distribution System.

Figure 2.1 Institutions in Food Security Research within the Government of India


Government of India
Ministry of Science & Technology
Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of Biotechnology
Department of Agriculture & Cooperation
Department of Agricultural Research & Education
Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Farming
Department of Food & Public Distribution
Indian Council of Medical Research
National Institute of Nutrition
Indian Council of Social Science Research

Source: Author

Table 2.4 Government Organisations in Food Security in India

Institution	**Department**	**Relevance to Food Security in India**
Ministry of Agriculture	Department of Agriculture and Cooperation	Funding and development of agriculture, schemes and programmes to increase agricultural yields and horticultural production
Ministry of Rural Development	Department of Rural Development	Socio-economic development in rural India, specifically focused on health, education, safe water, housing and infrastructure
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution	Department of Food and Public Distribution	Manages and funds the Public Distribution System (PDS), the Food Corporation of India (FCI), and the Minimum Support Price (MSP)
Ministry of Women and Child Development	-	Manages and funds the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), cooperates with NGOs and formulates and administers rules and regulations regarding women and child development
Ministry of Human Resource Development	-	Manages and funds the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), operates the Indian Council for Social Science Research

Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation	-	Aims at alleviating urban poverty through poverty relief programmes, as well as housing and employment programmes
Ministry of Urban Development	-	Formulates and administers regulations and laws regarding urban development and housing
Planning Commission (now NITI Aayog)	-	Sets the national poverty line, formulates 5-year-plans and advises the central government

Source: Author, adapting flowcharts by ValueNotes, 2011

Table 2.5 Major International Non-Government Stakeholders in Food Security in India

Stakeholder	Institution	Relevance to Food Security in India
USAID	Foreign government (USA)	Agriculture and Biotechnology Development Programme
DFID	Foreign government (UK)	Projects for soil erosion prevention and crop yield increase, Food Security Research Funding
ACIAR	Foreign government (Australia)	Wheat Genetics Project
Ford Foundation	Private foundation	Gene Campaign Project
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Private foundation	Funding for yield increases of local cereals (millet, sorghum)
Sir Ratan Tata Trust	Private foundation	“Reviving the Green Revolution” programme
World Food Programme	United Nations	Food Aid
UNICEF	United Nations	Child Health and Nutrition Projects

Source: Author, adapted flowcharts by ValueNotes, 2011

Having mapped out the institutions involved in food security in India, there is a clear division between institutions that deal with food security research, predominantly concerned with agricultural research, and institutions and ministries involved with the application of the food security and other poverty relief programmes. As these programmes are heavily siloed, some of the ministries and institutions listed are only tangentially involved with food security, with the urban ministries more focused on housing, infrastructure, and other poverty relief programmes. As discussed, Indian policies have tended to be reactive, and have been shaped, pushed and pulled by the dual tensions of economic rationalism and populist politics (Mooij, 1999). With the NFSA being part of a seemingly new approach to Indian policies through a rights-based approach, this raises the question as to what extent urban institutions and an understanding of urban food security were involved in the policy process of the NFSA. What were the ground realities of urban India that contributed to the policy design of the NFSA? To understand these questions better, a look at both urban India, urban food security in India, and the content of the NFSA itself is in order.

2.2 Urban India

The international institutional approach to food security, as discussed, has been simplified to four pillars of availability, access, utilisation and stability. Adding the qualifier 'urban' to food security changes the perspective from global food security to the urban field, yet retains certain key characteristics. Urban food security takes an even narrower perspective than the four pillars approach, disregarding for the most part availability of food production and supply, as there is an assumption that markets will be able to provide food year-round, focusing mainly on access, utilisation and stability (Cohen & Garrett, 2009). Urban food security has been interpreted by policy-makers as a need to focus on raising incomes on an individual and household level, as well as understanding seasonal, transitory and chronic food security (Pritchard, et al, 2014; Jarosz, 2011; Shaw, 2007; Mechlem, 2004). As urban residents depend on being able to afford food in a context where basic needs can only be met through purchasing power, relatively higher incomes than in rural areas may not translate into affording more food (Cohen & Garrett, 2009; Tacoli et al, 2013).

A reoccurring theme in the discourse around urban poverty (such as the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) seminal Urban Poverty Report in 2009), was that the urban poor mainly lacked i) proper housing, ii) access to clean drinking water, iii) access to proper sanitation infrastructure, iv) access to health, safety, educational services, and v) access to sustainable livelihoods. Sanitation, water quality and other physiological and environmental factors have been noted in playing larger roles in determining nutritional statuses of children than increased income (Cohen & Garrett, 2009), but is often considered the purvey of public health rather than food security, despite utilisation being one of the four pillars of food security. Urban food insecurity is instead broadly viewed as the inability of urban households to secure economic access to food, and is heavily linked with low incomes, fluctuations in food prices, and high expenditure on non-food essentials, such as housing, heating, education and health (Tacoli et al, 2013; Saxena, 2013; Mander, 2012).

As has been established, the contemporary discourse around food security has focused on the connection between poverty and undernourishment, with the scale of hunger in rural parts of the developing world is so apparent, and the struggles of the urban poor are often overlooked; indeed, urban children have lower rates of malnutrition, particularly lower rates of stunting (low height for age) and underweight (low weight for age), than their rural counterparts, although wasting (low weight for height) in urban areas rival or (in some reported cases) exceed rates of wasting in rural areas (Smith et al, 2004; von Braun, 2007). Furthermore, despite the nutritional advantage urban children have over rural children, urban poverty and malnutrition have been increasing in both absolute and relative terms, which has causally been linked with the constantly accelerating rates of urbanisation (Smith et al, 2004; von Braun, 2007). Even in situations where there may be sufficient energy intake, this does not ensure sufficient micronutrients (von Braun et al, 1993). Indeed, in India for example, iron intake is low and anaemia common in both rural and urban areas.

Urban malnutrition is considered symptomatic of the larger issue of urban poverty, linked strongly with low incomes, sociocultural practices, deficiencies in food systems, and the surrounding health environment (von Braun et al, 1993; Pritchard et al, 2014). There have been clear links in improved wages, employment and health with improved nutrition, although iniquitous economic growth may not be able to target the poor without government support (Mander, 2012; Pritchard et al, 2014). While increased incomes have been linked to a decrease in undernourishment and malnourishment, this decrease is marginal in urban areas, not only due to higher costs of food and non-food essentials, but also the inclination of urban populations to spend any increased income on non-food non-essentials, such as alcohol and tobacco (von Braun et al, 1993; Saxena, 2013). Typically, budgets for food are smaller for the urban poor than the rural poor, with other expenditures to factor in (Cohen &, Garrett, 2009; von Braun et al, 1993; Athreya et al, 2010).

Despite the urban poor having easier access to food than the rural poor due to their relative proximity to shops and areas of distribution, as well as easier access to employment and infrastructural benefits, this often obfuscates the serious issues facing the urban poor, such as homelessness, underpaid employment or unemployment, poor sanitation, cramped living conditions, exploitation of unrecorded migrant labourers, discrimination, malnutrition from unbalanced diets and vulnerabilities to communicable diseases (Mander, 2012; von Braun et al, 1993). Mitlin and Satterthwaite (2013) argue that the scale and depth of urban poverty is ignored in most low-income and many middle-income nations, which reflects a misrepresentation and underestimation of urban poverty, a consequence of narrow definitions of poverty by governments, difficulty in measuring urban depravation, and fundamentally an issue of poor conceptualisation. The causes and contributions of urban poverty are poorly understood by both governments and international agencies, and Mitlin and Satterthwaite (2013) argue that this reflects a lack of interest by these bodies to understand urban depravation.

The urban poor find themselves “in a nexus of underdevelopment and industrialisation” (von Braun et al, 1993, pg. 28), prone to poverty-related infectious disease and malnutrition, urban-related cardiovascular and mental disease, and social instability and insecurity, such as alcoholism, drug abuse and venereal diseases (von Braun et al, 1993). Malnutrition (either undernourishment or overconsumption) aggravates and is aggravated by other diseases, particularly infectious diseases. These are exacerbated by overcrowding and pollution, as well as sociocultural disruptions of rural migrants moving to large cities, creating psychological and mental issues, though the empirical studies of this are still not fully developed (von Braun et al, 1993). Nutritional status may be influenced by nutritional knowledge, food habits and cultural preferences, relying on education rather than merely availability or access to food.

Regardless, urbanisation is set to continue at a rapid pace, overloading existing infrastructure and expanding peri-urban areas where there is already inadequate infrastructure, being unplanned, poorly serviced and overcrowded (von Braun et al, 1993; Marshall & Randhawa, 2017). The rural poor, seeking out new livelihoods and opportunities, contribute heavily to migrant populations swarming to cities, meaning that urban slums tend to grow faster than other, more established parts of cities, as well as bringing with them their pre-existing issues (malnourished, chronic ill health, etc.) (Marshall &

Randhawa, 2017). These are mounting challenges that India will be facing in the coming decades as it transitions into a more urban, industrial and service-sector focused society, from a predominantly agrarian society (Tewari et al, 2015). Around 32% of India's population live in urban areas as of the 2011 census (Deloitte, 2011; Chatterjee, 2002) and the estimated growth for urban areas per decade is almost three times higher than for rural areas, with India expected to have roughly 50% of its population urban by 2025 (Bloom, 2011; von Braun et al, 1993).

In India, cities are conceptualised by policy-makers as hubs of economic growth and this aspect of the city has only grown more important, with estimates that 70% of India's GDP will by produced by cities by 2030 (McKinsey Global Institute, 2016). The economic growth in, for example, China has been a result of demographic transition and industrialisation, which has not been similarly reflected in India (Bloom, 2011).

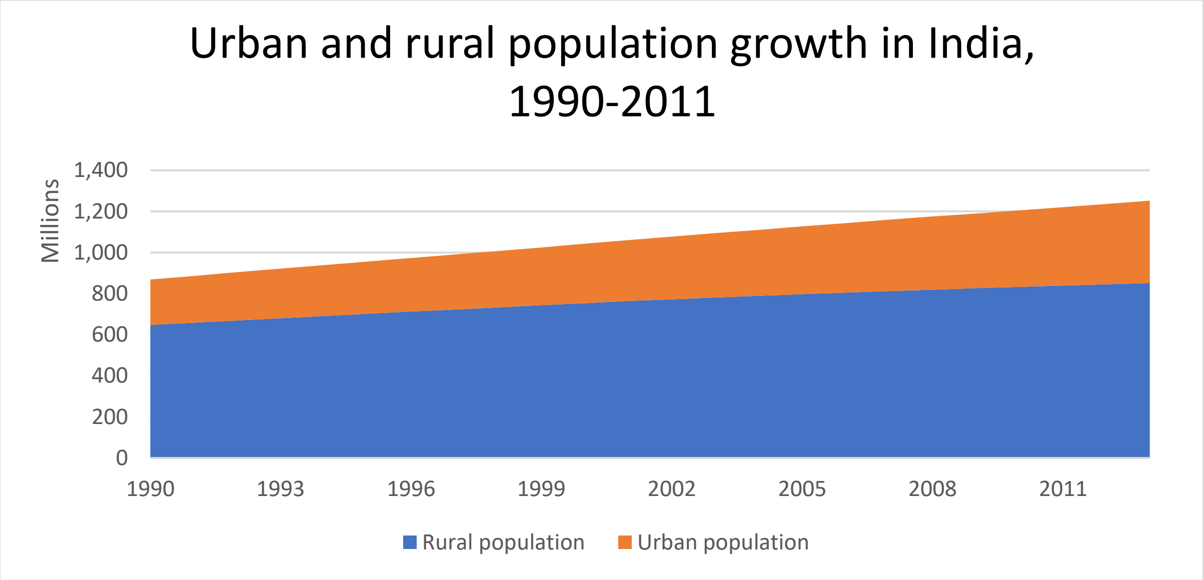
However, urban areas in India, much like many developing countries, are characterised by informal settlements, unplanned shelters that lack official recognition and thus lack access to proper sanitation, infrastructure and safe housing. The majority of the urban poor live in these settlements, which are most commonly called slums. Slums are viewed as a manifestation of rapid urbanisation and the urbanisation of poverty by the United Nations, who consider efforts to improve living conditions of slum dwellers to be "feeble and incoherent" (UN-HABITAT, 2003). A reoccurring trend in developing countries has been the shrinking of the core city and the increase in suburban and peri-urban zones (Tacoli et al, 2013), a phenomenon that is also occurring in India; Delhi, as an example, has shrunk its core around 2% in the last decade, while growth of the surrounding area has grown by 5% (Bhan & Shivanand, 2013). In India, this shrinking of the core city has been linked with widespread evictions of slums and slum demolishment, with an estimated 70,000 households evicted between 1990 and 2007 according to government data, and a further 40,000 households evicted preceding the Commonwealth Games in 2010 (Kundu, 2009; Bhan & Shivanand, 2013). While the total number of slums have decreased, due to this aggressive policy of slum destruction and the displacement, the total amount of slum dwellers has increased as migrants continue to travel to the city, leading to an increased density of slums (Kundu, 2009). This has contributed to urban sprawl, particularly along the major highways and railways linking Delhi to its surroundings, with resettlements colonies built in the periphery of the city (Bhan, 2009). The extent of evictions was such that two central districts saw a 25% fall of its total population according to the 2011 census (Bhan, 2014; NSSO, 2011). The eviction of slums has been justified by characterising residents of slums as “encroachers” and the slums themselves as “encroachments,” and that slums are demolished to protect “citizens” and ensure “hygiene” (Bhan, 2014; Ghertner, 2008). It must be clarified that the majority of slums are tacitly accepted and some even recognised by authorities, some of whose residents have ration cards, proof of residence and access to legal entitlements (Chatterjee et al, 2012).

While rural development has been the dominant focus of the Government of India since its inception, as well as the focus of foreign aid programmes, international organisations, local NGOs and grass roots organisations, there has been a growing understanding of the need for planned urban development (Government of India, 2006; Sattherthwaite, 2006). Urban development, as argued in the previous section, has broadly taken the shape of middle-class endeavours, such as ‘beautification’ projects, the building of apartments, high rises and shopping centres. The urban development plans aimed towards the urban poor have been mostly characterised by slum demolishment and the relocation of the urban poor to suburban and peri-urban areas, with some minor slum improvement plans that have focused on improving infrastructure and access to services.

However, historical academic work has pointed towards an urban bias in actual infrastructure development and investments, although these urban developments have been themselves biased against the poor (Harriss & Moore, 1984; Lipton, 1977). Furthermore, arguments against this academic work point towards not taking the democratic nature of India into account, which has veered towards a rural bias due to political gain (Mitra, 1977; Bholey, 2016). The historical situation of the urban poor, made up of underemployed migrants from rural areas, has shown an equal, or worse, health indicators than if they had stayed rural (Jones & Corbridge, 2010). State governments hold the budgetary and planning power over cities, while local urban bodies are tasked with more ‘managerial’ duties such as waste management: as such, the local urban bodies do not consider the responsibilities of dealing with urban poor as theirs, and even if they did would be constrained by a centrally-allocated budget and the lack of say in planning (Baud & De Wit, 2009). This reflects a broader decentralisation of urban governance found throughout developing countries, with similar issues of underfunding, a lack of administrative capacity and weak local governance (Baud & De Wit, 2009; Cabannes, 2004; Sassen, 2012). Furthermore, state governments in India have long oriented themselves towards pandering towards rural voters – for the majority of the states, these would be the overwhelming segment of their respective populations – while urban votes who are most courted are the urban middle class, who can be more easily located and their needs identified. As slums are generally unrecognised, their value as a voting base is also diminished, even in cities that are predominantly slums like in Mumbai (Pinto, 2008).

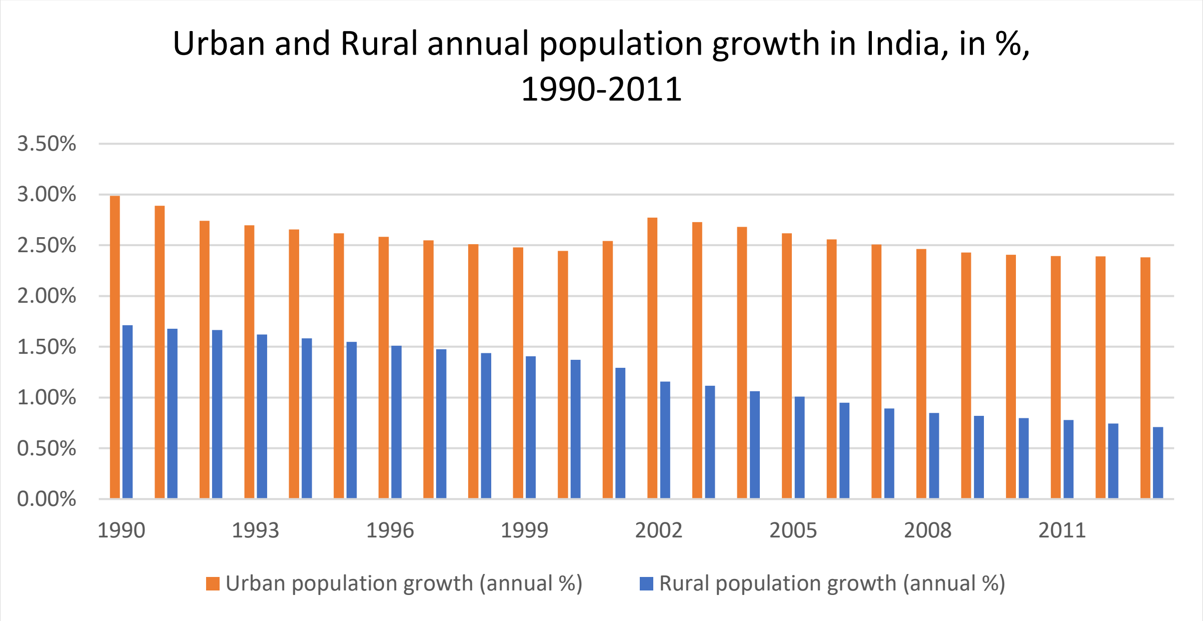
Huge amounts of migration from rural to urban areas have occurred, with people in search of work and opportunities bereft in rural areas (Pritchard et al, 2014). The lack of employment opportunities in rural areas has fuelled the de-agrarianisation of the Indian economy and contributed significantly to urban migration, in which unemployed youth see no future in agriculture and seek more economic and social opportunities in urban areas (Pritchard et al, 2014). This transition is only just beginning, with the majority of the population still living in rural areas, but it is well under way, with the exact population growth and changing proportions shown in figures 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5.

Figure 2.2 Urban and Rural Population Growth in India, 1990 to 2011



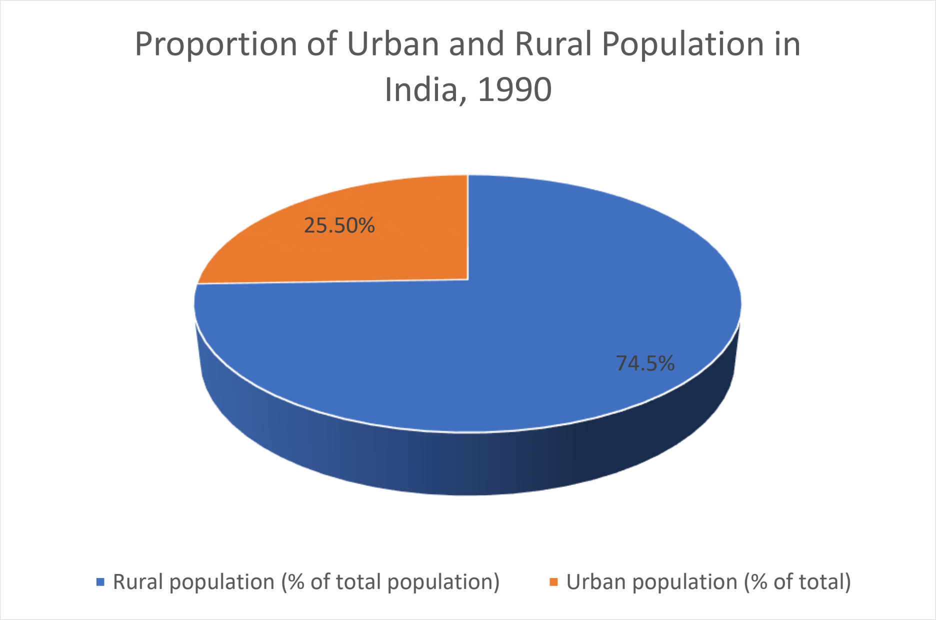
Source: World Bank, 2014

Figure 2.3 Urban and Rural Annual Population Growth in India, in %, 1990 to 2011



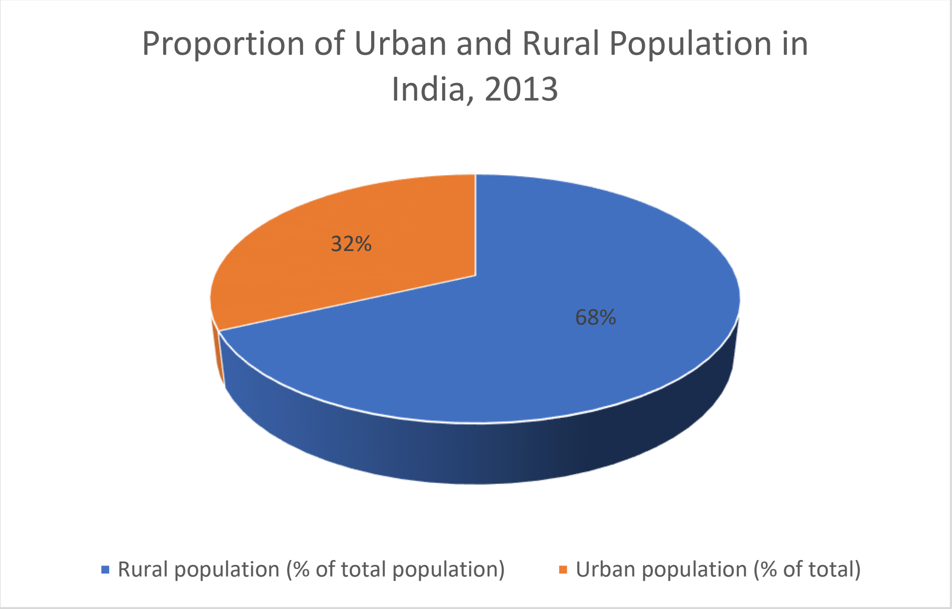
Source: World Bank, 2014

Figure 2.4 Proportion of Urban and Rural Population in India, 1990.



Source: World Bank, 2014

Figure 2.5 Proportion of Urban and Rural Population in India, 2013.



Source: World Bank, 2014

The rapid change in urban growth has stressed urban spaces and social institutions, affecting all aspects of society – from the economic and political to the social and cultural (Pritchard et al, 2014; Tewari et al, 2015). Historically, this type of transition away from agrarian society has rarely been painless – the Industrial Revolution in Britain being the classic example of the socio-economic and political changes that occur (Pritchard et al, 2014). India is no exception. A growing proportion of urban India is seeing rapidly increasing incomes and living standards, with a widening economic and lifestyle gap between the urban and rural. The most educated, the highest incomes and the majority of the formal sector are found in urban areas (Pal & Ghosh, 2007). A growing middle class, roughly estimated to be around 300 million people, have influenced and been influenced by the political and media narrative that emphasise the importance of economic growth and is intrinsically linked with 'Western' lifestyles (Drèze & Sen, 2013). Aspirational groups desire to mimic this lifestyle as a sign of success. While the majority of the nation are found outside this narrative, the urban poor are in a unique situation straddling old and new values, looking to break out of ancestral livelihoods and the cycle of poverty and encountering concepts of individualism and materialism (Menon, 2013). Tensions between these changes have contributed to significant alienation for large portions of the urban poor.

2.3 Attitudes towards identity and citizenship of the urban poor

The drive towards ‘modernity’ in India, spurred on by economic liberalisation in the 1990s (Ramakrishnan, 2013), can be seen through the lens of creating imagined cities, which Professor Amita Baviskar, who has written extensively on the cultural politics of environment and urban development in India, calls ‘bourgeoise environmentalism’, with the goal to transform major cities in the image of the elite, ‘world-class’, ‘progressive’ and ‘beautiful’ (Baviskar, 2003). The ‘unplanned city’ of sprawling slums, shanty towns and unrecognised settlements provide the cooks, cleaners, security guards, street sweepers, auto-rickshaw drivers and labourers who underpin the city and who enable the ‘planned city’ that is pursuing ‘modernity’, marked by shopping malls, luxury hotels and expensive restaurants (Ramakrishnan, 2013). The construction of the planned city necessitates the existence of the unplanned city, heavily reliant on migrant labourers, and the building of the planned city is mirrored by the mushrooming of the unplanned city (Baviskar, 2003). The contradictory nature of the city was brought about by the varying agendas and ideologies of planners, politicians and municipal officials, some who desired modernity and others who desired inclusion. Populist governments would recognise migrants, albeit to a limited degree, and local politicians supported and encouraged sprawling slums in exchange for votes, but economic liberalisation in the 1990s brought about housing societies and land transfer from farmers to property owners, where money became a larger influence than populist support (Baviskar, 2003; Ramakrishnan, 2013). This tension between populist politics and economic rationalism is a reoccurring theme within Indian policy-making, marked by paradoxes of control and liberalisation in economic venues, rights-based legislation and laws in the formal avenues and its irrelevance in the informal.

One significant change in this socio-cultural transition is the discourse on the urban poor. Historically, the Supreme Court had viewed the plight of the urban poor, specifically slum dwellers, as the failure of the local municipalities and the government to provide basic amenities, like sewage and sanitary infrastructure (Ghertner, 2008; Ghertner, 2013), but the discourse changed slowly throughout the 1980s and 1990s to view slums as sources of pollution and nuisance, considering the ‘polluting poor’ and the overpopulation of slums less as a failure of the government to provide housing and infrastructure but instead a reorientation of policies to prevent further overpopulation and pollution by limiting and demolishing slums (Ghertner, 2008; Ghertner, 2013; Bhan, 2014). This shift in discourse meant that slums began to be viewed as 'illegal settlements'. In 1985, the Supreme Court ruled that the southern city of Mumbai had the right to mass evict 'pavement dwellers', without necessitating compensation or to take the responsibility for resettlement (Olga Tellis Vs. Bombay Municipal Corporation, 1985). These mass evictions allowed for the development of luxury housing and shopping malls, and the next two decades saw the shaping of the city highly centred on the urban middle class and elite. Another Supreme Court ruling in 1990 reaffirmed the evictions of 'pavement dwellers' and extended them to all sorts of illegal settlements (Bhan, 2014).

A discourse analysis done by D. Asher Ghertner on the legal discourse on Delhi slum demolitions saw a key discursive shift regarding slums, and by extension slum-dwellers, in which was exemplified by two key sentences in two different judgments: the landmark Almrita Patel vs the Union of India case where the Supreme Court ruled that "there is large-scale encroachment of public land by the persons who come from other states," (Ghertner, 2008, pg. 62) the first time that the Supreme Court targeted slums as a 'public nuisance' and viewed slum-dwellers as 'others', and the Vikas Puri vs MCD case in 2006, where the interim order by the Delhi High Court stated: "on the one hand a citizen has to pay handsome price for acquiring land…for his habitat and on the other hand unauthorised encroachment and habitat on government land is allowed to go on, [which]...deprives the rights of citizens of Delhi to water, electricity and other civic services. The right of honest citizens in this regard cannot be made subservient to the right of encroachers," which clearly vocalises the citizens/non-citizens dichotomy, where slum-dwellers are reduced to illegal encroachers and the middle class elevated to honest citizens who are more deserving of rights.

Importantly, the courts drew distinction between "citizens" and "encroachers," redefining the residents of illegal settlements in the eyes of the judiciary and calling into question the rights of the urban poor and their claim on citizenship and participation, and in doing so questioning their legal access to resources and entitlements. This shift in language by the courts was considered surprising due to their extensive work on the Right to Food and other Public Interest Litigation (PIL), of which slum evictions had become a part of (Bhan, 2014; Ghertner, 2008). PILs are legal actions utilised on issues that raise broad public concern, as well as to advance the cause of disadvantaged groups – the Right to Food case, for example, was a PIL that championed the food insecure, yet on the other hand slum evictions were also PIL that resulted from complaints by middle class residents of areas surrounded by slums, citing the lack of safety and unsightliness of slums (Bhan, 2009).

These laws were both influenced by, and in turn contributed to, the perception of the urban poor as ‘encroachers’ and ‘squatters’ rather than as citizens, forming the identity of the slum dweller as illegal, rather than merely making where they resided illegal (Menon, 2013; Bhan, 2014). The urban poor through this lens is thus positioned as a consequence of changing attitudes and laws, moving them from a segment of society that needed support and aid to being viewed as a troublesome nuisance (Bhan, 2014; Baviskar, 2013). These latent attitudes have potentially serious consequences on how urban food security itself is perceived by policy-makers, as well as the government of India’s commitment to resolving and addressing urban poverty and urban food insecurity.

2.4 Urban Food Insecurity in India

There is broad acceptance in the literature of urban food security that it is an under-researched area, a part of a broader view in the literature on urban poverty that the scale and depth of urban poverty is ignored, misrepresented, underestimated and poorly documented within most developing nations; India is no exception (Mitlin & Sattherwaite, 2013; Tacoli et al, 2013; Agarwal et al, 2009; Mander, 2012; von Braun, 2007), with the official urban poverty estimates in 2012 placing 13.7% of the urban population below the poverty line, yet the official urban poverty estimates in 2010 placed 21% of the urban population below the poverty line. Furthermore, most estimates place one-third of the urban population as living in extreme poverty (Agarwal et al, 2009). While there is a slim likelihood of a dramatic change in two years, it is likely that the reality of the urban poor is obfuscated due to inherent statistical issues. No estimates of urban poverty have come out since 2012, highlighting how tracking the urban poor has been difficult, as many are highly mobile segments of the population, and resultantly, collecting population data as well as tracking indicators of poverty and malnutrition have been severely constrained. Limited existing data sets have contributed to these issues. These are significant factors that contribute to the difficulty of creating accurate and relevant policies for the urban poor, although Mitlin and Sattherwaite (2013) argue that this is indicative of a lack of interest by government institutions and international organisations to understand urban depravation.

The urban transition, wherein members of rural households leave farming to pursue non-agricultural livelihoods and/or migrate to urban areas, can take either a virtuous or vicious cycle (Pritchard et al, 2014; von Braun, 1999). A virtuous cycle is when the household member finds an opportune livelihood that supports a nutritious diet for themselves, and sufficient additional income to support the food security needs of their family. A vicious cycle occurs when the household member is forced into a marginalised, vulnerable livelihood, such as casual labour, and cannot afford a nutritious diet for themselves, let alone their family. The vicious cycle has more often than not prevailed for the Indian poor and is the reality for many migrants to urban agglomerations (Pritchard et al, 2014).

While infant and child mortality rates are globally lower in urban areas, due to closer proximity to healthcare centres, overall access and availability of healthcare centres and other forms of government institutions are limited, and in India specifically, child, infant and neonatal survival were similar in urban areas to rural areas, and in many states, undernutrition among urban poor children was worse than in rural areas; furthermore, more than half of all poor urban children under five are considered stunted (Agarwal & Sangar, 2005; Athreya et al, 2010, p.7; Agarwal, 2011). Government economists have cast this in a language that appeals to the neoliberal mentality – "billions of lost revenue" in potential future earnings for the country as children fail to reach their potential due to lack of proper nutrition (Gupta et al, 2015). Activists create an alternative framing of the issue and an alternative narrative – the failure of the Indian state to provide sufficient nutrition for children is a moral failure, condemning lives to inescapable poverty and suffering (Mander, 2012; Gupta et al, 2015).

Despite these concerns, there have been attempts made by the government of India, particularly through the Planning Commission, the government's policy research institute that has now been discontinued and replaced with the *NITI Aayog* (literally Policy Commission), to better understand and conceptualise urban food insecurity. While there is no single measurement that can capture the complexity of urban food insecurity, there are multiple measurements that have been used by different government institutions to quantify and elucidate food insecurity, ranging from concrete measurements, such as income, calorie consumption, quantity and quality of available food, and the utilisation of the Body Mass Index, to more subjective measurements, such as social acceptability, perception of access and availability to food, and experiences of going hungry (Agarwal et al, 2009). These different indicators of food security reflect a setting where different measurements of food insecurity reveal different outcomes, and how the failure to apply a multi-dimensional methodology to understanding urban food insecurity can present misleading data. The core dataset that is utilised in India is done by the National Sample Survey Organisation of India (NSSO), which has utilised some of the above metrics when conducting surveys, ranging from income, calorie consumption and BMI to experiential perception of food security. It also must be noted that food insecurity is not an absolute, that one is either food secure or food insecure, wherein one can be food insecure without hunger and food insecure with hunger (Blumberg et al, 1999).

The NSSO has tracked calorie intake in both urban and rural populations since the 1980s. The NSSO utilises this measurement to understand trends in consumption, and this tracking of calorie intake has meant that the Government of India has been able to set a minimum calorie requirement that is considered sufficient for good health – 2,400 calories in rural areas and 2,100 calories in urban areas (Chandrasekhar & Ghosh, 2013). However, the NSSO data shows that the bottom quartile has a calorie intake on average 30-50% lower than the calorie intake of the top quartile of the population, revealing a continued decline in calorie consumption of the bottom quintile since 1987 (Saxena, 2011). Food insecurity can thus be measured by food-energy deficiency, and utilising this methodology reveals that urban areas have the same, and in some cases higher, levels of food-energy deficiencies; the average per capita calorie intake, measured in 2009-2010, was 1,946 calories in urban areas, as opposed to 2,020 calories in rural areas (Tacoli et al, 2013; Saxena, 2013).

While the poorest quintile is still heavily reliant on calories from grains, overall consumption of grains has declined for all socio-economic segments, with the poor consuming fewer grains than the non-poor (Saxena, 2013). Dietary diversification has meant an increased expenditure on meat, fish, eggs and milk and a decrease in staple grains; as such, while calorific consumption may have declined, diversity is often correlated with improved nutritional status. An increasingly diverse diet has also been correlated to higher incomes (Stage et al, 2009; Tacoli et al, 2013). As such, diversification of diets for the urban poor has mainly been oriented around highly processed food as part of a broader nutrition transition (Baviskar, 2018).

Beyond the NSSOs calorie intake methodology, the decennial National Family Health Survey (NFHS) have utilised Body Mass Index (BMI) measurements as a method of gauging underweight and overweight. BMI has generally been criticised for not taking into account nutritional deficiencies, variations in body sizes and fitness, and other aspects of vulnerabilities and food insecurity (Ramachandran, 2013), yet is a simple way of gathering broad information regarding weight and as an indicator of malnutrition in terms of stunting and underweight (Motbainor et al, 2017). The last full all-India data from 2005-2006 revealed that 19.8% of women and 17.5% of men in urban areas were under normal BMI, while 28.9% of women and 22.2% of men had BMI that was above normal, indicating overweight or obesity (NFHS-3, 2006). That is to say, 50% of women and 40% of men covered in the survey were suffering from either underweight or overweight. Figures from the latest survey have not yet been fully released, but preliminary data from a handful of states seems to indicate that these figures have not changed substantially (NFHS-4, 2016). Michael Carolan (2013) argues that overweight and obesity should be factored in as an element of food insecurity, and this data reveals the depths of challenges facing urban public health and consequently urban food security. Currently, however, policy-makers have by and large not taken BMI into account in shaping food policy, focusing more on other dimensions of food insecurity, such as income, with no focus at all on overconsumption or overweight.

Another significant measure of food insecurity, mainly utilised by the Planning Commission, is tracking per capita expenditure on food to evaluate consumption patterns of macronutrients (Gulati et al, 2013). As access to food, as well as non-food essentials such as fuel, water, transportation and shelter, are highly monetised for the urban poor, calorie costs are on average higher in urban than rural areas (von Braun et al, 1993). Consequently, marginal increases in incomes have gone towards meeting the minimum non-food essentials, such as healthcare, education, fuel and transport (Saxena, 2013), with the high cost of living in urban areas leading to average per capita expenditure on food declining slightly in urban areas between 1994 and 2010, while overall expenditure on non-food items rose by 2.1% per annum (table 2.6) (Saxena, 2013; Athreya et al, 2010).

Figure 2.6 Growth in Average Urban per Capita Expenditure on All Goods and Average Urban Per Capita Expenditure on Food (In Rupees) at 1993-1994 Prices.

Years	Average Urban Per Capita Expenditure	Average Urban Per Capita Food Expenditure
1993-94	458.0	250.3
2009-10	637.8	244.9
Annual rate of growth 1993-94 to 2009-10	2.1	-0.1

Source: Gupta, 2013

With these basic measurements outlined, let us turn our attention to the National Food Security Act in itself, a brief history of its development and its contents, both its legally binding and non-binding clauses. The Act will also be contrasted with its earlier drafts, to outline how it has developed, as well as briefly cover the major criticisms of the Act.

2.4.1 The Most Vulnerable

There are segments of the urban population that the literature identifies as being the most vulnerable, on the margins of society. While there are several identifiable vulnerable groups, including women, children, the elderly, the destitute, the disabled, the ill, religious minorities, and disadvantaged castes and tribes, there were two urban vulnerable groups that were highlighted in the literature as being particularly prone to suffering from chronic food insecurity: namely the homeless and migrant labourers (Ghosh, 2010; Mooij, 1999; Sriraman, 2011, Prasad et al, 2010). This segment of the urban population face multiple dimensions of food insecurity, including all the aspects shared by the urban poor, further compounded by the lack of housing and marginalisation in society.

There is a broad range of definitions for homelessness, varying from someone with no shelter whatsoever, someone with insecure shelter such as in squatter settlements, or someone with temporary shelter such as refugee camps. Consequently, the urban homeless is a figure that is hard to estimate; in global terms, an estimated 100 million to 1 billion may find themselves homeless or lacking adequate housing (UNHRC, 2005).

The definition of homeless that is found in the census of India are specifically individuals who live in insecure or temporary shelter, strictly referring to the homeless as those who lack "a structure with roof". Traditional survey methodologies in India acknowledge that they do not include the homeless, as they base their surveys on residents to gather household data, even when doing research on levels of urban food insecurity (Prasad et al, 2010; NSSO, 2011). The census further states that the "houseless population" are likely to live "on the roadside, pavements, drainage pipes, under staircases, in the open, in temples, train platforms, and the like" (NSSO, 2011).

The urban homeless is therefore conservatively estimated to be around 8 million people, or about 2.4% of the entire urban population, and constitute one of the most vulnerable categories of urban poverty (Prasad et al, 2010; Kundu, 2009), with variations across states and cities. Megacities have a higher concentration of homelessness due to the lack of affordable housing, both of seasonal/temporary homeless migrants (who make up the majority of the homeless) and permanent street dwellers, although homelessness is found in all types of cities. The urban homeless struggle to organise and cook food for themselves, mainly relying on purchasing cooked food from street vendors for their nourishment; furthermore, the average daily expenditure on food for the homeless has been found to be between 50% and 80% of daily income (Prasad et al, 2010; Mander, 2008). They are therefore exposed to higher risk of nutritional deficiencies, food insecurity and deprivation, yet schemes and programmes offered by the Government of India are residence-based and lack portability, meaning the homeless are completely excluded from access, despite being part of the segment of the population that would benefit the most from entitlements.

The second group that was highlighted in the literature and was considered particularly exposed to food insecurity were migrant labourers. Vandana Prasad's research on urban homelessness estimates that 90% of the urban homeless are migrant labourers, with only a minority of permanent homeless, backed by statistics from the national survey (Prasad et al, 2010; NSSO, 2011).

Migrant labourers are a major source of new inhabitants of urban and peri-urban areas, with the reasons for migration varied and complex. Generally, it is a decision taken by the rural household to invest in the migrant to eventually boost household incomes through remittances, due to the expectation of higher earnings in urban areas and lack of opportunities and adequate livelihoods in the rural areas (Von Braun, 2007). It can be broken down into multiple 'push' and 'pull' factors; 'push' factors being low wages, absence of employment opportunities, or even droughts and land scarcity, while 'pull' factors would be improved job opportunities, the possibilities of higher incomes, and even different risk factors (Von Braun, 2007).

On one hand, if push factors are stronger than pull factors, the risk is increased for the migrant to join the high number of unemployed migrants already in the city. On the other hand, migration spurred by better jobs could be welfare enhancing, with improved remittances back to their rural communities (Von Braun, 2007). A survey in 2015 conducted in 18 states across India reflected deep dissatisfaction among farmers of their economic conditions, with 69% of the respondents believing that city life is superior to living rurally (CSDS, 2015). The belief that city life is far superior was strongest expressed by the landless farmers surveyed, and 60% of all the respondents of the survey wanted their children to settle in a city, seeing no future for them in agriculture, and saw cities representing better education opportunities, better employment opportunities and better access to services (CSDS, 2015). Seasonal migration is also common, where the migration is not permanent. A common example is of farmers migrating to cities when it is not the agricultural season, seeking to enhance their income and working in both rural and urban areas. This is called circular migration and may even be as a result of failed crops or lack of water or rain to sustain agricultural livelihoods (UNESCO, 2011). However, the literature points towards labourers to be not only vulnerable in terms of food insecurity, but also to work-place exploitation, the lack of job stability or security, and exclusion from formal schemes and programmes, finding themselves locked in the informal economy (Harriss-White, 2014; Drèze & Sen, 2013; Pal & Ghosh, 2007).

2.5 The National Food Security Act as a response to continued malnutrition and hunger

At the start of the 21st century, the development of the PDS under policies introduced during 'liberalisation' in the 1990s, as covered in the previous section, had become untenable and had failed to improve the food security situation within India, prompting certain states, particularly in the south, to strengthen their own PDS policies separate from the central government (Drèze & Khera, 2010). In 2001, a court case that is now popularly known as the 'Right to Food' case (Hassan, 2011; Pritchard et al, 2014), was brought to court. The Rajasthan branch of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), a human rights body, filed a petition with the Supreme Court of India demanding that the large stocks of grains that had accumulated over the years be utilised to feed impoverished people in the state, which was in the grips of an extended drought (Guha-Khasnobis & Vivek, 2007).

The court case brought the state of food insecurity sharply into focus, sparking debates on the right to food in the Indian policy sphere as well as receiving significant media attention (Guha-Khasnobis & Vivek, 2007). The Government of India had enshrined the right to life in article 21 of its constitution, based on the United Nation's declaration of human rights, but operated on an aspirational basis rather than a legal one, with no legally binding laws or acts that gave the Indian population ability to demand rights, acting more as guiding principles (Pillay, 2009; Drèze & Sen, 2013).

The Supreme Court ruled that the state had the constitutional duty to ensure that no one went hungry by interpreting article 21 in the constitution as ensuring the right to food (Pritchard et al, 2014), expanding the scope of the petition to the entire country (Guha-Khasnobis & Vivek, 2007) and establishing that the provisioning of food was a legal entitlement in the eyes of the judiciary. This was the means of challenging the policy design established by the legislative branch through the alternative policy venue of the judiciary (True et al, 2006).

The court followed the ruling by setting up a series of interim orders that further defined the rights and entitlements of people to food and food-related services, opening up a policy space for a rights-based approach and spurring a mobilization of various non-governmental organisations, trade unions, grass roots movements and other civil societies into the Right to Food Campaign (Hassan, 2011; True et al, 2006). These interim orders (see table 2.7) made existing government schemes into legal entitlements and thus became obligatory for the government to implement (Guha-Khasnobis & Vivek, 2007). The interim orders also ordered the central government, state governments, and state-run radio and television to spread publicity of the schemes and orders, raise awareness of the rights and entitlements that its population have, and to further support the right to food (Pritchard et al, 2014).

Figure 2.7 List of Supreme Court Major Interim Orders in 2001 Right to Food Case

Scheme	Original Scheme	Interim Order
Annapurna	10kg of free cereals for the aged and destitute without pension	Provisioning of cereals to begin immediately, and eligible beneficiaries identified
Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)	35kg of highly subsidised cereals for those considered 'poorest of the poor'	Provisioning of cereals to begin immediately, and eligible beneficiaries identified
Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)	Comprehensive integrated programme concerning health, education and nutrition for children under six, pregnant and lactating women, and adolescent girl	Directing that childcare centres (anganwadis) should be opened in each settlement and existing centres to open immediately. Set a minimum norm for food to be provided.
Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS)	School meal programme for children attending government or government-aided primary schools	Ordered that school-going children should be provided with fresh cooked meals at least 200 days a year, on all working days
National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)	Social security for the poor	Ordered that in case of death to a primary breadwinner, 10,000 rupees should be provided to the family no later than four weeks after death
National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS)	Scheme for poor pregnant women	BPL women, by their twelfth week of pregnancy for their first two live births, should be provided 500 rupees.
National Old Age Pensions Scheme (NOAPS)	Social security pension for the aged and destitute	Social security pensions provided monthly, and eligible beneficiaries identified
Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)	Subsidised grain for the poor	Provisioning of cereals to begin immediately, ration cards provided, and eligible beneficiaries identified

Source: Guha-Khasnobis, Vivek, 2007

The Supreme Court took three important steps in raising the profile of a rights-based approach and pressuring the government to legislate on the right to food (Birchfield & Corsi, 2010):

1) Identifying the right to life in Article 21 of the Indian Constitution as a right to food.
2) Concretely laying out the implication of the right to food in terms of policy.
3) Subsequently overseeing the implementation, and continued monitoring, of the court-specified policies.

In 2002, the court instituted a mechanism independent of the government, in the form of Commissioners, who monitored and reported on the implementation of the court's orders, as well as suggested ways to promote the right to food of the poor. The court followed its first major interim orders with increasingly detailed and strengthened interim orders on each specific scheme. As an example, the interim order concerning the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) expanded the scheme to all school-going children throughout the country, with precise directions to the government on how it would implement the change (Supreme Court, 2001). The Commissioners would monitor the implementation of the new rulings with the Right to Food Movement, who were working in close collaboration with the Commissioners, acting as their on-the-ground 'eyes and ears' (Hassan, 2011). The clear direction from the courts, with specifically defined targets and closely supervised implementation with support from the Right to Food Movement, made the MDMS one of the most successful social assistance programmes, fully available in schools throughout the country by 2005 (Guha-Khasnobis & Vivek, 2007).

The contribution of the Supreme Court, the Right to Food Movement and the Commissioners has ultimately been hard to concretely measure. While its influence on changing the policy process in India has been praised by many different corners of civil society, academia and politics (Mander, 2012; Mate, 2013; Hassan, 2011), with particular praise given to instituting a rights-based framework for future legislation and pressuring the government into drafting and passing rights-based bills, there was little accountability by the states for actual compliance and the Commissioners had little authority on the state level in ensuring that changes were fully implemented (Guha-Khasnobis & Vivek, 2007). Having excellent aspirational language on paper is one thing yet ensuring that malnutrition and hunger decline is almost entirely different.

The universalisation of the MDMS can be taken as an example of those mixed results. The court orders meant that the MDMS went from reaching 33 million children in 1995 to ultimately reaching 120 million by 2010 (Government of India, 2010), and has been considered a success in terms of regularity and scale (Khera, 2013). Furthermore, the MDMS has been extensively studied in terms of education and nutrition, with a significant positive impact on school enrolment, retention and attendance, as well as a limited improvement in nutrition (Afridi, 2011; Jayaraman & Simroth, 2011; Khera, 2013). However, fundamental problems remain, including food safety and hygiene concerns, lack of proper infrastructure and staff training, questions over the nutritional value of the food, overall accountability, and still-poor indicators on child stunting, wasting and underweight (Global Nutrition Report, 2014). In certain states, individuals have monopolised the food supply to schools, enabling them to supply low quality food for lucrative government contracts (Khera, 2013). The significance of the 2001 Right to Food Case has only grown with the subsequent laws that have passed, being a landmark event that set precedence on the role of the judiciary regarding human rights (Mate, 2013). Translating constitutional rights into justiciable legal entitlements can be seen as a powerful move in ensuring those rights being upheld by the government.

The Indian National Congress (INC) led a centrist coalition called the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), which took power in 2004. The UPA recognised the populist benefits of a rights-based framework and made promises to revamp existing schemes and programmes, from financing a universal MDMS to legislating on a slew of social protection programmes, such as a right to work programme that became the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 (NREGA). All of these targets had been goals of the Right to Food Movement and part of interim orders by the Supreme Court, which reflected the successful bottom-up pressure that the original Right to Food case created in demanding rights from their government (Pritchard et al, 2014). Crucially, it laid the foundation for the drafting of a right to food bill, named the National Food Security Bill (NFSB) in a manifesto promise of the UPA as they sought re-election in 2009. Furthermore, with the FAO releasing the ‘Guide on Legislating the Right to Food’ in 2009, ‘top-down’ international pressure helped contribute (Pritchard et al, 2014), although internal pressures played a far greater role.

2.5.1 Content of the NFSA

The Act eventually centred heavily on the PDS, with very few provisions for reforming the existing system, stipulating only (in legally non-binding terms) that certain technological innovations would be implemented in making the system more transparent and efficient, although it also acknowledged that technology cannot be the solution to governance (Gulati et al, 2012).

The NFSA went through a multitude of iterations that will be covered in chapter six. The very first draft was made by the National Advisory Council (NAC), an advisory body set up by the UPA government to directly advise the prime minister. The NAC, made up of prominent economists, bureaucrats, politicians and activists, emphasised the right to food in their draft, helping set the tone and focus of the NFSA's original content. The NAC did not have representation from any states, nor did it have an official role within the government, being an independent advisory body (Aggarwal & Mander, 2013). The initial criticism of the NAC draft of the bill from the Right to Food Movement was the lack of a universal PDS (Mander, 2012; Himanshu & Sen, 2011), retaining a methodology that was strictly socio-economic in identifying those eligible for the PDS.

In 2011, the government submitted an edited draft to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution. The role of the Standing Committee was to collate views from state governments, ministries, members of parliament, researchers and representatives of organisations within food security and present a draft that had taken these perspectives in mind (Aggarwal & Mander, 2013).

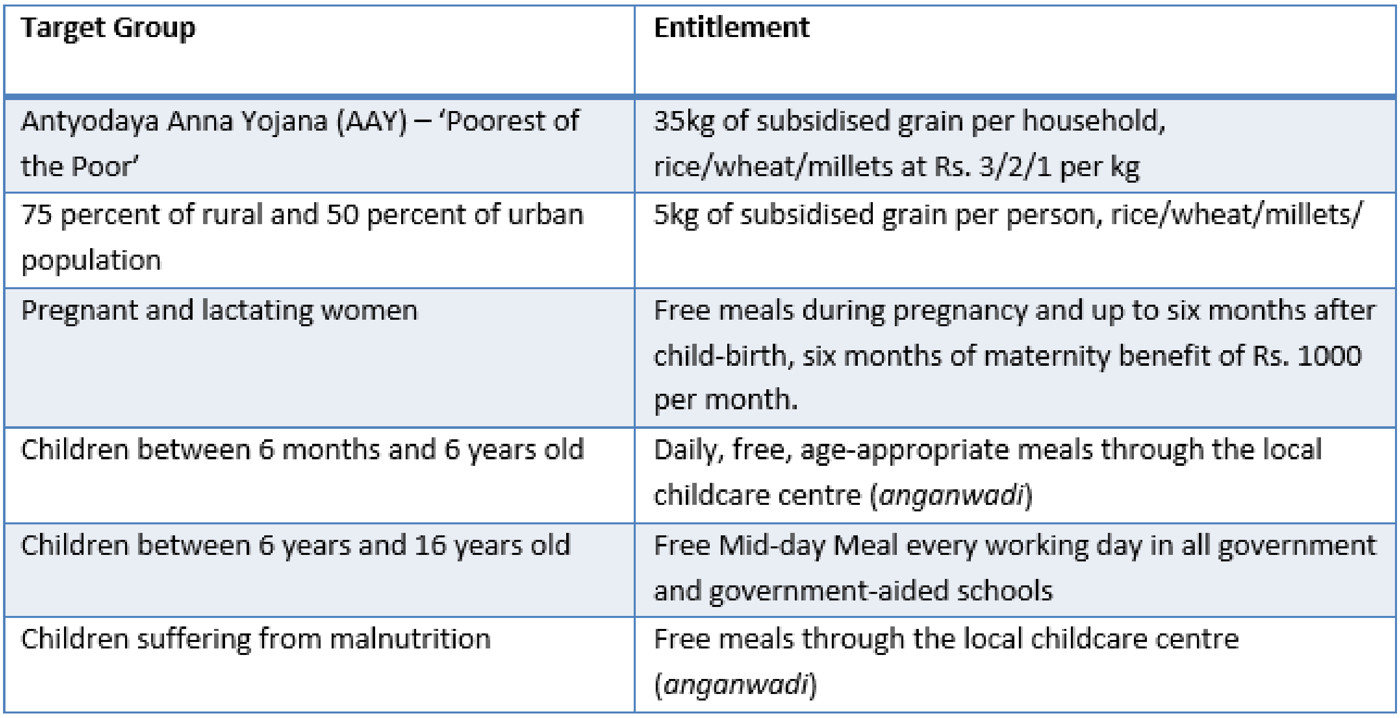
The most significant of the changes by the Standing Committee was the removal of the starvation relief protocol and the provisions for people living in disaster zones and emergencies, as well as for the homeless and the destitute, leaving only women and children as the main vulnerable groups to receive specific entitlements (Aggarwal & Mander, 2013). The eligibility criteria were also changed to encompass 67% of the population rather than 90%. Ankita Aggarwal and Harsh Mander (2013) heavily criticised the standing committee draft, arguing that the changes that had been made included removing provisions that the court had already established. By further limiting who was eligible for food distribution, the policy decision to retain targeted distribution was strengthened. The Right to Food Movement, apart from arguing that the right to food should be universal from an ethical perspective, also argued on the practical level of the high administrative costs of targeting, including defining and identifying those eligible, as well as printing ration cards, updating lists and hiring public officials to ensure that only those eligible received rations (Himanshu & Sen, 2011; Mander, 2011).

To further complicate the matter, the final arbiters of the eligibility criteria are the state governments, who have the responsibility to define the income levels of each category, which has created wide variances and a high differentiation in the implementation of the PDS depending on the state (Drèze, 2013). Furthermore, price subsidies, range of items covered by the PDS, and volume of how much is subsidised were also delegated to each state government to decide upon (Pritchard et al, 2014).

While the right to food language remained, the Right to Food Campaign considered the eventual act a disappointment that did not go far enough in its legal entitlements (Aggarwal & Mander, 2013). Table 2.8 shows the legal entitlements that became part of the National Food Security Act in 2013 as it was passed by the Lok Sabha, India’s lower house of parliament. As the table shows, the NFSA deals with food security narrowly, limited to access and to a lesser degree utilisation for certain target groups. Production is the remit of agricultural policies, while stability is a by-product of the PDS through the MSP. The NFSA will theoretically provide greater access to cheaper food, as well as continue with MSP for farmers to then be able to afford food, keeping it within a neoliberal paradigm of affordability and economic access.

Provisions for children deal directly with utilisation, such as the school meals programme, while for pregnant and lactating women it is dealt with indirectly, through the provisioning of money. Older drafts of the NFSA, particularly from the NAC, stipulated direct provisions of food for more vulnerable groups, particularly the homeless, elderly and migrant workers. This was removed in subsequent drafts after it reached the Lok Sabha.

Table 2.6 The Legal Entitlements of the National Food Security Act of 2013



Target Group	Entitlement
Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) – 'Poorest of the Poor'	35kg of subsidised grain per household, rice/wheat/millets at Rs. 3/2/1 per kg
75 percent of rural and 50 percent of urban population	5kg of subsidised grain per person, rice/wheat/millets/
Pregnant and lactating women	Free meals during pregnancy and up to six months after child-birth, six months of maternity benefit of Rs. 1000 per month.
Children between 6 months and 6 years old	Daily, free, age-appropriate meals through the local childcare centre (*anganwadi*)
Children between 6 years and 16 years old	Free Mid-day Meal every working day in all government and government-aided schools
Children suffering from malnutrition	Free meals through the local childcare centre (*anganwadi*)

Source: National Food Security Act, 2013

Distinct from the legally binding entitlements that make up the majority of the NFSA are certain provisions that are non-binding, subject to how the NFSA develops. These include:

- **Food Commissions**

The Act provides for the creation of State Food Commissions (SFCs); each commission shall have a chairperson, five members and a secretary, at least two of whom must be women and one member representing scheduled castes and another scheduled tribes (NFSA, 2013). These commissions are to monitor and evaluate the efficacy of the act, and to give advice to state governments and their respective agencies. They are also to look into violations of entitlements, either out of their own volition or when met with a complaint; they are to prepare annual reports to be presented to the state legislature and can impose fines and penalties up to 5,000 rupees (NFSA, 2013). The SFCs came out of the recognised influence the Supreme Court-appointed Commissioners after the Right to Food Case, and a willingness to keep a similar system in place to oversee future implementations. The major difference is that instead of an independent arbiter in the form of the Supreme Court, the states will form their own commissions.

- **Transparency and Grievance Redressal Officers**

The act further specifies a two-tier redressal structure, which involves the SFC on one end and the District Grievance Redressal Officer (DGRO) on the other. The DGRO is appointed by the state governments for each district; if a complainant or the authority figure who is the accused is unsatisfied, an appeal to the SFC may be filed. State governments may also create an "internal grievance redressal mechanism" such as call centres, help lines, or "such other mechanisms as may be prescribed" (NFSA, 2013). Furthermore, transparency provisions are outlined that seek to ensure the release of PDS-related records into the public domain, 'vigilance committees' set up at every administrative level to supervise implementation of the act, as well as periodically conduct social audits of the PDS and other schemes.

- **PDS Reforms**

The act postulates eventual PDS reforms, both technological and of a social nature, that would theoretically improve the efficiency and accountability of the PDS. These reforms include doorstep delivery of cereals, full computerisation of the system, management of fair price shops by women or their collectives, diversification of commodities distributed, as well as leaving the opportunity for schemes to move to cash transfer or food coupon systems, as prescribed by the central government (NFSA, 2013). This establishes the eventual opportunity to move to different expressions of food security policies.

2.5.2 Major Criticisms of the National Food Security Act

The central criticism of the NFSA was that it merely expands and legislates existing schemes, not create new schemes or undergo any binding reforms. Furthermore, estimations at the end of 2013 were that the PDS under the NFSA will require two million tons more grain allocation than the annual procurement of grains can currently manage (Sinha, 2013; Saxena, 2013). Despite this increase in requirements, the NFSA creates a legal responsibility for the government to ensure there is always an adequate supply of grains without giving adequate parameters in terms of agricultural production (Gulati et al, 2012). Economists critical of the NFSA level the charge that the act is supply-driven rather than consumer-driven (Gulati et al, 2012), as Indian consumers have had increasingly diversified diets with rising incomes (Saxena, 2013).

Perhaps the most divisive debate surrounding the NFSA has been its expected cost (Acharya, 2013), with economists, journalists and politicians both questioning and defending the projected annual cost of 1.25 trillion rupees ($20 billion) (Gulati et al, 2012; Bhalla, 2011). The act does not stipulate the methodology used in calculating the expected costs and does not include a projected cost for subsequent years (Acharya, 2013). However, independent calculations looking at the variables and factors put the cost in the short term to least 1.3 trillion rupees annually ($21 billion) (Saxena, 2011), with long-term estimates among economists varying considerably, with the most sceptical, such as economist Surjit Bhalla (2011), estimating it to rise up to 3 trillion rupees ($48 billion) annually, others pegging the eventual cost to be 2 trillion ($32 billion) rupees (Acharya, 2013), and yet others at a consistent low of 1.3 trillion rupees ($21 billion) (Saxena, 2011). Sceptics believe this will hamstring India's economy, despite defence spending taking up more of GDP expenditure than what the act will entail. Importantly, much of the cost is already a calculated part of the budget, as the schemes and entitlements that will come under the NFSA currently lie at around 850 billion rupees ($13.6 billion) annually (Saxena, 2011); however, the cost of acquisition, storage and distribution of grain at the current level is around 40% higher than the minimum support price, which is fiscally unsustainable (Gulati et al, 2012). The success of the act also rests on infrastructural improvements, investments in production, storage and distribution, as well as added administrative set ups; coupled with a projected increase in population, this would quickly inflate the cost (Gulati et al, 2012; Acharya, 2013). The counterargument is that these are necessary investments that would be needed either way (Sinha, 2013). Arguments against the economic criticisms is that no matter the cost, the state has an imperative to invest in a better life for its people (Mander, 2011), and ensuring that all of its citizens have access to an adequate diet could lead to better development for children and thus higher future earnings.

While the act is ostensibly for food *and* nutritional security, it provides only for large amounts of cereals, and does not provide for more nutritionally dense foods outside of the target groups of pregnant and lactating women and children (Aggarwal & Mander, 2013). The poor have diets that are already heavily reliant on cereals due to a lack of access to pulses, vegetables and oils (Saxena, 2011), so the NFSA's predominant focus on providing rice, wheat and now millet, with little legislation to provide for nutritional security outside of the preamble (Gulati et al, 2012), will most likely not go far in solving the problem of malnutrition (Sinha, 2013). The counterargument is that cheaper grains means there is more money to spend on other foods, as the PDS is intended to be supplementary and not to meet all the nutritional requirements (Acharya, 2009); however, the PDS incentivizes farmers to focus on cereal production, coupled with high inflation and the necessity to import certain cultural staples such as pulses, means that non-cereal commodities are still mainly unaffordable for the poor (Saxena, 2011).

2.6 Summary and identifying the research problem

Indian food policies regarding food security have broadly followed the rational institutionalist perspective, with an initial focus on production after independence accelerated by Green Revolution, and a subsequent particular focus on access to food through the PDS. While availability and production had been historically conceptualised in India as the primary focus of food security, government policies have decoupled the two – 'food security' that is found associated with the NFSA refers to access to food for those deemed food insecure, while agricultural policies have dealt with production and availability. However, food security policies prior to the formulation of the NFSA, including the PDS and specific schemes for women and children, have failed to adequately resolve continued undernourishment and hunger of large parts of the population, and has also failed to adequately deal with nutritional deficiencies. The National Food Security Act of 2013 was thus created in part as a reaction to these outstanding issues, as well as pressure from the Supreme Court and the Right to Food Campaign, as well as the belief that such an Act would be popular with the electorate.

As has been explored in this chapter, undernourishment, stunting and wasting in children under five, nutritional deficiencies in women and children, an average caloric consumption below government recommended levels, 19.8% of women and 17.5% of men in urban areas having low BMI, and insecurity and vulnerabilities in employment all contribute to a picture of sustained and continued food insecurity for significant segments of the urban population, particularly the poorest. Furthermore, measurements of food insecurity in urban areas would indicate pernicious, ongoing vulnerabilities for not only the most vulnerable in urban society such as the homeless and migrants, but also affecting a good deal of slum dwellers. However, statistical information regarding urban poverty and food insecurity remains poor, with large methodological gaps, and the scope and depth of urban food insecurity and poverty continue to be elusive. The literature on urban poverty suggest that this is deliberate, that developing countries in general, and the Indian government, have generally ignored, downplayed, misrepresented and misunderstood the nature of urban poverty and urban food insecurity (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2013; Tacoli et al, 2013). Furthermore, urban food insecurity is becoming an increasingly significant issue as cities swell with migrants and urban growth outpaces infrastructure.

This chapter has established that the NFSA is a reiteration of existing schemes and programmes already put in place by the Government of India, made into legal entitlements and expanded to cover 67% of the population. However, it is unclear how the figure of 50% of the urban population considered eligible was reached, particularly in light of the official urban poverty estimate at 17%. It shows the need to understand how the urban target population was conceptualised, although the figure does reflect that the Government of India has tacitly acknowledged urban hunger as an issue that has not been sufficiently dealt with. Furthermore, it is also unclear the extent to which urban food insecurity was understood and considered by policy-makers involved in the NFSA, considering that specific entitlements for vulnerable urban groups were removed. This reflects that urban food security was seemingly a consideration at one point in the policy process, but specific entitlements were eventually discarded. This thesis seeks to understand why these entitlements were excised, and what this tells us about the policy process and how policy actors interact and collaborate to form policies. The research objective is thus to clarify the problem of the unclear nature between the low official poverty estimates and half of the urban population eligible for food subsidies, the removal of urban-specific entitlements from the NFSA, and clarifying the extent that urban food security was considered and understood among policy-makers involved in the NFSA.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Research Approach

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 and 2 has shown that in India, despite high economic growth since the 1990s and comprehensive food policies that have broadly followed the international rational institutionalist approach, food insecurity remains pervasive and prevalent, in both rural and urban India. Chapter 2 has laid out the National Food Security Act of 2013 as a response to this food insecurity, steeped in the established service delivery paradigm yet offering a shift in framing and language through rights-based discourse, as a potential robust response to food insecurity. The NFSA offers substantial provisions through the PDS and entitlements for women and children, yet there are gaps in knowledge as to how the exact numbers of eligibility were reached, particularly for urban India, where the official rates of poverty are far lower than those eligible for the NFSA; the extent that policy-makers involved in the policy process of the NFSA understood and considered the dimensions of urban food security; and the core reason why extensive entitlements for the urban food insecure were ultimately excised in the final Act.

This research project aims to analyse the NFSA in regard to urban food security utilising Walt and Gilson's Policy Analysis Triangle (PAT). The formulation of this research project – utilising elite interviews, policy paper analysis and further literature review – is thus to understand:

- The context of urban food insecurity and urban planning and development and if the NFSA sought to address the core realities of urban food security in a way that differs from rural food security.
- The actors involved in the creation of the NFSA, to better understand which policy-making groups were involved and to what extent they influenced and shaped the Act, from bureaucrats, activists, politicians and food security experts, in regard to urban food security.
- To what degree the various policy-making groups considered, understood or represented the needs of the urban food insecure in the policy process.
- To elucidate the decisions made within the policy process of the NFSA that led to the exclusion of vulnerable urban groups and urban community kitchens.

The intent of this thesis was to explore the NFSA as the latest, and largest, example of Indian food policy on the national level, with specific focus on the role of urban food security in the policy process, utilising elite semi-structured interviews as the primary research method, along with secondary methods of policy document analysis and parliamentary transcript analysis. This chapter is divided into two parts. The initial part presents the research objective and research questions as they arose from the initial two chapters, followed by an exploration of the broad conceptual approach of critical food policy analysis and the specific conceptual framework of the Policy Analysis Triangle (PAT). Additional frameworks that were considered are presented, and the decision to utilise the PAT is discussed, comparing and contrasting it to six other conceptual frameworks.

The second part outlines the research process and the methods used in the fieldwork. It lays out how the research questions were formulated and how the primary and secondary data collection was conducted, including a discussion on elite semi-structured interviews, its strengths and weaknesses, and the snowball sampling methodology utilised in garnering interviews. How the interviews were conducted and the process of analysing the documents and interviews are presented, as well as a table presenting the policy documents that were utilised. Furthermore, there is a discussion of the ethical considerations of the research and challenges of the fieldwork.

3.2 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The overall research objective is to elucidate the role urban food security played in the policy process of the NFSA, to understand to what extent urban food security was considered and understood by policy-makers, that is to say, what role did urban food security play in the formulation of the Indian National Food Security Act of 2013?

This overarching objective was then organised into three secondary research questions that has also contributed to the subsequent structure of the findings chapters, being:

> RQ1. What are the main dimensions of urban food insecurity in India, and what is the urban planning and urban policy context?

This research question seeks to elucidate the context of the food security discourse in urban areas – does the situation in India match up with the literature on urban food insecurity as it stands globally? If it differs, how does it differ? This is explored through policy document analysis and semi-structured elite interviews to better understand how policy-makers, researchers and politicians view the food security situation on the ground in urban India. The findings will then be contrasted with the literature review on urban food security in the discussion chapter, to see if the dimensions of food security as considered by policy-makers line up with the literature.

RQ2. Who were the main actors involved in the policy process of the NFSA, and to what extent were urban experts consulted?

This research question seeks to explore exactly who was involved in the NFSA, to what capacity, and how influential they were in shaping the NFSA. Furthermore, it seeks to understand to what extent urban experts were involved in the policy process of the NFSA. This RQ was oriented around the idea of identifying the actors and their interests within the policy process of the NFSA, and to what extent urban food security was considered. This research question is explored primarily through semi-structured elite interviews as well as policy document analysis.

RQ3. To what degree was urban food security considered, understood and represented in the policy process of the NFSA?

This research question looks directly at the parts of the policy process of the NFSA that dealt with urban food security, from its inception as the National Advisory Council draft to the Act that passed through Parliament. This research question seeks to understand the changes made during the policy process that affected the urban food insecure, and why provisions and entitlements were added or removed. This is done through policy document analysis, primarily the different drafts of the NFSA, as well as through semi-structured elite interviews.

Table 3.1 below shows how the main research objective then led to three specific research questions, and how these research questions in turn each spawned three interview questions. These interview questions were then further differentiated based on the area of expertise and involvement in the NFSA, which is further explored in the section on Semi-Structured Elite Interviews, in table 3.5.

Table 3.1. Research Objective, Research Questions and Key Interview Questions.

Research Objective	What role did urban food security play in the formulation of the Indian National Food Security Act of 2013?		
Research Questions	RQ1. What are the main dimensions of urban food insecurity in India, and what is the urban planning and urban policy context?	RQ2. Who were the main actors involved in the policy process of the NFSA, and to what extent were urban experts consulted?	RQ3. To what degree was urban food security considered, understood and represented in the policy process of the NFSA?
Key Interview Questions	• In your view, what are the characteristics of the urban poor? How would you describe them as different from the rural poor? • How would you describe the central government's urban policies and migrant policies? • What would you characterize as the biggest issues facing the urban poor?	• What were the priorities of bureaucrats and politicians in shaping the NFSA? • To your knowledge, were any urban experts consulted in the drafting of the Act? • In your view, to what extent and role did the Supreme Court and the Right to Food Campaign play in the creation of, drafting and passing of the NFSA?	• Did the policy process of the NFSA take into account urban food security? To what extent? • Would you have any insight on how the NFSA 2013 reached the figure of 50% of the urban population for their eligibility criteria? • Would a cash transfer system be a viable alternative to the PDS in urban areas?

Source: Author

3.3 Conceptual Framework and Approach

Defining policy in itself can be fluid, even tricky. The literature on policy as a topic in itself is considerable, with many major theories. Often, public policy literature emphasises the state and state institutions, supported by non-state actors and institutions, in itself distributed across different levels of power and agency. Public policy is thus conceived as subjected to a variety of influences, including actors both with and without any formal authority, as well as including actions taken and decisions not to take action (Cairney, 2012, pg. 23). Policy relies on the political system in which it operates, the time and place that it occurs, and the focus that it takes, wherein a problem is identified, solutions are suggested, and a process of compromise and dialogue occur within the ideological and technological boundaries of the given system (Cairney, 2012). Seeking policy consensus thus becomes a key component of the policy process, as different policy-makers may agree on the problem identified, but differ on what solutions are best implemented (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009).

Policies may not always take the shape of a single document or piece of legislation, being a result of decisions taken across different sectors that may or may not create a unified outcome. Urban food security, for example, is influenced by public health, employment, education, policy alleviation, urban development and urban infrastructure policies, even in the absence of a specific "urban food security" document (Rist, 2000; Cairney, 2012). Food security policies are thus not only the explicitly stated goals of a policy document, such as the NFSA, but also the other policies that inform it, such as agricultural policies, public health policies and trade policies, just to name a few.

As a result, policy is a negotiated process, both in its formulation and in its application, with framing and interpretation done throughout. Policy-making thus can vary from rare radical restructuring in intent to a series of tweaking and adjusting of that which already exists, informed from its own policy path dependency as well as the surrounding context, more often than sudden monumental changes or key decisions (Rist, 2000). Policymaking is the process of different policy-makers engaging with one another to produce actions, as well as inaction. Choosing to not take action is as much a policy choice as acting (Rist, 2000). Chapter one of this thesis focused on defining the terrain and terms of food security to understand the framework and language that food security policies are forged within.

There is what some, such as Schaffer (1984), see as a 'common-sense' mainstream model of policy. This sees public policy as existing within sectors – food, security, housing etc – and that exist in independent realities, with policy in itself seen as a separate sector. This is then addressed separately by the respective actors, with certain segments of actors seen as ‘innocent outsiders’, such as academics and analysts (Schaffer, 1984). In this view, implementation that occurs after is seen as separate and its success is irrelevant to the actual policy. Schaffer, however, sees this as ultimately unhelpful as a form of analysis, due to its inability to address policies in practice, focusing on policies in concept. This dominant approach implicitly assumes policy as ‘design’ and ‘implementation’, which can then simplify policy failures as a consequence of ‘poor implementation’ (Fernandez, 2012).

This view separates policy creation from policy implementation. In doing so, it frames actors undertaking these policies in their respective sectors are doing so benevolently or neutrally, be they from “within”, such as ministers and officials, or “without”, such as advisors and analysts. Schaffer argues that the two main concerns with the mainstream model is that policies in practice deal with agendas, actors and institutions, rather than being “verbal, voluntaristic and decisional”, as well as the tendency to ignore the actual implementation of policies, focusing more on them as “utterances” (Schaffer, 1984, pg. 1). By ignoring the implementation aspect, Schaffer argues, whole areas of policy practice are ignored, which have real world consequences. While this model of policy is no longer dominant within academic policy circles, the ‘common-sense’ model tends still to be how policies are structured, and a view held by politicians and bureaucrats (Schaffer, 1984). Policy-making is instead informed and shaped by different visions, goals and interests, with the concept of benevolent evidence-based policy-making more of an ideal to be attained than the reality of policy-making (Lang & Heasman, 2004).

Analysing policies is thus inherently value-laden and prescriptive, being fundamentally contestable (Goodin et al, 2006). Lang & Heasman (2004) argue that food policy-making is far less defined than other public policy areas, as the issue of food cuts across many different segments of policy, with added complexities of competing interests and tensions between the state, civil society, academia, and corporations. As such, critical food policy analysis can also be problematised as being less clearly defined than other fields of policy analysis. While critical food policy analysis draws upon general public policy analysis, it has carved out its own terrain and themes, tailored towards a critical discourse of food policy. Critical food policy analysis lacks the same depth of literature as policy analysis, which has extensive literature (Parsons, 2005; Dunn, 2004, Schaffer, 1984). Dunn (2004) views policy analysis as a multidisciplinary investigation into ways of improving policies through assessment and analysis, while

Parsons views it as fundamentally about analysing public choices and decision-making, through contextual, multi-method, multi-disciplinary and problem-oriented investigation (Parsons, 2005).

Lang, Barling and Caraher (2009) argue that food policy analysis is an assessment of not only the relationship of evidence, policy and practice to the formulation and shaping of the food system, particularly in relation to the state. Fundamentally, the role of policy-makers, proponents, experts and beneficiaries, and their taken positions, arguments, assumptions and expressed views of other sectors, mediated through the state, also become part of the policy process. While commercial interests are of fundamental importance to CFPA, the focus of this thesis will be on the actors who had involvement, or influence, in the NFSA, such as those part of the judicial, executive or legislative bodies of India (policy-makers, politicians, institutions), civil society (advocates, experts) and academics. While citizens, journalists and industry are also elements of the policy process, the focus of the thesis was decided to be on those actively involved within government, as well as civil society members who were either involved outside government, or viewed as experts on urban poverty, that they would lend insight on urban food security and to understand if they were consulted.

Critical food policy analysis draws upon two major streams of policy thinking. One stream focuses on governance and governmentality (Coff et al, 2008; Marsden et al, 2000), while the other stream has its roots in Foucault's approach to power, looking at how power is operated and deployed within society, particularly through the usage of terminology and language in policy discourse and how this influences how society thinks and acts (Lang et al, 2009; Clapp, 2012 ; Patel, 2007; Carolan, 2013).

Fundamentally, the stream of governance looks at power through the relationship between structure and agency. This form of critical analysis has its roots in exploring and understanding power relations and the social, economic and political structural settings of policy-making, be they institutions, norms, or ideological consensus. These structural settings serve to constrain as well as conversely offer space for individual agents to modify and change these settings depending on the interpretation of those structures through action (Hay, 2008). Agents in commanding positions within economic, social, political, and academic circles and organisations are argued to reproduce the power that comes from structure, and whose decisions influence and shape many other lives. These actors are commonly understood to be a 'power elite'; however, there is no one 'power elite', with different interest groups influencing different policy areas, and the influence of interest groups may mean certain issues never make it on to a political agenda. Furthermore, agents may limit their own agency through adherence to the overarching ideological interests and the existing power structure, accepting parameters set for them and not realising their own interests. Identifying these interest groups is an important dimension of critical food policy analysis (Lang et al, 2009; Nestle, 2002; Clapp, 2012). The thrust of this thesis is precisely to identify the actors involved in the NFSA, and to investigate the perceptions, opinions, viewpoints and beliefs of urban food security, and the extent that understanding played in the policy process of the NFSA. Food policy is made by humans, and thus understanding the role of social relations, actors and institutions that shape a food policy, such as the NFSA, is of primary concern to critical food policy analysis. The study of this necessitates qualitative research, being subjective, contextual and centred around key actors (Miller & Deutsch, 2009).

These identifications of power within structure is known as historical institutionalism, which is an approach looking to understand not just institutions but the norms and values that underpin them. A policy process is conditioned by the historical direction of past policy, based upon the agreed norms and operating rules of the processes and institutions involved. This leads to what is known as ‘path dependency’, leading policy to be hard to significantly change (Clapp, 2012, Carolan, 2013; Coff et al, 2008). A clear example of this in the NFSA is the taking of schemes and programmes, making them a legal right with expanded access, but did not fundamentally change any policy in terms of approach or mechanism. While it is important to highlight the structural factors that shape policy institutions, one should not preclude a role for individual actors. Political parties, interest groups, social movements and even individuals can all influence policy, although quite often dominant ideologies play an overarching role in policy-shaping.

The postmodern stream focuses more on the processes of power, arguing that they may be diverse, but ultimately oriented towards conformity. This approach sees the role of discourse in framing and presenting ‘reality’, a multitude of differing interpretations that are all socially constructed. This post-structuralist critical policy analysis thus is focused on understanding what discourse and framing is dominant and how that dominance is expressed. The outward expression of government institutions is thus only a part of policy, underpinned by social relationships.

While these two policy streams are often understood as ‘competing’ or distinct, critical food policy analysis can be understood as drawing complementary theories from these streams, with the institutional, governance focus complemented by analysis of policy discourse and the role of framing by experts and policy-makers. The starting point of critical food policy analysis is the role of the state, yet it also seeks to understand the role of broader discourse and relationships (Lang et al, 2009). Food policy is thus conceptualised as contested space, albeit with a structured bias; the intersection of competing issues and demands, a constant juggling of interests that look at food from differing perspectives: from public health, nutrition and consumption; to trade, supply chains and scientific and technological advances; to issues of culture, ethics, social relations and social justice; all underpinned by government, politics and the environment. Due to historical trends, food policy has mainly focused on, interchangeably, agriculture and production, nutrition and public health, and global trade, yet due to the apparent challenges facing the modern food system, a 'new' food policy has been outlined by academics, civil society and some policy-makers that addresses ill health, environmental stresses and social inequalities (Lang et al, 2009). Critical food policy analysis thus sets out to explore whether existing food policies address the needs of societies, the environment and human health satisfactorily, and to understand how these food policies were shaped and what the policies were attempting to target.

The workings and the final results of a policy may be presented as "seamless, rational" products, but are often produced less linearly or orderly as the final product would indicate (Lang et al, 2009). Lang, Barling and Caraher argue that this gap between the passage of events and the official narrative should be closely scrutinised and theorised and is of core relevance to critical food policy analysis. Policy is thus subject to "power relations, conflict as well as consensus, irrational alongside logical thinking" (Lang et al, 2009). Looking at policy realities and elucidating rather than obfuscating the tensions within policy creation can help facilitate a better understanding of where the public good lies, and thus where policy should be focused.

Critical food policy analysis is also multi-levelled, multi-sector and multi-actor. Multi-level analysis acknowledges that food policy has multiple levels of governance: the international, the supra-national, the national, the sub-national and the local. The decision was made to focus on state and civil society actors, with the acknowledgment of less to no focus on commercial interests or the media, despite an acknowledgment of their influence. This research draws upon this perspective, while being squarely on national food policy in India, recognising the influences on and influences to the other levels of food policy governance, particularly the influence of the global food policy discourse on food security, as well as the consequences for sub-national and local food policy in India. CFPA also recognises that there are both 'hard' and 'soft' approaches to policy, ranging from 'hard' policies such as legislation, regulation and tax measures to ‘soft’ policies such as education, advice and labelling (Lang et al, 2009; Nestle, 2002; Clapp, 2012; Paalberg, 2013; McKeon, 2015). Policy effectiveness is thus judged against the urgency of the policy and its stated goals, rather than in a vacuum. A common occurrence in the 21st century has been governmental food policies applying a ‘light touch’ approach, promoting self-regulation and the adoption of safety and quality standards set by private actors, an example of ‘soft’ policy approach. As the focus of this research has been on legislation, ‘hard’ food policy has been the primary focus. India in general has adopted a ‘hard’ policy approach in dealing with matters of food.

The critical food policy analysis approach thus seeks to answer these questions of power and relationships of actors within the policy process, but the framework to address these questions can take many forms. Analysts utilise differing, albeit often overlapping, conceptualisations of policy and power. The varying dynamics within public policy shape the trajectory of food policy, and policy analysis informs food policy analysis. Due to these complexities, any research undertaken in understanding the policy process will necessitate the simplification of the process to try to understand it. This simplification can be done through the application of policy analysis frameworks, and quite often multiple frameworks can be utilised to develop a synthesis that best describes the reality of a given policy process, rather than merely speculating as to why policies develop (Sabatier, 2006). Within this broad theory, there are multiple lenses and conceptual frameworks that can be utilised for specific analysis, with each to be explored subsequently. As the policy field is messy, chaotic and disparate, organising research around existing frameworks to help identify the key elements and relationship between those elements further elucidates and explains, both in organising the research as well as in presenting the findings (Walt et al, 2008). For the purpose of this dissertation, two frameworks will be utilised to understand the policy process of the National Food Security Act of 2013; on one hand is the broader theory of critical food policy analysis, stemming from the work done at the Centre for Food Policy, City University London, and on the other the specific conceptual framework of the Policy Analysis Triangle, utilised to order and structure the thesis and the questions that arose from the two initial chapters.

This section now reviews and compares and contrasts six conceptual frameworks of policy analysis that were considered, each that would be possible to apply to the research problem in attempting to understand the conceptualisation of the urban food secure in the process of the NFSA. While they all have their applications, the main theoretical framework utilised as the structure of this thesis was Walt’s Policy Analysis Triangle. The other frameworks considered and reviewed were Sabatier’s Advocacy

Coalition Framework, Pritchard's Entitlement Framework (based on Sen), Baumgartner & Jones' Punctuated Equilibrium Framework, Kingdon's Multiple Stream Analysis, and the Social Construction and Policy Design Framework. In conceptualising critical food policy analysis, the rich literature within policy analysis must be first understood.

Policy Analysis Triangle Framework

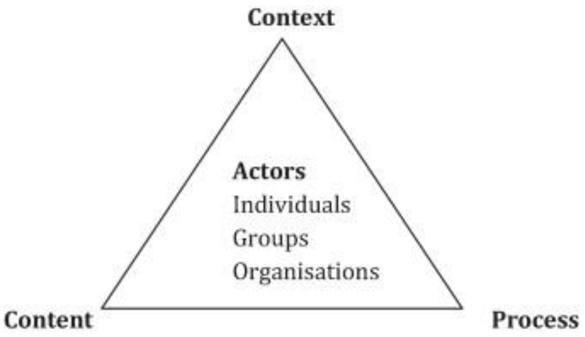
Originally stemming from health policy analysis, Walt (1994) sees policy analysis as fundamentally political, to understand who influences policy-making, how they exercise that influence, and under what conditions. As such, Gilson (et al, 2008) see the policy-making process as defined by continuing interactions between i) institutions, ii) interests and iii) ideas. These three concepts thus create the underpinnings of the framework:

- Institutions being the structures as well as the rules that shape decision-making.
- Interests are the groups, as well as individuals, who stand to gain or lose from policy changes.
- Ideas are the arguments as well as evidence for or against particular policy paths.

The Walt Gilson framework thus adopts a 'policy triangle' approach that puts the focus on context, process, content and, within that triangle, actors (Walt & Gilson, 1994; Buse et al, 2005):

i) Context is the systematic factors that influence policy, from the political, social, national and international.
ii) Process is the way which policies are initiated, negotiated, developed, implemented and evaluated.
iii) Content is the specific details of the policy that encompasses all its parts.
iv) Actors refer to the individuals, organisations and governments that influence policy.

Figure 3.1 Policy Analysis Triangle



Source: Buse et al, 2005.

Context can be further broken down into four aspects: situational factors, structural factors, socio-cultural factors, and global factors (Leichter, 1979). In the context of India, situational factors include the drought that triggered the People's Union of Civil Liberties court case in 2001, structural factors include the long-standing food insecurity situation in India, socio-cultural factors include the political incentive to address food insecurity stemming from British colonialism, and global factors include the development of food security discourse and global institutions that deal with food security.

Process is also broken down to four aspects: problem identification and issue recognition, policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation (Buse et al, 2005). Problem identification and issue recognition is to identify how issues make it onto the political agenda and how some issues do not get discussed; policy formulation explores who is involved in formulating policy, how they are agreed upon and how they are communicated; policy implementation, while often seen as separate and often the most neglected, is arguably the most important phase as if policies are diverted or ignored, then policy outcomes will diverge immensely from its intent; and policy evaluation is to identify what happens once a policy is put into effect, its unintended consequences, and whether it has achieved its objectives (Buse et al, 2005, pg. 13).

Fundamentally, the Policy Analysis Triangle seeks to understand how power is used in policy-making, particularly the role of the state, groups that make up civil society, and understanding how they interact and influence policy-making (Buse et al, 2005). How this influence plays out is through the policy process, and the context in which these actors and policy process interact. While the triangle may at face value seem to consider each concept individually, the framework acknowledges the complexity of policy-making, and the interconnectedness.

The benefits of the Policy Analysis Triangle framework is that it can be applied to any country, any policy, and at any policy level (Buse et al, 2005). Further explanations of policy process and of power can be applied to the fairly simple base framework, and as such triangle analysis has been used in developing countries to identify policy failings (Gilson & Raphaely, 2008). Although it has predominantly been applied to, and within, health policy analysis in developed countries, it has also been utilised in food policy, and can draw upon theories from political science, international relations, economics, sociology and other disciplines to flesh out its organisational structure (Buse et al, 2005). In being so flexible, critical food policy analysis can thus be utilised in conjunction with Policy Analysis Triangle.

Low and middle income countries are seen as under-developed in terms of policy analysis (Gilson et al, 2008), yet the Policy Triangle framework is relevant due to its ability to identify actors who may support or resist policies and why, as well as the unintended consequences of policies and the obstacles to policy implementation. As this thesis focuses on the formulation of policy, the focus of analysis will be on identifying actors, positioning them if they supported or resisted the formulation of the NFSA, and why.

Utilising this framework, the thesis seeks to identify the: Context (Food Security in general and in India, Urban food security in general and in India; Historical Context), the Content (the substantive details of the NFSA), the Actors (findings of who was involved in the NFSA, focus on governmental and civil society actors), and finally the Process (specifically the first two aspects of problem identification and policy formulation, with the decision taken not to focus on implementation and evaluation.

Punctuated Equilibrium Framework

The Punctuated Equilibrium (PE) framework argues that policies have long periods of incremental change, ‘punctuated’ by brief periods of major policy change (Sabatier, 2007). Major policy change comes about as new “policy images” are fashioned and exploited through multiple policy venues. This is seen through the idea of “stasis” and “crises”. Information dissemination is rarely dealt with seamlessly or smoothly, but instead done in sporadic ‘punctuations’ (True et al, 2007). Policymaking is often a series of small accommodations, with intermittently radical departure, at least within some elements of policy design if not outcomes. The foundation of the PE framework is the dual foundation of political institutions and ‘bounded rationality’ in decision-making, emphasising two key elements of the policy process: issue definition and agenda setting. Existing policies are reinforced or come into question by how issues are defined in public discourse, and to what extent issues have prominence in the public agenda. Reversals in policy outcomes occur when policies are questioned at the most fundamental levels, while reinforcements make anything but small changes difficult. The concept of bounded rationality stresses that policy-makers have cognitive limitations when making decisions, and attention spans are not only limited in individuals, but in governments too (Sabatier, 2007). The interaction between multilevel political institutions and behavioural decision-making creates patterns of stability and change (True et al, 2007). The long-term stability of policies can be likened to 'path dependency', where historical policy designs have long-term consequences that are difficult to change, with punctuated equilibrium occurring only in times of crises or large-scale failure. The PE framework seeks to measure and understand long periods of policymaking stability and policy continuity, as well as how these periods are disrupted by short and intense periods of instability. The PE framework consists of six key concepts (Cairney, 2011):

i) The aforementioned bounded rationality, wherein policy-makers are incapable of considering all problems and solutions, with limited attention spans and limited ability to parse information.
ii) Disproportionate attention, where issues can be either ignored or paid an unusual amount of attention, with the subsequent lack of attention being a core cause of policies not changing.
iii) Power and agenda setting, where various policy-making groups compete to either minimize attention to policy issues to maintain power or seek to expand attention to generate debate and change.
iv) Framing, where policy-making groups attempt to influence how issues are understood, defined, categorised and measured, and in doing so, can solve these issues in the way that it is framed. The way policy-makers frame an issue can have massive repercussions on how it is perceived and addressed.
v) Policy monopolies, wherein policy-makers have accepted their framing for longer periods to the point that it is institutionalised, with rules created and resources devoted to solving policy issues in the accepted framing. This policy monopoly acts as an institutional hegemony that prevent policy changes.

vi) Venue shopping, where challenges to policy monopolies in one venue, such as the legislative, judicial or executive, can be sought by political groups in different venues, such as in the courts, in legislature or another level of government, such as local state governments.

The PE framework thus outlines how policy-makers can be unwilling to focus on certain issues due to pragmatic and ideological reasons, as well as unable to focus on issues due to the time and attention constraints they have. Change thus requires either an external critical mass of attention or new actors with ideologically different approaches being elected or achieving power. Baumgartner and Jones (1993; 1996) developed the PE framework to look specifically at policy development in the United States, but has developed into a framework that can be applied to any system with multiple policy venues, such as India. Baumgartner and Jones have found that the six concepts they used had more universal application, and could be utilised to formulate questions surrounding why particular problems and solutions are prompted while others ignored, to identify patterns of stasis, stability and continuity disrupted by innovation, instability and change.

In terms of this thesis, the PE framework could have been used to understand the NFSA from the perspective of a new policy development that seemingly challenged the framing of food security with the right to food, through the venue of the Courts, but which was ultimately very similar to existing food policies due to the policy monopoly of the PDS approach and the ability of policy-making groups to partially resist the challenges of external policy groups and set the agenda for the final form of the NFSA. However, the decision was taken that the Policy Triangle framework would provide a better foundation to understand the policy decisions made regarding urban food security due to its stronger focus on the actors involved in the policy process, and the PE framework also takes a more historical perspective than the intent of this thesis.

Entitlement Framework

Developed from the work of Amartya Sen, with his seminal work on entitlements between 1976 and 1986, the entitlements approach to food security resonates particularly strongly in India, due to the development of the approach taking place in the context of India (Pritchard, 2013). It provides a unifying framework to highlight the framing of food and hunger from a social perspective (Devereux, 2001). The social and political construction of ownership relations and legitimacy within a society lies at the core of this approach, wherein Sen argues that people possess inherent ‘bundles’ that can be exchanged for alternative ‘bundles’, such as land, money, rights, their position within a networks of mutual obligations and responsibilities, or their ability to undertake labour (Pritchard, 2013). The mechanics of this exchange is labelled ‘exchange entitlement mapping’, and when applied to famines, it explains those outcomes as occurring not due to lack of food, but due to unfavourable exchanges occurring from rising food prices, falling wages, etc. Lacking access to food is thus a consequence of complex, multi-faceted characteristics of a society: the legal, political, economic and social formulations and the person’s position within it (Rubin, 2009).

These exchange entitlements were initially assessed through four sources of entitlement: i) production-based entitlement (growing food), ii) trade-based entitlement (buying food), iii) own-labour entitlement (working for food), and iv) inheritance and transfer entitlement (being given food). These initial entitlements have subsequently been expanded due to the acknowledgment that the axes of inclusion and exclusion have often ‘fuzzy boundaries’ (Devereux, 2001) and moved away from a formulistic framework of legal rights and legal entitlements. As such, environmental entitlements (accessing natural resources), and extended entitlements (cultural and social arrangements of sharing and cooperation, such as family, seniority, etc) have been added to address the complex web of both formal and informal practices that shape entitlements. Patterns of exclusion and inclusion are reinforced by interactions of entitlements and entitlement failures, these entitlement sources are co-produced in situated contexts (Pritchard, 2013).

Due to the nature of hunger in contemporary India, chronic under-nutrition, the entitlement approach addresses the social and economic conditions that frame access to food, utilising the exchange entitlements mapping on vulnerable segments of the population. India’s food security problem, according to the entitlement approach, is thus a consequence of three mutually reinforcing attributes: i) formal institutions having failed in its delivery of food, mitigating the amount of food accessed through transfer entitlement, ii) the inequity of India’s economic growth, resulting in India’s vulnerable population struggling to access food through own-labour entitlement, and iii) Structural constraints on food self-sufficiency, creating difficulties for the rural poor to gain production-based entitlements.

As such, using the entitlement approach to look at food security in India can outline why, despite high economic growth and being a net exporter of grains, consistent entitlement failures have prevented or restricted vulnerable populations from securing their food needs. Furthermore, the entitlement approach expresses how these failures interact with one another to create new, restrictive social domains for the vulnerable. This approach, however, lends a focus towards rural India (Pritchard, 2013), with not only the arguments that own-labour entitlement is far more easily accessed in urban India, but that the third component of the analysis, production-based entitlements, are a potential non-factor for urban vulnerable groups. This approach, consequently, is best applied on a nation-wide or state-wide level, or on rural vulnerable groups, and finds less relevancy for urban vulnerable groups. Due to the focus on urban India, it was decided that due to this focus, too many aspects of this framework would have been omitted.

Advocacy Coalition Framework

Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith developed the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) to highlight the multiple actors in multiple levels of government, the substantial goal conflicts and the important technical disputes that arise (Hoppe, 2002). While most of the application of ACF has been in the US and Europe, it has also been applied to policy issues in Africa, Asia, Australia, South America and Canada, showing that it has broad application despite its bias towards Western democracies. ACF has predominantly been applied to environmental and energy policies, but has also been used to look at taxation, public health, drugs, culture, education, sport and domestic violence (Sabatier & Weible, 2006). This diversity in application and location has led to further revisions to ACF, to deal explicitly both with corporatist regimes in Europe and authoritarian executive regimes in many developing countries.

The AFC has three “foundation stones”:

1. Macro-level assumption that policy-making occurs among specialists of a policy subsystem, with their behaviour influenced by the broader political and socioeconomic system.

2. A micro-level model of the individual drawn from social psychology. This aspect sets the ACF out from other policy frameworks, as it challenges the assumption of rational, self-interested actors rationally pursuing material interests (Sabatier & Weible, 2006) and instead assumes that normative beliefs need to be empirically ascertained – altruistic behaviour is thus a possibility. The ACF stresses that normative beliefs are incredibly difficult to change, and that pre-existing beliefs create a filter through how the world is viewed – these perceptual filters are thus how actors relate to the world. The same information available to two different coalitions would thus be interpreted and understood in two very different ways. This leads to mistrust and the belief that their opponents are more evil, more powerful and less trustworthy than they probably are

(Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999). These filters also tend to ignore dissonant information and reaffirm information that conforms to their world-view, making changing beliefs difficult and an explanation to why there is continued policy conflict and escalation of disagreements.

3. The conviction that the best way to address a multitude of actors within a subsystem is to aggregate them in to “advocacy coalitions”. Actors within a subsystem operate on interpersonal relations and policymaking is thus structured around networks of important policy participants (Sabatier & Weible, 2006). The belief is thus that these competing coalitions, each with their own core beliefs and core policy preferences, are in a race against each other to translate their belief systems into actualisable policy before their opponents can, and seek allies, share resources and develop complementary strategies. Furthermore, the beforementioned villainization of opponents exacerbates the fear of losing, further motivating actors to cooperate with allies. The advocacy coalition is thus an aggregation of hundreds of different interest groups, NGOs, institutions, individuals, with between 2 to 5 different competing advocacy coalition groups within a given subsystem.

Policy subsystems arise from policymaking complexities, such that participants must specialise to be influential. Subsystems are both substantive and territorial – e.g. food policy in India. Policy participants include legislators, judicial officials, agency officials and interest group leaders as well as researchers and journalists (Sabatier & Weible, 2006). The AFC assumes that participants hold strong beliefs and are motivated to translate those beliefs into actual policy, and also assumes that scientific and technical information plays an important role in modifying beliefs of participants, that researchers such as policy analysists, consultants and university scientists play a central role in the policy process. Further assumptions include that the beliefs of policy participants are stable over decades, making major policy change difficult, and also distinguish between mature and nascent policy subsystems. Policymaking thus occurs within policy subsystems, involving negotiations among specialists.

The AFC outlines a hierarchical structure of beliefs:

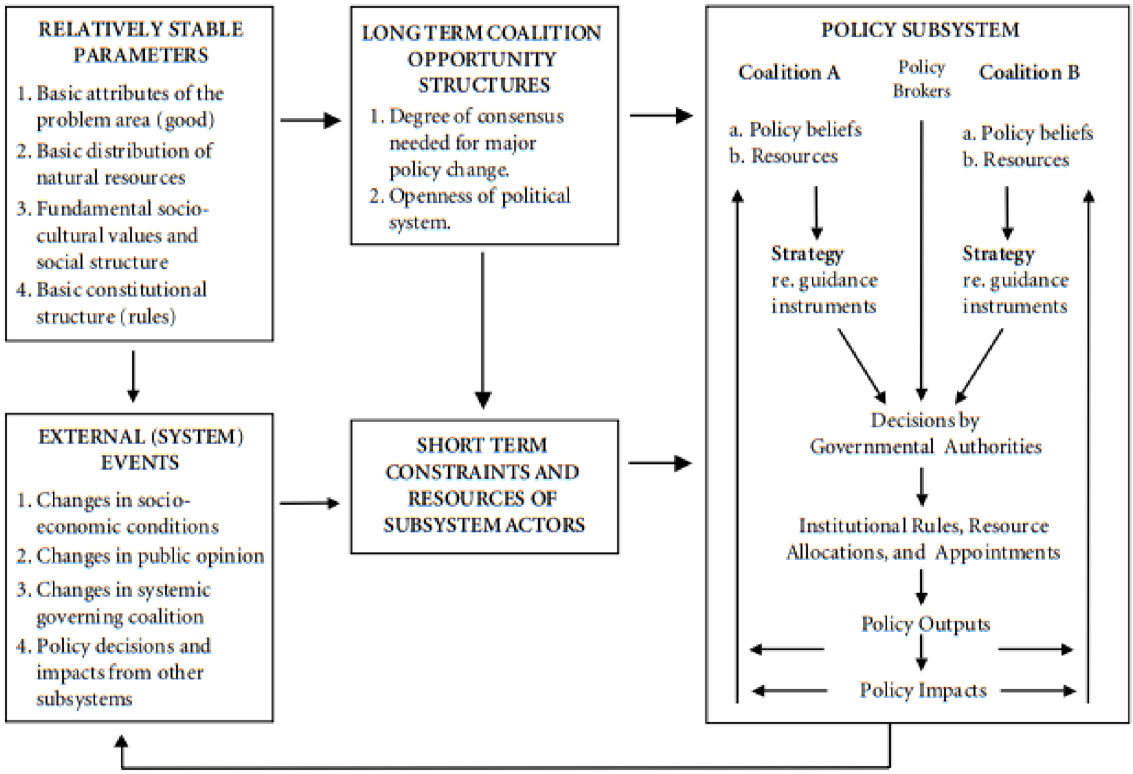
i) Deep core beliefs, that are incredibly difficult to change and include the left-right dichotomy, assumptions on human nature, fundamental values, the role of the state, etc.,

ii) Policy core beliefs, the application of deep core beliefs on the specific subsystem, which is used to outline and highlight different coalitions based on their beliefs, as well as to explain why seemingly similar coalitions may disagree – leading to policy core policy preferences, normative beliefs that project an image of how the policy subsystem ought to be, provides a guiding vision for strategy, and unites allies and divides opponents (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999).

iii) Secondary beliefs, policy preferences that there can be compromise and conversation on, and are oriented more narrowly on specifics than general conceptualisations, such as on detailed rules, budgetary applications, public participation etc.

Furthermore, the AFC argues that there are two major factors that affect behaviour, one being stable and the other more dynamic. The stable factor is a set of parameters outlining the basic attributes of the problem, the fundamental socioeconomic values and structure and the distribution of resources. The dynamic factor include changes in governing coalitions, changes in socioeconomic conditions and policy decisions from other subsystems. Major policy change is thus hypothesised as only being possible through one or more of these dynamic factors. In India, for example, the changing in governing coalitions and economic liberalisation of the country created several dynamic policy changes in food policy in India, but ultimately not of its core content or orientation.

Figure 3.2 Advocacy Coalition Framework of 2005**.**


RELATIVELY STABLE PARAMETERS
1. Basic attributes of the problem area (good)
2. Basic distribution of natural resources
3. Fundamental socio-cultural values and social structure
4. Basic constitutional structure (rules)
LONG TERM COALITION OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES
1. Degree of consensus needed for major policy change.
2. Openness of political system.
POLICY SUBSYSTEM
Coalition A
Policy Brokers
Coalition B
a. Policy beliefs
b. Resources
a. Policy beliefs
b. Resources
Strategy re. guidance instruments
Strategy re. guidance instruments
Decisions by Governmental Authorities
Institutional Rules, Resource Allocations, and Appointments
Policy Outputs
Policy Impacts
EXTERNAL (SYSTEM) EVENTS
1. Changes in socio-economic conditions
2. Changes in public opinion
3. Changes in systemic governing coalition
4. Policy decisions and impacts from other subsystems
SHORT TERM CONSTRAINTS AND RESOURCES OF SUBSYSTEM ACTORS

Source: Sabatier & Wieble, 2006

This framework, in contrast to the Policy Triangle Framework, groups policy-makers involved into broad coalitions that best represent each actor's views, with more focus on networks within a coalition and the beliefs within a subsystem. While the AFC can be utilised as a framework with two identifiable coalition groups, it becomes more comprehensive when more than two coalition groups can be identified and expanded upon.

Multiple Streams Analysis Framework

The Multiple Streams Analysis (MSA), developed by Kingdon (1984), proposes that policy formation is a consequence of three distinct processes: problems, policies and politics.

i) The problems stream is related to the core issues that require action. While there are no objective measures, perceptions can quickly change, with problems receiving attention based on how they are framed, utilising evidence and persuasion to make the argument there is a problem. More often, these policy problems arise from crisis, with most problems not receiving attention from policy-makers.

ii) The policies stream focuses on the solutions that are available to address identified problems. Once a problem has received attention, viable policy solutions must be considered and drafted, but inherently take time to develop. These solutions may sometimes be a long time in the making, subject to being proposed and then reconsidered, modified and changed by larger amounts of actors, before reaching a widely-accepted compromise.

iii) The politics stream is the broader political discourse, ideology and belief system that can be affected by national mood, pressure groups, and administrative or legislative changes (Kingdom, 1984). MSA views changes in the politics stream to be most powerful in shaping and reshaping policy agendas. The politics stream are thus made up of policy-makers who pay attention to the problem, be receptive to the policy solution, and have the motive and opportunity to turn this into actualised policy.

The focus of MSA is on the interaction between two ideas: policy solutions that can draw attention and catch on, vis-à-vis the established set of ideas held by policy-making communities. Attention may come quickly to a problem, but a solution accepted by the policy community may take longer. The MSA thus hypothesises that for these new ideas to be adopted, the three streams must converge, positing that policy change occurs when these three streams are joined together at critical moments, seen as ‘windows of opportunity’. Furthermore, MSA challenges the ‘common-sense’ policy analysis highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, standing in contrast to rational policy-making. The aims of policy-makers as well as the policy problems in themselves are seen as ambiguous, and solutions as something that is a struggle to achieve. Policy change, then, is hard to predict and even harder to achieve, requiring sustained attention, a viable and accepted solution, and sufficient compromise and will in the political system (Cairney & Heikkila, 2014). While MSA has not been applied as much outside of the US as some of the other frameworks detailed here, it has some concepts in describing policies that can be seen as universal, such as its focus on ambiguity, competition for attention, a flawed information gathering process, limited time, and rejection of the concept that policy-makers and policies are rational (Cairney & Heikkila, 2014).

The criticism of MSA is that its streams approach is ambiguous in itself, that there is a lot of room for interpretation and flexibility, making it problematic to compare various studies utilising the MSA approach (Cairney & Heikkila, 2014). MSA can be thus taken in many different directions, which dilutes its value as an explanatory framework where the same concepts mean the same thing to different researchers. Instead, it is interpreted and applied in many different fashions (Cairney & Heikkila, 2014).

Social Construction and Policy Design Framework

First posited in the 1980s, the social construction policy design approach was proposed to address the multitude of variables that affect the “design, selection, implementation, and evaluation” of public policy (Ingram et al, 2007). The specific variables that this approach focuses on is how policy-makers socially construct target populations in positive and negative terms and distribute benefits and burdens to reflect and perpetuate these constructions. Understanding the social construction of target populations helps explain why public policy often fails in its nominal purpose, fails to solve problems, perpetuates injustices, fails to support democratic institutions and produces unequal citizenship. The fundamental social and political consequences of policy design go beyond material welfare, affecting social reputation and how segments of a population view their relationship with the government. How target populations are treated affect the image of the government and can encourage or discourage political participation, and the social construction of these groups become important political tools that can become embedded in political discourse and elements of policy design (Ingram et al, 2007). To build a political base, policy-makers can utilise these social constructions, either by manipulating them or responding to them, often resulting in differential treatment.

The social construction framework views problems as interpretations of conditions that can be subjectively considered problematic and demanding action, and defining a problem thus becomes a political exercise and labelling a problem based on political values. As a result, this approach encompasses varying ways ‘realities’ are defined, such as images and stereotypes, as well as the assignment of values to objects, peoples and events (Stone, 1997). The intent of the framework is to link policy designs to aspects of society, such as citizenship, justice, democracy, and build not only an empirical theory but a normative basis for improved policy design (Ingram et al, 2007).

Socially constructed target populations are specifically the groups that are chosen by policy-makers to receive benefits (or burdens) through elements of policy design. Social construction may be the perception of the legislative, judiciary and executive branches of government, and eventually even the citizenry, of a target group. This view can become hegemonic as to become ‘natural’ and eventually unquestioned (Ingram et al, 2007). However, competing social constructions may occur, derived from ideology, experience or anticipated consequences of policy. Within the political sphere, the struggle for acceptance of a social construction is continuously ongoing. Despite this, long-term effects of historical and contemporary policies shape how target populations are identified and to the degree benefits or burdens are allocated to them. While the social construction of a target population may change with changing ideologies of a government, the existing momentum of past policies may mean that they are continually treated as to the previous social constructions that were in place when policies were created. These target populations can be formulated positively as either advantaged or dependent, or formulated negatively as contenders or deviants (Ingram et al, 2007).

Social construction of target populations is a key factor in holding policies in place on the same path dependency, and challenging social constructions is a key element of social change (Wilson, 2000). Figure 4.2 expresses the central hypothesis of the social construction theory that there is a power matrix regarding how groups are constructed.

Figure 3.3 Power Matrix of Social Construction Theory

	High Power		
Positively Constructed Groups	Advantaged	Contenders	Negatively Constructed Groups
	Dependents	Deviants	
	Lower Power		

Source: Author, based on Ingram et al, 2007

Power is expressed in the ability of a group to take advantage of, or compensate for, how they are construed. The example used for an ‘advantaged’ group is the military, who are often portrayed as heroes and are given substantial benefits from governments, while ‘contenders’ are given the example of big business, who are often viewed negatively but are powerful enough to ensure ‘hidden benefits and empty burdens’ (Ingram et al, 2007). The example for ‘dependents’ is often single mothers, who are unable to address inadequate benefits but are viewed as needing support, while ‘deviants’ are criminals, viewed negatively and often heavily burdened. While the concept of how actors socially construct target populations was highly relevant, considering its focus on actors and power, the decision was taken that the framework’s focus was insufficient in forming a holistic analysis of the different aspects of policy formulation that could be captured by the PAT framework.

Comparing and contrasting the frameworks

As has been explored, the different theoretical frameworks all have their applications and their angle in analysis. The different frameworks are not meant to compete with one another, with an objectively best framework, but can be compared and contrasted in terms of their key concepts, where they are useful to be applied, and how their insights differ (Cairney & Heikkila, 2014).

Major frameworks were not designed to be compared, generally operating independently of one another, and the field itself contains a multitude of complex theories, frameworks and models (Schlager, 2007). Cairney & Heikkila (2014), in their comparison of different frameworks, outlined four main variables that can be used to contrast the frameworks with one another:

i) The scope and level of analysis
ii) The defined concepts and vocabulary
iii) The relationships among the key concepts of the frameworks
iv) The model of the individual that grounds the frameworks

Utilising this model of comparison, the six theoretical frameworks that were reviewed and considered can be compared and judged if their use is most relevant to this thesis. The scope and level of analysis can be likened to a telescope, with some frameworks focusing on the individual, others on networks, and yet other on systems (Cairney & Heikkila, 2014). Even frameworks focusing on systems have a model of the individual that is utilised, such as bounded rationalism.

The defined concepts and vocabulary differ inherently, as there is no “general theory” of the policy process, and the process itself is inherently complex (Smith & Larimer, 2009), so in terms of comparing frameworks it is important to understand how these frameworks identify crucial elements of the policy process, simplified to six main aspects: actors, institutions, networks, ideas, policy context and events.

However, policy framework theories treat these aspects differently, with significant debate over their meaning and disagreements arising from their inherent ambiguity. These core concepts are also highly fluid, and the complexity is compounded with further complex concepts when attempting a complete explanation (Cairney & Heikkila, 2014).

The relationships among the key concepts of the frameworks can also differ significantly, as each different framework may choose to focus on varying aspects of the policy process, with trade-offs existing between explaining certain elements in depth or the whole process without going into significant depth (Cairney & Heikilla, 2014). The Policy Analysis Triangle will be shortened to PAT, Punctuated Equilibrium shortened to PE, Entitlement Framework shortened to EF, Multiple Streams Analysis shortened to MSA, Social Construction Framework shorted to SCF, and the Actor Coalition Framework shorted to ACF.

While the PAT, PE, EF, MSA and SCF work on the systemic level, the ACF operates on the sub-system and coalition level. PAT, PE and MSA emphasise the stages of the policy process, while ACF explores more on how coalitions are formed and how they learn, and the SCF focuses on how actors construct target populations that in turn affect policy design.

PAT, PE, EF and ACF view policy-makers and actors through the concept of bounded rationalism, while MSA focuses more on ambiguity in the individual. PAT, PE, MSA and SCF view these actors as interacting within institutional settings, ACF see this interaction in the context of advocacy groups specifically and EF focuses on interactions among networks and cultures. PAT, PE, MSA and SCF are broad in scale, with ACF much more focused and specific on coalitions, while EF is focused on entitlement exchanges.

As can be seen, the ACF differs significantly from the fundamentals of the other frameworks, and while it has its applicability, the focus of the thesis was on a more systemic level, of the NFSA as the latest iteration of food policy in India, and the ACF would instead have shifted the focus to coalitions within food policy. While that is a perfectly valid exploration, it was not part of the conceptualisation of the thesis. EF would have focused the thesis towards the failure of the government in providing entitlements, which the decision was made to focus instead on the NFSA as an example of the latest iteration of Indian food policy, rather than focusing on the past failures of Indian food policy. While PE and MSA also had their valid places, the exploration of how policy-making actors utilised power and influence to shape policies was more in focus than focal points of PE and MSA. While the SCF was strongly considered, it was decided that the PAT was able to capture the complexities of the policy-making process while simplifying it sufficiently to communicate its key concepts and ideas around power and influence of actors in the policy-making process better than SCF. A single framework would also be able to be much more elegant in framing and structuring the data. Table 3.4 outlines the different theoretical frameworks, how they differ and where they share commonality, applying an analysis by Cairney & Heikkala (2014) and expanded.

Table 3.2 Comparing the Theoretical Frameworks

	PAT	PET	EF	ACF	MSA	SCF
Scope of Framework	Dynamics of power and influence of actors within the context, content and process	Tensions of political stability and periodic major changes	Social construction and social mediation of ownership relations and legitimacy	Advocacy coalition interactions and policy changes	How policy choices are made under ambiguity	Social construction of target populations influencing policy choices.
Roles of Actors	From individual policy-makers, to institutions such as government, civil society and interest groups.	Individuals within groups, as well as interest groups and other organisations.	Policy-makers provide entitlements, and how individuals receive and utilise entitlements.	Policy actors who interact, learn and share within coalitions	Policy-makers and policy entrepreneurs who compete for policy ideas within multiple streams.	Policy-makers who characterise target groups
Core Ideas	Context, process and content of policies are elucidated to better understand power and influence of actors.	Established policies monopolise understanding, breakthroughs come from new ideas or solutions	The legal, political, economic and social formulations of society indicate access (or lack thereof) to entitlements	Actors are driven by belief systems and ideologies	Policy changes that are proposed are amended over time to become accepted by the policy community	Actors socially construct target populations that frame policies.
Key Concepts	The role of power in policy-making, particularly within the interaction and influence between the state and civil society.	Major policy change is caused by shocks/events that cannot be ignored, otherwise policy change is constrained	Individuals possess inherent ‘bundles’ of entitlements that can be exchanged for alternative ‘bundles’, such as labour exchanged for money.	Coalition formation, policy learning and policy change.	Three streams come together during windows of opportunity that cause major policy change.	Policy design identify and affect target populations, policy design changes depending on social construction of respective target populations.

Model of the individual	Bounded rationality, emphasising how individuals seek to exercise power to influence policy.	Bounded rationality	Not explicitly discussed but can be inferred to be bounded rationality.	Bounded rationality, emphasising individuals motivated by beliefs	Focuses on ambiguity, challenges assumption of comprehensive rationality	Bounded rationality, emphasising decision-making based on emotions and beliefs.

Source: Author, based on Cairney & Heikkila, 2014

As the ultimate decision was taken to use the PAT. While other frameworks could have been used, the PAT had the advantages of flexibility and could be adapted to the complexity presented by the NFSA, as well as provide a structure through which the policy process of the NFSA could be explore. The PAT allowed for enough rigour and structure while giving flexibility to explore new terrain, just coming in to play at the beginning of the fieldwork. To help answer the primary research objective, the framework utilised was thus:

- The context of urban food insecurity, urban planning and urban policy, and if the NFSA sought to address the core realities of urban food security in a way that differs from rural food security.
- The actors involved in the creation of the NFSA, to better understand which policy-making groups were involved and to what extent they influenced and shaped the Act, from bureaucrats, activists, politicians and food security experts, regarding urban food security.
- To what degree the various policy-making groups considered, understood or represented the needs of the urban food insecure in the policy process.
- To elucidate the decisions made within the policy design of the NFSA, in its shifting content, in regard to the inclusion or exclusion of vulnerable urban groups.

3.4 Research Process

The start of the research process began with a literature review on food security. It was decided early to focus on two primary aspects, food security and urban food security, exploring the theories and evolution of international food security, food security in India, and urban food security. This decision was taken to map the broader terrain to better understand the context that the NFSA finds itself in, both the historical context of food security in India as well as the historical and theoretical context of international food security. Subsequent literature on India specifically, including the structure of policies in India and Indian political economy, occurred when in India, after the initial transfer paper had been completed. During the interview process, the interviewees brought to light points of interest that changed the focus of the research. No concrete conceptual framework had been established by this point, and the decision was made to focus on attitudes and beliefs of the policy-makers involved in the NFSA. This substantially shifted the focus of the thesis, which lead to some weaknesses in overall structure and argument. In hindsight, beginning with a clear conceptual framework and a clear methodology to apply to the research would have made it far more structured and cohesive from the beginning. The ultimate decision was to reorient the thesis by utilising the Policy Analysis Triangle framework, both due to its flexibility as a lens and its format and structure was beneficial to the research.

The literature review focused on four different topics:

- International food security, to understand the background in which to place Indian food security.
- Urban food security, to specifically explore urban food security as a separate topic to the broader food security literature.
- Indian food security and food policy, to understand specifically how Indian food policy has developed, and how international food security discourse has influenced Indian food security discourse.
- Urban poverty in India, to situate the issues of urban food insecurity within the broader context of the discourse around poverty in India.

Each topic was looked at individually through multiple steps; the primary step was utilising the City University online library and google scholar, as well as key words in google, the secondary step was reading through the references of the resources found, collating authors and publications that appeared repeatedly and were widely cited and reviewing their work, the third step was identifying papers and output from relevant organisations, from international agencies to local NGOs and think-tanks via their websites, and the fourth step, taken when in India, were additional recommendations during the interview process of other works that may have been missed initially. The search terms used were “international food security”, “Indian food security”, “urban food security”, “food security india”, “food security”, “urban food security india”, “food policy india”. After this initial step, literature on the National Food Security Act of 2013 was done utilising search terms: “nfsa”, “nfsa india” “national food security act 2013”, “national food security bill india”, “nfsb” and “nfsb india”. It became clear that a literature review of policy and the literature around policy analysis was the necessary next step, to establish a framework to analyse Indian food policy.

After the literature review, which took place between September 2014 and May 2015 in London, the interviews took place between September 2015 and August 2016 in India, mostly in New Delhi. From September 2016 to October 2018 the initial thesis was written, with the Viva occurring in February 2019.

Rewrites and reconceptualization of the thesis took place from February 2019 to February 2020. Figure 3.1 gives an overview of the research process.

Figure 3.4. Flowchart of thesis process

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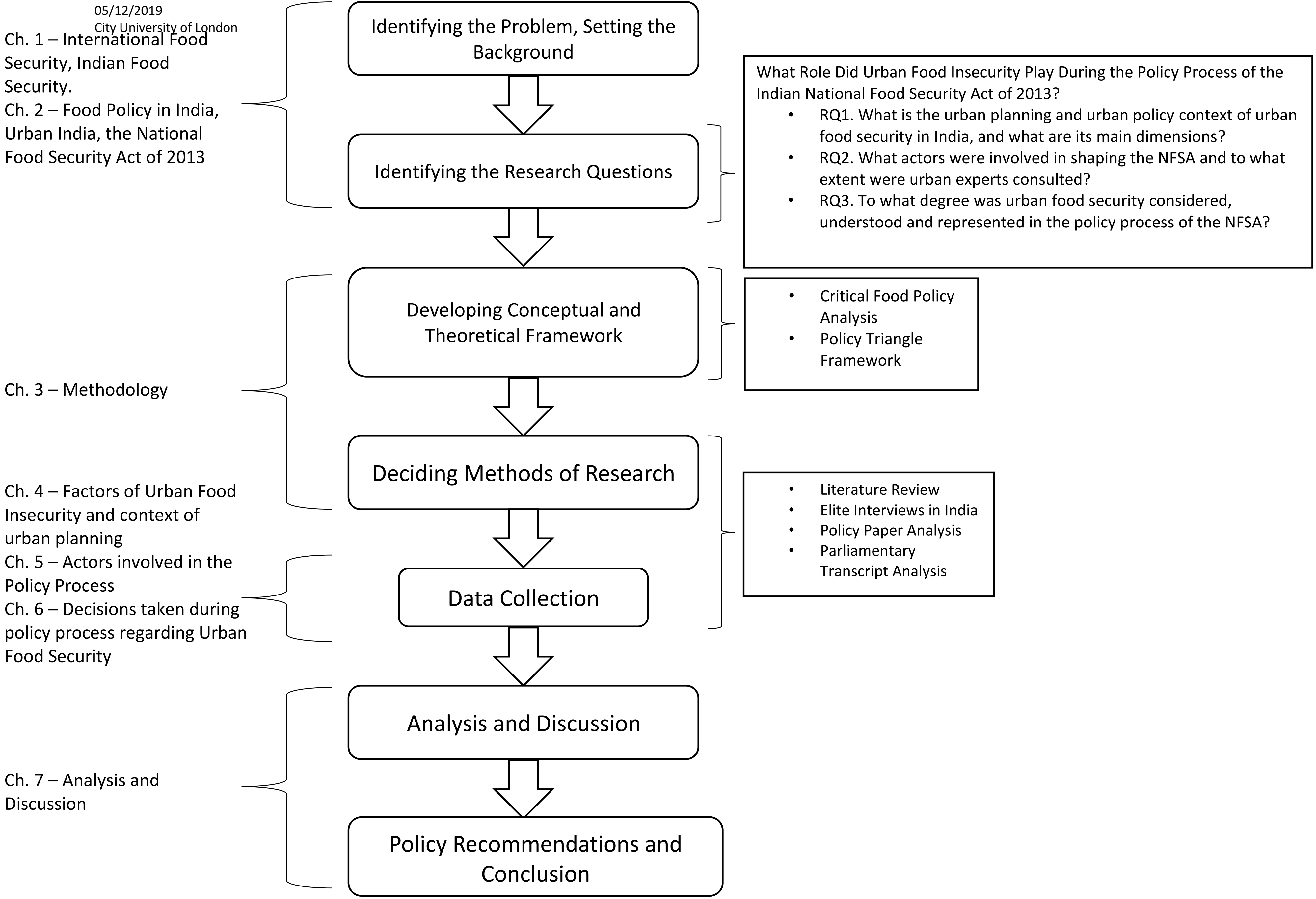


Ch. 1 – International Food Security, Indian Food Security.
Ch. 2 – Food Policy in India, Urban India, the National Food Security Act of 2013

Identifying the Problem, Setting the Background

Identifying the Research Questions

What Role Did Urban Food Insecurity Play During the Policy Process of the Indian National Food Security Act of 2013?

- RQ1. What is the urban planning and urban policy context of urban food security in India, and what are its main dimensions?
- RQ2. What actors were involved in shaping the NFSA and to what extent were urban experts consulted?
- RQ3. To what degree was urban food security considered, understood and represented in the policy process of the NFSA?

Ch. 3 – Methodology

Developing Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

- Critical Food Policy Analysis
- Policy Triangle Framework

Deciding Methods of Research

- Literature Review
- Elite Interviews in India
- Policy Paper Analysis
- Parliamentary Transcript Analysis

Ch. 4 – Factors of Urban Food Insecurity and context of urban planning
Ch. 5 – Actors involved in the Policy Process
Ch. 6 – Decisions taken during policy process regarding Urban Food Security

Data Collection

Ch. 7 – Analysis and Discussion

Analysis and Discussion

Policy Recommendations and Conclusion

Source: Author

3.5 Data Collection

The methods used in the present study were a) policy document analysis, b) semi-structured elite interviews with informed central policy actors. Further data was collected through parliamentary transcripts. The broad research objective was upon understanding how the Indian state formulated the act in relation to urban food security.

3.5.1 Policy Document Analysis

The research questions were informed by the policy document analysis, and policy documents were read closely for relevant information regarding the urban target population to be contrasted with response given during interviews. This was to ascertain if there were fundamental differences in policy design as it was explicitly written and the implicitly held views of the policy-makers. Policy documents were chosen for their relevancy by the title of the document, and a reading of the executive summary, to ensure that there would not be an overwhelming amount of irrelevant policy documents. Policy documents included papers analysing the NFSA, parliamentary transcripts of the debates around the NFSA, policy documents surrounding food security more broadly, to understand the language of the policy process, and the explicit thought processes behind the drafting of the act, listed in table 3.6. The majority of official reports are collated by PRS Legislative Research, an independent research initiative founded by the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), a prominent think-tank in India, which collect and publish all reports, briefs and bills discussed in parliament. Furthermore, policy document analysis of reports and papers on urban poverty was also done, to better understand the official positions on urban poverty and urban poverty methodology. The analysis was done through careful reading of relevant texts and identifying key themes and concepts. The policy analysis aimed to break down the discourse surrounding the NFSA and to identify key theories and perspectives that helped shape and create the Act. Furthermore, a comparative analysis was done of the National Food Security Act regarding its earlier drafts, to see to what degree urban food security was addressed during the policy process and how, if at all, it changed during the process. When conducting the policy document analysis, it was always kept in mind who the intended audience the document was for, and that the document was written for a specific audience in mind and for a specific purpose (Yin, 2011), trying to identify what the underlying objective of the documents were and how to interpret the contents. Comparing several documents on the same topic gave insight into how information was constructed and ‘facts’ established.

Table 3.3 Key policy documents on and around the NFSA, their data type and source

Document	Data Type	Source
The National Advisory Council NFSA Draft, 2011	Draft of Act	Found at http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Food%20Security/NAC%20Bill.pdf
The NFSA Bill introduced to Lok Sabha, 2011	Draft of Act	Found at http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Food%20Security/National%20Food%20Security%20Bill%202011.pdf
The NFSA Ordinance, 2013	Draft of Act	http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Ordinances/Food%20Security%20Ordinance%202013.pdf
The National Food Security Bill 2011 Legislative Brief	Legislative Brief	Found at http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Food%20Security/Legislative%20Brief%20National%20Food%20Security%20Bill%202011.pdf
Comparison of the Bill introduced, Standing Committee Recommendations, and final Act	Legislative Brief	Found at http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Food%20Security/Comparison%20of%20Bill,%20Standing%20Committee%20and%20Ordinance-.pdf
Lok Sabha Debates on the National Food Security Bill	Parliamentary Transcripts	Found at http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Debates/DebateAdvSearch15.aspx
Parliamentary Standing Committee Report on the National Food Security Bill, 2013	Parliamentary Report	Found at http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Food%20Security/SC%20Report-Food%20Security%20Bill,%202011.pdf

Report of the Expert Committee (Rangarajan) on National Food Security Bill	Government Report	Found at http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Food%20Security/Report%20of%20the%20Expert%20Committee%20on%20National%20Food%20Security%20Bill.pdf
Report of the Expert Committee (NC Saxena) on the methodology for rural BPL Census 2009	Planning Commission Report	Found at http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Food%20Security/Report%20of%20the%20Expert%20Group%20(NC%20Saxena)%20on%20the%20methodology%20for%20the%20BPL%20Census%202009.pdf
Report of the Expert Committee (SR Hashim) on the methodology for urban BPL census 2009	Planning Commission Report	Found at http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/genrep/rep_hasim1701.pdf
Report of the Expert Committee (Wadhwa) on the PDS 2009	Supreme Court Report	Found at http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Food%20Security/Justice%20Wadhwa%20Committee%20Report%20on%20PDS.pdf
Report of the Working Group on Urban Poverty, Slums, and Delivery System 2011	Planning Commission Report	Found at http://planningcommission.nic.in/aboutus/committee/wrkgrp12/hud/wg_Final_Urb_Pvt.pdf
Report of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (Gulati) on Food Security Bill	Ministry of Agriculture Report	Found at http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Food%20Security/CACP%20Report%20on%20Food%20Security%20Bill.pdf
Supreme Court Interim Order on Right to Food, 2001	Supreme Court Ruling	Found at https://www.escr-net.org/sites/default/files/Interim_Order_of_May_2_0.doc

Report on the State of Food Security in Urban India, World Food Programme 2010	International Agency Report	https://www.wfp.org/sites/default/files/Report%20on%20Food%20Insecurity%20in%20Urban%20India.pdf

Source: Author

At one point in the fieldwork process, about halfway through, a subsidiary keyword analysis was done on the Lok Sabha transcripts, due to the thousands of pages, a simple keyword analysis was conducted on parliamentary transcripts of the debates surrounding the NFSA to gauge the frequency of chosen keywords for comparison and to gauge the biases and interests of policy-makers. Simple keyword parsing was primarily done to take an otherwise dense parliamentary transcript at 705 pages to reveal basic arguments and debates around food security.

While there are a whole host of methods of doing text analysis of varying complexity, automation and focus, including topic modelling, n-grams, text comparisons, collocation and word frequency counts (Underwood, 2014; Onwuegbuzie et al, 2012; Bloor & Wood, 2006), a keyword analysis was chosen for its simplicity and its basis in forming qualitative conceptions that derive meaning (Williams, 1975; Bloor & Wood, 2006).

The specific keywords were chosen in terms of contrasting relevancy to the topic – ‘urban’ was contrasted with ‘rural’, ‘homeless’ and ‘migrant’ was contrasted with ‘farmer’. These words were chosen as they hold resonance within the food security discourse and in the popular imagination of food security (Williams, 1975). The keyword analysis was done by the author rather than by software to parse through and contextualise the keywords to understand how they were used. Simple keyword parsing was primarily done to take an otherwise dense parliamentary transcript at 705 pages and mine it to reveal insights on the conceptualisation of food security.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Elite Interviews

Interviews are one of the most widely used methods in qualitative research, with a wide range of different forms and types of tools that can be utilised (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Interview types are on a continuum, from structured to semi-structured and unstructured, as well with different terms depending on target interviewees, research topic, research questions and underlying theoretical frameworks (Bryman, 2001). These terms can range from in-depth, informal, non-directed, open-ended, conversational, naturalistic, narrative, biographical, ethnographic, etc. Jennifer Mason (2002) argues that despite this considerable range, there are core features of interviews: i) an interactional exchange of dialogue, inherently social and a potential learning event for all participants; ii) a narrative approach around the topics, themes and issues the research wishes to cover; and iii) a perspective on knowledge as situated and contextual, with meanings and understandings created through interaction, leading to the co-production of knowledge through construction and reconstruction. The relationship between interviewer and interviewee are of central importance to the interview, and one where not only the sharing of information but also issues can arise; as such, the researcher must be reflexively recognised as part of the research process and mindful of the power relations that arise, recognising that both the interviewer and interviewee will bring “concepts, ideas, theories, values, experiences and intersecting identities” (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Indeed, much of the debate around issues in qualitative interviews is the relationship between the interviewer, the interviewee, and the research; a key aspect of the interview process is drawing out the understandings and the subjectivities of the interviewees, looking at implicit and explicit biases, interpretations of ‘truth’, power relations, social constructions, and such-like (Edwards & Holland, 2013). As such, interviews are the primary method of obtaining data in this research, utilising an interpretive approach in gleaning understanding.

The specific interview style was in-depth, semi-structured elite interviews, chosen to obtain the most relevant data directly from actors and stakeholders who were directly involved in the policy process of the NFSA, either as a policy-maker or as an analyst, and place them in the appropriate social context. Semi-structured interviews gave the opportunity for the interviewees to transmit their opinions and observations within the framework of the dissertation topic while giving them the space to tell their story. Policy document analysis gave the foundation of data that the interviews were built upon. The interviews themselves were also primary source of data, intended to reveal how the interviewees perceived the topic of urban food security, and their answers reflected how elite policy-makers address the policy process. The elite interviews also serve as secondary data, strengthening the policy document analysis with insights into the relationships between actors.

A decision was made not to do on-the-ground interviews – those affected (or not) by the policy implementations, urban poor suffering from malnourishment or have their needs met, etc. The primary reason to opt out of this approach was that the purpose of this thesis was in understanding the policy process, and to garner the views and perspectives of elite policy-makers, how they perceived the issues, and how the NFSA as a policy document developed. Furthermore, access to these interviewees would be difficult, their views may be shaped by the contacts who would set up access and would require further ethical considerations (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Siloing the interviews into purely elite, rather than any, also simplified the research process.

Identifying the interviewees were made on multiple criteria (as discussed in the next section) but receiving access to those interviewed came through two predominant means. One was compiling relevant names from policy document analysis and cold-calling, which was not very successful, and the other was through 'snowballing', a process that occurred naturally through the interviews as names, phone numbers and email addresses were freely offered at the conclusion of many of the interviews, which was far more successful in garnering further interviews.

32 people were interviewed, all conducted face-to-face with each interviewee with both note-taking and the conversation being recorded. The interviews were all conducted, bar one, in and around New Delhi. The length of each interview varied greatly, from half-hour talks to over hour-long conversations. The interviews were transcribed by a commercial transcription service. Of the 32 interviews, 6 were not utilised in the thesis, two due to reasons of poor audio quality of the interview, two due to overlapping and not relevant information, and two transcriptions that were not completed before or during the write-up. Note-taking was done to capture key points during the conversation and help direct the flow of the interview away from too many digressions. Questions were purposefully kept to a minimum to allow for those interviewed to express their perspective with as little research narrative input or question-leading as possible, in an attempt to avoid bias (Byrne, 2004). While this may open up future issues of data interpretation (Byrne, 2004), with the potential for many different kinds of answers, this in itself is data and adds greater depth to findings. For example, if five separate interviewees give five totally separate answers, this will be data in itself on how there is no clear answer; inversely, if five separate interviewees give five identical answers, this would reflect a topic consensus, keeping in mind the different backgrounds and perspectives that those interviewees may or may not share. This gave the opportunity to observe any inconsistencies or need for further clarification. When relevant and interesting topics came up that were not part of the questions, follow-up questions for them to elaborate on their point was done. This occurred from time to time.

There are multiple levels of issues facing elite interviews, from the practical such as constant distraction through phone calls, emails and such-like, limited time to speak, compromised interview settings such as in a moving car or at a noisy conference (Grbich, 2013; Edwards & Holland, 2013), to the fundamentals of the interview structure inherent in elite interviews, such as power dynamics, information leverage, and setting the agenda (Edwards & Holland, 2013). These issues turned out to be relevant to my own interviews, but not all. Certain interviews did take place in the back of a car or at a noisy conference, and there was a definite high level of distraction for almost all the interviews – people coming and going with papers that needed signing, phone calls, or the interviewee browsing their phone.

Further issues involved were the power dynamics between the interviewer and interviewee. The literature highlights how the interviewer, in elite interviews, should attempt to reduce the “status imbalance” by being well-prepared, understanding the interviewees background, their published work, and ensuring that they have an in-depth grasp of the topic of discussion (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Interviews with elite can thus be seen as a power game of trying to achieve the upper hand, and the interviewees will attempt to transmit their agenda, message and position on a matter, and may even expect the interviewer to be ideologically inclined to their perspective (Edwards & Holland, 2013). The interviewer in question made all attempts to be informed, at least briefly, of the background of the interviewee and their published views, as well as remain strictly neutral. While the majority of those interviewed not only were very generous with their time but gave their full focus during the interview, it was clear that they had a message they wanted to deliver. The interviewer noticed that they would subconsciously try to build rapport with the interviewee, as described by Ross (2001), by finding common ground. This led to another danger of in-depth interviews, the position and behaviour of the interviewer (Grbich, 2013), and the appropriateness of interviewer-interviewee relationships. An attempt to be professional and neutral at all times was taken, but in truth there were moments of overstepping boundaries and talking too much, particularly in the first few interviews.

Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling is a model of interviewing that entails using existing contacts, or one singular contact, to help get in touch with other people of interest to the research (Valentine, 2005). The starting point is usually a relatively small number of initial contacts that have access to the community or group being researched, and in turn can help establish links with other potential research participants (Geddes et al, 2018). Snowball sampling is considered the most widely employed method of sampling in qualitative research (Noy, 2008; Geddes et al, 2018), and is used not only in sensitive research such as around drug-use and prostitution, but also everyday research contexts as well as in in-depth interviewing and ethnography (Geddes et al, 2018).

While it is frequently employed in qualitative research, snowball sampling comes with its own benefits and drawbacks (Geddes et al, 2018). If the target population for the research has low numbers of potential participants, are hard to reach, or if the topic is sensitive, snowball sampling is an effective way to gain access into such populations and expand the scope of research beyond the initial handful (Browne, 2005). This method is also convenient, non-random and non-probable, and often purposive – if one is not seeking to reflect a broader population, nor to make wider inferences, and are targeting a specific type of group, the snowball method can be highly effective (Geddes et al, 2018). There are times, however, that the snowball fails to "roll", faltering or failing entirely, or is unsuitable for the research topic. Furthermore, referrals may not inherently be considered 'positive information' (Noy, 2008), with interviewees potentially giving spurious contacts to deflect the research, preserve or enhance their own status, or to shield others (Groger et al, 1999). This can lead to the research being dictated by the interviewees and who they refer to, strengthening their own views by referring exclusively to like-minded individuals in their own sphere, shaping the 'movement' of the snowball sampling and shaping the knowledge of the topic for the researcher (Noy, 2008).

Noy (2008) outlines two key concepts that emerge when employing snowball sampling that the researcher must be wary of:

1) Social Knowledge – primarily a dynamic, processual and emergent phenomenon in a state of constant change. What the researcher knows and what the interviewee knows is often contextualized differently, understood separately, and the sharing of that knowledge is socially mediated
2) Power Relations – this transpires organically between the researcher and researched, and between the contacts themselves, and is a key facet that informs how the research is conducted, what is shared, how the different parties are viewed, and the direction that the interviews go.

In terms of this research, the snowball sampling model was applied to social elites, who do not face discrimination or marginalization, weighing the power relations in favour of the participants rather than the researcher (Noy, 2008). Snowball sampling is an inherently social method that uses and highlights existing social networks, highlighting how knowledge emerges from dialogue and interaction, rather than as ‘pebbles’ of information to be extracted (Noy, 2008). In doing so, the researcher relinquishes some control over the sampling phase to the participants and informants, and while there can be certain direction, it is ultimately of the interest and the ability of the informant to relay that information of who should become a participant, how many others, and what kind of information is shared. In this research, the avenue into the Food Policy sphere was through members of the Right to Food Campaign, and the initial snowballing was to other members within civil society organisations, think-tanks and NGOs that participated in the Right to Food Campaign. While these also extended to bureaucrats and academics, the overwhelming number of participating interviewees held similar ideological beliefs and shared world-view in addressing what they saw as the problem. While their perspectives differed within this shared world-view, the core concerns remained the same.

Situating the Researcher

An important element of research is understanding the role of the researcher, situating them in the research context, particularly within research that requires reflexivity and access to specific groups. The researcher had a year-long internship with the Centre for Equity Studies in New Delhi before starting the doctoral thesis, and was encouraged by Harsh Mander not only to pursue the research, but also in providing contacts and otherwise acting as a ‘gatekeeper’ to high-level, elite interviews. As such, the majority of interviewees are either related to, or part of, the Right to Food Campaign, even those who were part of the National Advisory Council. As such, it must be noted that there is a high degree of bias in the interview responses, skewed towards both implicit and explicit agendas of the members of the Right to Food Campaign, though it cannot be viewed as a monolith. However, the access granted through Harsh Mander also allowed for high levels of access to policy-makers, as well as knowledge and information, that is a requirement for an interpretative analytical approach (Yanow, 2003). As such, when speaking to those in civil society and academia, the researcher was treated as an ‘insider’, implicitly assumed to share the same ideals, goals, and beliefs as the Right to Food Campaign. This status further allowed access to, and participation of, high-level individuals who were personally involved in the NFSA or other related policies, such as Harsh Mander, Jean Drèze, N.C. Saxena, Jairam Ramesh, Abhijit Sen, Pronab Sen and S.R. Hashim. Despite this implied status, the researcher was able to step back and utilise an outsider’s perspective, not being from India or working professionally in India on food policy, being more in the realm of observer than participant.

Interviewee Criteria

Interviewees were selected on multiple criteria. First, a set of interviewees were identified through their direct involvement with the policy process of the National Food Security Act, such as participating in its formulation and drafting. A second set of interviewees was identified for indirect involvement, such as being a key actor in the Right to Food Campaign or an academic who has written extensively on food security or food policy. A third set of interviewees was identified for their work, either through NGOs, think-tanks, or academia, with urban food insecurity specifically and urban poverty generally.

Furthermore, they needed to cover the following other criteria:

- Their background and expertise must be within food security, urban poverty, or had specifically contributed to the policy process of the National Food Security Act.
- Due to this, they must be recognised professionals within academia, policy analysis, civil service, civil society (NGOs, etc.) or politics.
- They must be able to conduct a conversation in English. No translations will be done, and the researcher’s knowledge of Hindi and other South Asian languages is limited. This should not be an issue, considering that English is an official language of India.

Of the 32 total interviews, 26 of those interviews were quoted within the thesis. Table 4.2 lists the 26 interviewees, their roles and if they were active participants in the policy process of the NFSA, on any level, or were outside observers/experts. Six further interviews were done whose quotes were not included in the thesis, due to lack of relevancy, high overlap with other responses and in three cases incomplete transcriptions – in one case, the recording was too unclear, in one, the interview was recorded too late for inclusion. These were incomplete due to the late nature of the transcription.

Table 3.4 List of interviewees, their roles, and their involvement in the policy process of the NFSA.

Interviewee	**Role**	**Involvement in policy process of the NFSA**
Abhijit Sen	Former Member of Planning Commission focused on Agriculture; Professor of Economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University	Involved in analysis of NFSA from an agricultural and economic perspective, within the Planning Commission.
Amita Baviskar	Professor of Development Sociology at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University. Academic who has written extensively on urban exclusion, cities and changing food habits in India	Urban Expert who was not consulted during the NFSA
Anjali Chikersal	Senior Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, Expert on Urban Public Health	Urban Health Expert, not consulted by the NFSA
Biraj Patnaik	Right to Food Commissioner for the Supreme Court of India	Actively involved in the Right to Food Campaign.
Colin Gonsalves	Founder of the Human Rights Law Network, Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of India	Actively involved in the Right to Food Campaign.
Debolina Kundu	Associate Professor at the National Institute of Urban Affairs. Urban Expert.	Urban Expert who was not actively involved in the NFSA.
Dipa Sinha	Academic at Ambedkar University Delhi	Actively involved in the Right to Food Campaign.
Harsh Mander	Former member of the National Advisory Council, director of the Centre for Equity Studies, prominent think-tank	Member of the NAC, active participant in the drafting of the NAC draft.
Jairam Ramesh	Former Minister of Rural Development, Minister of Environment	Part of the UPA-II government, involved in introducing the Right to Food into the party manifesto and supporting its adoption.

Jayati Ghosh	Professor of Economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Academic who has written extensively on food security and poverty in India.	Written papers concerning food insecurity and the NFSA.
Jean Drèze	Former Member of the NAC, Professor of Economics at Ranchi University	Member of the NAC, active participant in the drafting of the NAC draft.
Kavista Srivastava	Former President of the Rajasthan branch of the People's Union of Civil Liberties (PUCL).	Head of the Rajasthan branch of the PUCL who introduced the Right to Food Case to the Supreme Court in 2001. Actively involved in the Right to Food Campaign.
Mukta Srivastava	Maharashtra State Representative of the Right to Food Campaign	Actively involved in the Right to Food Campaign.
N.C. Saxena	Former member of the NAC, consultant for UNDP India	Member of the NAC, active participant in the drafting of the NAC draft.
Neelabh Mishra	Investigative Journalist, former editor of Outlook Hindi	Covered PDS and food security extensively, but not actively involved in the NFSA itself.
Nikhil Dey	Activist with MKSS, an NGO part of the Right to Food Campaign	Actively involved in the Right to Food Campaign.
Pramod Joshi	Head of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) India	Was consulted in the early stages of the NFSA drafting, participant in multiple meetings and discussion groups hosted by the NAC, as well as consulted during the Standing Committee phase.
Prashant Bhushan	Prominent Lawyer and Activist	Worked extensively with PUCL and promulgated rights-based Public Interest Litigation, including the Right to Food case.
Pronab Sen	Former Chief Statistician of India, Programme Director for International Growth Centre India.	Participant in committee meetings surrounding the NFSA, including the urban methodology committee.
Reetika Khera	Associate Professor of Economics at Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi	Food Security Expert who was consulted in the early drafting stage of the NFSA.

Renu Khosla	Director of the Centre for Urban Excellence (CURE), an urban-focused think tank	Urban Expert who was not consulted regarding the NFSA
Schweta Khandelwal	Public Health Professional at the Public Health Foundation of India, Expert on Nutrition.	Not involved in the NFSA.
S.R. Hashim	Former Member of the Planning Commission	Chaired the Committee on Urban Poverty Methodology
Sunita Narain	Director of the Centre for Science and Environment	Extensively worked on food security matters from an agricultural perspective, consulted in the early stages of the NFSA draft.
Surjit Bhalla	Economist, Senior India Analyst for the Observatory Group, an international think-tank	Written on PDS and Cash Transfers.
Vandana Prasad	Public Health Professional with the Public Health Resource Network, a think-tank	Consulted in the early stages of the NFSA drafting.

Source: Author

The remaining 6 interviewees whose quotes were not used were: Amitabh Kundu, Kalyani Menon Sen, Ashwin Parulkar, Dunu Roy, Siddartha Sriram, Rama V. Baru.

Interview Questions

Three sets of interview questions were devised, specifically aimed at the three sets identified through the criteria. This was done to bring specific perspectives out of the interviewees depending on their background, e.g., speaking to an NGO member part of the Right to Food Campaign and speaking to a civil servant involved in the government drafting of the NFSA would necessitate two different formulations of questions, as they would be coming from different perspectives on the NFSA from the start. More specifically, these three sets of questions were aimed at: 1) Bureaucrats, Politicians and Policy-Makers, who were directly involved 2) NGOs and Academics who are associated with the Right to Food Campaign and research in Food Security, and 3) Academics, Think-Tanks and NGOs associated with urban poverty research and urban food security research. While there was some overlap, the three distinct categories were separate enough to formulate three sets of questionnaires, seen in table 3.4. Furthermore, each research question had three commiserate interview questions, which were then further abstracted for the actual interviews. This was done to better direct the key interview questions from table 3.1, . These more detailed interview questions were the ones directly used in the interviews, with the interview questions presented in 3.1 an aggregate of these questions, which went in more detail.

Table 3.5 Detailed Versions of the Interview Questions for Different Target Audiences

Questions for Direct Involvement	Questions for Indirect Involvement	Questions for Urban Experts
From your perspective, what were the priorities of bureaucrats and politicians in shaping the NFSA?	In your view, how did the National Food Security Act 2013 address the needs of the urban food insecure?	In your view, how did the National Food Security Act 2013 address the needs of the urban food insecure?
To your knowledge**,** did the policy process of the NFSA take into account urban food security? To what extent?	In your view, did the policy process of the NFSA 2013 take into account the urban food insecurity?	In your view, how did the policy process of the NFSA 2013 take into account urban food insecurity?
To your knowledge, were any urban experts consulted in the drafting of the Act?	To your knowledge, were any urban experts consulted in the drafting of the Act?	To your knowledge, were experts on urban poverty and exclusion consulted in the drafting of the Food Security Act?
To your knowledge, would you have any insight on how the NFSA 2013 reached the figure of 50% of the urban population for their eligibility criteria?	To your knowledge, would you have any insight on how the NFSA 2013 reached the figure of 50% of the urban population for their eligibility criteria?	To your knowledge, would you have any insight on how the NFSA 2013 reached the figure of 50% of the urban population for their eligibility criteria?
In your view, would a cash transfer system be a viable alternative to the PDS in urban areas?	In your view, would a cash transfer system be a viable alternative to the PDS in urban areas?	In your understanding, would a cash transfer system be a viable alternative to the PDS in urban areas?
In your view, what are the characteristics of the urban poor? How would you describe them as different from the rural poor?	In your view, to what extent and role did the Supreme Court and the Right to Food Campaign play in the creation of, drafting and passing of the NFSA?	How would you describe the central government's urban policies and migrant policies? Are there policies aimed at dealing with urban growth?

How would you describe the central government's urban policies and migrant policies?	How would you describe the central government's urban policies and migrant policies?	How would you describe the central government's urban policies and migrant policies?
What would you characterize as the biggest issues facing the urban poor?	In your view, what are the biggest challenges facing the urban poor?	In your view, what are the biggest challenges facing the urban poor?
		How would you characterize the differences in the issues facing Metropolitan Urban Areas to smaller Urban Areas and Semi-Urban Areas?

Source: Author

3.5.3 Data Analysis

The primary type of data was interview data. Secondary type of data was policy documents, parliamentary transcripts that were subsequently analysed to blend the primary and secondary data, deriving new analytical outputs. Content analysis considers both the context of the documents and its content, interpreting what those documents contain and considering how they are affected by and relate to certain variables (Spencer et al, 2014; Grbich, 2013). While it encompasses many different strategies used in the analysis of text, its general approach is through systematic coding and categorizing large amounts of textual information to examine who says what, to whom, and with what effect (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Content analysis allows for the possibility to analyse data qualitatively while quantifying the data, resting on a descriptive and interpretative approach (Grbich, 2013).

Qualitative research encompasses a range of theories, including applied thematic analysis and grounded theory, which both had relevancy and were considered, but ultimately was not considered appropriate for the research (Spencer et al, 2014). The theory that seemed most relevant to this research was ‘framework’ theory (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994), which is specifically designed for applied policy research. The methodology of ‘framework’ theory seemed the most relevant in structuring the analysis, as it builds upon identifying thematic frameworks, indexing the transcripts, charting the themes that emerge, mapping and interpreting the data in a consistent and traceable fashion. Framework theory also has the benefit of being adaptable and flexible, broad enough to fit in the needs of the research while setting the constraints to make the process of analysing the transcripts understandable and repeatable. Its use of inductive and interpretative thinking, while still retaining a level of structure and ordering to qualitative research, is a strong benefit that will make the analysis more informative than utilising other, more quantitative-driven theories. Utilising interpretivism as an underlying theoretical perspective fit better with ‘framework’ analysis than other theories, to better interpret the multiple theoretical perspectives interviewees held (from Marxist perspectives to postmodernist). The research sought to identify how the urban food insecure was constructed and perceived by policy-makers, and how that informed policy design, which was the scaffolding for drawing out useful data, specifically how people spoke about the NFSA and urban food insecurity, what they said, how they framed it, and critically how they perceived how policy-makers perceived it; that is to say, how they treated the topic, how they perceived how others treated the topic, and how that related to the policy design of the NFSA.

Analysing the transcripts using the ‘framework’ theory, key themes were colour-coded based on both an objective and subjective interpretation of the reading. Keywords, their repetition and frequency were an objective way to look at the themes that were emerging, while the subjective approach was also taken in utilising the research questions as a framework for the emerging themes and analysing the responses cautiously. A certain level of subjectivity in the analysis is to be expected, as long as one is clear in the development of the process and the data can be reproduced using the process. Coding was done by hand, the option to use NVivo was eschewed due to the inability of the programme to recognise syntax, nuance and inference (Krippendorff, 2013).

3.5.4 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the City University School of Social Sciences research ethics committee. Ethical approval is mandatory for any academic research and is a cornerstone to contemporary research to ensure that it is done fairly, ethically and transparently. The ethical approval was subject to a detailed consent form and information leaflet, as found in Appendix 1. Potential interviewees were informed of the purpose of interview and its process, either through email or through the phone. Once interviews were granted, written consent was obtained at the start of the interview. This was done in line with standard ethical considerations within qualitative interviewing, although one concern was that interviews may end up with disclosing and revealing far more than anticipated or intended by either the interviewer or interviewee (Miller & Boulton, 2007). As the interviewees were elite actors employed in academia, civil society, international agencies, or retired from governmental institutions, this had the potential to cause personal and professional conflict. As it happens, those interviewed were by and large candid and frank and had no qualms sharing information.

The main ethical concern during the interview stage was to protect those interviewed from risk and/or exploitation (Edwards & Holland, 2013). As such, anonymity and confidentiality were offered but all interviewed waived the anonymity, including those whose interviews were incomplete or not used. They all gave their informed, written consent and were interviewed regarding their professional lives. To maintain professionalism and neutrality, the majority of interviews were done at the place of work or an agreed upon public setting, although a handful of interviews were at private residences. The largest ethical concern regarding risk and exploitation was that the interviews were transcribed by a third party, but the confidentiality of the data was ensured in a written contract with the transcription service and the data was stored securely.

The largest initial concern for the interviewer was health and safety issues during the interviewing process. Roads are chaotic in India, and the nature of face-to-face interviews meant quite often one would have to interact closely with strangers. To ensure safety, arrival and departure was known to a family member at all times. No major incidences happened during the trip. The majority of interviews took place in New Delhi, with only two in separate locations – one took place in Ranchi and the other in London.

Chapter Four: RQ1. What are the main dimensions of urban food insecurity in India, and what is the urban planning and urban policy Context?

4.1 Introduction

This chapter answers research question one: What are the main dimensions of urban food insecurity in India, and what is the urban planning and urban policy context? While chapter one covered the literature of food security and the history of policies in India, this chapter is a findings chapter based on the interview responses and documentation surrounding urban food security in India, as well as the wider context of urban planning and urban policies in India. The findings seek to point towards the main dimensions of urban food insecurity in India, and to see if this aligns with the literature review of urban food insecurity. This not only covers the major challenges facing the urban poor and its link with food security but also covers how the Government of India specifically defines an urban area, what exactly constitutes the urban population in contrast to the rural population, the inherent difficulties of measuring urban poverty, and the main central government programmes that relate to urban planning and development.

The main dimensions are differentiated based on the findings as different urban vulnerable groups are revealed, with dimensions of food insecurity differing for slum dwellers vis-à-vis the homeless and migrant labourers. The context is explored to better understand the space that the National Food Security Act of 2013 seeks to inhabit in terms of dealing with urban food security, how it relates to urban food security, and if its entitlements, that are explored in chapter two, are appropriate for the needs that exist for the urban food insecure.

4.2 Defining Urban Spaces

4.2.1 The Rural to Urban Continuum

As the focus of this dissertation is on the policy process of the NFSA in relation to urban populations, it is important to understand how the Government of India defines an urban area, and thus who is considered part of the urban population. Breaking down exactly how India defines urban areas is necessitated by the lack of any international standardisation in the definition of the urban, with international measurements of urbanisation made difficult as countries define urban areas in different ways (Tacoli & Satterthwaite, 2003). The rural and urban can be viewed as being on a continuum between the 'very rural' and 'very urban' and not as a single, homogenous category (Von Braun, 2007). However, the policy approach in India can be best described as monolithic, with clear divisions between rural and urban India.

Urban areas are defined through the decennial census that the Government of India undertakes, which has a two-fold consideration when defining a place as an urban area: one that is based on administration and one based on the demographic characteristics of population size, density and employment. To be defined as an urban area needs only to meet one or the other criteria.

The first definition of an urban area is:

> "1. All places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee, etc." (NSSO, 2011)

This defines an 'urban agglomeration', regardless of size, as one that has an urban administrative body. These are known as 'Statutory Towns', notified under law by the relevant state government regardless of their demographic characteristics. This entails urban areas being defined as urban because they have urban administrative bodies and are thus rooted purely in what has historically been considered urban, in tautological fashion.

The second definition is:

> "All other places which satisfied the following criteria: i) A minimum population of 5,000; ii) At least 75% of the male main working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits; and iii) A density of population of at least 400 persons per sq. km." (NSSO, 2011)

This defines an urban area based on demographic characteristics, and are known as 'Census Towns', as they are defined through the census process rather than based on statute. Peri-urban areas are recognized as 'outgrowths'.

4.2.2 'Census Towns'

The 2011 census, the latest that has been undertaken, reported a total of 4,041 Statutory Towns and 3,849 Census Towns, with a particularly large growth of Census Towns from the 2001 census (which recorded 1,362 Census Towns at the time) (NSSO, 2011). However, Debolina Kundu, an urban expert who studies Census Towns with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), points out that Census Towns find themselves governed by rural bodies such as panchayats, and do not have urban municipal bodies as their administration:

> **"Census Towns are urban by definition, but by governance they are still rural. Rural [administrative bodies] would say they are urban [but] the state government hasn't notified them as statutory, so they are not here nor there. When any central scheme is devised…. whether it is housing for all or any central government programme… you'll find that each of them are directed only to Statutory Towns and not Census Towns. " – Debolina Kundu, Associate Professor at the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)**

Consequently, Census Towns lack urban governing bodies and are not considered 'urban' in regard to administration, and thus outside of the scope of 'urban' in regard to legislation. Preliminary research into existing Census Towns has shown that the rural administrative framework has failed to address their changing needs and are simultaneously often overlooked by rural bodies who do not wish to govern them as they are by definition urban areas (Pradhan, 2013). Furthermore, they are overlooked by state governments, who do not recognise Census Towns as urban areas and thus do not establish urban administrative bodies (Pradhan, 2013). This unwillingness to give Census Towns recognition as Statutory Towns stems from a seeming unwillingness to acknowledge previously rural areas evolving into urban agglomerations (Pradhan, 2013). Consequently, Census Towns take the characteristics of sprawling slums with poor infrastructure and low investment from both government as well as private actors.

Due to the lack of proper administration, nor legal recognition by state governments as urban areas, Census Towns are overlooked by the central government in policy planning and urban planning (Pradhan, 2013), with no specific schemes for Census Towns and no provisions in any urban-oriented programmes, such as the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNURM) that ran between 2005 to 2014. Furthermore, as these towns are not recognised by relevant state governments, the food security situation is poorly tracked and understood, with very little current data on the outstanding issues in Census Towns. Despite being an increasingly large segment of urban growth, the populations of Census Towns find themselves classified as part of the rural population, as each state defines the eligibility criteria for the National Food Security Act. Furthermore, the NFSA specifically defines urban areas as areas that have an urban administrative body and thus overlooks Census Towns (NFSA, 2013). Consequently, dimensions of urban food insecurity that may exist in Census Towns are not taken into account.

As Census Towns represent unacknowledged urbanisation, very little completed academic research, let alone debate, has been done on them (Pradhan, 2013). Due to this general lack of data, the status of food security in Census Towns, and the potential impact of the NFSA, is something that can only be speculated on. One can assume that the imagination of rural populations by policy-makers did not include the large number of rural settlements with urban characteristics, and will most likely remain overlooked by state governments in the implementation of the NFSA based on how these cities have been handled previously. While the official census, and by extension the central government, recognises the existence of Census Towns, the lack of recognition by state governments and the lack of urban administrative bodies means that the NFSA would treat them as part of the rural population.

4.2.3 Statutory Towns

Statutory Towns are officially considered ‘urban areas’ in relation to the provisioning of entitlements, programmes and schemes. As such, these Statutory Towns cover the ‘urban population’ as defined by the NFSA, as they have urban administrations and are recognised by state governments, who are responsible for defining the specific eligibility criteria for accessing entitlements.

Statutory Towns are grouped based on their population size, with Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3 categories. The minimum population size to be considered a Class 1 town is 100,000 people where up to 70% of the total urban population live and where the majority of urban population growth has taken place since 2001 (NSSO, 2011). Of these Class 1 towns, there is further differentiation of 'Million Plus Towns' and 'Mega Cities'. Million Plus Towns include Mega Cities and cover 43% of the total urban population, altogether 160 million people. Mega Cities are urban agglomerations with populations higher than 10 million, with only three classified Mega Cities in India – Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata – which altogether comprise 49 million people. In 2011, there were 53 recognised Million Plus towns, while 10 years earlier there were only 35 recognised Million Plus towns, indicating a huge increase in growth. As of 2018, 16.5% of the total population live in urban agglomerations of more than 1 million (UN, 2018). This aspect of the increasing growth of urban areas has been the urbanisation of formerly rural areas directly surrounding urban agglomerates, seeing a substantial increase of settlements in peri-urban and suburban areas. These satellite towns around major cities have been growing steadily as cities grow into metropolises, contributing to urban sprawl (Athreya et al, 2010; UN-Habitat, 2008). Abhijit Sen, former bureaucrat in the Planning Commission, highlighted that this urban sprawl has contributed to issues that can affect food security, such as pollution and sanitation:

> **"A big problem of large urban areas is a continuous increasing population [contributing] to urban sprawl, along with which comes a whole set of issues such as pollution, sewage, [unclean] water." – Abhijit Sen, former bureaucrat in the Planning Commission.**

The extension of urban space on rural space has led to high demand for land around cities for residential, commercial and industrial construction, as well as for transport links such as roads and highways as well as for urban waste disposal (Von Braun, 2007). Environmental concerns, such as increased pollution, loss of agricultural land and increased urban demands for resources such as water, contribute to the vulnerabilities of peri-urban and suburban settlements, which have little access to adequate shelter, sanitation and other services and often overcrowded and with squalid living conditions (Von Braun, 2007; Athreya et al, 2010; Agarwal, 2011). The predominant focus of this thesis is on the status of food insecurity in Million Plus towns and Mega Cities, with less of a focus on smaller urban agglomerations that are found throughout India. While they may face many of the same challenges, most research on urban India has been on the larger cities (Agarwal, 2011; Athreya et al, 2010; Sivaramakrishnan & Singh, 2011).

4.2.4 Quantitative Data in Urban India

A further concern in understanding the context of urban food insecurity in India is elucidating where the majority of the data that concerns India derives from, how it is derived, and to what extent it can be relied on as an accurate indicator. Large, nation-wide surveys performed decennially by the National Statistical Survey Organisation (NSSO) are the main source of data coming from India, yet it take years to complete and the latest one, in 2011, is where the majority of data concerning India is based on. The next major survey is not expected until 2021, which means that the changes that have occurred in the last eight years are not entirely clear. The Planning Commission, an institute of bureaucrats, civil servants and advisors from various academic, industry, or civil society backgrounds, was the part of the Government of India tasked with creating five-year-plans as well as producing reports on various aspects of the country's development and other long-term issues. In 1993, the Planning Commission created a poverty line, headed by Professor Lakdawala, to be able to create specific policies and programmes for different categories, and in 2009 an expert committee headed by Professor Suresh Tendulkar reformed the poverty line to differentiate between urban and rural and raised the poverty line to a higher income. As a result, pre-2009 estimates of poverty lines were based on the methodology of the original Lakdawala group and the post-2009 estimates based on the poverty lines and methodology of the Tendulkar committee, at 32 rupees for the rural population and 47 rupees for the urban population (Panagariya & Mukim, 2013). Poverty lines exist for the entire population, for specific urban and rural segments of the population in every state as well as the urban and rural nation-wide. The criteria for the poverty line affect benefits and programme eligibility, but have also been used ideologically, such as being able to claim huge poverty reduction through an arbitrary decrease of 'BPL' households by lowering the line (Deaton & Kozel, 2005).

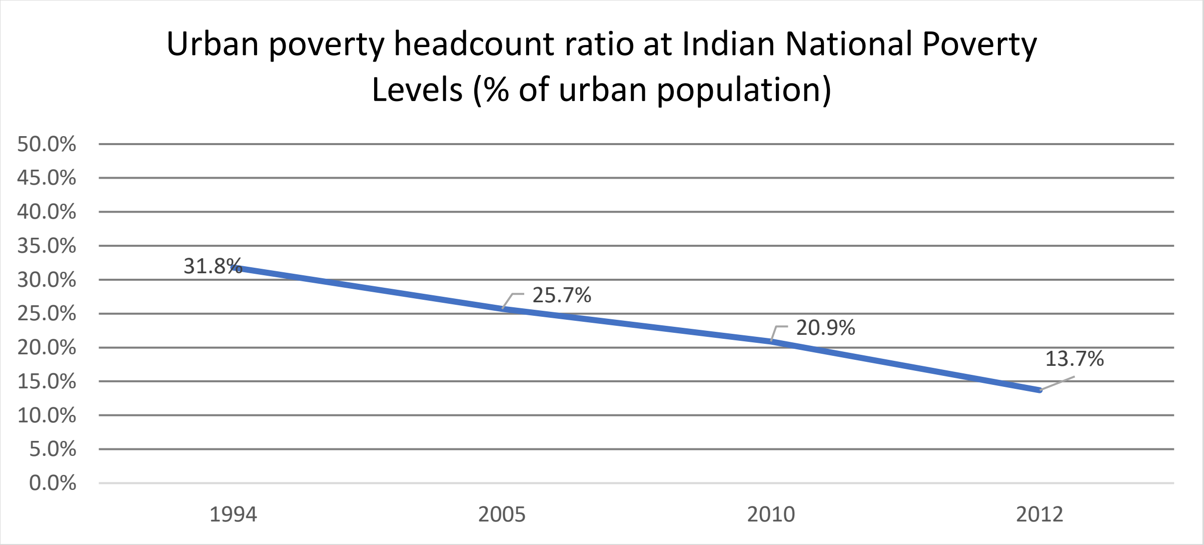
Deaton and Kozel (2005) looked in-depth at statistics on poverty in India from the 1990s onwards in an attempt to break through the dogmatic approach by government institutions that interpreted the data to suit their narratives. Their findings were that the original intent of poverty lines was to determine consumption patterns of the poor as part of the five-year-plans the Planning Commission created to model consumption growth, but that political interests utilised the numbers instead to make broader claims about poverty and utilised the poverty line for the allocation of funds (Deaton & Kozel, 2005). Pronab Sen, who was a former Chief Statistician of India and Minister of Statistics & Programme

Implementation from 2007 to 2010 and a former member of the Planning Commission, elaborates in an interview:

> **"The poverty lines were originally invented to determine what the poor consumed and what would the pattern of consumption be with growth, as part of the planning model. In fact, in the 5th [Five Year] Plan it gets hijacked when they start using it for the purpose of allocating funds, and it gets completely messed up when they start using it to identify people. That was not the purpose of poverty lines and the Planning Commission have been screaming about this for a long time but nobody listens. It is a convenient number; there is a lot of political mileage derived out of it, so it continues." – Pronab Sen, Country Director of the International Growth Centre (IGC)**

Professor Pritchard of the University of Sydney argues in the book *Feeding India* (Pritchard et al, 2014) that it has become increasingly apparent that raised incomes haven't necessarily translated into increased food consumption or healthier diets, and while income is incredibly important as a determinant of health and hunger, it is not the only determinant (Pritchard et al, 2014). As such, a huge methodological issue in measuring urban food security are the standards and indices used, which are almost entirely based on income. Urban poverty and specifically urban malnutrition have been notoriously difficult to track, with large gaps in literature as well as limited available data (Von Braun et al, 1993; Athreya et al, 2010). Broad indicators are utilised instead, which a growing body of literature argues has contributed to continued underestimation in statistics used by global institutions of the scale and depth of urban poverty, particularly the "under a dollar a day" standard used by the World Bank (now $1.25), utilising deeply flawed methodologies (Wratten, 1995; Satterthwaite, 2003; Baviskar, 2003).

Figure 4.1 Urban Poverty Headcount Ratio at Indian National Poverty Levels, % of Urban Population, 1994-2012



Source: World Bank, 2018

Following the national poverty line, only 13.7% of the urban population would be below it (see figure 4.1). The methodological difficulties with measuring and defining the urban poor, coupled with inadequate data, create a very difficult space to know the exact amount of households and individuals that are food insecure (Von Braun et al, 1993; Satterthwaite, 2003; Mander, 2012). Efforts to map the poor and food insecure have generally taken country-wide standards, and specifically the urban poor have been poorly mapped. Pronab Sen highlights the problems of understanding urban poverty:

> **"A fundamental problem is that the level of understanding of the contours of urban poverty are much worse than the understanding of rural poverty. [Statistical institutes] understand rural vulnerabilities very well, but the urban side we just don't know. The mindset comes from trying to extrapolate rural vulnerabilities and conditions on to the urban and then seeing whether those vulnerabilities are obtained, which they often aren't. We do not have a measurable concept of [urban] vulnerability […] We know we underestimate urban poverty because [in] our surveys the first condition is that it must be a permanent establishment. If a very large chunk of your urban are non-permanent or people who see themselves as non-permanent then they simply fall out of the survey. By definition we simply did not look at**

> **probably 20% of the households [because] in terms of the survey frame they fall outside its methodology, but they are very much physically there." – Pronab Sen, Country Director of the International Growth Centre (IGC).**

Consequently, mobile segments of the urban population, such as slum dwellers, squatters and rural migrants are often overlooked, slipping through the statistical net as they are not officially accounted for and are not particularly sought out by data collectors, or do not officially exist due to high mobility (Von Braun et al, 1993; Von Braun, 2007); this creates difficulties in comparing average urban food consumption, health and nutrition statistics as there are wide intra-urban income disparities across population groups (particularly in income distribution) (Von Braun et al, 1993). Accurate data can be argued to be a necessity for modern policy initiatives, particularly projected population estimates and consumption patterns – yet the magnitude, dynamism and complexity of urban life has proved it incredibly difficult to generate data that accurately reflects the reality (Baviskar, 2003; Appadurai, 2003).

Academics in India thus acknowledge that research on causes of urban hunger and its extent are limited (Satterthwaite, 2003; Agarwal, 2011; Athreya et al, 2010). The 1999-2000 national survey in India, for example, explicitly states that official data did not capture the full picture of urban food security, stating "the overestimation [for cereal consumption in urban areas] could be as high as 14%...this is a cause for serious concern." (NSSO, 2001; Chatterjee, 2002). Biraj Patnaik, the Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right to Food, elaborates on the difficulty of capturing urban deprivation statistically:

> **"The census data is not really there for measuring the urban poor, and unless you have a multi-dimensional methodology for estimating real poverty, a methodology just based on income data will always be arbitrary because you don't recognize the inherent differences in vulnerabilities beyond income. The same income for a single women is much more vulnerable whether in the rural or urban context. Poverty data based on consumption doesn't work." – Biraj Patnaik, Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right to Food.**

With all this in mind, with the inherent difficulties of estimating the urban poor, let alone urban food insecurity, it is important to understand who the main vulnerable groups that encompass the urban food insecure are, and what their dimensions of food security are.

4.3 The Urban Food Insecure

It became apparent throughout the research that food insecurity and poverty have become so heavily linked that the two terms were utilised interchangeably, with the implication that the urban poor and the urban food insecure are one and the same, or that the urban food insecure are a sub-set of the urban poor. Within the framework of 'food security' that the NFSA represents, this assumption remained unquestioned by those interviewed as well as the policy documentation. While academics like Carolan (2013) argue that food security should take a broader remit, as explored in chapter one, and there is a growing body of evidence of nutritional deficits in all income levels in India, the groups considered 'food insecure' are seen by most of those interviewed as well as the documentation as a subset of the urban poor. A report by N.C. Saxena, former member of the Planning Commission, shows that access to subsidized food through the Public Distribution System (PDS) is only available to an estimated 29% of the urban poor who have managed to obtain ration cards and are unobtainable by the most vulnerable of the urban poor – the homeless and migrant labourers (Saxena, 2013).

As such, the urban poor in India face multiple dimensions to their food security. Much like many slum dwellers in other developing countries, sprawling unauthorized settlements are where the majority of the urban poor live, which not only exclude them from basic services but can criminalize their very existence and make them vulnerable to exploitation and the sudden loss of housing through demolishment (Bhan, 2009; Baviskar, 2011). Furthermore, living in congested conditions with poor sanitation and poor quality of water helps promote the spread of infectious disease (Agarwal et al, 2009), compounded by poor nutritional intake. This section looks at the above challenges in greater depth.

4.3.1 Slums and Resettlement

As covered in chapter two, urban areas in India are characterised by informal settlements, unplanned shelters that lack official recognition and thus lack access to proper sanitation, infrastructure and safe housing. The literature highlighted aggressive policies of slum destruction and displacement, which Vandana Prasad, the founding secretary of PHRN and who has worked on homeless food insecurity, believes are essentially an issue of land, to which Debolina Kundu, professor at the National Institute of Urban Affairs echoes:

> **"The mass displacement of the urban poor is essentially to reclaim land, as land is an expensive commodity. It is couched in sanitation and beautification, but essentially it is to further construction projects for the middle class." – Vandana Prasad, founding secretary of Public Health Resource Network (PHRN).**

> **"With [the policy of] sanitisation of the cities, slums are being more or less relocated, slum dwellers have been evicted because there is a slum in prime locality that comes in the way of development, so with the development process slums are generally relocated in the peripheries" – Debolina Kundu, Professor at NIUA.**

Colin Gonsalves, a senior advocate of the Supreme Court of India and the director of the Human Rights Law Network (HRLN), a network of lawyers who work on social causes and who worked closely with the Right to Food Campaign, expresses the cause of slum evictions more forcefully:

> **"In urban areas there is commercial, crass money-making. In the sense that in the urban areas when you demolish slums and set up a five star hotel, it's money-making for the member of parliament, MLA and other administrators." – Colin Gonsalves, founder of Human Rights Law Network (HRLN)**

Anjali Chikersal, senior fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, a think-tank, expands on this concept:

> **"Land development is essentially a very ruminative and lucrative process in which the big builders and politicians are closely involved. The poor who are coming into the urban areas don't have a forum where they can stand together and put forth their voice and raise their concerns and demands, so what has happened is that they have squatted on whatever government land is available. It is all related to how land has been exploited by these big builders and politicians for profiteering. It was up to the governments of the day to ensure that social housing and housing for the low middle income or the lowest socio-economic population was built, which did not occur." – Anjali Chikersal, Senior Fellow at CPR (think-tank).**

The literature around slum evictions, as covered in chapter two, stresses that it not just the demolishment of the built environment, but preventing those evicted residents from negotiating, demanding or fighting for their right to remain (Bhan, 2014; Bhan & Shivanand, 2013). Initially, slum dwellers were evicted with no recourse, but court orders and a change in government policy in the early 2000s put into law that slum dwellers were entitled to resettlement, although fewer than half of evictions have resulted in resettlement or other rehabilitation (Bhan & Shivanand, 2013). Prashant Bhushan, a prominent civil rights lawyer and author, explains:

> **"There is a government policy which says that slum dwellers who are evicted from their slums due to any public need have to be resettled. And that policy unfortunately again is not implemented very often. Dwellings are demolished without offering them any rehabilitation or alternative land. This is despite many policies as well as several judgments of the High Court requiring the government to do so." – Prashant Bhushan, Prominent Public Litigation Lawyer.**

However, resettlement colonies themselves were also broadly criticized by those interviewed, flagging multiple issues with resettlements. Pramod Joshi, director of IFPRI India; Neelabh Mishra, an investigative journalist who covers urban poverty, Dipa Sinha, an academic closely related to the Right to Food Campaign, and Kavista Srivastava, a key activist with the Right to Food Campaign, all argue that livelihoods are scarce in resettlement colonies, with many of the poor moving back into the city to work:

> **"The government tried to resettle [slum-dwellers] in houses that they built for them. What [those relocated] did is that they sold their houses and came back and once again made the huts because this is closer to work." – Pramod Joshi, director of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), India.**

> **"Mostly these slums are located near the place of work. The reaction of the middle class or the policy planners was to move them away from the place of work, to relocate them in some distant place." – Neelabh Mishra, Editor-in-Chief of the National Herald and former editor for Outlook India.**

> **"Urban land is increasingly becoming real estate, so evictions and relocations make the urban poor invisible, you throw them out so far away that they are far away from their livelihoods." – Kavista Srivastava, Rajasthan state representative to the Right to Food Campaign.**

> **"The government plan to relocate the urban poor ended up placing them where they can't find work, and if they were to stay where they were relocated, they would have no livelihood." – Dipa Sinha, Academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign.**

Apart from livelihoods, a key issue that was brought up repeatedly was the lack of services in the resettlement colonies, as mentioned by Vandana Prasad, founding secretary of PHRN; Jayati Ghosh, development economist at the Institute of Economic Development, JNU; Renu Khosla, director of CURE and Anjali Chikersal, senior fellow at CPR:

> **"People who had been uprooted from various slums and then shifted to these resettlement colonies didn't have roads, they didn't have water, they didn't have sanitation, and they didn't have toilets. None of the facilities you automatically assume a resettlement colony would have, and that is a formal resettlement colony. They simply didn't exist, and they couldn't leverage power, so for decades after they have not gotten those facilities even now." – Vandana Prasad, founding secretary of PHRN.**
>
> **"Bawana was a resettlement of slums around Delhi, and it was set up as planned and designed, but the absence of planning was unbelievable, six toilets for six thousand families. They need better conditions, but they need conditions planned in a way for a minimum civilised, dignified life." – Jayati Ghosh, Development Economist at Institute of Economic Growth, JNU.**
>
> **"When squatter settlements were displaced they were given these small plots of land and single rooms were built for them on the outskirts of Delhi, yet they were given no water and sanitation. These were new colonies that were built for them but they didn't think they needed water and sanitation." – Anjali Chikersal, Senior Fellow at CPR (think-tank).**
>
> **"Resettlement colonies are not 100% covered with municipal supplies such as sewerage, such as services for personal taps and toilets." – Renu Khosla, director of CURE.**

Furthermore, Renu Khosla shared the findings from when CURE, the Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence, a non-profit development organisation, worked with the Delhi government on a slum resettlement in 2008, highlighting the temporary food insecurity that arose:

> **"[CURE] worked with a slum resettlement in the northwest of Delhi. It's been nearly 8 or 9 years that we have been in this resettlement, which was to house 9,500 households, eventually only 6,500 households are there today, roughly 30,000 plus residents. When we moved there one of the biggest challenges was food. The ration shops had not been relocated in and it should have been a kind of a seamless process: you're moving people, you got their addresses, you just hand it over to the ration shop people, but because these are all politically motivated resettlements, this did not occur. One of the first thing that the government asked us to do was to help re-establish the food supply system. There were villages around that area, there were a lot of farming activity, so what you could get was access to low price vegetables, but they couldn't get their staples, the wheat and the rice." – Renu Khosla, director of CURE.**

While this was temporary food insecurity, it highlights the short-term consequences of resettlement and the lack of long-term planning and preparation in the resettlement process. Colin Gonsalves, director of the Human Rights Law Network, a major NGO within the Right to Food Campaign, believes that access to proper housing is a key component of urban food security, but recognises that the specific link between slum demolishment and malnutrition is poorly researched:

> **"The link between malnutrition and housing is the real issue. As long as housing remains insecure, as long as the constitutional right to housing which is well-established in Indian law is not implemented and as long as slums are demolished at will for malls and commercial establishments, it's quite possible that malnutrition will continue unabated. The link between malnutrition and demolition of slums has never been really explored, but I think there would be a very tangible and immediate connection between child malnutrition and demolition." – Colin Gonsalves, director of HRLN.**

4.3.2 Access to Services

The urban population in India, much like other developing countries, has a high level of inequality, not only in terms of income but also access to basic services and education (Tacoli et al, 2013). As the urban poor represent a segment of the population that do not pay tax, own property and are often not recognised as contributing members of society, they fall through the gaps of 'public policy' and are often denied access to resources (such as electricity, proper sewage, or clean water) and frequently must turn to the informal market (Menon, 2013; Bhan, 2009; Mander, 2011). Access to housing, health services, sanitation and other government services, such as waste disposal, are in no way guaranteed, with high levels of exclusion from these services as well as other government services such as *anganwadis* (child and mother health and feeding centres). Renu Khosla, director of an urban think-tank called the Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE), has researched urban poverty for decades, and argues that if one defines poverty not by income but by access to services, there would be a significant increase in those considered vulnerable. Current government figures put urban poverty as no greater than 15%, and as low as 10% (World Bank, 2014), but Khosla argues that taking into consideration the amount of people with poor living standards due to the lack of access to basic amenities and services would greatly expand the amount of the urban population that would be considered poor:

> **"Many slum-dwellers are not poor by an income definition, but they are poor if you take services and if you take housing. By that definition of poverty, taken by services, the amount of poor in urban areas is very high. 60% of the urban population do not have access to home toilets. There are community toilets, so the band of people who would be defecating in the open could be considered as the group that are the poorest. In the extremely poor pockets, 90% would have no toilets. [In our research in] Agra, we figured out that 60% of the population were without access to services. It's a minority of people who get access. Poverty depends on what definition you are using, in this case the definition that we use is that they don't have access to services at home."** – **Renu Khosla, Director of the Centre for Urban Excellence (CURE)**

As such, many of those interviewed highlighted that income was an inadequate measure of food insecurity, and that one should look towards a lack of access to services as the primary source of vulnerabilities, as highlighted by five different individuals:

> **"[Slum dwellers] might actually earn quite a lot but they're still living without access to services, so they are vulnerable. From my experience in working urban areas in last twenty years, I find that income poverty is not that serious problem in urban areas […] It's not that people are so poverty stricken that they don't get access to food. However, they are exposed to multiple vulnerabilities" – Debolina Kundu, Associate Professor at the NIUA.**
>
> **"Although the [urban poor] have income levels where their earnings may be okay, their levels of vulnerability are high. There is no job security, there is no certainty of income, and they lack access to services." – Pronab Sen, Country Director of the International Growth Centre (IGC).**
>
> **"The problems of the urban poor are much more towards inadequacy of basic services, especially residence, health, sanitation or education. A very large number of people have no place to live in." – N.C. Saxena, former bureaucrat with the Planning Commission.**
>
> **"The issue about urban food insecurity is a complicated one precisely because there are other significant issues in urban India, such as access to sanitation and access to clean water, which are both more significant issues." – Jayati Ghosh, Development Economist at Centre for Economic Studies, JNU.**
>
> **"If you look at it from the economic perspective then the income of even the poorest of the poor has gone up, and I just don't mean in absolute but also in relative terms. Yet it does not mean that their quality of life has improved, although their access to health care and basic services and food has improved objectively." – Anjali Chikersal, Senior Fellow at Centre for Policy Research.**

As the urban poor lack legitimacy, they live in conditions that entail illegality – living on property they do not own, utilising illegally procured energy and water provided by criminal middlemen or local power brokers for votes or control (Menon, 2013; Bhan, 2009). Their status as squatters means they have little official protection and end up paying more for basic services, such as water, than legally housed residents; a study done on urban squatters in Mumbai showed that, on average, they would pay 10 rupees for every 1,000 litres of water, while the municipality supplied water to houses at 50 paise (100 paise is 1 rupee) per 1,000 litres (Sharma, 1999). This lack of access puts a huge strain on being able to manage household food security, wherein non-food essentials take a large share of the income. Although incomes have improved, non-food expenditures have increased commensurately (Saxena, 2013).

Furthermore, unhealthy living environments have been shown to be a leading factor in urban malnourishment (UNHRC, 2005; Agarwal, 2011; Tacoli et al, 2013), with the lack of clean water and proper sanitation, crowded living conditions, open sewers and air pollution linked with higher prevalence of diarrhoea and stomach-related diseases in urban areas than in rural areas (UHRC, 2007), as well as exposure to communicable diseases (Von Braun, 2007). Jayati Ghosh, Biraj Patnaik and Schweta Khandelwal were all vocal in pointing out that poor sanitation is the main contributor to malnutrition in urban India:

> **“One of the biggest causes of malnutrition is poor sanitation and in urban India that is a leading cause of disease. There is no water right, and especially when you're not recognised, access to those things is very difficult.” – Jayati Ghosh, Development Economist at Centre for Economic Studies, JNU.**
>
> **“The NFSA has the potential to eliminate hunger to a very large scale, but it is not able to deal with malnutrition unless we crack our sanitation, our water, access to potable drinking water, access to quality health services.” – Biraj Patnaik, Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right to Food.**
>
> **“If a baby is born underweight it is going to fall prey to stunting, wasting, and stunted brain development. Sanitation is thus also a nutrition issue.” – Schweta Khandelwal, Research Scientist at the Public Health Foundation.**

Vandana Prasad, the founding secretary of the Public Health Resource Network (PHRN), an urban-based NGO, and Dipa Sinha, an academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign, both highlighted a growing public health crisis as a consequence of this lack of access to services occurring simultaneously with a nutrition transition of shifting diets in urban areas:

> **“There’s been a rise of both communicable and non-communicable diseases. We have diabetes and hypertension, which also exist in the rural poor communities much more than people would anticipate. They have huge amounts of morbidity. And if you were to look at**

> **any comparatives in terms of life expectancy and morbidity it would show a huge difference between the urban rich and the urban poor and even between the urban poor and rural poor on many fronts. So for instance infant mortality rates are higher in urban slums than they are in current rural communities." – Vandana Prasad, Founding Secretary of the Public Health Resource Network (NGO)**

> **"We have this problem of undernutrition and obesity at the same time. We have communicable diseases and hypertension, diabetes and non-communicable diseases at the same time. This is essentially due to diets being completely wrong, especially in urban areas." – Dipa Sinha, Academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign**

India is in a unique situation where obesity and obesity-related health problems, primarily heart disease and diabetes, have become increasingly common while many millions live with chronic hunger. India has more than 50 million people suffering from diabetes, as well as 20 million obese, thus being the one nation with the highest prevalence of obesity and metabolic syndrome (pre-obesity) (Deloitte, 2011). Reduced physical activity, unhygienic and overcrowded living conditions, higher exposure to pollution, high stress levels and poorer diets all potentially contribute to this increase (Deloitte, 2011). An overall decline of mortality due to infectious disease and increasingly sedentary lifestyles have also contributed to the increase of mortality rates due to NCDs (Bloom, 2011).

The problem is not limited to the economically well-off (or even to urban areas), although the urban poor face a 'double burden' of acute diseases as well as an increased incidence of chronic diseases. As stated, calorie consumption is lower in urban than in rural areas, a result of half of the urban population belonging to self-employed, casual labour households (Athreya et al, 2010). The urban poor suffer from not only long-term material deprivation, high levels of stress and unhealthy living conditions, but are also more prone to drink and smoke, with the highest rates in India of both among the lowest income quintile (Deloitte, 2011). The urban poor thus find themselves "in a nexus of underdevelopment and industrialisation" (Von Braun et al, 1993), poverty-related infectious disease and malnutrition, urban-related cardiovascular disease, and social instability and insecurity, with high risk of exposure to vulnerabilities such as alcoholism, drug abuse and venereal diseases (Von Braun et al, 1993). Malnutrition aggravates, and is aggravated by, infectious diseases, which is exacerbated by overcrowding and pollution, as well as sociocultural disruptions of rural migrants moving to large cities, creating psychological and mental issues, though this has not been empirically studied in any sufficient form (Von Braun et al, 1993).

The rise of calorie dense and nutritionally light processed foods in cities has contributed to a belief that people are food secure in urban areas, although even overweight people suffer from a form of malnourishment. India is facing the double burden of under-consumption and over-consumption, a situation developmental sociologist Raj Patel (2009) characterises as ‘stuffed and starved’: a public health catastrophe with no clear solutions.

4.3.3 Livelihoods and Income

As was explored in chapter one and chapter two, the literature on food security has closely linked increased incomes with improved nutritional status and increased food security (Pritchard et al, 2014), and the literature has made clear that access to food, as well as non-food essentials, such as fuel, water, transportation and shelter, are highly monetized for the urban poor (Saxena, 2013). While the rural poor can potentially gather or collect essentials from their surroundings, or support each other communally, the urban poor rely almost purely on employment for survival (Athreya et al, 2010). Poverty lines are an attempt to reflect this reality, such as India’s urban poverty line having a higher monetary value than the rural poverty line, yet it does not reflect that high-cost locations may at times require a significantly higher income for survival (Satterthwaite, 2003). The urban poor thus find themselves in a situation wherein relative prices of commodities are high, levels of daily wage are low, and expenses such as housing and healthcare are pressing, leading many to take high-interest loans to be able to cover essential expenses (Agarwal et al, 2009). Food access is almost entirely dependent on income and livelihoods, with high levels of non-awareness of government programmes and schemes (Mander, 2012; Prasad et al, 2010; Agarwal et al, 2009). Only 29% of those eligible in urban areas are aware of, and have access to, the PDS (Saxena, 2013). A study by Agarwal et al (2009) reported household food insecurity in urban slums in New Delhi highlighted the need for the urban poor to find avenues of employment through either schemes or skills training to help alleviate food insecurity derived from poor remuneration and lack of livelihood security.

Keeping the literature that was explored in chapter one and two in mind, Pronab Sen and Amita Baviskar believe that livelihood security is directly tied to urban food security beyond issues of sanitation and infrastructure. This is because the majority of employment, even in urban areas, is in the informal sector. The informal sector is characterised by a proliferation of 'self-employment', a euphemism to indicate the lack of formal contracting, which corresponds with poor remuneration and vulnerable livelihood (Pal & Ghosh, 2007). Daily wage labourers live with constant vulnerabilities, needing to find work every day to be able to feed themselves and any adherents. Average incomes of daily wage labourers are 1,500 to 2,000 rupees (£15-£20) a month, and often have to support multiple adherents, such as women and children (Bhan, 2014). Pronab Sen, the former chief statistician of India, explains why the informal sector has such unpredictable wages:

> **"[The urban poor] are of a vulnerability which comes from livelihood insecurity. When you look at the informal sector, where you don't have any formal indexation, wages are not linked to cost of living. In urban areas waged work can be equated to paying someone 100 rupees today, and tomorrow pay them 105 rupees, but costs may have gone up by 10 rupees. The wage increase is arbitrary and not linked to the actual economy. Daily wage workers buy food on a daily basis because they have a cash flow problem, living day by day. So they earn, they buy and they eat. Urban food security is essentially livelihood security." – Pronab Sen, Country Head for the International Growth Centre (IGC).**

Amita Baviskar, Professor of Developmental Sociology at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University, agrees with Pronab Sen that urban food security is tied directly to livelihood insecurity:

> **"As long as livelihood remains insecure, access to food does too. However, one can argue that higher wage rates in the urban context actually translates into slightly better food security […] The urban poor have more regular access to food than in rural areas." – Amita Baviskar, Professor of Development Sociology at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University.**

Vulnerable livelihoods and high income inequality are integral dimensions of food insecurity that were flagged, and as explored in chapter one and two, there is a consensus in the literature regarding incomes and food security (Pritchard et al, 2014; Tacoli et al, 2013). However, there was widespread agreement among those interviewed that the urban poor are by and large not poor by an income definition and that the majority could buy food, yet are mainly vulnerable due to a lack of access to services, a hostile attitude from the state, judiciary and the 'middle class', uncertain housing where they may be forcefully evicted, and unsanitary living conditions. Jayati Ghosh, prominent development economist at the Centre for Economic Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, expands on the disconnect between poverty and food security in India:

> **“Income poverty and food poverty are not the same at all in India, if you just take standard nutritional indicators, food poverty is much more widespread. People who I would call lower middle class can move into situations of food insecurity. We forget that poverty is not the same as food insecurity and yet the criteria seems to kind of conflate the two as problematic indicators of poverty and income are used to define food security.” – Jayati Ghosh, Development Economist at Centre for Economic Studies, JNU.**

Renu Khosla believes that the issue really is about vulnerability and not just poverty. Vulnerability to shocks can entail food insecurity, beyond a pure income-based measure:

> **“Anybody above the poverty line then becomes middle income, lower middle income. That’s why we don’t use the word poverty, we use vulnerability. You see in families who, because they have health costs of an accident or major illness of a family member and/or a death of a family member, actually slip from fairly decent income household to poverty. That’s why the term for urban has to be vulnerability not poverty. Poverty in urban and rural is very different. In the urban areas, poverty is more about access to services. It’s lack of water, lack of toilets and poor sanitation, lack of housing and livelihoods.” – Renu Khosla, director of CURE**

As such, while there is a segment of the population wherein vulnerable incomes are closely tied to food insecurity, structural issues around housing, sanitation infrastructure and clean water are all contributing factors to continued vulnerabilities for large segments of the urban population, all of which are potential dimensions of food insecurity. Ultimately, without the support of the government, the urban food insecure must rely on fair remuneration and access to the market, which does not exist to be a benefactor or as an aid, but is ultimately motivated by a profit motive.

4.3.4 The Most Vulnerable

So far, the dimensions of urban food insecurity covered in the preceding sections, from slum demolishment, housing, sanitation and clean water, are primarily focused on the urban poor who are slum dwellers and the segment of the urban population that have access to the NFSA. However, there are segments of the urban population that was identified in the literature review in chapter two and further in the interviews as being the most vulnerable, on the margins of society, consisting of the homeless and migrant labourers, who are not only vulnerable in terms of lacking permanent shelter, but also lack access to the NFSA due to entitlements being residence-base.

As explored in chapter two, the homeless find themselves exposed to multiple dimensions of food insecurity, from political exclusion, lack of recognition, lack of housing, and exploitation in the workforce. While the eligibility criteria of the NFSA is decided on a state by state basis and states may choose to provide benefits to the homeless, these are up to the discretion of each state and not centrally mandated (NFSA, 2013). Anjali Chikersal of the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) views the homeless as the most exposed urban vulnerable group:

"The health of the homeless is significantly worse and access to health services is almost non-existent for the homeless and shelter-less compared to slum dwellers." – **Anjali Chikersal, Health Researcher at Centre for Policy Research (think-tank).**

A study done by the University of Delhi in 2015 on coping strategies in urban Delhi in preventing food insecurity showed that the urban homeless are most likely to reduce their food consumption to cope, alternatively to depend on charities, or turn towards foraging or theft (Gupta et al, 2015). This urban homeless constitute a small segment of the overall urban population but find themselves on the fringes of society. N.C Saxena, Jayati Ghosh and Renu Khosla and Pronab Sen all believe that the methodologically weak identification of the poor in urban areas contribute to the inability to accurately locate, and thus care for, the urban homeless:

> **"The bulk of urban poverty is locatable, big cities concentrate poverty in pockets such as slums. It is a small band which will be a transient, moving, which are hard to footprint."** – **Renu Khosla, Director of the Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (think-tank).**
>
> **"The number of homeless people is certainly under-reported, but more importantly is the fact that in urban areas the actual identification of the poor is an issue." – N.C. Saxena, former member of the National Advisory Council.**

> **“We don’t even know the full extent of homelessness because even in the census all these homeless have not been identified. That has more to do with the issues of identification.”** – **Jayati Ghosh, Developmental Economist at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning.**
>
> **“Street people are extremely mobile and it is very hard [for them] to attain any form of identification. So in a sense even if you have the best intent in the world, actually addressing the urban poor is tougher”** – **Pronab Sen, Country Head for the IGC.**

After a devastating winter in 2010, which caused multiple deaths among the homeless due to their lack of shelter, the Right to Food Commissioners to the Supreme Court recommended that hot cooked meals should be provided for the homeless population at subsidised prices, either in the form of community kitchens or at homeless shelters (which the Commissioners also recommended that urban bodies build more of). As the National Advisory Council had two of the three commissioners as members, this provision was included in the first draft by the NAC and survived until the parliamentary standing committee report recommended it to be excised on the grounds of the inability to properly track those who would be eligible for the community kitchens and ensure that proper access was granted to beneficiaries (NFSA, 2013; Standing Committee Report, 2013). This is looked at in more detail in chapter six, but suffice to say this decision was troubling for many of those interviewed, with the ‘Amma’ canteens in Chennai in Tamil Nadu often given as examples of properly functioning community kitchens that provide subsided food and are open to all (Mander, 2013).

Further mentioned in chapter two as a significant vulnerable group was migrant labourers, which were further identified in the interviews as a serious cause of concern in terms of urban food insecurity. As explored, the majority of migrant workers are from poor, marginalised groups who wish to escape cultural and economic discrimination (caste, religion, etc.) in their villages, believing in better job opportunities and the anonymity of the city. Vandana Prasad, of the Public Health Resource Network, headed an extensive study on the food security of homeless and migrants in urban India, and argues that migration in India is predominantly of the push factor:

> “**Most migration in India is of push migration rather than pull. Most migrants would be the most vulnerable even in the rural communities that they come from, typically the landless, those who have had a peculiar catastrophe happen to them such as floods or drought, or some social ostracism that has led to them migrating. They are already physically and**

> **mentally vulnerable as it is and then the problems of surviving in the big city, living in very unsafe environments, both physical as well as social. [Our research] found a lot of trauma, for example road traffic injuries, sexual and physical abuse, and illnesses. Most of them were pretty malnourished [as] as a lot of them sacrificed on food to be able to send earnings home. A lot of their daily earnings go for food, they will eat just one meal a day."** – **Vandana Prasad, Founding Secretary of the Public Health Resource Network (NGO)**

Renu Khosla agrees that push migration is the predominant form of migration in India:

> **"Unskilled migration is predominantly push migration due to desperate circumstances or it could be a gradual deterioration of conditions."** – **Renu Khosla, Director of CURE.**

The majority of these migrants are from deprived socio-economic backgrounds, seeking out new livelihood options. It is unclear if these migrants are part of the urban or rural makeup, and are often undocumented, unregistered, and not recognised as belonging to whichever urban area they have travelled to – becoming a 'floating' population that has been accorded low priority by the Indian government in part due to a knowledge gap of the extent, nature and magnitude of migrants (UNESCO, 2011). Debolina Kundu and Mukta Srivastava both recognise that seasonal migrants fall between the gaps of policy:

> **"Seasonal migration is going up among the poor, among the lower caste. Permanent migration is higher among the better off sections of society."** – **Debolina Kundu, Associate Professor at NIUA.**
>
> **"Seasonal migrant workers who come for six months from the rural area and then they go back have their names listed in the rural area. So when they come to urban areas they have no ration card, they don't have place where they can cook food. The Food Security Act doesn't help them."** – **Mukta Srivastava, Maharashtra state representative to the Right to Food Campaign**

There was a perception by many of those interviewed, particularly those who worked closely with migrant labourers in NGOs, that the government is not only unwilling to provide support or aid, but is hostile towards migrants in general. In fact, most policies aim at dissuading migrants, such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005, which was described as a "migration bill" by N.C.

Saxena. The majority of those interviewed expressed concerns that there were no laws specifically regarding migration and the overall lack of policy regarding migrants has contributed to deeply rooted food insecurity for migrant labourers. The interviewees offered numerable reasons why this was the case. Abhijit Sen, a former bureaucrat for the Planning Commission, explained that urban policy and migrant policy were firmly a state issue in India's federal system, and individual states have been unwilling to facilitate or in any way regulate migration. Sen granted that the central government has the capacity to direct and overall shape a national urban or migrant policy, but has so far not acted:

> **"As far as migration is concerned, there is a real problem, the problem of a Federal System. The constitution ensures that people can move, but the constitution also ensures that most of these things are the responsibility of the state governments. Now most state governments really do not want to create laws or entitlements for people who are not resident of the state, while most states where migrants come from are unable to set up a system for the migrants in other states." – Abhijit Sen, former bureaucrat at the Planning Commission.**

This perspective was echoed by other interviewees, who argued that the Indian central government has historically been indifferent to urban migration, having not passed or even tabled any policies addressing urban migrant labourers, as they are predominantly seen as an issue for each state. N.C. Saxena argues that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was an act to discourage migration and have people stay in rural areas:

> **"The [Indian] government is very indifferent to urban migration, and has not drafted laws like China has, where there are all kind of restrictions on rural to urban migration. Here there are no legal restrictions, anyone can migrate, but for migrant workers the kind of laws that we have are not being implemented. So migrant workers find that they are in the informal sector, exploited, often bonded. People are migrating from rural to urban because they can't find a job in rural areas; if you provide job in the rural areas then there is no migration. This is why the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a migration bill." – N.C. Saxena, former member of the National Advisory Council**

Amita Baviskar argues that this has been on purpose, that the lack of adequate policies has been to foster a hostile urban environment to deter immigration:

> **“There continues to be a deficit in terms of dealing with issues of shelter and livelihood, which does make the city unfriendly to migrants. [Government] failure to change anything and continuing to maintain a system which is hostile to migrants is a way to deter people from coming. ” – Amita Baviskar, Professor of Development Sociology at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University.**

Harsh Mander outlined a conversation with the former mayor of Delhi, who frankly stated to them that the Delhi Municipal Corporation did not want to encourage more migrants to urban areas by making the city easier to live in. The lack of proper infrastructure, the inability of urban areas to absorb the current flow of migrants, and the issues of governance that were discussed in chapter five mean that Indian urban areas will struggle to handle even larger migration, which may be the fear that policy-makers believe will occur if the pull factors become more enticing.

> **“Policies till now have kept the poor, maybe poor, but still in rural areas. Have incentivized staying in rural areas, and more importantly de-incentivized urban migration.” – Sunita Narain, Director of the Centre for Science and the Environment (CSE).**

Another major issue that was brought up was the lack of portability of entitlements, which has meant that the many migrants who come from rural areas looking for employment are unable to bring their entitlements with them (assuming that they have access to those entitlements in the rural areas), as stated by Vandana Prasad:

> **“A chronic problem for urban migrants are lack of papers, lack of identity, definitely lack of proof of residence which is required for many entitlements. In any case there is no mobility of entitlements.” – Vandana Prasad, Founding Secretary of PHRN.**

Abhijit Sen and Jayati Ghosh further expand on the pitfalls of residence-based programmes and the omission of mobile populations:

> **“The main thing about the migrant issue is that any mode of transfer, whether they are food transfers or cash transfers, that prioritises residence as the basis on which you get the transfer, rules out migrants. It’s an issue of portability of rights. If the central government can introduce some mechanism for portability, that would go a long way. It’s mainly a political**

> **issue, the technology for it exists now.” – Abhijit Sen, former bureaucrat with the Planning Commission**
>
> **“Public policy is migration-blind as it is residence-based. It’s not just that there is no migration policies, it is that all policies are in a sense assuming away migration, especially homelessness and temporary or recent migration, and since it is residence-based it therefore excludes huge numbers of people.” – Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning**

Quite often it is men who migrate looking for work, their family remaining in the villages that they come from and to whom they send remuneration. This type of migration often takes the form of seasonal migration, moving to the cities during lulls in the agricultural seasons or moving to work temporarily before moving back to live with their family. For many this is a lifestyle, living in the city for about nine months and at “home” for the remainder, year after year. While this segment of the population end up spending most of their time in the city, they are still considered temporary migrants, as they are registered in the village that they came from. Statistically they are not considered part of the urban poor, and their food security status unknown, despite academic studies on migrant labourers and the homeless consistently showing high levels of nutritional depravity and food insecurity through economic vulnerability, particularly among migrant women and their adherent children (who also lack access to education) (Agarwal et al, 2009; Prasad et al, 2010; Mander, 2008; UHRC, 2007).

4.3.5 Attitudes towards Identity and Citizenship of the Urban Poor

As discussed in chapter two, the academic literature on urban poverty highlight that attitudes held by policy-makers, the political elite, and by many citizens, contribute to the continued neglect and non-citizenship status of the urban poor. The interview process saw this perspective brought up repeatedly from several interviewees, such as Biraj Patnaik, the Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right to Food; Dipa Sinha, an academic who has researched the legislation on the NFSA extensively and is associated with Right to Food Campaign; and Renu Khosla, Director of the Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE), an urban think-tank:

> **"The fact that [many of the urban poor] are on illegal land, actually is the core. That illegality was transferred from the land to the individual, making it the illegality of their existence. As you are illegal, on illegal land, you don't have proof of address, you cannot get access to services. – Renu Khosla, director of CURE.**
>
> **"The slums, the house owners are illegal, they are just people who got there first and grabbed the land and built a shack and rented out to somebody else. The electricity connections are illegal, the water connections are illegal, everything is illegal. There are no services because they are not recognised. The societal response is not there and response instead is to illegalise them. You criminalise them and put the blame on them." – Dipa Sinha, academic associated with the Right to Food campaign.**
>
> **"The main challenge for the urban poor is recognition of citizenship. Not identity, as in having documentation, but being recognised as real citizens, participating in the economy in a real way with rights. It's a manifestation of a deeper issue: the urban poor are the new Dalits [the lowest caste], unless as a country we acknowledge the productive role that the poor are playing in our cities. This phenomenon is a result of growing inequality." – Biraj Patnaik, Right to Food Commissioner.**

Amita Baviskar argues that the management of urban spaces in Delhi and Mumbai is done to emphasise ideals, to reflect the power and prestige of its wealthiest inhabitants, who occupy central urban spaces and wish to shape the city to their vision (Baviskar, 2003). To justify their vision, an ambiguous 'urban middle class' has been idealised both within political discourse and in the Indian media, seen as an expression of growing affluence and a link to the globalising world (Ramakrishnan, 2013). Baviskar elaborated in the interview:

> "**The urban middle class dominate urban spaces; a numerically very small section of the urban middle class wields great influence over urban policies. Once you claim that space, as long as you can defend it, you maintain this illusion of power. Inequality and wanting to maintain hierarchy have both been constant features of Indian society including in the cities, which has to some extent been exacerbated with [economic] liberalisation; a lot of the rhetoric around liberalisation is that more people have been able to join a world of high consumption, upward mobility, etc., but those dreams and ambitions are not really actualised for most people**." **–**

> Amita Baviskar, **Professor of Development Sociology at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University.**

Several others of those interviewed agreed with this assessment, including Harsh Mander, former member of the National Advisory Council and who has written and researched urban poverty extensively; Nikhil Dey, a key activist in the Right to Food Campaign; Schweta Khandelwal, a research scientist on urban public health at the Public Health Foundation of India; and Vandana Prasad, a Public Health activist who has done research on homeless food insecurity:

> **"The views of the state and the general middle-class public opinion is as though the legitimate citizens of the state are primarily its middle class. The urban poor [are viewed as] burdening cities and crowding cities. Questioning the legitimacy of citizenship of the urban poor translates into viewing the whole framework as illegal. Therefore the state, according to this imagination, has only duties against the urban poor, not for them, to try to protect the 'Middle Class', protect sidewalks, protect traffic, protect sanitation, law and order from alleged dangers and problems with urban poverty. [The urban poor] are treated as illegitimate, illegal residents." – Harsh Mander, former member of the National Advisory Council and director of the Centre for Equity Studies, think-tank.**
>
> **"[The urban poor] are basically criminalised, their existence is criminalised. They are not the concern: the concern is the middle class." – Nikhil Dey, leading social activist in the Right to Food Campaign.**
>
> **"There is a distinct lack of "we are in this together" attitude. That goes for all the tensions I find in India. The upper middle class, the politicians seem not to recognise the urban poor as citizens of the nation." – Schweta Khandelwal, research scientist on urban public health at the Public Health Foundation of India.**
>
> **"[Ignoring urban poverty] is a consequence of a middle class mind-set that denies the role that the labouring class plays in their own lives so as to deny them their entitlements." – Vandana Prasad, founding secretary of Public Health Resource Network (PHRN)**

The interviewees argue, and the literature supports, that contemporary political and cultural trends in India have been to construct the idea of citizenship on a decidedly middle-class identity (in itself an ambiguous social construct), which in turn has resulted in the exclusion of marginalised groups from the prevailing political discourse, as established in chapter two (Ramakrishnan, 2013; Bhan, 2009; Baviskar, 2013). The urban poor, then, exist in opposition to the new Indian middle class, who themselves have engaged in the "politics of forgetting" (Fernandes, 2000). This "misrecognition" of the poor has been part of the broader political, economic and aesthetic transformations of the city, and underlies the justifications used in mass evictions of slum settlements and the continued negative approach to the urban poor in policy terms (Bhan, 2009). While the 'urban middle class' holds a strong narrative appeal for politico-economic discourse found in the media and among policy-makers, this middle class is fairly ambiguous, varied and far from homogenous, with differing mind-sets, engagement with urban development, consumption abilities and lifestyle choices. However, the promise of attaining privilege and distinction that is associated with the middle class has helped further the urban middle class narrative (Ramakrishnan, 2013). The re-appropriation of space by the urban middle class is thus legitimised by legal structures and public policies (Ramakrishnan, 2013; Bhan, 2014). However, Renu Khosla, the director of CURE, saw this exclusion in other terms:

> **"I would not now say that services are oriented towards the middle class, I would say services have been oriented towards a formal citizen versus the informal citizen." – Renu Khosla, director of CURE.**

Rhenu Khosla's distinction speaks to how simple social constructions of 'poor' and 'middle class' can miss the nuance that comes with recognition, or the lack thereof, by the state. An important characteristic of urban food insecurity is thus one of being an informal citizen, not recognised by the city and outside of the scope of governmental programmes, rather than through a simple 'poor – not poor' dichotomy. The consequence of being viewed as informal citizens is that access to basic services as well as to government programmes and subsidies becomes highly limited. While it is valid to point out this distinction, the prevailing discourse of those interviewed, and which in turn informs the social construction of the target population of the NFSA, is one couched in the language of the 'poor' and the 'food insecure', and not merely the differences between formal and informal citizens. It must be kept in mind that the majority of those expressing these views in the interviews are academics and NGO workers who work with the urban poor.

4.4 Urban Policy

This section explores, per the interviews and policy documents, the urban policy landscape and how the NFSA fits within the larger context of urban development, urban poverty relief and the ongoing efforts by the Government of India in planning and shaping urban areas. Two specific urban planning efforts undertaken by the current and previous governments is outlined, specifically the two major current and former urban policies: the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), which lasted from 2005 to 2014, and the Smart Cities Mission, launched in 2017, and what they tell us about the Government of India's approach to urban development and the role that government bodies play in urban governance.

The constitution of India enshrines urban development as the remit of state governments, although the central government and its institutions like the Planning Commission have the capacity to pass nation-wide laws dictating how urban planning should develop. Historically, the central government has given each state the governance space to deal with urban policies, particularly after governance reforms in 1992 that focused on decentralisation, as covered in chapter two (Baud & De Wit, 2009). According to the urban experts interviewed, a consequence of urban development being in the hands of state governments, whose populations have been mainly rural, has meant that urban poverty alleviation has been overlooked in terms of policy and governance. Policy documents and expert opinion point towards long-standing rural bias in policy-making regarding poverty alleviation, stemming from a long-held "pro-poor" agenda of many different governments and politicians, both in the central government as well as in different states.

Those interviewed also expressed a rural bias in regard to poverty alleviation and food policy – with food security experts and academics acknowledging a lack of focus on urban food insecurity, while urban experts pointed towards the huge swathe of rural poverty alleviation programmes in comparison to the few urban programmes: the preponderance of poverty in rural India has contributed to the neglect towards urban poverty alleviation, with the focus of urban development on large infrastructure projects and forming cities as economic engines (Harris, 2012). As described by urban experts, another major contributing factor to continued policy neglect of the urban poor was an imbalance of responsibilities and power between state governments and local urban bodies. State governments hold the budgetary and planning power over cities, while local urban bodies are tasked with more 'managerial' duties such as waste management: as such, the local urban bodies do not consider the responsibilities of dealing with urban poor as theirs, and even if they did would be constrained by a centrally-allocated budget and the lack of say in planning (Baud & De Wit, 2009). Furthermore, state governments in India have long oriented themselves towards pandering towards rural voters – for the majority of the states, these would be the overwhelming segment of their respective populations – while urban votes who are most courted are the urban middle class, who can be more easily located and their needs identified. As slums are generally unrecognised, their value as a voting base is also diminished, even in cities that are predominantly slums like in Mumbai (Pinto, 2008). State parties that have found success in state elections have pandered towards rural voters on so-called 'pro-poor' platforms, or other types of identity politics, such as pandering towards different castes that vote in block (Drèze & Sen, 2013), and have thus found little interest in pushing for urban poverty relief programmes.

Those I interviewed spoke very strongly about the failure of local governance, rooted in urban institutions lacking both authority and autonomy, with budgetary decisions and planning the responsibilities of state institutions. Renu Khosla, the director for an urban-focused think-tank, expands:

> **"The issue facing these cities are that there is no clear governance, there is very muddled authority and the finances are not in their control. Municipal governance bodies neither have control over the finances nor do they have control over major functions. Looking at a city like Delhi, the municipal corporations lack the resources and they also don't have empowered functions. Their only function is limited to solid waste management and some minor administrative things like parking lots, billboards and advertisements, and property taxes. Local governments are not empowered sufficiently by the states to do its own thinking, so a lot of the planning is done at state level, with the cities having very little say." – Renu Khosla, director for CURE.**

Renu Khosla continues, arguing that the lack of authority and control have resulted in local administrations with little desire to enact change, seeing their roles as purely perfunctory, while the politically elected policy-makers see their responsibilities elsewhere:

> **"As the states have been so powerful, the city has become weaker and weaker. [Local bodies] lack the capacity now to even think, with their current commissioners dealing more with day**

> **to day matters, such as water supply, etc. They are administrators, they are not visionaries, there is no vision that you would see in any city. And that is the root cause that has resulted in a mess of urban cities in India. No bureaucrats with visions or politicians with interest." – Renu Khosla, director for CURE**

Harsh Mander, a former member of the National Advisory Council, reached a similar assessment, arguing that the role of the local bodies, municipal corporations, has been reduced to simple administrative tasks:

> **"The municipal corporation has always seen itself as more oriented towards maintenance, garbage collection and water pipe construction. It has never seen itself as a developmental or welfare institution. The failure of urban governance to address urban populations is a reflection of the same attitude of the illegitimacy of this population. An assumption that the urban poor are basically a spill-over of rural poverty in cities, so their needs, anything that you apply in a rural area apply to a smaller degree to urban areas, to the urban poor. It might be the same people, the rural and urban poor, but when they come into the city the nature and the experience of urban poverty are very different. It has only very minorly begun to change now in the last 15 years. There have recently been positive programmes for the urban poor but they are very small and under-resourced. As an example, the National Rural Health Mission existed for more than a decade before a National Urban Health Mission was implemented quite recently. I don't think we even have thought up policies for the urban poor." – Harsh Mander, director of the Centre for Equity Studies.**

The issue of state government control over urban planning was identified by the Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right of Food, Biraj Patnaik, as a catastrophe for urban governance:

> **"There is a collapse in urban governance in India. It's not about food. There is a deep malaise of governance in urban India. It was not grappled with structurally early on, and now it is at a complete crisis point and exemplified in the circus witnessed in Delhi. The crises are over control, over service distribution between the central government and the state government. It's completely off the rails. In India every city is de facto governed by local bodies, on paper**

> **empowered to deal with all local issues but the reality is all decisions are done by the state government. The whole model is broken, whether its revenue collection, revenue distribution, everything about it." – Biraj Patnaik, Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right to Food.**

Sunita Narain, director for the Centre for Science and the Environment, a prominent think-tank, argues that this governance system is a consequence of the massive focus on rural governance since colonial times:

> **"Urban Indian governance has never been looked at. Rural Indian governance is still to some extent intact because of the setup during colonial times and the follow-through by the Nehru government and their legacy. There's the District Administrator, the Block Development Officer and the Panchayati Raj, so you have both participative democracy as well and representative democracy as well as administrative democracy. India was such a rural-focused country for so long, we have just not even thought about what the governance systems are in urban India. Consequently, urban India has poor governance systems and whatever we have has been whittled down. We have municipal corporations, which don't have budgets, which have no accountability. Governance is the crisis right now, whether it is delivery of basic services, whether housing, water, sewage, garbage, it's a complete mess. There was a planning system but it's not been able to cope with the sheer scale of growth anymore, with very poor technical ability within institutions and not even clear accountability within institutions. There was an inability to reform the system so instead little bits and pieces were introduced outside the system." – Sunita Narain, Director of the Centre for Science and the Environment (CSE).**

Sunita Narain continues the argument that this apparent rural bias in governance systems has resulted in decades of urban policy neglect:

> **"There is nobody in charge. I don't even blame them. The Union Ministry of Urban Development has no role to play. Our crisis is that we haven't figured out what a city government should be. Any budget urban bodies need has to go through the state government, with no independent budget. They have no independence and the more lucrative part of the city, the money, has been taken out of their scope and brought under**

> **bureaucrats, and the bureaucrats don't like to be under the elected representatives, and so they see the elected representatives as a pain in the neck. And these bureaucrats are often corrupt, useless and all. They have basically crippled their municipal administration. Municipal administrations in most cities in India today only handle one thing – garbage, yet no money to invest in it. Which is why we are drowning under it. We are still focused on the problem of urban governance in India, we are not focused on the nature of the institutions that will govern the city yet." – Sunita Narain, director of CSE.**

The book *India's Reluctant Urbanisation* by Piyush Tiwari, et al (2015) strengthens these perspectives on urban governance neglect, as they analysed six decades of urban policies, political discourse on urbanisation and economic and social systems, and observed that the debate on urbanisation and the outcomes, both physical and social, in urban India, point towards urban policies being implemented "reluctantly" (Tiwari et al, 2015; p. 21). A paper by Mihir Bholey in 2016 furthers these arguments, stating that the predominantly agrarian society in India has meant the chunk of attention has been towards social policies and programmes skewing towards rural concerns, and claiming that the pro-poor agendas of elected officials and political parties have led to an 'antipathy' towards urban development (Bholey, 2016), notwithstanding commercial interests. As the interviews have made clear, the constitution of India holds that urban planning and governance is the remit of state governments, and the central government has by and large kept itself out of urban planning outside of a handful of policies, yet state governments have mainly concerned themselves with their rural constituents, meaning urban bodies have lacked funding and authority to properly plan urban areas. This then develops into a vicious cycle, with urban development taking its cue from the larger cities, where the leading policies have pointed towards slum demolishment and the relocation of the urban poor to peri-urban areas. As explored in chapter five, this slum demolishment and relocation has caused further issues regarding food security, as well as livelihoods. This lack of access to services for the urban poor is by and large the largest challenge for the urban poor and a large contributor to continued food insecurity.

4.4.1 Urban Planning

Urban governance and urban planning are tightly interlinked, with the lack of clear responsibilities in urban governance closely correlated to the failure of urban planning (Bholey, 2016). Consequently, there has been little to no nation-wide frameworks dictating how cities should grow or how they should develop, leading many smaller urban conglomerates to grow in a haphazard, slum-like fashion, while larger cities have had to continually redevelop itself as its population growth has outpaced infrastructural investments (Marshall & Randhawa, 2017). The lack of a central urban planning framework has also led to existing masterplans, such as the Delhi Master Plan, being utilised as a broad blueprint for other urban areas. The Delhi Master Plan, as discussed in chapter two, marginalised the urban poor and gave little recognised space to where they should reside, leading to the ballooning of the 'unrecognised' city alongside the recognised city. Renu Khosla, director of the urban-focused think-tank Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE), expands on the exclusionary nature of the Delhi Master Plan:

> **"The Delhi Master Plan is exclusionary by design. Today's economy is growing and a certain percentage of that growth can be attributed to the cheaper services provided by the poor people who are in the informal sector. The terms which are very often used in most of the meetings is that we have a much larger informal community and a much smaller formal citizenship." – Renu Khosla, Director of CURE.**

As such, other urban areas have followed similar designs, with only Chandigarh, a planned city that was ordered to be built by Nehru, taking into account living areas for those who cannot afford planned, organised spaces. However, even Chandigarh has seen a growth of slums in its suburban and peri-urban areas, as the continual influx of migrants, coupled with high population growth, has left urban bodies and states unable and often unwilling to properly adapt and respond. N.C. Saxena, former member of the NAC, believes that these central issues of governance are the major challenges facing urban food policy:

> **"[Urban food policy faces] problems of administration, from government will, political will and changing government policies and changing from [the former government] UPA to [the current government] NDA." – N.C. Saxena, former member of the NAC.**

The reasons as to the continued failure in dealing with the urban poor properly are complex and varied. Much like in other developing countries, local corruption, inefficient bureaucracy and a societal structure that places little value in the poor can be attributed to the lack of policy responses, yet there are some complexities that were highlighted in the interviews. The largest contributing factor, which was earlier explored, has been the failure of clear responsibilities in urban governance. Anjali Chikersal, public health expert at the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), shared her experience with urban planning in India:

> **"Urban areas have an organic growth. There is rarely anything called urban planning in India. I was speaking to a friend who was secretary of development in Himachal Pradesh, a policy-maker, and there are concrete buildings [in HP] that are not even earthquake proof. They might just fall if there are heavy rains or mud slides. I asked him why isn't there a committee that looks at the safety of the buildings and he replied why should we if the people are happy with the buildings!" – Anjali Chikersal, public health expert at CPR.**

The 'organic' growth of cities can be most clearly seen in the lack of planning in peri-urban areas, smaller towns and Census Towns, which even lack urban governance bodies. Debolina Kundu, urban expert at the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), lays out this lack of planning:

> **"The entire urban area is a slum in small urban areas. There's no central planning. What I find is that [in urban areas], the waste which is generated is being burnt instead of being dealt with. And where is it burnt? In the heart of the city in the central business district." – Debolina Kundu, Associate Professor at the NIUA.**

Furthermore, this 'organic' growth clashes sharply with the desired planning of policy-makers, a point Amita Baviskar made when illustrating urban municipalities:

> **"There is so much about municipalities that is unorganised, *ad hoc* about the way they exist, about the way they expand. Even having a municipality might speak to the desire to organise**

> **and order a sense of space but does not translate into reality. The need to have a planned ordered reality is very strong among a certain class of people both in the government and outside. That desire really struggles uneasily with ways in which things happen actually on the ground." – Amita Baviskar, Professor of Development Sociology at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University.**

The lack of urban planning affects all inhabitants of an urban area, but disproportionately affects the poor, as expressed by Nikhil Dey, a prominent activist with the Right to Food Campaign:

> **"I think urban living is just unmanageable: our cities are not made for large numbers of people, we don't have decent public transport, we aren't dealing with water, sanitation, housing, any of those issues with any kind of planning today. They're just unplanned, it is so-called urban planning. I think the poor are the worst affected because they are not even citizens of the city." – Nikhil Dey, activist with the Right to Food Campaign.**

Vandana Prasad, a public health professional with the Public Health Resource Network (PHRN), was especially damning of the lack of urban planning, seeing it as a reflection of a greater disinterest among those with power to enact changes:

"Urban planning is really missing, and it is all very arbitrary, especially small towns keep cropping up and slum communities keep cropping up and nobody is really learning from anybody else's experience. There is complete lack of political intent. Poor people are considered fairly dispensable, and as long as labour needs are met, then basically an overarching capitalist system doesn't really need to do that much more. You need to do enough to keep your labour in decent health and enough food for them to be able to labour. Apart from that, I don't think there is any concept of rights or equality that is driving this country." – Vandana Prasad, public health professional with PHRN.

4.4.2 Examples of Urban Planning

As has been explored, there has been a dearth of urban poverty relief policies in India, a consequence of various factors: a majority rural population, a long-standing rural bias in poverty relief programmes, and the responsibilities of urban policy the constitutional remit of state governments. However, there have been two policies enacted by the central government that have been focused on urban development – the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and the Smart Cities Mission. While the Smart Cities Mission is still in its developmental stage, its set goals and overarching aim can be used as an indicator to how urban planning is imagined by the current central government. The JNNURM has come and gone and is a useful indicator of the extent that the urban poor were considered and their needs addressed. As Biraj Patnaik earlier pointed out, the urban malaise in India is not about food – but has had an effect on the food security of those without access.

The JNNURM

The Jawarhalal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (henceforth JNNURM) was launched by UPA-1 in 2006 and was planned as a massive city modernisation scheme by the central government. The aim of JNNURM was to invest around $20 billion over seven years (later expanded to nine years) with the explicit set goals to encourage cities to improve their infrastructure and raise the quality of life by ensuring better services and expanded access to services (Government of India, 2006). The JNNURM took two primary ‘sub-missions’; one sub-mission, administered by the Ministry of Urban Development, was to focus on improving the water supply, sanitation and solid waste management, as well as improve urban transportation, urban road networks and the redevelopment of old city areas (WeF, 2016). The second sub-mission, administered by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, was focused on an integrated development of slums, with the set targets to broadly provide basic services to the urban poor (dubbed BSUP). This was the first time that a central government in India created a nation-wide programme for urban development, as urban policy was constitutionally the role of the states, as highlighted by Abhijit Sen, former member of the Planning Commission:

> **“The Central Government until the UPA did not have an urban policy. This was constitutionally the role of the states. UPA introduced the JNNURM, which was a part financing of projects by the Central Government, centred around infrastructure.” – Abhijit Sen, former member of the Planning Commission.**

The interest of the JNNURM to urban food security is two-fold. Firstly, the JNNURM was the first central government policy focused solely on the urban and is an example of large-scale urban funding; secondly, the sub-mission, which focused on water, sanitation and waste management, would potentially have significant impact on urban food security if it was a success, as these were key dimensions of urban food insecurity identified in chapter five. It is of note that food security was not mentioned specifically in the JNNURM, and that food security itself was not highlighted as a specific concern; as such, to explore if the NFSA is appropriate in urban areas, it is important to look at existing and past urban policies and what their focus was on.

However, many of the urban experts interviewed pointed to the JNNURM as an example of a central government policy in urban development that, despite its stated goals oriented towards poverty alleviation, became a vehicle for middle class investments. The sole mechanism utilised in the JNNURM were economic incentives in the form of grants from the central government, as well as grants from state governments. An analysis by Debolina Kundu, Associate Professor at the National Institute of Urban Affairs and an expert on urban India, showed that real spending for the urban poor declined over the course of the missions, while more funds were granted to infrastructure projects that were oriented towards the urban middle class (Kundu, 2014). Kundu expands in an interview:

> **"The first programme oriented towards the urban that the central government started was the JNNURM, which was biased in favour of states and in favour of infrastructure, not so much for the urban poor. I looked at the allocation of funds for the poor and non-poor [in the JNNURM]. There was one programme called 'Basic Services for Urban Poor [BSUP]', directed [towards] the poor, which had the remit of housing and access to services. The other major component was 'Urban Infrastructure Governance [UIG]', which led to the construction of fly-overs, metros, etc. That was more for the non-poor. What I did was to look at the per capita allocation of the UIG vis-á-vis the BSUP. What I found was that the initial figure allocated for the BSUP, which was 40%, came down to 30%, and thus 70% went for urban infrastructure projects. The [JNNURM] was ultimately more investment friendly." – Debolina Kundu, Associate Professor at NIUA.**

Kundu argues that the decrease in overall spending of the more targeted BSUP in favour of the broader UIG implied that despite the initial language of the JNNURM oriented towards urban poverty relief, its primary goal was not to raise the living standards of the urban poor but to invest in city infrastructure that would mainly help commercial interests and investors – private companies that would be tasked in building metros, fly-overs, etc. While there is ample evidence that improved overall infrastructure of cities contribute to decreasing poverty as well as to increased economic growth, there are stronger links with decreased poverty and inequality through targeted improvements in basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity (WHO, 2015; Kundu, 2014). This would seemingly validate Debolina Kundu's assertions that the JNNURM was more investment friendly. Furthermore, Kundu argues that the introduction of the JNNURM ended up only benefiting a small amount of urban areas:

> **"When this programme launched, there were two demands that states and cities had to comply with: one was 23 mandatory reforms, 10 at the state level, 13 at the city level, with a timeline of seven years to comply, and the other was to prepare City Development Plans [CDPs]. This was an issue, as the small towns did not have the wherewithal either to comply with the rules or to prepare CDPs [due to] poor institutional structure and economic structure; Small towns do not have a viable economy to support the reforms. So what happened? Only about 700 odd towns could really access the JNNURM funds, and when it launched, all existing urban development programmes were subsumed under this. The existing [programmes] stopped and were directed only for a few cities…that created a lot of disparity among cities and among states, as only richer state could comply with the reforms." – Debolina Kundu, Associate Professor at NIUA**

Kundu argues that the JNNURM increased the inequality among states and cities, with richer states and richer cities having the ability to comply with the demands of the JNNURM, both in terms of being able to afford to implement reforms as well as the know-how in preparing CDPs. As such, cities and towns that were most in need of funding and large infrastructure projects were the least likely to receive such aid, with cities already heavily invested in receiving even more funding (Kundu, 2014). Jayati Ghosh, a prominent development economist and professor at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning at JNU, further argues that the mandatory reforms put forward in the JNNURM were not necessarily reforms that would contribute to improved infrastructure for the urban poor but were more along the lines of tax elimination reforms. Kundu believes that these tax elimination reforms were part of a larger neoliberal push by the Government of India in the early 2000s:

> **"There was a very strong neoliberal push in the JNNURM, for example state governments that wanted it had to get rid of a particular tax for land, an inheritance tax, and they had to reduce, and in some cases eliminate, some taxes that for example in states like Kerala were very important. It was entirely neoliberal and it's stupid because the central government was telling the states that they will give them money, but only if they reduce their own money." – Jayati Ghosh, Professor at Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University.**

One of the largest failings of the JNNURM, as highlighted in a report by the Swaminathan Foundation on urban food security (Athreya et al, 2010), was that urban areas were not differentiated by income levels and were treated equally, and thus disproportionately benefited the more well-off segments of the urban population. All told, the legacy of the JNNURM was one where too little was done in too few places, and its impact highly marginal. The lengths the JNNURM went in dealing with urban poverty was 'encouraging' state governments and urban local bodies to update their Master Plans to 'adequately provide housing and basic amenities' in non-legally binding clauses (Bholey, 2016). The focus of the majority of investments granted through the JNNURM was on large-scale infrastructure projects such as roads, fly-overs and metro systems, which meant that the decreased funding in poverty-alleviating infrastructure projects such as sanitation and water supply had an inadequate impact on the existing dimensions of urban food insecurity. This, coupled with mandatory reforms that would remove significant taxes and funding requirements that were unable to be met by the majority of urban bodies, led to a skewed programme that contributed to an overall increase in inequality between cities and states (Kundu, 2014; Bholey, 2016).

The project that would replace JNNURM, the Smart Cities Mission, was launched by the current BJP government in 2017. While the Smart Cities Mission included a broad range of goals, including improved sanitation and water infrastructure, the underpinnings of Smart Cities were to improve cities as centres of economic growth, to 'integrate' Indian cities with modern technology, such as wifi-access (WeF, 2016). Furthermore, the approach taken to Smart Cities was to focus on each individual sector specifically, prioritising eventual outcomes (such as universal water access or heritage conservation) rather than as a broad-based mission that prioritised initial reforms like the JNNURM (WeF, 2016). This, as it was argued in the interviews, represents a gross misunderstanding and misreading of the current urban situation.

The Smart Cities Mission

First touted in 2014 and launched in 2017 by Narendra Modi and the BJP government, the Smart Cities Mission has been touted by the BJP government as bringing Indian urban areas to the ‘21st century’ (WeF, 2016), a clear indication of intent regarding not only the desired character of urban development but also how cities are viewed by the central government. The Smart Cities project is set as a five-year plan, with one city in each state nominated to partake in what is dubbed the ‘Smart City Challenge’. A total of $15 billion has been approved for use as funds, a decrease of $5 billion compared to the allocated funds for the JNNURM. The aim of this project, unlike the JNNURM, has been expressed in official government documents as an approach involving local urban bodies, state bodies and urban citizens (Government of India, 2015; Bholey, 2016). While this raises questions as to who is considered a ‘citizen’, it is a novel approach within the framework of Indian policy, which has been historically top-down, and is part of the larger trend of decentralisation of Indian urban governance (Baud & De Wit, 2009).

The Smart Cities initiative globally have been aimed at being not only technology-focused but also capital intensive (Bholey, 2016; Kundu, 2014), and the outlined desires of the Modi government in adopting the Smart Cities approach has been specifically to ensure urban areas to be continued ‘engines of growth’, even if it may contribute to increasingly inequality (Kundu, 2014). With few exceptions, Indian urban growth has been ‘organic’, with no central planning or urban planning to speak of, which has resulted in highly heterogenous cities and provide a major obstacle to the expected widespread adoption of technology that underpins the very concept of Smart Cities (Bholey, 2016). Smart Cities conceptually has also rested upon having achieved a modicum of economic, social and infrastructural development to be able to sustain a focus on technological innovation, which India has yet to achieve. Smart cities conceptually do not substantially deal with social inclusion, being far more focused on creating ‘hubs of economic growth’ rather than in reducing inequality.

Those interviewed expressed these concerns with the Smart Cities Mission, with Dipa Sinha, an academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign and Mukta Srivastava, the Maharashtra state representative of the Right to Food Campaign, expressing concerns regarding the adoption of the Smart Cities initiative with the continuing failure of addressing the needs of the urban poor:

> **“We are going to have 100 smart cities, but where will the poor go, where will they live, what about their water and sanitation? The JNNURM also mainly focused on fly-overs and infrastructure, and the infrastructure was not for the poor.” – Dipa Sinha, academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign.**
>
> **“[Smart cities] will undermine the right of the citizen.” – Mukta Srivastava, Maharashtra State Representative to the Right to Food Campaign.**

Despite the flaws of the JNNURM, including its lack of impact on urban inequality, it nominally had the intent to include the poor in urban planning and development, which the Smart Cities Mission lacks (Bholey, 2016). The narrative of the JNNURM was built upon the ideology of the UPA, primarily concerned with providing support and poverty relief for the poorest of the Indian population, while the narrative of the Smart Cities Mission has instead built around the idea of the Indian middle class, focused on beautification and encouraging cities as engines of economic growth, and thus more in line with the BJP narrative of providing economic growth. There has been a long-standing hesitation regarding urban development on the policy-making level in India, and the Smart Cities Mission is another example of the unclear conceptualisation of urban development throughout urban policy-making (Bholey, 2016).

4.5 Summary

This chapter has established that the lived reality of the urban poor is broad and complex. There is no one lived experience or measure that captures urban poverty and food insecurity. However, one can broadly state that there are two main groups that have distinct dimensions of food insecurity – slum dwellers face dimensions of food insecurity related to access to services, such as sanitation infrastructure, clean water, as well as education, healthcare and other services, while the most vulnerable, the homeless and migrant labourers, face more pressing needs with a complete reliance on income to eat, as well as are completely excluded from access to schemes and programmes due to the residence requirement, as there is no portability of entitlements, although certain states may choose to waive this at their own discretion.

There is a proportion of the urban population that would not be considered ‘poor’ from a purely income-based measurement, but when considering exclusion from services, particularly sanitation, sewage, water and healthcare, as well as exclusion from accessing adequate housing, reveals a far higher percentage of the urban population that can be considered ‘poor’, disproportionately slum dwellers. Furthermore, policy discrimination from state, central and local governments against slums and the homeless have criminalised swathes of the urban poor, who are considered unwanted or unwelcome in the vision of the city put forth by policy-makers, and vulnerable to evictions, forced resettlement outside the city and discriminated against by officials and the police.

Furthermore, this chapter establishes that urban social programmes have been historically neglected, both in terms of policy initiatives as well as in national debate, due to the long-standing rural bias in poverty-relief focused policies. Furthermore, urban governance has been hamstrung due to budgetary and planning decisions being the remit of state governments, with local urban bodies and urban administrative bodies reduced to basic infrastructural tasks such as garbage collection, in part due to increased decentralisation of responsibilities from the central government to state governments, and political parties and state governments having oriented their social programmes and policies towards rural areas. State governments have by and large not fulfilled their remit in urban planning, lacking vision and interest, approaching urban development with antipathy. Furthermore, urban development has focused on cities as ‘engines of economic growth’, with the majority of funding and political attention towards commercial infrastructure projects and roads and fly-overs.

The lack of budget, responsibilities and ability to plan has contributed to high inequality and exclusion, which are all contributing factors to urban food insecurity and malnutrition. The core issues of urban India, which are housing, sanitation and access to clean water, are consequences of this lack of urban planning, and are the major contributing factors for continued urban food insecurity. The two large urban programmes launched by the central government, the JNNURM and Smart Cities Initiative, have both failed to deal with urban poverty and inequality, focusing more on different aspects of infrastructure, and neither have even mentioned food security. Food security is thus predominantly viewed as a rural phenomenon, but it must be noted that India is a nation marked by contradictions

(Tiwari et al, 2015). This chapter further establishes that pure food distribution is not a primary concern in the urban context. The NFSA might not find itself as effective in urban areas as it potentially may in rural areas, but to dismiss it outright for not dealing with an entirely different set of issues would be naïve. The NFSA contains a positive step towards establishing the right to food, although enabling the right to food for the urban will only be possible after tackling the challenges in urban governance, the lack of recognition of many of the urban poor as participating citizens, and adequately differentiating the dimensions of urban and rural food security to better inform policy-makers.

Chapter Five: RQ2. Who were the main actors involved in the policy process of the NFSA, and to what extent were urban experts consulted?

5.1 Introduction

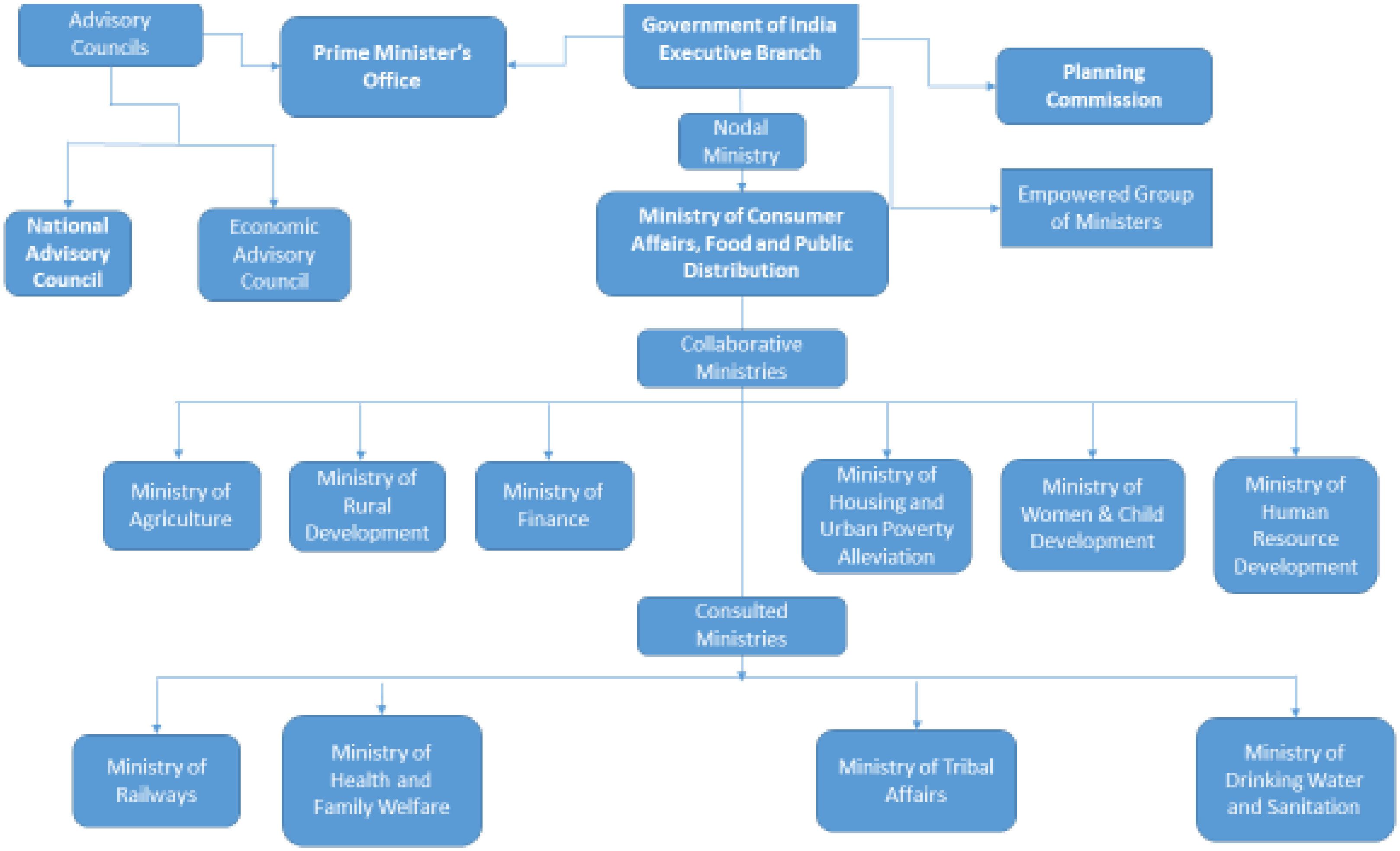
The following chapter identifies the key actors involved in the policy process of the National Food Security Act of 2013, primarily utilising the interviews and parliamentary transcripts. The chapter explores the extent these actors were involved in shaping the NFSA in relation to urban food security, if at all. As part of the Policy Analysis Triangle, it is important to map out the different actors and interest groups surrounding the policy – from those on the "inside", such as politicians, bureaucrats, advisory groups, academics and experts, who make up the policy space and whose interactions shape policy, and those on the "outside", such as activists and journalists, who have the potential to influence policy through pressure (Sabatier, 2007).

Policy-makers are not one homogenous group and understanding the tensions and different policy goals and desires of the different actors is key in understanding how a policy was shaped. The first section breaks down the involvement of various actors as chronologically as possible, despite the inherent messiness of policy-making, looking at how different policy groups and institutions had controlling stakes in the drafting of the Act at different stages. Actors as institutions will primarily be explored, although key individuals are also highlighted. It must be clear that even within institutions there is not necessarily a homogeneity or even agreement, with different competing interests, as discussed in chapter three. The second section looks specifically at the extent of urban consultations during the policy process, to see if it managed to play a role in the policy process. The conclusion points towards an important if limited role in pushing for extensive urban food security entitlements that were ultimately removed later in the policy process.

5.2 Institutional Actors and Key Individuals

The development of the National Food Security Act of 2013 was a complex and branching process, but for the purpose of this dissertation can be explained through a simplified form of three overarching phases corresponding to the three branches of government that played a central role in the policy creation process. The roots of the NFSA can arguably be traced back to the judicial branch, specifically the role that the Supreme Court played in establishing the right to food; after this, the championing of a Right to Food act in the ruling coalition’s manifesto and the role of the executive branch in delegating responsibility for the initial planning and drafting of the act; and subsequently the legislative branch and the role that the Indian parliament, particularly the Lok Sabha (lower parliament) and the Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution played in the final shaping and passing of the Act. Figure 5.1 maps out the executive branch stakeholders involved in the policy process of the NFSA.

Figure 5.1 Executive Branch Stakeholders in the Policy Process of the NFSA, 2009-2013


Advisory Councils
Prime Minister's Office
Government of India Executive Branch
Planning Commission
Nodal Ministry
Empowered Group of Ministers
National Advisory Council
Economic Advisory Council
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Collaborative Ministries
Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Rural Development
Ministry of Finance
Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation
Ministry of Women & Child Development
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Consulted Ministries
Ministry of Railways
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Ministry of Tribal Affairs
Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

Source: Author

5.2.1 The Supreme Court and the Right to Food Campaign – Entering the Policy Space

As laid out in chapter two, the Supreme Court created the rights-based framework through its interpretation of the Indian constitution, establishing that food-oriented entitlements, particularly the Public Distribution System (PDS), should be a legal right (Mate, 2013; Hassan, 2011). A growing movement of disparate NGOs, interest groups and activists came under the umbrella of the Right to Food Campaign and were integral in bringing the issues of hunger to the courts. They were then, in turn, encouraged by judicial decrees to apply pressure on the central government and members of parliament to institute a legislative right to food.

However, the influence of the Supreme Court and the Right to Food Campaign in the creation of the NFSA is quite nuanced. Much has been written on judicial activism and their role in Public Interest Litigation (Guha-Khasnobis & Vivek, 2007; Mate, 2013; Hassan, 2011), but the actual extent of its role in the NFSA is not entirely clear. Primarily, the influence of the Supreme Court can be viewed as establishing the framework of "food security", identifying the entitlements that would eventually shape the NFSA. This establishment of the foundation of a rights-based framework would influence the policy design of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), who would eventually pass prominent legislation with a rights-based framework such as the Right to Employment and the Right to Education. Having said that, many of the specific orders of the Supreme Court were not included in the NFSA, such as the Annapurna scheme that provided 10kg of grains to the destitute, although other key entitlements were. Some interviewees indicated that the pressure from the court orders played a role in pushing the executive branch to pass a right to food act, although it still took almost 10 years from the initial court orders to the drafting stage of the NFSA.

Several members of the Right to Food campaign, including Colin Gonsalves, a prominent lawyer, Dipa Sinha, an academic closely associated with the Right to Food Campaign, and Mukta Srivastava, the Maharashtra state representative of the Right to Food Campaign, believed that the courts played a vital role in the establishment of the NFSA:

> **"What the Indian courts have done in terms of public interest litigation is absolutely unique. It is a revolutionary change in India's jurisprudence, which recognised collective rights and that when administration is fractured and governance is poor, the court must do its constitutional duty even though it appears to be carrying out executive actions. Consequently,**

> **the Supreme Court played an enormous role. It was extraordinary, even within the kind of cases that happened in India. There were a whole range of actors who came in simultaneously, and the case didn't have the kind of success that it did only because of a particular participant in the process. It was a confluence of several sections of people all showing interest in pulling India out of starvation that had this effect." – Colin Gonsalves, Director of HRLN.**

> **"I think the Supreme Court played a role. They created a kind of pressure, because the government had to spend money and implement the changes the courts had decreed on, but were not getting any credit for doing it. The other thing the Supreme Court did was also give a framework of entitlement schemes for food in an eventual Act, so that would be the PDS, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, and the ICDS which were eventually subsumed into the NFSA. However, only the key entitlements translated fully into the Act, not all aspects of these existing schemes." – Dipa Sinha, academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign.**

> **"I think the Supreme Court played a major role, the whole existence of the Food Security Act originates from there. It was pressure from below and also institutional pressure by the Supreme Court. To the credit of the government which was in power then, it was of the same disposition. I think there was a big fight for that. We wanted a much stronger Food Security Act, but whatever we got is definitely because of not only the Supreme Court but also the whole fight of the Right to Food Campaign as well." – Mukta Srivastava, Maharashtra state representative of the Right to Food Campaign.**

However, not all believed that the courts played as important a role. Reetika Khera, a development economist who has worked extensively on food security, Nikhil Dey, a key activist within the Right to Food Campaign, and Jairam Ramesh, former Minister of Rural Development and who contributed to the Congress Manifesto that included the Right to Food Act, were more sceptical:

> **"I doubt the courts played a big role. I'd be really surprised if the [Indian National] Congress cares two hoots about what the court is saying" – Reetika Khera, Associate Professor of Economics at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT).**

> **"The Supreme Court had nothing to do with it, the Right to Food Campaign has nothing to do with it, although the idea of deliverance from hunger did come from there." – Jairam Ramesh, former Minister of Rural Development.**

> **"I wonder [to what extent the Campaign and Courts had influence]…I think there was a political atmosphere but you must give credit finally to legislation, campaigns can only build an atmosphere. The [Indian National] Congress made its pitch in its second term through the National Food Security Act. It was both Congress' success and it gets credit for it, but it's also its failure and where it stopped short of many of its promises. No doubt that once the Supreme Court raised the question, it had a big impact and it had the government studying. However, on the basis of other measures such as pensions, the Court made orders none of which were followed, nobody pays, nobody cared, so in each one [of the] various schemes they made there were series of orders most of which were ignored." – Nikhil Dey, Key Activist in the Right to Food Campaign.**

The basis of their scepticism rests mainly upon the understanding that many other court orders, such as on pensions, were wholly ignored by the executive branch in terms of creating further legislation, and that the motivation to create the National Food Security Act lay elsewhere.

When speaking of the influence of the Supreme Court, it is important to note the influence of the Right to Food Campaign. The Court orders were a rallying point for the Campaign, who worked closely with the Right to Food Commissioners in pressuring state governments to implement the Court orders as well as applying pressure on members of parliament and the central government to legislate on the Court orders, to ensure that the Right to Food would be an assured legal right. Dipa Sinha, an academic closely associated with the Right to Food Campaign, expands:

> **"The Right to Food campaign definitely did play a role [in the creation of the NFSA], I won't say only the Right to Food campaign, there are also media and other political parties and all that, but the campaign played a role in keeping food security and malnutrition in the public eye, making it a big issue and keeping it an issue for the country. I think it helped create that**

> **public pressure in debate and demand, which translated into many other political parties also taking it up." – Dipa Sinha, academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign.**

Jean Drèze, a key actor in the creation of the NFSA and prominent development economist and activist, noted that the Supreme Court and the Campaign may have played a significant role in laying the foundation for the NFSA, but the influence declined once the NFSA became overtly politicised:

> **"The Campaign created some foundation for the Act. It put the whole issue on the political agenda, which was the biggest contribution. The Act greatly expanded and consolidated the entitlements that were from the Supreme Court case and the Campaign activities. The Act just gave prominence to the entitlements that were already there in the Supreme Court order, which is a good thing, the stronger the legal side the better. The Act wasn't exactly new but just endorsed what was already put in place. But I think there was a point when the NFSA really became an agenda of the UPA government and from that point onward, the Campaign continued to make demands and to press for a more comprehensive Act, but I don't think it was very successful in pushing the government beyond what it wanted to do." – Jean Drèze, Development Economist.**

Ultimately, the foundation of the NFSA can be traced to orders laid out by the Supreme Court, who were perhaps most influential in creating the framework for food-based entitlements and influencing the thinking of prominent policy-makers in subsequent years. However, the Supreme Court seemed to have little bearing on the final product of the NFSA, particularly as Jean Drèze amongst others argued that food security eventually became more prominent as a political agenda. In terms of urban food security, the court passed orders in 2010 indicating the need for more attention placed on the urban homeless in terms of food and shelter, but otherwise did not have any specific focus on the urban. The majority of the decrees were oriented towards the poor and hungry in general, and women, children and the aged when specified. The lack of specific focus on urban food security is no surprise, as the creation of the framework came about due to a specific court case concerning rural food insecurity in Rajasthan and the failure of stockpiling in that state. Indeed, the court ruling on the urban homeless came out of a PIL during a specifically harsh winter in 2009, not during the initial ruling that came about in 2002. In the initial phase, urban food security was a footnote in relation to the overall discourse and discussion on food security, specifically the plight of rural hunger was far more pressing, but that did not mean it was completely ignored.

5.1.1 The UPA-I and UPA-II Policy Platforms – From Discourse to Law

The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) was a coalition of centre-left political parties formed in 2004, after no single party had won an absolute majority in that year's elections. The UPA was led by the Indian National Congress (INC), one of the largest parties in India and which has historically focused on a platform of raising living standards for the poorest segments of Indian society. This policy focus translated into a series of rights-based legislation passed by the UPA, including: The Right to Work, passed in 2005; The Right to Information, passed in 2005; The Right to Education, passed in 2009; the Right to Fair Compensation in Land Acquisition and Resettlement, passed in 2013; and the Right to Food, passed in 2013. According to Jairam Ramesh, a key politician within the INC at the time, the 'Right to Work' was the 'big idea' that was forwarded in the election manifesto of the INC during the 2004 elections, and in the 2009 national elections the 'big idea' in the election manifesto was the Right to Food. This 'big idea' was centred around the promise that malnutrition and hunger would be tackled, touting a comprehensive Food Security Bill (Saxena, 2011; Mander, 2012). Jairam Ramesh, who was the Minister of Rural Development and Minister of the Environment during the UPA coalition times, elaborates in his own words:

> **"I had been entrusted with the responsibility of preparing the manifesto for the 2009 elections in May 2009. When you prepare a manifesto you look for one or two big ideas which can catch the public imagination. In 2004 the one big idea that caught the public imagination was the Right to Employment, what eventually became the National Rural Employment Guarantee [Act]. So in 2009, what is the big idea that we can think of? Jean Drèze and I were talking sometime in [early] 2009, I asked him, 'What was the big idea that we have that we can put into the manifesto?' And he said, 'Well there are two big ideas, one of them the Right to Food, the other is the Right to Health'." – Jairam Ramesh, former Minister of Rural Development.**

The majority of the more left-leaning parties had abandoned the UPA near the end of 2008 due to the renewal of a nuclear deal with the United States, but a substantial increase in seats for the INC meant they won re-election and UPA-II was instituted. Interviewees familiar with the UPA government indicated that there was a significant internal split regarding the NFSA and rights-based legislation, and this internal division was a central theme throughout the interviews regarding the policy process. Harsh Mander, a former member of the National Advisory Council, Biraj Patnaik, the Supreme Court Right to Food Commissioner, and Prashant Bhushan, a prominent rights-based lawyer, all expressed views indicating that this internal split was widely known by those who participated in the policy process of the NFSA:

> **"During UPA-1, because the Left was part of the alliance, there was a political incentive to see through the rights-based laws. Sonia Gandhi represented the Left within the Congress and had a very strong ally in the Left parties. The second time around, in UPA-II, the political Left was out, and there were no political backers of the rights-based approach, just us outside the government who were advisors, policy-makers, bureaucrats, etc." – Harsh Mander, Director of the Centre for Equity Studies (CES)**
>
> **"UPA had a prime minister who was not a politician [Manmohan Singh], so when you have a situation like that obviously someone else is in command, and it was Sonia Gandhi who rode these policies... In a way she interpreted the mandate much better as a politician than many of the non-politicians who were running her government. She was the driving force behind the rights movements. However, the economic right in Congress were opposed to the NFSA. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, [Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission], was a close aide to the Prime Minister, as well as P. Chidambaram, the Finance minister. They didn't want it. Their belief is that if you have a 10% growth for 30 years, whatever happens is collateral damage. If we have to get coal, we have to get coal. If we have to sacrifice a few thousand tigers or a few hundred thousand tribals get displaced, why should we worry about that?" – Biraj Patnaik, Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right to Food.**
>
> **"The UPA were divided, some wanted to enable the act, others were less interested. Sonia Gandhi, for example, was very keen." – Prashant Bhushan, Prominent Rights Lawyer.**

Through the interviews, particularly with elite actors who were intimately involved in the process, it became clear that there were two factions within UPA-II – those working towards rights-based legislation and who fully supported a food security act, and those who saw it as unnecessary, a misuse of resources and overtly costly. Furthermore, this internal division may also be reflected in the lengthy period it took for the Act to pass, first being touted in 2009 yet not entering the stage of the Indian Parliament until 2011, while the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 was passed in a year from its initial draft. The development economist Jayati Ghosh argues that the length the NFSA took to pass exposed how little concern UPA-II had in actually implementing the Act:

> **"The second UPA, which had promised [the NFSA], took a very long time to pass the Act; they didn't pass it till the very end of their tenure and when they did they were not in a position to implement it. If they had actually taken it seriously as they had electorally promised in the manifesto, then they would have actually put it in place in the very beginning of their second tenure and had four years to implement it properly." – Jayati Ghosh, development economist at JNU.**

Dipa Sinha, an academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign, believed that there was genuine concern among members of the INC to provide rights and entitlements to better protect the population:

> **"When [the INC] put [the Right to Food] in the manifesto, I think whoever the people were who got it in the manifesto had a genuine concern providing food security to the people. I think they must have had political consideration where they thought that in the first term they did the Right to Work. Congress came on the platform that they would do welfare, and they did. Then they won another election, so they were at least some within the party who believed that all these things would help them in yet another election. " – Dipa Sinha, academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign.**

The development of the Act may have taken the five years from drafting to passing due to the internal divisions within the government in regard to its necessity, with the initial draft resulting from compromise between camps of different ideological perspectives. Jairam Ramesh and Harsh Mander, both key actors in the policy process of the NFSA, expand in their own words:

> **"From 2011 onwards, the debate [around the NFSA] was intensely political and there was a sharp division between the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister and the Agriculture Minister**

> **and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, all of whom were simply opposed to the Food Security Act, and on the other hand the NAC, including Sonia Gandhi, were pushing the Act and within the government there were only two of us who were pushing for the Act, myself and the Minister for Food K.V. Thomas." – Jairam Ramesh, former Minister of Rural Development with the UPA.**
>
> **"The NAC was constituted in June 2010 after the government was elected in 2009. The UPA-II had kept the promise in their manifesto that it would pass a law in the food security area. They made only one very specific promise: that people below the poverty line who would get benefits. They also talked about the community kitchen, so there was an awareness of the needs, vested groups that were specifically food insecure. I contributed, as did Jairam Ramesh, Jean Drèze, etc. The manifesto actually never remained central to the Planning Commission throughout but in the NAC we had several members, Jean [Drèze] and N.C. [Saxena], and others, who held the manifesto central, and in the first meeting the NAC took upon itself to draft the National Food Security Act. I was entrusted [with] the responsibility of convening that group, we spent about a year in negotiating and meeting. With the urban specifically, as a separate commission, I organised a series of consultations with [the] campaign, with experts, many other groups." – Harsh Mander, former member of the NAC.**

Policy creation is a messy process with the involvement of many institutions and individuals. Once the UPA government had agreed upon the creation of a Food Security bill, despite internal divisions towards it, several institutions and interest groups played a role in its shaping. This is explored in the following sections.

5.1.2 The National Advisory Council and Prime Minister's Office – Drafting the Act

This section explores the role of the Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM), the Planning Commission, the National Advisory Council (NAC), the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC). This is done as chronologically as possible, although there were many aspects of drafting that were occurring simultaneously.

The Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) on Food was a committee appointed by the Prime Minister in 2009 to investigate and report on procurement, foodgrain management, and the proposed law on food security. They were given the initial task of discussing a food security bill when appointed, with the further authorization to make executive decisions. This committee held nine meetings between 2009 and 2011 (Standing Committee Report, 2013).

Meanwhile, the National Advisory Council (NAC), an unelected advisory body to the Prime Minister, was given the task by the Prime Minister to deliberate and write the first draft of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) in support of the EGoM. The members of the NAC were from diverse backgrounds, from activists, academics, economists, businessmen and bureaucrats. There was a strong rights-based contingent within the NAC, including the head of the NAC and chairman of the INC, Sonia Gandhi, as well as influential members such as Harsh Mander and Jean Drèze. The interviewees by and large identified these actors and their strongly held beliefs regarding universal rights and the need for a comprehensive approach to food security as instrumental in shaping the underlying policy design of the NFSA:

> **"The NAC played a very critical role in rights-based policy creation. Their legacy includes the Right to Information Act, the MGNREGA [National Rural Employment Guarantee Act], this Right to Food, Right to Education, all of these rights-based laws." – Prashant Bhushan, prominent rights-based lawyer.**
>
> **"The NAC were key in drafting the Food Security Act, and the reality of it is that they're drawn from the most elite, though they definitely were diverse." – Reetika Khera, development economist and associate professor at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi.**

Pramod Joshi, director of IFPRI India, spoke of his role with the EGoM before the NAC took over the drafting process:

> **"An Empowered Group of Ministers was constituted to work on the Food Security bill and we [IFPRI] were a part of that group. Then the responsibility went to the National Advisory Council – Sonia Gandhi was chairperson and all of our inputs were given. I was involved from the very beginning but after it was completely taken up by the National Advisory Council our role ceased, and then they made it a Right." – Pramod Joshi, director of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) India.**

At the same time, the Planning Commission, which was one of the oldest institutions of the Indian government, had the long-standing designation to create five-year plans as well as broader functions in the assessment and planning on India, from material, capital and human resources to advising on the prioritization of policies. The Planning Commission, particularly the de facto chairman, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, was disproportionately mentioned by various interviewees, particularly academics and activists, as being vehemently opposed ideologically to the rights-based approach and who was highly critical of the perceived cost and scope of the NAC draft.

After the NAC's first initial recommendations, the Prime Minister's Office constituted an Expert Committee chaired by C. Rangarajan, chairman of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC). The divide was clearly seen between members of the NAC and actors within the Prime Minister's Office, the PMEAC and the Planning Commission, with the government constituted of actors with fundamentally different beliefs and attitudes concerning food security and the right to food.

The development of the NAC draft was through compromise between recommendations from the PMEAC and the Planning Commission and the framework of the NFSA settled by the NAC. Despite the Expert Committee considering an ambitious food security act unsustainable due to the perceived need to drastically increase procurement to cover legal entitlements (Rangarajan Expert Committee Report, 2011), the initial draft was ultimately heavily influenced by the rights-based contingent of the NAC. Harsh Mander, who was in the NAC at the time, pointed out how unusual it was for the PMEAC to became involved in the drafting of the NFSA:

> **"[The development of the Act] was largely based on negotiations, but for the NAC discussions, specifically women and children and vulnerable groups, our [target] groups and formulations were retained except for the question of universal pension. Our draft went to the Prime Minister, the method was when the NAC concluded its deliberations the chairperson, Sonia Gandhi, who was directly below the Prime Minister, went to him with the recommendations of the NAC…The Prime Minister was largely alarmed with the PDS component, so he did something unusual and unexpected, which was to refer to another council, the Prime Minister's Economic Council [PMEAC], which is more conservative [than the NAC], and asked them for their views. The PMEAC expressed several reservations, they turned around the draft quite substantially. They weakened the provisions around many of the aspects including the**

> **women and child component. However, they did retain the vulnerable groups section to some degree including community kitchens." – Harsh Mander, former member of the NAC and director of the Centre for Equity Studies (think-tank).**

Abhijit Sen, a former bureaucrat with the Planning Commission, summed up the role of the PMEAC neatly:

> **"The NAC had a set of proposals, Planning Commission had a different one, Rangarajan [the head of the Expert Committee] sort of basically cut everything up. Basically, the final decision was that of the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister." – Abhijit Sen, former bureaucrat in the Planning Commission.**

Many of those interviewed saw the divide as one between the left and the right. The members of the NAC were widely labelled as 'leftists', while the PMO, PMEAC and certain members of the Planning Commission were considered 'right-wing neoliberals'. The two extremes of these views were expressed by Surjit Bhalla, economist and author, who believed that the NAC were intellectually corrupt leftists, and the other view expressed by Colin Gonsalves, prominent lawyer and founder of the Human Rights Law Network, who was highly critical of the Prime Minister and the Planning Commission:

> **"There were too many interest groups who were influential in policy, starting with the, I would say, intellectually corrupt left intellectuals in the National Advisory Council as well as the corrupt bureaucracy." – Surjit Bhalla, economist and author.**

> **"It's as good an Act as we could possibly get but I don't think Manmohan Singh was interested at all in having the Food Security Act. He was an enemy of the people: Manmohan Singh and his cabinet were the enemy of the Indian people—everybody, Montek Singh Aluwalia and all these people were absolutely right-wing. Staunch enemies of any social measures of this kind." – Colin Gonsalves, director of Human Rights Law Network (HRLN).**

Put simply, the ‘leftists’ were primarily concerned with creating rights-based legislation to address existing inequalities, and the NFSA was seen as key opportunity to address the long-standing struggles India has faced with hunger and malnutrition. Those viewed as ‘right-wing neoliberals’ were primarily concerned with enacting policies that would facilitate economic growth and to grow faster. The logic that seemed to be expressed through government policy documents (Rangarajan Expert Committee Report, 2011; Planning Commission, 2011) was that once the economy was at a sufficiently high growth rate, a ‘trickle-down’ effect would occur and the poorer segments of society would be able to afford food without the need for expensive, interventionist policy. Their primary objections to the NFSA were based on economic reasoning, taking cost and expense of a widely-expanded Act as their primary concern (Rangarajan Expert Committee Report, 2009; Gulati et al, 2012). This division was spoken about in detail during the interviews:

> **“The whole act was brought very half-hearted way. There was some push from the Congress senior leadership like Sonia Gandhi, but Prime Minister Manmohan Singh didn’t seem to be interested. And that whole coterie of Montek Singh (Ahluwalia), the Planning Commission, what a fight we had with him. You know, the whole league of bureaucrats.” – Kavista Srivastava, Rajasthan state representative to the Right to Food Campaign.**

> **“[Sonia Gandhi] played a big role in the rights-based approach of Congress, and again in the second round of the government [UPA II] it came out quite starkly. However, the government was quite split and quite publicly so. The Planning Commission and the Prime Minister were speaking in a different language and the NAC speaking in the completely different language.” – Dipa Sinha, academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign.**

Biraj Patnaik, Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right to Food, believed that most of the executive branch did not desire the NFSA, and did not fully back it. While Jairam Ramesh believed the Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, K.V. Thomas, fought in favour of the NFSA as expressed in an earlier quote, Biraj Patnaik was of the opinion that the ministry itself was opposed to the Act:

> **“Nobody wanted the NFSA. The Food Ministry was opposed, the PM was opposed and the Planning Commission was also opposed. The bureaucrats, the government in power, the**

> **executive, the Prime Minister's Office, they never believed in the NFSA." – Biraj Patnaik, Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right to Food.**

Jayati Ghosh, a prominent development economist, believed bottom-up activism and the insistence of rights-based legislation by Sonia Gandhi and left-leaning parties pressured the executive branch into introducing the NFSA to the legislative branch of government:

> **"They hated it – Manmohan Singh, Montek Ahluwalia and Chidambaram – hated all of these legislations, every single one of them. It was pushed by Sonia Gandhi certainly and the complex nature of that thing, but also by social movements, by political activism such as by the left parties. The creation of the act was not something that happened because these guys at the top had a change of heart, or thought they were being good, it was pressure." – Jayati Ghosh, development economist at JNU.**

Despite this apparent opposition within the UPA, the supporters of the rights-based approach within the NAC managed to keep many of their desired entitlements during the negotiations, particularly for women and children, as stated by Harsh Mander, a former member of the NAC:

> **"The portion around vulnerable groups was something that I personally pressed about where groups like slum dwellers, homeless, the destitute and so on. The vulnerable groups portion is where urban poverty was somewhat visualized in the discussion. I'm very pleased with these two sections as they emerged from the NAC because we had to convince NAC members who had different viewpoints. The Prime Minister's Office played a larger role in the NAC draft than any previous rights-based legislation. Many of the questions where they were involved was concerning the PDS. What we lost at the NAC stage of negotiations was including universal pensions. That was the major loss in terms of the chapter around vulnerable groups. But the rest of it was more or less retained. The women and children vulnerable group was completely retained without any kind of abbreviation. Everybody's focus was on the PD, and on questions of coverage there were strong negotiations with the Prime Minister Office, and Mrs. Gandhi had said if you get their consent, then it will be very good." – Harsh Mander, former member of the NAC.**

Jean Drèze echoes Harsh Mander's views that the predominant focus of policy-makers was to ensure legal entitlements through the PDS, with specific entitlements for vulnerable groups seen as extraneous to the main goal of an expanded PDS:

> **"The UPA was clear that they had made certain electoral promises and for them the main thing was to activate this idea of legal entitlements through the PDS. They were never terribly keen on the rest [of the provisions]. They went along because these were obligations due to the Supreme Court order, so they said 'all right'. Some agreed because Mrs. Sonia Gandhi wanted the entitlement to be given, the rest resisted." – Jean Drèze, former member of the NAC.**

Colin Gonsalves views the policy process of the Act as being heavily influenced by a handful of actors, who pushed through their vision of a right to food bill, and were ultimately allowed to as it was seen as politically beneficial even if not fully implemented:

> **"I think the development of the Act was through a connection between some people in the Right to Food Campaign and some people in the UPA, and also a desire by the Chairman of the UPA to see things through that. I think it had more to do with individuals in the Right to Food Campaign and individuals in the UPA government who pushed through quite a remarkable Act. The UPA felt that if they brought this Act about they would benefit politically from it, and perhaps they did. It was more an internal calculation that if they come out with this social measure, even if they don't implement it fully it will benefit them politically." – Colin Gonsalves, director of the Human Right Law Network (HRLN), prominent lawyer and key activist in the Right to Food Campaign.**

Regardless of the true intentions behind the initial drafts of the NFSA, with various actors pushing their own agendas, the NAC draft, and the negotiations between the NAC, the PMEAC, and the Planning Commission, were only the initial steps of the policy process. Once the NAC draft had gone through the Prime Minister's Office, the suggestions of the PMEAC committee and the Planning Commission, the revised draft was passed to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution in 2012.

5.1.3 Ministries and Parliament – Policy Finalisation

Once the NAC draft had gone through the PMO, the suggestions of the PMEAC and the Planning Commission, the revised draft was passed to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution by 2012. As the nodal ministry, it was the minister's responsibility to bring the draft to parliament for debate. As gleaned from policy documents and through the interviews, the ministry took the government draft as is, with very minor changes, passed the draft through the EGoM who approved it without changes, and then K.V. Thomas, the Minister, introduced the Act to the Lok Sabha, India's lower parliament. K.V. Thomas was specifically highlighted by several interviewees as a key actor in supporting the NFSA:

> **"They got in K. V. Thomas. He was very good. He could deal with ration dealers and [so] on, he himself was president of ration dealers association in Kerala. He understood the importance of a Right to Food bill but he was also under a lot of pressure. The pressure is basically Montek [Singh], Manmohan [Singh], that's the leadership." – Kavista Srivastava, Rajasthan state representative to the Right to Food Campaign.**
>
> **"K.V. Thomas was the anchor [of the act]." – Jairam Ramesh, former Minister of Rural Development in the UPA.**

Once introduced, the draft was passed to the Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution. The Standing Committee, chaired by MP Shri Vilas Muttemwar, consisted of 19 members of the Lok Sabha and nine members of the Rajya Sabha, and invited views, comments and suggestions from the general public, the nodal ministry, all states, as well as a select group of ministries, institutions and individuals who were considered to have the relevant expertise to comment on the draft act. Input was specifically sought from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Rural Affairs, while the Ministry of Urban Affairs was not consulted. The Standing Committee called for comments and inputs in the beginning of 2012 and convened in 2013 to discuss their findings and recommend changes.

The largest changes from the original NAC draft, and what would eventually become the final Act, were a result of the recommendations of the Standing Committee. Most of what the NAC had recommended had passed through the executive branch with minor changes, mostly in terms of language and phrasing.

The Standing Committee recommended the removal of entire legally binding entitlements, particularly for specific target groups, arguing that there were difficulties in applying and enforcing eligibility for those target groups, as there were poor methodological frameworks with which to define them with. The Standing Committee recommendations were particularly disadvantageous for urban groups and more on this is explored in chapter six, looking specifically at the final policy design and its effect on urban food insecurity.

The Standing Committee changes were outlined by Harsh Mander as severely weakening the Act in fulfilling food security:

> **"When the Standing Committee sat, the real destruction of the Act actually happened at this level, which was significant. What happened was actually that the PDS portion got in doubt, that was the positive conclusion of the Standing Committee. But it drastically and entirely eliminated the vulnerable groups. So vulnerable groups gone and through that the window addressing urban poverty got almost completely removed. That was the clueless blow in some sense to me, because they were supposed to be representative of all political parties and that's where in the Right to Information Act and the MGNREGA things were improved at the stage of the parliamentary committee. But in this case the entitlements were even further omitted." – Harsh Mander, former member of the NAC and director of the Centre for Equity Studies, think-tank.**

One cannot speak of the Standing Committee's intentions outside of the wording of the policy papers, as nobody on the committee was able to be interviewed during the research. Those interviewed believed that the Standing Committee most likely had the best of intentions and were genuine in their explanations.

The crux of the changes lay in the Standing Committee's belief that **"it was the utmost importance"** that the NFSA was to be a **"simple yet effective framework of the Public Distribution System ensuring food security to the people of India"** (Standing Committee Report, 2013, pg. 24). As such, the specific target groups, such as the homeless, the destitute and those living with starvation, were perceived to be complicating an already broad bill and that keeping those entitlements in **"would be difficult for the administration to identify destitute and homeless persons who may be given such benefits under the**

provisions of the Bill. Further, there is a risk of breaking the social fabric as non-earning members of the family may be pushed out of homes to feed for themselves." (Standing Committee Report, 2013, pg. 104).

The recommendations by the Standing Committee in this regard are almost wholly based on the input of Shri Naveen Jindal, a member of the Lok Sabha with the INC. All other comments that are noted in the report suggest ways of improving the definitions and identification of the destitute and homeless, or an expansion of the existing entitlements to be more comprehensive. However, it seems that this recommendation by Shri Jindal was a sentiment shared by the Standing Committee. There is an inference that by providing entitlements and food security for the homeless and the destitute, there would be an incentive for poorer families to abandon family members. There are several assumptions at play here, on one hand there is the belief that the poor are so desperate that they would willingly get rid of family members who are not contributing to the family economically if there was an excuse, and on the other, that familial, cultural and social behaviour is so fragile as to be predicated on government incentives. These assumptions speak to broader beliefs and perspectives that policy-makers in India have implicitly and explicitly voiced.

Not all agreed that the Standing Committee changes were merely weakening the Act, but in fact making the Act more practical and manageable:

> **"The government was actually waiting for the Standing Committee to give their report and the Standing Committee for whatever reason wasn't moving. It was only after they sent it back that it went to the Parliament. By that time they were in a hurry because the next election was coming up, so they accelerated the whole process." – Jean Drèze, former member of the NAC.**

After the deliberations of the Standing Committee, the revised draft was reintroduced to the Lok Sabha in 2012. Continued opposition to the bill, in part due to opposition from states that had implemented universal PDS, such as Tamil Nadu, which feared that the standardisation of the PDS through the NFSA would weaken their own PDS; in part due to economic concerns from certain parties; and in part due to political and ideological differences from opposition parties to the UPA meant that it stalled for a year until it was passed as an ordinance.

5.1.4 Lok Sabha Debates

The 15th Lok Sabha, the Indian lower parliament between 2009 and 2014, extensively debated the National Food Security Act for roughly a year before it became law, introduced in 2012 and passed in 2013. The transcripts of the debates were analysed for keywords to better understand the context surrounding the NFSA, what topics were and were not discussed, and to the extent the urban was considered in the debate. Discussions specifically surrounding urban food security was looked for, and tables 5.2 and 5.3 compare the amount of times keywords were mentioned: “farmer/farmers” and “rural” to look at how often the rural population was specified, and “urban”, “labourers, “homeless” and “migrant” to see the extent the urban population was specified. Furthermore, several unsuccessful amendments were tabled during the debates, and the use of keywords gauges how often the urban were specifically considered in the amendments.

The raw data shows that “Rural” was mentioned 97 times and “Urban” was mentioned 87 times, with 45 of those mentions simple reiterations and repetitions of the existing content of the NFSA, specifically in the mentioning of the eligibility criteria, while a further 10 mentions of “Rural” and nine mentions of “Urban” were in the context of failed amendments. As such, when simple reiterations and amendments were omitted, “Rural” was mentioned 42 times in other contexts and “Urban” 32 times. This reflects a small bias towards the rural, but that the urban was mostly treated equally with the rural. Furthermore, there were 23 unique speakers who mentioned “Rural” outside of repetition of the Act and 21 unique speakers who mentioned “Urban” outside of repetition of the Act, with all those speakers being the same MPs who also mentioned “Rural”. This would indicate that the MPs who were engaged with the NFSA were looking at both rural and urban. The mentions of “Urban” outside of reiterations of the NFSA were mainly concerned with eligibility criteria in southern India, such as in Tamil Nadu, where existing State legislation made the PDS universal. A point of note is that of the 545 members of the Lok Sabha, only 23 MPs were active in the debate around the NFSA outside of mere reiteration of the words of the Act. This may be common among legislative debate, in India or otherwise, but is worth noting.

However, when looking at other contextual clues, beyond the simple “Rural” or “Urban” discussion, it reveals a larger bias. The keyword “Farmer/s” was chosen to reflect rural concerns, as one criterion of an urban area is the amount of population that are employed in non-agricultural pursuits; “Farmers” were mentioned 70 times, despite the NFSA not once mentioning farmers specifically, with seven of those mentions in the context of unsuccessful amendments and mentioned by 19 individual speakers. To reflect concerns in the "Urban", the keywords "Homeless", "Labourer/s", and "Migrant/s" were chosen, to reflect the most vulnerable urban groups that were identified in RQ1. The transcript analysis showed that "Homeless" were mentioned 15 times, eight of which were in relation to removed entitlements, and by only five speakers, while "Labourer/s" were mentioned six times, three of which were in relation to failed amendments, and by two speakers. Lastly, "Migrants" were not mentioned at all, with "Migrate" only appearing twice, both in relation to "Labourers" within a failed amendment. This furthers the perception that rural India was the primary focus for MPs during the debate around the NFSA, and that there was considerably more concern regarding farmers than there were for the urban homeless or migrant labourers when discussing food security. However, this keyword analysis does show that there was a concern among a handful of MPs to introduce amendments that would target the homeless, with one more failed amendment than amendments invoking farmers.

Table 5.2. The Use of "Urban" and "Rural" Keywords in the Lok Sabha NFSA Debates, 2011-2013

Keyword	Total Uses	Used in Repetition of Act	Used in Failed Amendments	Used Uniquely	Speakers who Used Keyword Uniquely
Urban	87	45	9	32	21
Rural	97	45	10	42	23

Source: Author, Lok Sabha Transcripts

Table 5.3. Use of Contextual Keywords in the Lok Sabha NFSA Debates, 2011-2013

Keyword	Total Uses	Used in Repetition of Act	Used in Failed Amendments	Used Uniquely	Speakers who Used Keyword Uniquely
Farmer/s	70	0	7	63	19
Homeless	15	0	8	7	5
Labourer/s	6	0	3	3	2
Migrate	2	0	2	0	0
Migrant	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Author, Lok Sabha Transcripts

Shri Dinesh Trivedi, MP from West Bengal and the All India Trinamool Congress Party, who supported the UPA-II coalition until 2012, was one of the only MPs who spoke strongly against the removal of the entitlements for the homeless and the removal of community kitchens:

> **"The NAC had detailed chapters in their draft version of the NFSB which was forwarded by the UPA Chairperson to the Government on dealing with the needs of the destitute and most marginalized sections of our country including the urban homeless, people affected by starvation, out of school children etc. through destitute feeding programmes, community kitchens, emergency feeding programmes and so on. I am deeply saddened to note that all of these progressive parts of the NAC draft have been removed from the Bill that has now been listed in Parliament, even though they were included when the NFSB was tabled in December, 2011." – Shri Dinesh Trivedi, Member of Parliament.**

Furthermore, MPs from Tamil Nadu, particularly the ruling AIADMK party, who was in power in Tamil Nadu and were rivals to the UPA-II, were the only speakers who would regularly invoke the plight of the urban in discussing the Act. Shri S. Semmalai, MP from Tamil Nadu and the AIADMK party, criticised the urban eligibility criteria of the parliamentary bill by asserting that the urban poor are no better off than the rural poor:

> **"Under the false notion that the urban dwellers are well off and above the poverty line, the NFSA provides a coverage of 50% of the families in urban areas. Those who are living in the urban areas are as much poor as their counterparts in rural" – Shri S. Semmalai, Member of Parliament.**

Another example of this criticism from an MP from Tamil Nadu is the speech by Shri C. Rajendran of the same party:

> **"The NFSA is making arbitrary cut-off points for eligibility and this is going to compromise on food security. This is going to create hardships to the people and going to affect the urban population, whereas Tamil Nadu Government's Universal PDS is covering the entire urban population also." – Shri C. Rajendran, Member of Parliament.**

The context of their criticism of the Act was that Tamil Nadu had an already existing universal PDS, which was unwilling to give up the central government funding that had helped Tamil Nadu afford their universal PDS. Furthermore, Tamil Nadu is the second most urbanised state in India, with around 48% of its population living in urban areas (NSSO, 2011), and appealing to and invoking the plight of the urban not only reflects the higher proportion of urban dwellers in Tamil Nadu, but also that the voting base in Tamil Nadu is more urbanised than most other states.

Dr. Ram Chandra Dome, MP from West Bengal and Chief Whip of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), introduced an amendment that would provide access to the PDS for migrant labourers without a set address, including both landless agricultural labourers and urban labourers in the unorganised sector, which was defeated after being put to vote. Furthermore, one amendment was introduced to the House for vote two times that included the following entitlement:

> **"(1B) All homeless persons shall be entitled to affordable meals at community kitchens, in accordance with such scheme including cost sharing, as may prescribed by the Central Government" – Amendment No. 88, Lok Sabha NFSA Debates.**

These amendments were voted down each time, with the one vote done in division of the house showing that there were 144 Ayes and 241 Noes, with one abstention, for the amendment as a whole. While the quoted entitlement was only a smaller part of the larger amendment, the overall purpose of the amendment was to reintroduce the specific entitlements that existed in the NAC draft. A second division was done for a more specific amendment, which was to insert the following line:

> **"Foodgrains shall be provided free of cost by the Central Government in case of entitlements of destitute persons, homeless persons and people living in starvation or conditions akin to starvation." – Amendment no. 283, Lok Sabha NFSA Debates.**

This division, for a much more specific amendment, revealed that there were 109 Ayes and 235 Noes. This indicates that there was no broad backing or desire for the re-introduction of specific entitlements for vulnerable groups among the MPs in the Lok Sabha.

5.2 Government consultations with Urban Experts

Based on the interviews and reading of policy documents shows that urban consultations were highly limited. There was a small number of urban experts consulted by the Right to Food Campaign, as well as a specific urban poverty committee convened by Harsh Mander for the NAC. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution held one consultation meeting in 2009 with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA), in conjunction with consultations with six other ministries and the Planning Commission. The Standing Committee of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution invited comments on the final draft of the Act from HUPA and the Ministry of Urban Development. The specific comments and notes of the consultations are not publicly available as the Standing Committee report on the National Food Security Act did not contain any minutes.

Outside of these limited consultations, there were no specific experts on urban food security that could be identified as being spoken to. There was one expert who was consulted on cash transfers who spoke of urban food security, Guy Standing from UNICEF. Jairam Ramesh noted that the Minister for Urban Development was not involved at all, while Reetika Khera pointed out that the majority of those involved were rural experts:

> **“The Minister for Urban Development was not involved in any of the discussions.” – Jairam Ramesh, former Minister of Rural Development in UPA.**
>
> **“It’s true that a lot of the people involved in the policy process were rural experts, Harsh [Mander] would be the main urban voice, and there weren't any other significant voices.” – Reetika Khera, development economist at IIT.**

Harsh Mander, a name frequently mentioned as being highly active with urban food security within the policy process, also noted that very few urban experts were consulted and those who were consulted were mainly done in the early drafting stage:

> **"Urban food security experts, experts on urban poverty, there were very few consulted actually. Very little, in fact I seem to represent that constituency in the group but outside myself I don't think there was any with an urban focus. I was also convening a committee on urban poverty, a group there that had experts, lots of consultation. I had one concerning both the homeless and urban poverty issues of slums, access to services, etc., and I was also part of the Hashim Committee, which was part of the Planning Commission, regarding methodologies of measuring urban poverty. Fortunately I was able to see through the proposal around the urban homeless and that emerged from the NAC, which was pretty much in conformity with both the work which I was doing parallel on the Supreme Court case. But the final report of the work around the urban slums, it did not finally emerge." – Harsh Mander, former member of the NAC and director of the Centre for Equity Studies, think-tank.**

Dipa Sinha and Kavista Srivastava, who were part of the Right to Food Campaign, also echo that urban experts were consulted in the early drafting stage, but were unaware of how many there were in later stages:

> **"Urban experts were consulted in the early drafting of the Act, from the Right to Food Campaign and also the NAC, who did a series of meetings." – Kavista Srivastava, key activist in the Right to Food Campaign.**

> **"Urban experts were mainly consulted at the NAC level, as well as within the Right to Food Campaign because the bill was discussed over a period of four years. There was an attempt within the Right to Food Campaign, two groups were working with urban poor, to get their perspective. Looking at the process at the NAC, they did a couple of consultations on [urban food security]. They had consultations on migrants, the homeless, and they did a whole one-day theme on community kitchens and how they can be incorporated. The NAC had a focus that there should be some vulnerable groups which should be mentioned within the Act, that they definitely be covered. These [provisions] finally did not make it, within the government I don't think it was taken very seriously." – Dipa Sinha, academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign.**

As the interviewees revealed, the extent of urban experts contributing to the NFSA was fairly limited. The majority of those interviewed argued that not only were their focus predominantly on the rural, it was rightly so – the argument is that plight of rural food insecurity is on a completely different level than urban food insecurity. This was true too of those interviewed who were urban-focused, who insisted that the focus for the alleviation of urban food insecurity is best done through the alleviation of urban poverty, specifically through housing, sanitation infrastructure and gainful employment. There was a general belief that food insecurity was not much of an issue in urban areas, and if it were, then it was nowhere near the type of issue of rural food insecurity. However, the NFSA clearly does provide for the urban and the issue should not be an either-or. Furthermore, the extent of urban food insecurity is generally unknown, due to the current existing methodology in surveys and the seeming dearth of research on varying aspects of urban food insecurity. This research has argued that the nature of urban food insecurity is highly different to rural food insecurity, and based on the interviews and the findings in policy documentation, which has not been reflected in policy. There is a two-fold assumption in this belief:

> **"Urban experts were not consulted in the drafting of the NFSA to my knowledge because a) there is a paucity of urban experts, b) the kind of dialogue that should happen on urban poverty that happens in any half decent society doesn't happen in India because our activist sector hold such a big rural bias. Our policy-making is cued to these few individuals. There has been no nuance in the dialogue or discourse on urban poverty. It boils down to the simple question on who should be considered poor in urban India. You see in rural areas we will have separate lenses at tribal, minorities, panchayat based, non-panchayat based, yet this nuance does not exist in an analysis of urban poverty." – Biraj Patnaik, Supreme Court Commissioner on the Right to Food.**

5.3 Summary

The National Food Security Act developed through: (1) the right to food becoming a legal entitlement in the eyes of the Supreme Court in 2002, and several existing entitlements were reformulated and ordered to be implemented by the judiciary; (2) the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), and particularly the Indian National Congress (INC), in a bid for re-election in 2009, proposed a right to food act in their manifesto; (3) after winning the election in 2009, the Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) discussed how a right to food act would look like, and subsequently the Prime Minister hands the task to formulate the first draft to the National Advisory Council (NAC), consisting of activists, bureaucrats, economists and politicians; (4) the NAC, in conjunction with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (PMEAC), formulate a first draft by 2010, which includes wide-ranging entitlements – while there is opposition within these groups to an overtly generous act, the NAC draft is heavily rights-based; (5) the draft is passed on to the executive branch, which consults the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution; (6) after approving the NAC draft with minor changes, the government draft is handed to the legislative branch, particularly the Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution; (7) after lengthy appraisals and consultations, the Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, suggests key changes to the government draft in 2011, including omitting all entitlements for urban groups, such as the homeless and migrants; (8) the Standing Committee draft is discussed in the Lok Sabha and Raj Sabha; (9) wide-ranging debates, from universal entitlements to economic concerns, delay the passing despite general amenability to the Act; (10) the Act is passed in September 2013.

As can be seen, the policy arena surrounding the NFSA constituted multiple institutions and significant actors within institutions. The importance of the role and involvement of these institutions and actors came down to the perceptions and the narratives shared by the interviewees, as well as careful reading of policy documents.

Initially, it is clear that the Supreme Court had a large role to play in arguing that the citizens of India have the Right to Food, formulating the entitlements that were to be considered 'food security', and applying pressure on the executive and legislative branches of government to formulate legislation that would encompass the judicial rulings. The Commissioners appointed to the Right to Food case played a role in applying pressure on state governments to implement the judicial rulings, and two of them being included in the National Advisory Council would mean that they were highly influential in the formulation of the initial draft.

Ultimately the contribution of actors who were involved in the urban sphere was highly limited. The majority interviewed argued that not only were their focus predominantly on the rural, it was rightly so

– the argument is that plight of rural food insecurity is on a completely different level to urban food insecurity. This was true too of those interviewed who were urban-focused, who insisted that the focus for the alleviation of urban food insecurity is best done through the alleviation of urban poverty, specifically through housing, sanitation infrastructure and gainful employment. There was a general belief that food insecurity was not much of an issue in urban areas, and if it were, then it was nowhere near the type of issue of rural food insecurity. However, the NFSA clearly does provide for urban food insecurity and the issue should not be an either-or, as both rural and urban food insecurity should be dealt with. Furthermore, the extent of urban food insecurity is generally unknown, due to the type of methodology used for surveys and the dearth of research on varying aspects of urban food insecurity.

Chapter Six: RQ3. To what degree was urban food security considered, understood and represented in the policy process of the NFSA?

6.1 Introduction

After setting the context of urban food insecurity, its dimensions and how the central government has approached urban planning and urban policies in chapter four, and identifying the actors, institutions and organisations directly involved in the policy process chronologically in chapter five, this chapter looks at how those actors considered, understood and represented the target urban population, if at all, and what decisions were made during the policy process that addressed the urban population. Aspects of this have been touched upon in chapter five and will be expanded upon here, presenting the specific findings regarding the NFSA in relation to urban food insecurity.

To understand how actors considered, understood and represented the target urban population, this chapter will look at specific decisions made during the policy process that affected the urban food insecure, tying into the broader construction of the urban poor in judicial and legislative policies in the last few decades that was established in chapter two, mainly utilising data from policy document analysis and the semi-structured interviews to attempt to piece together the reasoning and thought process behind those decisions. These decisions are specifically: the excision of provisions that would disproportionately affect the urban food insecure, the rephrasing of the Act from the NAC draft to the final version that affected the target urban population, and the policy decisions in the setting of the eligibility criteria of 50%. Then alternative policy designs that were mentioned in policy documents and by interviewees is looked at and the relationship between those policy alternatives and urban food insecurity is explored, to attempt to understand why certain decisions were made, what the alternatives were and what their potential impact on urban food security would have been.

6.2 Comparing the NFSA drafts

This section looks specifically at the policy deliberations in the NFSA policy process, informed through the interviews and reading of the policy documents, which were identified as specifically affecting urban food insecurity. This section aims to lay out how the ‘urban’ was treated leading up to the ultimate policy formulation of the NFSA, to elucidate how the NFSA was shaped. The subtle changes in the wording of the NFSA and the excision of provisions that have been identified as urban-focused is specifically highlighted. The policy process necessitates changes in content, and this section will explore the changes that would have had a direct effect on the urban target population. Table 6.1 below maps out the changes of the various drafts, while figure 6.1 lays out the chronological timeline.

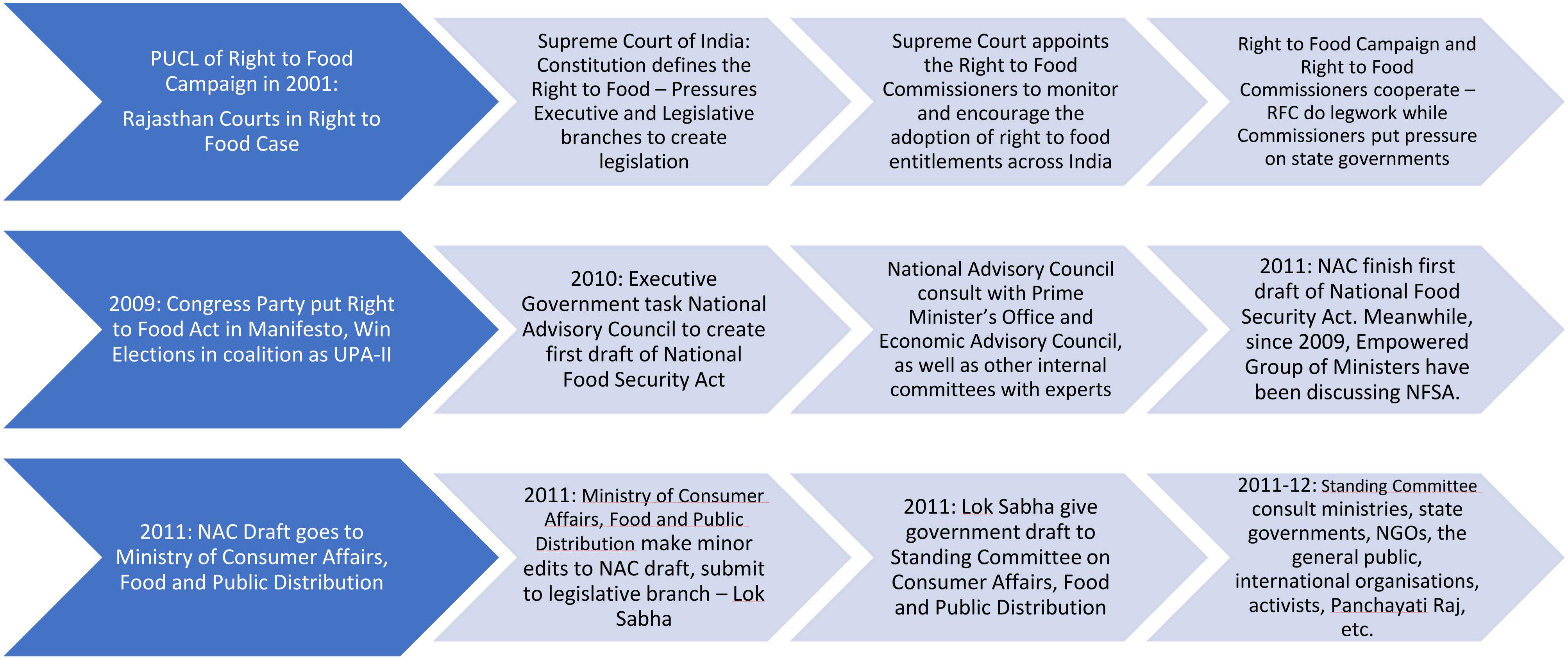
Table 6.1. Iterations of the National Food Security Act, 2009-2013

Year	Draft	Key Aspects	Eligibility	Changes from Previous Draft
2009	National Advisory Council Draft	• Provisions for people living in/with: homelessness, destitution, emergencies, disaster zones. • Community Kitchens for urban homeless and destitute • Starvation Protocol • Specific provisions for women and children. • 7kg per person per month for 'priority' category at 3/2/1 rupees per kg of rice/wheat/coarse grain • 4kg per person per month for 'general' category at half of market price	90%	
December 2011	Government Draft introduced to Parliament	• Provisions for women and children • Community Kitchens for urban homeless and destitute • Starvation Protocol • 7kg per person per month for 'priority' category at 3/2/1 rupees per kg of rice/wheat/coarse grain • 3kg per person per month for 'general' category at half of market price	67% - 75% rural and 50% urban	• Removed all provisions for the homeless, destitute, those living in emergencies or disaster zones • Reduced eligibility from 90% to 67% • Reduced 'general' category entitlements to 3kg
January 2013	Parliamentary Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution Draft	• Provisions for women and children • 5kg per person per month at 3/2/1 rupees per kg of rice/wheat/coarse grain	67% - 75% rural and 50% urban	• Removed 'general' and 'priority' categories.

				• Uniform entitlements for everyone • Removed Starvation Protocol. • Removed Community Kitchens. • Extended provisions for children up to age 16
July 2013	National Food Security Bill/Ordinance	• Provisions for women and children • 5kg per person per month at 3/2/1 rupees per kg of rice/wheat/coarse grain. • 35kg per household per month for AAY households, at 3/2/1 rupees per kg of rice/wheat/coarse grain	67% - 75% rural and 50% urban	• Introduced provisions for the poorest of the poor – the AAY.

Source: Author

Figure 6.1. Timeline of the Creation and Drafting of the National Food Security Act



PUCL of Right to Food Campaign in 2001:

Rajasthan Courts in Right to Food Case

Supreme Court of India: Constitution defines the Right to Food – Pressures Executive and Legislative branches to create legislation

Supreme Court appoints the Right to Food Commissioners to monitor and encourage the adoption of right to food entitlements across India

Right to Food Campaign and Right to Food Commissioners cooperate – RFC do legwork while Commissioners put pressure on state governments

2009: Congress Party put Right to Food Act in Manifesto, Win Elections in coalition as UPA-II

2010: Executive Government task National Advisory Council to create first draft of National Food Security Act

National Advisory Council consult with Prime Minister's Office and Economic Advisory Council, as well as other internal committees with experts

2011: NAC finish first draft of National Food Security Act. Meanwhile, since 2009, Empowered Group of Ministers have been discussing NFSA.

2011: NAC Draft goes to Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

2011: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution make minor edits to NAC draft, submit to legislative branch – Lok Sabha

2011: Lok Sabha give government draft to Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

2011-12: Standing Committee consult ministries, state governments, NGOs, the general public, international organisations, activists, Panchayati Raj, etc.

Source: Author

6.2.1 Excisions of Urban-Focused Provisions

The quite extensive and comprehensive NAC draft, already a product of compromise, was further changed in the later stages of the policy process. The most significant difference for urban food security between the NAC draft and the final product of the NFSA 2013 is found in the excising of key provisions for vulnerable groups that existed in the NAC draft. These specific provisions were for the destitute, the homeless and migrants, as well as an extensive starvation protocol. These vulnerable groups exist in urban areas, with the homeless and migrants especially prevalent, all who face harsh living conditions as explored in chapter five. These excisions occurred quite late in the policy process, after the report of the Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution at the end of 2012. Despite the fact that these actual changes in the draft came quite late in the process, Harsh Mander, a former member of the NAC and a strong pro-rights proponent, pointed out the seeming unwillingness of the central government in pursuing urban food security even earlier in the policy process:

> **"When we tried to convince the Planning Commission and the Prime Minister's Office that community kitchens were centrally important to urban food insecurity, there was a certain sense that they were wondering, is this what the government should do? Taking care of the most vulnerable in society?" – Harsh Mander, former member of the NAC.**

The report by the Planning Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution indicated that these provisions were excised for political expediency and to simplify and 'streamline' the NFSA, to make it more palatable as a broad act, and not with any direct intention to harm urban food security; indeed, it never came up as a point of contention. By removing key provisions for the most exposed in urban areas, the act invariably focused on rural food security, as the vast majority of the poorest of the poor (that come under the AAY) live in rural areas. Some of those interviewed echoed this sentiment, with Jean Drèze, a prominent development economist, author, activist and professor at the University of Ranchi, arguing that it was a consequence of a general lack of experience to pursue such ambitious provisions, a lack of consensus on the continued inclusion of such specific provisions, which echoes Harsh Mander's insight, and that there was a general attitude that the Act was 'overloaded' in regard to what the government was willing to do:

> **"In the end [these provisions were] shelved because there was a feeling that there wasn't enough experience to recommend it as a legal provision for the time being, and because the**

> **Act was becoming overloaded relative to what the government was willing to do. So that was one of the reasons that it was unfortunately taken out of the Act. There was some differences of views regarding community kitchens as to whether to have it or not and because of this lack of consensus it was left out of the Act. That would have been the one thing that would have addressed urban food security specifically. I think that would have been the main urban provision in the Act." – Jean Drèze, Development Economist and former member of the NAC.**

Provisions for pregnant women, mothers and children, to give them nutritional support and monetary aid, remained, which is one positive for urban food security as urban women and children have been shown to have worse rates of malnutrition on average than rural women and children (Kundu, 2014). The specific changes to entitlements from the NFSB 2011 and the NFSA 2013 can be seen in table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Comparison of Entitlements for the Urban, NFSB 2011 and NFSA 2013

Entitlements for the Urban	**NFSB 2011**	**NFSA 2013**
Homeless	"The State Government shall ensure **urban** homeless and such other needy persons […] have access to affordable meals […] through a scheme of Community Kitchens run by any agency identified by the appropriate government, or any other method."	Excised. No mention of the homeless, nor of Community Kitchens.
Destitute	"The State Government shall provide all destitute persons at least one freshly cooked meal every day, free of charge, according to the nutrition standards specified […], at a location close to their home, or if they are homeless, close to the place they are ordinarily to be found in, in accordance with appropriate schemes to be piloted and specified under this Act"	Excised. No mention of the destitute, nor of nutrition standards.
Migrants	"Migrants and their families shall be able to claim all entitlements as specified under Section 4 to Section 12 of this Act, at whatever location in the country is their current place of residence." – Section 4 to 12 specify the right to food for Indian citizens.	Excised. No mention of migrants.

Source: Author, NFSB 2011, NFSA 2013

The crux of the changes lay in the Standing Committee's belief that **"it was the utmost importance"** that the NFSA was to be a **"simple yet effective framework of the Public Distribution System ensuring food security to the people of India"** (Standing Committee Report, 2013, pg. 24). As such, the specific target groups such as the homeless, the destitute and those living with starvation was perceived to be complicating an already broad bill, and that keeping those entitlements in **"would be difficult for the administration to identify destitute and homeless persons who may be given such benefits under the provisions of the Bill. Further, there is a risk of breaking the social fabric as non-earning members of the family may be pushed out of homes to feed for themselves."** (Standing Committee Report, 2013, pg. 104).

As stated in chapter five, this paragraph exposes the underlying belief structure of some of the actors involved in the policy process, with an inference that by providing entitlements and food security for the homeless and the destitute, there would be an incentive for poorer families to abandon family members. As stated, there are several assumptions at play here, on one hand there is the belief that the poor are so desperate that they would willingly get rid of family members who are not contributing to the family economically if there was an excuse, and on the other that familial, cultural and social behaviour is so fragile that it is predicated on government incentives, or the lack thereof. These assumptions speak to broader beliefs and perspectives that policy-makers in India have implicitly and explicitly voiced. Furthermore, the recommendations by the Standing Committee in this regard are almost wholly based on the input of Shri Naveen Jindal, a member of the Lok Sabha with the INC. All other comments that are noted in the report suggest ways of improving the definitions and identification of the destitute and homeless, or an expansion of the existing entitlements to be more comprehensive. *Shri* Naveen Jindal was not only a Member of Parliament at this time, but an industrialist, chairman of Jindal Steel and Power Limited. This would suggest that he had untoward influence in the changes made to the NFSA, particularly in relation to urban entitlements.

Harsh Mander was particularly critical of the changes made by the Standing Committee:

> **"When the Standing Committee sat, the real destruction of the Act actually happened at this level, which was significant. What happened was that the PDS portion was brought into doubt, which was the positive conclusion of the Standing Committee. But it drastically and entirely eliminated the vulnerable groups. So vulnerable groups gone and through that the window addressing urban poverty got almost completely removed. That was the clueless blow**

> **in some sense to me, because they were supposed to be representative of all political parties and that's where in the Right to Information Act and the MGNREGA things were improved at the stage of the parliamentary committee. But in this case the entitlements were even further omitted." – Harsh Mander, former member of the NAC and director of the Centre for Equity Studies, think-tank.**

Jean Drèze argues that these changes were in many ways needed, as he considered the NAC draft 'unimplementable':

> **"The Act that was passed was the residual of all these [discussions], and even within that there were some constraints about the PDS; there was a clear limit to how far we could go. That is why if you look at the drafts that came out of the NAC, they were very unwieldy and impractical, in my opinion. The reason was that it was kind of put into a straitjacket and there was a perception that the government was willing to go so far and no further. And within that there was an attempt to do the best that was possible." – Jean Drèze, Development Economist and former member of the NAC.**

He further elaborated that the Standing Committee changes were aimed at making the Act more practical and manageable:

> **"It was only after the NAC submitted their draft that it was simplified, which I think was quite important in making the Act practical. It's difficult enough to even cover 10% or 15% households. And then if you have to create multiple categories and meet some specified state-wide ratio, it's just not possible. I think it was well into the Standing Committee's report where we had to make a case to them to simplify the Act, but there was a long period in between where nothing was moving." – Jean Drèze, Development Economist and former member of the NAC.**

The categories Jean Drèze speaks about has been explored in chapter two, but in summation the NAC draft had the categories of the poorest of the poor, the general category, and the priority category. These three categories were to receive different amounts of grain every month, although at the same price. The simplification during the Standing Committee Report was to remove the general category and make the priority category available for all who do not come under the poorest of the poor. Looking at the changes made to the Act in its totality, the excision of specific provisions for vulnerable groups fit the broader changes of simplification and streamlining. The point of contention is not the excision of entitlements for the urban poor as a means to streamline the Act, but in the wording in justifying the excisions that their inclusion would "break the social fabric". Streamlining an unwieldy Act has merit as an argument but worrying about the societal ramifications of feeding the homeless speaks to far deeper-rooted attitudes towards the urban poor, if not at the least as obfuscation.

6.2.2 Rephrasing the Act

Throughout any policy process, there are significant but subtle changes to the phrasing of an Act. The details of a specific phrasing may have a potentially large impact on the outcomes of a law, and the NFSA is no different. Of interest to the potential impact on urban food insecurity is to do with the wording of the eligibility criteria. The ultimate Act settled on the proportion of eligible at 50% of **the urban population**, and 75% of the **rural population**. Interesting to note here is that the original NAC draft placed the proportion of eligible at 50% of **urban households**, rather than population; 50% of urban households and 50% of the urban population are two different estimates.

The specific wording of the NAC draft is "**not less than 50% of all urban households,**" while the wording of the NFSA is "**up to fifty per cent**. [sic] **of the urban population**." This drastically changes the nature of those eligible. 'Not less than' implies that it is a minimum of 50% that are eligible, while the phrasing of 'up to' implies that it is a maximum of 50% that are eligible. Furthermore, half of all urban households encompasses more than half of the entire urban population, as single-person households are statistically rare in the Indian context. This represents an overall decrease in the number of those eligible, not only in terms of pure numbers, but also in future potential.

One further substantial change in wording was the removal of the definition of an "urban area" between the NAC draft and the final Act, which reflects more a general lack of focus on the urban during the policy process rather than having any tangible impact on urban food security. A former minister that was interviewed, Jairam Ramesh, was previously quoted as stating that the Ministry of Urban Affairs was not consulted on discussions of the NFSA, with the majority involvement from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Rural Affairs and Ministry for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

Looking at the final Act, the literal definition of an urban area in the Act is defined as not being a rural area. Ironically, the definition of a rural area is any place that doesn't have an urban local body. As explored in chapter five, there are many 'Census Towns' that do not have urban institutions or structures and are thus defined legally as rural areas. Consequently, the criteria of eligibility for access in rural areas may potentially omit these urban-but-not-urban areas, although more research needs to be done on this to understand the nuances more definitively. As it is, this adds to the picture of continued neglect of urban areas.

With the excision of provisions that provided for community kitchens, a passage on state duties to ensure the existence of community kitchens was also removed. This is not as noteworthy, as the removal of the primary provision necessitated further changes. The key rewordings are found in table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Key Rewordings for the Urban in the NFSB 2011 and NFSA 2013

Topic	NFSB 2011	NFSA 2013
Eligibility Criteria	"[…] the State Government shall ensure that **not less than 50% of all urban households** are entitled to subsidized food grains […]" Note that this draft states that a minimum of 50% of urban households are eligible.	"The entitlements of the persons belonging to the eligible households […] **up to fifty per cent**. **of the urban population**." Note that the final Act states that it is a maximum of 50% of the urban population that is eligible.
State Duties	"The state government shall put in place Community Kitchens in urban areas as may be necessary for the urban areas."	Excised. No mention of community kitchens.
Definition	"'Urban Areas' shall mean any area in a State covered by any urban local body or a Cantonment Board established or constituted under any law for the time being in force."	No definition of 'urban area'. A rural area, however, is defined as the following: "'rural area' means any area in a State except those areas covered by any urban local body or a cantonment board established or constituted under any law for the time being in force;" A rural area is thus defined as the **absence of urban governance**, which many large areas that fulfil the criteria of urban may lack.

Source: Author, NFSB 2011, NFSA 2013

6.2.3 Eligibility and Exclusion

A significant point of contention throughout the Indian food policy discourse has been the topic of eligibility, and this was no different during the policy process of the NFSA. As covered in chapter 1, the PDS changed from a universal approach to a targeted approach in the Mid-1990s, basing its eligibility criteria on the Planning Commission's poverty lines, dividing citizens into Above Poverty Line (APL) and Below Poverty Line (BPL), which is currently pegged at 73 rupees for rural areas and 89 rupees for urban areas.

Consequently, based on the interviews, an apparent major point of contention during the debate around the NFSA between the NAC and the PMO and Planning Commission was if they were to revert the policy course away from a targeted PDS and reinstate a universal one. The NFSA was seen by several members of the NAC as an opportunity to revisit this eligibility, and the initial NAC draft was highly aspirational in terms of what it wanted to accomplish, attempting to be as close as possible to a universal system. The original NAC draft pegged those eligible for the PDS at 90% of rural households and 50% of urban households. The process to even reach this level of eligibility was a process of compromise – while certain members on the NAC were closely linked with the Right to Food Campaign and argued for a universal Public Distribution System (PDS), the economists and bureaucrats who had little affiliation with the Campaign disagreed, considering it unrealistic and economically wasteful, as was covered in the criticisms of the NFSA in chapter two (Aggarwal & Mander 2013). Jean Drèze, a former member of the NAC and prominent development economist, expands on those tensions:

> **"There was a lot of discussion in the initial stage, for example, of having universal PDS in the poorest states, which I think was a good idea and I still wish today that it had happened. In fact it had been agreed in the NAC and put on record. Suddenly you are told no, that's not on." – Jean Drèze, Development Economist and former member of the NAC.**

Further drafts pegged the urban eligibility at 50%, while the rural eligibility subsequently changed to 75%. The Rangarajan Committee Report on the NAC draft suggested taking the official urban poverty line and adding 10% of the BPL population to capture both the poor and those on the margin (Rangarajan Expert Committee Report, 2011, pg. 11), having an entitled category of around 28% of the urban population, and adding 12% to 22% of the urban to a general category, suggesting a total proportion of either 40% or 50%. As the priority and general groups was subsequently removed in later drafts, the NFSA stopped defining its eligibility criteria on the APL-BPL system, though the vestiges of that system are shown during the policy process as being influential in pegging the coverage. The final Act itself had no methodology or framework in defining who was eligible, leaving this to each state to decide. The Standing Committee report comments that the final coverage was chosen due to **"current levels of production and procurement of foodgrains"** (Standing Committee Report, 2011, pg. 31). The interviewees similarly had varying impressions as to why those figures were chosen, and specifically how policy-makers had reached an eligibility of 50% of urban population.

N.C. Saxena, a former member of the NAC, argued that the eligibility criteria was reached by taking the estimated urban poverty line and doubling it to ensure that more than all the necessary beneficiaries were captured under the Act. At the time, urban poverty was officially estimated to be around 25% of the urban population:

> **"That number of 50% urban eligibility was a result of the government; at that point of time in 2010, when this was being debated and being drafted, we looked at the poverty figures, and according to government at least 25% people in urban areas were poor. However, when you look at it decile-wise consumption, decile-wise total income, then it appears that a very large number of people who [were] just above poverty line and were vulnerable. They would be potentially falling below poverty line if there some kind of crisis in the family or health etc. In fact decile wise was one of the reasons we resulted in 50%." – N.C. Saxena, former member of the NAC.**

This was in line with the Rangarajan report that suggested increased coverage precisely to cover the urban population who may be on the margins and vulnerable. This approach shown was not looking at malnutrition, caloric intake, or BMI, but purely on income. Mukta Srivastava, an activist with the Right to Food Campaign, also saw the eligibility criteria as being fundamentally based on income, being in essence an expansion of the poverty line to cover more people:

> **"The eligibility criteria is about income, how they define poverty. And there are different people, different kind of poverty lines. The economists said it was more people who are in rural areas who are poor than in the urban areas, that is their data. And on the basis of that**

> **they decided this. It was not arbitrary." – Mukta Srivastava, Maharashtra Representative of the Right to Food Campaign.**

Jayati Ghosh, a prominent economist, echoed these arguments, believing that the eligibility criteria were broadly based on poverty rates, although also arguing that while strongly correlated, poverty and food security are not necessarily the same:

> **"There are eligibility criteria and it's all based on the social and economic survey that was done. However, we forget that poverty is not the same as food insecurity and yet the criteria seems to conflate the two. First, they're taking problematic indicators of poverty and income, and secondly the two [poverty and food insecurity] are not the same. I believe in any civilised society is to make sure all your population is adequately nourished that is not something that is met by this Act." – Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning.**

Jean Drèze argues instead that the eligibility criteria were in fact pegged on procurement, which was more in line with the Standing Committee report, which mentions procurement as the primary factor in deciding on the eligibility criteria, and that the coverage was pegged in regard to how much procurement was considered possible to maintain, rather than purely on inflated poverty lines:

> **"There was an unspoken understanding that 60 million tons of grains was the cap, rightly or wrongly. As it is, this was a big concession because most people in the government, Planning Commission and Finance Ministry, they all felt that this could not be maintained, which actually turned out to be wrong. If anything, the NFSA was under-ambitious. At that time, procurement was still going on so they advocated something like 50 million tons. In the end, there was a kind of understanding that okay we can push it up to 60 million tons and no further. Within that the ratios were calculated backwards, so there was no specific rationality of 50% in urban areas." – Jean Drèze, Development Economist and former member of the NAC.**

Dipa Sinha was of the opinion that the eligibility figure was reached from a financial perspective and was based on much money they wanted to spend on the NFSA and how many people could be covered with the money they had available:

> **"There was this whole process happening within the NAC on what the coverage of the NFSA would be. Harsh Mander was within the steering committee within the NAC on this. Finally what it came down to is how much money they were willing to put in. There was a figure given to the NAC by the Prime Minister's Office, which was the additional subsidy they could get for the Act. Whatever they did, they had to fit their numbers to fit into the budget. So there was a lot of juggling of numbers done, and the eventual figures seemed to fit well, 75%, 50%. That's all, there is no meaning about the figures. It came like this, it's very arbitrary." – Dipa Sinha, academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign.**

Yet others interviewed believed that it was a combination of factors, including financial decisions, agricultural production and poverty lines, but also a consequence of competing interest groups that had their own figures, in line with Jean Drèze's point that there was a lack of specific rationality for the figures. The majority of those interviewed who were in favour of a universal PDS dismissed the entire idea of eligibility as arbitrary, arguing that it increased corruption, created more bureaucracy, paper-work, administrative costs and inefficiencies (Himanshu & Sen, 2011). The final figures, in their view, were not based on any thorough research, but was a politically expedient number, and ultimately arbitrary. These considerations were never publicly released and were thus "complex and opaque":

> **"There were no eligibility standards put out, making the inclusion criteria complex and opaque. The framework established by the Food Security Act was ultimately arbitrary: the distribution is arbitrarily settled at 5 kilograms [a month], the eligibility is arbitrarily cut off to 67% of the population, 75% rural, 50% urban for the whole of India. It was very arbitrarily decided, there is no logic." – Kavista Srivastava, Rajasthan state representative to the Right to Food Campaign.**

> **"[The eligibility criteria] was just looking at a whole bunch of sets of calculations done week after week, playing around with numbers, and those were mainly done between the National Advisory Council and the Prime Minister's Committee that was formed under the Financial**

> **Advisor to the Prime Minister. Ultimately the eligibility criteria were completely arbitrary." – Nikhil Dey, key activist within the Right to Food Campaign.**

> **"There was a lobby which was saying [the NFSA] should be targeted. There was a lobby which was saying it should be universal – So they allocated 50% urban, 75% rural. It's arbitrary." – Pramod Joshi, Country Director of IFPRI India.**

As these quotes show, there were many interviewed who felt the exercise of choosing an eligibility criterion was completely arbitrary, and was neither derived from financial incentives, agricultural potential nor from poverty lines, lacking any deciding rationale and done merely to have some sort of eligibility criteria, a view shared by Biraj Patnaik, Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right to Food, and Reetika Khera, a prominent political economist at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT):

> **"If you were to ask what the rationale for 50%? Why not 45% or 52%? There is no rationale. It is a completely arbitrary number. There is absolutely no methodological thinking behind it other than the fact that we wanted to restrict the number to about 67%, which was motivated partly due to economics and partly due to politics. No one would give 100%, we said okay gives us 75%. We essentially doubled the numbers that were available then, we had to do it. They said no we won't give you 75% so we said give us 75% in the rural and they said okay but not in the urban. All advocacy is negotiation between the real and the ideal." – Biraj Patnaik, Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right to Food.**

> **"The eligibility criteria was totally arbitrary, even the overall coverage of 66% or 67% whatever it is, was just a number pulled out of a hat. There is no basis for it, it should have been universal" – Reetika Khera, Political Economist at IIT.**

Pronab Sen, the former head of the statistical bureau of India, believed that the reason the figures were arbitrary was that there had been no established methodology in measuring vulnerabilities beyond income and consumption, which was echoed by Abhijit Sen, a former member of the Planning Commission:

> **"50 or 17% [as eligibility criteria]; all these figures were drawn from the air. Completely arbitrary and this is so because we do not have a measurable concept of vulnerability." – Pronab Sen, Country Head of the International Growth Centre (IGC).**

> **"It was arbitrary because in fact it had been unduly delayed because of all these committees going into it. And when movement required it was unduly rushed, so I mean, one usually follows the other. This 75% and 50% that was written into the Act simply because of the Right to Food people. They demanded that the Act would be that way." – Abhijit Sen, former bureaucrat with the Planning Commission.**

Regardless if the eligibility criteria were arbitrary or based on a specific reasoning, Renu Khosla, an urban expert who has worked extensively on urban slums, believed that the urban eligibility was sufficient as it took into consideration urban groups above the official poverty line:

> **"I'm okay with that figure of 50%. The current urban poverty line is about 2,490 rupees (£26.02) per month. Somebody who is earning 2,491 (£26.03) rupees is above the poverty line and considered non-poor. Our research [on urban poverty] was if this is your poverty line then there is a band above that should also be considered as vulnerable, those who can slip into poverty at the slightest of shocks. You have the poorest and the most desperate below the poverty line, and then the vulnerable but improving poor, with aspiration or abilities to go above the poverty line, but who can step back into poverty. We argued that you have to take half of that poverty line above that. So this is your poverty line, actual, real one, then it expands from 15% to 30% or even 50% of the urban population, so with these considerations this was actually a very broad act." – Renu Khosla, director of the Centre for Urban Excellence (CURE).**

The NFSA that was ultimately passed by the Lok Sabha provided for 67% of the Indian population (800 million people), 50% in the urban and 75% in the rural. However, from the Standing Committee draft onwards, target groups were only written in broad terms: 'urban' and 'rural' populations, 'pregnant and lactating women' and 'children', and the percentages that should have access to entitlements. There is no explicitly stated methodology of identifying these target groups, and throughout the policy documents, actual identification of those eligible was tasked to the state governments. As such, it was important to understand what the methodologies that the state governments would use to identify these target groups, to have a better understanding of what segment of the population was considered as needing access to food distribution. Harsh Mander noted the importance the NAC draft took in outlining criteria for eligibility:

> **"In our drafting of the NFSA, I had taken a great deal of care in trying to lay down criterion for urban eligibility, which were very specific to urban poverty's different form, and for that also developed this framework, which is part of the first committee. It is also instructive that there has been no official census of urban poor households. We've had what they call BPL surveys. All BPL surveys have been rural. There's never been an urban BPL survey." – Harsh Mander, former member of the NAC.**

This point raised by Harsh Mander, that the poverty line set by the Planning Commission was predominantly rural-based and thus was inherently biased towards rural poverty, was echoed by Abhijit Sen, a former bureaucrat with the Planning Commission:

> **"Frankly the urban side had less thought than the rural side, in part because the whole APL, BPL, all of that was really a rural thing. The urban side did not really have a proper method to try to identify who the urban poor is. Harsh [Mander] was very interested in lot of things, but as it stood the PDS by that time had more or less collapsed in many urban areas and whatever was there was an APL type thing." – Abhijit Sen, former member of the Planning Commission.**

Due to this historical lack of a standardised methodology in identifying urban poverty, a simultaneous development during the policy process of the NFSA was the work of two committees that were appointed by the Planning Commission to devise new methodologies regarding the identification of rural poverty and urban poverty. The rural methodology committee, which received the most attention in the press as well as within the Planning Commission, was chaired by N.C. Saxena, while the urban methodology committee, which received very little press attention and was ultimately not implemented by the Planning Commission, was chaired by S.R. Hashim. Abhijit Sen expands on how the methodology committees ultimately played no role in the eligibility criteria for the NFSA:

> **"The basis of rural selection procedure has been what I call the poverty census, the BPL census. Now a BPL census had been planned around 2009-10. It was originally exclusively rural but then there was also a committee on the urban poor [the Hashim Committee]. Clearly**

> **that was a necessary input into the process of implementing the Food Security Act, however, the ultimate eligibility criteria does not derive from any methodology. N.C. Saxena and Hashim were not actually measuring the poor. They were actually simply giving a methodology to conduct the census. However, Saxena elsewhere wrote that there are estimates which stretch from anywhere between 25% to 80% of the population and that it's somewhere around near 2/3 or at least half, if not 75% of the population being defined as poor. There were a lot of people that believe that sort of stuff. And I think, really these numbers simply reflect that." – Abhijit Sen, former Planning Commission.**

During the interview process, the researcher received the opportunity to speak to S.R. Hashim, the head of the committee on urban methodology, who expanded on the shortfalls of the current methodology in gauging urban poverty:

> **"The level of calorie consumption to be considered below the poverty line, as given by the Indian National Sample Survey, is already lower than recommended calorie consumption by medical institutions, and the current methodology around urban poverty is based on only two metrics, wage and calorie consumption, therefore, the poverty line comes out to be very low. The minimum wage came to around Rs.32 per day, per person. To assume that Rs. 32 can buy all the meals, clothing, something for housing, education… for a normal, minimum decent living… It's very meagre. Urban poverty is thus turning out to be higher and more around 35% or 25%."– S.R. Hashim, former chairman of the Hashim Committee on Urban Poverty Methodology.**

S.R. Hashim explained in his own words the methodology developed by the committee he chaired:

> **"Our committee based our methodology on the visible indicators, on housing, jobs, schools, on the types of vulnerabilities like households without an adult worker, child labour, households with only women creates another kind of insecurity, households with handicapped persons, persons suffering from chronic illnesses, etc. Further complexity was added when looking at the types of occupational insecurities such as health hazards, housing insecurities with vulnerabilities to violence and crime; a person whose housing condition is poor, in slum areas, are more vulnerable to rapes and other types of violent crimes in those areas. Maybe all of these dimensions have implications for food security and other things, but**

> **the government and Planning Commission was hesitant in taking our methodological recommendations, as poverty would be at a higher level. There is a political component." – S.R. Hashim, former chairman of the Hashim Committee on Urban Poverty Methodology.**

Harsh Mander, who was a member of the Urban Methodology Committee, commented via email that the report on urban methodology was never officially adopted by the Planning Commission as they believed that the report would place the figure of urban poverty much higher than official figures:

> **"It was never officially adopted by the Planning Commission. I suspect because it would have resulted in many more urban poor households being identified than the Planning Commission was willing to admit, or support." – Harsh Mander, former member of the NAC.**

This tension was interesting, as it revealed the dichotomy between 'what-we-know' explicitly and 'what-we-know' implicitly. The explicit 'what-we-know' through government documentation and what is touted through the statistical bureaus is a picture of declining poverty, while the implicit 'what-we-know', as shared by not only those interviewed but through academic studies and observation of public discourse, is one of increased inequality, and continued low income for the bottom quintile. S.R. Hashim made it clear that without the adoption of a new methodology, the eligibility criteria remain rooted in measurements of income and calorie consumption, measurements that lack nuance or sufficient differentiation regarding rural or urban food insecurity. The eligibility criteria have been established to be closely linked with the evaluation of poverty. N.C. Saxena, a former bureaucrat and member of the NAC, also expands on the issues in identifying target groups and being able to provide entitlements:

> **"In urban areas actual identification of the poor [is] an issue. The [Hashim] committee was set up to identify the urban poor. Inherently there are two different issues: one issue is determining how many poor there are and the other issue is understanding who the poor are. How many poor one can determine through a survey but to find who the poor are, you need to go to every household and find out. Socio-economic censuses have mostly been done in rural areas. Now for urban areas, I do not know. Unless you identify the poor, it is quite likely that the ration card may be given to the wrong person. There could be some error. [The urban**

> **poor] are very mobile, making identification of specific beneficiaries difficult." – N.C. Saxena, former member of the NAC.**

> **"There is a lot of dispute about [identifying the poor]. There have been two committees which have estimated the extent of food insecure but there are two problems in computing poverty. One is the extent of poverty itself and the other is the identification of the poor. Even if you say the poor are so many percentages, who are the people who constitute that?" – Neelabh Mishra, former editor of Outlook India.**

N.C. Saxena makes it clear that the NFSA never undertook the task to actually define who the food insecure in India are. The purpose of the Act was to provide subsidised grains to the Indian population, but in the broadest terms possible. Without ever really defining who the food insecure are, or even what grounds one could be considered food insecure, the ultimate eligibility was built upon the straightforward model of poverty as food insecurity. While this is sufficient in broad terms, such as in rural areas where hunger and food insecurity are more widespread and potentially easier to target through simplifying the eligibility criteria, the complexities and nuances that mark urban food insecurity are lost. Large segments of the urban population may not be eligible for entitlements depending on how the eligibility criteria are utilised by local bodies in their estimations, and the risk of exclusion increases without a centralised, standardised and nuanced methodology of measuring urban food insecurity and poverty. As it is, the opaque nature of each state government's eligibility criteria makes it difficult to accurately surmise if or if not everybody who might need entitlements are covered – some states may provide for the homeless, while other states may choose not to.

Ultimately, it is the failure of the Act to lay out specific criteria for eligibility, and the previous failure of the Planning Commission and the central government to introduce a standardised methodology to follow in determining eligibility. The Planning Commission did not implement or promote a standardised methodology to gauge urban food insecurity, meaning the eventual methodologies for urban identification remain opaque and at the discretion of state governments, all of which may have differing methodologies. The final Act and policy documents do not explicitly state any criteria for eligibility in urban areas. This point was reinforced by multiple interviewees who argued that the lack of any standardised methodology in defining the eligibility criteria reinforces its perception as arbitrary, such as the perspective of Biraj Patnaik, Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right to Food Case:

> **"Unless you have a multi-dimensional methodology for estimating real poverty, just based on income data the cut off will always be arbitrary because you don't recognize the inherent differences in vulnerabilities beyond income; poverty data based on consumption doesn't work. The nature of urban poverty in metropolitan cities is very different from the nature of urban poverty in class A or class B towns, peri-urban areas and so on. A nuanced methodology was adopted by the Hashim committee but nothing is happening on that report. No government is following that report, so it is dead. Having said that, the National Food Security Act per se does not have anything to do with the identification of the poor: the Act says that the state governments will do it." – Biraj Patnaik, Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right to Food.**

Pramod Joshi, director of IFPRI India, observes that while there is a long list of indicators that can be used as eligibility criteria, there is no standard methodology throughout the country:

> **"Urban areas also have certain criteria, but there is no standard method – even to this date there is none. There is large number of indicators, a long list of indicators, of which it is up to each state government to choose which ones they wish to follow. So each state can choose how to identify who are poor." – Pramod Joshi, head of IFPRI.**

Pronab Sen, the former chief statistician of the Indian Statistical Institute, believes this lack of standardised methodology in defining urban poverty, and the lack of any standardised definition of the eligibility criteria, has led to a chronic underestimation of urban poverty:

> **"We know we underestimate urban poverty because in government surveys the first condition is that those surveyed must live in a permanent establishment. Now if a very large chunk of the urban are non-permanent established or people who see themselves as non-permanent then they simply fall out of the survey. The identification process in the urban areas is of a completely different order of magnitude." – Pronab Sen, former chief statistician of the India Statistical Institute.**

Harsh Mander believes that due to how contested the eligibility criteria was, the Act ultimately decided not to include any guidelines specifically due to this contestation:

> **“The challenge of identifying the urban poor is that everybody is in the informal sector with casual work and daily pay, etc. It is thus impossible to evaluate incomes of these household in ways that are transparent and verifiable. When the Act got finally negotiated, it came in the dying months of the UPA-II government. What happened then was that they just wanted to get it passed. Anything that was at all contestable, including the basis on which the households were selected, was left without any kind of guidelines. That was a kind of death knell, it was bad enough for rural areas, despite the experience of multiple BPL surveys and theorising and thinking of rural poverty, and so on. In urban areas there was not even the experience, anything like a scientific, objective survey of urban poverty.” – Harsh Mander, former member of the NAC.**

In summation, the NFSA posits a broadly expanded target population to receive access to the PDS but does not explicitly state a methodology to identify that expanded population. The previous PDS utilised the Above Poverty Line (APL)/Below Poverty Line (BPL) dichotomy, based on the poverty line set by the Planning Commission, but the NFSA, through the process of negotiations and compromises, forgoes the poverty line in favour of an expanded PDS. However, by not actually replacing the APL/BPL system with a new methodology for identifying those eligible, nor recommending any type of standardised methodology for identification and leaving the eligibility criteria solely up to the states, a vacuum is created in terms of accurately identifying those eligible, and the vestiges of the APL/BPL system remains. While there is a wealth of experience in identifying rural food insecurity within central and state governments as well among NGOs and academics, the discourse surrounding urban food security lacks this experience, with a dearth of long-term research and adequate data sets.

6.2.4 Accessing Entitlements

A point of contention to the entire structure of social policies in India as it relates to the urban is that they are all, including the NFSA, ‘residence-based’. That is to say, beneficiaries need a fixed address, a place that they can be located, tallied and accounted for, to be eligible. This necessarily omits the homeless and migrants, who have no fixed address, with migrant labourers keeping their places of origin as their registered address. An example that was illustrated by one of the interviewees is of a man who migrates to a large metropolis in another state as a labourer, but the ‘ration card’ is linked to his entire family – firstly, he is not be able to receive any benefits outside of his home state with the card, secondly, as his entire family is linked to the card, he leaves it at home for his wife and children. As a result, the man, who is by all definitions under the poverty line and would be entitled to food under the NFSA, is unable to access his entitlements as he is not recognised or registered in the area he has migrated to. Furthermore, the NFSA makes the eldest female the legally defined head of household, which means they receive the ration card, and while this may help prevent misuse and abuse of the ration card, it makes it harder for male migrant workers to ensure their own food security, even if the rest of their family have access to food rations. This gap, addressed in the earlier drafts of the NFSA through community kitchens and specific entitlements for migrants, remains unsolved and unmentioned in the final Act.

Jayati Ghosh, a prominent development economist at JNU, believes that by remaining residence-dependent, vulnerable groups that most require government assistance continue to remain excluded, regardless of the law:

> **“Every entitlement in India is residence-dependent and that has a huge public policy implication for migrants, who are denied everything, even citizenship in terms of the right to vote as postal ballots are not allowed inside the country. This is just one of the many instances in which migrants and particularly seasonal and temporary migrants are denied their basic rights.” – Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning.**

In terms of food security, as explored in chapter five, many of those most food insecure are specifically those groups that lack access to these entitlements. The ultimate omission of specific entitlements for these vulnerable groups means that the Act does not ultimately address this issue, as expressed by Dipa

Sinha, an academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign, and Pramod Joshi, country head of IFPRI India:

> **“The way the [Public Distribution System] currently functions doesn’t address the vulnerable groups in urban areas, especially the homeless and unskilled migrants.” – Dipa Sinha, academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign.**
>
> **“Migrants are not covered [by the NFSA] unless they have a ration card. Some manage it because they get proof of address but most of them don’t because [they] don’t have a permanent address – they move from one place to another. If Mr. X lives in Patna – he has a ration card – all names are in the ration card and he comes to Delhi for some job, so he will not be entitled to the PDS here. His family receives the entitlements but he is deprived here because the ration card is for Patna. He would not even be able to receive a card in Delhi unless he has a Delhi address, so it is a big problem for migrants.” – Pramod Joshi, Country Head for IFPRI India.**

Furthermore, even if one has residency, it is very challenging as a slum dweller to obtain a ration card, which grants access to schemes and programmes, for multiple reasons. First, sufficient documentation for identification is required, which may not be available to all slum dwellers, even those who can claim residency. Secondly, many slums are not legally recognised, creating administrative issues when applying for documentation. Thirdly, slum dwellers often lack the knowledge, as well as the time, to go through the rigmarole of obtaining proper documentation as well as the lengthy application process for a ration card. Studies indicate that only about 29% of slum dwellers have managed to obtain ration cards (Agarwal et al, 2009). Renu Khosla, an urban expert and director of the Centre for Urban Excellence (CURE), N.C. Saxena, a former member of the NAC, and Amita Baviskar, a sociologist who has worked extensively on urban poverty, all elucidate the difficulties of the urban poor to claim their rights:

> **“A lot of people with ration cards don’t want to share information because they are the beneficiary, they are actually the advantaged poor. They have all the documentation, so every time there is a scheme they are the first one to come because they have all the papers which are needed. Once they are in the system and move to another poor slum but have the documentation as proof, they get the ration card. The most challenging thing for people to get was the initial ration card, to get into the system.” – Renu Khosla, Director of CURE**

> **"Urban migrants are not voters. They have not been given voter's cards. I visited a slum area very close to Vasant Kunj, where people have been living for the last 20 years, they still do not have ration cards, they do not have voter's cards." – N.C. Saxena, former member of the National Advisory Council.**
>
> **"A lot of people don't even bother to apply for the ration card because they know that they don't have the paper work. I don't know if there are any estimates of those kinds of numbers but it's bound to be very large given the extent of the homeless people, people who haven't been in Delhi long enough to be able to muster the documentary requirements." – Amita Baviskar, Professor of Development Sociology at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University.**

Fundamentally, the residence-based nature of schemes and entitlements in India disadvantage the most vulnerable urban groups, leaving it up to the purvey of state governments if they choose to include them, and the ultimate omissions from the NFSA of specific entitlements for these vulnerable groups compound their fragile positions. These issues are more systemic than just the NFSA, but earlier drafts of the Act would have taken great lengths in addressing this segment of the population and their potential food insecurity. Slum dwellers who have houses may not be in much better positions based on the low percentage of awareness of their rights, and the inherent difficulties in obtaining identity cards, proof of residence and ration cards as a result of being in a powerless position.

6.3 Policy Alternatives

In the process of policy creation, certain policy design features, ideas and alternatives are considered and parsed through before a general agreement is reached in what direction the overall policy document should take. Through policy documentation and interviews, a handful of policy alternatives that were considered came up repeatedly. To help shape the understanding of the overall policy design of the NFSA, it is important to look at what alternatives were being actively considered during the policy process. The potential impact that these policy alternatives would have on urban food insecurity are also posited, but the overall focus of this section is to lay out the policy alternatives that were considered and the degree to which they could have potentially affect urban food insecurity.

Universal vs. Targeted

A long-standing debate within the food policy sphere has surrounded the scope of eligibility of the PDS. In the mid-1990s, the PDS changed from a universal approach to a targeted approach, as a consequence of the cost being deemed too high and sufficient evidence that the universal approach was inefficient (Himanshu & Sen, 2011). Studies done since, however, have leaned in favour of universalism, with the evidence showing that the targeted approach had actually created a more complicated bureaucracy with poor oversight, which in turn increased leakages, making it more inefficient and expensive (Drèze & Khera, 2010; Himanshu & Sen, 2011; Khera, 2011). The studies have shown that in states that have independently instituted a universal PDS, the bottom quintile consume 50% (in Tamil Nadu) up to 68% (in Karnataka) of their grains through the PDS, while in states that remain with a targeted PDS, only 2% (in Bihar) to 6% (in Uttar Pradesh) receive their grains from the PDS (Saxena, 2013). The evidence collected among states have firmly shown that the best run PDS have been those states with universal or near universal systems (Himanshu & Sen, 2011).

Consequently, during the debate around the NFSA between the NAC, the PMO and the Planning Commission, a major point of contention was to revert the targeted PDS and reinstate a universal one, as mentioned in the preceding sections. Jean Drèze, a former member of the NAC, explained how initial discussions had argued for the inclusion of universal coverage for the poorest states, but were subsequently told that a universal approach was off the table:

> **“There was a lot of discussion in the initial stage, for example, of having universal PDS in the poorest states, which I think was a good idea and I still wish today that it had happened. In fact it had been agreed in the NAC and put on record. Suddenly you are told no, that’s not on.” – Jean Drèze, Development Economist and former member of the NAC.**

The NFSA in essence takes a ‘middle path’ between universal PDS and targeted PDS, keeping certain targeted groups while still greatly expanding its scope (Mander, 2011). The Right to Food Campaign argues in favour of a universal system, both on principle that a right to food act should universalise that right and that the inclusion of better-off groups, who are more influential, would likely lead to a higher quality system (Mander, 2011). On a purely practical level, instituting a universal approach would remove transaction and administrative costs (Himanshu & Sen, 2011). Supply and fiscal constraints are the main reasons cited for why the bill continues with a targeted approach, despite the evidence against it (Himanshu & Sen, 2011). Kavista Srivastava, the Rajasthan state representative to the Right to Food Campaign, believes that a universal system would be the most efficient way to ensure that those who need access to food can claim it:

> **“This segregation of poor, very poor, extremely poor, you know those layered entitlements. The only way it could have worked if it was a universal entitlements Act. And as we have seen, that even from a technical or managerial point of view, that kind of universal entitlement you automatically have dropouts from people who don't need it. That's a much more efficient way of targeting than this sort of from on high setting income classes than just setting criteria to identify these classes. It’s too huge a population.” – Kavista Srivastava, Rajasthan state representative to the Right to Food Campaign.**

However, many of those interviewed believe that the broad approach the PDS takes is to its advantage, while others felt that an even narrower, more targeted approach would have been more effective. Consequently, the NFSA seemingly displeases everybody, for either being too broad or not broad enough.

> **“The 75% in the rural areas is state wise and therefore practically close to universal in the poorer states. They can do something better than the old APL/BPL approach which was disastrous. I think in the poorer states it is not entirely obvious whether the universal approach is better than the exclusion of the top is useful. I am for the universal approach for the poorer states and the main reason for that is I believe that if you exclude the top, even if it only a small proportion you create a disgruntled group of powerful people who destabilise the system. I don’t think there is a very big difference between universalisation and what we call the exclusion approach. But there is a huge difference between either of them from the targeted approach that was being used earlier where you try somehow to identify the poorer 20% or 30% and you end up with massive errors. It’s a kind of hit and miss approach.” – Jean Dréze, Development Economis and former member of the NAC.**

> **"It was not universal and in fact there were a lot of debate on that it should be universal. The problem was that even if you make it universal you'd have to raise the price at which they would pay, otherwise the subsidy will become very high. A committee was set up by the Government of India in rural development for rural people, how to identify the rural poor. I chaired that committee, and that report is available on the website. We had suggested that the government should have some people compulsorily included, some people compulsorily excluded and then grade the rest. Recently the government, based on my recommendations, completed the survey which is called socio-economic classes, but this was solely done in rural areas." – N.C. Saxena, former member of the NAC, former Supreme Court Commissioner to the Right to Food.**

Cash Transfers

Citing reports from other developing countries that have successfully implemented cash transfers, such as in Brazil (Gulati et al, 2012), the growing support for Direct Cash Transfers has seen recent legislation where a whole host of poverty reduction schemes have been replaced with simpler monetary reimbursements (Gulati et al, 2012; Aggarwal & Mander, 2013), although food-based schemes and entitlements have been mainly excluded due to the MSP mechanism and the need for an outlet for distribution (Saxena, 2013), and the necessity for food distribution to the most vulnerable. The NFSA makes specific mention of the possibility of the central government to move the framework from pure distribution of subsidised grains to cash transfers, food coupons, or other similar schemes:

> **"The reforms shall […] include […] (*h*) introducing schemes, such as, cash transfer, food coupons, or other schemes, to the targeted beneficiaries in order to ensure their foodgrain entitlements specified in Chapter II, in such area and manner as may be prescribed by the Central Government." – National Food Security Act, 2013, section 5, pg. 8.**

The NFSA thus opens up the potential for a move to cash transfers (Aggarwal & Mander, 2013). Jairam Ramesh notes that the addition of this clause was for political reasons:

> **"Consideration for cash transfers came in 2011, as a means of getting a broader-based support in parliament." – Jairam Ramesh, former minister of rural development.**

However, cash transfers have been a historically significant flashpoint of contention, particularly among those associated with the Right to Food Campaign. Despite the ideological differences in perspective, wherein cash transfers are viewed as a dangerous step away from direct food distribution, many of those interviewed posited cash transfers as a potential solution in urban areas, as direct access to food is a marginal issue in urban areas, with the assumption that the problem facing the urban food insecure is not a lack of access to stores. Direct food distribution may not be entirely necessary in urban areas, and instead providing money to buy food either through directly giving money or through food coupons to ensure that the money is not spent in other ways, has been argued as a more efficient form of ensuring urban food security. Surjit Bhalla, a prominent economist, was strongly in favour of this type of approach as he believed this would also reduce corruption within the PDS:

> **"What we should have is either a food stamps programme or a cash transfer programme. There is no logic that says we should have the stupid programme that we currently have. The reason it's not done is because lot [of] the money is siphoned off, corruption is rife. The reason the programme doesn't reach its objectives is because the government, the administration, are made up of corrupt people who siphon off. " – Surjit Bhalla, prominent economist.**

Renu Khosla, who has spent her entire career looking at urban poverty, agreed broadly with this sentiment and was of the firm belief that food security issues in urban areas came down to access and not availability. She believed a better approach for urban areas would be specific cash transfers rather than the current direct food distribution:

> **"Food is available in urban areas. The availability is there, affordability is also there. I believe cash transfers have potential in urban areas, and I'm very optimistic about that, because I think it would bring down the level of stealing, corruption that happens through the PDS. If this cash transfer system actually operates well, at least the intended beneficiaries would be targeted and then they have a choice." – Renu Khosla, director of CURE (Centre for Urban Regional Excellence).**

Anjali Chikersal, whose work has focused on urban public health, is also of the belief that a voucher-type system would operate the best in urban areas, mainly from a quality perspective, as the quality of grains in the PDS is notoriously poor:

> **"If you have a scheme where you give vouchers to families for getting grain from the market where they can actually buy the quality that is available in the market rather than giving them quality, which is almost necessarily at the present time going to be inferior due to corrupt prices, perhaps that is a better way to go about it." – Anjali Chikersal, Senior Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research.**

Despite some support for cash transfers, it has its share of critics, who broadly argue that cash transfers would potentially worsen food security for those who depend on the PDS as a lifeline, and that there would be no guarantee that cash transfers will increase adequately with price increases (Aggarwal & Mander, 2013). Furthermore, it would prove operationally difficult to dismantle the MSP and PDS mechanisms (Saxena, 2013), and Jean Drèze, Jayati Ghosh and Kavista Srivastava all expressed opposition to the current adoption of cash transfers, for multiple reasons. Jean Drèze argued that the current infrastructure in India is not prepared for an extensive cash transfer system and testing in areas where the infrastructure is more in place is a more reasonable approach:

> **"I think that infrastructure is not in place and that some people are pushing for cash as a way of undermining other things. And I think that the objection that poor people have is very sensible. That is not to say that cash transfers would not be appropriate in the future but to demonstrate it [can be] you have to make a cautious and reasonable start in the areas where systems are more ready and people into the idea." – Jean Drèze, Development Economist and former member of the NAC.**

Jayati Ghosh and Kavista Srivastava, however, were completely opposed to the idea of cash transfers, arguing that they would exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and was merely an excuse to reduce expenditures on poverty relief:

> **"It's possible they will try to implement cash transfers, it's often argued this is a way of reducing expenditure, just give them the money directly and then they can reduce spending on subsidies and transport and grain storage. That's all nonsense, this is essentially a way of**

> **reducing access to food; several reasons, first is because the amount of the cash transfer rarely keeps pace with the market price, so when you decide that it's so and so amount, the market value of that can change, and the second is that even if it's a coupon system there's vulnerability to exploitation and there are those who say 'well why should we force households let them decide', etc." – Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics at Centre for Economic Studies and Planning.**
>
> **"This whole shift to cash payments instead of food, that's really disadvantaged those right at the bottom. It comes from a middle class understanding of how the household economies of the poor work. It's the typical untextured understanding of 'it has worked there so it will work here, it reduces administrative costs'. It's that logic of cutting costs. " – Kavista Srivastava, Rajasthan state representative to the Right to Food Campaign.**

Early research done by Dipa Sinha, an academic who works closely with the Right to Food Campaign, seemed to indicate that the urban poor had little knowledge or access to bank accounts and would not be fully able to benefit from a cash transfer system as the infrastructure remains lacking:

> **"I don't think we are ready for cash transfers yet, even in urban areas. Rural and tribal areas definitely not, they like the PDS. In urban areas I don't want to say never, but I don't think we are there yet. Chandigarh has now cash transfer in place of PDS, they have been doing a pilot in September. Some of us did an assessment in December. We found that this whole issue of banks and the poor understanding of how to deal with financial institutions is very much a problem in urban areas as well. That's one of the reasons given usually about it being okay if we do it in urban areas but not in rural areas, because there are enough banks, people don't have to go to some other town to access it, so that problem doesn't exist. But what we found that while there are banks, they are quite alien institutions for the poor. The poor are used to the PDS and are able to negotiate with it much more than the bank, so there is that issue. " – Dipa Sinha, academic associated with the Right to Food Campaign.**

Reetika Khera, Associate Professor of Economics at IIT, and Pramod Joshi, Country Head of IFPRI India, were of the opinion that cash transfers were not a preferred approach in urban areas, that the support for it among potential beneficiaries is not high and that there are fundamental issues in terms of access to the cash and access to bank accounts, echoing Dipa Sinha's findings:

> **“Even in urban areas, the support for cash transfers is not very high” – Reetika Khera, Associate Professor of Economics at IIT.**
>
> **“Everyone talks about cash transfers. The problem with cash transfer is that it cannot be done if people do not have bank accounts. They do not have the perfect or competitive markets in these areas. If there is only one market, one shop in the village and if you go for cash transfer and do not have a public distribution system this guy will raise the prices. So, you need two conditions. One, you should have bank accounts, the other, a competitive market. But with remote and tribal areas you can’t go for cash transfer – also markets are not there – hilly areas, backwards areas. In most urban areas, however, it can be done. In Delhi for example. However, very poor people don’t have the bank accounts, for example the rickshaw pullers. He doesn’t have one, every day he pulls the rickshaw, comes evening he has about 100 rupees and buys some food. So, although Mr. Modi [Prime Minister of India] says that everyone should have bank accounts including these rickshaw pullers but only some of the urban areas where you have good markets and banks this can be done.” – Pramod Joshi, Country Head of IFPRI India.**

Abhijit Sen, former bureaucrat with the Planning Commission, believed that any cash transfer approach would necessarily start in urban areas, as the objections to it would be less valid and the infrastructure for it would be more established:

> **“If you believe in cash transfer, it should work as well as in rural areas as urban areas. It’s just that they think it is easier to do in urban areas and that certain objections to it might be less valid in urban areas.” – Abhijit Sen, former bureaucrat in the Planning Commission.**

The opposition to cash transfers remains strong, particularly from the Right to Food Campaign as well as many prominent activists and academics who have been part of the Food Security debate, who have stood against cash transfers aggressively (Standing, 2012). Mainstream economists and international agencies (such as IFPRI, the World Bank and UNICEF) promote cash transfers as a feasible alternative. Most of those in favour of cash transfers believed that it would be preferable within a hybrid system that utilised both food distribution and cash transfers and did not believe that it needed to be either-or. Pronab Sen believed that a hybrid system could work:

> **"The PDS combined with a cash transfer system will work. A pure cash transfer in lieu of the PDS I think is a very bad idea." – Pronab Sen, Country Head of the International Growth Centre.**

Those vehemently opposed to cash transfers, however, were strongly opposed to even a hybrid system, arguing that it would begin a creep to full cash transfers and a dismantling of the rights of the poor:

> **"We are a very hierarchical, gender-discriminated society and it is very unlikely that the food needs of women and female children will be fully met if you give only cash transfer." – Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, JNU.**

> **"The question is if a cash transfer scheme can be sensitive to local situations? If it is going to be a certain fixed amount across the entire state then it is going to leave some people really badly off because they happen to be in a remote area and there is only one shop selling food at an inflated price. I think it is worth trying it out in a differentiated way. Who are the people who benefit from it and who are those who lose? I think it is also important to look at it from the point of view of household expenditure given that decision making is so often in male hands. If you have a ration card then you know you are going to get food but if you have cash in the hands of the man, then the kind of things which are bought are likely to be different. If you want to understand the nutritional impact of the differences in cash or coupon then you will have to do household analyses, analyses of different kinds of households in terms of cash transfers." – Amita Baviskar, Professor of Development Sociology at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University.**

6.4 Summary

The entitlements for vulnerable groups, of which the homeless, destitute and migrants make up those most vulnerable in the urban context, was a small but meaningful component of the NAC draft, but were entirely excised in the final Act, and thus those vulnerable groups were most disadvantaged by the changes that made up the final Act. The whole-scale removal of entitlements for the urban homeless and migrants, omitting the possibility of government-sanctioned community kitchens, as well as the small, subtle changes with large ramifications, such as changing 'at least 50% urban households" to "at most 50% urban population", led to urban food security receiving few benefits from the Act. The interviewees were split on whether this was done with intent or merely to better streamline an already ambitious and unwieldy Act, but it reflects a consistent overlooking of urban poverty and urban food security, where in the issues of the urban poor are exacerbated by how they are viewed by policy-makers as well as the broader society. The urban poor have been criminalised, viewed as deviants and attitudes towards them have been increasingly negative in the last few decades, as the vision of the city has been oriented towards a politically expedient yet ambiguous middle class. While the majority of urban experts believed that 50% of the urban population being eligible for the NFSA was sufficiently broad, the current eligibility criteria, be they based on poverty ratios, financial considerations or agricultural caps, have no standardised methodology or framework in recognising eligibility, as an urban methodology that was created by the Hashim Committee in 2011 was ultimately never used and seemingly buried. Lastly, the most vulnerable groups in the urban context, the homeless and migrant labourers, are excluded from the NFSA due to the residence-based requirement of all schemes and programmes, except at the discretion of state governments if they choose to include those vulnerable groups. The lack of a central standardised methodology leaves eligibility opaque and unclear.

Chapter Seven: Analysis and Discussion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is an analysis and discussion of the summarised and presented findings from chapters 4, 5 and 6, to specifically answer the research questions and the main research objective. As such, the primary focus will be on how the findings relate back to the initial main research objective: to what extent was urban food security considered in the formulation of the NFSA?

The findings in chapters 4-6 have drawn a complex picture of urban food security and the role that it played in the policy process of the NFSA, contextualised among broader issues of urban poverty relief policies and urban planning in India. Table 7.1 lays out the major findings by research question to give an initial overview in mapping out the findings.

The findings have shown that there are two major groups of urban food insecure, with different dimensions of urban food security. One group, the urban poor who live in slums, see their dimensions of food insecurity related to their living standards – the limited access to adequate sanitation infrastructure, poor water quality, and inadequate housing, as well as the constant threat of relocation, slum demolishment and informal employment. The primary concerns of the slum-dwelling urban poor in relation to their food security are in terms of malnutrition and not necessarily distribution. The second group is the amalgamation of the most vulnerable groups, particularly the homeless and migrant labourers, who have no housing and completely lack access to services as well as to schemes and programmes that are residence-based, except at the whim of state governments. This segment of the population is highly vulnerable, and their needs are related to both access to nutritious food as well as living with constant malnutrition, highly reliant on finding work for the day to be able to eat.

The findings from this thesis have indicated that the input of urban experts during the policy process of the NFSA was limited and were mainly consulted in the beginning stages of the policy process. Furthermore, the formulation of the NFSA was marked by disagreements, tensions and battles over key aspects the NFSA, mainly between the political leaders within UPA-II, such as the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, who, according to the interviews, saw little value in the NFSA, and some key members of the NAC, some associated with the Right to Food Campaign as well as the chairperson of the INC, who pushed for a universal, comprehensive, rights-based food security act. Despite these tensions and the limited input of urban experts, the initial drafts of the NFSA had specific entitlements for urban vulnerable groups, including a clause on urban community kitchens, reflecting an understanding and concern for the urban food insecure in the initial planning stages, particularly among members of the National Advisory Council (NAC) such as Harsh Mander. Despite this, the bill that was ultimately debated in the Lok Sabha, after changes recommended by the Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, had those specific entitlements removed. The NFSA thus contains a significant amount of superficial acknowledgment of urban food insecurity, particularly expressed in the eligibility criteria being divided into rural and urban but lacks any further depth. Broader entitlements for women and children, however, benefit the urban poor as much as the rural poor, and these particular entitlements may be key to any inroads the NFSA will find in urban areas.

However, these fundamental concerns do not mean that the NFSA will have no impact in urban areas, even if direct food distribution is not a prevailing concern for the slum-dwelling urban poor, as the legislation for women and children may still prove to be important. However, the most vulnerable urban groups, the homeless and migrant labourers, will only potentially benefit if state governments choose to include them, with no overarching methodology or framework for identifying the target populations found within the NFSA, leaving it up to each state to decide. This can lead to high variability in the actual implementation and reach of the NFSA, depending on the state.

Table 7.1 Research Questions and Major Findings

Research Question	**Main Findings from Research Question**
RQ1: What are the main dimensions of urban food insecurity in India, and what is the urban planning and urban policy context?	• Two broad categories of vulnerable groups: Those with homes, slum dwellers and the lower middle class; and street dwellers, the homeless and migrant labourers. • For slum dwellers, main dimensions are poor quality housing, lack of access to services such as healthcare, and lack of proper sanitation infrastructure and clean water contributing to malnutrition. • For both slum dwellers and the lower middle class, vulnerabilities come from low incomes and poor livelihood security, having no safety net against shocks (such as medical emergencies) and thus vulnerable to food insecurity. • For the homeless and migrant labourers, the lack of housing, complete lack of access to services and infrastructure leave them in a constant state of food insecurity, and as programmes and schemes are residence-based mean they are completely excluded from the NFSA. They are thus highly reliant on income for food, and suffer most from unreliable livelihoods. • The NFSA defines urban areas as areas that “do not have rural administration”, omitting Census Town populations from the eligible urban segment. Census Towns are recognised as urban areas by the national census but have rural administrative and governance bodies. • Further context of the NFSA within general urban governance, urban planning and urban policy: • There is a crisis of urban governance in India, with the constitution putting the remit of urban governance with state governments. Further decentralization has meant local urban administrations have been left with little oversight while there is a deep-rooted lack of expertise and knowledge. State governments control urban funding and budgets, and thus control any initiatives, leaving local urban bodies to act in administrative roles rather than pursue poverty alleviation, for example, local urban bodies have the responsibility of waste management and garbage collection, but not the responsibility in addressing urban poverty or food insecurity. • In terms of urban planning, there has been no centralised plan on the national level, and no blueprint for urban areas to follow. Instead, urban areas have mainly grown ‘organically’, unplanned, creating sprawling cities that lack basic infrastructure and adequate housing and few services. Chandigarh is one of the few cities in India that was planned before building, and other cities have followed the Delhi Master Plan, one of the only existing Master Plans in India, in lieu of alternatives. The Delhi Master Plan emphasises middle class spaces and leaves little space for the unplanned city.

	• In terms of urban policy, two key government initiatives were addressed: The JNNURM – Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission – and the Smart Cities Mission. These government initiatives did not address urban food security directly, nor did either of them mention urban food security. However, both these initiatives did highlight the need for better sanitation infrastructure, clean water and better health services, all necessary components of improved urban food security. • The JNNURM was established to address both developments for the urban poor as well as larger infrastructure projects, but the majority of funding eventually went towards infrastructure projects such as fly-overs, with less and less funding for poverty relief initiatives addressing housing, sanitation or clean water. • The Smart Cities Mission aims to ensure urban areas remain as 'engines of economic growth', as well as address infrastructure and sanitation issues, but its unclear conceptualisation rooted in capital-intensive technological innovation raises concerns in its ability to address urban poverty and exclusion.
RQ2: Who were the main actors in the policy process of the NFSA, and to what extent were urban experts consulted?	• The Policy Process can be divided into four main stages, each stage with its corresponding actors and institutions who played roles: • Setting the agenda and establishing the overall framework was initiated by the Supreme Court of India when they passed orders on the Right to Food. • The Indian National Congress (INC) Party, as part of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA-II), introduced a Right to Food Act in their manifesto and ordered it to be drafted, with a rights-based agenda set by Sonia Gandhi, President of the INC. • The initial drafting stage was marked by dialogue and compromises between the National Advisory Council (NAC), Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the Economic Advisory Council (EAC), as well as the Planning Commission, all taking different positions on what the NFSA should look like, leading to the first draft. Key individuals involved were Sonia Gandhi, Harsh Mander, Jean Drèze, N.C. Saxena, C. Rangarajan, and Montek Singh Ahluwalia, among others. • After passing through the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Minister K.V. Thomas introduced the government draft to the parliament, the Lok Sabha, whereupon the Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution discussed the draft Act and held consultations and accepted views from NGOs, experts, international organisations, the general public, academics and politicians, which lead to the final draft that was debated and discussed in the Lok Sabha. • Urban experts were mainly consulted in the NAC stage of the draft, to a limited degree, with no evidence to show any substantial consultations with urban-focused experts at the Lok Sabha stage. As such, urban consultations were limited and inadequate.

RQ3: To what degree was urban food security considered, understood, and represented in the policy process of the NFSA?	• There were both minor and major changes to the NFSA during the policy process that had an effect on its potential impact on urban food security: • Minor changes include changing eligibility wording from "households" to "population" (e.g. 50% of eligible households became 50% of the eligible population), lowering the entitlement amount to 5kg per person from 7kg per person, and redefining urban population as "not rural", rather than a specific definition in itself. Urban eligibility remained the same. • Major changes include the wholesale removal of entitlements for the homeless, the destitute and migrants, including the removal of a clause on establishing community kitchens. These changes fundamentally affected the potential of the NFSA to address urban food insecurity. • The reasons used to justify the removal of further entitlements for vulnerable groups was citing difficulties in identifying who was allowed in and who was not, and the concern that community kitchens would break the fabric of society, with the stated fear that families would abandon their non-working family members as feeding alternatives would exist. This argument gives insight into the attitudes towards the urban poor held by policy-makers and officials. • The negative perceptions of the urban poor revealed in the justifications from the Standing Committee are contextualised by insights from other rulings by policy-makers, both in the judicial and legislative branches, where laws illegalise, exclude and punish the urban poor. Slum dwellers are labelled "encroachers" and not "citizens", while mass evictions and resettlement are the norm. • Despite long-standing "pro-poor" legislation, these have been historically oriented towards the rural poor.

Source: Author

7.2 Answering the Research Questions

7.2.1 RQ1: What are the main dimensions of urban food insecurity in India, and what is the urban planning and urban policy context?

The first research question, "What are the main dimensions of urban food insecurity in India, and what is the urban planning and policy context?", was to elucidate the 'context' aspect of the policy analysis triangle, to better understand not only the policy space that the NFSA would inhabit in terms of urban policy, but also if the policy process and content of the NFSA reflect the main dimensions of urban food insecurity that elite interviewers and policy documentation considered to be the most influential. This section seeks to answer that question in relation to the literature.

The Policy Analysis Triangle breaks down context in four aspects: situational factors, structural factors, socio-cultural factors, and global factors (Leichter, 1979; Buse et al, 2005). As global factors were covered in the first chapter, the findings from this RQ will be further broken down into situational factors, structural factors and socio-cultural factors. The RQ can also be broken down into two components, the first on the context of urban food insecurity, and the second on the urban planning and policy context.

Structural Factors of Urban Food Insecurity

The findings in chapter four showed that the main structural factors in the dimensions of urban food security are very much in line with the global discourse on urban food security as explored in chapter two (Tacoli et al, 2013; Von Braun et al, 1993; Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2013; Mander, 2012), namely issues related to public health, such as the lack of clean drinking water, adequate sanitary infrastructure, and poor access to government services. Systemic inequality, unequal economic growth and poor living conditions contribute to these low living standards, with the lack of proper housing having led to significant ramifications on food security for the urban poor, according to the interviews and studies (Prasad et al, 2010; Marshall & Randhawa, 2017). Furthermore, there are urban areas that are identified by the Indian census as urban, Census Towns, but come under rural administrative bodies and are thus legally viewed as rural areas, falling often between the cracks as rural bodies see these towns as urban, while the state governments view them as rural – more research on these towns and their food security situation is needed, as it is currently not deeply explored.

The portion of urban citizens that have access to the NFSA's legal entitlements are predominantly slum dwellers, but due to the NFSA's broad remit, lower middle-class families that are not necessarily slum dwellers also have access. Research presented in the book '*Feeding India: Livelihoods, entitlements and capabilities*' (Pritchard et al, 2014), argue that the core reasons of continued food insecurity amidst high economic growth come down to poor remuneration from vulnerable livelihoods, with low incomes for much of the Indian population despite high growth. While their work was focused on rural India, the necessity in urban areas for incomes to purchase food, and based on the findings, shows the validity of a livelihood assessment.

While vulnerable livelihoods are a significant dimension, with the interviewees unanimous in recognising that long-standing exploitation in livelihoods and insecure and transient employment contributed to continued food insecurity, in line with the literature (Harriss-White, 2014; Drèze & Sen, 2013; Pal & Ghosh, 2007), the findings in chapter four further indicate that even those with improved wages, who would not be considered poor from a monetary perspective, are prone to a host of vulnerabilities not necessarily associated with incomes, such as the aforementioned exclusion from access to services and unsanitary living conditions, lack of clean water, and lack of access to affordable healthcare.

A holistic approach in addressing food insecurity, wherein livelihood security is one aspect, albeit a centrally important aspect, would also be able to address the exclusion from services, which Pritchard et al also argue for (2014). As such, 'enigma' of India is not quite an enigma, as increased incomes have not translated into improved food security, and taking a food security approach that focuses on key sectors such as sanitation, clean water and public health may have a larger impact on improved food security, not only in urban areas, as argued by Deaton & Drèze (2009). This is ultimately not the case with the NFSA, where Jarosz's (2011) interpretation of the stratification of food security holds weight. As the discourse on food security focuses on the individual and household level of food security, as does the NFSA, such as in the promotion of female participation as the head of household, by doing so it fails to address the structural factors in poverty and hunger that could be potentially addressed in a different interpretation.

Socio-Cultural Factors

In line with the literature on attitudes towards the urban poor, the lack of recognition of the rights of slum-dwellers and those right above the poverty line as empowered citizens were also recognised in the interviews as a potential aspect of continued food insecurity (Baviskar, 2003; Baviskar, 2013;

Ghertner, 2008; Ghertner, 2013; Bhan, 2014). The imagined city is shaped by its elites, who have pursued policies denying the rights and legality of slums and slum-dwellers, the homeless and migrant labourers. These policies have enabled slum demolishment, displacement and relocation of the urban poor, and meant that their existence in slums is one of embodied illegality. These explicit attitudes that appear in the Delhi Court rulings and Mumbai Court rulings, as analysed by Ghertner (2008; 2013), however, may obfuscate further motivations surrounding the reclaiming of land, as opined by the interviewees, as well as echoed by other studies on urban poverty, such as by Fiona Marshall and Pritpal Randhawa (2017) pointing to a draft National Land Utilisation Policy (2013) that may be used as a policy entry point in addressing land ownership in relation to agricultural uses. However, land use laws in India have created an artificial urban land shortage due to a combined effect of poorly conceived central, state and municipal regulations, artificially increasing urban land prices (Bertaud, 2002).

Situational Factors

The policies formed by viewing the urban poor as unwanted encroachers have contributed to continued, situational vulnerabilities, particularly with the lack of employment in peri-urban areas where most resettlement colonies have been placed, as well as the continued lack of infrastructure in these resettlement colonies. As the findings show, the issue of evictions is multiple. First, residents of slums are viewed by policy-makers as illegal residents and are thus juxtaposed against ‘citizens’, who are viewed as legitimate residents of the city. This perpetuates a divide between formal and informal residents, one that is viewed favourably and one that is viewed as unwanted. Secondly, evictions remove the ability of slum dwellers to mobilise and have a participatory voice in the politics of the city, and who are unable to fight for their rights to the city, which French sociologist Lefebvre argued was not merely access to resources the city could offer, but the right to participate in shaping the city (Ramakrishnan, 2013; Bhan, 2014). Thirdly, resettlement colonies, for those who finally do move there, lack the same access to services that the slums lacked, are far removed from their livelihoods, and the process of resettlement comes with its own temporary issues of accessing food. Resettlements seemingly reinforce existing vulnerabilities and can thus contribute to food insecurity, at least temporarily, particularly when a share of the income goes towards transportation when moved to the periphery. Even in recognised slums, the land they live on is still not owned by those residents and they are thus in a constant state of vulnerability and face the potential of forced resettlement.

The groups that the interviewees and documents, particularly the Hashim Committee Report, identified as some of the most vulnerable urban groups, namely the homeless and uneducated urban migrants, are also identified in the literature as some of the most vulnerable, along with women, children, the elderly and the disabled (Ghosh, 2010; Mooij, 1999; Sriraman, 2011; Prasad et al, 2010). The findings indicate that these vulnerable groups in particular lack access to the NFSA as well as to most entitlements and programmes, as poverty-relief policies in India are exclusively residence-based, unless at the whim of state governments who can choose to include them. These vulnerable urban groups are thus part of the most in need of support, not only regarding their food security, and the removal of entitlements and consequent lack of attention to these vulnerable groups severely undermines any serious attempt at addressing their dimensions of urban food insecurity. The lack of any centralised methodology or framework that could be used to consistently identify those eligible also leaves it open to interpretation for each state, who may have political or economic considerations in the inclusion or exclusion of households.

Urban Planning and Policy Context

Further structural factors affecting the NFSA are that the initiatives undertaken in food policy, while nominally including the urban and reaching a segment of the urban population, are disconnected and unrelated to urban development programmes on the whole. The urban governance and development context in India highlights how the discourse on food security is mainly rooted in the rural experience, with a lack of cross-sectoral communication, overlap or shared goals between food policies such as the PDS and urban-specific programmes.

The interviewees argued that the focus of the JNNURM and the subsequent Smart Cities Mission was primarily on promoting cities as engines of growth through large infrastructure projects, further strengthened by the research on the JNNURM done by Professor Debolina Kundu of the NIUA (2014) and Dr. Mihir Bholey of the National Institute of Design on the Smart Cities Mission (2016). Marshall and Randhawa (2017) support this finding, similarly stating that efforts to address malnutrition are “decoupled” from urban development initiatives, policies and planning. As explored in chapter two, the concentrations of malnutrition for the urban and peri-urban poor, particularly among children, are comparable to rates of malnutrition in rural areas (Marshall & Randhawa, 2017; Athreya et al, 2010). The pure availability of food has been argued to be adequate in urban areas, so the inability to provide adequate access to vulnerable and marginalised urban groups can be considered rooted in policy neglect, policy path dependence, and the lack of attention to food security in the wider context of urban planning and development (Mitlin & Sattherwaite, 2013). The overall potential of the act is thus limited by the lack of dialogue during the policy process between urban experts and urban-focused institutions and the larger food security policy sphere. A significant factor in the ongoing neglect of the urban poor is a consequence of the existing structure of urban governance in India.

Furthermore, government programmes and initiatives centred around urban areas have been skewed heavily towards commercial infrastructure interests, such as providing incentives for commercial real estate to build malls and high-end apartments, with a much smaller allotment gone towards affordable housing and sanitary infrastructure for poorer urban residents. These programmes also lack holistic elements, with little discourse on sustainably expanding cities, on the impact urban areas have on the environment, or the role of food in cities. As such, the programmes that have been implemented in urban areas have oriented itself around large infrastructure projects (JNNURM) and technological innovation (Smart Cities). The predominant focus on urban planning towards commercial infrastructure has contributed to rising inequality, as cities are seen as central to India's economic growth and the investments in cities have all been towards increasing commercial potential.

For example, the proposal by Modi's BJP for the implementation of 'Smart Cities'. The ideology and terminology of 'Smart Cities' has been long-established outside of India, a term that has become short-hand for a new approach to urban governance and planning that utilizes the rapid development of technology, particularly the internet and other types of 'smart' gadgets, to facilitate urban development and to reshape cities through the integration of innovative technologies – examples can be seen in South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, and Portugal (Bholey, 2016). The ideas implicit in the term of 'Smart Cities' became an easy catch-all for Modi to utilize as a broad idea for the rejuvenation of cities in India. Indeed, the former government of India during the UPA rule had a similar attitude and approach towards utilizing new technologies as a panacea to longstanding issues surrounding corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies and lack of oversight, implicitly connecting technological innovation with transparency.

The much-touted technologisation and computerization of the PDS that was highlighted in the NFSA has yet to come to pass, and the attitudes towards technology indicate that it is seen as the solution to systemic issues, rather than as a tool that can aid in resolving systemic issues. Far more important than just the technology are the implicit beliefs and perspectives of policy-makers and bureaucrats who are implementing these policies, rather than merely on the strength of the technology (Lang et al, 2009; Clapp, 2012; Carolan, 2013). The Smart Cities Project seems to fall in the same mindset that befell the proponents of the Green Revolution, and a common approach in the growth-focused development (Drèze & Sen, 1989). Gone are the specific policies found in the JNNURM in aiding the urban poor, redeveloping slums and investing in services, although the actual impact of the JNNURM was highly limited, and indicates a shift in tone and attitude towards urban development.

To summarise, the dimensions of urban food insecurity as viewed by the interviewees matched with the existing literature on the subject, showing a complex and multidimensional picture of food insecurity. Furthermore, the urban planning and policy context shows that there is no discourse on urban food security in national-level urban programmes, and a lack of overlap or communication between food policy considerations and urban policy considerations. As there were ultimately no specific urban-focused or sectoral approaches within the NFSA means that the core, systemic dimensions of urban food security remain unaddressed, and the lack of overlap with other urban programmes and schemes compounds this issue. Furthermore, the most vulnerable urban groups are excluded from access to entitlements as they lack residence and recognition. Of the groups that do have access to entitlements, their food security needs are more closely linked to malnutrition than food distribution and are associated with broader vulnerabilities such as access to services and infrastructure and reliable employment. As such, the entitlements found in the NFSA are broadly inadequate in dealing with the realities of urban food insecurity, albeit with the potential to alleviate some cases of food insecurity, particularly for pregnant and lactating women and children.

7.2.2 RQ2: Who were the main actors involved in the policy process of the NFSA, and to what extent were urban experts consulted?

To answer RQ2, ‘Who were the main actors involved in the policy process of the NFSA, and to what extent were urban experts consulted?’, chapter five laid out the complex networks of actors and institutions involved in the formulation of the NFSA through the interviews and policy papers. The findings indicate that the UPA and UPA-II governments involved non-governmental policy experts and academics in the policy process to help shape rights-based legislation, predominantly through the National Advisory Council (NAC) although also through consultations and a call for recommendations by the Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

While this involvement lessened once legislation reached the parliamentary stage of the Lok Sabha, the ability to communicate with non-governmental groups led to very ambitious legislation that had potential to raise the living standards for millions of people. Despite these appearances, the reality of the situation was quite different. The UPA-II government was hit by a series of scandals, and corruption was rife on many levels. As indicated by the findings, there was a sense by the academics and activists that their involvement in rights-based legislation, helping shape the discourse around rights and poverty relief, was a way to 'legitimise' the government and obfuscate their unwillingness to implement the legislation and make real strides towards reducing poverty, still stuck in a mindset of a benevolent caregiver, a 'donative reality' (Menon, 2013; Mooij, 1998; Schaffer, 1984). Instead of challenging the historically paternalistic approach, the rights-based approach was instead co-opted, its language used to obfuscate that the actual governance had not changed (Mander, 2012). The NFSA, specifically, came at the tail end of the UPA-II government and came too late for the UPA-II government to actually implement, passing it on to future governments to oversee. It was an incredibly delayed piece of legislation that sat in the Lok Sabha for at least two years. Analysing the Lok Sabha transcript, the political opposition to the Act came in the form of MPs from Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh, as those states had implemented universal PDS and were worried that the NFSA would limit their mandate, but the bill was otherwise broadly supported, regardless of political affiliation, as it was seen as something that would help the poorest segments of the population and politically difficult to oppose. This clearly shows the consensus frame of Food Security in play (Mooney & Hunt, 2009).

The Lok Sabha transcripts, and the interviews, show that the aim of feeding the populace was never in question, and never challenged; even the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the major opposition party, were in favour of the NFSA. Where the disagreements lay were exactly in the 'fractured consensus', as Maye and Kirwan (2013) put it, of the best way to address food security in the country. Farmers and their plights were frequently invoked, and the debates that raged were more to do with states rights and appropriate compensation than on the value of food security in itself. Two broad camps could be identified as emerging from the tensions and disputes that underlined the policy process – the embedded, dominant frame of 'free market', economy-first perspectives, as Davies (2014) and Candel (et al, 2013) argued is common among government agencies, and the 'counter-frame' of the left-wing and communist MPs in the Lok Sabha, as well as the Right to Food Movement and the academics and civil society activists who found themselves at the heart of the initial draft, who had the opportunity to push their alternative perspective through the very policy proposal that they had been championing the entire decade prior.

Several of those interviewed believed that the long length of time the NFSA took to go from initial drafting to final Act, four years, was a reflection of many prominent members of the UPA not having faith in the NFSA, seeing it as a waste of money, a largely ideological undertaking and a strain on resources. This divide within the UPA-II government was mentioned repeatedly by many different interviewees, one being on ideological grounds – the economists and politicians who prioritised economic growth and minimising government involvement, and the politicians and policy experts who argued that the entire platform of the UPA and UPA-II government was to provide for the poorest of the poor, and that the policy approach to ameliorating poverty was through rights-based programmes that would provide work, food, education and information. While utilising the Advocacy Coalition framework would have potentially teased out further coalitions (Sabatier & Weible, 2006), these two broad groups clearly emerged from the findings, and this was central to understanding who influenced the formulation of the NFSA (Walt, 1994).

This tension was a major component of the policy process of the NFSA, between policy-makers who seemed primarily motivated by the plight of the poorest, those living on the margins of society and who suffer from food insecurity, and policy-makers who were more focused on economic growth, 'growth-led' development (Drèze & Sen, 1984; Drèze & Sen, 2013), and lessening the burden of government expenditure on costly programmes. This finding was in line with the literature, where the central aspect of the policy process is the tensions, disagreements, and compromises of the actors involved (Lang & Barling, 2009; Coff & Barling, 2008; Clapp, 2012; Carolan, 2013; Nestle, 2002).

During the first UPA, several rights-based programmes were drafted and passed in a year, such as the Right to Work and the Right to Education, but by the second UPA, only the NSFA was touted as a rights-based Act and itself was derived from a campaign manifesto promise. Many of those interviewed argued that the left-wing parties that had been important in the creation of the first UPA, such as the Communist Party of India, were primary drivers of rights-based legislation. However, these parties left the UPA and the Indian National Congress Party (Congress) received a significant increase in votes during the creation of UPA-II. Congress was itself divided on the topic of economic growth vis-à-vis poverty alleviation programmes, and the shedding of left-wing parties shifted the ruling coalition towards a broader economic growth platform and away from the original poverty alleviation platform that had first proved to be popular with the electorate when they first came to power (Drèze & Sen, 2013).

Furthermore, the interviews and policy papers explored in chapter five indicate that urban experts were, by and large, only consulted in a limited fashion during the early stages of the policy process. While there were policy-makers that took specific interest in urban food insecurity, such as Harsh Mander, during the NAC stage, and urban experts were consulted in various stages of the draft, the findings indicate that the contributions they shared were ultimately excised from the final Act or otherwise marginalised. The interviews highlighted that the main focus surrounding the discourse on food security has been predominantly rural, with academics, NGOs, international organisations and government institutions predominantly rural-focused within the food security sphere, as well as with poverty relief schemes and programmes. There was an acknowledgment by the food security experts interviewed that they had far more knowledge and understanding of rural food insecurity than urban, arguing that it is for good reason, as India has had, and still has, incredible issues and challenges regarding rural food security. While this is undeniable, the situation for the urban poor is still one marked by vulnerabilities, exclusion, illegality and malnutrition, as laid out in chapter four. This recent oversight of urban food insecurity due to continued pressure on the rural poor has contributed to the lack of an adequate framework that could be utilised in approaching urban food security, both in terms of understanding and policy implementation.

However, the NAC and initial government draft did contain provisions for the urban homeless and migrants, reflecting those policy-makers involved at the early stages of the policy process, specifically the NAC stage, who had recognised the need to provide food security provisions for vulnerable urban groups. Despite the limited involvement of urban experts in the policy process, there had been significant provisions included in the first draft of the Act for the urban food insecure. These provisions were ultimately removed by the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Public Distribution, Food and Consumer Goods. The removal at this late stage can be traced to the lack of understanding and concern by MPs regarding urban food security, with Lok Sabha transcripts showing that urban food security was only specifically discussed by one member of parliament, who was not involved with the Standing Committee, and that the dominant concern in the debate surrounding the NFSA was the situation in rural areas. These transcripts show that urban food security was neglected in the debate around the NFSA by parliamentarians, and their position of power to ultimately decide over the Act led to huge excisions that would have specifically aided vulnerable urban groups. Furthermore, the language used in the Standing Committee report justifying the excision of entitlements for urban vulnerable groups was entirely drafted by one Congress MP, Sri Naveen Jindal, a prominent industrialist and chairman of Jindal Steel and Power:

"…there is a risk of breaking the social fabric as non-earning members of the family may be pushed out of homes to feed for themselves." – Standing Committee Report, 2013, pg. 104.

That an official report listed breaking the social fabric as one of the reasons not to include an entitlement speaks multitudes of the implicit beliefs and attitudes held by key policy-makers, expressed explicitly, as well as a reflection of the undue influence and power of key policy-makers who may have other implicit interests at stake in denying the homeless and the migrant labourers subsidised food.

In summary, the findings have identified two main ‘groups’ of beliefs/ideologies around the formulation of the NFSA. Due to the consensus frame of food security (Candel et al, 2013), no actor explicitly disavowed or disagreed with its existence, but instead sought to influence its development as a policy in other ways: the politicians, activists, academics and bureaucrats who were pushing for comprehensive, rights-based entitlements, and the politicians, bureaucrats and members of parliament who were looking at reducing costs, ‘streamlining’ the Act and removing entitlements that were outside its two core aspects of the PDS and nutrition for women and children. While the framing and language of the NFSA is almost wholly based on the initial draft of the NAC, its content was ultimately a compromise between these two groups. Despite the dearth of urban experts consulted throughout the formulation of the NFSA, early drafts contained comprehensive entitlements for urban vulnerable groups, like the homeless and migrants, until the subsequent excisions of entitlements in the Lok Sabha. The changes done at the legislative stage reflect the influence of key policy-makers in the legislative branch, which merits future research, particularly of potential commercial interests.

7.2.3 RQ3: To what degree was urban food security considered, understood and represented in the policy process of the NFSA?

To answer RQ3, ‘To what degree was urban food security considered, understood and represented in the policy process of the NFSA?’, the interviews and policy documents in chapter six sought to elucidate the policy process, specifically in the stage of formulation, and the content of the NFSA. Those who were doing the considering, understanding and representing were specifically the actors and institutions involved in the formulation who had sufficient influence and power to affect the content of the NFSA. The findings highlighted how the initial drafts of the NFSA contained numerous entitlements for the urban food insecure, beyond the eligibility of 50% of the urban population, with particular entitlements for vulnerable groups such as the homeless, migrant labourers and pensioners. However, the findings also indicate that the urban food insecure were not conceptualised differently than the rural food insecure, despite the many differing dimensions of urban food security as explored in chapter five.

The ultimate approach in the final version of the NFSA was to view the beneficiaries as one amorphous blob, with no real differentiation between rural and urban food insecurity, despite creating separate brackets of eligibility for urban and rural. While there were no clear answers as to why this was ultimately done, many of those interviewed, as well as many MPs in the Lok Sabha, argued that the eligibility criteria were purely arbitrary, a leftover of an initial plan to include specific urban and rural beneficiaries, such as the homeless and those suffering from starvation, as well as the vestiges of the old BPL/APL methodology in determining eligibility, which had come under a lot of criticism (Himanshu & Sen, 2011; Deaton & Kozel, 2005; Drèze & Khera, 2010). The process of the NFSA left a lot of the initial ideas intact while removing further differentiation, such as the removal of priority and general households, and with years of path dependency in food policy that had taken the BPL/APL methodology for granted, the vestiges remained.

Furthermore, the urban eligibility criteria that was penned at 50% derived from either financial or procurement considerations, or an expansion of the existing poverty line, and not from any specific demand or need in the urban population. However, experts on the urban who worked with them on the ground were overall satisfied with the figure of 50%, arguing that this was more than adequate to cover those who need access to the PDS and other food entitlements, even if it was not a number in response to a studied, statistically established need.

While additional entitlements were ultimately removed, the vestige of a more intricate Act with differentiated beneficiaries remained. The omitting of the most vulnerable groups in the NFSA meant significant strides towards addressing urban food insecurity may ultimately be hampered. This is in line with an analysis of the NFSA from a societal perspective by Ankita Aggarwal and Harsh Mander (2013), who view the final Act as ‘watered down’, as covered in chapter two. Furthermore, the findings show that the NFSA specifies that the criteria for eligibility are entirely done on the state-level, with no further guidelines on the federal level on what these criteria may be, and no implemented centralised methodology, despite the existence of the Hashim Committee Report on urban methodologies and the Saxena Committee Report on rural methodologies.

The existing beliefs and views of policy-makers towards the urban poor, as explored in chapter two and further strengthened in the findings in chapter four, based on policies and judicial decrees since the 1980s and 1990s, view slum dwellers as ‘encroachers’ and ‘non-citizens’ (Bhan, 2014; Ghertner, 2008). The early drafts of the NFSA had entitlements to specifically address these shortcomings in urban food security, but the specific entitlements were recommended to be removed by the Standing Committee of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution’s report. The reasons given by the Standing Committee as to why these entitlements were to be removed reflect the dismissive attitudes and unwillingness to adequately deal with this segment of the urban population, indicating a belief that the existence of community kitchens would lead to the abandonment of elderly or infirm family families and the potential breakdown of the social fabric, a perspective that not only views the urban poor in a demeaning fashion, but that cultural family ties are so fragile that government support would break these ties down altogether – a view not supported by any evidence. If utilising the social construction and policy design framework (Ingram et al, 2007), this type of language would highlight the negative construction of the urban target population by policy-makers. Utilising the policy analysis triangle, this highlights how key actors in the policy process competed with each other for influence over the NFSA, and how the interests of the actors involved in the initial drafting stage were trumped by the interests of actors in the parliamentary stage, undermining the potential of the NFSA to address urban food insecurity.

There is an argument that can be made that this language was to obfuscate underlying economic interests unwilling to extend funding for vulnerable groups, unwilling to provide support lest it undermine continued cheap labour, masked by the construction of the urban poor as undeserving. While this is a reoccurring theme within food policy (Clapp, 2012; Carolan, 2013; Nestle, 2002), its application has been predominanty in Western democracies, where the access and availability of information on lobbying is more transparent and available than in India, where it operates in an ambiguous, legally grey area.

Keyword analysis on the Lok Sabha debate transcripts were to understand how Members of Parliament considered, understood and represented urban food security in their discourse. While only a slight bias towards rural concerns were seen, a handful of MPs lobbied for urban-focused amendments, such as for the homeless, and these MPs were from states with a higher proportion of urban populations such as Tamil Nadu. As India continues to urbanise, greater concern and focus on urban food insecurity may arise from the necessity of MPs to court urban voters. However, as it stands, the great majority of the population is still rural, with their needs as pressing as ever, and the slight bias towards the rural reflects that. The Lok Sabha transcripts ultimately show that the NFSA was subject to political interests, which should not come as any surprise, and the debates revolved around MPs championing their own interests, either explicit interests of their primary voting base, which were often rural, or their implicit interests, which they would not reveal in the theatre of parliamentary debate.

The beneficiaries of the NFSA are viewed largely as those in need of direct distribution of food, regardless of their actual location. There is broad consensus in the interviews that food security is deeply entwined with rural poverty, and urban food security comes across, even among the urban experts but especially among those deeply involved in food security, as an after-thought. By implicitly basing the entire conceptualisation of food security on rural food insecurity, urban food insecurity becomes overlooked on a conceptual level, which then further translates into lack of understanding on multiple levels, from policy to delivery. Consequently, the knowledge, understanding, conceptualisation, policy involvement and infrastructure for urban food security are all severely lacking. This lack of understanding reflects the existing attitudes towards the urban poor on not just a government and policy level, but on a societal level in India.

7.3 What role did Urban Food Security play in the Policy Process of the NFSA?

This section now stands back, following the Policy Analysis Triangle framework to weave together the answers of the three previous research questions, to ultimately answer the core research question - what role did urban food security play in the formulation of the Indian National Food Security Act of 2013?

To begin with, we have established the context of the NFSA in relation to urban food security, urban poverty and the broader context of urban policies. For the segment of the urban population that are slum-dwellers and those right above the poverty line, this thesis argues based on the interviews with urban experts and on the literature, that their food security situation would not be significantly ameliorated through the direct distribution of food, but instead would be better served by addressing the range of continued vulnerabilities that include poor sanitation infrastructure, poor quality drinking water, the lack of adequate housing, as well as low incomes from the lack of stable livelihoods as argued by Pritchard et al (2014), Deaton & Drèze (2009), Agarwal et al (2009). These dimensions all derive from exclusion and not being viewed as ‘formal’ citizens, contributing to high levels of malnutrition, particularly among children. These root causes were argued by both policy-makers and urban experts to be beyond the scope of the NFSA, which is more narrowly focused on direct food distribution. This elucidates how the NFSA in many ways an extension of entrenched policy pathways, particularly the PDS, while in itself ignoring the context of an India in transition. The removed entitlements that would have sought to ameliorate urban food insecurity did not fit within the entrenched policy direction of the PDS, with a reliance on foodgrain distribution at its core.

As the NFSA is not a nutritional security act, and there lacks a sectoral approach to food security, the systemic dimensions of urban food security remains unaddressed, with the main shortcomings in urban food security is nutritionally-based, established by research done by Dr. Siddarth Agarwal on urban depravities in New Delhi (Agarwal & Sangar, 2005; Agarwal et al, 2009; Agarwal, 2011) and the Urban Food Security Report by the Swaminathan Foundation on behalf of the World Food Programme (Athreya et al, 2010). The findings of this thesis have shown that the interviewees, prominent policy-makers and urban experts, do not consider access to food a fundamentally important aspect of urban food insecurity, and thus do not see direct food distribution as a priority. While this means the urban poor are heavily reliant on the market, this is in itself problematic, with analysis showing markets as extracting economic and material resources from agriculture and contributing to the production and reproduction of inequalities and exploitation (Harriss-White & Heyer, 2014).

Furthermore, the lack of properly functioning urban governance institutions and infrastructure has meant that the PDS has failed to properly distribute food in many urban centres, with only 29% of potential beneficiaries managing to obtain ration cards and access to the PDS (Saxena, 2013). Further surveys that have been done have shown that the reach of the PDS in urban areas have remained consistently around 29% for the past two decades, while the access to PDS in rural areas went from 26% to 52% in the same time frame (Kumar et al, 2014; Himanshu & Sen, 2013). The work that the Planning Commission has done in analysing the effectiveness of the PDS has mainly focused on rural areas, with the data on food distribution in urban areas poor. While the inception of the PDS had an urban bias due to the ease of establishing Fair Price Shops in urban centres, the marked and prolonged shift to improving the rural PDS system has left urban access stagnant. The PDS has been utilised predominantly as a tool for poverty reduction in rural areas, with poverty declines as a result of the PDS in urban areas negligible (Kumar et al, 2014).

Furthermore, the NFSA only provides for citizens with fixed addresses, i.e. permanent residence, and for the urban population, in areas recognized as ‘urban’. Areas recognized as ‘urban’ in the NFSA are defined as areas that have ‘urban administration’, and thus everything else per definition is rural. This means that only ‘Statutory Towns’ come under the definition of ‘urban areas’, and ‘Census Towns’, towns that have characteristics of urban areas but the governance parameters of rural areas, are not included. There is currently very little data and research on food security in ‘Census Towns’, and specific research on the food security situation in these nebulously defined areas is needed to better understand what is happening. ‘Census Towns’ have rural administration but the characteristics of an urban area. These thus fall between the gaps in what the NFSA defines as urban and how they are treated by state governments.

It is acknowledged that urban poverty is underestimated by official government surveys, laid out in research done by Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite in the book '*Urban Poverty in the Global South*' (2013) as well as by a study on urban food insecurity by the Swaminathan Foundation (Athreya et al, 2010). This underestimation could feed into how state governments define the criteria for urban eligibility, with the potential of setting criteria that would not encompass all those who the broad eligibility criteria could potentially provide for. As the criteria themselves are opaque and unclear, it is difficult to assess the potential impact the NFSA will have in urban areas. The lack of any centralised methodology or framework, despite the existence of the Hashim Committee Report, who were specifically tasked in formulating a methodology for urban poverty, remains a concern.

The seeming contradiction of historical long-standing urban biases in the PDS and food security, which had been ameliorated in the last few decades (Kumar et al, 2014), and the arguments of this thesis of a rural bias in contemporary poverty relief and food security, as evidenced by the NFSA, can be resolved through arguments by Gareth Jones and Stuart Corbridge, who argue that the urban bias that exists in policy cover economic and commercial considerations but does not extend to urban poverty relief policies vis-à-vis the rural (2013), as well as the aforementioned research by Mitlin and Sattherwaite (2013), who lay out evidence of systemic deep-rooted neglect of the urban poor in multiple developing countries, stemming from under-reporting of the scale of urban poverty and the continued utilisation of financial-based measurements of poverty rather than the multidimensional approach that takes into account housing, access to services and civil and political rights.

Thus, the NFSA does not deal with the core aspects of urban food insecurity and does not take a multidimensional framework to understanding or addressing it. The majority of those interviewed were in agreement that it was not the role of the NFSA to deal with the major dimensions of urban food insecurity such as access to sanitation, clean water or even safe food, lest the act became too bloated, unfocused and vague. It is clear through the documentation that 'food security' is very narrowly defined in terms of policy as food distribution and, to a lesser extent, provisioning of nutritious foods to women and children. Specific entitlements that deal with malnutrition for pregnant and lactating women and children may help with reducing malnutrition in urban areas, however, if the root causes of malnutrition remain unresolved then the opportunities found in the NFSA will not be fully realized.

As such, this thesis has highlighted the continued policy neglect of the urban poor, both in terms of the NFSA as well as in broader urban programmes, which would be appropriate avenue in addressing the major dimensions of urban food insecurity and poverty but instead focuses on commercial infrastructure and cities as 'engines' of economic growth, as exemplified by the Smart Cities Mission, in language and funding priorities (Kundu, 2014). The findings here underline the academic literature that show urban developments have had long-standing biases against the poor (Harriss & Moore, 1984; Lipton, 1977).

The findings show that there is a clear need for reform in urban administrative and governance practices. As it stands, budget allocation and the decision-making process for urban areas are done on the state level, with the remit of local urban bodies falling towards basic administrative tasks such as waste disposal. The findings show that local urban bodies are not empowered to plan, implement or execute any social welfare policies, and the responsibility of implementing poverty-relief programmes and schemes are done on the state level, in line with the literature in chapter two (PWC, 2015; Baud & de Wit, 2009). There is a pressing need to reform and empower urban administrative bodies to deal directly with urban issues beyond simple administrative tasks such as garbage collection, and to reform the budgetary decision-making process to empower local urban administrations. However, the situation in urban governance in India reflects a broader decentralisation of urban governance found throughout developing countries, with similar issues of underfunding, a lack of administrative capacity and weak local governance (Baud & De Wit, 2009; Cabannes, 2004; Sassen, 2012).

There is also a need for local decision-making bodies to have appropriate expertise, and the decades of administrative disempowerment and neglect has meant a dearth of knowledge and expertise in urban governance. Reforming the entire urban structure is no easy task, but one that becomes increasingly pressing with the continued growth of urban areas. There have been examples of empowered local governance in states such as Tamil Nadu and Kerala that have taken initiative to provide for the urban poor, including the homeless and migrants, such as the Amma Canteens in Chennai in Tamil Nadu (Mander, 2013).

The actors involved in the NFSA have been mapped up, and their motivations explored, though primarily through interviews with academics and activists. While many of those interviewed were personally involved in formulating the NFSA, they have their own biases and perspectives that they wanted to put forward. Regardless, there was sufficient consensus to explore the implicit motivations of the actors involved in the NFSA, beyond the explicit motivations set out in policy documents. While many of these interviewees provided insight into the policy process, many of them being personally involved, they also came with their own biases and perspectives. They may have been willing to be interviewed to further their own perspective and agenda, and overstate their position in shaping policy. However, much of what was argued by interviewees and what was revealed in policy documentation and literature formed a broad picture of the policy process that was much in agreement with each other. While some of those interviewed only engaged on an academic level, such as Jayati Ghosh, others were deeply involved in both urban poverty and the NFSA, such as Harsh Mander, or in the food security and the NAC, such as Jean Dréze and N.C. Saxena. They all had their own perspectives on the policy process, with enough overlap to elucidate the process and how the content was formed. While it is important to understand these biases and agendas, as to even why they acquiesce to interviews, as well as the context of those who agreed to interview, the data that derived from these interviews paint a clear picture of policy neglect towards urban food security, deliberate changes to the content of the drafts during the policy process that weakened opportunities to address urban food security, and that the imagination of policy-makers by and large focused on the ‘poor’ in general, and the plight of rural food security more specifically.

As established through the interviews, key members of the INC were increasingly unwilling to spend too many resources on the NFSA, though they were themselves pushed back by other core members. The NFSA was in some ways a victim of the internal political struggle to shape the INC and the UPA-II, as rights-based legislation during the first UPA reign were conceptualised and passed within a year, such as the MNREGA being first touted in 2004 and passed as an Act in 2005. As the NFSA was fundamentally politically motivated, and not solely motivated by societal pressures concerning food insecurity, it was left vulnerable to the shaping, redesigning, and downplaying by the political process, and the Act came under political pressure to be as simplified as possible and its costs lowered.

The economic-focused rationale of key members of the UPA-II is emblematic of, as Drèze and Sen (1989; 2013) describe, ‘growth-led’ development. Despite a long history of the ‘service delivery paradigm’ (Menon, 2013) in India, the growing economic rationalism among policy-makers since liberalisation in the 1990s can be recognised in contemporary international food security discourse, which, as Maxwell (1996) argued, is subjective, individual-focused, and market-oriented, with this logic of economic rationalism feeding the interpretation of food security as a matter of market forces. However, the rationale only functions where there is well-remunerated employment, accessible and stocked markets, and nutritious and well-priced food available, which then also assumes that consumers act in their own interests in only purchasing nutritionally-dense, healthy foods.

It should be noted that some policy-makers in India recognise that this is not quite yet the case, as the lack of regard towards the NFSA from some policy-makers in government and in the Lok Sabha did not ultimately quell the core entitlements, although it may explain the sole focus on grains in the PDS component of the Act.

As such, navigating these tensions, the NFSA did manage to retain the major key legislative suggestions set forth by the NAC draft, and broadly fulfilled the demands set forth by the Supreme Court and activists in the Right to Food Campaign. The excising of key entitlements for the urban food insecure, however, was in the hands of the legislative branch, who in turn may come under other pressures, such as commercial interests, that were not explored in this thesis, in a way that perhaps a different framework or analysis would in turn have focused on instead. What can be said, though, is that the singular argument made by a lone MP, a prominent industrialist, had sufficient sway in the deliberation on food canteens that the entire argument was taken verbatim as the justification of its eventual excision. Many of the other arguments and suggestions that had been submitted to the Standing Committee, which discussed expanding who would be eligible for food canteens, among others, were seemingly ignored. This speaks in many ways to the implicit power imbalance among policy-makers, and further research would be necessary to elucidate this power dynamic.

It was left up to the new government, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition lead by the BJP, to oversee the implementation of the NFSA. The ideological underpinnings of the modern BJP have been oriented around economic growth and the growing Middle Class in India, with less of a focus on poverty alleviation and the poorest of the poor, instead arguing that a focus on economic growth would lead to improved living standards for all segments of society. This would leave the NFSA in a potentially precarious situation, wherein the current government has no significant political will in enforcing its implementation.

However, the elements of UPA-II that were focused on economic growth and the current NDA government have much in common, and while they personally did not believe in the NFSA, they still ultimately approved the drafts that was submitted to the Lok Sabha. This may indicate that while the NFSA has become enshrined in law and it is the NDA government’s duty to oversee implementation, the future of the NFSA may see it moved towards cash transfers or otherwise neglected, although ultimately it comes down to each individual state in handling the implementation and oversight. Another key theme emerges here, showing how the various actors and institutions within a policy process all have their own motivations, conceptualisations, ideologies and concerns, and that certain actors have undue influence and power over how policy is shaped than others. It also shows how even a policy that may seemingly have widespread support is still ultimately a political tool, to be bargained over, compromises made and shaped by various interests, be it economic, ideological, political or deep-seated biases/beliefs.

A key piece of evidence to the influence of different actors in the policy process is the existence and subsequent excision of entitlements for the homeless, destitute and pensioners. The inclusion of entitlements for the urban homeless in particular was a consequence of academics and activists being included in the policy process at the initial drafting stage, involved as members of the National Advisory Council (NAC), whose personal involvement, such as Harsh Mander and Jean Dréze, with on the ground research on poverty and food insecurity, contributed to a slew of earlier rights-based legislation before the NFSA, such as the Right to Work act and the Right to School act. Key members of the NAC viewed the urban homeless (and based on the evidence, rightly) as needing further entitlements beyond the PDS to address their food insecurity, particularly in accessing cooked, affordable meals. These attitudes also connect to Sen's entitlement framework, an influential framework that formed the foundations of much of the food security discourse in India since the 198-s – in this case, the NAC policy-makers viewed the urban homeless as lacking the entitlements of own-production and access to natural resources as well as lacking the full entitlements of wage-labour and income, and thus needing exchange-system entitlements of poverty relief programmes (Sen, 1981).

However, the later interests and beliefs of certain Members of Parliament in the Lok Sabha, including but not exclusively those involved in the Standing Committee Report, that the homeless and migrant labourers were part of the 'undeserving, encroaching urban poor', an attitude that has been argued in chapter two and strengthened in chapter five to be ubiquitous in not only political and judicial circles but also by the growing middle class, ultimately encapsulated in the belief that any such structure like community kitchen would be abused, and that the solution is that nobody receives anything at all. Furthermore, the interests of MP Naveen Jindal, and his influence over the Standing Committee's recommendations on community kitchens, can be further highlighted, with his personal recommendations to the Standing Committee single-handedly becoming the entire recommendation on community kitchens in the final Standing Committee report, despite not being part of the Standing Committee himself. Being a prominent industrialist, his voice may have carried more influence than other MPs that also gave their own recommendations to the Standing Committee, and it opens the line of questioning if their concerns on community kitchens were based on the explicitly stated paternalistic attitudes towards the poor, or if there were implicit economic concerns that feeding the homeless and migrants would lead to.

With the failure of the government to adequately provide food distribution, and even if successful solely ensuring distribution of food grains, it is left to the market to provide nutrition and food. The essence of this leaves the poor reliant on income to be able to ensure their own food and nutrition security. Food canteens would subvert the relationship between those eligible, such as the homeless, and the market, that would potentially leave their income for other essentials and non-essentials other than food. As it stands, food is a significant proportion of where income goes, particularly for the homeless and migrant labourers, as well as those right above the poverty line who face personal shocks such as a medical emergency (Saxena, 2011; Prasad et al, 2010).

Thus, several big themes came out of answering the research questions, such as continued policy neglect of the urban poor, compounded by the ‘silo’ing of policies, including the separation of nutrition policy and food policy, and the separation of urban food insecurity from national urban programmes; the conflicts and clashes of actors within the policy process that ultimately shape and direct policy, and the path dependency of large policy undertakings that may ultimately inhibit the potential a piece of legislation can have (Rist, 2000; Cairney, 2012; Coff et al, 2008).

Of those, the tensions and conflicts of actors and institutions in shaping and designing policy, played out through the policy process, is particularly of note. The subsequent exclusion of urban-focused entitlements and the reshaping of the original draft of the NFSA shows how the content of a policy can be significantly altered through the opinions and influence of key actors. Policy-makers are not all equal in power and influence, and their words do not all carry the same weight, depending on when in the process they weigh in and how engaged they may be. It is clear there are large amounts of actors, from academics, activists, bureaucrats, politicians and judges, who had recognised and highlighted the existing problems, helped shape rights-based legislation, and saw two-thirds of their original vision remain intact and brought into law. The changes that were made to the NFSA were in its details, not its broad vision, yet this seeming ‘streamlining’ gutted a significant avenue of food insecurity alleviation for the urban poor. As such, the NFSA was not immune to political and economic interests and arguments, from the start, and found itself at the tail-end of the UPA-II. Despite its seminal content and future potential, at the time the NFSA seemed almost as an afterthought, playing out in the backdrop of corruption scandals and political pushback from opposition parties, particularly the BJP.

Ultimately, the NFSA is not a nutritional security Act, or a sanitation Act, or a clean water Act. The remit of the NFSA was very specifically two-fold: direct food distribution through the PDS and specific support for pregnant and lactating women as well as children. As has been shown, the specific entitlements in the NFSA will have a more limited impact on the overall picture of urban food security than if the earlier entitlements and provisions had remained. While it may have a positive impact on access to food in rural areas of India, which has already been shown to be the case based on recent studies done by Jean Drèze (2018; Drèze et al, 2019), the dimensions of urban food security differ significantly from rural food security, and the NFSA primarily responds to the needs of a large, undefined group of 'food insecure', which is viewed as predominantly rural in nature. This is not to say that the NFSA will not have an impact in urban areas, but that the impact will be far more limited than its potential rural impact. It is fair to state that the dimensions of urban food security are outside the overall remit of the NFSA, yet the ultimate removal of specific entitlements for urban vulnerable groups significantly weakens the impact of the NFSA on urban food security. The NFSA can be construed as ultimately giving lip service to the urban food insecure, as it on one hand does not address the dimensions of urban food security and on the other hand does not specifically provide for the most vulnerable in urban areas. The lack of strong urban institutions and NGOs on the ground providing for the urban food insecure, coupled with policy neglect by governments, have led to a state of continued difficulties and a lack of proper understanding of the realities of urban poverty. This, coupled with the perspective by policy-makers that food security is an overwhelmingly rural concern, resulted in an under-representation of urban experts and urban government institutions in the planning process of the NFSA, which conversely also fed into the lack of expertise on food security within the urban policy context, exemplified by the JNNURM and Smart Cities Mission.

7.4 Alternative Policy Approaches to Urban Food Security

When looking at the policy documentation of food distribution, along with the discourse surrounding Indian policy, it becomes clear that the rights-based approach of the UPA-I and UPA-II governments (from 2004 onwards) heralded a huge step away from the previously paternalistic approach to poverty reduction (Drèze & Sen, 2013). It is relevant here to call back to a quote by

Jayati Ghosh, a prominent development economist, when she underlined how this rights-based approach had great potential in changing the policy discourse in India:

> **"Something like the NREGA was so revolutionary, that it made it the obligation of the government to deliver the right to decent work with minimally decent conditions. That kind of turned the whole *mai- baap sarkar,* from the mother-father, clientelist, patronage-based style of governance to a rights-based approach." – Jayati Ghosh, development economist at Nehru University.**

However, while the implication of the rights-based approach was that it became the legal obligation of the government to provide certain goods and services independent of any particular party or government committing to welfare, the findings show that the NFSA was not a revolution in practice, its actual content not new at all, remaining different only in language. While the actual enforcement and implementation of these rights have been less than stellar (Saxena, 2013; Sen & Drèze, 2013; Himanshu, 2011), this shift in language and discourse was broadly seen as a significant step in the development of poverty reduction programmes (Aggarwal & Mander, 2013). However, the widespread corruption that has historically plagued poverty-relief schemes and programmes were never firmly dealt with by the UPA, and a series of massive corruption scandals ultimately lead to individuals losing faith in the Indian National Congress. Furthermore, without fundamentally dealing with the systemic flaws that first brought a rights-based approach into consideration, the creation of a rights-based framework around pre-existing schemes and programmes underlined a lack of institutional consistency in the approach to, and implementation of, poverty-relief schemes and programmes.

Proponents of rights-based legislation hope that this will strengthen government institutions in the long-term, and create the grounds for greater empowerment of the citizenry, while critics believe that the complexity of the Indian court system, the disenfranchised nature of the marginalised, and the general lack of awareness of these rights have meant that the *mai-baap sarkar* style of governance is still very much alive and not going anywhere soon, and that the current BJP government will only help reinforce those trends. The ultimate legacy of the UPA governments will have to be seen.

As was explored in chapter six, there have been multiple policy alternatives to direct food distribution that has been part of the food security discourse in India. There has been strong opposition to these alternatives by the Right to Food Campaign and many academics, who would rather see a better-functioning PDS than an abandonment of the food distribution approach. A part of this is rooted in the monumental investments that have gone towards improving the PDS, with continued infrastructural and administrative improvements despite long-standing challenges, wherein a dismantling of the system for an alternative would be a monumental undertaking and heavily undesirable. As many of the food security experts have dedicated their lives in analysing and improving the PDS, they are much more intimately aware of the needs of rural areas, where the infrastructure for any alternative approaches to food security may be non-existent. However, one can consider two major policy alternatives that could specifically address urban food security outside of the existing policy approach of direct food distribution:

7.4.1 Cash Transfers

As was explored in chapter seven, there have been multiple policy alternatives to direct food distribution that has been part of the food security discourse in India. There has been strong opposition to these alternatives by the Right to Food Campaign and many academics, who would rather see a better-functioning PDS than Cash Transfers or Vouchers. The information gleaned from the interview process painted a picture of a distrust of the government in being able to adequately transition over to a cash transfer system, and that at this point in time direct food distribution was still the best approach to take. Urban experts were by and large much more in favour of a cash transfer or voucher system, viewing direct food distribution as outdated for the needs and the landscape of urban food insecurity. That is not to say that these alternatives have the adequate infrastructure in place currently, with many of the urban poor still lacking adequate access to banking services. The rapid technological changes taking place currently in India may mean quick changes, and the hope of many economists is that the widespread and cheap availability of smartphones may help spur an easier swap, particularly with the implementation of Aadhar cards (identification cards with unique pins).

Of those interviewed who were critics of cash transfers, the following reoccurred among different individuals as their main sources of contention:

- Price Stability: The price of food fluctuates on a monthly, if not weekly, basis. The cost of food during the monsoon would be different than the cost of food during winter. A base, calculated income from cash transfers would, in their view, most likely be static, and sometimes be too much money, and at other times too little money. Furthermore, inflation and the increase of cost would mean that the agreed-upon income from cash transfers will be less and less impactful as years go by, and periodic reviews would probably not occur on a yearly basis.

- Misuse: A common shared fear is that the money that would be gotten from cash transfers would not be used for food or other essential items – instead, it would be spent on non-essential items, such as alcohol, tobacco, and such-like.
- Limited Reach: To receive cash transfers, it necessitates having a bank account. In many parts of India, particularly the very rural, there is no availability of banks, let alone access to bank accounts. There, direct food distribution is necessitated by area and situation.

Those interviewed in favour of cash transfers counter the arguments with the following:

- Price Stability: This represents a deep distrust of bureaucracy, which already plagues the PDS. Price stability need not be an issue if the money transferred is instead of an incredibly wasteful, vast social policy infrastructure which is inherently corrupt – if that money is directly transferred instead, the income will be greater than the fluctuations of food within any given year, barring a crisis. Furthermore, a proper institution that periodically reviews the price of food and cash transfers, such as once every year, is not unfeasible.
- Misuse: Many studies taken of lower-income groups in terms of cash transfers has shown that they have spent that money on food, or whichever that they have been given the money for. Barring this, let us assume that people will inherently misuse the money – then why not food coupons? That would help spur local economy by giving business to stores and be able to remove the bulk of Fair Price Shops, the necessity for the government to buy millions of tons of grain every year and fund a complicated public distribution system that spans the entire nation, of which costs can go into subsidising food.
- Limited Reach: That is a fair contention, but these are the minority of the poor to begin with. The majority of the poor, and there are millions of them, would be able to receive cash transfers, and the current government is already setting up bank accounts for everyone (under a scheme called *Jan Dhan Yojana*, which has already opened 15 million bank accounts across India). The minority of the poor, the ‘poorest of the poor’, would receive specific targeted benefits as it is now, but be more efficient as it is specifically targeting them exclusively. This would reduce but not eliminate the PDS.

For urban areas, the issue of limited reach is relevant only to individuals with no fixed address – alternate schemes like community kitchens would be a necessity for the homeless and migrant labourers. The other large segments of the urban poor, however, would potentially be able to benefit from cash transfers or food coupons in ways the rural poor may not be able to. The issue of misuse is still open for debate, but one economist I interviewed pointed out the corruption and inefficiency in the PDS as an example of existing misuse, and as the existing framework has not been able to adequately ensure food security, it would be far more efficient and financially sound to remove a major source of corruption and replace it with direct monetary distribution; if the fears are really that high that citizens will misuse the money (keeping in mind bureaucrats and politicians are already heavily misusing money and resources through the PDS), then food coupons could serve to allay those fears. Lastly, price stability is also a concern, considering price shocks and inflation, but the amounts of money distributed that some economists argued for seemed to be an argument for a redistribution of wealth, from inefficient and poorly functioning social policies to directly giving money, and price stability would perhaps not be an issue in this model. More research would be needed to give a full picture of the implications of implementing a cash transfer system in urban India.

7.4.2 Nutrition Security

While the NFSA has extensive entitlements for women and children, particularly aimed at improving their access to nutritious food, the main bulk of the Act that concerns itself with the PDS lacks any discourse on nutrition. The design of the Act is centred around subsidised grains and does not support the subsidisation of other nutritious foods. The argument put forth in a report on the NFSA by Gulati et al (2013) is that subsidised, cheaper grains means more income is available to purchase nutritious foods, and a mathematical analysis of the PDS by Kumar et al, 2014 showed that cheaper grains through the PDS have marginally improved nutritional outcomes. However, both papers show that this has been more effective in rural areas, and two studies by the Urban Health Resource Centre (UHRC) (Agarwal et al, 2009; Agarwal & Sethi, 2010) show levels of malnutrition among the urban poor, particularly among women and children, remain high, and argue that nutritional education and greater support for nutritional security by the government is a necessary step. As such, the removal of provisions for migrants and the homeless severely dampens the potential for nutritional security for these vulnerable groups, and their inability to access residence-based entitlements carries over to homeless and migrant women and children. The primary form of nutritional security for children, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), applies only to children who go to school, which is not a guarantee for vulnerable children as school enrolment is primarily residence-based. For slum-dwellers who have the potential to access entitlements, the main sources of urban malnutrition are based around sanitation and drinking water, and not necessarily access to nutritious food, meaning that the extensive coverage for women and children has a much stronger potential in rural areas than urban areas. The lack of any urban-specific nutritional approach compounds the existing issues that effects urban nutrition, and the NFSA's approach excludes the most vulnerable and fails to address those underlying issues. While nutrition is considered part of an overall food security framework and finds a space in the NFSA with targeted provisions for women and children, the lack of subsidization of nutritional foods and an exclusive focus on staple grains in the PDS reinforces the economic gap in being able to provide adequate nutrition. A cash transfer system would potentially create an avenue of flexibility in terms of what families choose to purchase.

7.5 Summary

In the final Act, urban and rural food security were not fundamentally differentiated, despite having differentiated target groups of “urban” and “rural”, with one unified approach towards food distribution via the Public Distribution System (PDS). However, women and children were differentiated as specific target populations. In the first draft, there were extensive entitlements for the homeless, the destitute, migrants, as well as the aged and the starving. These were all removed because of the Standing Committee Report recommendations. This indicates that there was a level of concern among policy-makers regarding existing urban food insecurity, particularly among the National Advisory Council (NAC), but that this concern was not found in the Standing Committee, who recommended the removal of these entitlements.

Food security experts interviewed, from NGOs to academia, in the Right to Food Campaign and bureaucrats, by and large admitted to having limited knowledge of the urban food insecurity situation in India, although all acknowledged that it is a real concern, reflecting that food security discourse was conceptually oriented towards the rural, based on real concerns in rural India. Urban experts expressed larger concerns regarding livelihoods, exploitation and vulnerabilities stemming from lack of access to services, housing, and livelihoods, viewing urban food security as a smaller facet of larger systemic issues. It showed a ‘silo’-ing of interests, with a very small overlap among food security experts and urban experts.

Urban experts believed that the 50% of the urban population being eligible for access to the PDS was very generous and would cover those that would need aid. However, access to entitlements are residence-based, and the homeless and migrant labourers would not have access to entitlements, omitting a large portion of the most vulnerable. Furthermore, there is a dearth of evidence that indicates direct food distribution as a necessary component of urban food security.

Ultimately, the findings show that while urban food security is recognized by experts and academics as a concern, there is a lack of rigorous knowledge, research and understanding of urban food insecurity. A one-size-fits-all approach was taken to address food security, applying largely arbitrary target population numbers and removing specific entitlements for vulnerable groups. Specific entitlements for women and children, however, indicate that the potential for broader legislation exists, and may be helpful in addressing urban food security.

However, the urban poor, in the broader Indian context, are disempowered and lack self-determination. This reinforces existing barriers. Ultimately, the NFSA was not an appropriate Act in addressing urban food security – it did not differentiate sufficiently between urban and rural food security, which take on different dimensions and needs; it had no consistent central methodology to identify those eligible in the Act itself; it was beyond the remit of the Act to deal with the core dimensions of urban food insecurity, and did not find itself a place within the wider context of urban programmes in India; it was by and large not a nutritional security act, and the ultimate decisions made by key policy-makers in the policy process excised the entitlements that had most potential in addressing urban food security. Alternative policy approaches, such as cash transfers, remain controversial and unpopular with the general population, although the NFSA contains the seeds of a more comprehensive nutritional security approach. With its initial focus on women and children, it has created the grounds for further, improved nutrition. Depending on the state, the PDS can also be expanded upon to provide more nutritionally-dense foods than is covered by the NFSA.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions, Recommendations and Reflections

This chapter provides an overview of the research process, what it found out, its contribution to the body of knowledge, its implications for policy analysis of urban food security in India and provide some reflections on the researcher's own process.

8.1 Conclusions

In seeking out to answer the extent the role that urban food security played in the policy process of the NFSA, it became clear that there were many contextual pieces around attitudes towards urban poverty, to the structure of urban governance and the approach to urban policy that all fed into the ultimate role that urban food security played in the NFSA. On its face, the NFSA recognised that urban food insecurity was a reality for millions of people, and by setting the eligibility criteria of the urban target population at 50%, a seeming recognition that it was more than official poverty and census figures would suggest. The extensive entitlements for women and children, accessible regardless of the urban-rural divide, also indicated that policy-makers involved in the policy process recognised that targeting vulnerable groups was an appropriate approach to addressing the food security situation in the country. However, through the interviews and analysis of policy documents and parliamentary transcripts, it became clear that the urban poor were conceived as informal and illegal, lacking recognition as formal citizens, and that attitudes among some policy-makers, particularly members of the Standing Committee Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution, viewed them in a negative light, undeserving of specific social programmes that would go to some lengths in addressing urban food insecurity. The broader context of slum demolishment and resettlements, as well as continued neglect regarding access to basic services and infrastructure, point towards the urban poor being viewed as unwanted, problematic, and the spaces they occupy illegal. As such, urban food security was only a concern for a handful of policy-makers in the early stages of the policy process, who were well-placed to be highly influential in shaping the overall narrative, language and content of the initial drafts, but policy-makers in the later stages of the NFSA's formulation had influence over the details, such as the removal of key urban entitlements. While the PDS and other food security measures in India have historically had an urban bias, mainly due to the relative ease in setting up Fair Price Shops and in distributing food, the reformulation of priorities in Food Security in the last two decades has been highly centred around the rural, and that understanding formed the bulk of the framework of the Act. The removal of a starvation protocol and entitlements for the elderly show that while entitlements for urban vulnerable groups being removed was significant in continuing to fail to address urban-specific food security, these removals were more likely to streamline the Act in whole rather than to specifically target the urban poor.

The findings suggest that the core dimensions of urban food insecurity played little role in the policy process of the NFSA. The issues of sanitation, water and housing were beyond the scope of the NFSA, which had a narrow focus on food distribution and specific provisions for women and children, while issues such as residence-based legislation was similarly unaddressed. Critics of the NFSA pointed out that it would be enshrining existing entitlements set by the Supreme Court into legal rights, and existing entitlements were already oriented towards the needs of the rural food insecure. While the NFSA has a clause that indicates the possibility of cash transfers, a potential alternative for urban areas, the Act's main legal entitlements encourages the expansion of the existing Public Distribution System's (PDS) infrastructure. Furthermore, the current state of urban governance and urban policy on a federal level does not facilitate the future implementation or reappraisal of urban-specific food security entitlements, as urban government institutions and food security-oriented institutions have no apparent cooperation or dialogue, unlike rural government institutions, and urban-specific programmes such as the JNNURM and the Smart Cities Initiative do not mention urban food security whatsoever.

Urban NGOs have inadequate funding, infrastructure and presence to monitor urban food insecurity as well as lacking a strong enough voice to put political pressure on politicians to create better living conditions for the urban poor. Food insecurity is not at a level of desperation, and the homeless and poor migrants are part of a segment of the population that do not vote. The general disregard towards these vulnerable groups by policy-makers, coupled with wanting to keep migratory pull factors as low as possible and the complete lack of policies regarding migration, means that continued neglect of these vulnerable groups will continue. The needs of urban slum-dwellers may be addressed over time, as their living standards have improved in the last few decades, but a growing population and the lack of central urban planning has led to unprepared cities with local municipal governments that will always be playing catch-up regarding infrastructure and living conditions.

The ambiguous nature of census towns and peri-urban areas has meant that often the poorest and most vulnerable groups are the ones who have the fewest opportunities in accessing entitlements, which in turn has led to wider disparities in urban areas between those that can and do access entitlements and those that cannot. The overall picture of urban food security is one where poor segments of the urban population, predominantly slum-dwellers but also those the lower middle class, have had improved living conditions and incomes, which has led to better nutrition and food security, yet still lack access to public services, infrastructure and secure livelihoods. This has meant continuous vulnerability that may lead to food insecurity if there are any shocks, either large-scale such as price inflations on food or personal, such as illness or accidents. Beyond those groups, there are segments of the urban population that have not seen any demonstrable improvements in living conditions or food security, lack access entirely to programmes and entitlements, and are thus highly marginalised and vulnerable even before any shocks may occur. The first segment, who have residences, may still be marginalised in terms of formal recognition but have the potential to access the entitlements found in the NFSA, while the second segment lack residence and thus access, and are heavily biased against in policy terms, both in actual policies as well as broadly in the attitudes of government policy-makers and bureaucrats.

As long as there is a lack of a holistic approach to food security that integrates the needs and issues of the urban with the broader food security sphere, the opportunities for the most vulnerable in urban areas, some of who have shown to have similar rates of malnutrition as their rural counterparts, will remain highly limited, and their existence continually vulnerable and marginalised.

This research represents a moment in time, covering the specific policy formulation process from 2009 to 2013. This research, as such, provides a historical record of the dynamics, tensions and interplay of the policy formulation of the NFSA. The researcher's access to elite interviews, from academics, civil society, international agencies, politicians and bureaucrats, allowed for rich and detailed findings, where interviewees were open, candid, helpful and passionate.

Food policy analysis has predominantly focused on Western democracies, with this research seeking to see the validity of applying the Policy Analysis Triangle framework not only within food policy but in a developing country. The PAT framework helped draw forward narratives that could be more easily structured and parsed, bringing an understanding of the NFSA's policy process, particularly its formulation, the context that the NFSA found itself, and the relationship between the governmental and civil society actors that this thesis focused on. Instead of focusing on evaluating the NFSA as a success or failure based on its own set goals and targets, this analysis sought to clarify the underlying narratives and belief systems of the actors involved, to elucidate the motivations of the political and civil society elite, and how the confluence of their competing goals shaped the Act ultimately. The PAT framework helped organise and bring forward the findings from policy-makers in an accessible and organised manner, to help foster a better understanding of the challenges of policy formulation in practice. The limitation of this approach was the lack of attention given to non-governmental and non-civil society actors, particularly of commercial and media interests that can, and do, influence policy formulations, as well as the role of states and their influence. As the focus of the research was on the formulation of a policy, another limitation is the inability to evaluate the NFSA on its implementation.

Furthermore, contemporary critical food policy studies have largely stemmed from Western democracies (c.f. chapter 1). This thesis has shown the value of application of a policy framework that has historically been focused on western nations, although not exclusively (Gilson & Raphaely, 2008; Clapp, 2012). While India poses different challenges and a different terrain, there are both similarities and differences in the lobbying, civil society groups, and policy negotiations. The aim of this thesis was not to compare India's food policy with Western democracies, but found applicability of policy studies in the Indian context. Further utilisation of some of the frameworks and approaches that were reviewed and presented in this thesis, beyond the ones utilised, could bring forward novel insights on Indian food policy. The value in identifying the power dynamics among actors that are integral to policy formulation and the policy process, finding common ground with how policy processes are conceptualised in Critical Food Policy Analysis affirms its applicability in different contexts. The research also contributes to Critical Food Policy Analysis by identifying themes and concepts found in the literature, particularly on actors and their relationship with power, and recognising the universal nature of these power dynamics through its application in an unfamiliar terrain, drawing out similarities in issues and concerns surrounding food policy that exists in India that were previously identified in the literature. Critical Food Policy Analysis, however, has far more of a focus on the power and influence of corporations, and as this thesis focused on the government and civil society aspects, this aspect was under-explored. The research also contributes to the body of knowledge on urban policy neglect in developing countries (such as Mitlin & Satterthwaite) through exploring the extent that urban food security was considered in a landmark food policy.

8.2 Suggestions for Future Research

In the tradition of the Centre for Food Policy, some thought was given to implications of the world of policy. The brief policy recommendations in this thesis arise from an understanding of the role that urban food security played in the policy process as well as the context of urban poverty-relief policies and attitudes of policy-makers towards the urban poor.

Table 8.1 below lays out some potential recommendations and possible target audiences for them. These are given as illustrative only, in keeping with the Centre for Food Policy's culture of trying to articulate policy evidence for both practical application and the academic body of knowledge. It must be noted that as this thesis has looked at the role the central government has played in creating a national food policy, there are no recommendations for state governments – while it is their task to implement the NFSA, and state government's also hold the constitutional task of urban governance and have the power to implement further policies, it is ultimately decision-making on the central level that shape national food policies and urban policies. While some policy recommendations are viable and can be potentially implemented, some of the recommendations would be difficult in implementing, and are included more to note the potential reforms and changes that could benefit the urban food insecure.

Table 8.1 Table of potential recommendations for different target audiences.

Target Audience	Main Recommendations based on Findings
Central Government - Executive and Legislative Branch	• Create specific legislation for different vulnerable groups to better target food insecurity among the most vulnerable. • Increase funding towards urban infrastructure projects for the urban poor, specifically sanitation infrastructure and water supply. • Provide Funding for Community Kitchens on a pilot basis in major urban centres to begin addressing food insecurity for the homeless and migrant labourers. • Recognise that urban and rural food security have differing characteristics and require a more nuanced approach, while also recognising that urban and rural populations are fluid and interlinked to strengthen understanding of the needs of migrant labourers. • Reform urban governance to empower urban bodies to enact and implement programmes that target urban poverty and food insecurity. • Remove differentiations in eligibility, creating a universal PDS, while retaining increased provisions for the poorest of the poor.
NITI Aayog (Planning Commission replacement institute)	• Continue pilot studies in cash transfer efficacy in urban areas. • Establish a central urban blueprint for future urban planning. • Fund and support studies on Census Towns, in terms of their food security situation and pathways to establishing urban governance frameworks. • Form institutional structures that specifically research and survey urban food security, outlining potential policy differentiation between urban food security and rural food security.

	• Implement a multidimensional framework based on the Hashim Committee on Urban Methodology Report for the evaluation of urban poverty and food insecurity.
Indian Civil Society – e.g. Right to Food Campaign, NGOs	• Coordinate methods to help reform perspectives and attitudes towards the urban poor, promoting the view of the urban poor as participatory citizens, inclusive and worthy of claiming their rights. Foster greater awareness of urban poverty and food insecurity to government institutions as well as the general public. • Help strengthen local urban administrations through educating best practices and lending expertise. • Keep pressure on state governments to fulfil the legal entitlements found in the NFSA. • Promote Community Kitchens as a pathway to addressing urban food insecurity.
Academics	• Continue studies in PDS efficacy in urban areas. • Continue studies in cash transfer efficacy in urban areas. • Establish further studies on Census Towns, in terms of their food security situation and ways of establishing urban governance frameworks.

Source: Author

Recommendations for Academics

The findings and analysis from this research has raised areas of interest that would benefit from further study. While some recommendations for future research found here is already likely underway, it is beneficial to further reiterate areas of interest. One area of further study that is needed is on Census Towns, in terms of their food security situation and what available pathways there may be to establish urban governance frameworks in Census Towns.

Census Towns straddle the transition from rural to urban areas, towns with urban characteristics but rural governance structures. It is unclear how this lack of recognition has affected Census Towns, as there is little research and understanding of the exclusion caused by the administrative mismatch. It would be of interest to study Census Towns to understand how to establish urban governance, as is understanding the food security situation on the ground.

Another area of interest is further study in the efficacy of the PDS in urban areas. The findings point towards the PDS having an insufficient uptake in urban areas, and the needs of the urban food insecure not necessarily in line with the direct food distribution approach. However, further studies on the efficacy of the PDS in urban areas can give more insights where the key points of failure are, to better address PDS uptake in urban areas – be it problems of implementation, awareness, or need.

While it is important to better understand how the PDS functions in urban areas, further studies on cash transfer efficacy in urban areas would also shed light if alternatives are currently viable or desirable. While the cash transfer debate is notably controversial in India, pilot studies on cash transfers in urban areas to evaluate its efficacy will help clarify if it has a role to play in addressing urban food insecurity. The instituting of a food coupon system, or similar type of cash transfer system, exclusively in urban areas on a pilot basis could generate sufficient data in seeing to its viability, such as the pilot studies in Chandigarh, which on initial studies seem to be inadequate on the point of implementation (Sharma, 2017). Cash transfers, however, have the potential to fulfil needs in conjunction with proper structural reforms that have already been adopted, such as the continued expansion of existing policies such as *Aadhaar* (biometric identity number) and *Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana* (a financial inclusion programme).

As this thesis has focused on the formulation of the NFSA in relation to urban food security, future research on the successes or failures of the actual implementation of the NFSA will be of considerable focus for food security research in India in the decades ahead. Preliminary, broad-brush assessments have already occurred shortly after implementation in Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal (Drèze, 2017; Drèze et al, 2019), but more research on the implementation of the NFSA in urban areas would be of interest.

This thesis has also touched upon the role of commercial interests in potentially shaping the NFSA via influence in the Lok Sabha. While there has been an ideological shift towards promoting economic growth and economic rationalism in Indian politics, further research is necessary to better elucidate the role of commercial interests in Indian food policy. Due to the wide-ranging nature of this thesis and its initial focus on governmental and civil society actors directly involved in the formulation of the NFSA, further attention in future research could focus on the role of commercial interests and the media in shaping not only the discourse around food security but the content of Indian food policy.

8.3 Reflections on the Research

After finishing the master's dissertation on the National Food Security Act of 2013, I was eager to take a more in-depth exploration of the policy process for an eventual PhD. Indian politics and policies are notoriously complex, opaque and sprawling, with many contradictions between the Cradle to Grave policies on paper and the lived realities of many of the population of India. The urban perspective had come across as an area that had not been deeply explored within the Indian food policy sphere, and where opportunity for research existed. The initial year of the PhD was spent looking at background and literature, fleshing out the discourse on food security, urban food security, and Indian food security. This helped ground the research in the surrounding theoretical sphere, although the decision was made to analyse the food security situation in India from a critical food policy analysis, rather than from a developmental perspective. This was as a response to the transitional nature of Indian society, and an acknowledgement of India as a democratic country with working institutions. In retrospect this may have proven naïve, yet taking a similar approach of analysis as one that is used in Western democratic nations has allowed for a different perspective on the food security situation in urban India. One major reflection is that it began as an interest in a topic – urban food policy in India, as expressed through the NFSA – and a theoretical lens was applied afterwards, rather than start with a theoretical lens to view a policy and then choosing the NFSA. This backwards approach caused initial trouble in identifying and narrowing the topic into a manageable narrative.

The second year was focused on the fieldwork in India, over a 16-month period. The fieldwork done during the master's thesis had set the groundwork for contacts, gatekeepers and relevant actors who would be of great help in connecting elite actors for interviews. The decision was made to solely do elite interviews of involved actors and experts, as the aim was to analyse the policy process and not the outcomes of the policy – interviewing potential beneficiaries of the Act would have had its own set of ethical concerns, as well as issues in terms of hiring translators, being able to confirm the translations, and being able to parse the information. The ultimate decision to limit it to elite interviews was, on reflection, a rewarding choice – the information gleaned from those interviews was insightful and impactful, and as everyone spoke fluent English there was no need for translation. The two year period spent in India was not only helpful from the perspective of accessing interviewers, but also to give insight into Indian politics, academia and civil society, as well as the culture of urban India, specifically New Delhi where the majority of interviews were held. The formulation of the research questions changed over the interview period, both in part from the semi-structured approach leading to insights previously not considered as well as from the policy documentation, specifically the Standing Committee Report and Lok Sabha transcripts. The specific insights surrounding attitudes and perspectives of policy-makers towards the urban poor influenced the research questions once it became apparent that it was a major unspoken factor. While the range of interviewees was broad, and many of those interviewed were highly influential within the food security discourse and in the drafting of the NAC, the inability to garner more interviews with Members of Parliament and former Ministers was a disappointment. The perspectives of Members of Parliament were mostly gleaned from parliamentary transcripts and the Standing Committee Report, but none of those involved responded to interview requests, or said they were too busy to meet. As such, the majority, but not all, of those interviewed were individuals who shared goals, perspectives and beliefs, such as the extensive range of interviewees who were part of the Right to Food Campaign. This was a consequence of having established contacts that were part of the movement, giving a path in to the food security policy sphere from the academic and activist angle.

The decision to adopt the Policy Analysis Triangle helped elucidate key aspects of the NFSA, as well as perform a necessary simplification of an otherwise messy, opaque process, in clearly highlighting four major cornerstones in policy development – the Context, the Content, the Policy Process and, underpinning all of this, the Actors involved. The PAT helped highlight the central role actors played throughout the development of a piece of policy.

Research on complex topics such as food security, particularly in already complex countries such as India, require a deal of simplification of nuanced and seemingly contradictory evidence. On one hand, India has extensive Cradle to Grave entitlements, yet on the other, the most amount of food insecure in one country. This research similarly simplifies the situation in India, and acknowledges that. One primary simplification of this thesis is in its big city bias, where the majority of evidence of urban depravation was from research and studies done in New Delhi and Mumbai. The decision was made not to fully exploring the full urban-rural dichotomy, including middle-size and small-size urban agglomerations as well as suburban and peri-urban areas, due to the innate complexities involved. Urban areas are instead broadly discussed as monolithic, despite being in constant change and urban inhabitants having incredibly diverse experiences.

The initial literature review when starting the process in the first year was focused on food security as a term, and food security in general. It should be acknowledged that in hindsight, the initial literature review should have focused more heavily on India, India's policy terrain, and the complexities of Indian food policy. Instead, the focus ended up being on a top-down review of food security in general, urban food security in general, and only later on Indian food security specifically. As one learned more on India through direct experience, policy documents, and interviews, the understanding of India and the Indian policy terrain grew. This is reflected in the earlier version of this thesis peppering in literature review on India in the findings chapters, as it reflected the author's own growing understanding of India. The author acknowledges that this understanding could have been known earlier in the research process if the initial focus had been different. The thesis was then rewritten to reflect that understanding throughout the first few chapters rather than sprinkled throughout as it stood previously.

A major component of creating appropriate policy responses are those that can successfully translate into reality; a failure of implementation is as devastating as a failure in policy design. However, while a long-standing issue within policy in India is the failure of implementation, this dissertation looks more specifically at policy design. It is important to note that implementation is sorely lacking in the Indian context, and the discourse around appropriate policy responses is reflected in how many Indian policy experts genuinely believe that the programmes and policies targeting the poor are on paper very comprehensive, and that the real failure in India has been in implementation. While this is a widely held sentiment, and one that forms the backdrop of beliefs of many policy-makers, it is rarely questioned.

The focus of this dissertation on the policy design of the NFSA is to question that belief and raise the possibility that the very design of current food policy is a contributing factor to continued food insecurity. This was intentional, as the purpose of the analysis was to understand what extent urban food security would be addressed even if the implementation was flawless. This made it possible to show that specific vulnerable urban groups that came outside the natural remit of the PDS, the homeless and migrant labourers, would forego any benefits of the NFSA even without issues of implementation, and that this omission was done retroactively as earlier drafts of the NFSA contained entitlements for the homeless and destitute. The failure of implementation would not matter to these specific vulnerable groups. However, it must be noted that policy analysis must take into account the entire process of the policy, from inception to execution. To isolate the failures of a policy to its implementation would mean valuable lessons might be overlooked for future iterations. However, the success or failure of the policy design can be hard to evaluate if policies repeatedly fail in the implementation stage due to factors such as corruption, lack of accountability, lack of oversight and administrative stagnation and bureaucratic complexity.

The decision to omit any discussion on caste was a hard one, as the intersection of discriminated caste and low socio-economic standing has shown correlation to food insecurity (Mahadevan & Suardi, 2012), yet the decision was taken for two major reasons – firstly, a caste-based perspective on food security could be a dissertation in itself; secondly, the NFSA as a policy document has minimal discourse on caste. While this means that the framework set up by the NFSA was thereby accepted, the decision to focus on the urban would have been complicated even further by yet another layer. Future research on urban food security in India may well need a greater acknowledgment of caste as a major contributing factor.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Explanatory Statement for Project Participants

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT for Project Participants

Project Title: Analysis of the Policy Process of the Indian National Food Security Act and its relationship with Urban India

Student Researcher: **Karl-Axel Lindgren, Centre for Food Policy, Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, City University London, Northampton Square, London EC1V 0HB, UK**.

Email: **Karl-Axel.Lindgren.1@city.ac.uk**

Post-Graduate Course Programme: **PhD/MPhil in Food Policy**

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

Indian Food Policy has seen tremendous changes in the last 20 years. Along with a population explosion, the demographics are slowly moving from a still predominantly rural, agricultural society to an increasingly urban, service-oriented society, willing to compete in the modern global economy. Despite these changes, the majority of the Indian population still live rurally, and agricultural is still the largest employer and biggest sector in the country; to see to the needs of their population, the government of India has devised various schemes and subsidies to feed its population – of which its newest iteration of food policy is the Indian National Food Security Act. I am conducting a policy analysis of the NFSA, trying to understand the considerations the NFSA had regarding the largest growing segment of India – its urban population, primarily those living on the periphery of society such as the homeless, slum-dwelling urban poor and migrant labourers.

The Aims

The interviews will explore:

- The NFSA as an expression of the Indian policy position on Food Security,
- If the NFSA is an appropriate policy response to urban food insecurity.
- The role of the NFSA in shaping the debate for future Indian food policy.

Why have I been invited?

You will be one of a small number of Indian academics, members of civil society, bureaucrats and politicians interviewed from September 2015 to September 2016. You were selected due to your knowledge of, or involvement in, the drafting and planning of the NFSA, or specific knowledge of urban food insecurity in India. The total amount of those interviewed will not exceed 40 persons.

I would greatly appreciate being able to interview you about the NFSA, its potential impact on the urban population, and how you perceive its influence on policy space. Your answers may feature in my written dissertation for a PhD in Food Policy at City University, London, where I am currently a student.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is voluntary, you may withdraw at any stage, as well as free to avoid answering questions you deem too personal or intrusive. Any future studies will not be affected if you choose to withdraw, and you will not be penalized. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen if I take part?

If you choose to participate, I will conduct a semi-structured interview with you that will last between 45 to 90 minutes, depending on length of answers. The research will take place in person at the place of your choosing, most likely your office, and the interview will be recorded. Anonymity will be guaranteed unless if you choose to waive the right to be anonymous.

What do I have to do?

All that is expected of you is to answer the questions truthfully and honestly from your perspective of how things developed, and with how you perceive the events that will be covered by the questions.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There should be no outstanding risks for participation, due to the precautions taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. However, potential disadvantages may that your colleagues will view or treat you differently if they are aware of the interview and are not asked themselves, although the chances of this are slim.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will be contributing to the academic understanding and knowledge of the NFSA, as well as its potential impact on the urban, which is growing to become of policy concern for India, as well as a global phenomenon. Your knowledge and understanding of the urban, or the NFSA, may help contribute to future laws and legislations around the world.

What will happen when the research study stops?

Your information will be stored at a safe location at City University for another 10 years after the research and dissertation is complete, in case future amendments are needed. After that period, the information will be destroyed.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Audio recordings and transcripts will only be able to be accessed by the researcher, and all information shared will be kept anonymous. The records will be stored on an encrypted laptop as well as secure storage at City University. A decade after the PhD is completed, the information will be destroyed through deletion and purging from the hard-drives.

What will happen to results of the research study?

Key quotes will be utilized in the thesis, anonymized unless if anonymity is waived, and the flow and structure of the thesis will depend on the types of answers received from the interview process. Furthermore, any articles that may be consequently published may utilize quotes and information gleaned from the interview. Please email the researcher if a copy of the final thesis is desired, and one will be sent at the conclusion of the PhD process.

What will happen if I don’t want to carry on with the study?

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without needing to explain why and with no subsequent penalty for withdrawal.

What if there is a problem?

If you have any problems, concerns or questions about this study, you should ask to speak to a member of the research team. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through the University complaints procedure. To complain about the study, you need to phone 020 7040 3040. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is:

An analysis of the policy process of the Indian National Food Security Act of 2013 in relation to Urban Food Insecurity

You could also write to the Secretary at:

Anna Ramberg
Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee
Research Office, E214
City University London
Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0HB
Email: Anna.Ramberg.1@city.ac.uk

City University London holds insurance policies which apply to this study. If you feel you have been harmed or injured by taking part in this study you may be eligible to claim compensation. This does not affect your legal rights to seek compensation. If you are harmed due to someone’s negligence, then you may have grounds for legal action.

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for Project Participants

Project Title: Analysis of the Policy Process of the Indian National Food Security Act and its relationship with Urban India

Student Researcher: Karl-Axel Lindgren**, Centre for Food Policy, Sociology Department, School of Arts and Social Sciences, City University London, Northampton Square, London EC1V 0HB, UK.**

Post-Graduate Course Programme: **PhD/MPhil in Food Policy**

- I agree to take part in the above City University research project.

- I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Participation Information Sheet which I may keep for my records.

- I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- be interviewed by the researcher
- allow the researcher to record audio and take notes during the interview
- answer the questions and discuss my views on the topics as required
- make myself available for a further interview should that be required

Data Protection

This information will be held and processed while writing a PhD Dissertation, and kept only for the purpose of that dissertation. The dissertation will not name or otherwise identify the interviewee unless agreed to waive anonymity.

I understand that any personal information I provide is confidential, and I guarantee that no information that can lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other organisation.

Withdrawal from study

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Consent

I agree to City University London recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose(s) set out in this statement and my consent is conditional on the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

I agree to take part in the above study.

Name: ……...(please print)

Signature: ....………

Date: ....

Data Protection

Your answers will be confidential and not attributed to you in a way that could identify you, unless if you choose to waive anonymity. This information will be held and processed while writing a PhD Dissertation, and kept only for the purpose of the dissertation. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other organisation. Records will be destroyed after 10 years.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been approved by City University London Sociology Research Ethics Committee

Further information and contact details

First Supervisor:
Professor Tim Lang
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Social Sciences Building
London
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Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Karl-Axel Lindgren
Centre for Food Policy
04/06/2020
City University of London