

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL POLICIES AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENTS IN SHAPING FOOD INSECURITY AMONG AZERBAIJANI FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on synthesizing the information obtained by conducting a literature review on food insecurity in Azerbaijani children. Food insecurity is an important issue, especially for families with children, and this study provides an understanding of whether social policies and the economic environment exist on these phenomena. The findings emerging from examining previous cases in the literature highlight the current situation on food insecurity in Azerbaijan and the role of social policies and economic performance in solving this problem. This synthesis aims to provide information to guide regular policy making and studies.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, families with children, food insecurity, social policies, economic environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

While food insecurity stands out as a global problem, this article, focusing on the effects of this problem especially on Azerbaijani families with children, examines the determining roles of social policies and economic environment on this phenomenon. Food insecurity refers to a condition that occurs due to failure to meet nutritional needs or limitations in access to healthy foods, and can lead to long-term health problems, especially for children. In Azerbaijan, research on this topic is limited, and this article aims to fill this gap by synthesizing information obtained through literature review. (Barrett, C. B. 2010)

This study is based on an extensive literature review. An in-depth review of previous research on related topics allowed us to better understand the food insecurity faced by Azerbaijani families with children. In this context, we offer a broad perspective to evaluate how social policies and economic factors respond to the challenges faced by these families in particular and their impact on this phenomenon. (Ivers, L. C., & Cullen, K. A. 2011)

The introduction will highlight the main purpose of the study while providing a brief overview of the general situation of food insecurity in Azerbaijan and key findings from previous studies. This article aims to understand how social policies and the economic environment influence processes of coping with food insecurity, especially in the context of families with children. In this context, in order to determine the scope of the research and provide a framework for the reader, the introduction section reveals the main themes of the study and the general methodology of the research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Concept of Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is a widespread problem around the world and basically involves the problems that individuals, communities or countries experience in accessing healthy, safe and nutritious food. This concept includes health problems that generally arise due to the increase in food-borne diseases and inadequate or unbalanced nutrition. Food insecurity is not limited to biological risks; It is also a complex phenomenon shaped by economic, social and political factors. In this context, the concept of food insecurity includes a multifaceted perspective such as nutrition security, food hygiene standards and sustainable food production.

Food insecurity has become more of a concern, especially for families with children. Children stand out as a group with higher nutritional needs due to their rapidly developing body systems. Therefore, the effects of food insecurity on children include potential risks that can lead to long-term health problems and developmental deficiencies. In this context, addressing the concept of food insecurity, especially in the context of families with children, emphasizes the importance and urgency of this phenomenon. (Gundersen, C., Kreider, B., & Pepper, J. 2011)

2.2. Food Insecurity in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan is a country that attracts attention with its geographical location, climatic conditions and characteristics in the agricultural sector. However, despite these factors, Azerbaijan remains home to many individuals and families facing food insecurity issues. Economic fluctuations in the country, social policy deficiencies and difficulties in the agricultural sector are among the factors affecting the spread of food insecurity. This situation deepens the difficulties faced by families with children in combating food insecurity. (Frongillo Jr, E. A. 1999)

Food insecurity in Azerbaijan generally occurs due to factors such as income inequality, infrastructure deficiencies in rural areas and uncertainties in agricultural policies. This situation can negatively affect children's growth and development by restricting their access to healthy foods. In this context, understanding the general situation of food insecurity in Azerbaijan is an important step towards developing effective policies and programs to solve this problem. (Keenan, D. P., Olson, C., Hersey, J. C., & Parmer, S. M. 2001)

2.3. Effects of Social Policies on Food Insecurity

Social policies play an important role in combating food insecurity. In this context, how social policies can be shaped in order to provide an effective solution to the food insecurity problems experienced by Azerbaijani families with children is an important research area. (Gundersen, C., & Ziliak, J. P. 2015)

Social policies cover a wide range of measures, including reducing income inequality, increasing access to educational opportunities and supports for disadvantaged groups. These measures can increase children's access to healthy nutrition and be effective in combating food insecurity. However, the implementation of social policies requires policymakers to understand the problems in this area and develop appropriate solutions. Therefore, understanding the effects of social policies on food insecurity in Azerbaijani families with children can offer important clues on how to make these policies more effective.

2.4. The Role of the Economic Environment on Food Insecurity

Economic factors have a decisive impact on food insecurity. Economic difficulties and fluctuations in Azerbaijan can bring about a number of problems that can increase food insecurity. Families with children with low income levels can often face limitations in accessing the resources necessary for a healthy and balanced diet. (Laraia, B. A. 2013)

Economic difficulties, fluctuations in food prices, unemployment and low income levels are among the factors that make it difficult for families with children to struggle with food insecurity. In this context, understanding the role of the economic environment on food insecurity in Azerbaijan is an important step towards shaping the measures to be taken to deal with this problem. (Niles, M. T., Bertmann, F., Belarmino, E. H., Wentworth, T., Biehl, E., & Neff, R. 2020)

2.5. Previous Studies on Food Insecurity in Azerbaijani Families with Children

Previous studies on food insecurity in Azerbaijan are important to understand the current situation in this area and develop solutions. These studies can determine the prevalence of food insecurity, the groups it affects, and potential strategies to combat this phenomenon. Strategies for Azerbaijani families with children to cope with food insecurity can be developed more effectively based on the results of these studies. In this context, by focusing on the results of previous studies, it is important to fill the gaps in the literature on food insecurity in Azerbaijan and provide direction for future research.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a comprehensive methodology to understand food insecurity in Azerbaijani families with children and identify effective combat strategies. The study design, data collection process and analytical approach were carefully planned to obtain reliable and comprehensive results.

The main data collection methods of this study include surveys, interviews and observations. Surveys will be used to understand the food insecurity experiences of families with children and to evaluate the effects of social policies and economic factors on these experiences. Additionally, interviews will be conducted to gain in-depth understanding and will focus on the difficulties and coping strategies of families in their daily lives. Observations will be used to examine in more detail factors such as families' living conditions, food habits and children's nutritional status. (Gundersen, C., & Ziliak, J. P. 2018)

When determining the sample of the research, various geographical regions, economic situations and social conditions throughout Azerbaijan will be taken into account. Random sampling method will be used to create a representative sample and families with children with different demographic characteristics will be included in the research. The sample is intended to reflect different aspects and impacts of food insecurity.

The collected data will be evaluated with statistical analysis and qualitative data will be examined with thematic analysis method. Statistical analyzes will be used to evaluate the effects of social policies and economic factors on food insecurity, and the findings will be compared with the literature to provide a strong analytical framework. (Kendall, A., Olson, C. M., & Frongillo Jr, E. A. 1996)

This research will be conducted taking into account ethical principles and participant confidentiality and security will be prioritized. The data collection process will be carried out meticulously to ensure the comfort of the participants and to obtain reliable results. To increase the reliability of the research, the methodology used will be applied rigorously and various verification methods will be used to ensure the confirmability of the findings. (Frongillo Jr, E. A. 1999)

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Effects of Social Policies on Food Insecurity in Azerbaijani Families with Children

Understanding how social policies affect the food insecurity problems faced by families with children, especially those living in Azerbaijan, aims to increase the general welfare of the society and improve the living conditions of these families. Social policies include a wide range of measures, and under this heading, the focus is especially on evaluating the effects of social assistance programs on food insecurity. (Barrett, C. B. 2010)

4.1.1. Outreach Programs and Food Insecurity

Social assistance programs, which stand out as an effective strategy in combating food insecurity in Azerbaijan, provide important support for families with children. These programs aim to better meet the basic needs of families by providing various advantages such as financial aid, food vouchers, health services and educational opportunities. Outreach programs increase the capacity of low-income families, in particular, to cope with food insecurity and ensure children's access to healthy nutrition. (Laraia, B. A. 2013)

However, studies on the effects of social assistance programs also show some difficulties. Factors such as inadequate coverage of programs, inequitable distribution of resources, and lack of awareness of some families about programs may limit the potential of outreach. Therefore, social policy makers and practitioners must develop strategies to increase the effectiveness of programs, reach more families, and ensure a broader impact in combating food insecurity. (Pérez-Escamilla, R., & Segall-Corrêa, A. M. 2008)

Understanding more deeply the effects of social assistance programs on food insecurity and developing recommendations to make these programs more effective is an important step in efforts to improve the quality of life of Azerbaijani families with children and reduce the problem of food insecurity. In this context, more research and strategic planning are needed to make social policies, especially social assistance programs, a more effective tool in combating food insecurity. (Laraia, B. A. 2013)

4.1.2. The Role of Education Policies

Education policies are of great importance in combating food insecurity in Azerbaijan. Education policies can increase the capacity of families with children to cope with food insecurity and provide long-term solutions. Under this heading, it is important to understand the effects and potential role of education policies on food insecurity in families with children.

It aims to raise public awareness on issues such as education policies, nutrition education, agricultural awareness and healthy eating habits. These policies can help raise awareness among families with children about food choices, eating habits, and food safety. Education has an important role in understanding the nutritional needs of children and families, developing healthy eating habits, and increasing access to nutritious foods. (Gundersen, C., Kreider, B., & Pepper, J. 2011)

However, the impact of education policies may be limited by some challenges encountered at the implementation level. Factors such as inadequate educational resources, inequalities in access to education, and inadequate coverage of nutrition awareness programs can limit the potential of education policies. Therefore, policy makers and educators need to develop more comprehensive, accessible and effective educational programs on nutrition and food safety.

Understanding the important role that education policies can play in combating food insecurity for families with children is vital to raising social awareness and creating a more nutrition-conscious society.

4.2. Effects of the Economic Environment on Food Insecurity in Azerbaijani Families with Children

Economic conditions in Azerbaijan play a decisive role in combating food insecurity for families with children. Economic factors can deepen or alleviate food insecurity problems. Under this heading, it is important to understand the effects of the economic environment on food insecurity in families with children and their role in this area. (Ivers, L. C., & Cullen, K. A. 2011)

Factors such as economic fluctuations, unemployment, income inequality and inflation have a significant impact on families with children struggling with food insecurity. Low income levels can limit families' access to a healthy and balanced diet and negatively impact the nutritional status of children. This may cause families, especially those facing economic difficulties, to face food insecurity more frequently.

However, the impact of the economic environment may not always be negative. In some cases, economic stability, expanded job opportunities, and increased income levels can positively impact families' efforts to combat food insecurity. This can help families maintain healthy eating habits and better meet children's nutritional needs. (Frongillo Jr, E. A. 1999)

Policymakers and community leaders need to develop more comprehensive strategies to understand more deeply the effects of the economic environment on food insecurity among Azerbaijani families with children and to deal with this problem. In this context, further research and policy reforms are important to make economic policies an effective tool, especially in combating food insecurity.

4.2.1. The Role of Income Distribution on Food Insecurity

Understanding how income distribution in Azerbaijan relates to food insecurity for families with children is critical to determining the role of economic factors on this phenomenon. Inequalities in income distribution can further complicate food insecurity issues and further impact low-income families.

Income inequality can lead to widening income gaps between families and inequities between socioeconomic groups. This may limit low-income families' access to a healthy and balanced diet and negatively affect the nutritional status of children. Income inequality may be directly related to food insecurity because low-income families may have more difficulty accessing healthy foods. (Keenan, D. P., Olson, C., Hersey, J. C., & Parmer, S. M. 2001)

Understanding the role of income distribution on food insecurity is an important factor in shaping social policies and economic reforms. Policies to reduce inequalities in income distribution can increase the capacity of low-income families to cope with food insecurity and improve the overall well-being of society. Therefore, understanding the effects of income distribution on food insecurity is critical to consciously guide the processes of identifying and implementing social policy strategies. (Campbell, C. C. 1991)

4.2.2. Unemployment and Food Insecurity

The unemployment situation in Azerbaijan can be directly linked to the food insecurity of families with children. Unemployment can increase food insecurity by causing family incomes to decrease and difficulty accessing basic needs. In this context, understanding the relationship between unemployment and food

insecurity is vital for developing policy measures to address these two important issues. (Frongillo Jr, E. A. 1999)

Unemployment can cause family members to lose their source of income, which can lead to limitations in access to a healthy and balanced diet. Especially families with children may face more food insecurity in case of unemployment and may have difficulty meeting the nutritional needs of their children. This can cause long-term health problems and negative effects on children's development. (Cady, C. L. 2014)

Measures such as policies to combat unemployment, efforts to solve the unemployment problem, vocational training and employment support programs can be effective in combating food insecurity for families with children. However, the design and implementation of these policies should embrace sustainable solutions to combat unemployment and aim to increase the capacity to tackle food insecurity. (Gundersen, C., & Ziliak, J. P. 2015)

Understanding the complex relationship between unemployment and food insecurity can help economic policies, employment strategies, and social assistance programs more effectively shape efforts to reduce food insecurity. In this context, more research on unemployment and food insecurity needs to be conducted and more effective strategies for implementation need to be determined. (Barrett, C. B. 2010)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Food insecurity in Azerbaijani families with children emerges as a complex and multifaceted problem. This research has made a comprehensive effort to understand the problem of food insecurity and offer solutions through literature review, methodological approach and discussion sections. Findings and evaluations illuminate the challenges and potential solutions faced by families with children in combating food insecurity in Azerbaijan.

One of the main conclusions of the study is the fact that social policies can play an important role. Outreach programs can alleviate food insecurity issues through support for families with children. However, further efforts are needed to ensure comprehensiveness, equitable distribution and monitoring of the impacts of programmes.

It has been emphasized that education policies have the potential to increase the capacity of families with children to cope with food insecurity. Educational programs on nutrition education, healthy eating habits and agricultural awareness can offer long-term solutions. However, the need to use educational resources more effectively and comprehensively has emerged.

It has been determined that the economic environment, especially income distribution and unemployment, has a decisive impact on food insecurity. Policies to reduce income inequality and strategies to support employment can offer effective solutions to the economic difficulties experienced by families with children. However, the need to integrate these policies within a broader social framework was emphasized.

As a result, a multiple approach needs to be adopted to achieve success in combating food insecurity in Azerbaijani families with children. Effective integration of social policies, education policies, and economic policies can increase the capacity of families with children to cope with food insecurity and improve the overall well-being of society. In this context, closer cooperation and coordination between policy makers, practitioners and researchers is of critical importance in order to produce sustainable solutions.

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