

Hunger and obesity – the two of the world's biggest problems

[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



The documentary basically tells one of the major global issues which is hunger mentioned as a tragedy of all humankind. Even though, all world thinks how to feed themselves, some parts of world are severely struggling with death risk due to the starvation. Today, in developed nations, many people die of nutrition related diseases, at the same time, three quarters of the population of the world are trying to survive hunger. Those who suffer from the poverty, are perennially sick, cannot think properly, cannot work in full capacity, cannot prosper and their productivities decline. As is known, in United States of America, obesity afflicts a third of the population and kills thousands of people each year. While half of Europeans go on a diet during the year, 850 million humans go hungry every year. Hunger is the most extreme ramification of poverty, violation of the most basic human rights, economic handicap and a cause and effect of the poverty.

After World War II, Green Revolution stands out which includes some projects that have been set in motion in Latin America and Asia, such as China and Vietnam have produced modest and good results by improving their situations drastically. The sub-Saharan region of Africa is the only place on earth that has not benefited from the Green Revolution because Africa does not have quality infrastructure which has no decent roads or parts and internal markets affecting and involving in the world economy. In sub-Saharan Africa, therefore, hunger is on the rise. Dramatically, one out of every four undernourished persons on the planet is from this region.

Following this region in Africa, North Korea, Pakistan and Bangladesh are some of the poorest countries in Asia. Even the major cities in these

countries continue to suffer from the effects of a massive rural exodus. The documentary highlights that countries such as China and Vietnam have had success because they have been able to create a dynamic rural economy. Vietnam and China have built sufficient infrastructure for rural areas more in particular and provided access to land, followingly raised the prices of agricultural products. Buying power of farmers increased accordingly.

The film underlines that more than half of the 11 million children die each year because they are malnourished. Two billion people in the world are anemic. The correlation between low birth weight and high infant mortality rates is well known and obvious. The scarcity of nutrients from malnourished mothers results in insufficient amount of milk which is usually of low nutritional value. Women who have a breadwinner, produce food product and keep household stocked to feed their families. Even the poorest women are extremely knowledgeable about the use of natural resources.

According to the documentary, malnourishment is especially noticeable in the Sahel Fringe, where the Sahara desert fuses with the African Savannah. That climate change did cause increase the size of the desert, is clear. In recent years, the Nomadic people of Niger have already lost more than half their cattle. Owing to this catastrophe, families there had to change their eating habits and now eat only once a day. Many people consume only plants and leaves. The main problem hereby is that what they sell is cheaper, what they buy is too expensive. Animal prices are very low. To illustrate, in the last 2 years, the price of a cow has been cut in half. On the other hand, the price of mijo seed and sorghum has doubled. The crisis of

nourishment in Sahel affects 8 million people. Indeed, increasing availability of food is neither enough, nor a real and permanent solution. Scientific studies confirmed that the problem of malnutrition is not because of a lack of food, but rather to inadequate and unfair distribution of resources. It is not true either that there are no enough arable lands. Apparently, for many reasons, less than half of arable land is used for agriculture. However, most of land that is used for crops is dedicated entirely to export or to the production of food for animals. In many of these countries, more than a third of all grain is grown for cattle. These animals, in turn, are consumed in developed countries. Both in developed and in third world nations, it does not seem like these are genuine concerns of governments of those countries.

The film claims that after World War II, the amount of grazing land and heads of cattle doubled in South America. In the meantime, the consumption of beef by local citizens diminished. Beef produced was exported to North American and European markets. In Brazil, during the ' 60s and ' 70s, thousands of hectares of Amazonian rainforest were destroyed to make room for cattle ranchers. In Columbia and Peru, a similar phenomenon occurred. It is sad to say that the main reason for this growth was the increase in demand for hamburger meat and a threat to developing nations. The culture of “ consumerism” in first world nations and the abundance of available food increased rapidly, so much so that in countries such as the U. S. obesity has surpassed smoking as the main cause of preventable deaths. The number of obese persons has doubled in the last 30 years of the 20th century. In

developed nations, billions of dollars are spent to fight with over eating-related diseases.

Thus, it is understandable that fast food constitutes the basis of the modern food pyramid. The quality of the food the people eat is getting worse and worse in time. The issue is not only the low nutritional levels but also the excessive caloric content of fast food. The size of portions most people eat has notably increased. To demonstrate, a typical Burger King hamburger had 200 calories in the first years of the establishment of the popular chain however, now has almost 400 calories. French fries at McDonald's now have more than three times as many calories. A McDonald's Happy Meal contains half of the daily calories that a healthy adult needs but, much less than half the nutritional requirements.

Currently, almost half of the world's food production comes from fields that are irrigated. It could be alleged that water levels are diminishing almost everywhere, especially in and around the Mediterranean Sea, India and parts of China. The rate of consumption is much higher than the rate of replenishment. Half of the world's population suffers from water problems due to inadequate access to water. The projected population increased coupled with the erosion of the environment and the lack of water may lead the people to an unprecedented food crisis.

As is known, the progress of modern agriculture is based on the scientific experiences that the nations possess. Green revolution basically aims manufacturing capacity be modified according to the environmental

conditions so that the most ideal conditions for agriculture and cattle raising can be implemented. If the climate is dry, irrigation may be used. If the ground is not fertile, fertilizers could be used. If weed and pests invade crops, fields might be sprayed. If more energy is needed to plow and till arable fields, mechanized vehicles can come into play. The “ Green Revolution” was based on precisely that. However, there are many both benefits and harms of it to the environment. Accordingly, the next step is hereby the use of biotechnology and agricultural applications of genetic engineering which could be mentioned as “ New Green Revolution”.

Genetically modified organisms and transgenic organisms is obviously a *raison d’etre* of biotechnology because of being a part of economic globalization and providing a lot of advantages and positive impacts. The business of genetic engineering is in the hands of large agrochemical and pharmaceutical multinationals. Moreover, all people should be aware of its negative effects and risks at the same time. To demonstrate, the extensive use of transgenic crops stimulates the use of herbicides, which might contaminate the water being used for arable lands. These herbicides may also be a danger to the public health owing to their toxicity. Transgenic genes are more expensive than conventional seeds because they are patented, farmers cannot use the new seeds to plant them for the next season. Agro-industrial companies derive huge benefits from the genetic characteristics of these crops in the world.

There is no doubt that almost all western governments do sponsor the use of transgenic foods due to the great geopolitical economy and unlimited

political power. The success of using of new technologies depends on the objectives the people establish. The types of agricultural strategies should be compatible with ecologically sustainable ideas.