

TOWARDS HOLISTIC SOLUTIONS: EXPLORING INTERSECTIONAL APPROACHES TO FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN INDIA

** Emerald Kripalani, **Adarsh Pathak, ***Shreya Makkalageri & ****Dr. Chandra Iyer*

** Student Researcher, ** Student Researcher, *** Student Researcher & **** Research Guide, B.K. Birla College, Kalyan (Empowered Autonomous)*

Abstract:

This research endeavours to tackle the complex and pervasive issue of food insecurity among economically disadvantaged populations in India, recognizing it as a multifaceted challenge deeply rooted in poverty and inequitable access to food resources. Through a rigorous examination of existing literature, empirical data analysis, and in-depth case studies, the study aims to achieve three central objectives. Firstly, it seeks to explore the nuanced intersectionality of food insecurity and poverty among marginalized communities, shedding light on the underlying causes and unique challenges faced by those most deprived within society. Secondly, the research endeavours to critically evaluate the effectiveness of current interventions, government policies, and community-based programs in mitigating food insecurity, with a focus on identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement. Additionally, the study aims to delve into ancient Indian strategies and traditional practices, such as educational and community-driven approaches, to enrich contemporary efforts in enhancing food security and overall well-being. By addressing these objectives, the research aspires to provide valuable insights and evidence-based recommendations to policymakers, organizations, and communities striving to alleviate food insecurity among low-income households in India.

Keywords: *Food insecurity, Poverty, Sustainability, Ancient Indian strategies.*

Copyright © 2024 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited

Introduction:

Food insecurity refers to the inability to regularly obtain an ample supply of nourishing food to lead a sustenance and active life. It's a state where individuals lack reliable access to enough food that meet their dietary needs. This challenge obstructs normal growth and development and underscores the urgent need to ensure both the presence and reach of food to promote overall well-being (FAO, 2023). India faces significant challenges in ensuring food security, with high poverty rates contributing to malnutrition affecting around 194.4 million people, approximately 14.37% of the population. One-third of the world's malnourished children are Indian (India, 2022). The food security

paradigm comprises four key components: availability, access, utilization, and stability. Availability focuses on agricultural production, while access involves physical and economic access to food. Utilization emphasizes health and nutrition, and stability addresses vulnerability to various factors like seasonal fluctuations and disasters. This comprehensive framework is crucial for addressing India's multifaceted food security issues (Bhadury, 2021). The historical roots of addressing food insecurity and poverty among low-income households in India can be traced back to various cultural and religious traditions. These traditions include providing free meals to large groups of individuals, which originated from diverse

spiritual practices such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism. For example, in Hinduism, the concept of Annadanam, or giving food, is considered a noble form of charity and service. Similarly, Sikhism introduced the institution of Langar, a community kitchen established by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, emphasizing egalitarian principles by offering free vegetarian meals to all, regardless of their social status or beliefs. In Jainism and Buddhism, supplying food to monks, nuns, and followers is seen as a virtuous act that accumulates positive karma and spiritual merit. These practices often involve Bhandara, which not only includes religious ceremonies, but also social gatherings, communal feasts, and charitable initiatives aimed at providing free meals to marginalized populations.

Research Methodology:

Understanding the interconnectedness of food insecurity, poverty, and socio- environmental factors is crucial for devising effective strategies. Assessing the bearable, equitable, and viable consequences of food insecurity is essential to alleviate its effects on low-income households.

Effects of Food Insecurity on Socio-Environmental Impacts: Food insecurity strains community bonds, cultural norms, and social connections, pushing low-income households towards unsustainable behaviours that worsen environmental degradation. Addressing this necessitates promoting sustainable food production and consumption practices while protecting environmental assets.

Effects of Food Insecurity on Socio-Economic: Intertwined with poverty, food insecurity disrupts employment, income distribution, and access to essential services like education and healthcare, perpetuating poverty cycles. Implementing equitable measures such as income support, job creation, and educational opportunities empowers low-income

families, bolstering their economic resilience.

Effects of Food Insecurity on Eco-Environmental: Food insecurity poses threats to biodiversity, land utilization, and climate resilience, prompting unsustainable agricultural methods. To ensure the sustainability of food systems and environmental health, interventions should prioritize agroecology, conservation farming, and climate-smart agricultural practices, fortifying ecosystem resilience and securing food access for disadvantaged communities.

Research Objectives:

- To study the intersectionality of food insecurity and poverty amongst the deprived.
- To examine the gap between government schemes or approaches to address food insecurity and their effective utilization by beneficiaries.
- To connect ancient Indian strategies encompassing educational, and community-driven approaches to enhance food security and improve the well-being of India.

Hypothesis:

Integrating historical cultural and religious practices in India, particularly through community kitchen initiatives and charitable feeding programs, will correlate positively with improvements in key socio-economic and environmental indices related to food security and poverty. This study hypothesizes that carry out these initiatives is expected to result in higher levels of household net financial savings (HNFS), enhancements in the Global Hunger Index (GHI), advancements in the Social Progress Index (SPI), advances in the Global Sustainable Competitiveness Index (GSCI), & progress in the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI). **Significance of the Study:** This study informs policy interventions to alleviate food insecurity and poverty by refining existing schemes and proposing new strategies. It promotes sustainability through promoting sustainable farming

methods and environmental conservation efforts, ensuring Food security in the long run security and ecosystem resilience. Empowering communities with traditional methodologies addresses underlying inequalities and fosters inclusive growth. Its global relevance lies in informing evidence-based policies, contributing towards promoting sustainable progress and improved well-being of low-income households worldwide.

Research Methodology:

The study employs analytical and descriptive approaches, supplemented by a thorough exploration of primary and secondary data. Secondary data was collected through various online sources. Primary data was collected through a questionnaire and hypothesis testing was done using a Correlation Matrix and ANOVA to analyse the data. Limitations include constraints related to sample size and the duration of the study, spanning from 2018 to 2023.

Review of Literature:

Singh et al. (2018) suggest that food insecurity intensifies pressure on arable land, resulting in land degradation and diminished agricultural productivity. Biswas et al. (2019) highlight challenges faced by food-insecure populations in accessing clean water sources, leading to increased vulnerability to waterborne diseases and malnutrition. Kumar et al. (2020) emphasizes the relationship between food insecurity and the loss of agricultural biodiversity, stressing the significance of diverse cropping systems for resilience and food security. Smith et al. (2017) examine how food insecurity contributes to biodiversity loss and soil degradation, affecting ecosystem health and resilience in agricultural landscapes. FAO (2019) discusses the importance of enhancing climate resilience in agricultural systems to mitigate the effects of food insecurity, advocating for sustainable adaptation strategies.

Deaton and Dreze (2019) explore the intricate connection between food insecurity and household income levels, highlighting the cyclical nature of poverty and food insecurity. Alkire et al. (2020) analyse the intersectionality of poverty and food insecurity, emphasizing the role of addressing food insecurity in poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Jayne et al. (2018) Investigate the impact of food insecurity on employment opportunities in the agricultural sector, particularly for smallholder farmers and rural communities, emphasizing the need for inclusive growth strategies. Deshpande and Motiram (2019) discuss how food insecurity hampers access to education, perpetuating intergenerational poverty and inequality. Quisumbing et al. (2016) highlight gender disparities in food access and distribution, emphasizing adverse health outcomes and intergenerational poverty among women and girls.

Tilman et al. (2020) assess the relationship between food insecurity and food production efficiency, advocating for sustainable intensification practices to enhance productivity while minimizing environmental impacts. FAO (2020) discuss strategies for reducing water and energy consumption in agriculture to address food insecurity and environmental degradation. Springmann et al. (2018) evaluates the carbon footprint of food creation and distribution systems, stressing the necessity for environmentally friendly food systems to address food security and Environmental transformation mitigation goals. Lambin et al. (2018) examine drivers of land use change and deforestation, including food insecurity, proposing approaches to sustainably manage land and conservation. IPBES (2019) assess the impacts of food insecurity on wildlife and ecosystem services, advocating for integrated approaches to sustainable development.

Mohanty et al. (2017) explores the intersectionality of food insecurity and poverty, calling for targeted

interventions to address underlying inequalities. Khera (2020) analyse the efficiency of government schemes in addressing food insecurity, suggesting policy reforms to improve access to food assistance and social protection programs. Sahoo and Behera (2018)

Data Analysis & Findings:

The table below shows the relationship between indices like Household Net Financial Savings (HNFS), Global Hunger Index (GHI), Social Progress Index (SPI), Global Sustainable Competitiveness Index (GSCI), Global Food Security Index (GFSI), and Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI). Growth in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) exacerbates food insecurity, possibly diminishing Household Net Financial Savings (HNFS). Conversely, increases in the Social Progress Index (SPI), Global Sustainable Competitiveness Index (GSCI), Global Food Security Index (GFSI), and Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) may enhance HNFS. Higher SPI denotes improved service access, potentially elevating income, and savings. Enhanced GSCI implies better environmental practices, promoting economic stability and savings. Improved GFSI indicates better food access, reducing food costs and bolstering savings. GHI worsens food insecurity, reducing HNFS. Improvements in SPI, GSCI, GFSI, and CCPI may boost HNFS. Higher SPI means better service access and savings, enhanced GSCI promotes economic stability and savings, while improved GFSI suggests lower food costs, strengthening savings.

examine traditional agricultural practices and community-driven approaches to food security in India, highlighting the importance of indigenous knowledge systems and cultural heritage in sustainable development.

Table 1: Comparable Trend & relationship of Indices affecting food insecurity & sustainability

Years	Present Data					Forecasted Data						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
HNFS	7.90	7.70	11.50	7.20	5.10	5.36	5.62	5.90	6.20	6.51	6.83	7.18
GHI	28.00	28.00	27.50	29.20	28.70	30.14	31.64	33.22	34.89	36.63	38.46	40.38
SPI	59.10	56.80	58.21	60.19	58.06	60.96	64.01	67.21	70.57	74.10	77.81	81.70
GSCI	39.50	42.40	40.90	39.25	40.20	42.21	44.32	46.54	48.86	51.31	53.87	56.57
GFSI	60.40	60.40	64.20	64.55	64.90	68.15	71.55	75.13	78.89	82.83	86.97	91.32
CCPI	66.49	66.49	67.02	67.54	68.23	71.64	75.22	78.98	82.93	87.08	91.43	96.01

Source: Secondary data

The table displays data on key indices related to food security and socio-economic factors from 2019 to 2030. Fluctuations in these indices over the years indicate changing levels of household net financial savings, global hunger, social progress, sustainable competitiveness, food security, and Environmental transformation performance. Identifying patterns and correlations among these indices can inform targeted interventions and policies aimed at improving food security, reducing poverty, and promoting sustainable development globally. H0: There is no significant relationship between sustainability and Food insecurity and poverty amongst low-income households.

H1: There is a significant relationship between sustainability and Food insecurity and poverty amongst low-income households.

The correlation matrix unveils connections among indices related to food security and socio-economic factors. The values range from -1 to 1, indicating the strength and direction of correlations.



Table 2: Correlation between studied indices

	<i>HNFS</i>	<i>GHI</i>	<i>SPI</i>	<i>GSCI</i>	<i>GFSI</i>	<i>CCPI</i>
HNFS	1					
GHI	-0.7404	1				
SPI	-0.0564	0.5638	1			
GSCI	0.2369	-0.5435	-0.9278	1		
GFSI	-0.0746	0.4487	0.3706	-0.3796	1	
CCPI	-0.5295	0.6461	0.2527	-0.3873	0.8737	1

Source: Secondary data

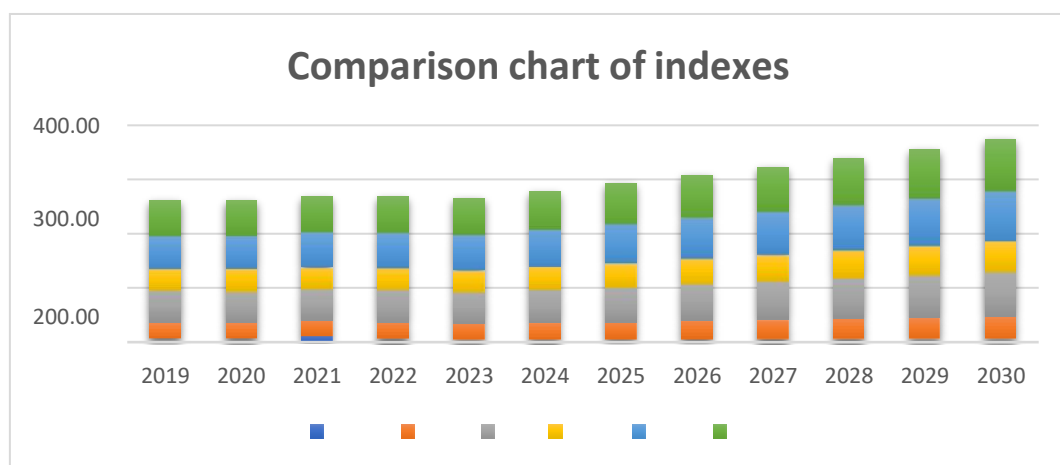
A robust inverse relationship between HNFS and GHI suggests addressing food insecurity can alleviate global hunger. A weak negative correlation between HNFS and CCPI implies food insecurity may contribute to decreased climate change performance. Efforts to promote sustainable food practices could mitigate both food insecurity and environmental degradation.

A robust inverse relationship between GHI and CCPI indicates addressing hunger may improve climate change performance. A moderate positive correlation between GHI and SPI suggests tackling food insecurity could enhance social progress. Equitable interventions like income support and education access are crucial to empowering low-income households economically.

A strong negative correlation between SPI and GSCI implies social progress may lead to more sustainable agricultural practices. A weak negative correlation between GSCI and GFSI suggests sustainable agriculture plays a role. However, additional variables also influence global food security. Promoting agroecology and conservation agriculture can enhance ecosystem resilience and food security for vulnerable populations.

The graph below depicts the present and forecasted value, if there is an estimated 5% increase in HNFS its impact on GHI, SPI, GSCI, GFSI, CCPI.

Figure 1: Comparison Chart of indexes



Hypothesis testing of study variables was done using ANOVA to validate the significance of Income towards fluctuations in food prices impacted by the consequences of climate-related events on agriculture.

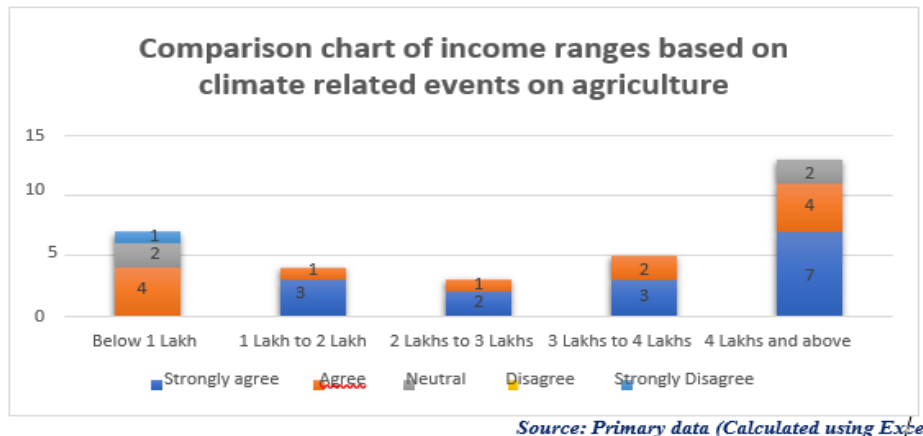


Figure 2: Comparison chart of income ranges based on climate-related events in agriculture

The graph above represents the statistical data of the respondent's perception towards the income and fluctuations in food prices impacted by the consequences of climate-related events on agriculture. H₀: There is no significant impact of the respondent's perception towards fluctuations in food prices impacted by the consequences of climate-related events on agriculture.

H₂: There is a significant impact of income on the respondent's perception towards fluctuations in food prices impacted by the consequences of climate-related events on agriculture.

Table 3: ANOVA test on climate change and its impact on agriculture

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Income group	32	109	3.41	2.70		
Climate change and agriculture`	32	56	1.75	0.84		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	43.89	1	43.89	24.80	5.37E-06	4.00
Within Groups	109.72	62	1.77			
Total	153.61	63				

The outcomes of the ANOVA analysis reveal that income has a noteworthy impact on how respondents perceive fluctuations in food prices affected by climate-related events in agriculture. With a p-value of 5.37E-06, considerably lower than the standard significance level of 0.05, the initial hypothesis suggesting no notable influence of income is refuted. This suggests that the level of income significantly shapes how individuals interpret the connection between changes in food prices and the agricultural repercussions of climate-related occurrences. Hence, the alternative hypothesis proposing a meaningful impact of income is upheld. In essence, it can be inferred that income level plays a pivotal role in moulding individuals' perspectives on fluctuations in food prices concerning climate-induced agricultural effects.

These findings emphasize the necessity of holistic approaches to combat food insecurity, highlighting its interconnected impacts on global hunger, socio-economic equity, and environmental sustainability. Addressing these challenges necessitates holistic solutions that promote social progress, economic empowerment, and sustainable agricultural practices to ensure resilience and food security for vulnerable populations.

Summary of Findings:

The research paper investigates the multifaceted challenges of food insecurity and poverty, particularly focusing on their socio-environmental, socio-economic, and eco-environmental impacts.

Socio-environmental factors: Addressing food insecurity is crucial for alleviating global hunger, as evidenced by the robust inverse relationship between household net financial savings (HNFS) and the Global Hunger Index (GHI). Additionally, efforts to promote sustainable food practices could mitigate both food insecurity and environmental degradation, indicated by the weak negative correlation between HNFS and the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI).

Socio-economic factors: Addressing hunger may improve climate change performance, as suggested by the robust inverse relationship between GHI and CCPI. Moreover, tackling food insecurity could enhance social progress, as implied by the moderate positive correlation between GHI and the Social Progress Index (SPI). Equitable interventions like income support and education access are identified as crucial in empowering low-income households economically.

Eco-environmental factors: Promoting social progress may lead to more sustainable agricultural practices, highlighted by the strong negative correlation between SPI and the Global Sustainable Competitiveness Index (GSCI). Additionally, promoting agroecology and conservation agriculture can enhance ecosystem resilience and food security for vulnerable populations, as suggested by the weak negative correlation between GSCI and the Global Food Security

Index (GFSI). These findings underscore the interconnected nature of food insecurity and its broader implications for global hunger, socio-economic equity, and environmental sustainability, emphasizing the need for holistic solutions to address these complex challenges effectively.

Suggestions: By prioritizing the efficacy of leveraging historical cultural and religious practices in India to alleviate food insecurity and poverty among low-income households, the suggested strategies are aligned with the research objectives and aim to provide insights into innovative and culturally sensitive approaches to addressing this complex socio-economic challenge.

Community Kitchen Initiatives: Investigate the implementation and impact of community kitchen initiatives inspired by historical cultural and religious practices, such as Langar in Sikhism, as potential solutions for addressing food insecurity and poverty among low-income households. Assess the effectiveness of these initiatives in providing nutritious meals, fostering social cohesion, and promoting community resilience.

Promotion of Charitable Feeding Programs: Explore the role of charitable feeding programs rooted in diverse spiritual traditions, such as Annadanam in Hinduism, in addressing food insecurity and poverty. Examine how these programs can be scaled up and integrated into broader food security interventions and evaluate their effectiveness in reaching marginalized populations and improving their food access and nutritional outcomes.

Integration of Traditional Practices: Investigate the integration of traditional practices like Bhandara into modern food security strategies. Analyze how these practices contribute to enhancing food access, promoting social inclusion, and empowering communities, particularly among vulnerable and marginalized groups. Explore innovative approaches to adapt and scale up these practices in urban and rural contexts.

Education and Awareness: Examine the role of education and awareness campaigns in promoting empathy, solidarity, and collective action towards

addressing food insecurity and poverty. Assess the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at raising awareness about the historical and cultural significance of charitable feeding practices, and their impact on community engagement, volunteerism, and support for anti-poverty efforts.

Policy Support: Investigate the policy landscape and advocate for policy support and funding for initiatives that leverage historical cultural and religious practices to address food insecurity and poverty. Conduct policy analysis and stakeholder consultations to identify opportunities for integrating traditional practices into national and local food security policies and programs, and advocate for policy reforms to prioritize community-led approaches.

Research and Documentation: Conduct research and documentation assessing the efficacy and impact of leveraging historical cultural and religious practices in India to alleviate undernourishment and poverty. Use mixed methods approaches to collect qualitative and quantitative data, including case studies, surveys, and participatory assessments, to assess the strengths, challenges, and scalability of these interventions, document best practices for future replication and adaptation.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this research delves into the potential of leveraging India's historical cultural and religious practices to combat food insecurity and poverty among low-income households. By examining initiatives such as community kitchens, charitable feeding programs, and traditional practice integration, it offers innovative solutions rooted in cultural heritage. Through education campaigns, policy advocacy, and research documentation, this study provides actionable insights to address pressing socio-economic challenges effectively. These strategies not only provide immediate relief but also foster social

cohesion, community empowerment, and sustainable development. Going forward, further research and implementation efforts are crucial to assess effectiveness, engage stakeholders, advocate for supportive policies, and promote cross-sector collaborations. By capitalizing on traditional practices and community resilience, significant strides can be made towards achieving food security and poverty eradication, ensuring a brighter vision for ONE EARTH, ONE FAMILY, ONE VISION.

References:

- BADRI, H. (2023). Ecommerce Can Trigger Ecosystem Change For A Greener Supply Chain. Outlook Planet.*
- Berhe, Y. Z. (2022). The Impact of Green Investment and Green Marketing on Business Performance: The Mediation Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Ethiopia's Chinese Textile Companies. MDPI.*
- Bhadury, D. S. (2021). Right To Food Security And Poverty In India: An Analysis. Webology.*
- Chauhan, K.S. (2023). TOI. Retrieved from TOI: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/theinterection/embracing-the-rise-of-esg-investing-in-india-a-sustainable-future-54478/>*
- David Bendig, L. K.-S. (2022). The effect of green startup investments on incumbents' green innovation output. Elsevier B.V.*
- FAO. (2023). Hunger and food insecurity.*
- Freytag, J. (2020). CHALLENGES FOR GREEN FINANCE IN INDIA: An Analysis of Deficiencies in India's Green Financial Market. Umeå University.*
- GUPTA, A. (2023). Understanding Emerging Green Financing Opportunities In India. Outlook Planet.*

- Haldar, S. (2019). *Green entrepreneurship in theory and practice: insights from India*. *Int. J. Green Economics*.
- India, A. S. (2022, December 1). *Feeding India. Understanding the malnutrition crisis in India*. *Journal, A. B.* (2023). *A regional comparison of ESG regulations*. *Asia Business Law Journal*.
- Lin Wanga Azer Dilanchievb, M. H. (2022). *The environmental regulation and policy assessment effect on the road to green recovery transformation*. Elsevier B.V, 17.
- Mukul Bhatnagar, S. T. (2022). *A wave of green startups in India—The study of green finance as a support system for sustainable entrepreneurship*. AIMS Press.
- Pal, A. (2023). *Business Insider*. Retrieved from *Business Insider*: <https://www.businessinsider.in/careers/news/green-jobs-a-career-option-that-actually-impacts-lives-the-environment/articleshow/100291085.cms>
- Purkayastha, L. P. (2020). *Accelerating Green Finance in India: Definitions and Beyond*. *CPI Discussion Brief*.
- Rohit Agrawal, S. A. (2023). *Adoption of green finance and green innovation for achieving circularity: An exploratory review and future directions*. Elsevier B.V.
- Saha, S. (2023). *EY*. Retrieved from *EY*: https://www.ey.com/en_in/climate-change-sustainability-services/green-finance-is-gaining-traction-for-net-zero-transition-in-india
- Sarkar, V. A. (2023). *The Impact of Green Investment and Green Marketing on Business Performance: The Mediation Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Ethiopia's Chinese Textile Companies*. *Mint*.
- Sharma, S. (2023). *Mint*. Retrieved from *Mint*: <https://www.livemint.com/opinion/first-person/fintechs-must-brace-for-rising-cybersecurity-challenges-11695629860002.html>
- Shijie Li, Y. Y. (2022). *Frontiers*. Retrieved from *Frontiers*: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fenvs.2022.868704/full#:~:text=Green%20investment%20and%20technological%20innovation,and%20generate%20fewer%20carbon%20emissions.>
- Singh, A. (2023). *Invest India*. Retrieved from *invest India*: <https://www.investindia.gov.in/team-india-blogs/green-energy-rise-india-sustainable-investment-opportunities>
- Vijeta Singh, N. M.-H. (2022). *Mapping the Current Practices and Patterns of Green Digital Finance in India and the Way Forward*. *ResearchGate*, 21.
- Vikas Nath I, N. N. (2014). *Green Banking Practices – A Review*. *Impact: International Journal of Research in Business Management*, 18.

Cite This Article:

Kripalani E., Pathak A., Makkalageri S. & Dr. Iyer C. (2024). *Towards Holistic Solutions: Exploring Intersectional Approaches to Food Security and Poverty Alleviation in India. In Kalyan Region. In Aarhat Multidisciplinary International Education Research Journal: Vol. XIII (Number II, pp. 142–150). AMIERJ.*

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10935678>