

Chapter 4

Understanding Food Porn in the Context of Poverty, Starvation and Hunger

CHAPTER-4

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“Starvation is the characteristic of some people not having enough food to eat. It is not the characteristic of there not being enough food to eat.” - Amartya Sen (1981, 1)

4.1 Introduction

The basic utility of food is to satisfy or fulfill the biological hunger of any living being. If we examine food in the context of biology, we can understand that food is those edible materials that consist of many essential things such as protein, carbohydrates, and fat required for a living body for growth, and development as well as for getting energy. On the other hand, food has also a sociological meaning. As Lucy Long (2017, 208) stated, “Food is matter considered appropriate for ingestion. It is not just "stuff we eat" or "stuff that nourishes our bodies." Young children put all sorts of things in their mouths— leaves, bugs, plastic toys, the tails of pet dogs and cats— that are not considered food by their parents or society. The same items in a different culture or prepared in a different form, however, might be considered food. Food, then, is "constructed" in that different groups consider different things appropriate for ingestion.

For Fabio Parasecoli (2008, 2) Food is pervasive. The social, economic, and even political relevance cannot be ignored. Ingestion and incorporation constitute a fundamental component of our connection with reality and the world outside our body. Food influences our lives as a relevant marker of power, cultural capital, class, gender, ethnic, and religious identities. It has become the object of a wide and ever-growing corpus of studies and analysis, from marketing to history, from nutrition to anthropology. Yet, food reveals many other layers of meaning that are often left unexplored when it comes to phenomena that fall squarely under the heading of pop culture, especially the “low brow” or even “trash” kind. According to Roland Barthes (1972) “It is not only a collection of products that can be used for statistical or nutritional studies. It is also, and at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behavior.”

Thus it can be said that both biology and sociology have significant influence on the definition of food. But one thing is important to note that in whatever way we have to agree that food is something that provides the energy to live, to grow, and to survive. This particular function of food means that it provides force for living beings. So, a very natural and obvious conclusion can be made that the absence of food means the absence of a life force, and the absence of this force means difficult to survive for the living or non-living. There is an absence of fulfillment of hunger, nourishment, and sustaining of lives. Here, hunger comes into the scene. But before discussing the concept of hunger, the logic behind this chapter needs to be addressed.

4.2 Why this Chapter?

It can be said that this chapter is a continuation of the earlier chapters, as the earlier chapters deal with sexualisation of sexuality as one of the elements of food porn for seducing the gaze of viewers. In this particular chapter another element of seduction is being discussed at length. Like sexualisation, some other elements also play important roles in seducing the gaze of the viewers for food porn. Food porn is understood as possessing one of the characteristics of excess with a glamorous nature in it. For instance, Tisha Dejmanee (2016, 429) has opined that the term porn in food porn indicates the idea of excess. Again another definition from Urban Dictionary suggests that food porn is something that is a juicy, mouth-watering, high-resolution image of incredibly delicious-looking food.

A utopian idea regarding food porn is always being celebrated in the visual media. Thus, to know and understand this utopian perspective of food porn, where food porn is always being showcased as glamorously excess, perform in the contemporary world, where poverty, hunger, starvation, lack of food, and malnutrition are the burning problems. According to W.H.O. (2020), “Tens of millions have joined the ranks of the chronically undernourished over the past five years, and countries around the world continue to struggle with multiple forms of malnutrition.” There are many organizations which used to collect data regarding the status of starvation, poverty, and world food problems. So, in this sense, the celebrated utopian concept of “food porn” is becoming more and more popular. It is not only the developing and underdeveloped countries that are suffering from the problem of hunger, starvation, and poverty as a whole; however, the developed countries like the U.S.A. are also not an exception to it. The face of hunger may be

different but it exists. For instance, an article by Tracie McMillan (2014) published by National Geographic Magazine mentioned hunger,

It can be tempting to ask families receiving food assistance, If you're really hungry, then how can you be—as many of them are—overweight? The answer is “this paradox that hunger and obesity are two sides of the same coin,” says Melissa Boteach, vice president of the Poverty and Prosperity Program of the Center for American Progress, “people making trade-offs between food that's filling but not nutritious and may actually contribute to obesity.” For many of the hungry in America, the extra pounds that result from a poor diet are collateral damage—an unintended side effect of hunger itself.

Thus, a discussion on food porn and its operation in this world where almost more than half of the societies are suffering from hunger is a significant area for study. In other words, how, with food porn, capitalism seduces the viewers' gaze when more serious issues are there to solve. It is an interesting area of study. A very popular quote from Virginia Woolf's (1929, 16) essay, *A Room of One's Own*, “One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.” Thus, it is very entrancing to study the seducing element behind this meaning of food porn. Before diving deep into the prime matters of concern, a brief understanding of hunger, starvation, and poverty is discussed below in the context of this chapter.

4.3 Hunger as a Concept

To understand hunger as a concept in a vivid manner, there arises the need to explore hunger in a wide range. Hunger in general, has many connotations based on different occasions of arousing hunger. Briefly discussing,, hunger can be biological or physiological, it can be psychological, and finally, hunger can be understood as a social construct.

4.3.1 Hunger as a Biological Concept

As stated above, hunger can be referred to as the sensation that persuades a living being to consume food, and the opposite of hunger is satiety. A complex system of physical

and hormonal activities involves hunger. The sensation of hunger typically arises after only a few hours without eating. Another term that also exhibits similar characteristics to hunger is appetite. Hunger is physiological, as the biological changes throughout the body signal to the body that it is the time to eat to maintain energy levels. It is the most known and common hunger everyone can understand and explain according to their culture and society. Even animals can also understand this type of hunger.

4.3.2 Hunger as a Psychological Concept

Psychological hunger can be understood clearly from the concept of ‘appetite’. Appetite is simply the desire to eat whether it can be a result of hunger, or other causes, such as emotional or environmental conditions. Appetite can also be a learned behaviour. In short, appetite is similar to hunger as it also motivates us to eat food items, usually due to hunger, but here lies a twist. Appealing food can stimulate appetite even when hunger is absent, although appetite can be greatly reduced by satiety. Moreover, appetite can refer to the feeling or a desire to eat the food of choice. Physiological hunger always derives from the idea of filling the empty stomach. The choice of food is not the main emphasis as in the case of appetite. Thus, psychological hunger does not demand any physiological hunger, it might be present but it is not necessary.

4.3.3 Hunger as a Social Construct

Whether it is physiological hunger or psychological hunger, everything comes under the umbrella term of ‘hunger’ as a social construct. This hunger refers to the social and political aspects, where the whole world is fighting together to reduce it as a problem of global importance. In social science and policy discussions the condition of people who suffer from a chronic lack of sufficient food, due to various reasons like lack of affordability, and disease, which constantly or frequently experience the sensation of hunger and cannot fulfill the requirement can lead to malnutrition. The famous economists Jean Drèze and Indian Nobel laureate Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze (1989) talked about hunger in their book *Hunger and Public Action*; which became one of the greatest books on hunger, poverty, and famines in the context of India. This book can help us to understand hunger as a whole and in India in particular. In this chapter, hunger which is commonly used in policy discussions and social science is taken into prime

consideration. Moreover, physiological as well as psychological hunger are based on this study.

Along with all these variations regarding the connotations of hunger, another subtype of hunger is also significant for this study, i.e. the concept of imperialism, the core of world hunger. The article “The Imperial Roots of Hunger” by Madhusree Mukerjee (2013), highlights the effects of imperialism on world hunger. Out of the many examples that she cited, one is from Haiti. Haiti is an underdeveloped country that until the 1980s was largely self-sufficient in its staple food, rice. The International Monetary Fund in a way, in order to qualify for a loan, forced Haiti to reduce the tariffs that protected its domestic rice production from 35 to 3 percent. Then, the country was forced to import cheap rice from the US. Domestic rice production in Haiti collapsed and rice, which is their staple food, started to be imported. Mukherjee discussed how agro-colonialism exists in the present world too. Rich countries take the Third World’s seed varieties, developed over centuries by indigenous farmers. She showed an example from India, The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), set up in the 1960s by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, managed to get hold of more than 16,000 varieties of rice that Indian farmers developed. Again another instance from India, she discussed the oil seeds debacle of India. She argued that the World Bank forced India to import oil from the US and Europe by flooding Indian markets with cheaper oil and with huge subsidies. She cites analyst Devinder Sharma’s reports that in the mid-1990s, India achieved 97 percent self-sufficiency in edible oils by domestic production only. Now, India is the world’s second-largest importer of edible oil.

Thus, it can be said that hunger which is physiological as well as psychological is always shaped by the imperial dominance over it. The physiological hunger shaped by imperialism can be understood from the instances cited in the article, Haiti was previously a self-sufficient country in regard to its staple food, rice, but after the imperial intervention, it no longer remained a country that could fulfill its citizens physiological hunger by their domestic production and in return have to rely on the imported cheap rice, that is making the country more hunger prone. Again, on the other hand, Savanna Shoemaker (2020) defined psychological hunger as the hunger that occurs when one has the desire to eat, however, physically the body doesn't need food. “Physical hunger is

true hunger, which is characterized by an empty feeling in your stomach and discomfort that can only be relieved by eating.

Conversely, psychological hunger is associated with cravings, emotional eating, and boredom eating.” This can be understood from the example of comfort food, which is one of the most significant examples of psychological hunger. Lucy Long (2022), one of the food studies scholars, defined the idea of comfort food in her article, “How the Pandemic Redefined Comfort Food: American Individualism, Culinary Relativism, and Shifting Moralities”. According to Long, “Food has long been seen in the US as representing the moral character of the individuals consuming it. Historian Jennifer Wallach traces attitudes to multiple sources for this perspective but sees the Puritans as primarily responsible for this belief system: “The custom of eating simply was fundamental to many Puritans’ sense of who they were...Their most important source of sustenance...was spiritual and not temporal” (27). This translated into “simple dishes” valued for their practical functions and suspicion of anyone who found sensual pleasure in food.....(57)

The phrase “comfort food” seems to have first been used in print in a 1966 newspaper column by psychologist Dr. Joyce Brothers who claimed it was being used by patients to explain their weight issues. Food writers in the popular media popularized it further. In 1977, a food critic for the Washington Post described an iconic dish (shrimp and grits) and its entire regional cuisine (the South) as comfort food, implying that it tasted good but was unhealthy (Richman). Later, in 2013, she corroborated the idea that the concept of comfort food existed within the general public, and she and others had simply named it (Richman)” (ibid, 58).

Thus, psychological hunger is something that is not induced by the biology of the body, rather mostly it is initiated by the outside environment of the body. It can also be understood in this way, the concept of food porn can be seen as a concept that is basically based on psychological hunger, as the hunger is seduced or initiated by an outside element, not from the biological need. This idea of comfort food was developed in American society but in due course of time, it can be seen on a global scale as a result of globalization, imperialism, and other related forces. Thus, it can be said that ‘Hunger’ has many discourses that need academic consideration. For this chapter, the researcher

tries to look at how hunger has a connection with social constructs in the context of food porn is being discussed.

4.4 Food Porn, Appetite, and Hunger: Understanding the terms in Relation to each Other

Food porn which is commonly refers to something which is in abundance. Dejmanee (429) suggested that “food porn is the most prevalent of several currently circulating terms that use the marker porn to indicate an aesthetic of excess, such as “organizational porn”, “real estate porn”, “ruin porn”, and “disaster porn”.” thus we can easily understand that food porn has a nature which is always associated with the availability of abundance and excessiveness of food items and in high-calorie content is an interesting part to be studied. It is commonplace that food porn has a deep relationship with hunger and most importantly with appetite. As discussed in the previous chapters, food porn has a significant connection with the concept of hunger. Appetite has already been discussed and it refers to a sensation similar to hunger. However, appetite includes hunger along with satiety. In the case of appetite, hunger can be natural or biological as well as artificial or constructed by some external forces.

The hunger that is being seduced in food porn is in a real sense not the natural biological hunger but an appetite that is being constructed through various external forces like videos, photographs, audio, presentations, and through various seducing techniques. How various techniques are being used to create this hunger or in other words seduce the hunger or appetite has already been discussed in the previous chapters. Appetite also creates differences or inequalities in society. Appetite, as already discussed in the previous section, is mostly related to psychological hunger. For the poverty-stricken population, for them, hunger is mostly carried by a physiological phenomenon, but on the contrary, those who can afford luxurious food for them hunger is mostly a psychological one. It is already established that class discrimination creates hunger, poverty, and starvation. However, it can also be said that the way the concept of hunger is perceived differently, also strengthens class discrimination in society. Like appetite, another concept called starvation, which is also an integral part of hunger, but related to physiological hunger is important for the study. In this connection, the researcher highlights the views given by Amartya Sen, who is a well-known economist and philosopher. Sen has made substantial contributions to the study of development

economics and developed this idea of development as freedom in his book *Development as Freedom* (1999). Sen's theories have had a significant influence on our understanding of human well-being and economic growth. He makes the case in this book that development should be viewed as an extension of peoples' capacities and freedoms rather than just a rise in income or GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

Hunger, from sociological, political, economic, and cultural perspectives, is a complicated one and needs vivid study. It is a condition in which a person does not have the physical or financial capability to eat sufficient food to meet basic nutritional needs for a sustained period. This severity of hunger leads to another very significant issue that is called 'starvation', which is discussed at length by Amartya Sen (1981) in his book, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*.

4.4.1 Starvation

Starvation refers to the condition when a person does not eat for days and gradually his/her body starts to shut down or deteriorate. Extreme poverty, drought, war or famine, and other dire circumstances can contribute to starvation. Any living organism that depends on food for energy is at risk of starvation when there is not enough to eat. For some scholars, the concept of starvation entered into the language in 1775 during the American (Vocabulary.com, n.d.). In the modern context, nutritionist Rohini Patil explained, (Lifestyle Desk, 2022), "Hunger is the feeling of being hungry. Starvation, on the other hand, is when a person has lost all sense of hunger, and even though they are eating, they don't feel satisfied. When you are hungry, it's because your body needs food. When you are starving, it's because your body can't process or store enough food". She further highlighted that the difference between starvation and hunger is that "hunger is a feeling, whereas starvation is a medical condition". "People who are starving often feel hungry because they're not getting enough nutrients from their food or their environment.

This medical condition is a result of anomalies and differences or discriminations in society. This can be argued from this point that in the case of hunger and starvation, it is mostly not insufficiency or lack of food but lack of the capability to afford food for survival (there are cases of lack of food and resources induced hunger but very little). Amartya Sen (1981, 1) very vividly discussed this point. According to Sen, "Starvation

is the characteristic of some people not having enough food to eat. It is not the characteristic of there not being enough food to eat. While the latter can be a cause of the former, it is but one of many possible causes. Whether and how starvation relates to food supply is a matter for factual investigation”.

This is the reason why world hunger is always related to poverty. Poverty and hunger are directly related to each other. According to Baldock (2002), in most cases, issues regarding distribution cause problems in access to food, as in countries where enough food is available the poor cannot afford to buy. For instance, in the case of Argentina, which is one of the biggest exporters of food in the world, people are dying from malnutrition as they can't afford to buy food. Argentina is for the present time suffering from poverty as well as malnutrition which are related to each other. Another scholar who works on hunger, and starvation-related works is Ute Schaeffer. Ute Schaeffer (2011) is a German Journalist who works as the editor-in-chief for Deutsche Welle, Germany's foreign broadcaster. She, as a journalist, focuses mostly on European and German policy towards Africa and on German international development cooperation. She was the head of the station's Africa/Middle East program till 2011. She also reports on political, economic, social, and cultural developments in Africa. According to her,

‘Let's end the lies of our affluent society. Famines, only partially caused by wars and natural catastrophes, are seldom a problem of the urban poor. Hunger is the result of politically tolerated social exclusion of large swathes of the population. Their needs and hardships are pushed to the side, ignored by the profiteers...’

Schaeffer is important to be referred to here because she is trying to look at how hunger is politicized. She is analysing this contempt in the context of the developing countries of the world. This idea can help the researcher to build an understanding of the relationship between hunger and food porn.

Holt-Giménez (2016, 1) opine that

The Reproach of Hunger started with the 2007–2008 global food crisis when the number of desperately hungry people in the world swelled to over 1 billion. People went hungry not because of a lack of food, but because they were too poor to buy the food that

was available. The question “Why are people poor?” was answered over 60 years ago by US President Harry Truman at his inaugural address: because they are underdeveloped. Development – both the original, state-led version and today’s market-led iteration – has been the capitalist solution to poverty and hunger ever since.

Thus, a brief picture of the concept of hunger, appetite, and starvation has been attempted to be portrayed through the above discussion. For this chapter, to discuss the operating process of food porn around the whole world and its visual media representations would be difficult to conclude, so, for the study, a particular area or context and instances from the visual media are being discussed.

4.5 The Context or Area of Study

To carry out this study, only a few limited areas are concentrated, as otherwise the concepts like world hunger, and poverty are very vast and need separate and deep analysis. Another issue that needs to be clear here is that the hunger and poverty situations of every country are different, so every country needs a separate study. For this chapter, India is being considered as the context. The instances from India proved to be very interesting as India is a developing nation. So, food porn and its workings are influenced by all its classes. For this chapter, India is being considered as the context. Because the researcher belongs to India and so wants to use an emic perspective to examine how food porn is showcased in countries like India which is a developing country. The instances from India proved to be very interesting as India is a developing nation, so, the food porn and its workings are influenced by all its classes. India is mainly seen to comprise three classes High class, middle class, and Low class (underprivileged), though a watertight comparison is hard to create. For this study, the emphasis is primarily on the low class/underprivileged class or the class with prominent hunger issues.

4.5.1 Class in India

Classes are manifestations of economic differentiation. Classes are constituted, not on the basis of income but on the basis of the position that one occupies or the functions that one performs in the process of production. In the case of India, studying class always

carries a unique meaning, as there is an influence of caste in it. Caste is something that a person achieves by birth, it is ranked, named, and endogamous (in-marrying) groups. There exist more than a thousand castes and sub-castes in India. Inequalities among castes are considered in the Hindu faith to be part of the divinely ordained natural order and are expressed in terms of purity and the profane.

In an analysis of class formation in India, anthropologist Harold A. Gould points out that a three-level system of stratification is taking shape across rural India. He calls the three levels Forward Classes (higher castes), Backward Classes (middle and lower castes), and Harijans (very low castes). Economically, far below such groups are members of the menial underclass, which is taking shape in both villages and urban areas. As the privileged elites move ahead, low-ranking menial workers remain economically insecure. Thus, it happens that the upper caste groups are becoming economically more sound and the lower caste groups are becoming more and more economically challenged. The system continues to operate, but changes are occurring. Indian constitution guarantees basic rights to all its citizens, including the right to equality and equal protection before the law. The practice of untouchability, as well as discrimination on the basis of caste, race, sex, or religion, has been legally abolished. The Constitution helps in some areas such as, some of the members of even the 'lower' caste are also joining the 'higher' class with the help of the economic ladder. On the basis of caste, one cannot determine the class or vice versa of any individual in India. Moreover, for this chapter, the emphasis is more on the class, not the caste in the context of India. Caste and food porn are also two important parts of Indian food porn. However, in this chapter those are not being included. Furthermore, it has already been mentioned in this chapter that, more emphasis will be given to hunger, poverty, and the lower class and their status regarding food porn, normally, its class component.

Social class has been defined as a kind of social group, which is neither legally defined nor religiously sanctioned. It is generally defined as a stratum of people occupying similar social positions. Wealth, income, education, and occupation are some of the basic determinants of class. It is relatively open, i.e. anyone who satisfies the basic criteria can become its member. There are several classes in society. These classes are hierarchically ranked primarily in terms of wealth and income. Social classes in India, as we see them today, had their genesis during British rule. The class dimension of Indian society was

only less pronounced than it turned out to be during the British period. The so-called self-sufficiency of the village community appears to have been one of the reasons behind it. Even when there was a marked class dimension; it was overshadowed by the caste component. Besides these classes, there were also classes of administrative officers of various ranks, merchants, artisans, and specialists of various kinds. The process of the rise of new social classes was an uneven one. It did not develop uniformly in different parts of the country and also among various communities (Heitzman and Worden, 1995). Moreover, irrespective of any religion, the group of people who are lacking to afford the minimum criteria of life like food, shelter, clothing, education, and health and are poverty and hunger-stricken, starved group is the one which is being focussed.

4.5.2 The Classes in India and Food Porn

In the Indian context, as already mentioned earlier roughly three classes- the high class, the middle class, and the low class (under-privileged), can be seen, though watertight compartments are hard to make. However, when viewed from the angle of food, the taste of food, as well as the presentation of food, it is enough as a material for the study of class. So, food porn and the study of class is a significant work to understand the complex setting of Indian society. A very interestingly delivered discussion on food and class has been provided by Erin Metz McDonnell (2016, 241),

“Though associated with sustenance and social familiarity, food is also a status-laden arena of social demarcation.” Bourdieu’s famous study of habitus and cultural capital intricately traced the class-based differences in how the practices and tastes around food differentiated the social spheres of Parisian professionals and the working classes (Bourdieu, 1984). Thus the FOOD PORN subject and the practice of capturing and sharing food images are intimately linked. The wider availability of spectacularly crafted food has stimulated within a category of consumers – often styled as ‘foodies’ – the desire to cultivate and display refined food tastes. For the twenty-first century nouveau riche, publicly sharing photographs of aestheticized food enables the public demonstration of social prestige, the participation in high cultural capital, as a form of conspicuous consumption (Veblen, [1899]

1912). As in Veblen's observation of prior eras, it is not the contemporary über rich who pioneered the practice of food porn, but rather aspiring classes – imitating the tastes of wealthier classes – for whom such food was newly in reach. This is commensurate with Bourdieu's observation that the upwardly mobile petite bourgeoisie were the most likely to exhibit aspirational tastes in food, mimicking those of upper-class origin who were 'very inclined to the "original and exotic" ' in contrast to the working class, who preferred meals that were 'plentiful and good' (Bourdieu, 1984: 79). Erin Metz McDonnell (2016, 241),

In relation to India, it can also be vividly observed that food and class are interrelated. The idea of food for the high class is definitely very different from lower or underprivileged class and also from the middle class.

In this regard, another engrossing reality is put forward by Roland Barthes (1972, 78-80), in his work titled "Ornamental Cookery". Barthes argues that the ornamentation regarding cookery always has a class connotation associated with it. He put examples of two magazines, one named Elle, which primarily deals with the working middle class women, and the other is L' Express for the petite-bourgeoisie. In the magazine Elle, food is presented in a very sophisticated way, or in his words 'dream-like cookery', on the other hand, in L'Express food is presented very normally without much sophistication. So, through this, Barthes wants to prove his point that the working class who cannot afford sophisticated food in their real life can enjoy their cooking dreams through this magazine. In the case of L'Express, petit-bourgeois who can enjoy comfortable purchasing power in their everyday lives, through the magazine just want the real food recipes. This point can easily be seen in the context of India too. In a way, the class becomes one of the seducing elements or agents for the gaze of the consumers.

4.5.2.i An Example in Indian Setting

In the case of India, for instance, there are many Kentucky Fried Chicken Franchise restaurants in metropolitan cities, like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, and even in Guwahati. KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) is an American fast-food restaurant chain headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, that specializes in fried chicken. Colonel

Harland Sanders was the main person behind the coming of KFCs (Whitworth, 1970). Since this chapter examines this argument in the context of India, it is a common scenario that the middle class or to be specific, the upper middle class often visit such places in India.

The elite class (high class) mostly visits the exotic or in recent times some restaurants that have opened such as a chain of organic restaurants in places like Bengaluru and Mumbai. Celebrities either from the film industry or business industry who earn enough fortune to afford them, often visit such places like Green Path in Malleswaram, Farmer's Cafe in Bandra West, 91 Mumbai, Kitchen Garden by Suzette, Bandra West, Hakkasan, Bandra West, Sequel Bistro & Juice Bar, Bastian, Bandra West. These restaurants are not affordable for the lower or unprivileged class, or even the middle class, only the high class afford them (Chablani, 2019).

Again, to talk about the lower class or the underprivileged class who mostly cannot afford food from restaurants, and go to very cheap street food vendors. There are many instances where distinct differences can be clearly seen regarding class and food-eating habits in the context of India. A cursory glance at the idea of hunger, starvation, and poverty in the context of India is provided below to begin the core assignment of this chapter.

4.6. The Status of Hunger and Starvation in India

For India, hunger and starvation have been the major problem before independence as well as post-independence. There are many books and articles where these issues have been discussed at length. One of them, where India's hunger and starvation has been addressed is the article by Dan Banik (2011).

Despite all its achievements, India tops the list of countries in the world with the largest share of the global extreme poor. And with 37.2 % of the population (more than 400 million people) that is officially estimated to be living in absolute poverty, the country has the unenviable record of being home to a third of the world's poor. Although substantial improvements have taken place in the past six decades—e.g. the number of undernourished individuals decreased from 210 million in 1990–1992 to 194.6 million in

2014–2016 (FAO 2015), there is now widespread consensus among scholars, practitioners, and policymakers that improvements in nutritional status have not kept pace with the country's impressive success in spurring economic growth in the past few decades. Despite being touted as a major economic power and a rising global power, India is also home to the largest number of hungry people in the world.

Another scholar, Benjamin Robert Siegel (2018) in his book entitled, *Hungry Nation: Food, Famine, and the Making of Modern India*, beautifully made an account of how food became the final issue in the nationalist push for Indian independence and the first challenge of the new Indian state. Siegel argues that in the Indian context, it is because of hunger that the famine created a breaking point in Indian frustration with English colonial rule and disgust with British attempts that led to the result of modern India- the 1943 Bengal famine. In other words, the severity of the famine, in which three to four million lives were lost due to hunger and malnutrition is not what makes it the starting point of contemporary India. Even contemporary India also deals with hunger, starvation, malnutrition, and the politics related to it.

Amartya Sen (1981), in his book *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, also talks about the issue regarding food, poverty, and hunger in the context of India in particular and world hunger as a whole.

Hunger, starvation, and poverty are the very basic realities of the country of India. On one hand, there exist the world's richest individuals, and on the contrary, hunger, starvation, and poverty are the other realities of India. Thus, India's picture of hunger and poverty is being portrayed through the above discussion. The following section will be dealing with the idea of how food porn, hunger, and poverty can be discussed on the same platform. To understand the mentioned issues in the context of India, a text is being taken into consideration.

4.7 Five Photographs of Dreaming Food Project by Alessio Mamo, as Text

Alessio Mamo is a Sicilian freelance photographer based in Catania. He began his photojournalism in the year 2008 focusing on contemporary social, political, and economic issues of the world. (<http://www.alessiomamo.com/wordpress/about-me/>) In

the year 2011, he took some photographs in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh as part of a project called Dreaming Food. On July 22, 2018, and posted five photos from his project work on the Instagram account of the Amsterdam-based World Press Photo Foundation, one of the world's foremost photojournalism organizations (Khan and Pathak, 2018). The concept of the project of 'Dreaming Food' as explained by Alessio Mamo was inspired by the issue of wastage of food done in the West and the number of Indian children dying of malnutrition annually. The photographs consist of one or two male and female villagers both posed together and in some other photographs models posed singly. All the photographs consist of a table with a red tablecloth and different types of fake food (mostly not Indian cuisine) which is kept in front of the posed individuals and a rustic background has been showcased.

4.7.1 Criticism of Mamo's "Dreaming Food" photographs

The photographs captured by Alessio Mamo faced a wide range of criticisms just after their upload on Instagram on July 22, 2018, some of the criticisms are on the following grounds -

One of the articles on the Mamo's project by Priyanka Bansal entitled "Alessio Mamo's 'Dreaming Food' Was Definitely in Bad Taste" wrote that World Press Photo, one of the premier organizations and Mamo as a part of that organization worked with such mistake is very bad. She compares Mamo's work with the works of Dario Mitideri's Children of Bombay'. In the works of Mitideri, who was criticized for photographing the street children of erstwhile Bombay in their vulnerable positions including nude and semi-nude pictures. As Mamo and other like-minded people would defend by saying that he was just depicting the reality of the place, others argued that it could be used by people who draw pleasure from child nudity. Again Bansal said that Mamo needed to be more mindful, So, Bansal also criticized the editorial decisions. She urges photojournalists to make better choices and for prominent organizations to pick up smarter and more empathetic projects.

Another article on this issue is, by Alison Dundes Renteln (2018), in which she argues that the NGO's and Journalists who are responsible for making photographs of powerful images should shift from a "politics of pity" to a "politics of dignity." She also talks about measures which are being taken by authorities regarding the mentioned issue.

Nevertheless, there are many instances that reflect the desire to show greater sensitivity to the precarious status of some subjects in photographs. Recognizing that voyeuristic interpretation of distant suffering is offensive does not necessarily mean this practice will cease. The real challenge ultimately is that the ethically problematic images that present “pitiful” victims to the world are often the ones that capture public attention.

These criticisms are mainly based on the grounds of lack of empathy, lack of consent, lack of understanding, and also on the grounds of poverty porn. Significantly, one of the main criticisms faced by Alessio Mamo’s photographs was that he was accused of doing poverty porn, the phrase which refers to something that uses one’s poverty status to earn sympathy and heroic names. ‘Poverty porn’ suggests that the protagonists are being exploited and that the viewer is motivated by the gratification of basic instincts. A scholar named Matt (2009), in his words,

As I’ve come to believe, poverty porn, also known as development porn or even famine porn, is any type of media, be it written, photographed, or filmed, which exploits the poor’s condition in order to generate the necessary sympathy for selling newspapers or increasing charitable donations or support for a given cause.

Thus, it can be said that poverty porn is a phenomenon where the poverty of any group is used to benefit oneself, this benefit might be in different forms like earning a profit, gaining publicity, earning respect etc. Food porn is also about exploitation. The capitalist also benefits from it. Basically, poverty porn is something where poverty becomes an item for sale by abusing consumers’ emotions. In the context of the photographs of Mamo, “Dreaming Food”, is accused of using poverty as the subjects in the photographs to earn publicity, respect, and other gains in the world. For the present study, poverty porn is discussed only on the grounds of understanding the criticism of Mamo’s “Dreaming Food” photographs only.

Alessio Mamo’s reply after his photographs got criticized which had been quoted in *Mirror Online* (2018) in the following way:

The only goal of the concept was to let Western people think, in a provocative way, about the waste of food. Maybe it did not work at all, maybe it did in a wrong way, but I worked honestly and

respectfully with all the people involved. I only had the intention to let people think about this issue", he wrote. He also stated that the people in his photographs were not malnourished, hungry or sick. Despite the backlash and the resultant controversy, the World Press Photo organization is yet to pull down the photos from its Instagram account.

For this study, the criticisms regarding the photographs are not being emphasized but Mamo's photographs are being used to read the hunger story of India. The criticisms of Mamo's Photographs and his reply are used for this context, only to summarize the whole background of the photographs, it is not for detailed study.

Moreover, this scene from Alessio Mamo's "Dreaming Food" can be understood from the lens of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1977). Orientalism is basically the difference between East and West. According to Said, "Orientalism" is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and the Occident". Orientalism is also defined as the biased perspective through which Westerners view languages, lifestyles, art, cultures, values, and attitudes of the East, particularly the Middle East and North Africa. Edward also argued that the manifestations of Orientalism still exist with only a main difference in which the British and French role was replaced by the American Orientalism. Mamo's "Dreaming Food" can be seen as a product of orientalism as the way he discusses the motive behind his intention regarding the projecting the poverty-stricken subjects as they are poor and have less food to eat, unlike American citizens who mostly waste enormous amounts of their food every day. This particular notion that Americans waste food, implies that Americans unlike Indians have enough food to eat that's why they even manage to waste. Mamo used this interpretation as an explanation to his argument against his "Dreaming food" photography project's criticisms. While this is a misperception that every Americans have enough food to eat and waste. There are large numbers of Americans who do not have enough food or lack access to healthy food. On the contrary, in the context of India, the subjects of the photographs are not even getting enough food to sustain themselves, so, they are asked to dream in front of fake foods.

Some photographs of Alessio Mamo's 'Dreaming Food' project,



Fig: 4.1



Fig: 4.2



Fig: 4.3



Fig: 4.4

Source: Fig. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4-

<https://www.google.com/search?q=Dreaming+food+project+alessio+mamo&sxsrf=APwXEdGZ>

qaVmhywHju2KdAge9e6q_hyg:1681143823663&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKE wjk2LPj3J_-

AhX5jFYBHasbC6gQ_AUoAXoECAEQAw&biw=1536&bih=754&dpr=1.25

4.7.2 Reading of the Five Photographs of the Dreaming Food Project

The five photographs of the Dreaming Food Project were observed in the following way:

- For this study, from the Photographs, primarily two categories of classes can be analyzed: who can afford food and with the availability of choices, the elites doing food porn and the group who cannot eat so food is lacking for them or can be called the hungry category and lack of food.
- Or in other words, it can be said that one group possesses the choice of doing food porn or have the choice of comfortable pleasure of food porn and the other group is the hungry group, so, they lack food as well as the choices.
- Who are the two categories and their characteristics?
- The individuals in the photographs who are covering their eyes and being asked to dream about food they want, these people can be perceived as the group who are facing lack of food in real life and so, dreaming is a way they are fulfilling their physiological need of food with the help of satisfying their psychology. This is the one category.
- The other category that can practice their choices of food and practice food porn is being perceived to be represented through the fake foods showcased in the photographs. It is more symbolic, no physical human being is present. It can be said that to understand and read the text in a more detailed way, the method of prosopopoeia or personification is employed. In a general sense, it is known to all that hungry people, the food of elite people, is always a dream for them. That is why this comparison.

Global food movements are varied and represent a rising consciousness of the effects that our food systems have on the environment, society, and health. Numerous issues pertaining to food production, distribution, consumption, and sustainability are the focus of these movements. For instance, numerous interesting food movements that aimed to address different facets of the food system have emerged in the US like the Zero Hunger Movement, which is an international movement, backed by institutions such as the United Nations, that aims to end hunger and malnourishment by tackling food security concerns and guaranteeing that everyone has access to sufficient and nourishing food. Food Waste Reduction Movement is another type of movement that focuses on

responsible consumption, redistributing excess food, and finding creative solutions for food processing and preservation. Its goal is to reduce food waste at every stage of the food supply chain. (Nestle, 2007)

4.7.3 The Reasons behind the Representation

In academic or non-academic discussions, writings, and conferences, on the topic of hunger and the hungry population, the images used in these contexts are mostly the images of some children with protruding stomachs, some black women with thin body stature, and so on, basically showing the individuals and where food is a lack. On the other hand, there is the category who can afford to enjoy food without much difficulty or choices of food are available for them without lack. Moreover, it can be called the group who can afford the food porn, the glamorous, exotic food whether online or offline, or whether physical food or the simulated reality food, or the holder of the gaze. Therefore, the reading of the photographs is being done based on two perceived categories. Moreover, the protruding stomach of the male child in a photograph among the five photographs captured by Mamo is a very vivid symbol of lack of food and hungry category. The protruding stomach is a sign of a lack of food and scarcity. Kwashiorkor is a serious medical condition that happens when a person does not consume enough protein that is necessary for the body. This severe deficiency of protein leads a person to retain excessive fluid, which can make the stomach look bloated (Butler, 2020).

Moreover, regarding food porn, the foods which seduce the viewers' hunger are mostly fake, as they are foods of simulated reality. They rarely have empty stomachs. So, in the context of the texts, they are perfectly represented with fake foods on the table.

Hence, the two categories have been established and with the help of the concepts of physiological hunger and appetite can be understood. The next important task is to understand how these categories can be used to represent the varied population categories of India. In India, more than half of the population is poverty-stricken (the 'have nots') the remaining others are the group that can afford food of choices. So, for the sake of convenience to understand the issue, we can divide the categories of the population of India as the one with the ability to afford food as well as enjoy the elements of food porn and the other with the inability to afford food and thus no meaning of discussing food porn. So, in this context, the individuals who posed in the photographs

can be perceived as representing the poverty-stricken hungry group and the fake foods on the table are perceived to be represented as the elite and middle-class group of India, who can enjoy food porn.

4.8. Understanding Alessio Mamo's Photographs of 'Dreaming Food' through the Lacanian Gaze

Alessio Mamo while photographing the models from the Indian villages of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh asked them to dream about food they want to have in front of their eyes. To discuss the whole scenario from the context of those villagers' situations, basically they belong to the group where to have a completely nutritious one time meal is a rare occurrence. Mamo is asking them to dream about the food they want to have, moreover, putting some fake foods in front of them. In this entire process of photographing, some significant points need to be noted. Firstly, the economic situation of the people who are being asked to dream is already struggling with their daily food management. So, asking them to dream of a situation that is something entirely contrary to their reality. Another important point to be noted is that the fake foods are kept in front of the photographed subjects. Finally, the idea of asking a group of people to dream. All these situations can be observed from Lacan's lens of Chuang-tsu's butterfly dream.

4.8.1 Lacan's Idea of Chuang-tsu's Butterfly Dream

Chuang Tzu was a philosopher from ancient China, one night he went to sleep and dreamed that he was a butterfly. He dreamt that he was flying around from flower to flower and while he was dreaming he felt free, blown about by the breeze hither and thither (The Philosophy Foundation, n.d.). He was quite sure that he was a butterfly. This analysis of Chuang's butterfly dream from Lacan's (1978), perspective is beautifully simplified way Yuanlong Ma, "The split of the gaze from the eye is, in the final analysis, the split of the unconsciousness from the consciousness. According to Lacan, the eye stands in close relation to the representation, the consciousness and the subjectivity whereas the gaze stands in close relation to the image, the unconsciousness and the objet petit a. As far as the scopic field is concerned, there is a most imperceptible fact: it is only because the fact that "I am someone who is looked at" is erased that I can constitute my consciousness." In other words, it is only because the gaze is veiled, screened by the eye that my consciousness and subjectivity can come into being. As Lacan points out, in its existence in the world, the subject not only looks, it also shows. For whom it shows? Ofcourse, for the other. However, it is not the same in the awoken state as in the world of dream. In the so-called awoken state, the subject feels that he/she is looking but is not aware that something is shown before him/her. In the field of the dream, however, it does nothing but shows..Lacan opines that in the scopic field the imposition of identity on the subject is carried out by the gaze (i.e. being looked at from all sides). That is why in the waking state, it is only for the sake of the others that Chuang-tsu is Chuang-tsu, however, in the field of dream and in

the field of the unconsciousness, he is a butterfly for nobody. (Ma, 2015, 128). In the context of Alessio Mamo's photographs the subjects who dream about their foods they wanted to have, can be explained in this way. The food and the image of themselves having the food will be totally different from their usual awakened stage food like the Chuang-tsu's butterfly dream. The food which the subjects are dreaming will be something that they gaze in their awakened stage. Lacan says that it is always eye stands in close relation to the representation, the consciousness and the subjectivity whereas the gaze stands in close relation to the image, the unconsciousness and the objet petit a. So, in the context of Mamo's subject and their dreams, the food they dreamt of can be understood like this: subjects are poverty stricken or lack of food is the truth in their awakened stage. In other words, it can be said as these people are being perceived as the poverty stricken people by others. However, in their dreams they can be people who 98 have enough food that too in different variety for nobody. The Capitalist used this dreamy stage of unconscious to get involved in the world of gaze so that the reality does not hurt them and the capitalist could. As we all know that the fake food in this context is also another kind of food porn. Whether showcased as healthy or unhealthy, one point is common in both the cases that it is the glamorous, luxurious presentation of food in excess. However, these excessive, glamorous, luxurious are nothing but a seducing element for the class and status maintaining group of people who enjoy the status laden food where nutrition and energy are questioned or hidden as discussed by McDonnell. Here comes the play of hidden hunger and food insecurity in the context.

4.7 Seduction and Gaze

The whole phenomenon of food porn is being discussed in the context of India with emphasis on the case study of Alessio Mamo's photographs from the lens of Lacan's gaze.

In all the photographs of Alessio Mamo, he is asking the subject's (the model who posed for the photographs) eyes to be closed and covered with hands and to dream about the food the subjects would like to have on their table. So, in this process when seen from Lacan's perspective of gaze, objet petit a, the desires, and fantasies of the subjects or the models are being triggered as a result of their unknown fantasies, the subjects for a moment are trying to search for their lack (both in psychoanalysis and hunger sense). In regard to the intention behind the 'Dreaming Food' photographs of Alessio Mamo is to create a contrast between a Western table with luxurious food and food in a poor context that could emphasize this contrast. Moreover, it shows the people of America how they waste food on different occasions and how India is fighting for even minimal necessities of food. The intentions behind the photographs are discussed by Mamo after he faced a severe backlash from a large group of

scholars and netizens. However, in the context of this chapter, the researcher is not questioning Mamo's arguments or either supporting criticisms, notwithstanding, trying to read the photographs from the lens of Lacan's gaze, as one of the perspectives of the research.

4.7.1 Hunger and Poverty Used for Subtle Seduction

In the photographs captured by Alessio Mamo, the act of asking the subjects to dream about what food they want to eat, is a symbolic way of alienating the agencies of the individuals and deriving towards the tinkering aspects of life which is to fulfill their temporary psychological hunger without satisfying the physiological hunger. In the context of fake foods in the photographs captured by Alessio Mamo, those who can afford to enjoy food porn, basically, the elite and middle class are groups of India being seduced with the promise of providing class-laden food which is wanted by them to maintain their class in the society. So, in this way of promising class-laden fake foods,

the agency is being alienated from questioning about the hidden hunger. From this, it can be understood that food porn is a way or process or phenomenon with the help of which the capitalists rule and earn profit out of dominating all the groups but with consent as a form of fake food or low nutritious food.

How the act of dreaming by the subjects can be regarded as alienating their agencies can be understood from the concept of 'Alienation'. Alienation is a term that has been used over the ages with varied and sometimes contradictory meanings. To discuss briefly on its ancient history, the term which was basically used in a positive way, was mostly used from a metaphysical sense of achieving a higher state of ecstasy or union, contemplation, becoming alienated from a limited existence in the world. Since then many scholars have been using the term in many different senses, mostly in a similar manner. Hegel was the first philosopher to seriously engage in a philosophical and widespread discussion about the concept of alienation. Moreover, Karl Marx, one of the students of Hegel, used the term in a more non-spiritual way.

In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, Marx (1961) discusses four aspects of the alienation of labour, that takes place in a capitalist society: one is alienation from the product of labour; another is alienation from the activity of labour; a third is alienation from one's own specific humanity; and a fourth is an alienation from others, from society. There is nothing mysterious about this fourfold breakdown of alienation. It follows from the idea that all acts of labour involve an activity of some sort that produces an object of some sort, performed by a human being (not a work animal or a machine) in some sort of social context. result of the

private ownership of the capital and hiring workers for wages, as well as arrangements that give workers little control over what they are doing. In systems that alienate themselves, people do not work for the experience of satisfaction or a sense of connection with the process of life but instead work to earn money and meet their needs. What causes alienation becomes a mechanical activity and flowing habit that is managed by others.

For this study an understanding of Gramsci's use of alienation and 'hegemony' is considered for the study as it is not only economically deterministic, it also looks at the ideological, social, and cultural perspectives. Gramsci does not directly use the term alienation but he discusses the idea of alienation in his work of Hegemony and intellectuals. Gramsci is the first famous Marxist who focused on the theme of superstructure and raised some questions about the special relations between economy, culture, and class. In Gramsci's (1971) opinion, in civil societies, the consent of the people is gained through various ways and forms a false consciousness among the working classes. One of the most important ways of forming consent and false consciousness is through the ideological control of the intellectuals. This way of controlling the consciousness of the working class creates a favorable condition for alienation as the people are not aware of the reality and hence are alienated from society and from themselves. A scholar named Baher Hussain discusses the phenomenon of Cultural Hegemony and how alienation happens from the perspective of Antonio Gramsci. Hussain quoted Gramsci, Cultural Hegemony is the "spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is historically caused by the prestige that the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production"[4] He opined that Gramsci's theory of Cultural Hegemony perfectly captures the power relations in the digital era. To expand, the rise of Capitalist social media and digital media as a whole, the more time a user spends on Facebook, the more profile, browsing, communication, behavioral, content data s/he generates that is offered as a commodity to advertising clients. This way Gramsci sees how the Capitalist big tech companies are distracting the masses and dictating the social culture and conditions of labor that the Proletariat operates under and alienating them from themselves and from the society.

In the case of the subjects of Alessio Mamo's photographs, the act of dreaming can be understood as a process of alienation. The subjects in their dreaming state, fall into the trap of false consciousness (the term used by Gramsci in his work) as in their dreams they are being asked to dream about the foods that they want to have in their imagination however, in reality, it is not possible. Moreover, fake foods are kept in front of the subjects, all these actions can be understood to be included in the process of alienation. This alienation is the alienation from reality and the construction of a fake consciousness. The physiological hunger of the hungry

population is not addressed, which is the real concern but their consciousness is diverted towards a simulated reality that helps the capitalist to maintain the hegemony and alienate them from themselves as well as from the society as a whole. The agency and the consciousness of the hungry group are diverted towards enjoying the dream of having some unrealistic foods of imagination.

In the world of simulated reality, the middle and elite classes are also used by the capitalist system as already mentioned, as the consumers of status-laden products as well as authentic products with exotic significance, which is an important market for the capitalist system for food porn. Moreover, it can be understood through the Baudrillard's concept of simulacra and simulation. Baudrillard in his book *Simulacra and Simulation*, he opined that the world in which we live, the simulations take over our relationship with real life, this creates a hyperreality which is a copy of an entity which does not have any original. He describes three orders of simulacra. The first order is one in which reality is represented by the image. The second order of simulacra is one in which the distinction between reality and representation becomes blurred or the representation is more real than the real itself. The third order of simulacra is that of simulation, reality itself is lost in favour of a hyperreality. In this context of Baudrillard's simulacra and simulation Food porn and its phenomenon can be understood which is neither true nor false. In fact, it is a deterrence machine set up in order to rejuvenate in keep busy in a hyperreal world, so, the truth of domination, manipulation, and suppression is not understandable by the general public.

The agency of individuals helps them to know about food insecurities, hidden hunger and other concepts that will help to eradicate oppression of any type.

4.8 Understanding Food Insecurity and Hidden Hunger in the Context of India

Food insecurity, in general, is something that is a condition of not being able to afford basic food as well as being safe, nutritious, and healthy. We must understand what food security is before discussing food insecurity. As Gyn said, "World Food Program defines food security as having "availability and adequate access at all times to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life." There is some debate over this, as some policy researchers tend to see food insecurity more as an economic problem than a food-specific problem. In this case, food insecurity is defined as "inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints." (Gyn, 2017).

Thus the concept of food insecurity posed another serious question to the researcher, i.e.

- food insecurity only concerns the problem of not being able to afford due to financial constraints. What about the problems of the absence or very little presence of important nutrients in food, as food without nutrients and necessary ingredients will put healthy life at stake? It can be seen that in underdeveloped or developing countries, dealing with food insecurity at any cost, results in compromising the quality of food, devoid of necessary nutrients to lead a healthy life. So, here comes another concept called 'hidden hunger' which gives more insights into the core problems of hunger, starvation, and poverty as a whole related to food in the case of India.

According to Grebmer et.al (2014), former deputy executive director of UNICEF,

“Hidden Hunger, also known as micronutrient deficiencies, afflicts more than 2 billion individuals, or one in three people, globally (FAO 2013). Its effects can be devastating, leading to mental impairment, poor health, low productivity, and even death”

.....Hidden hunger is a form of undernutrition that occurs when intake and absorption of vitamins and minerals (such as zinc, iodine, and iron) are too low to sustain good health and development. Factors that contribute to micronutrient deficiencies include poor diet, increased micronutrient needs during certain life stages, such as pregnancy and lactation, and health problems such as diseases, infections, or parasites. While clinical signs of hidden hunger, such as night blindness due to vitamin A deficiency and goiter from inadequate iodine intake, become visible once deficiencies become severe, the health and development of a much larger share of the population is affected by less obvious “invisible” effects. That is why micronutrient deficiencies are often referred to as hidden hunger”.

Basically in the case of hidden hunger, food is affordable, however, it is cheap and filling, but most importantly an insidious type of deficiency caused by deficiency in essential vitamins and micronutrients. The interesting fact, in this regard, is that the consequences of subclinical deficiency of micronutrients often go unnoticed. Therefore, this phenomenon is called hidden hunger. Here the hunger for nutrient-rich food is present but goes unnoticed as physical food is affordable and in the literal sense the people are no longer without food.

The two concepts, food insecurity and hidden hunger operate hand in hand. First of all the phenomenon like food insecurity is an outcome of a capitalist maximizing profit system. An instance can be seen in the words of Tamseel Aqdas (2021), Generally, it is believed that food insecurity is not a result of food scarcity but the scarcity narrative was produced and used by the corporate food regimes to serve their interests through capitalism. In reality, the annual

production of food surpasses the benchmark of sustaining one and a half times more food for the world's entire population. Food insecurity is none other than a fabrication of capitalism and it is the interests of corporations, where the wealth is saturated in the elite class. Due to capitalism, food has transformed from a necessity into a commodity, it has become an entity for the maximizing of profiting from its high demand. Moreover, the phenomenon of hidden hunger is the result of the concession of the promise of providing some food. Due to this food is available and to an extent affordable but not nutritious food. Thus, it can be said that hunger remains hidden from the general public.

Thus, it can be understood that through various means the nutritional value of food is always being veiled and can be understood through food insecurity and hidden hunger. Food porn, is a phenomenon where food is showcased as abundant, exotic, and costly, and most importantly this food seduces the hunger of people like sexual pornography seduces the mind of the audiences, but it can be said that the nutritional value is less as food porn is mostly associated with high-calorie content foods (Davis, 2000). Most importantly, as opposed to the popular belief that food porn is where food is secure and available as it always showcases an abundance of food and another notion associated with food porn is also so-called "healthy food", as already discussed in the previous chapter. All these perspectives related to food porn can be seen as established by the consumerist capitalist media. On the other hand, in the case of the poverty-stricken group, physiological hunger forces them to consume cheap food without any nutritional value. The protruding stomach of the child in the photograph as already discussed is a sign of malnourishment and food insecurity and most importantly hidden hunger. The other individuals in the photographs are too of thin stature and with bone structures visible as a result of food insecurity.

Food insecurity and hidden hunger can be understood in relation to food porn and poverty-stricken group's food:

In the case of the poverty-stricken hungry group, the hunger is hidden because nutrition is a far-reaching idea for them and the nearest or closest element of food available is being used anyhow to fulfill their stomach, is being fetishized by the capitalist that has healing power. Again, regarding food porn, the fake food does not contain any nutrition and in reality too the food representing food porn rarely contains high-calorie content food which can be considered a case of hidden hunger, as non-nutritious food items are available.

Thus, it can be observed that food porn and the food of poverty-stricken groups, seem different and contradictory in general. However, the quality of food in both cases is the same. In both cases, the food is of low quality. The food in the case of Food porn is either high-calorie food or simulated food, in the same manner, the food of poverty-stricken people is of low nutrition

content, not so healthy food. This can be understood as the food of both categories is not healthy.

Understanding food insecurity, and hidden hunger, in relation to food porn and middle class and elite class:

In the case of the middle class and elite groups who are the followers of food porn.

In the case of middle-class groups, by following food porn they achieve a class-laden food as respect or award. Roland Barthes in his book *Mythologies* explained this phenomenon which is discussed at length in the first chapter of this study.

Again, to discuss the elite group and its obsession with healthy, organic, exotic food of food porn, are also deceived by the capitalist veil that is on food porn.

So, hidden hunger is veiled, and no food security as such.

Therefore, it can be said that these phenomena, hunger, poverty, starvation, and food porn are different by nature and characteristics. But these two phenomena function for one significant goal, which is to alienate the agency of individuals and provide the necessary environment to maintain the status quo of the ruling dominant forces like capitalism. This is the main factor that allows food porn and hunger to survive together in the same society in a developing country like India. Food porn hijacks the brain with the seducing gaze and the villagers represent the majority population of India, and are being hijacked by poverty and lack of capabilities. The remedy to the problem of hunger and poverty given by Amartya Sen is by enhancing the capabilities of all individuals of India as lack of capabilities does not allow them to afford choice and hence freedom and justice are absent along with the food. Moreover, Sen argued for establishing Deliberative Democracy which in turn helps to form the agency of every individual and especially helps the hungry to cultivate the agency (Sen, 1999). The deliberative democracy of Sen is beautifully discussed by scholars like Lawrence Hamilton (2020) and Achin Chakraborty (2020) reviewed Lawrence work.

In regards to food porn, it can be said that the veil of glamour and abundance availability are veiling the ugly picture of hunger, and poverty. It is being done to maintain a gap between the classes.

4.9 Summary of the Chapter

Hunger, as a concept very dynamic, carries a lot of different meanings. Sometimes, it means a physiological state, again in another perspective, it signifies a state of socio- economic conditions of people. It also carries the meaning of the psychological state that is induced by some external forces. Hunger and food porn are always closely related to each other. Food porn is nothing but a product that works within the purview of hunger, whether physiological or psychological, in most cases it rather deals with psychological hunger. Food porn is popular as something that seduces people's hunger, so, this hunger mostly is enhanced by some external forces like luring people's gaze by applying many lucrative items. Like already mentioned food porn seduces its viewers according to their capacity to hold the comfortable pleasures of eating, as mentioned by Roland Barthes. It is easy to hold the viewers' attention that belongs to the respective groups of the elite and the middle class, however, the group that cannot even afford minimal food for survival or it can be said as the group whose identity lacks food and other essentials. So, to understand the relationship of hunger and food porn is a significant aspect. To study, this interesting phenomenon, India, as the context of the study is considered. To talk about the findings, it is enthralling to note down that the hungry group, or the group that lacks affording the minimum food for survival, has a close similarity and association with food porn concerning nutrition and healthy food. The quality of food, hungry groups used to eat and the quality of food that food porn in real sense presents, does not have much difference. The concepts like hidden hunger and food insecurity play a great role in unveiling the quality of food in both cases. In food porn, in the name of luxurious, healthy, exotic, status symbol food, the quality is being compromised and hence, the food in food porn and the food of the hungry group do not have much difference. Food in the context of food porn and food that is dreamt by the hungry group are unattainable. Though the food in both cases is unattainable, it provides a kind of pleasure to them by poking their desires even if for a few moments.

Food porn and poverty porn have significant connections. Hunger plays important roles in both genres but we have to understand that there are different connotations of hunger in both cases. Hunger is psychological in the former genre whereas it is biological or physiological in the latter. About food that poverty-stricken subjects are asked by the photographer in the select text can be observed that hunger is biological or physiological as the subjects in the photograph belong to the deprived section of the society who lack the basic food to live. On the other hand, the process of dreaming of food which the poverty-stricken subjects in real life is far from the possibility, is the hunger which is more of psychological.