



Food aid, domestic policy and food security: Contrasting experiences from South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa

Carlo del Ninno ^{*}, Paul A. Dorosh, Kalanidhi Subbarao

*The World Bank, Safety Nets, Social Protection and Labor, 1818 H Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20433, United States*

Received 25 October 2005; received in revised form 3 November 2006; accepted 15 November 2006

Abstract

Food aid, both for short-term emergency relief and as program food aid that helps address medium-term food “deficits”, is often a major component of food security strategies in developing countries. This study reviews the experience with food aid of four major recipients of food aid (India, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Zambia) regarding food production, trade, markets, consumption and safety nets, as well as the policy responses to food emergencies. The widely varying experiences of the study countries suggest that food aid that supports building of production and market enhancing infrastructure, is timed to avoid adverse price effects on producers, and is targeted to food insecure households can play a positive role in enhancing food security. However, food aid is not the only, or in many cases, the most efficient means of addressing food insecurity. In many cases private markets can more effectively address shortfalls in food availability and cash transfers may be a viable alternative to food transfers in-kind.

© 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

JEL classification: Q18-Agricultural policy; Food policy; I38-Government policy; Provision and effects of welfare programs; F1-Trade

Keywords: Food aid; Food security; Trade; Bangladesh; Ethiopia; India; Zambia

^{*} Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 202 4589579; fax: +1 202 5223252.
E-mail address: cdelninno@worldbank.org (C.del Ninno).

Introduction

Maintaining food security at the national and household level is a major priority for most developing countries, both for the welfare of the poor as well as for political stability. In order to help assure food security, developing country governments have adopted various strategies including efforts to increase production (often with an explicit goal of food self-sufficiency), government intervention in markets, public distribution of food and maintenance of national food security stocks. Food aid, both for short-term emergency relief and program food aid that helps address medium-term food “deficits”, is often a major component of these food security strategies (Shaw, 2002; Haddad and Frankenberger, 2003).

Numerous concerns have been raised, however, about the efficiency of food aid – supported programs in meeting their objectives.¹ Problems identified include minimal impact on development (e.g., Pillai, 2000; Clay et al., 2005), high cost of procurement of tied aid,² and poor targeting (Clay et al., 1999; Jayne et al., 2001). Moreover, along with food-assisted programs in general, food aid resourced programs often involve high administrative costs within-country (due in part to leakages; Subbarao and Smith, 2003a). Emergency food aid is also often criticized for lack of timeliness (late arrival or even cancellation) and the high cost of delivery to the recipient country (Barrett and Maxwell, 2005; Clay et al., 2005; Shaw, 2002). These limitations notwithstanding, emergency food has often been effective in addressing short-term relief needs.

Perhaps most important implication for long-term security, however, is the possibility that food aid may cause disincentives for domestic production through reductions in domestic prices and lead to reduced public and private investment in food production. To the extent that these disincentive effects are large, the benefits of food aid in addressing acute short-term food insecurity may be offset by the cost of reducing long-term food security. These possible medium-term disincentives of food aid are particularly important because, although long-term program food aid is declining, emergency operations often extend for several years, and in some countries (e.g. Ethiopia), there has been almost a continuous sequence of successive emergency operations. Several individual country studies have examined these medium-term food aid issues in major food recipient countries (e.g. Shaw and Clay, 1994; WFP, 1994, 1995; Webb and Von Braun, 1994 and Von Braun et al., 1998; Ahmed et al., 2000). Clay and Stokke (2000) and Barrett (2006) also provide a cross-country analysis of medium-term issues and draw some useful lessons of experience.

The objective of this paper is to provide a systematic comparison of experiences of selected countries of South Asia and sub Saharan Africa regarding impacts of food aid, not only in emergency situations, but with respect to medium-term production, trade and consumption. The countries covered include four major recipients of food aid over the past four decades, viz., India, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Zambia. The two South Asian countries have been the center of much of the debate on food aid and food security.³

¹ Recent analyses include Shaw and Clay (1994, 1998); Hoddinot et al. (2004); Barrett and Maxwell (2005) and Clay et al., 2005.

² Cost efficiency estimates vary widely across donors, modes of supply, commodities and destinations, ranging from 10% below to more than 55% above the cost of alternative commercial imports (Clay et al., 2005, p.13).

³ India was among the leading recipients of food aid in the 1960s, as was Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) from the 1960s through 2000.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5071188>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5071188>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)