

# Food Security and Geopolitics in Agriculture

**Jayprakash Patel, Akhilesh Yadav, Sandeep Chauhan, Shardinjay Singh\* and Kamran Alam**

*Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension Education  
Acharya Narendra Deva University of Agriculture and Technology, Kumarganj, Ayodhya, India*

**Corresponding Author**

Shardinjay Singh

Email: shardinjay@gmail.com



**OPEN ACCESS**

## Keywords

Food security, geopolitics, trade policy, export restrictions, global food systems

### *How to cite this article:*

Patel, J., Yadav, A., Chauhan, S., Singh, S., and Alam, K. 2026. Food Security and Geopolitics in Agriculture. *Vigyan Varta* 7 (04): 145-148.

## ABSTRACT

Food security has emerged as a critical global concern in an era marked by geopolitical uncertainty, climate change, and economic volatility. Agriculture, as the foundation of food systems, is deeply influenced by political decisions, international relations, and strategic trade policies adopted by nations. This article examines the interlinkages between food security and geopolitics in agriculture, with special emphasis on national food security strategies, government policies, and the influence of global political events on agricultural trade flows. It discusses how conflicts, sanctions, export restrictions, and strategic alliances reshape food availability and access, particularly for import-dependent and developing nations. The article argues that achieving sustainable food security requires balancing national interests with global cooperation, strengthening domestic agricultural resilience, and maintaining open and transparent trade systems in the face of geopolitical challenges.

## INTRODUCTION

**F**ood security is defined as a condition in which all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. *Practical, G. (2008)*.

While food security was traditionally viewed through the lens of agricultural production and poverty alleviation, it has increasingly become a geopolitical issue. Globalization has integrated agricultural markets across borders, making food systems more sensitive to

political decisions, diplomatic relations, and international conflicts.

In recent decades, the world has witnessed how geopolitical events such as wars, trade disputes, economic sanctions, and pandemics can disrupt agricultural production and trade, resulting in food shortages and price volatility. The Russia Ukraine conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, and rising geopolitical tensions among major economies have underscored the fragility of global food systems. As agriculture is both an economic activity and a strategic sector, governments often use food and agricultural trade as tools of political influence, which can have profound implications for global food security.

### National Food Security Strategies and Government Policies

National food security strategies are designed to ensure stable food availability, accessibility, and affordability for domestic populations (Qureshi, M., Dixon, J., & Wood, M. (2015)). Governments employ a wide range of policy instruments, including price support mechanisms, public procurement systems, strategic food reserves, input subsidies, and social safety nets. These measures aim to protect vulnerable populations from market shocks and ensure political stability.

Many countries maintain strategic food grain reserves to respond to emergencies such as droughts, conflicts, or sudden supply disruptions. Public distribution systems and food assistance programs play a critical role in ensuring access to food among low-income households. However, while such interventions are effective domestically, they may influence international markets if they involve export restrictions or large-scale procurement.

Trade policy is another important component of national food security strategies. Martin, W. J., & Glauber, J. W. (2020) Governments

often face a dilemma between maintaining open trade to benefit from global markets and restricting exports to protect domestic consumers during periods of high prices. Export bans and quotas, though politically appealing, can exacerbate global food crises by reducing supply in international markets and increasing price volatility. Thus, national food security policies must strike a careful balance between domestic priorities and global responsibilities.

### Geopolitics and Agricultural Trade Flows

Geopolitics significantly influences agricultural trade flows by shaping who trades with whom, under what conditions, and at what cost. Bosone, C., & Stamato, G. (2024) Conflicts and political tensions can disrupt production, transportation, and distribution networks, leading to sudden supply shortages. The Russia–Ukraine conflict, for example, disrupted global supplies of wheat, maize, sunflower oil, and fertilizers, severely affecting food-importing countries in Africa and Asia.

Sanctions and trade restrictions further complicate agricultural trade. While food commodities are often exempted from sanctions on humanitarian grounds, indirect effects such as restricted access to finance, insurance, shipping, and fertilizers can hinder trade. These disruptions increase transaction costs and reduce market confidence, making food less accessible and more expensive for vulnerable populations.

Geopolitical alliances and strategic partnerships also influence trade patterns. Countries may prioritize agricultural trade with politically aligned nations, leading to regionalization of food systems. While such arrangements may enhance food security for some countries, they can marginalize others and increase dependency on a limited number

of suppliers. Over time, this can heighten systemic risks in the global food system.

### **Global Events and Political Decisions Shaping Food Security**

Global events such as pandemics, climate-induced disasters, and economic crises interact with geopolitical factors to shape food security outcomes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, several countries imposed temporary export restrictions on staple foods to secure domestic supplies. Although many of these measures were later lifted, they revealed the vulnerability of global food supply chains to political decisions.

Climate change further amplifies geopolitical risks by increasing the frequency of extreme weather events, reducing crop yields, and intensifying competition over natural resources *Scheffran, J. (2020)*. In regions already affected by political instability, climate-induced agricultural stress can exacerbate conflicts and displacement, creating a vicious cycle of food insecurity.

Political decisions taken by major agricultural producers and exporters have disproportionate impacts on global markets. Policies related to biofuels, fertilizer subsidies, and land use can affect global supply-demand dynamics. Therefore, coordination among nations through multilateral institutions is essential to manage shared risks and promote food system stability.

### **Challenges and Policy Trade-offs**

The pursuit of national food security often creates trade-offs between domestic objectives and global welfare. Protectionist measures may stabilize domestic markets in the short term but undermine global food security by reducing availability and increasing prices elsewhere. Similarly, excessive subsidies can distort markets and discourage sustainable agricultural practices.

Another major challenge lies in ensuring equity. Food-importing developing countries are particularly vulnerable to geopolitical disruptions, as they have limited fiscal capacity to absorb price shocks. Without international support and cooperation, geopolitical tensions can deepen global inequalities in food access.

### **Pathways for Strengthening Food Security under Geopolitical Uncertainty**

To address the growing intersection of food security and geopolitics, countries must adopt integrated and forward-looking strategies. Strengthening domestic agricultural productivity through investment in research, irrigation, infrastructure, and climate-resilient technologies is crucial. At the same time, maintaining diversified import sources and promoting regional trade cooperation can reduce dependency on single suppliers.

International cooperation and transparent trade rules are essential to prevent panic-driven policies during crises. Multilateral institutions such as the FAO, WTO, and IFPRI play a vital role in monitoring food markets, facilitating dialogue, and promoting evidence-based policy responses *IMF, O., & UNCTAD, W. (2011)*. Targeted social protection programs can protect vulnerable populations without disrupting global markets.

### **Final Perspective**

Food security and geopolitics in agriculture are deeply interconnected in an increasingly uncertain global environment. National food security strategies and government policies, while essential for domestic stability, can have far-reaching implications for global agricultural trade and food availability. Geopolitical events such as conflicts, sanctions, and trade disputes continue to reshape food systems, often with severe consequences for vulnerable populations. Achieving sustainable food security requires a

balanced approach that strengthens domestic resilience while fostering international cooperation, open trade, and collective responsibility. Only through coordinated and inclusive strategies can global food systems withstand geopolitical shocks and ensure food for all.

## REFERENCES

- Bosone, C., & Stamato, G. (2024). *Beyond borders: How geopolitics is reshaping trade* (No. 2960). ECB Working Paper.
- IMF, O., & UNCTAD, W. (2011). Price volatility in food and agricultural markets: Policy responses. *FAO: Roma, Italy*
- Martin, W. J., & Glauber, J. W. (2020). Trade policy and food security. *COVID-19 and trade policy: Why turning inward won't work*, 89.
- Practical, G. (2008). An introduction to the basic concepts of food security. *FAO: Rome, Italy*.
- Qureshi, M., Dixon, J., & Wood, M. (2015). Public policies for improving food and nutrition security at different scales. *Food Security*, 7(2).
- Scheffran, J. (2020). The geopolitical impact of climate change in the Mediterranean region: Climate change as a trigger of conflict and migration. *Mediterranean Yearbook*.