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An uncertain Hobbesian life



The Hindu

NO SAY: “Schemes like NREGA focus on creating jobs and roads, while resisting localised decision-making.” Picture shows farmers involved in NREGA work in Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh.

India’s small farmers have been struggling for centuries now and they need social and governmental action to change their future

Of India’s 121 million agricultural holdings, 99 million are with small and marginal farmers, with a land share of just 44 per cent and a farmer population share of 87 per cent. With multiple cropping prevalent, such farmers account for 70 per cent of all vegetables and 52 per cent of cereal output. According to National Sample Survey Office data, 33 per cent of all farm households have less than 0.4 hectares of land. About 50 per cent of agricultural households are indebted. In Sultanpur district, Uttar Pradesh, cultivation cost per hectare for wheat has increased by 33 per cent in five years. Such farmers face an uncertain Hobbesian life: poor, brutish and short.

Rain-fed agriculture has been practised since antiquity in India, with Indus Valley farmers growing peas, sesame and dates. Greek historian Herodotus

had noted in *The Histories*: “India has many vast plains of great fertility. Since there is a double rainfall, the inhabitants of India almost always gather in two harvests annually.” With the British era came the zamindars, the ryots and penury. As Tirthankar Roy notes in *The Economic History of India, 1857-1947*, “from 1891 to 1946, diminishing returns coupled with growing land-shortage and yield deceleration led to an acute crisis, particularly in Bengal.” India’s marginal farmers have been worse off for centuries.

Alleviating marginal farming

Our policymakers recognised this dependence on rain and formulated policies focussed on supporting canal-fed crops and improving agricultural productivity. This they coupled with incentive structures, pricing regimes and input subsidies. A bewildering array of schemes was launched — Small Farmers Development Agency (1971), Integrated Rural Development Programme (1980), Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY, 1999) and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. Skewed by a bureaucratic approach, these schemes focussed on creating yearly jobs and roads, while resisting decentralisation and localised decision-making. Individual symptoms were mitigated, while long-term food security and ecological sustainability were ignored.

The Drought Prone Area Programme (1974) was “concerned with drought proofing rather than livelihoods and growth-focussed development.” The National Policy on Farmers (2007) focussed on improving farmer income through better risk management and an improved price policy. Implementation, sadly, was lacking, with less than 30 per cent of small and marginal farmers borrowing from institutional credit systems.

The Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (2011) allocated Rs.10 lakh to each district to prepare and implement the Comprehensive District Agriculture Plan with the participation of local panchayats. The discussions were mostly chaired by the local minister or district collector, with little reflection on farmers’ needs. Best practices were mostly ignored.

Farmers in arid regions were encouraged to plant high-yielding wheat instead of Malwi Ghehu, a local wheat variety, while relying on declining groundwater. Sixty one per cent of irrigation is now from groundwater, with the proportion of districts with semi-critical and overexploited groundwater rising to 33 per cent. The proportion of districts in the critical, semi-critical

and over-exploited category rose from 5 per cent in 1995 to 33 per cent in 2004, according to statistics available from the Central Ground Water Board.

Punjab is well past unsustainability, with 110 blocks out of 137 falling under the “over-exploited” category. The Punjab State Farmers Commission (2013) recommended a substantial crop diversification to cotton, pulses and vegetables, decreasing area under paddy cultivation by 40 per cent over five years. Of the Rs.5,300 crore suggested for diversification to dryland crops, the Centre allocated only Rs.500 crore.

A shift back to dryland agriculture, particularly in western India, is much needed. Rajasthan, despite low rainfall, is buffering by integrated farming — having subsidiary farm enterprises such as dairy, poultry, sericulture and goats. States with little rainfall such as Haryana can be encouraged to shift back to oilseeds and coarse cereals. Rice cultivation could be increased in rainfed Odisha and Assam, while incentives to promote wheat and rice are realigned.

With conventional irrigation mostly tapped, drip irrigation is an obvious solution. By accommodating irregular field sizes and unlevelled topography, water application efficiency (greater than 70 per cent) can be kept high, lessening soil erosion. Yield can be increased up to 230 per cent, while fertilizer efficiency rises up to 30 per cent. However, the high initial cost has been a significant barrier. With individual loan sizes too small for transaction costs, banks have been reluctant to provide loans. Bundling farming households through subsidy schemes like SGSY can help structure such transactions. Tamil Nadu offers a 100 per cent subsidy for small and marginal farmers for taking up micro irrigation up to a maximum of 60,000 acres. With high monetary ceilings in irrigation projects, drip irrigation can be mostly funded through a revolving subsidy fund, which is based around local self-help groups.

Even with existing subsidies, sanction delays can cause installation delays, with suppliers reluctant unless the full cost is paid. Banks could be encouraged to advance full loans to government-authorised self-help groups, without insisting on sanction and release of subsidy. Subsidy adjustment can occur later, while repayment periods are kept between 10-15 years.

Funding for research

The Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) has been primarily focussed on breeding higher yielding varieties for rice and wheat, while mostly ignoring coarse cereals. Funding for research for ICAR and State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) has been dismal. Most SAUs are in overdraft, with little accreditation and a growing dependence on ICAR.

A restructured funding scheme, with a focus on Research and Development in 10-12 crops in dryland agriculture can be encouraged. The Kelkar Committee in Maharashtra had suggested that funding to SAUs could be increased by at least Rs.100 crore, to upgrade research facilities and set up agriculture labour training schools. Mechanisation needs to be encouraged as well.

Even the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture has been hit by a funds crunch. This mission would have focussed on mitigating risks associated with climate change and ensuring food security, with a focus on organic farming and System of Rice Intensification propagation. Such initiatives need to be encouraged.

The Working Group on Marginal Farmers (2013) recommended that marginal cultivators could be encouraged to join Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs). Such organisations can be provided interest subvention on loans for a five year period and exempted from the agricultural produce market committee cess. Procurement from small and marginal farmers should be prioritised particularly through regulation for multi-brand retail. Enhancing their investment credit and matching their working capital requirements should be a priority. FPOs could be extended collateral free loans of up to Rs.25 lakh, along with creating a Credit Guarantee Fund for financial institutions to lend to such institutions.

To foster these shifts, comprehensive ground-up regulatory and social action is essential. A shift to drip irrigation can be instituted by mandating it for all sugarcane plantations and fruit orchards. Combining this with micro-irrigation and horticulture incentives might create demand on-ground. Agriculture can be further customised through soil test labs at the ground level that provide advice to farmers on a personalised basis, while promoting greater water efficiency. Taxes on agricultural machinery should be removed and agro-based industries fostered, with commodity parks created at the

district level. Such social and governmental action can help the marginal farmer peer beyond penury.

(Feroze Varun Gandhi is a Member of Parliament, representing the Sultanpur constituency for the BJP.)

Revive conventional minor millets, farmers advised



M. Rajendran, Director of Agriculture, inspecting paddy near Pudukottai on Monday.

Official asks farmers to adopt drip irrigation to improve productivity

Farmers should adopt drip irrigation particularly in raising red gram through transplanted method, said M. Rajendran, Director of Agriculture.

Addressing farmers who had raised the red gram using transplanted technique at Michaelpatti near Tiruvarangulam on Monday, he said that drip irrigation would facilitate not only minimum use of water but step up productivity.

The transplanted technique could be adopted as an inter crop, he suggested.

S.M. Shajahan, Joint Director of Agriculture, said about 368 hectares had been covered under red gram, including about 100 hectares through the transplanted technique.

At Vallavari village near Aranthangi, Mr. Rajendran advised farmers to go in for conventional minor millets particularly, ragi, cumbu, maize, and inspected the demonstration plot.

At Arasarkulam Melpathy village, also near Aranthangi, the official inspected the “CR 1009” as part of crop estimation survey which would be the basis for the crop cutting experiment.

On the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) at Kallakurichi and Mumbalai villages near Meemisal, he said that the SRI system had improved the yield.

Mr. Shajahan explained the techniques for raising the paddy seed at Kazhugumanai village near Aranthangi where samba masoori (BPT 5204) seed had been raised on four acres of land. The Director advised the district officials to ensure prompt distribution of seeds to farmers.

Tips on beating Tanjavur Wilt



Coconut farmers taking part in a training programme on management of Tanjavur Wilt at Periye on Monday.

Training held for coconut farmers of Kasaragod

With the district reporting isolated cases of Tanjavur Wilt, which affects coconut palms, a demonstration-cum-training programme on management of the fungal disease was held at Periye, near Kanhangad, on Monday.

The programme was jointly hosted by the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) here, Agriculture Department, and Kanhangad block panchayat.

Presiding over the function, C. Thamban, Principal Scientist at the CPCRI, stressed the need to apply neem cake enriched with antagonistic fungus trichoderma at the rate of 5 kg a basin, which, he said, was also beneficial to check stem bleeding disease.

Root decay

Coconut trees affected by Tanjavur Wilt would show signs of premature drying of leaves, and nut fall, and root decay, Dr. Thamban said. The package demonstrated at the function consisted of measures to contain and avoid spread of the disease. Its spread could be checked if noticed in the initial stages, Sajini Mol, Assistant Director of Agriculture Kanhangad block, said in her inaugural address. Around 30 coconut farmers and nine officials from the departments concerned took part in the programme.

MP inspects crop loss, says drought severe



Kadapa MP Y.S. Avinash Reddy inspecting the withered-away bengal gram crop in Simhadripuram on Monday.

Pulivendula constituency in Kadapa is in the grip of a severe drought, akin to that witnessed in 1967, and bengal gram, groundnut and coriander crops cultivated in Rabi season withered away in several thousands of acres in Simhadripuram, Pulivendula and Thondur mandals, Kadapa MP and YSR Congress leader Y.S. Avinash Reddy said on Monday.

Borewells became defunct and not yielding water even at a depth of 1,500 feet, he said. Mr. Avinash Reddy and YSRC State Farmers Wing general secretary Aravindanatha Reddy inspected the dried-up bengal gram crop in Y. Kothapalli, Simhadripuram and Kasunur villages in Simhadripuram mandal this morning. Farmers told the leaders that they raised bengal gram crop in over 20,000 acres in Simhadripuram mandal and were in distress due to lack of rainfall and not getting even a handful of crop yield in return. The dried up crop was even unfit for use as fodder for cattle, they said. The farmers lamented that they invested more than Rs. 10,000 per acre and incurred debts to the tune of lakhs of rupees.

As almost all borewells dried owing to severe drought, horticulturists were felling withered sweet lime trees. On finding that the crop had dried up at the plant stage with “zero yield”, Mr. Avinash Reddy spoke to Joint Director of Agriculture Gnanasekhar over telephone and sought disbursal of compensation of Rs. 20,000 an acre to the affected farmers.

‘Entuse tobacco growers to switch to alternative crops’



ZP president Pushpavathi Amarnath at a meeting in Mysuru on Monday.—
PHOTO: M.A. SRIRAM

Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture and Forest departments have been directed to chalk out a detailed project report suggesting alternative crops for tobacco and measures to convince tobacco growers to take up alternative crops. Chairing a Karnataka Development Programme review meeting here on Monday, Pushpavathi Amarnath, president of Mysuru zilla panchayat, requested Deputy Director of Sericulture Y. Chigri to evolve a project co-ordinating with the other three departments. M. Mahanteshappa, Joint

Director (Agriculture), said that a few farmers had tried couple of alternative crops but failed to get remunerative prices.

Mr. Chigri said that tobacco was grown under rain-fed conditions in Mysuru and therefore it was difficult for growers to crops that needed irrigation. If irrigation was provided, the farmers could be convinced to take up alternative crops. Ms. Amarnath asked the heads of the four departments to hold meetings with tobacco growers and chalk out a scheme for this. She expressed concern over the failure of many departments in ensuring 33 per cent reservation benefit to women in different schemes and programmes. She expressed her disappointment over some departments not furnishing information about progress in this regard. The absence of adequate bed and blanket facilities in Morarji Desai schools and hostels for backward communities also figured at the meeting.

Programme on bioinformatics begins

A programme on bioinformatics, sponsored by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, began at the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) on Monday. R. Soudamini, Director, Bio Informatics Centre, National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bangalore, inaugurated the three-week programme, titled 'The winter school on bioinformatics and its emerging dimensions in agriculture'. She stressed the need for integration of data developed at various research centres to facilitate proper understanding of behaviour of proteins.

How about some coconut honey or virgin coconut oil capsules?

CPCRI has come out with these value-added products



Director of the institute P. Chowdappa said a meeting will be held with industrialists and entrepreneurs on transferring the technologies in Kasaragod on January 31.— file photo

Heard of coconut honey and syrup? Or capsules of virgin coconut oil? The Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) has come out with these products.

The institute, headquartered at Kasaragod, Kerala, had earlier made sugar and jaggery from neera (a sweet sap from coconut palm), coconut chips, virgin coconut oil and desiccated coconut as value-added products.

‘Capsules good for health’

Director of the institute P. Chowdappa told *The Hindu* that some time ago it made 10 ml capsules of virgin coconut oil (extracted from fresh coconut kernels) for consumption as medicine.

He claimed that consuming virgin coconut oil helped improve immunity and reduced obesity as it had high lauric acid.

One tablet could be taken in the morning and one in the evening, he said and added that it had transferred the technology of making capsules to three companies recently.

The director said that sugar made from neera was good for diabetic patients as the glycemic index was low.

Without elaborating much on the honey and syrup, he said the institute would hold a meeting with industrialists and entrepreneurs in Kasaragod on January 31 on transferring the technologies. Anyone interested in the commercial production of these value-added products could attend the meet.

He said such entrepreneurs would have to sign an agreement with the institute and pay royalty fixed by it. Scientists and technologists of the institute would help them till the venture streamlined and the industry manufactured them without hiccups.

Other uses of coconut

Mr. Chowdappa said that now the CPCRI was promoting coconut cultivation as a beverage, medicinal and food crop and not as an oil seed crop as many value-added products could be made from it.

He said that of the total coconut production in the country in the last decade, only 5 per cent was consumed as value-added products.

According to him, 34 per cent was used to extract oil, 45 per cent for domestic use and 15 per cent as tender coconut.

Farmers throng Collectorate with paddy crop bunches

A few groups of farmers on Monday thronged the Collectorate here with bunches of paddy crop claiming that blast fungus disease has hit several acres of paddy.

They presented petitions with the Collector K.S. Palanisamy seeking compensation to affected farmers. They said that about 500 acres of standing paddy crop raised at Ironputhur in Guntur panchayat had been affected with the disease.

It had been spreading to neighbouring areas. Although the crop was about to be harvested, the disease had brought down the hope of farmers.

It could affect the crop yields to a great extent.

Survey sought

P. Viswanathan, Tamil Nadu Lake and River Agriculturist Association, said the State government should conduct a survey to identify the affected fields, and adequate compensation should be paid to farmers.

Several farmers from Manikandam and its surrounding areas met the Collector with the same demand.

He promised them that a survey would be conducted and their grievances would be taken to the notice of the government.

Honey, syrup from coconut

The Central Plantation Crops Research Institute has come out with products such as coconut honey and syrup.

Not a sought-after sport in Erode

Though Kangayam bulls, among the sturdiest of the cattle, are bred in the region by farmers with passion, there has been no indication so far of villagers patronising *jallikattu* in the district.

Kangayam bulls that sport a majestic appearance with huge humps are mostly sought after by organisers of *jallikattu* across the State. At a recent exhibition of Kangayam bulls in the city, the breeders made a vociferous plea to the State Government not to interfere with the culture of rural

population to conduct *jallikattu* as part of Pongal celebrations. Their line of thinking was that the ban on *jallikattu* was the cause for the rapid decline in the number of Kangayam bulls in the State.

The State Government's initiation of measures to permit conduct of *jallikattu* has gladdened the Kangayam breeders, but as far as Erode district is concerned, *jallikattu* has not been a sought-after rural sport.

Nevertheless, police sources said they are keeping a watch though there has been no representations so far seeking permission for *jallikattu*, bull races or bullfights.

There has been no representations so far seeking permission for jallikattu, bull races or bullfights in Erode, say police sources

Sugarcane farmers seek hike in procurement price; stage protest

Expressing disappointment over fixing the sugarcane procurement price at Rs. 2,650 a tonne for the current season 2014-15, members of Tamil Nadu Sugarcane Growers' Association demanded that the procurement price be increased to Rs. 3,500 for the benefit of farmers. They staged a protest with black flags and sugarcanes near Old Bus Stand in Tiruchengode here on Monday.

Led by State vice-president of the association S. Nalla Gounder, members said that the State advised price of Rs. 2,650 a tonne, including Rs. 100 a tonne for transporting sugarcane, was the same price fixed for 2013-14.

This is a mere Rs. 450 a tonne higher than the statutory fair and remunerative price of Rs. 2,200 a tonne fixed by the Centre .

Cultivation costs

“We have been urging the State and the Central governments to fix the procurement price at Rs. 3,500,” they added. Members said that rising cultivation costs, non-availability of labour, severe drought condition and other factors would discourage farmers to take up the sugarcane cultivation if the price was not revised.

‘Unfair’

Also, South Indian Mills Owners Association has announced that they would pay only Rs. 2,200 a tonne and not as fixed by the government. “It is unfair,” added the members.

Members said that the sugar mills have refused to pay an outstanding sum of Rs. 362 crore to the cane farmers for the year 2013-14.

Mills paid Rs. 2,550 a tonne and the balance of Rs. 201 a tonne were yet to be paid even after a year. Continuous protest, hunger strike, road blocks were conducted urging the mills to pay the arrears. But so far, the cane growers have not received the amount, they said.



[Diet Diary: Decoding contradictory studies on glycemic index](#)

Scientific research is the foundation of modern medicine. Yet, when it comes to media reports, several things that have been reported one day are countered sooner than later by another study, confusing the reader. For example: coffee is good for health, milk is good for you but bad for the heart; high protein is good for weight loss but bad for your heart, fats are bad for the heart but good for health.

Recently, a report on the glycemic index of food happened to create a similar controversy. The glycemic index classifies carbohydrate-containing foods according to their potential to raise your blood sugar levels. Whole grains, legumes, vegetables, fruit, low-fat dairy products, nuts and seeds raise blood sugar slowly and have a low glycemic index. Low glycemic carbohydrates help you lose weight and keep you feeling full longer, improve insulin sensitivity, blood lipids and blood pressure.

However, a scientific study recently contradicted these findings. Published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2014 conducted on 163 overweight adults for duration of five weeks, it stated that diets with low glycemic index, compared with high glycemic index of carbohydrates, did not result in improvements in insulin sensitivity, lipid levels, or systolic

blood pressure. This also implied that it had no benefit in body weight and obesity management. There were some drawback in this study – that it is a relatively small (163 participants), short (five-week) randomized controlled trial and the study population was not representative of the general population of most countries.

Several studies of longer duration conducted on much larger and diverse samples and meta-analyses have stated benefits of consuming a healthy low GI diet in relation to blood glucose, insulin and lipid profiles, weight loss and prevention of diabetes and heart disease. One of the largest clinical trials of GI involving 773 European adults, published in 2010 in The New England Journal of Medicine reported that a low GI diet was found to be highly effective in preventing weight regain over 6 months.

The beauty of scientific research is that it is a dynamic process that moves forward slowly and recommendations are made based on the best science available at the time. However, with new research and new results, these recommendations may be revised. The research process is like placing stones on an old-fashioned balance scale. When enough weight accumulates on one side, the scale tips in favour of a particular recommendation. And the more weight there is on one side, the stronger the recommendation is and the more evidence it would take to change it.

The important thing to remember is often just one study becomes a headline or a 30-second sound bite that may be oversimplified, distorted or overstated. Accurate reporting with perspective is crucial if confusion is to be avoided. Try and get to the original scientific article whenever possible.

So, the jury is clearly in favour of distinguishing the carbohydrate quality according to their glycemic index. However, nothing in isolation can ever be effective and over-simplification of any concept can be erroneous and unhelpful. So, a holistic and balanced approach to a good diet is the prudent approach and there is no magic bullet.

Recipe: Coconut fish curry and brown rice

This one meal of coconut fish curry and brown rice, can give you a hearty, wholesome, and complete Indian dinner, in terms on nutrition and taste.

The combination of fish for your protein fix, brown rice for your carbs need, and coconut in the curry, which takes care of your requirement for healthy fats, is a winning combination that cannot be replaced. Eat this piping hot while it pours down outside and enjoy!

Ingredients:

- 500 ml water
- 190 g uncooked brown rice
- 1tbsp Coconut oil
- 1 large onion chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 450 g cod fillets, cut into chunks,
- 1 1.2 tbsp curry powder
- 2tsp ground cumin
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 400 g coconut milk
- Your favourite veggies chopped up (one bowl)
- 1 tbsp cornflour

Method

Bring the water and rice to the boil in a pot. Cover, reduce heat to low, and simmer 45 minutes.

Heat the oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat. Stir in the onion and garlic, and cook 1 minute. Mix in cod, and season with curry powder, chilli powder, turmeric, cumin, salt and pepper. Pour in the coconut milk, and mix in vegetables. Cover, and cook 10 minutes, or until vegetables are tender and cod is easily flaked with a fork.

Drain 125ml liquid from the pan into a bowl, and mix with cornflour. Stir back into pan to thicken sauce. Serve over the cooked rice. Read more Personal Health, Diet & Fitness stories on www.healthmeup.com

Top 5 healthy Indian curry recipes

Known for their wide variety, aromas, flavours, spices and gorgeous colours, Indian curries are loved across the globe. Unfortunately this global love for curries is marred by a common perception - most people consider them greasy and unhealthy.

But today, Chef De Cuisine Ankit Sharma at JW Marriott, Chandigarh, shares with us his healthy versions of much-loved, popular Indian curries. With the right balance of seasoning and aromas these recipes are perfect for healthy winter indulgences.

Dal Makhni. Ingredients: 800 grams Black Gram, 800 grams Butter, 50 grams Chilli Powder, 50 grams Cumin Powder, 20 grams Garam Masala, 50 grams Coriander Powder, 30 grams Garlic Paste, 30 grams Ginger Paste, 800 grams Tomato Puree.

Method: Wash the dal thoroughly with salt, vinegar and water. Boil for 10 to 12 hours till mashed thoroughly. Saute ginger-garlic paste, cumin powder, coriander powder, red chilli powder and add tomato puree. Cook for some time, add salt and cooked dal.

Parcha Paneer. Ingredients: 300 grams Paneer, 300 grams cream, a pinch of black pepper pd, 150 grams chopped onion, 10 grams chopped green chilli, 100 grams kaju paste, a pinch of salt, deghi mirch, turmeric powder, green cardamom, 0 grams of tomato chopped and 1 tablespoon of ghee. **Method:** Cut paneer cubes into small pieces and keep aside. Heat ghee and add chopped ginger, green chilli and crushed black pepper. Add the mixture of cream and kaju paste and cook until done. Add salt and black pepper powder. Now pour the gravy over the top of paneer cubes and serve.

Jheenga Curry. Ingredients: 400 grams Prawn grade, 300 grams fresh tomato puree, 50 grams ghee, 10 grams mustard seeds, 60 grams fresh coriander, 25 grams ginger, 90 grams yoghurt, 10 grams cooking salt, 50 grams lemon juice, 5 grams green chilli, 10 grams turmeric powder, 10 grams coriander powder and 10 grams red chilli powder.

Method: De-skin prawns and clean vein by giving cut on middle. Now, chop fresh coriander and chilly green separately. Apply salt, turmeric & lemon juice to the prawn leave it for 5 mins to marinade. Now, take a pan, put it on fire and add ghee to it. Put mustard seeds, chopped green chilli, add

the fresh tomato puree and cook. Whisk yoghurt well and put it in the pan for the gravy to cook. Now, add salt and all the dry spices and cook well. Take another pan and sautee the prawns separately, and add it to the gravy.

Methi Murgh. Ingredients: 500 grams Chicken boneless, 100 grams Methi leaves , 10 grams salt, 10 grams Powder masala garam , 20 grams Ginger , 10 grams Chilly green , 150 grams Chopped onion, 100 grams Gravy tomato, 1tbs Ghee, 25 grams Ginger & garlic paste, 100 grams Tomato, 5 grams Turmeric powder, 3 grams Red chilly powder, 200 ml Chicken stock, 100 grams Coriander.

Method: Heat ghee in a heavy bottom pan. Add methi leaves and chopped onion and saute till light brown in colour. Now add the add ginger and garlic paste. Now throw in chicken piece and dry spices. Add chopped tomatoes & cook on very slow fire. Add chicken stock & cook again. Finished with chopped coriander.

Hari Mirch ke Mushrooms. Ingredients: 600 grams Mushroom button, 100 grams Chopped onion, 10 grams Garam masala powder, 1tbs Ghee, 50 grams Garlic, 20 grams salt, 200 ml Cream cooking, 2 grams Pickle chilli green, 20 grams Cumin powder, 15 grams Morrel, 10 grams Javitri ellaci powder, 5 grams Ginger, 10 grams Chopped mint, 10 grams Black pepper powder, 2 grams Green chilli pickle.

Method: Dice mushrooms and wash. Heat ghee in a pan and add chopped garlic. Then add chopped onion and saute it along with diced mushroom and salt. Then cook it on a slow fire. Soak the morels in hot water, cut them into roundels, once soft. Add morels (gucchi) to the sauteed mushroom mix. Add double cream, cumin powder and black powder. Finish the dish with come chopped mint, javitri ellachi powder and green chillies.

[Recipe: Healthy, tasty meal for your fussy kid](#)

So you think your kids are difficult eaters? As most parents will vouch, food and children aren't always the best of friends. And most mothers have a debilitating experience bringing the two together. So here's the challenge — to create a nutritious and child-friendly meal for varied fussing quotients.

Meet our grand jury — brothers Karan (11) and Kabir Mishra (7), and brothers Siddhant (10) and Rohan Gautam(7). This all-boys squad takes on Chef Ashish Rane from Silver Beach Cafe, Juhu and Chef Mahesh More from Opa, Juhu and brings their specially designed child-friendly three course meal to book.

The tall table is set; the napkins, (some wrapped around like bibs) are in place; the cutlery is daunting and tummies are rumbling; the boys are excited, and the chefs are nervous. "It's a tough crowd," says More looking at the impatient boys shuffling around in their seats and playing imaginary catch to keep themselves busy.

As the first course — delicately dressed soyabean and sprout falafel coins, hummus and muhamara by chef More and bruschetta of spinach, artichoke and sundried tomatoes by chef Rane — is brought to the table, the excitement immediately makes way for short-lived panic. Concerns on how to transport the 'cutlet and chip' to their plate without dropping, are exchanged by the boys through bewildered expressions. The air is heavy as they wait with anticipation for one of them to lead the way. Siddhant and Karan go ahead and scoop them up with their fingers while Rohan decides to put the unnecessary cutlery to use and attacks it with a fork, failing which, fingers are used. Before the others can sniff and prod, Kabir has it all down, in one big mouthful and nods approvingly.

With the bruschetta, a few other concerns are expressed. Primarily, that of some vegetables being sighted. As Siddhant picks one up, the cheese and vegetable topping falls onto his plate and his younger brother, as if on cue, scrapes off his topping, assuming that's the 'proper' way of having it.

The first is liked by almost everyone and the other, by some. Next on offer by chef More is a whole meal burger of mixed greens, soyabeans and sprouts in a multigrain bun and radish mayo. While the server is still explaining the various nutritious facets of the burger, Kabir and Rohan attack it with gusto and wolf down chunks. Siddhant carefully fishes out all the 'extra' vegetables and gingerly picks on the bun and patty. Kabir too, discounts most things healthy and heads for the bread and cheese slice. Leftovers reveal a mixed review.

The soya wrap served with bellpepper garnish was universally disliked, except Kabir, who true to his silent and focused approach to the meal, quietly consumes all of it in one bite.

The highlight of the evening was clearly the chocolate and marshmallow pizza that chef Rane dished out. Hitting where it hurts the most, these crispy sweet delights had them oohing and aahing but ranked low on the nutrition quotient. Chef More's dessert on the other hand, a Bournvita desire with Bournvita, museli, fresh fruits and honey, was high on the nourishment but ranked very poorly with our jury, who wanted "unadulterated chocolate". The pizza was the winclincher for chef Rane as he surged ahead in the tough competition. With the last of the spoons licked clean and tummies filled, the kids thanked the chefs for a "confusing but very nice meal".

So parents, don't feel disheartened if you can't get it right. Clearly, it's an uphill task even for professionals, who clearly cheated on the nutrition quotient to get by. Take heart in the fact that within a few years, when the children are all grown up and living away, the leftovers in your fridge will be the only food they'll pine for.

Chocolate pizza with marshmallows

Ingredients:

200 gm flour

30 gm butter (for the pizza dough)

50 ml milk

Water (as needed to make a soft dough)

20 gm icing sugar

75 gm chocolate pieces

50 gm finely chopped walnuts

15 marshmallows

Preparation: Take flour, butter, a little milk, sugar and water. Knead these into a soft dough. Cover with a damp cloth and keep aside for about 30 minutes. Roll the dough out into a circle and grease it with butter.

Sprinkle icing sugar and chocalate shavings. Put inside oven (set to 280 C) for four minutes. Take the pizza out, sprinkle finely chopped walnut and marshmallows on top. Put it back into the oven and remove once the marsh mellows melt. Serve hot.

Soyabeans and sprout beans falafel gold coins, hummus and muhamara

Ingredients:

50 gm soya bean

30 gm moong bean sprouts

20 gm boiled barley

20 gm cornflakes

30 gm boiled potatoes

30 gm boiled red beans

15 gm fresh spinach

15 gm raddish leaves

5 gm chopped onions

5 gm chopped garlic

15 gm grated carrot

10 gm butter

15 ml oil

Salt and pepper to taste.

Preparation: Mix all the ingredients together and make small round patties. Crumb the patties with crushed cornflakes and grated carrots. Heat the oil and butter in a pan. Pan fry the patties. Serve with hummus, muhammara and lavash.

[Allergic to nuts? Know how much is too much](#)

Researchers have identified the level of five of the most common food allergens which would cause a reaction in the most sensitive 10 percent of people.

The five foods they considered were -- peanut, hazelnut, celery, fish and shrimp.

Between 1.6 and 10.1 milligrams of hazelnut, peanut and celery protein produced a reaction in the most sensitive 10 percent of those studied.

For fish, it was higher - at 27.3 milligrams - and for shrimp, a significantly higher 2.5 grams of cooked protein produced a reaction - though the researchers did not study raw shrimp which may have a different effect.

"What we wanted was to find a level of allergen which would only produce a reaction in the most sensitive ten percent of people," said lead researcher professor Clare Mills University of Manchester in Britain.

"This sort of data can then be used to apply a consistent level of warning to food products. What we would like to see are warnings which tell people with allergies to avoid certain products completely or just apply to those who are most sensitive," Mills explained.

The researchers analysed data from 436 people across Europe who had allergies to peanut, hazelnut, celery, fish or shrimp.

They were then given small doses of the food they were allergic to and their reactions were monitored.

The study appeared in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*.

[Here's your guide to reducing salt intake](#)

Yearning for savouries every evening? Here's a guide on how to curb your salty craving

It's not our fault -our tongues are specially designed to detect sodium, and our bodies require sodium to survive. But why do we start looking for the savouries?

Turns out force of habit may be more to blame than a salt addiction. Researchers suggest that people often sprinkle salt in their food before they've even tasted it, suggesting that we're often on autopilot when we pick up the saltshaker; it's almost like the muscle memory you develop after performing an exercise over and over again. What this means is that to break your salt cravings, you just need to change your habits, and your taste buds will follow.

WEEK 1

Rid your kitchen of highly processed eats.

What does highly processed food mean? There are many ways to define it such as, long shelf life, number of ingredients, number of artificial ingredients. To get rid of the habit, ask yourself, Is it real food? One of the key signs of highly processed food, is sodium content above 140 milligrams per serving. So make sure you always check nutritional panels of foods you don't suspect are very salty.

A recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report revealed that bread, cold cuts, and cheese are top sources of salt in the diet -even more so than savoury snacks like chips, popcorn, and fries. So go easy on them.

WEEK 2

Replace packaged snacks with fresh fruits and vegetables

Even if you've cleared all the junk food from your kitchen and torn all the restaurant pamphlets serving pizzas, burgers, and other unhealthy grubbs, you may still be tempted by salty crisps your local bania sells. How do you resist? By gradually replacing the processed snacks with whole-food options. Continue to replace one prepackaged snack with fresh fruits or vegetables per day until all snacks are fresh. And while at that, you can use a little bit of rock salt when cooking. It's the packaged, processed foods that are the worst. Restaurant food is no good too, so restrain yourself from using the saltshaker when dining out.

WEEK 3

Toss out your saltshaker

Although this isn't a permanent move, it would help to quit the extra serving for now. All you need to do is to train your taste buds not to depend too much on salt. When people cut salt out of their diet, and then it is reintroduced, they use lower levels of salt, even if they previously had high salt intake. Only after you have completely restrained, reintroduce the saltshaker, but be sure you use it only after you've tasted your food. You may find that you don't need it after all.

WEEK 4

Incorporate herbs and spices into your meals

Once you've brought back salt in your diet, start experimenting with herbs and spices when you're preparing your meals. That way, you're less likely to go back to the saltshaker. If you learn to add flavour in other ways, you won't need to depend on salt to stimulate your taste buds. You'll find it easier to resist the urge to sprinkle the stuff liberally on every meal.

To drink or not to drink water with meals...

Case study: Sonalika Singh is confused. Reason? The 12-year-old does not know whether to listen to her mother or her grandmother — one says that she shouldn't have water with your meals and the other insists that one should have water along with meals. Sonalika is not alone — and neither is this debate new — to drink water with meals or not to. We spoke to clinical nutritionists and dieticians to find out more...

Water during meals may dilute enzymes Deepshikha Agarwal, sports nutritionist says, "The acids and enzymes that are necessary for digestion get diluted if you are drinking water with your meals, so it is best to avoid drinking water when you are eating. Have a glass of water half-an-hour before you sit down for your meals." She recommends that ideally there should be a gap of at least 45 minutes to one hour after one finishes their lunch/dinner. She adds, "Avoid water immediately after meals."

No one rule applies to all Clinical nutritionist Priya Karkera says that there is no one single flat rule that applies to all when it comes to having water with meals. "When treating obesity we recommend that one should have a glass of water before meals because that will make the person feel full and he/she will eat less because the appetite will reduce considerably." Karkera states that water is essential for our body and it is not harmful if one sips a little water during meals.

Is it okay? Dietitian and nutritionist, Khushboo Sahijwani believes that there is no harm in consuming water during meals if one really feels like. "We keep hearing that drinking water during a meal makes one feel full too soon and thus affects appetite and if one has it immediately post a meal then it affects digestion. But neither of the two reasons have a scientific backing to it. Generally, the acidic levels of the stomach are quite high post a meal as the digestive juices are released to begin the digestion process. And there is no such food or even water which if had immediately, that will dilute the stomach acids or affect the process in anyway, as they don't even near those ph levels."

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Govt to fast-track talks with Iran for urea plant

Bengaluru, January 12:

The Government proposes to fast track the process of setting up the proposed urea-ammonia plant in Iran through a joint venture with the West Asian country that is rich in energy resources.

“We are keen to fast track the Iran initiative. A delegation is expected to visit Iran soon to expedite bilateral discussions in this regard,” a Fertiliser Ministry source said.

Plans

A consortium of State-owned-entities such as Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilisers, Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertiliser Corporation and Gujarat State Fertiliser Corporation has been proposed to set up the fertiliser plant in Iran with a local partner.

India is a net importer of urea and the proposed plant will help in assured supplies and result in huge savings for the government.

Economically viable

“It is cheaper and economical to produce in Iran and bring it to India through a long-term off-take arrangement,” the source said.

The proposed urea-ammonia joint venture plant in Iran would be on the lines of the OMIFCO (Oman India Fertiliser Company) in Oman, where the Indian entities have jointly invested in urea manufacturing with local player.

OMIFCO is owned 50 per cent by the Oman Oil Company SAOC, 25 per cent by the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative and the rest by Krishak Bharati Co-operative Ltd.

The Government of India has a long term off-take arrangement with OMIFCO for sourcing urea.

Achieving self-sufficiency

India currently imports about nine million tonnes of urea to meet the domestic shortfall.

Urea production in India is stagnant around 22 million tonnes, while the domestic consumption ranges between 30 and 31 million tonnes.

The Centre has placed emphasis on reviving about half-a-dozen closed fertiliser units in places such as Sindri, Barauni, Gorakhpur and Ramagundam, a move aimed at achieving self-sufficiency in urea production over the next five years.

No new urea capacity has been added in the past 14 years due to lack of an appropriate policy framework, which had resulted in widening demand-supply gap.

Urea is highly subsidised and the government has ruled out any price increase or cut in subsidy.

Moreover, in a move aimed at improving the nitrogen use efficiency of urea and boost farm productivity, the Government has recently done away with the 35 per cent cap on neem-coated urea production for the domestic nutrient makers.

No new urea capacity has been added in the past 14 years due to lack of an appropriate policy framework, which had resulted in widening demand-supply gap.

Adani Wilmar to invest Rs. 150 crore in rice biz



Pune, January 12:

Edible oil major Adani Wilmar Ltd plans to invest Rs. 150 crore over the next 12-18 months in its rice business, a new vertical it expects to grow over the next few years.

The company forayed into rice last year and ran a pilot with its Pilaf brand of basmati rice.

It has just launched the commodity in its flagship Fortune brand in Maharashtra, the State that consumes nearly a quarter of the 12 lakh tonnes of the basmati rice sold in the country every year.

A phased rollout across the country will follow. “We plan to spend Rs. 150 crore over the next 12-18 months to acquire two or three brown field rice mills and upgrade them,” Angshu Mallick, Chief Operating Officer, Adani Wilmar said.

The target is to increase existing paddy processing capacity from 520 to 800 tonnes per day, he added. Adani Wilmar expects to sell around one lakh tonne of basmati rice till March 2016.

Low prices for basmati

Meanwhile, basmati rice prices in India have dropped by over 30 per cent, thanks to 20 per cent higher crop yield this year coupled with a ban on exports to Iran, a major importer of the commodity.

This year, prices are around 80-85/kg for the new crop against Rs. 128 last year, Rajesh Shah, a rice trader and executive member of the Poona Merchants Chamber, said.

The country produces 50-55 lakh tonnes of basmati rice a year, with exports accounting for around three-fourths of total sales. India produces three varieties of the rice – traditional, Pusa and 1121 varieties. A fourth variety – 1509 – is expected to be introduced this year.

Western UP cane farmers see bitter days ahead

New Delhi, January 12:

The Centre may have alleviated some of the worries of cash-strapped sugar mills in the country with a revised ethanol policy and promises to examine export incentive on raw sugar, but farmers in western Uttar Pradesh are not hopeful.

About 750 farmers committed suicide in Uttar Pradesh during 2013 (6.4 per cent of total farmer suicides in India) due to their inability to pay off debts. The numbers could rise this season, warn farmers from the area.

“This year there will be more suicides since there has been no payment yet. There is low demand for cane and it’s delaying the sowing of wheat. About 21 per cent of farmers in Baghpat alone are yet to sow wheat as their fields have still not been cleared of cane,” said Udayveer Singh, a sugarcane farmer, who spoke to *BusinessLine* on the sidelines of the “Sugarcane and Gur Festival” organised by Navdanya on Saturday.

Farmers in the region usually alternate between cane and wheat in six-month cycle.

“Wheat sowing should have begun already by mid-December. If there is a delay in the harvest, it affects local consumption and there’s a shortage of cattle feed,” said Singh.

Rising input costs

“Input costs have gone up, particularly for weedicides and pesticides along with higher diesel prices. About three years ago, we would spend maybe Rs. 200-250 on inputs for one bigha (about half an acre). Today, that’s about Rs. 1,300,” said Rakesh Chauhan, a cane farmer based near Baraut, also in Baghpat district.

The UP government set the State Advised (SAP) of cane at Rs. 280/quintal for the second consecutive season. Mills are required to pay Rs. 240/quintal within 14 days of procurement with the remainder payable within three months of crushing season ending. Farmers, however, reiterate that it should be at least Rs. 350/quintal.

“Farmers have been selling to smaller kolhus and big gur (jaggery) units since we are getting about Rs.200/quintal from them. Mills began crushing late this season, around December, and gur buyers paid us immediately unlike the mills,” said Chauhan, adding that rising transportation costs due to poor roads.

Jaggery prices surge on AP government move for Sankranti gift

Prices rise by Rs. 400-500 a quintal



Visakhapatnam, January 12:

There has been a sudden spurt in the prices of jaggery for all grades at the Anakapalle jaggery market yard in Visakhapatnam district prior to Sankranti festival, according to trade sources.

The best grades are selling at Rs. 280-300 per 10 kg – a sudden spurt of Rs. 400-500 a quintal during the week. Traders said this was triggered by the decision of the AP Government to supply a pack of all essentials including half kg jaggery to the white ration card-holders as a sankranti gift christened *Chandranna Kanuka* .

Therefore, there has been a sudden demand for jaggery not only at Anakapalle but also at Mandya in Karnataka and also Maharashtra.

“The State Government has so far procured 6,500 tonnes of jaggery and the trend will continue till Sankranti and there is likely to be a correction afterwards,” said jaggery trader K Butchi Raju.

Farm Ministry seeks inputs on norms for price stabilisation fund

New Delhi, January 12:

The farm ministry has sought comments on the draft operational guidelines for the price stabilisation fund for procurement and distribution of perishable horticulture commodities, according to a notice.

“A corpus Price Stabilisation Fund is being created. The intervention is expected to regulate price volatility through procurement by Central and State government agencies of selected produce, maintenance of buffer stocks and regulated release into the market,” it said.

Initially, the government would buy only potato and onion under the scheme but gradually, the scheme may be extended to other horticultural commodities, the notice added. Agencies such as the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd will be roped in.

Tea prices up at Coonoor auction



Coonoor, January 12:

The encouraging trend seen at the opening auction this year at the Coonoor Tea Trade Association last week continued in Sale No: 2 with 82 per cent of

the 16.91 lakh kg on offer being bought despite prices rising by a rupee a kg on the average.

Broken Orange Pekoe Fannings grade of Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped the CTC leaf market at Rs. 214. In all, 10 CTC grades fetched Rs. 200 and more per kg and 109 marks Rs. 125 and more.

Kairbetta topped orthodox market at Rs. 265 a kg, followed by Kodanad at Rs. 252, Havukal and Glendale at Rs. 240 each, Chamraj Rs. 232, Highfield Estate Rs. 226 and Coonor Tea Rs. 207. In all, 42 marks got Rs. 125 and more per kg.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs. 40-44 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs. 90-160 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs. 45-54 for plain dusts and Rs. 110-190 for brighter liquoring dusts. There were some purchases for Pakistan at Rs. 55-66 a kg and for CIS at Rs. 55-115.

Cardamom steady on export and domestic buying

Kochi, January 12:

Strong domestic demand, coupled with good export buying, kept the cardamom prices steady last week despite moderate arrivals at the auctions.

Upcountry buyers were aggressively covering while the exporters were buying whatever exportable material available at the current prices, trade sources in Kumily told *BusinessLine*.

Exporters bought an estimated 60 tonnes last week.

According to Ranganathan, a dealer in Bodinayakannur, the market, after moving up by around Rs. 130 a kg in recent days, slipped by about Rs. 30-40 a kg. "But, it is steady now and above the previous weekend prices," he said.

The auction average last week was between Rs. 820 and Rs. 870 a kg.

Total arrivals last week increased to 604 tonnes from 517 tonnes the previous week.

The fourth round of picking is over and has entered the fifth round.

The quality of capsules started declining as also the availability of 8 mm bold cardamom, trade sources said.

At the Sunday auction held by the Kerala Cardamom Processing and Marketing Company, arrivals stood at 102.5 tonnes against 120.6 tonnes the previous Sunday and the entire quantity was sold out.

Auction average

The maximum price was Rs. 1,070 a kg and the minimum Rs. 641 a kg. The auction average slipped to Rs.840.13 from Rs. 847.99, PC Punnoose, General Manager, KCPMC, said. Total arrivals during the season stood at 11,371 tonnes against 12,264 tonnes during the same period last year. Sales were at 11,157 tonnes against 11,877 tonnes.

Prices of graded varieties moved up last week and the prices in the open market on Monday in Bodinayakannur in (Rs. \kg) were: 8mm bold - 1,040 -1,080; 7-8mm 925 -950; 6mm - 7mm - 800; below 6 mm- 725. Medium bulk was being traded at Rs. 800 - 850 a kg.

Business Standard

[Farmers await produce, Chhattisgarh procures 4 mt paddy at MSP](#)

The state government had earlier decided to purchase only 10 quintals of paddy behind every acre of land

Even as a large section of [farmers](#) in [Chhattisgarh](#) are waiting for the [paddy](#) to get ready, Chhattisgarh claims to have procured 4 million tonnes (mt) of paddy by paying minimum support price (MSP) to the sellers."As on Monday, the state-run marketing federation has purchased 4 mt paddy from the farmers at MSP," a state government spokesperson said. Of the paddy procured, maximum flow had been reported in Mahasamund district where the nodal agency for paddy procurement had purchased 422,000 tonnes of paddy.The state government, in a cost cutting measure, had put a cap on paddy procurement.

The state government had earlier decided to purchase only 10 quintals of paddy behind every acre of land. After facing strong protest within the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and farmers, Chief Minister [Raman Singh](#) extended the cap to 15 quintals per acre.

[NABARD to set up chair in agri business at IIM-Ahmedabad](#)

Chair will promote research in agricultural marketing, enhancing rural livelihood, among other areas

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) on Monday signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A) for setting up a [NABARD](#) chair unit at the management institute.

The MoU was signed by H R Dave, deputy managing director, NABARD and Professor Ashish Nanda, director, IIM-A in the city, a press release issued by the NABARD said. "The objective of the chair unit is to encourage research in emerging areas such as climate change, rural livelihood, financial inclusion, value chain management, agriculture marketing and financial product development," a press release issued by NABARD said.

Speaking on the occasion, Dave said, "As revealed by the recently released findings of the 70th round of National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), agriculture in India is dominated by the presence of small and marginal farmers. The survey also points to high level of dependence among these farmers on non-institutional sources of credit. It is critical that this vast majority of small farmers find farming lucrative to not only meet the needs of a vast population but to be able to increase their share in the consumer rupee." The partnership with IIM-A, the release added, is yet another attempt of NABARD to enhance the efficiency of supply chains and address the issues of fragmented value chains existing in the country at present.

Integrating small and marginal farmers under efficient supply chains and exploring the role of private sector in this regard will also be examined by the NABARD chair professor, the release highlighted. The chair unit, the release noted, is also expected to offer inputs on issues confronting agriculture marketing and suggest innovative models to make farming a more profitable proposition for country's farmers. It is also expected to focus on credit-related issues of farmers and inclusion thereof in the institutional credit fold. Welcoming the collaboration with NABARD, Professor Ashish Nanda emphasized on the need to find solutions for various emerging challenges in the field of agriculture and rural finance through collaborative research.