**Literature Review**

Consumption of food is vital for every organism on the planet, no matter the kind of organism it is. However, the consumption of food greatly depends on the choice that a person has at hand and resources present in the region. Therefore, this paper seeks to address the food insecurities and the reason behind these insecurities. An individual needs to consume just enough calories on a daily basis to stay healthy. Food security has defined the ability of an individual to consume just enough food daily, with the required amount of food being available to the person. While there is more than enough food produced in the world to feed everyone in the world, however, unequal distribution of food causes food insecurity in various regions of the world. This food insecurity gives rise to a number of medical conditions and has many causes associated with them. While there are many causes of food insecurity, none of them are as prevalent as poverty. Poverty makes it difficult for an individual to produce or buy enough food. The rapid growth of the human population has a huge impact on food security. It is expected that food insecurity will significantly increase with time. Population in the next 30 years may exceed to a critical point where it will be difficult to produce and distribute enough food to everyone. In order to understand the issue in detail, a number of research papers, journals and newspapers were studied to collect information on the subject.

Food security is recognized as a universal human right due to its central role in the sustenance of life. The sustainable Developmental Goals incorporates the need to eliminate food insecurity and enable food security within nations who face food insecurity. The food insecurity is synonymously used with ‘Hunger’. A major portion of hungry people live in developing countries, mostly located in Asia and Sub Saharan Africa (Eicher, 1983). There is a correlation between food assistance, food security and health status of the people. This was studied by Martin and his colleagues (2012), who conducted controlled and randomized research. They evaluated their result by comparing a hundred fresh place members with a hundred individuals who consume food from traditional food pantries. The main purpose of the research is to explain the community based participatory research process for the fresh place evaluation and development. The changed score analyzed over a period of three months was compared through t-test. This included the outcome of diet quality, food security, and self-sufficiency. The results indicate that partnership between university and community agencies brought larger change score and better diet quality and food security (Martin, Shuckerow, O’Rourke, & Schmitz, 2012). [2 Sources]

Alvarez and his team of researchers (2015) acquired data from the Community Health Center Patient Survey to figure out the relationship between health outcome, and food insecurity. The research indicates that sample reported for health status, food assistance, and food security was about 31.9%, 52.6%, and 10.9% respectively. In addition, women reported for health status were significantly higher than men. These findings suggested that food assistance and food security have a direct impact on the poor/good health outcome where programs like affordable care act and patient protection can play a vital role (Alvarez, Lantz, Sharac, & Shin, 2015). The dilemma of food insecurity is that a significant portion of the population, who are victims of undernourishment belong to lower income levels. This is coupled with socio-political imbalance, financial downturn, negative trade balance, migrations, high illiteracy rates, poor health and lack of good governance which has further accelerated food scarcity (Saheed Matemilola, 2017). Financial conditions are one of the main factors that cause food insecurity in a household that results in several health issues. [2 sources]

Chang, along with Chatterjee and Kim (2014) worked with qualitative data and information from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics to identify the role of financial problem in health outcome. Throughout the whole process, the researchers put the focus on the insolvency risk, asset inadequacy, and liquidity constraint. The research suggested that Americans get affected by the repeated expansion of hunger, food insecurity and assistance where major contributors for the causes are unemployment poverty and income level (Chang, Chatterjee, & Kim, 2014). Moreover, Long and colleagues (2017)analyzed publication from 1997 to date to review the searches about food insecurity, hunger, food banks, and other food-related keywords. Publications were reviewed based on eligibility criteria that is whether the research is related to food issue and can help to address the food insecurity issue in the context of the household. The result suggested that during food insecurity period household increase their food consumption through food banks and food pantries which results in various diseases and health issues (Long, Rowland, Steelman, & McElfish, 2017).

Household somehow manages healthy food and therefore good health but outside home people experience food insecurity. Bowen, along with colleagues (2019), assessed the role of factors related to health outcome in homeless adults who live in supported housing. The research used survey interviewed 237 people of age above 45 in California. The result indicated that about 67% of the total population faces the issue of food security and income level is the main factor that affects the health outcome (Bowen, Lahey, Rhoades, & Henwood, 2019). Knol and team (2018) characterized the food insecurity experienced by the student at the undergraduate level. Survey and interviews from fourteen students were conducted, and factors that lead to experiences of food insecurity were collected. Findings highlight that financial problem is the cause that leads to food insecurity and issues like frustration, aggression, anxiety, and depression (Knol, Robb, McKinley, & Wood, 2018). [2 sources]

Geographical information system and demographic data are useful to acquire the information regarding food insecurity and needs of the people. Bacon and Baker (2017), focused on the estimation and researched method for the findings of food insecurity. Seventeen indicators were used to identify the factors and risks of food insecurity. Cluster analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings indicate that the geographical information can be helpful to understand the needs and problems of the people and efficient use of resources can be ensured (Bacon & Baker, 2017). Borders and team (2018) made use of the demographic data, geographical information system, and location of food assistance. The data was analyzed through the food insecurity index, potential food insecurity, distance, and poverty rate through the case study method. The result highlights that poverty is the only approach that is helpful to estimate the food insecurity rate and access of the people for it. Therefore, poverty should be addressed to reduce the issue (Borders, Ferris, Jo Beeby, & McCahill, 2018). [2 sources]

Wright and his colleagues (2016) defined the term food desert, referring to the areas that lack access nutritious, healthy and even affordable food. The sample was taken from a list of known food deserts, especially one which uses observational data regarding local availability, quality, and price. It then deploys focus groups and food insecurity. The purpose of this research was to show that the people in neighborhoods with a full-service supermarket have a much poor diet than the ones that do. The only recommended solution to this issue is to open full-service supermarkets in various neighborhoods and provide food to low-income populations , 2016). Zepeda (2017) redefined good insecurity within the country as reduced variety, reduced quality and even desirability of diet. Lack of food or food insecurity does not necessarily mean hunger, but it is related to a poor diet, health problems, and even weight gain. This process of redefining was done by carrying out a research-based assessment of 20 people living in middle America suffering from food insecurity since they do not have a pantry in their homes. Furthermore, they are also classified families on the basis of the Asset Vulnerability Framework (AFV) to deal with food insecurity. The various points associated with the subject refer to the structural changes in the economy. These changes have reduced labor assets of a number of middle-class participants using decreased job security, reductions in wages, and finally increased nonstandard work along with a significant increase in costs of benefits as being responsible for food insecurity (Zepeda, 2017).[[1]](#footnote-1) [2 sources]

Entering the Field

Anthropologists serve in many different areas. They work to find new avenues where interaction between human can be made more workable and productive. Anthropologist care for the community by working over the most prudent options which can benefit others. The community food banks are one such example of this. If a research-based mechanism is applied to study the demand and supply of food articles, it could be beneficial for both the food bank authorities and for the consumers. Since anthropologists work much differently, compared to other social scientists, therefore they often contradict with the perception of other social scientists. The under-discussed study is conducted in the Marysville community food bank which provides food to many elderly and financially unstable citizens.

The Marysville community food bank is located in the state of Washington behind the church of St. Mary and is open at different timings for seven days a week, and it is providing food at the specified time to its consumers. This community food bank is located here since 1974 and serves the food requirement of the needy. The reason why I joined the Marysville community food bank was that serving people can allow me to change the life of an individual by helping provide access to food. This was giving me a sense of accomplishment, and it is a rewarding and meaningful way of doing well for others and the community.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Findings

An interview conducted with Dell Deierling the director of Marysville community food bank he indicated that he is responsible for the very ordinary work. Dell Deierling (2019) said I clean up, and I am responsible for the general work. it shows that the food bank operates in a very easy to go environment. The director also elaborated about the food quality, which he believes is hygienic, fresh, and sterile. The volunteers observed a practical example of faith and acceptance while being there. People work without requiring cash or anything else for this food bank. Dell, Joan, and Amy[[3]](#footnote-3) are the only paid employee that is working full time in the Marysville food bank; however, they earn a meager salary.

Considering the diverse role of the food bank, its operations could not meet unless many people come together and work for making both ends meet. Dell Deierling (2019) said that there are different categories of volunteers; who come together at their specified timings and help in managing the staff at the venue. From collecting food from the specified places until the last consumers, the volunteers work in categories of sorting food, shopping assistance, maintenance, and distribution. The volunteers are mostly the retired people, students, church and the community people that are willing to donate their time to help others.

The trip at the food bank offered an insightful experience to the supply chain management. It was different from a typical supply chain management operation. Since the complete work is voluntary, therefore, it offers an exciting case study about how a voluntary task is met. The director explained the different phases of food collection, it’s sorting, and repackaging. The complete operation, according to him, is met in hours or so. The orderly pattern, what the food bank reflects is even hard to find in established organizations. Other than the operation functions, the management it requires is huge. The food bank authority manages this in some minimum resources it is provided by some people. It met all these necessities by collaborating not only with the private entities but also with some federal government organizations. They offer the authorities some handful amount, which helps meet the financial requirements of the food bank and some essential staff.

The interview was not limited to sorting out the managerial operations and administrative responsibilities; rather, the volunteers explored other areas too. For example, while talking about food handling, the director explained to volunteers, that utmost care is taken to assure that person carrying food is hygienic and is in good health conditions. He explained about the donations, which he referred to as the necessary amount required to meet administrative tasks. Dell Deierling (2019) mentioned that the Marysville takes help from food donating centers. They offer help just in case the food is required to keep fresh and intact.

Marysville food center makes sure that no one except the staff touches the food. It then makes other tasks such as further sorting, freezing, or refreezing of the food for the Marysville staff easier. Volunteers have been to different areas of the food bank and have not found anything extra, which might, in any way, affect the presence of food. Some volunteer’s help in gathering food, sorting it out, and some customize it as per the need of the visitors. Similarly, there are volunteers who look after the walk-in visitors.

One volunteer asked the manager about any specific category of the customers they have made. Dell Deierling (2019) promptly responded we provide food to our community without any question or judgment. Anyone with any income level can get service from the Marysville community food bank.

At the Marysville food bank, there are several rules that the clients have to follow specific rules when receiving services. One of the rules is that the clients cannot touch the food. They have to request it from the shopping assistance in which they will handle all the food that goes into the customer shopping cart. At the registration, the client will receive a color tag that represents with either blue, red, green, or yellow color depending on their family size. Dell Deierling (2019) said that the food bank serves the food demands of approximately three hundred fifty families per week.

The foods are arranged on a different rack that has the color sign corresponding to the client tag. The color sign on the food rack indicates the food quantity that customer may choose. Each shopping assistant who is volunteering for the first time will get a copy of the shopping assistant instructions. The instructions explain the detail of the color sign and its meaning. For example, the top rack in each food section is a color signed for blue and green families only. Yellow families do not receive food from the top shelf.

Once the customer enters the facility, one shopping assistance will walk the client through the bread and pastries rack, and he can choose from different choices. At the end of the bread rack, another shopping assistance with the food cart, and a few plastic bags will greet the client. The shopping assistance must place the client color tag into the holder on the cart, and as they work through the line, the client can choose the available food choice from the food rack. The shopping assistance will bag all the items and place them into the client shopping cart.

In Marysville community food bank, there are several food sections such as bread and pastries, canned food, canned meats, dry packs, soup, meat, fresh fruits and vegetables, deli, baby supplies, other households, personal items, and dairy. Once the clients walked through all the food sections and chosen their groceries needs, other volunteers will help them to load the grocery bags into their car. Then the shopping assistance must return to the end of the bread rack for the next customers.

Marysville community food bank also has a backpack program which works with the counselor of all of the elementary school to provides weekend food to the students. This program helps to feed and reliving students’ hunger. The school handles the distribution of the bags that contain snacks and food. There is also a food pantry in all middle and high school for the students in need.

Despite the rule and the regulation that the client of the Marysville community food bank must follow, but some of them don’t. From what a volunteer student saw, every client at Marysville community food bank was following the rules. One of the volunteer students was asked from the guy who was volunteering for several years if he had any struggles with the client that don’t follow the organization rule. Joe[[4]](#footnote-4) said one time he saw a homeless client wondering around with the shopping cart, and he was grabbing the foods out of the racks by himself. When Joe told the client that he has to wait for the shopping assistance and he could not touch the foods he got angry, and he refused to follow the rule, so they had to involve the security guy to resolve the situation (J. Smith, personal communication, July 09, 2019).

Maryville’s food bank director states that the volunteers have faced dual challenges when it comes to countering the food issues of the community. They are involved in developing strategies to counter the food insecurity within society. Volunteers are responsible for handling the impact of the outcomes of the food bank and also responding to the social need of the community. The volunteers are hence important resources to the food bank in times of the crises especially (D. Miller, personal communication, July 09, 2019).

David[[5]](#footnote-5), other long-time volunteers at Marysville community food bank, mentioned that one of the challenges this community sometimes encounter is the conflict between the client and the volunteer. Sometimes, as a result of that, the volunteer may stop coming back for volunteering and that causing many workload problems for the organization. One of the management and the community responsibility is to prevent that and to ensure every volunteer feel welcome and comfortable working in this community by creating a healthy workplace where people are supported, valued, and empowered (D. Miller, personal communication, July 09, 2019). Hence it becomes very difficult to recruit volunteers frequently, they are trained and sensitized to deliver and collect food to the community in a helpful manner. The director suggests that this is how the altruistic relation between the client and the bank is formed through the volunteer they reflect the associations between the social environments and the collective community efforts. It minimizes and controls their impacts. They cohesively reach state goals of maintaining peace, supply networks and mapping the possible solutions to the food crisis.

Several volunteers inserted their opinion of the reason why they like to volunteer in Marysville community food bank for some because they want to make a valuable and positive affect on people, communities, and society for others it encourages socializing, meeting new people, friend-making and getting to know the local community. People are helping others when they don’t have to without expectations or getting anything in return. There is so much to get out of volunteering.  Volunteering benefits people for an important reason also and is that it helps the volunteer forget about their problems for a while because they have to work on somebody else’s issues. Of course, some people that volunteered there as a part of their academic curriculum, and some people volunteer because it is the requirements of their career and they need to gain experience with doing work in a volunteer setting. Regardless of the volunteer’s motivation, what unites them all is that they come together for a common goal, and they find it both challenging and rewarding.

There are other challenges that pose a threat to the effective working of the Marysville food bank they state, these changes have economic roots. He stated that sometimes there are external issues to food supply such as the farmers and stores that have excessive supplies but are unable reach the food bank cannot reach the destination since it is far from the banks reach. The farmers are deeply in the economic struggles to cultivate and then sell crops, hence sometimes it is not possible for them to donate. There are legal implications on the donors who are willing to supply food to the bank are met with problems of guaranteeing the food safety that is not unhealthy to the consumers. The donors to the food bank of Marysville suggest are limited by the liability of the donors that sometimes the supplies of the food to the bank.

Concerning the anthropology framework, the Marysville meets each requirement of a community welfare program. It meets the requirement of helping people, caring for the community needs, managing donations and voluntary basis, etc. In addition to this, the food bank authorities have practically manifested the resolve to keep on continuing the operations. The settling there also suggest that the food Bank authorities are handling the operations effectively, and the number of visitors along with voluntary participation is increasing.[[6]](#footnote-6)

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1. Word count (Literature review) = 1465 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Word count (Entering the field) = 239 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The use of 1st names is a cultural norm at this field site [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Pseudonym [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Pseudonym [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Word count (Findings) = 1868 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)