While President Trump brags and blusters US citizens reel under hunger and homelessness

In US, celebrated by its rulers for its affluence, innovation, and supposed equality of opportunity, the spectre of hunger casts an alarming shadow. For millions of Americans, the ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, so boasted by the ruling bourgeoisie and its lackeys, are now exposed as hollow promises, eclipsed by the reality of empty pantries and skipped meals. The United States paradoxically hosts one of the most pervasive hunger crises in the developed world-a silent epidemic that lays bare the systemic inequalities deeply embedded in its socio-economic fabric.

Hunger by the numbers reveal accentuating inequality

As per published reports, 34 million Americans, including 9 million children, are suffering from acute hunger. These are not just numbers; they represent lives distressed, disrupted portending ominous future. African Americans, who represent 13% of the population, account for nearly 22% of food-insecure households, reflecting the generational toll of systemic racism and economic disenfranchisement. Similarly, Latino families, many of whom are integral to the agricultural and service industries, face disproportionate food insecurity. Nearly one-third of food-insecure households identifying as Latino. Asian Americans, often inaccurately perceived as universally affluent, are not immune to this crisis. Subgroups such as Hmong, Cambodian, and Laotian communities experience hunger rates exceeding 25%, a stark reminder of the invisibility of their struggles in mainstream narratives.

For children, the data is even grimmer. Nearly 20% of all children live in food-insecure households, and Latino children are disproportionately represented. African American children twice as likely as white children to experience chronic hunger. These statistics are compounded in states like Mississippi and Arkansas, where systemic poverty exacerbates an already dire situation.

The elderly, too, bear a silent burden. Food insecurity among seniors rose by over 50% in the last decade. For African American and Latino seniors, the rates are disproportionately higher, driven by a lifetime of wage gaps, inadequate healthcare, and structural inequities.

The Cost of Human Lives Defined by Scarcity

Behind these statistics lie stories of heartbreak and resilience. In urban Chicago, a Black single mother of three works multiple low-paying jobs. Yet her children rely on free school meals as their sole source of nutrition. In Los Angeles, Maria, a second-generation Mexican American, shares a poignant story of rationing her food to ensure her children have enough to eat.

For Asian-Americans like Lin, a Cambodian immigrant in Minnesota, cultural barriers compound the indignities of hunger. Food pantries often lack culturally appropriate staples, leaving her family reliant on whatever is available, even when it diverges from their dietary norms.

The stories echo across rural America, where agricultural workers-ironically those who harvest the nation's food—face some of the highest rates of hunger. These are the silent tragedies of a broken system, where working families teeter on the edge of survival.

Homelessness-another peril

Alongside hunger, homelessness has grown in the U.S. to such a level that more than half a million people on any given night are sleeping in shelters, cars, and on the streets. The figure is likely an undercount, as it does not include people temporarily staying with family and friends. This rate of the unsheltered homeless in the US is far higher than in most of the other rich capitalist countries, which is closely associated with non-availability of affordable housing. The number of people experiencing homelessness continues to increase as more people struggle to afford sky-high housing costs.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that the largest increase in homelessness is among families with children. Between 2023 and 2024, 39 % more people in families with children experienced homelessness, while 19 % were with children under 18. Between 2023 and 2024, children (under the age of 18) were the age group that experienced the largest increase in homelessness, with nearly 150,000 homeless on the night of the survey, an increase of 33% from 2023 (or 32,618 more children). Immediate impact of homelessness among children leads to a high incidence of mental disease. As per HUD report 2024, about one in every five people experiencing homelessness on a single night in 2024 was age 55 or older. More than 104,000 people experiencing homelessness were aged 55 to 64, and just over 42,150 people were over age 64. Nearly half of adults aged 55 or older (46%) were experiencing unsheltered homelessness in places not meant for human habitation. It means that senior people are more affected by homelessness. Another serious impact on the health of Homeless people is that they have a 60 % higher mortality rate than housed individuals living in poverty and their life expectancy 26 years shorter than the general population. In Europe, average life expectancy of people who experience homelessness is 30 years less than non-homeless populations. From this, one can imagine the fate of homeless people whose lifespan is shortened just because their govts has failed to provide affordable homes to them. They also experience infectious disease and mental illness at a substantially higher rate; due to less access to primary health care and unable to use expensive hospital emergency rooms. Homelessness also causes serious health care issues, including addiction, psychological disorders, HIV/AIDS, and a host of order ailments that require long-term, consistent care. A recent cross-country analysis found that about two thirds of adult homeless people suffer some form of mental illness, with the rate in the US being particularly high. It is closely associated with non-availability of affordable housing and coincides with the subsequent sharp rise in housing costs relative to income of the people. Even the education levels and employment rates among homeless adults are low compared to the general population.

In this respect too, worst sufferers are the African Americans and Latinos. The Housing and Urban Development (HUD) report shows that African Americans make up just 12 % of the total US population and 21 % of the US population living in poverty but are 32 % of all people experiencing homelessness. HUD report further points out that 31 % of Latinos, American Indians, Alaska Natives and indigenous populations suffer a particularly high rate of homelessness (83 out of 10,000 people in 2023). This report also offers more insight into the sheltered population. While about 72% of unhoused women and girls live in shelters, nearly 70% of men are unsheltered.

Capitalism is root of all distress

Hunger or homelessness in America are no isolated phenomena but an inevitability in an imperialist-capitalist country marked by growing inequality and based on injustice. Wealthiest Americans 1% control over 40% of the nation's wealth while millions at the bottom of the economic ladder struggle to afford basic necessities, let alone nutritious food. Hunger, it warrants to mention, is a consequence of imperialist-capitalist system that prioritizes reaping of maximum profit by the handful of monopolists and multinationals over even bare subsistence of the wretched toiling million. The disproportionate concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few results in systemic deprivation for millions. In 2022, the U.S. economy generated over $25 trillion in GDP, yet 34 million people faced food insecurity. This contradiction-abundance alongside deprivation-reveals the structural inefficiencies of a system where wealth accumulation for the elite coincides with poverty for the working class. Food deserts, disproportionately concentrated in low-income neighbourhoods, serve as geographic markers of class oppression. Predominantly inhabited by Black and Latino populations, these areas exemplify how systemic inequities in housing, employment, and urban planning intersect to perpetuate hunger. Structural racism compounds these inequities. Decades of discriminatory housing policies, wage suppression, and unequal access to healthcare and education have entrenched cycles of poverty, particularly in African Americans and Latino communities.

US example once again reaffirms what great Marx had said 175 years back that the economic structures underpinning capitalist societies inherently produce inequality, exploitation, and systemic crises. Growing hunger of the down-trodden in a class-divided capitalist society is thus not because of scarcity of eatables but due to rapidly growing pauperization which disables them from buying even basic food items at price fixed by the profit-hungry imperialist-capitalist sharks and their servitors. In the United States, hunger exposes the fault lines of a deeply unequal capitalist society. It is not just the working class that suffers; the social fabric of the nation is at risk. A society that allows millions to go hungry and homes while billionaires race to colonize space is one that has fundamentally lost its moral compass.