

A Normative Perspective on the South African Government's Obligations to Ensure Nutrition Security for the Country's Most Impoverished Children.

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Early childhood and especially the first 1000 days from conception are crucial for a child's development and sets the tone for all future health, development, and achievement. Nutrition security is paramount during this critical developmental period, yet the majority of young South African children live in extreme poverty, deprived of nutrition, and exposed to serious malnutrition. Malnutrition is considered a key driver of child morbidity and mortality in South Africa. Children are vulnerable due to their restricted autonomy, fragile development, and utter dependence on a caregiver which put them at increased risk of harm and exploitation. This study illustrated the gravity of the nutritional needs of South Africa's impoverished children which render them extraordinarily vulnerable to malnutrition. Such vulnerability demands ethical responses from the South African government who has the authority to ensure nutrition security for these children. The study provided a normative perspective on the South African government's moral and legal obligations to ensure that the country's impoverished children have access to nutrition security. Various national and international laws obliging the government to ensure that these children have access to adequate nutrition were analysed. Perspectives were analysed and discussed through the bioethical lenses of ubuntu ethics, an ethics of care, rights theory, needs theory, and the four principles of biomedical ethics: non-maleficence, beneficence, respect for autonomy, and justice to illustrate the government's moral obligation towards the country's impoverished children.

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