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## FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA



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**Abstract:** In the recent report of Global Hunger Index 2011 to 2013 India ranks 63rd in malnutrition. India has past away Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and China in malnutrition. Sri Lanka ranks 43, Pakistan 57, Bangladesh 58 and No. 1 populated country in the world China ranks 6 in this report. According to the report 21 crore out of 84.20 crore means 25% of world's hungry people live in India. Despite, India being one of the biggest producers of food supplies there are millions of hungry poor who urgently need cheap and affordable food. So in India there is need of food security to the poor people.

**Key words:** Food Security, Global Hunger, malnutrition, sanitation facilities.

### INTRODUCTION:

Food is one of the basic needs required for the survival of human being. It is necessary for getting energy for doing different works. One requires a balanced diet to be healthy otherwise one can suffer from hunger and malnutrition that causes many diseases, famines and epidemics. So each and every person has a security to have sufficient, healthy and balanced food at affordable price. For healthy life with the healthy food pure and safe and drinking water, sanitation facilities, primary health awareness and facilities provision of basic education and hygienic environment is also needed. The main object of this article is to present the realistic picture of the food security in India.

### The nature of the food security:

In order to know the nature of the food security it is necessary to have a glance on some of the definitions of the food security. World Development Report (1986) defined food security as, "Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life". According to Food and Agricultural Organization of UNO "food security exists when all people at all times have access to sufficient and nutritious food to meet the dietary needs and food preference for an active and healthy life". The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as "When all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life."

The food security may be either of short term or long term. In case of short term food security we consider food security only in the context of the present population. In case of sustainable or long term food security we consider food security for everyone at present as well as for future generations also. In short Food Security means to provide all people sufficient quantities of food to lead an active and healthy life. There are two dimensions food security. They are quantitative and qualitative food security. There is sufficient availability of food to meet the demand in quantitative food security while the nutritional requirement

of the population is properly looked after in the qualitative food security.

The Policies of the Government of India for the Food Security:

In order to secure the food for the people in India the Government has introduced the following policies:

- i) The Public Distribution System.
- ii) The Integrated child Development Services.
- iii) Mid day Meal Programme.

All people have right to decide what they eat and to ensure that food in their community is healthy and accessible for everyone. Over the past 40 years we have improved food production through the technical intervention in areas such as post harvest management, processing and storage, marketing, animal husbandry, irrigation facilities, water management, soil conservation, high yield varieties, agricultural mechanization, common efforts to control crop diseases etc.

During the Third Year Plan Green Revolution took place and the Nation became self sufficient in food grains. Production of food grains had increased from 51 million tons (1950-51) to 217.3 million tons (2006-07). Even though the country was not able to provide food needed for an active and healthy life. After Green Revolution in our country there was enough food in stock. However, people in India cannot have sufficient and nutritious food because of to some extent failure of public distribution system, poverty, low income under employment, unemployment etc. So in India there is a tragedy of food security on the ground of food surplus. In India prices of food grains rises day to day because of inflation, increasing prices of petrol and diesel, unfair policies of private grain merchants like profitability, monopoly, artificial scarcity, black marketing and unauthorized stock. Because of day to day rising prices common man cannot access with sufficient food at

affordable price and cannot live active and healthy life.

**Some Fact about the Malnutrition:**

- i. According to Global Hunger Index 2011-2013 India ranks 63. Lower than neighbouring countries Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China.
- ii. 21 crore out of 84.20 crore means 25% of the world's hungry people live in India, in a world be 'Super power' country.
- iii. About 1/3 population in India consuming 80% of the minimum energy requirements. Means 33% of population cannot have sufficient nutrition for efficient working.
- iv. Nearly 9 out of 10 pregnant women between 15 & 49 years are malnourished and anemic. Cost of medical facilities for them is far more than the cost of nutritious food.
- v. 48% children under 5 were malnourished.
- vi. Out of total death of children under 5, 21.6% are of India.
- vii. 43% under birth weight children are taking birth in India.
- viii. Three out of four children in India are anemic.
- ix. One out of three children has stunted growth.
- x. 51% of children not fully immunized.

On this ground Government of India passed Food Security law by July 2013. The food law will provide food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food, at affordable prices to the people to live life with dignity.

The Historical food security program will be largest in the world. The economic cost of it will be Rs. 1, 30,000 crore. It will require about 62 million tons of food grains annually. It provides a subsidized food to 80 crore (67%) of total population-120 crore. The law guarantees 5 Kg of rice wheat and coarse cereals per month per person at Rs. 3, Rs. 2 and Re.1 respectively. The poorest households would continue to receive 35 kilograms of grains per month under the "Antyodaya Anna Yojana" at subsidized price

**The Salient Features of the Government Schemes:**

1. 75 percent of rural and 50 percent of the urban population are entitled for three years five kg food grains per month at ₹3, ₹2, ₹1 per kg for rice, wheat and coarse grains respectively.
2. The states are responsible for determining eligibility;
3. Pregnant women and lactating mothers are entitled to a nutritious "take home ration" of 600 Calories and a maternity benefit of at least Rs 6,000 for six months;
4. Children, 6 months to 14 years of age are to receive free hot meals or "take home rations";
5. The central government will provide funds to states in case of short supplies of food grains;
6. The current food grain allocation of the states will be protected by the central government for at least six months;
7. The state governments will provide a food security allowance to the beneficiaries in case of non-supply of food grains;
8. The Public Distribution System is to be reformed;
9. The eldest woman in the household, 18 years or above, is the head of the household for the issuance of the ration card;
10. There will be state- and district-level redress mechanisms; and State Food Commissions will be formed

for implementation

For implementing these schemes smoothly and to keep accountability and transparency, Government has to set up the effective grievance redressal machinery at district level, computerize the Public Distribution system, open adequate fair price shops and to look after the efficient facilities of transport, storage etc.

**Positive Side or the benefits of the scheme:**

- 1) This is the biggest ever experiment in the world for distributing highly subsidized food by any government through a 'Right based approach'.
- 2) This welfare scheme will give nutritious food to the beneficiaries.
- 3) It will be investment in human capital.
- 4) It will bring some security in people's lives and make it easier for them to meet their basic needs, protect their health, educate their children and take risk.

**Criticisms on the Scheme:-**

- 1) Gimmick before 2014 General Election
- 2) Corrupt government Machinery is incapable to handle this huge scheme.
- 3) This scheme will impose additional burden of Rs. 1 lac crore on storage, transport wastages etc.
- 4) The scheme will result in galloping inflation and acute poverty.
- 5) It retards the progress of the country due the diversion of funds in such super flows scheme.
- 6) According to some opposers the scheme is an example of political motivation and fiscal irresponsibility.
- 7) Private initiative in agriculture will be reduced.
- 8) Working willingness of the farming labour will reduce, because implementation of this programme getting adequate food will be cheaper than a movie ticket. So there will be scarcity of labour in the agriculture sector
- 9) Due to scarcity of labour farmers will increase the usage of herbicides, fungicides and pesticides. There will be addition in the problem of pollution.
- 10) There will be imbalance in the agriculture products. Production of oil seeds, Pulses, fruits and vegetables will be reduced.
- 11) Overall cost of production of agriculture products will increase. Living cost of middle class population will be unsustainable

**To achieve house level food security the following efforts are to be taken:**

1. Accelerating growth in food and agricultural sectors that provides direct source to food and income with which purchasing power will increase
2. Promoting rural development that focuses on poor
3. Improving accesses to land and other natural resources
4. Providing cheap credit to the poor households
5. Increasing employment opportunities
6. Stabilizing food supplies and prices

**CONCLUSION:**

So far as the above discussion is considered we come to the conclusion that the problem lies not with the

welfare schemes but at its implementation level. So the government has to ensure that the benefits of this scheme reach the people for whom the programme is targeted. Identifying the correct beneficiaries arranging funds to fund this scheme on time and to plugging the loopholes and lacunae will definitely give success to the government in implementing this ambitious programme

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