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Food Security: Challenges Ahead

*Surendra Kumar**

ABSTRACT

Food security is the major issue among all the issues (shelter, safety, health, self-esteem). We can not think about a world where 85 crore people are suffering from hunger and India stand 67th position among 81 countries suffering with hunger. There are serious challenges of increasing population and decreasing farm land holding. Most of the challenges are man made and some are natural. In last two decades approx 2% farming land had decrease. The present paper focused on challenges before food security and government steps towards food security. It is a conceptual paper and secondary data.

KEYWORDS: Food security, Hunger and Malnutrition, Poor in India, Govt Policies.

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring food security have to be a great important issue for a country like India where more than one-third of the population is estimated to be absolutely poor and one-half of all children malnourished in one way or another. The United Nations estimates that about 870 million people – just over 15 percent of the world's population – are undernourished today. The majority live in developing countries, with the largest numbers of undernourished people in China and India, and the highest prevalence of undernourishment in sub-Saharan Africa. Every day, almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes – one child every five seconds. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United

Nations (FAO) estimates the world's population will reach 9.3 billion people by 2050 and 10.1 billion by 2100. Much of this increase is projected to come from developing countries with rapid population growth, including 39 countries in Africa, nine in Asia, six in Oceania and four in Latin America. To meet the world's increasing demand for food, an anticipated 70-percent boost in global food production will be necessary by 2050. High economic growth rates have failed to improve food security in India leaving the country facing a crisis in its rural economy, warns the report of the World Food Programme and the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF).

*Faculty, Institute of Cooperative Management, Bhopal. Email-skyadav109@yahoo.co.in

According to the GOI Economic Survey, food grain production in India has declined from 208 kg per annum per capita in 1996-97 to 186 kg only in 2009-10, a decline of 11 per cent.

The concept of food-security has undergone significant change in the recent years. The millennium development goals provide us with the starting point to assess the level of food security and prioritize our efforts to achieve it. The first Development Goal seeks to eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger. During the seventies, the perception of food security alert mainly on availability and stability of food to all. A broadly conventional description of food security now goes beyond adequate availability of food. It includes 'Access to adequate food to all people at all times for an active and healthy life. The aim is not merely to supply adequate quantities of food but to create conditions in which people are capable of feeding themselves self-reliantly with healthy and culturally acceptable foodstuff a state of 'nutritional sovereignty'. The multi-dimensional concept of food security has the following components

I. Food Availability defined as aggregate supply ensured either

through sustainable growth in production or through imports or both and encompasses both the inter-temporal and spatial stability of supplies for every section of the population.

- II. Food Accessibility defined in terms entitlement to access adequate food, whether through production, labor, trade or transfer based entitlements.
- III. Absorption of food- a function of environmental hygiene, nutrition practices and access to primary health care and clean drinking water.
- IV. Sustainability involving conservation and enhancement of natural resources.

In recent years the growth rates of world agricultural production and crop yields have slowed. This has raised fears that the world may not be able to grow enough food and other commodities to ensure that future populations are adequately fed. However, the slowdown has occurred not because of shortages of land or water but rather because demand for agricultural products has also slowed.

This is mainly because world population growth rates have been declining since the late 1960s, and fairly high levels of food consumption per person are now being reached in many countries, beyond which further rises will be limited. But it is also the case that a stubbornly high share of the world's population remains in absolute poverty and so lacks the necessary income to translate its needs into effective demand.

Food Security Challenges: According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of United Nations 9.1 billion population of world till 2050 will in need of double of agricultural produce that of today. Another fact is that due to climate change, decline in farming land and water crisis will reduce approx. 35% of food grain production. Due to increasing population and decreasing land holdings 2% farming land had decreases in last two decades.

Despite above facts there are certain measure challenges among food security in India are-

1. **Hunger & Malnutrition:** According to a report of United Nations more than 85 crore population of world is suffering from hunger, malnutrition and disease based on

nutrition while food grain production is more. In India large numbers of children are dying due to pneumonia, meningitis and malnutrition. Approx 47-48% children in India are suffering with malnutrition. Government of India is trying to come up with this problem with national food security mission.

2. **Food Grain Storage:** India has achieved a significant growth in food grain production in recent past years, but major problem is storage which has been raised by different media and Supreme Court has also raised the issue too.
3. **Negligence of Corse Grain:** After green revolution we focused on farming of wheat and rice, where India achieved a significant growth which resulted in the form of problem of food grain storage, malnutrition and low soil fertility and high water consumption. While Farming of Corse Food Grain will not only decrease the malnutrition problem but also increase the fertility of soil .Corse grain farming reduces the consumption of insecticides and pesticides.

4. Climate Change: Climate change is the major threat before food security in the world, due to global warming world is facing problem of drought, flood, avalanches etc. Industrializations and deforestation among the major factor behind the climate change.

Food Schemes for Food Security in India:
India has the largest food schemes in the World to feed more than one billion population.

1. Entitlement Feeding Programmes
 - ICDS (All Children under six, Pregnant and lactating mother)
 - MDMS (All Primary School children)
2. Food Subsidy Programmes
 - Targeted Public Distribution System (35 kgs/ month of subsidized food grains)
 - Annapurna (10 kgs of free food grain for destitute poor)
 - Employment Programmes
3. National Rural Employment Scheme (100 days of employment at minimum wages)

4. National Old Age Pension Scheme (Monthly pension to BPL)
5. National Family Benefit Scheme (Compensation in case of death of bread winner to BPL families)

SUGGESTIONS:

Food insecurity and hunger is caused by a large number of factors such as accessibility, availability and affordability and hence solutions too have to be among these factors. The various measures to meet the challenges are-

1. Better storage facility for food grains.
2. Promotion of coarse grain production, storage and marketing at better price.
3. Promotion of coarse grain in daily consumption which will lead to cope the various health related problems.
4. More thrust on food processing industry
5. Water conservation and forestation.
6. Research and Development based farming.
7. Promotion of farming as a profession.
8. Better implementation of Government policies.

CONCLUSION:

Small agriculture holding and stagnating growth in agriculture after the mid-1990s there has been employment decline, income decline and hence a fall in aggregate demand by the rural poor. The challenges for food security as storage, proper distribution, starvation and malnutrition, negligence of coarse grain and lower social acceptability are among various factors which must be taken in to consideration while making policy and future action for the most serious issue of the world. The most important intervention that is needed is greater investment in irrigation, power, and roads in the poorer

regions. It is essential to realize the potential for production surpluses in Central and Eastern India where the concentration of poverty is increasing.

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