



## **Feeding the World and Caring for Earth**

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### **Abstract**

*Food security means the easy availability and access of food at all times in sufficient quantity in a safe and nutritious form to meet the dietary requirements and food preferences for an active, healthy and productive life. The prerequisite for food security is, a stable well organized and properly functioning agricultural market. To encourage food security FAO under the aegis of United Nations celebrates World Food Day every year on 16th October, the day on which the Organization was founded in 1945. "World Food Security and Family Farming" was the theme for the World Food Day for the year 2014. Although India had long back achieved self-sufficiency in food, the Government of India has launched the new National Food Security Mission 2007 with the basic objective of grappling with the persistent yield storage in the country. In our country where more than one third of the population is estimated to be absolutely poor and about one third Malnutrition is a widespread problem. According to 'Global hunger Index-2012 (International Food Policy Research Institute), India is at 65 ranks among 79 countries. Global Survey Report by Save the Children (2012), India is ranked at 112 among 141 countries. The government of India has accorded high priority to the problem of malnutrition especially among children and young girls and women. It has implemented several schemes and programmes like Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Mid Day meal Scheme (MDM), Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls nicknamed SABLA and Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY).*

*Key words: food security, family farming, malnutrition, agriculture, government schemes.*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Food security is the imperative prerequisite for the economic and social stability of any nation, according to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), "food security is said to exist when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life".

The prerequisite for food security is, a stable well organized and properly functioning agricultural market. To encourage food security FAO under the aegis of United Nations celebrates World Food Day every year on 16th October, the day on which the Organization was founded in 1945. "World Food Security and Family Farming" was the theme for the World Food Day for the year 2014. The theme is quite relevant as an increase in demand for fuel, food, diversion of good crops to fuel, inflationary peak particularly observed in food items can have a detrimental effect on the gap between demand and supply of food products and food security of the nations as a whole. The worst affected, under such circumstances will undoubtedly be the people residing in the developing and the underdeveloped nations of the world. Poor people of these countries are largely dependent on agriculture which is most vulnerable to climate change. Thus, at present, the world is not even on track to achieve the 1996 World

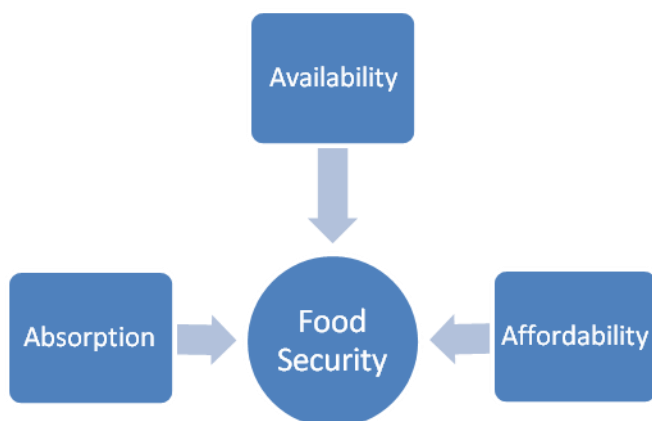
Food Summit target of reducing the number of hungry people from 800 million to 400 million by 2015. Moreover, the world food prices have risen 45 percent in the last nine months.

Although India had long back achieved self-sufficiency in food, the Government of India has launched the new National Food Security Mission 2007 with the basic objective of grappling with the persistent yield storage in the country. The mission will increase the production of rice by 10 million tones, wheat by 8 million tones and pulses by 2 million tones in five years by the end of 11th Five Year Plan (2011-2012). In our country where more than one third of the population is estimated to be absolutely poor and about one third of all children malnourished, ensuring food security must be seen as an utmost priority.

### **Food Security**

Food security has three basic instruments. These are interdependent and interconnected viz. Procurement prices (MSPs), Buffer stocks and Public distribution system (PDS).

1964-65, Food Corporation of India (FCI) was established to oversee the country-wide procurement, distribution and stocking of food grains. Likewise, in the same year, the Commission on Agricultural Cost and Prices (CACP) was established to recommend minimum support prices of agricultural crops to the government.



Availability is the first aspect of food security. It ensures that food grains are available to every section of society. It is achieved by using the instruments of minimum support prices/procurement prices; maintain adequate buffer stock with Food Corporation of India; and ensuring the supply of food grains to needy and to market at stable rate.

Minimum support price ensures that the producer/farmer get a minimum price for the produce. Buffer stock-minimum stock of grains that the union government should have in the central pool at the beginning of each quarter, so as to fulfill its commitment of the public distribution system and other welfare measures. It also helps in arresting price instability.

Public Distribution System ensures that the stored food grains like, rice, wheat, pulses, edible oil, and kerosene are available for distribution through a network of some five lakh fair price shops spread throughout the country. Both central and state government shares the responsibility of regulating the PDS. The central government is responsible for procurement, storage, allocation and transportation, while the state government has to ensure right identification of families below poverty line, supervision and monitoring so that the PDS work efficiently and in the right spirit. Tough the PDS is marred by major deficiencies like high exclusion and inclusion error, leakages, and supply of inferior quality of food grains. The Wadhwa committee which submitted its report in 2010 has made some recommendations like the constitution of an independent anti hoarding cell under the enforcement branch and formation of a 'Special flying squad' to monitor the complaint of hoarding of food grains.

Beside that there is need to use ICT as integrated information system for food grains management (IISFM) to give stock position in any depot at a point of time and tracking of the stocks using GPS technology.

### **Absorption**

Malnutrition in India is a widespread problem. According to 'Global hunger Index-2012 (International Food Policy Research Institute), India is at 65 ranks among 79 countries. Global Survey Report by Save the Children (2012), India is ranked at 112 among 141 countries. National Family Health Survey-III (2005-06) of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India has 48% stunted and 43% underweight children below 5 years.

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### **Family Farming**

The United Nations declared 2014 as IYFF to recognize the importance of family farming in reducing poverty and improving global food security. IYFF aims to promote new development policies at national as well as regional levels, that will help smallholder and family farmers eradicate hunger, reduce rural poverty and continue to play a major role in global food security through small-scale, sustainable agricultural production.

The important objectives associated with family farming are

- Family and small-scale farming are inextricably linked to world food security.
- Family farming preserves traditional food products, while contributing to a balanced diet and safeguarding the world's agro-biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources.
- Family farming represents an opportunity to boost local economies, especially when combined with specific policies aimed at social protection and well-being of communities.
- Recognize the importance of smallholder and family farmers for sustainable development
- Place small-scale farming at the centre of national, regional and global agricultural, environmental and social policies;
- Elevate the role of smallholder farmers as agents for alleviating rural poverty and ensuring food security for all, who manage and protect natural resources; and as drivers of sustainable development.
- The IYFF has four key objectives:
  - Support the development of policies that will foster sustainable family farming
  - Increase knowledge and public awareness on the vital role that family farmers play in the agricultural and development sectors
  - Raise awareness of the needs and potential of family farmers, along with the constraints that they face, and ensure that they have access to technical support
  - Create synergies for sustainability
- Other objectives:
  - Recognize the role and rights of women in family farming
  - Strengthen the legitimacy of farmers' organizations and their capacity to effectively represent and defend the interests of family farmers;

- Create rural economic opportunities for family farmers that provide alternatives to migration to urban areas
- Promote local and indigenous knowledge and know-how
- Encourage research that improves food security and supports sustainable rural development, safeguards cultural heritage, protects the environment and maintains biodiversity
- Promote dialogue on policy and decision making processes
- Identify and share lessons learned and successful pro-family farming policies, and capitalize relevant knowledge on family farming
- Enhance communication, advocacy and outreach.

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