

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

1.1 Food, the basic to survival means different to different persons. It is the core component for development of individuals. Therefore, the concern over 'food' and 'food security' have existed throughout history amongst scholars, academicians etc. apart from the common people. In a society there cannot be any socio-economic development and its sustainability without food security. Food sustains life and thus food is a moral right of every human being. No one can compromise with hunger. Infact, the fight against hunger is something much more important and challenging than a political or economic struggle. There is an intrinsic moral and ethical dimension of food too and it is recognized by all religions in the world. Right to food is a basic and inherent birth right of every individual and the most delicate component of the entire gamut of human rights. Presence of hunger in a nation is therefore a fundamental violation of human rights. It is primarily because of such importance of food, the concept of food security has gained immense recognition. The core idea of food security is access to quality and quantity food by all. It means that all people have both physical and economic access to adequate amount of nutritious and appropriate food. Food and nutrition security is integral to livelihood security in terms of capabilities, assets and activities required for living. Food security is a condition related to the supply of food and individuals' access to it. Food security is in fact one of the areas of 'Human Security' and as such attainment of food security has been placed in both the international and national agenda of almost all the nations including India. Poverty a complex and serious challenge for any nation is also related to food security. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) describes poverty as being unable to obtain good food and other items that are essential to everyday life. There are more than 200 definitions and 450 indicators of food security. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) defined food security as "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 World Health Organisation (WHO) defines food security as when “all people at all times have both physical and economic access to enough food for an active and healthy life”. It may also be stated that food security is the basic pillar of human development. It is primarily built on 4 pillars – Food availability, Food access, Food utilisation and Food stability. Food availability refers to production of food to the sufficient level to feed the population of a nation. But mere availability of food is not the sole yardstick to measure food security status. Availability of food in the market only do not ensure food security in a nation. So many evidences are there which shows food is available in surplus but still the level of food security is not satisfactory. India is not an exception to this. The second crucial aspect of food security is access which includes both economic and physical access by people to food. Income is not the only condition for ensuring food security to each and every individual in a nation. Even when food is produced in a proportion to the population in a nation and the people have sufficient income to have access to the food so available, then also individuals could be food insecure. Reluctance of the people to have physical access to the available food and also prevention of certain groups of people to have access to food is a major source of food insecurity in a nation. Equality is a great value necessary for all individuals for their development and existence. In terms of access to food also perfect equality is of crucial importance among all individuals. But the worst fact is that despite giving such recognition and importance to food and food security in the whole world inequalities in terms of food access is visible. Such inequalities is more profound in households and the victims of such inequalities are the women in particular in most of the households. Utilisation of food is another necessary condition of food security. Proper knowledge of food and nutritional fulfillment of diets of people is important to achieve food security. Food security in a long term basis is to be prevail in a nation. Sustainability of food security status of a nation is of prime importance. Therefore, long term strategies and measures should be adopted to achieve sustainable food security. Rural infrastructure is considered to be an important aspect of development of a nation. Since 1977 most of the countries have taken food security as a social target including India and it is considered that this particular goal can be better achieved through rural

infrastructure. Globally it has been accepted that to prevent social problems in any nation, the first priority should be sufficiency of food and also to have a healthy population with full nutritional security and investing in nutrition is of great importance. Many global financial institutions have recognised the necessity of such investment. Food security as a social goal has been taken in India even before many developed nations, still the level of food security in the territory is not to the expected level. Even today, most of the people go to bed hungry, many are undernourished, many facing the challenge of malnutrition. Many households particularly rural households do not get most of the time two square meals a day. Although many serious initiatives have been undertaken by the Government of India since long before, still the challenge of food insecurity is visible. After 'Green Revolution' availability of food is not a problem in India but the problem of food insecurity exists. After many analysis both globally and nationally, it has been found that household food security is basically related to food access not merely to food availability. Most of the rural households in India faces the challenge of both scarcity of time and material resources which ultimately lead to the low level of food security status of the households. Food insecurity in India is more to be found in the rural society. Access to both quality and quantity food is equally important for both men and women to lead a healthy and happy life. But the reality shows a different picture. Most of the women in many developing countries faces various types of discrimination and India is not an exception to this. Women in India faces sufferings and discrimination in their day to day life. Such discrimination is not limited to education, income and decision-making power but even to access to food. Women are the most vulnerable to any problem and so even to the problem of food insecurity women are the worst sufferers not men. Most of the rural women specially in India do not have access to required diet. Although their daily activities are mostly associated with food and nutrition and plays a vital role in improving food and nutritional security in the households, they do not enjoy a healthy life. Women make incomparable contribution in ensuring food security and accordingly in the development process of the nation. They make essential contributions to all aspects viz, economic development, household income, food security and also in the world of work. But the worst part is that most of the works of women, their contribution remains unnoticed. Domination by menfolk against the women in many households in rural India is a common feature. They are

treated just as house-workers and temporary labourers. They grow crops, harvest, apply fertilizers, process, store and many a times market the food produce. They also thresh, winnow, clean and gather seeds. Therefore, such commendable role of women should not be ignored. Despite such contributions of women in terms of food security, their status of food security in particular is very disappointing. They are the worst victims of household food insecurity. Many a times irrespective of economic status of the households, rural women are deprived of a proper diet. It clearly shows that economic factor is not the main determinant of food security of women. Their pattern of food consumption is very low. Therefore, sincere initiatives need to be taken by the government and also by the civil society to tackle this serious problem of the womenfolk. The pattern of food consumption of especially the rural women is something to be placed in the study of the present day as without women no development could take place, no goal is possible to achieve and even the goal of national food security is very difficult to achieve without raising the level of women's status of food security first. The major constraints to effective recognition of women's actual roles and responsibilities in ensuring household food security has to be removed. A proper understanding of women's pattern of food consumption is very necessary and also adoption of certain specific and concrete measures to promote their food and nutritional security.

1.2 The term 'gender bias' is very familiar to the intellectual world. Gender bias is often used as synonymous with 'gender inequality'. But gender inequality is not only a case of inequality in terms of the groups – male and female. It is more than that. Inequality arises because of deprivation of any given opportunity or facility and that deprivation may be seen in terms of income, education, health and even access to food. In most of the cases such deprivations are faced by the women. Gender bias means looking at whether males and females getting their due share. One more dimension of gender bias is gender discrimination and gender discrimination is not fully reflected by a measure of gender inequality as it is mainly concerned with the number. A measure of gender discrimination demands not independence of the number of males and females but to share only. One of the important aspects of gender bias is the intra-household allocation of resources among the members in the household. In many rural households of India, even in terms of consumption of food,

gender bias exist against women. No doubt gender bias factor has been taken into consideration by many authors, still the menace has not been addressed properly. Females get fewer opportunities than males. There exist pronounced differences between men and women and such differences are visible even in health status of the women. The gap between men and women in the intra-household distribution of food and other resources lead to poor health among women and health problems. Taking the various problems of rural women into consideration and discrimination they faces even in terms of food in the households and to examine and to find out the hidden causes of the problems from the grassroot , I have conducted a study in Assam in the three districts – Kamrup(Rural), Lakhimpur and Cachar and in all the districts rural areas have been selected for survey. The three districts selected for the study represents three geographical division of the state. Women are responsible for feeding their families with other added responsibilities. A feminist perspective is imperative in household food security and nutrition analysis. In this study this aspect is given particular attention. Even FAO firmly acknowledges the commendable contribution made by women to household food security and the multiple roles women plays in their day to day lives, but most of their position is not to that level that they deserve and faces various obstacles in improving their position. Untill and unless rural women are empowered, all rural development policies will become meaningless and ultimately the whole nation's development will be meaningless. Even the latest enacted National Food Security Act,2013 will be successful if all the objectives of the Act specially in relation to women are implemented fully.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3 In reference to the study it is intended to concentrate on the consumption pattern of food of rural women. It may be noted that inspite of immense contributions of women in every aspect including household food and nutrition security, they faces food insecurity. In the

study regarding food security status of women in rural Assam some specific objectives have been identified. These are as follows –

1. To assess the role of the economic factor in food security status of the households in the study area
2. To identify if there is any bias in the social system against women in terms of food consumption
3. To examine the level of awareness of a balanced diet amongst the rural women

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.4 The concept of food and food security have gained immense recognition worldwide and in the world of learning since long time. There are many literatures having thrust on food security, women and other related issues. An endeavour has been made to present a review of the studies which have a direct or indirect bearing on the study(a full bibliography appears at the end of the work)

V.Radha(2009) in her book, ‘Women and Rural Household Food Security’, has identified the general and the specific food security issues in Indian context and inequality and variability in the food consumption pattern of women. The author has also referred to a number of theoretical propositions that have provided the theoretical background of the study.

Pradeep Chaturvedi(2002) in his work, ‘Women and Food Security: Role of Panchayats’, discussed women’s role in achieving food security, importance of land rights to women and the role of Panchayats in relation to food security

L.Reddeppa (2011) in his book, ‘Food Security in India’, discussed in detail on PDS, TPDS, issues of food security at the macro and micro levels,types of ration cards like Antyodaya Anna Yojna, BPL, APL cards,etc.

Shyam Kartik Mishra and Babita Agarwal (2013), in their book, 'Food Security in India: Policies and Challenges' (edited), discussed about food and nutrition, micronutrient deficiencies in India, nutritional support programmes in India, PDS, farm productivity and food security

M.S.Bhatt (2004), in his book, 'Poverty and Food Security in India: Problems and Policies' (Ed.), highlighted the link between poverty and hunger, discrimination in terms of food insecurity, wage employment schemes, etc.

Surabhi Mittal and Deepti Sethi (2011), in their book, 'Policy Options to Achieve Food Security in South Asia' (Ed.), discussed in detail about the status of food security of South – Asian countries, Indian Government initiatives and programmes to achieve food security, etc.

Nivedita Menon (1999), 'Gender and Politics', Oxford University Press, New Delhi. The author in the book discussed about national movement and women, Gandhi and women, judicial approaches to equality rights in India.

K.C. Lalma Sawma and Lalma Sawma Khingte (2010), in their work, 'Human Security in North-East India: Problems, Responses and Strategies' (Ed.) discussed various security related issues.

The author Akhil Ranjan Dutta (2011) (Ed.) in his book, 'Human Security in North-East: Issues and Policies', tried to highlight the problems of security in the North-Eastern region.

M.L. Narasaiah (2010), in the book 'Energy and Food Security', discussed about food production, India's food challenges, climate change and human health, rural poverty in India, etc.

P.R. Chari and Sonika Gupta (2003) in the book, 'Human Security in South Asia: Gender, Energy, Migration and Globalisation', discussed very well about increasing attention given to human security, freedom from want and fear, women deprivation, etc.

P.K. Jain, B.S. Hansra, K.S. Chakraborty and Jayashree M. Kurup (2010) in their book, 'Sustainable Food Security', discussed about watershed management for food security,

farmers' training for sustainable agricultural development, dairying an income generating tool for food security,etc.

The authors Manisha Priyam, Krishna Menon, Madhulika Banerjee(2009), in their book, 'Human Rights, Gender and the Environment' discussed the concept of human rights, UDHR, patriarchy in India, minority rights in Indian Constitution,etc.

Manoranjan Pal, Premananda Bharati Ghosh and T.S. Vasulu(2009) (Ed.) in their book, 'Gender and Discrimination: Health, Nutritional Status and Role of Women in India', discussed about gender, religion and age at marriage in India, gender inequality, and many serious issues.

The author M. Krishnaraj (2007) in 'Gender, Food Security and Livelihoods', discussed about the relation between gender and food security and other issues too.

The authors John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens, in their book, 'The Globalization Of World Politics An Introduction To International Relations', discussed in detail about many important global concepts and issues besides the theories of world politics like poverty, terrorism, development, hunger, human rights, human security, environmental issues and so on.

Sir Edward Gait, in 'A History Of Assam', very nicely projected the period of Assam rulers from prehistoric to traditional, various events taken place in the region from 4th century -12th century, the rise and fall of Ahom Kingdom, literature, religion, social conditions,economic conditions from the beginning of the region and so on.

V. Geetha(2002), in 'Gender' discussed about women and the various discriminations faced by them under patriarchy system.

Kamala Bhasin(2003), in 'Understanding Gender' discussed about the concept of gender, gender bias against women, etc.

Allan G. Johnson(1997), in 'The Gender Knot: Unravelling Our Patriarchal Legacy' discussed about patriarchy and gender factor.

S.Mahendra Dev (1996),in 'Food Security:PDS vs EGS: A Tale of Two States' made a comparison between PDS System and Employment Generation System.

J. Chikaire(2012), in 'Role of Women in Improving Household Food Security in Owerri North Area of Imo State, Nigeria discussed about the various roles of women in food related activities and their role in ensuring household food security.

HYPOTHESES

1.5 The research gap that has been found after the review of literature and giving specific focus to the objectives led to the formulation of the following hypotheses -

1. Economic factor is a major determinant of food security status of women
2. There is bias in the social system against women in terms of food consumption
3. The level of awareness of a balanced diet amongst the rural women is significantly low

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

1.6 There are quite a large number of theories on Food Security from supply, demand and gender perspectives. Here an attempt is made to highlight some of the selected theories concerned with socio-economic perspectives and women-related perspectives regarding food security which is found to be relevant to a great extent for the study.

Food security has been a serious theme of discussion from the classical period but during that time it was viewed only from the supply parameter and the theories of that period mainly concerned with the supply of food to ensure food security. Later on, more rational discussion has taken place on food and the problem of food and it was found even food insecurity could take place even in the situation of availability of food. Demand side is equally important in terms of food acquirement problem not merely supply of food.

Adam Smith(1776)¹ theorized that famines could be caused only by a real scarcity situation, and a plenty of scarcity situations were caused by natural calamities like drought, flood and seasonal failures. But David Ricardo(1815)² opposed Smith's view and said even in situations of abundance famines could occur.

Garbaldi Accati(1983)³ found that participation of women in both farm and non-farm activities increases total food supply to the household and also ensure dietary variations as most of the rural households grow different types of vegetables, roots and fruits.

Safilios-Rotschild(1980)⁴ said that women's decision-making power is an important determinant of nutrition as women is the main actor regarding feeding their families daily and often they make sacrifices for the families health, more particularly for their children.

Marcoux(2001)⁵ found that in developing countries gender-bias prevails and this gender-bias is an obstacle to nutritional well-being and health of the womenfolk.

Mazumdar(1985)⁶ identified that on the status of dietary adequacy of households there is an impact of economic status of the households.

Chadha(1995)⁷ found that there is a significant relation of income level and occupational status with the pattern of food consumption of households.

Omawale and Rodrigues(1980)⁸ conducted a study in Guyana and found that poverty and food consumption are correlated with each other. Household food expenditure and quantity of self-produced food consumption is associated with land holding.

Alderman(1986)⁹ theorised that increase in the income results in the increase of intake of staple food mainly in the rural poor households and to to a great extent of non-staple food like meat.

Schiff-Valdes (1990)¹⁰ found that the number of meals and dietary status of households is positively related to increase in per capita income.

Amartya Sen(1984)¹¹ identified presence of sex-bias and age-bias in the intra-household food allocation.

Von Braun and Pandya-Lorch(1991)¹² quoted that a number of factors lead to food insecurity problem in rural poor households. Food insecurity status is found to be very high in those households which are landless or quasi-landless. Again in households where number of dependents is more and there is young age composition food insecurity is higher.

FAO(1993)¹³ very clearly made a declaration that intra-household inequalities in terms of income and decision-making against women had increased to a considerable level due to lack of control over resources by women.

Garcia(1991)¹⁴ said that women who earn spend more proportion of their income on food consumption and children's healthcare of their families than men.

Acharya and Bennet(1982)¹⁵ identified women having direct access to cash influence their power in intra-household dynamics and status.

Bairagi(1980)¹⁶ made a study and found that there is relationship between child nutrition and factors like family income, maternal education and birth order. It was found by him that income is not the sole factor in relation to nutritional status, rather maternal education has significant influence on nutritional status.

Standing(1989)¹⁷ found that women who do not earn are worse-off in terms of nutritional status than earning women or women who are heads of poor households.

V. Radha (2009)¹⁸ conducted a study and found that gender-bias is significant in many rural households of India and nutritional status of children is greatly influenced by mother's nutritional knowledge.

Among all the theories mentioned above, I have adopted three theories which I find to be relevant to my study. The first one is the theory of Sciff and Valdes in which economic factor is given importance in relation to food security. Second theory is Bairagi's theory where he mentioned about the relationship of mother's education with nutritional status of children of households. And lastly V.Radha's theory in which gender factor and nutritional knowledge of women have been considered as important determinants of food security status of women.

METHODOLOGY

1.7 The methodologies adopted for the purpose of the research are -

- Empirical approach is being adopted and data is verifiable, transparent and sources of data collection are relevant for the study
- Schedule has been prepared and data is collected on the basis of the schedule
- Spot observation further has been adopted to gather specific information in the process of interviewing
- Simple random sampling method has been adopted for selection of the sample
- Purposive sampling method has adopted for selection of villages in the districts
- Analytical approach is adopted to analyse the data, diagrams to show the picture more precisely and relevant statistical tools i.e.SPSS method as it is currently a relevant statistical tool is adopted for computing simple averages and percentages for scientific presentation

- Second hand data is collected by visiting library, individuals having information, health institutions , etc.

STUDY AREA

1.8 Assam is one of the ‘Seven Sisters’ of the North-Eastern States of the country. It is a land of beautiful flora and fauna and with many places of tourist attraction. Its total area is 78,438 sq km and it represents 2.39% of the total area of land of India. The mighty river Brahmaputra flows through the region and it is surrounded by international boundaries upto nearly 3,200 km. Assam is situated in the Himalayan foothills and also it is known as land of red river and blue hills. Assam was known by the name of ‘Pragjyotisha’ in the epic age and in the classical Sanskrit literature Pragjyotisha is also called ‘Kamrupa’. The modern name of the region, Assam is of recent origin, came with the coming of Ahoms in the beginning of 13th century. At present there are all together 32 districts in the region with creation of 5 more districts in 2015 with the earlier 27 districts. For the purpose of the research on consumption pattern of food by rural women in Assam and food security I have decided to go for three districts representing three geographical regions of the state- 1) In the Brahmaputra Valley in lower Assam the Kamrup(Rural)district, 2) In the Upper Assam the Lakhimpur district and 3) In the Barak Valley the Cachar district.

Kamrup district was the most density populated district in Assam and so on 2003 the district was divided into Kamrup and Kamrup Metropolitan by the state government. Rangia as the district sub-division works as a gateway to the eastern Bhutan.

Total area of Kamrup is 3,483.77 sq km.

Total population is 15,17,542 with Male population -7,78,461 and Female population - 7,39,081

Sex Ratio is 949 female per 1000 male

Density is 489 persons per sq km.

Literacy rate is 75.55% with Male - 81.30% and Female - 69.57%

District headquarter: Amingaon and Sub-Division: Guwahati and Rangia. Total number of blocks is 15 and Total number of villages is 1084.

Boundaries of the District : Kamrup (M) and Darrang district on the east, Baksa and Nalbari district on the north, Goalpara district to the west and Meghalaya on the south.

Lakhimpur district is an eastern district of Assam in the borderline. The district is an entrance to the province of Arunachal Pradesh. Till 1950 the district was known by the name of 'Kaleepani' due to flood damage and uncomfortable transport

system. In 1971 this district was formed with North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji as its headquarters but later on 1980 Dhemaji was formed as an independent district and Lakhimpur district was formed with Dhakuwakhana and North Lakhimpur as its subdivisions. Agriculture is the main livelihood of the region and paddy cultivation is practiced to a great extent with no such large industries.

Total area of Lakhimpur district is 2,277 sq km.

Total population is 10,42,137 with Male population – 5,29,674 and Female population – 5,12,463

Sex Ratio is 968 female per 1000 male

Density is 458 persons per sq km.

Literacy rate is 77.20% with Male - 83.52% and Female – 70.67%

District Headquarter is North Lakhimpur and Sub-Division : North Lakhimpur and Dhakuwakhona. Total number of blocks is 9 and Total number of villages is 1184.

Boundaries of the District : Arunachal Pradesh on the north; Dhemaji and Dibrugarh district to the east; Jorhat, Sivasagar and Brahmaputra on the south and Sonitpur on the west.

Cachar district is located to the south of Assam and Barak is the main river of the Cachar District. The Barak river acts like a border between the Cachar district and the state of Manipur. After India's independence, North Cachar region in 1951 and Karimganj sub-division in 1983 and in 1987 Hailakandi sub-division were separated from the extensive Cachar district. In Cachar district many ancient monumental works is still can be found in the district. The Kacharis who ruled this region for long time ago is believed to have given this name of Cachar to this land. At the same time another possibility is also found regarding the origin of the name of Cachar i.e, the Bengalis of Sylhet gave this name as the term 'Kachar' in Sylhet means a stretch of land at the foot of a mountain and this land is surrounded by mountains. There are no large scale industries in the district. There are a large number of tea gardens in the district and agriculture is the main source of Cachar's economy. However, the economic condition of the district is not very encouraging.

Total area of Cachar district is 3,786 sq km

Total population is 17,36,617 with Male population – 8,86,284 and Female population – 8,50,333

Sex Ratio is 945 females per 1000 males

Density is 459 persons per sq km.

Literacy rate is 79.34% with Male - 84.78% and Female – 73.68%

District Headquarter is Silchar and Sub-Division: Silchar and Lakhimpur. Total number of blocks is 15 and Total number of villages is 1040

Boundaries: Dima Hasao and Meghalaya to the north; Manipur on the east; Mizoram to the south; Hailakandi, Karimganj and Bangladesh on the west.

STUDY STRUCTURE

1.9 The structure of the study is divided into three stages on the basis of which the entire research is conducted - Pre-field study, Field study and Post- field study. On the basis of pre-field survey I had decided to go for three districts representing the three geographical regions of the state as mentioned above. The total sample population of the study area is 300(women), in each district 100 sample selected on the basis of a calculation regarding the test of significance that corresponds to 300 plus minus. The 300 sample belongs to different communities viz, ST category, SC category and General caste category. The villages in each selected district are selected on the purposive sampling method i.e., on the basis of ST populated, SC populated and General caste populated village. The main reason behind these selecting three districts and the villages of the study is to see whether the trends available in terms of food security in all the parts of the state of Assam is identical or different as it is a land of different communities with different culture. The communities living in this territory of India though differs from each other culturally

but whether any difference exist in terms of the access to food among the womenfolk of the communities is considered to be important to find out to make the research more fruitful and accordingly research is conducted on the said districts selected.

In the field study data is mainly collected through the first hand investigation with the help of a schedule that have been put in the Annexure I. The tool of observation has also been used extensively in the process of collecting data.

In the post-field study the data collected has been processed and analysed using preliminary excel sheet and diagrams and the appropriate statistical tool like SPSS.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.10 Women in India since ancient times have been praised by many eminent thinkers. Women played and still playing a very great role towards the nation-building and development. We find many instances of women's contributions and sacrifices to a considerable extent from the very beginning of the civilized society which are incredible. But if we look into actual lives of women in the nation we find a different picture. They always go on performing various tasks for welfare of their own families, for the well-being of the society, they always stood for the development of the society, never hesitate to do anything which is good for the family of their own and for the society but in turn they do not get the deserving position. In spite of sacrifices and contributions they do not get that life to live which they deserve. They create opportunities but do not get

opportunities most of the time specially the rural women. They are deprived of a organized and a dignified life. They are not fully empowered even today. Human Rights are considered to be birth rights and equally important for both men and women for existence as human beings. But regarding the exercising and enjoyment of the human rights also women in many households faces discrimination. It would be worth mentioning that the sufferings and discriminations against women is not limited to India only, even women in many developed and other developing countries all over the world initially faced many discriminations and injustice. In various writings from classical era we find many views and ideas regarding women's rights and gender equality, the elimination of gender discriminations. Several sincere initiatives also been undertaken by the international community, governments of many nations in the world, recommendations are always been given by the intellectual section regarding the upliftment of women's lives and their empowerment. Many women all over undoubtedly achieved a great height in life, become very successful, many of them are not just going hand to hand with men but gone far away from men, achieved more success than men. Still another fact is also there that in many countries today also many women are suffering, they still subject to deprivations and discriminations in terms of access to opportunities, they do not have freedom in many aspects of life, they becomes the worst victims of any kind of problem. In India many special packages, schemes and policies are being introduced and implemented mainly for the women section. Reservation is there for women in many government jobs and educational institutions. Even there is reservation for women regarding seats in the system of government so that they become aware of the importance of their

participation in the running of the state machinery. In spite of such steps taken by the government the overall condition of the women specially rural women is not upto the desired level. Rural women always play an added role of promotion, protecting and preserving the health of their family members besides feeding their families. To achieve food security at the national level of a nation first achievement of household food and nutrition security is important, and activities related to household food and nutrition security is within the domain of the women. Household food security can be considered as a battle which can be won only by actions of women. The concept of 'welfare state' will be reality only when the conditions of women section is developed as without women no development is possible to achieve. Human development includes food security of the population of a nation and in the population women is equally important, their role is more profound and the real asset of a nation. They are entitled to lots of work which they perform wholeheartedly but in most cases they are not entitled to adequate facilities and opportunities. There is a saying ' Health is Wealth ' and this applies to women too. Women must be able to lead a healthy and active life and this requires their access to appropriate food and sufficient food everyday. In this connection one thing must be said that is considered to be significant i.e, women too must be aware of having a healthy life and so to have access to proper food which satisfies their dietary needs. Without right to food no other right carry any meaning to a person. Women should not consider themselves to be inferior to the menfolk and gender should not be given importance by them regarding eating habits, they should be conscious of their health . The pattern of food consumption of women should be considered important to analyse in

the rural areas as mostly in rural areas women are the victims of food insecurity problem. The change of the mindset of both men and women is equally essential in relation to the share of women to anything. The multiple roles performed by women regarding food security should be acknowledged and more and more studies should be conducted to understand, recognize and evaluate the invaluable contributions of women to achieve food security of rural households. The cream of food should be shared equally by both men and women but on the contrary in many rural households the men have the cream of the food to eat as women in many households eat last sometimes with no sufficient food to eat also. Only availability is not the consideration of food security of women, other factors are also there that leads to less food consumption compared to men by them(women). For most of the rural women food security is a far cry and so this problem should be taken more seriously and some more sincere work is needed to undertaken on it. This study is therefore conducted to thoroughly investigate food insecurity problem of women in rural areas especially, find out the hidden causes of the problem and to provide certain concrete futuristic recommendations to the policy planners nationally and even internationally on women and more particularly regarding raising the level of food security status of women and also to empower women in terms of food access too. This study is also significant as it project the fact that household food and nutrition security have a female perspective as women plays many roles in the entire food chain. To know the family equations in terms of gender and nutrition is another significance of the study.

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