

CHAPTER-3

FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA

STATUS OF FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA

3.1 Food security is a very critical issue facing by almost all the nations of the globe. Food security covers various dimensions that go beyond production, availability and demand for food. There are various definitions on food security, above 200 definitions. The most working definition is “food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”¹. In the world almost all the nations have given due recognition to this issue of food security and considered it to be a social goal to achieve to bring human development in the true sense. India one of the South-Asian countries is not an exception to this and it had placed attainment of food security in the national agenda much before than many developed countries. India is a land of huge population and over the years it has adopted many measures, policies have been introduced and initiatives undertaken to feed the huge and diverse population and achieve the target of food security to all. In India, in the 1940s food crisis existed but gradually the government by adopting concrete and timely exigent-initiatives especially the Green-Revolution in the mid-1960s has been able to solve this problem to a considerable level and made the nation move from famine situation to self-sufficiency in food production today. India at present undoubtedly is one of the fastest growing economies and in terms GDP the contribution of agricultural sector is more than industrial and service sectors. On the production side in India various agricultural commodities like rice, wheat, pulses, vegetables, milk and other commodities are produced in large quantity. Infact, it has emerged as one of the leading producers of these commodities worldwide. However, many people of India even today go to bed hungry, many are facing the menace of malnutrition, illiteracy, poverty and diseases are burning problems till date. No

doubt the levels have been decreased but wholly the problems have not been abolished from the country. Most of the people are not consuming the required energy and at about 50% of the world's population are found in India. Some micronutrient deficiencies like Iron Deficiency Anaemia (IDA), Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDDs), Vitamin A Deficiency (VAD) are affecting many people of the nation mainly women and children irrespective of caste creed and religion. To counter these deficiencies many programmes like Nutritional Anaemia Prophylaxis Programme, National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme (NIDDCP), National Programme for Prevention of Nutritional Blindness have been initiated and adopted till date by government yet the improvement level is not very high.

In 1955 the government introduced Essential Commodities Act to safeguard the interests of the poor against the vagaries of the market. Other nutritional and food security support programmes crafted in India are like Public Distribution System (PDS), Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) in 1997, National Food for Work Programme (FFW), Antyodaya Anna Yojna in 2000, Integrated Child Development Scheme in 1975, Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDMS) in 1995. In 2009, Right to Food Act was passed. In September 2013 again the most highly acclaimed National Food Security Act (NFS) was passed to achieve food security at all levels by all people and to empower the women section.

The food security status in India is under threat as the major problems which directly affects food security of a nation's population still very rampant in the country. In India the problem is not availability of food as it has already been said that production of commodities in the country is high. Therefore, in order to achieve the desired level of food security the hidden and main causes of the problem should be found out and appropriate measures should be undertaken to prevent the problems in the path of food security target.

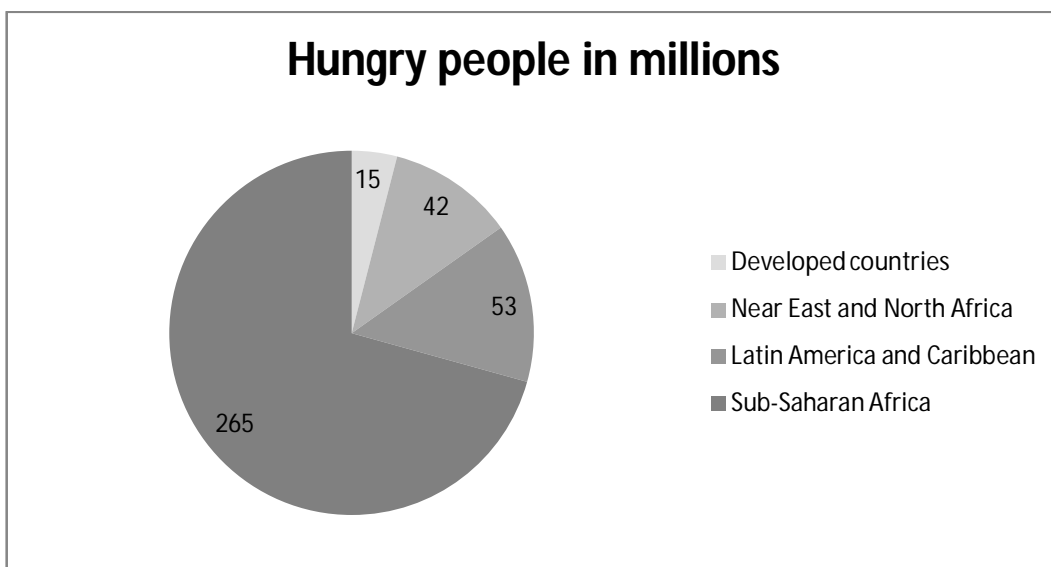
Globally there are many organizations which are providing aid to all nations of the world to enable the nations to achieve the most desired target of food security. But it has been found that in many countries including India the aid do not reaches all the targeted beneficiaries. There is leakages in many systems both globally and nationally meant for the goal of food security.

Government of India is very much committed to make all the people in the country secured. From the beginning the government has tried to meet the dietary requirements of the population. Even the state governments too adopted many strategies depending on the regional environment and situation to feed its people and achieve food security including the state of Assam. But the worst part is that inspite of so many initiatives there is something lacking which is making the country to face the problem of food insecurity to a great level even today both in urban and rural areas. Something more and effective is to be done in the region to become successful in this goal.

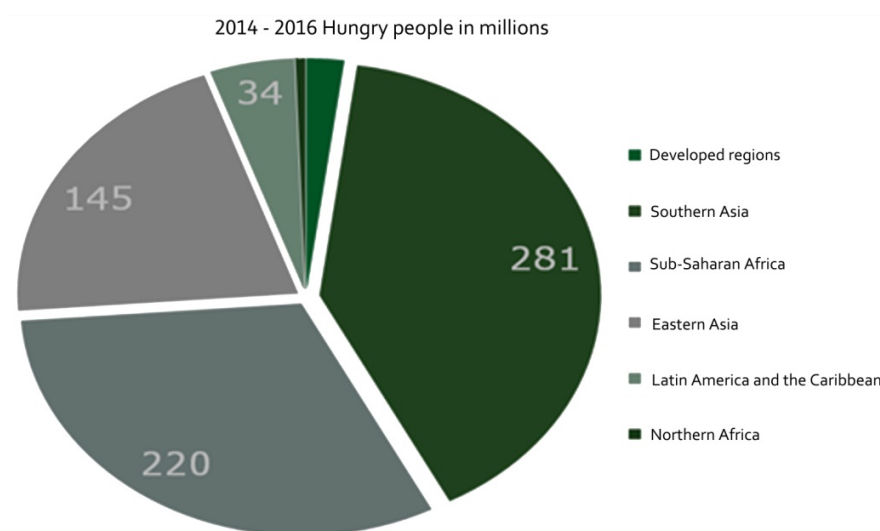
PROBLEMS OF HUNGER AND POVERTY IN INDIA

3.2 Poverty, uneven distribution of food, natural disasters, low education levels are listed as big threats to food security by UN World Food Programme (WFP). The main hurdle in the path of food security in India too is the most familiar problems of poverty and hunger. Poverty and food security go hand in hand. Infact, poverty is the greatest obstacle towards the development process of the country. The issue of poverty is very complex and multi-dimensional and it is linked to food security of people in a country. No nation can achieve the target of food security until and unless poverty is removed. Poverty is considered to be an attribute of the poor and therefore it can be defined as the state of being poor. In India to create better living conditions for the poor and to mitigate poverty, various policy measures were designed since independence. Researchers are working from beginning on incidence of poverty. There are many discussions and difference on opinions on the concept and measurement of poverty in India among analysts, policy-makers and activists. Naturally, it has generated debate and controversy too as poverty is such a complex concept which can be approached from social, psychological, political and economic sides.

Figure1: Regional distribution of hungry people in the world in millions



Source: FAO 2009



Source: FAO

There are two models of poverty-absolute model and relative model. Absolute model is also known as subsistence cost theory developed by Adam Smith and David Ricardo. This theory of poverty says that there exist a level of fixed monetary wage income below which physical subsistence is not possible for individuals and fall in income leads to starvation and Smith and Ricardo mainly based their theory on the manual labour segment of the population. The theory says that when wage rate is greater than subsistence cost then workers give birth to more children. This results in increase in supply of labour and ultimately this results in fall in wages. According to this classical notion of poverty workers themselves are solely responsible for poverty. Later on this idea on poverty was updated in the 20th century by Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree. This notion says that in order to escape from poverty each household should be provided with the minimum income necessary for fulfilling minimum necessary quantities of the basic needs like food, clothing, housing, fuel and other household things for the physical survival and also for maintaining physical efficiency for performing the assigned task at the work place. At present the subsistence theory is not limited to the labour segment, it has been broadened and it covers non-labour segment too. Now, poverty means absence of minimum income to maintain the minimum physiological needs of food and clothing. This model also includes other needs such as health services, education, access to potable water supply, hygiene and sanitation, transportation and mother-child care services.

Another approach to poverty is relative poverty model which also developed the concept of deprivation. This model basically stated that poverty can be measured from the average standard of living of people in a society or nation and this standard is based on the income which makes an individual to participate in wide range of roles and relationships. That is average per capita income and expenditure on consumption is the main yardstick to measure poverty according to model. Moreover, this model says that absolute poverty is not possible to remove completely from a society as absolute equality in income and expenditure is not possible to attain in a society. So, it is something very utopian.

In India as already cited poverty and hunger are the most critical and serious issues of our times. Poverty is such a concept which has drawn global attention. Many academicians,

researchers, policy-makers as well as human activists have been taking keen interest on these issue globally and nationally. Poverty is the main factor towards the development of the problem of hunger including India. As long as the poverty exist in a society it is not possible to eradicate other major problems of hunger, starvation, undernutrition, malnutrition, health diseases from that society. Hunger is the worst kind of poverty and these two issues are the two sides of the same coin. Moreover, food insecurity is at many instances is the result of the prevalence of poverty. In India poverty alleviation is the solution of the problem of hunger and accordingly the problem of food insecurity as all these problems are inter-linked. Hunger needs to be addressed directly in India and in a more practical manner. World Food Summit(WFS+5) and other major global organizations clearly recognized the issue of hunger and poverty and suggested a twin-track approach for quick reduction of these problems. One track is promotion of agricultural and rural development to create for the hungry people. Secondly, programmes should be undertaken for directly making the hungry to have direct access to food. These are found to be very relevant solution to the problem of hunger and poverty in case of India too. The New Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) even included removal of poverty as one of its goals and linked hunger target to poverty. To get rid of hunger is the first step towards poverty alleviation and economic development according to the FAO report prepared by World Food Summit: Five Years,2001 later and this is true for India too. To live a life with dignity is essential for all individuals and food security is a necessary condition to a dignified life. All persons must have right to food as no other right is meaningful for a hungry person. Moreover, even the most desired goal of food security of our times is very positively related to the greatest challenge of the whole world- poverty. India is also a land where the challenge of poverty exist since the time of nation-building of 1940s. Therefore, in order to achieve the target of food security in India too, first poverty should be completely removed from the society. Unless poverty is eradicated and other major problems that it breeds, it is not possible to be successful in the goal of food security. To remove poverty many strategies have been adopted till date in India and achievement of self-sufficiency in food and removal of poverty has been of the basic objectives of development planning from 1951-52 itself. During that time industrialization was considered to be an essential means to achieve economic development and removal of poverty and hunger and in

the process to make the population food secured. However, no great achievement was made during that period and in the subsequent five year plans in this regard. Later on, another strategy was adopted in the Fifth Five- Year Plan which consisted certain anti-poverty contents such as- generation of employment provisions, ensuring availability of basic elements of consumption at stable prices, gearing up the pattern of investment and composition of output to the pattern of consumption of the poor people, provision of services like education, health, nutrition, etc. In addition the Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) was introduced during this time too. A number of other anti-poverty programmes and food security policies and schemes were launched and strategies adopted in the later five year plans. Public Distribution System(PDS), Targeted Public Distribution System(TPDS), Integrated Rural Development Programme, National Food for Work Programme, Annapurna scheme in 2000-01, Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana and many more.

In the 1990s in general no doubt there is a reduction of poverty level but in many regions nothing has been done to make dent on poverty and inter-regional dispersion in poverty has not come down. Hunger is still a common feature of India as many people are still experiencing it and it is clear violation of the human rights². In India the fight against hunger and poverty is more urgent than any political or economic struggle even today. Food is a moral right of all people and this is something should be given more recognition in India. There have been many debates centred around the concept of poverty like definition of poverty line, determinants of poverty, aggregation of characteristics of poverty and to related issues like nutrition and undernutrition. Internationally it has been recognized that food assistance is an essential event to remove hunger on a priority basis , in the process an important step to remove poverty alleviation and also to achieve the goal of food security. India is a home for the most poverty ridden and hungry people. Therefore, approach to food and nutrition security has been constantly in the development plans of the Five-Year Plans and ensuring all people food secured in terms of access, availability and absorption of adequate and nutritious food has been in the same platform with other development initiatives. Giving focus on India's realities of hunger and poverty, special and comprehensive aid is necessary. To remove poverty and hunger long term strategies are

needed to be adopted so that a strong hunger free human capital is created. Infact, with these realization the government has already adopted many extensive food assistance programmes and other basic needs programmes till now.

The policy-makers and implementers have a key role to play regarding reduction of poverty and hunger. In India though there has been a decline of poverty line but even today India is not a hunger and poverty free region. The government and the bureaucrats must be aware of the fact they must deal with the hungry people not hunger. Hunger is the entry point to poverty alleviation and hungry people is the entry point to alleviation of hunger. Therefore, empowerment of the hungry people is equally necessary with food and other service assistance. Again proper delivery of assistance capacity is to be established by the national government to reach the target population. Due to hunger which is mainly a result of poverty in India there are other incidence like low birth weight associated with undernutrition of mothers, illiteracy, powerlessness, decline in development and even hunger deaths. Poverty is not a phenomenon of deprivation of basic needs for survival, but human empowerment is also considered necessary and related to poverty reduction. Sustainable development in India is not possible without elimination of poverty as it is a central issue of development.

In the ranking of the Global Hunger Index 2008, India covers the position of 66 out of 88 ranked countries and the nation's (India's) rank is 80 out of 104 countries in the Global Hunger Index, 2015. In spite of good economic performance India is a home for over 200 million food insecure people (V.Radha,2009). On this earth about 795 million people are hungry and India is the home to largest undernourished and hungry population, with about 195 million people goes to bed hungry daily³. Most of the stunted children are settled in Sub-Saharan Africa and South-Asia⁴. 3000 children die everyday in India due to malnutrition. In most of the cases children are undernourished due to their mothers' state of nutrition. 36% of women in India are undernourished from childhood and patriarchy is the main factor behind this. The Sustainable Development Goals for 2015 has made eradication of hunger by 2030 from the world and making all people having access to food as one of its key goals. Even the specialized agency of UNO- UNICEF is supplying countries by supplying micronutrients like iron and vitamin A. An organization in India- Feeding India is supplying excess food from

individuals, corporate, weddings and restaurants to the needy people, in the process it is converting food wastage to food security for others. This is an important step taken besides government policies and schemes. In the global hunger reduction India's contribution is very small and it has overtaken China. India infact missed both the target of Millenium Development Goals and the goal set up World Food Summit in 1996⁵. Approximately 194.6 million people are undernourished in India⁶. 51% of women between age of 15-59 years are anaemic and 44% children under 5 are underweight⁷.

Hunger in India is a very complex issue and it is widespread. Although in the region there is available food production but it is not possible till now in the region to provide food security and eliminate hunger. There are other alarming factors which is worsening the food security scenario of the country and the factors are like rising food prices, infrastructure constraints in supply chain, poor distribution and management of food commodities, purchasing capacity of the households and several other factors. Poverty is the main factor regarding the rising number of hungry population in India. Poverty in India is also widespread in India and various measures have been proposed to measure it. According to the United Nation's Millenium Development Goal programme 270 millions or 21.9% people out of 1.2 billion of Indians live below poverty line in 2011-12. From the historical times poverty existed in India. The World Bank revised its poverty calculation methodology and according to this revised methodology worldwide 872.3 million people are below the new poverty line and out of this 179.6 million people live in India.

NUTRITION ISSUE AND NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES AND POLICY INITIATIVES FOR FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA

3.3 A healthy diet is the prime requirement of all persons in the world. Proper nutrition is necessary along with calorie component to maintain and improve weight. Even many debates and discussions already taken place on the issue of nutrition security and investment on it internationally and nationally and investment has been done too. Nutrition security is equally important as food security but both the concepts cannot be used interchangeably. In a

developing country like India food security has been considered a social goal and there are many measures which have been already adopted to achieve this global goal of food security and also adopted measures to ensure nutrition security to all individuals. To make foodgrains available to all citizens at an affordable price and attain self-sufficiency in food, the Food Corporation of India was set up under the Food Corporation Act of 1964. In India it has been clearly recognized the fact that healthy human resource is the main source of development of the country. The issue of food and nutrition security is a matter of concern for both developed and developing countries and this is emphasized by FAO. Right food should be eaten daily by all individuals to overcome many diseases and problems. India no doubt is not been wholly successful in achieving the target of food and nutrition security but it cannot be ignored the fact that the government has taken various sincere measures to ensure both food and nutrition security to its population till now. Only having access to food do not make an individual food and nutrition secured as only choosing the right food from the available food is necessary for food and nutrition security. Nutritional awareness among the people is important. Poverty and lack of purchasing power are major factors for low dietary intake by many people in India which is a big hindrance in the development of the country as undernutrition reduces work capacity of an individual and increases the risk of diseases and infections. Food security demands access to nutritionally adequate and safe food for all times by people. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in India and it plays an important role in the process of economic development of the country. Infact, more than half the India's population are engaged with agriculture. Agricultural sector is also considered as the priority area of concern for bringing the target of food security in India as it is the backbone of the development goal of the nation and so the government has started more investment on this sector since long before along with industrial development. After 'GREEN REVOLUTION', India has become one of the largest producers of fruits and vegetables in the world and also India ranks first in production of milk in the world. It clearly shows that availability of food in India is there which is also one of the important elements of food security.

In India introduction of the Public Distribution System (PDS) in 1970s is one of the most important component of the strategies for providing food security to the poor at the household

level and to minimize the problems of hunger and malnutrition. Then in 1997 PDS system was restructured into Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and it was introduced to reach the poorest of the poor people in terms of food security. Again in order to make the TPDS more fruitful in its goal of reducing hunger among the poorest segments of the BPL population Antyodaya Anna Yojna (AAY) was launched on December 2000. TPDS through the AAY scheme covered many poor families amongst the BPL and provided them foodgrains at a highly cheap price of Rs.2/-per kg.for wheat and Rs.3/-per kg. for rice. The AAY Scheme has expanded to cover 2.50 crore poorest of the poor segment of population has so far.

Another programme namely Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) has been implemented by government in order to provide nutrition and food security to children and pregnant women.

The mid-day meal scheme was introduced in 1995 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development for ensuring nutrition security and food security to the students of classes I-VIII in government primary and upper primary schools and government aided schools and schools run by local bodies. Under this scheme the Department of Food and Public Distribution allocates annual requirement of foodgrains to the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Resource Development and foodgrains are released to the states/ Union Territories by Food Corporation of India (FCI). Foodgrains are supplied free of cost under this scheme to each student per school day at the rate of 100 gram and the students are served with cooked and processed hot meal. The meal contains minimum of 300 calories and 8-12 gms of protein in each school day for each student. Wheat-based Programme in 1986 has also been implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. This scheme is meant for providing nutritious food to children and expecting/lactating women belonging to disadvantaged sections.

For indigent senior citizens of age 65 years or above Annapurna scheme has been launched in 2000-01 by the Ministry of Rural Development and later in 2002-03 the scheme was transferred to the State Plan along with National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS) and

National Family Benefit Scheme. The senior citizens who are not receiving pension under NOAPS, then those who are deserted by family members and are living on community's support, those who do not have any family members and those with physical incapacity comes under the beneficiaries of the scheme. Then National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) has been launched as another measure to achieve the objective of food security in the year 2004 by government. It aims at providing additional resources for generation of wage employment and for providing food security to the backward districts of the country apart from resources available under another scheme that is Sampoorna Grammen Rojgar Yojana (SGRY). This is a centrally sponsored scheme. Under this scheme foodgrains are also supplied to the states free of cost.

In 1955 as mentioned earlier the Essential Commodities Act was passed by government to protect the poor people's interests from market vagaries. Under the Act, various ministries and department regulates production, distribution, pricing, etc. of certain essential commodities. In 1993 the National Nutrition Policy was adopted by the government under the Department of Women and Child Development. This policy recognizes the role of nutrition in development of the nation and the necessity of condition of improved nutrition. In 1995, in order to execute the National Nutrition Policy other programmes and a National Plan of Action on Nutrition has been developed.

In 2005 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act (MNREGA) was passed as a measure to alleviate poverty and upliftment of the poor people in rural areas. This Act is an important legislation for livelihood security of rural households by providing them guaranteed wage in unskilled manual work and this in the process helps in achieving food security of the rural households.

In the 53rd meeting of National Development Council (NDC) on 29 May, 2007 a resolution was adopted to launch a Food Security Mission to increase production of foodgrains which comprises rice, wheat and pulses by 10 million tones, 8 million tones and 2 million tones by the end of 11th plan(2011-12). Then accordingly National Food Security Mission (NFSM) a centrally sponsored scheme has been launched from 2007-08 aimed at ensuring food security

in the country. The main aims of the mission are- increasing foodgrains production of the above crops through expanding area and enhancement of productivity, restoring soil fertility and productivity, creation of employment opportunities and enhancement of economy of farm level to restore farmers' confidence of targeted districts which have potential but productivity is relatively low at present. In 2007 itself National Policy for Farmers has been introduced which mainly focuses on the development of the farm sector and broad areas under the policy are economic well-being of the farmers in addition to production and productivity. Under the policy various new technologies like biotechnology, Information and Communication Technology, renewable energy technology, nano technology and space applications are encouraged to increase and improve productivity per unit of land and water. Moreover, under the policy women are also benefitted as various services for women like creches, child care centres and nutrition needed by working women in fields would also be funded and also to ensure remunerative prices for agricultural commodities. Minimum Support Price mechanism has been implemented. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna (RKVY) is another scheme launched by the government for achieving the most crucial and desired goal of food security in the nation. This scheme has been launched in the year 2007 itself in the 53rd meeting of the National Development Council (NDC) and the main aims of the scheme are firstly to incentivize the states to increase the share of investment in agriculture and allied sectors, reducing the yield gaps in important crops and maximization of returns to the farmers. By developing agriculture and allied sectors RKVY aimed at achieving 4 percent annual growth in the agricultural sector during 11th Five Year Plan. The Central Government is to provide the funds for RKVY to the states.

On June, 2009, the Right to Food Act was passed and under the Act all BPL households are entitled to 35kg of foodgrains per month at Rs 3/kg and Rs 2/kg of rice and wheat under the PDS system with continuation of existing food related schemes.

On 2013 another very significant step was taken by the Government of India for ensuring food security to 6.5 millions of people of the country by enacting the most outstanding National Food Security Act (NFS). After a series of debates since 2011 this Act was passed

with great expectations. This Act also aims at improving women's status of food security, women's empowerment, removing health problems of women and many more.

In the whole South-Asian region the role of India is very crucial towards achievement of food security. India is a large country. In fact, it is the largest country in SAARC both in terms of population, area and economy. India is the main food exporter as it is one of the leading producers of rice, wheat, sugarcane, milk, fruits, etc. Sri Lanka also exports food to a great extent along with India among the other South-Asian region.

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

3.4 In India to feed the whole population was considered to be a responsibility and a social goal since the time of independence when the nation was suffering from acute food shortage and starvation, poverty and other major challenges. In India every state more or less is facing nutritional problems. According to the fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution of India each person has the right to live a life with dignity with two decent meals a day. Again Article 47 of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) it is the duty of the state to raise the level of nutrition, standard of living and to improve public health. Accordingly Right to food has been taken as a part of the right to life and the government has undertaken this right very sincerely and adopted many strategies to guarantee this right to the people of the nation. Public Distribution System (PDS) is one of those sincere initiatives taken by the government for achievement of food security for the poor in the nation. It has an universal coverage character and till now no other programme has been introduced to target the PDS system in the country. In India to counter the poverty and hunger various employment programmes have also been made but PDS is the most effective strategy and systematic attempt to target the poor in terms of elimination of problems of poverty and hunger and also to ensure food security through distribution of subsidized foodgrains. But there is another view regarding the effectiveness of PDS and employment programmes and according to this view employment programmes are found to be more systematic and effective strategy to reaching the poor and providing support to the poor population⁸.

Initially the main objective behind the introduction of the PDS system in India was price stabilization as PDS is a measure that facilitates transfer of foodgrains at affordable prices to the poor and those leading a very hard and inactive life. It is an important step taken that has the capacity to abolish the problem of malnutrition to a very great extent. In 1939 the 'rationing system' was introduced by the British in Bombay first and later on other parts of the country and the PDS system which was introduced in later period resembles this rationing system. Under the PDS system essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar, edible oils and kerosene are ensured available to Above Poverty Line (APL) and Below Poverty Line (BPL) consumers at cheaper prices through the network of Fair Price Shops locally known as 'ration shops' and these shops are operated through both central and state governments' assistance. In all over India there are ration shops in every locality, village, towns and city. The central government is responsible for making available the six essential commodities for distribution to the state government. APL households are distributed the commodities at FCI's economic cost and the BPL households receive it at half of FCI's economic cost. But there emerged many criticisms and doubts against the working of the PDS. It has been criticized of not serving the poor effectively and so later on in 1992 to overcome the doubts and criticisms the government again introduced Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) to distribute foodgrains to the poor with more varieties and also quantities at very cheap prices which they easily afford to buy. Again in 1997 the RPDS was restructured into Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) to target the poorest of the poor population. Under TPDS each BPL household is given 35kg of foodgrain per month at an special subsidized price and APL cardholders is entitled to 15kg/per month of foodgrains. The foodgrains are allocated through Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY). The TPDS operates under two-tier subsidized pricing system: one for the APL population and the another one for poorest of the poor among the BPL. To protect the poor and vulnerable section from inflation is the main aim of TPDS and it was even observed by Dr.Manmohan Singh. He said to feed the growing population and to satisfy the nutritional requirements of the people there is the need of high rate of growth of production of food⁹.

In both coverage and expenditure the PDS is the most important food security network and is probably the largest machinery of distribution in the world. Still inspite of having largest stock of grains the foodgrains supplied under the PDS are not being able to meet the consumption needs of the poor and there are many cases where the foodgrains are found to be of inferior quality. Today 21% remain undernourished after having such a food mechanism¹⁰. Even after being such a unique and significant machinery of distribution of its type, the PDS is not totally free from defects. Many shortcomings have been discovered so far of the PDS :

1. There is an increase in the instances of receiving low quality of foodgrains by consumers under the scheme in Fair Price Shops (FPS).
2. Many FPS dealers sell a major stock of foodgrains received from Food Corporation of India in black market, resort to malpractice and illegal diversions of commodities.
3. Due to the malpractices made by dealers make many poor consumers unable to have access to nutritious food which ultimately creates the situation of food insecurity of those people.
4. In many instances it has been found that many fair price shop owners create large number of fake cards and they sell foodgrains in the open market.
5. There is many loopholes in terms of identification of households who should be granted PDS. Many undeserving people who have sufficient income and are not in any way BPL people are tasting the fruits of PDS meant for BPL families due to possession of ration cards through illicit means.
6. Due to absence of any criteria to identify which household is BPL and which is APL there is serious corruption in the PDS and the targeted beneficiaries are not being benefitted. Many middlemen are consuming large portion of foodgrains meant for the poor. There is no proper supervision of FPS and also there is no accountability of the persons who are responsible for the distribution of foodgrains under the PDS to the poor.

7. Lack of awareness of the main norms of PDS among the poverty-stricken societies is also barrier for satisfactory performance of PDS. Many BPL families lacks information of overall use of the BPL cards.
8. On 14 October, 2013 it has been found by Aaj Tak news channel through a sting operation named Operation Black on PDS that in most cases the foodgrains meant for distribution under the PDS do not reach the fair price shops first instead reaches mills¹¹.
9. In Andhra Pradesh the number of BPL cards issued exceeded the number of below poverty people registered in the state¹².

Although there is availability of foodstuff under the PDS but due to such loopholes even today the Indian state is not completely free from hunger and food insecurity. In order to make the PDS fruitful in its objective an improvement is necessary in the system and the improvements are like: strict vigilance squad is to be made to detect corruption made in the system, the officers-in-charge should be made accountable, good quality of foodgrains should be supplied for distribution from FCI and other such prominent agencies, checks and raids frequently is necessary to be conducted in order to eliminate acquisition of bogus and duplicate cards by illicit dealers and other persons, proper display of price chart and quantity of foodgrains available should be enforced, delivery of PDS commodities to the FPS doorsteps instead of being delivered to FPS owners at FCI godowns, a more effective Management Information System is needed to be introduced. As hunger and malnutrition continue to be a major challenge in India since long time and in order to eliminate these problems the most significant step was taken by the government through the launching of food distribution scheme-PDS. But due to problems of misappropriation of resources and mismanagement of the system till now the government is unable to achieve its goals totally. Therefore, the most urgent need of the time is reform of the PDS, effective storage of foodgrains and increasing agricultural production and this should be generally acknowledged.

INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (ICDS)

3.5 The main aim behind launching the ICDS programme in 1975 which comes under the purview of Ministry of Women and Child Development (MOWCD) is to improve nutritional and health standard of children under 6 years of age and women of age group 15-45 years. It also aims at eliminating various hazards to child health, decrease rate of infant mortality, child malnutrition, health status improvement of expecting and lactating mothers and also to reduce school drop-outs. It is a government programme which aims of improving the nutritional status of the underprivileged section of the population. Under the ICDS scheme, the beneficiaries are provided with supplementary nutrition. The children under 6 years and pregnant or lactating mothers are entitled to the following four main services –

- i) Supplementary nutrition : Vitamin A tablets, food grains and rice, and fortified food packages are available for children and mothers who shows signs of malnourishment. Even weight-for-age growth cards are maintained for all children under 6 years.
- ii) Immunisation : Children are given full vaccinations against 6 preventable diseases like poliomyelitis , diphtheria, pertusis, tetanus, tuberculosis and measles. Then again pregnant women receive vaccination against tetanus as it reduces maternal and neonatal mortality rate.
- iii) Health check-ups : Various health services are provided for children and also treatment is provided for diarrhoea, de-worming and along with this ante-natal and post-natal check-ups are provided for pregnant women and new mothers.
- iv) Referred Services : Proper medical attention is given to children or mothers who need it by referring to the Primary Health Centre or Sub-centre even to specialists.

In addition to this, under ICDS women and adolescent girls (age 15-45) are given nutrition and health education, advices are given and support to help them to look after their own health, nutrition and development needs of themselves and also of their children and families. These services are made available from a local ICDS or Anganwadi centre by Anganwadi workers like ‘Shanti’. But the overall responsibility of monitoring the ICDS scheme is of the MOWCD.

ICDS plays a significant role in building better future for children by providing the maximum facilities and basic health privileges to women and children. However, various evaluative studies as stated by Brinda Viswanathan (2003) in 'Household Food Security and Integrated Child Development Services in India (Background Paper for IFPRI-MTID-DPH68) reveals that the impacts of this programme have not reached the target groups effectively and also the operational efficiency of the programme is not satisfactory. The ICDS programme is associated with decreasing malnutrition and better child development and improve health and nutritional status of women of age 15-45 years. In 2015, India had around 158 million children under 6 years and about 26 million births in 2015 and in the same year India's ICDS scheme served about 82 million children under 6 years and over 19 million pregnant and lactating mothers. The beneficiaries received services under the scheme in about 1.3 million centres. However, the large size and diversity of the country, the policy context, mode of funding and lack of community awareness, lack of community engagement, low institutional capacity, poor infrastructure have hindered scaling up access and implementation quality. Therefore, the future success of the ICDS services depends on how well it adheres to quality standards and also how it evolves to address current weakness.

THE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT, 2013

3.6 The National Food Security Act (NFS), 2013 is the greatest act being enacted by the then UPA government with the main objective of achieving food security at all levels in Indian state. This Act converts into legal entitlements for the various existing food security programmes of the Government of India which includes the Midday Meal Scheme, Integrated Child Development Services scheme and the Public Distribution System. Under this Act maternity benefits are also recognized. The Act was first introduced into India's Parliament on 22nd December 2011, promulgated into presidential ordinance on 5th July 2013 and signed into law on 12 September, 2013¹³. It is a landmark act for achieving food security to all people in the Indian state. While enacting the Act the main aim of the government is to provide foodgrains to poor and vulnerable population of two-thirds of 1.2 billion population in India

at subsidized prices¹⁴ under TPDS. This Act is a very important step towards empowerment and development of women section too and also of children. NFS Act is the result of long debate discussions and criticisms among the legislators of Indian Parliament since 2011. The beneficiaries under the Act will be entitled to 5kg. per eligible person per month of foodgrains at prices of rice at Rs. 3/per kg, wheat at Rs. 2/per kg and coarse grains(millet) at Re 1/per kg. Under the Act pregnant women, lactating mothers and children of certain categories are entitled to free meals daily. The salient features of the Act are:

1. 75% and 50% of rural and urban population will be covered under TPDS with uniform entitlement of 5kg per person per month for 3 years from enactment to 5kg. of foodgrains per month at Rs.3, Rs. 2 and Re 1 per kg. of rice, wheat and coarse grains(millet)¹⁵.
2. The States/UTs are responsible for determination of eligibility of beneficiaries under the Act within the coverage under TPDS determined for each state.
3. Pregnant women and lactating mothers are entitled to nutritious 'take home ration' of 600 Calories as prescribed nutritional norms under Integrated Child Development Services(ICDS) and also of maternity benefit of minimum Rs. 6,000 for six months.
4. Again children of 6months to 14 years of age also entitled to free hot meals or 'take home rations' as prescribed by ICDS and Midday Meal schemes and higher nutritional norms have been prescribed for children who are malnourished upto 6 years.
5. The Central government will provide funds to states when there will be short supplies of foodgrains
6. The state government will provide a food security allowance to the targeted beneficiaries in case of non-supply of foodgrains.
7. For maintaining transparency and accountability there are provisions made for disclosure of records relating to PDS, social audits and setting up of strict Vigilance Committes.

8. The eldest woman in a household who is 18 years or above is the head of the household for the purpose of issuing of ration cards and this is a clear step taken by government for women empowerment.
9. There is a provision for setting up of grievance redressal mechanism at the District and State levels. States can use the existing machinery or even set up separate mechanism
10. The State Food Commissions will be formed for implementing and monitoring the provisions of the Act and there is provision for imposition of penalty on public servant or any authority by the Commission in case of failure to compliance with the relief recommended by the District Grievance Redressal Officer.
11. It is the responsibility of the central government to provide assistance to the States in meeting the expenditure incurred by them on transportation of foodgrains within the State, its handling and FPS dealers' margin.

The National Food Security Bill is the biggest experiment ever regarding distribution of subsidized foodgrains by any government with an additional food subsidies of the existing PDS for the poor. The NFS Act is a step to provide for food and nutritional security to the population of India by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices so that all live a dignified life. The Act extends to whole India. The Commission on Agriculture Costs and Prices calculated and stated that total expenditure of the NFS Act anywhere will be Rs.125,000 to 150,000 crores annually (i.e., 1.25 to 1.5 trillion rupees)¹⁶. The Act during the time of enactment process many criticisms were leveled against it by the opposition parties. Criticisms were like the bill was described as a measure for “vote security” for the then ruling government instead of being for ensuring food security and this was said by one senior opposition politician Murli Manohar Joshi¹⁷. Again another politician, Mulayam Singh Yadav said that the Act was brought for elections of 2014 only and nothing else by UPA government¹⁸. The Technical Advisory Committee on Monetary Policy stated that food security bill will further aggravate food price inflation as it will tilt supply towards cereals and away from other farm produce which will raise food prices. It is further said that

the bill implemented sincerely and honestly will cost 3 percent of the GDP in its first year¹⁹. Again it has been stated by the Indian Ministry of Agriculture's Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices that higher food subsidy burden on the budget will raise the fiscal deficit, increasing macro level inflationary pressures and will induce imbalance in the production of oilseeds and pulses. The Commission also predicted that the Bill would restrict private initiative in agricultural sector and will further reduce competition in the market place due to government domination²⁰. Even the bill was considered to be a "pet project" of Indian National Congress President Sonia Gandhi. However, though there were many criticisms against the Bill, it cannot be ignored the very fact that this Act is a milestone in the whole history of measures adopted for ensuring food security too all in India and also to empower women and development of women and children who are the most vulnerable to any problem. The bill is nothing but an investment on human capital and a step to achieve human development in the real sense in the state of India. This act is a gurantee for the people to make them live a secured life and to easily meeting their basic needs. If implemented honestly the bill will definitely tide over the problems of hunger and malnutrition and achieve the goal of food security.

HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY

3.7 To achieve a higher and satisfactory level of food security by a nation the most urgent need is to take measures to ensure food security situations from root that is from individual and household level not merely national food security. Household constitutes a single person or group of persons living together and also sharing food from a common kitchen. All the members of a household are related to each other by blood, marriage or adoption and size of a household is based on the number of 'consumer units' which means a person of a particular group of age and sex.

The issue of food security although taken as a very important social goal, another fact is also there that many households are not being able to reach the desired level of food security, including India. Abolition of hunger is also not the ultimate solution to achieve food security

as many households belonging to low income countries, even in middle-income and some rich countries are suffering from the threat of food insecurity not merely a sector or group of nations. Any society can truly develop only when the entire population have access to secured food. Household food security is very important to achieve first and a household is food secured “when it has access to the food needed for a healthy life for all its members (adequate in terms of quality, quantity, safety and culturally acceptable), and when it is not at undue risk of losing such access.” Only availability of high levels of food is also not the sole condition to abolish the threat of food insecurity especially in low income countries. Therefore, specific policies and programmes is to be formulated to address successfully the household food insecurity in a country. Households should never be viewed in the context of isolation instead should be viewed in the context of their community. Community participation is important elimination of many problems including food insecurity. It is responsibility of the government to enable families and communities to achieve food security in long-term basis and also to provide them with safety net for preventing destitution. Food secured households is a precondition for a modern and healthy society. Along with ensuring food security, government must also give special recognition to tackle other problems like illiteracy and housing problem. An increase in the income of low income households as money is a serious obstacle of food purchasing capacity and this increase in income will also improve the level of quality of dietary intake as a food secured household is that removes the hunger of its members and also satisfies their nutritional requirements. Therefore, focus on various factors which determines the level of food and nutrient consumption of households is necessary to decide whether a household is food secured or not. To measure household food security one measure is measurement of household food availability and average household food consumption levels over a period of time in relation to need of the household. But this measure is difficult to best regard it as an ideal measure as there are many difficulties in this measure, in many cases in terms of measuring availability and consumption and need too.

IFAD²² defined household food security as “the capacity of a household to procure a stable and sustainable basket of adequate nutritious food”. There are three main dimensions of household food security which includes: availability of food, access to adequate food and

utilization of food. Poverty is a determining factor as already discussed earlier to food security goal and this also reflects a household's access to food. Production of food is although not the sole dimension but an important dimension of food security as food security at the household level encompasses both supply and demand issues. There are therefore other issues which are included in the strategy of food security and these are secured ownership of access to resources and services, consumption of food and the issues of nutrition, health, food storage and preparation and access to adequate income to purchase the produced food. According to A.K. Sen in his theory of 'Exchange Entitlement', food insecurity is a result of failure of a household's entitlement to a bundle of commodities with enough food²³. Sen stated in his theory of exchange both poverty and hunger takes place based on several factors like lack of land labour, capital or entrepreneurial ability or due to loss or lack of entitlement or exchange based acquirement i.e., employment, decrease in wages, food inflation, reduction in social security provisions. In a household food insecurity problem arises mainly due lack of resources, lack to access to land and skewed distribution of employment opportunities and income.

As mentioned earlier that one dimension of household food security is access to food and security and these are important concepts of household food security. Access implies entitlement to produce, purchase, exchange or receive food and the concept of security implies to balance vulnerability, risk and insurance. Proper assessment of those channels through which a household has access to food. There are many instances which shows that households face the problem of food security in terms of consumption and utilization of food and it is also another important dimension of household food security. Sometimes family size and high dependency ratio along with the problem of entitlement limits the level of feeding of members of a household. In other words, it can be stated that a household's food security level is associated with many factors viz, capacities of individual's and the household's day-to-day activities and decisions to produce , purchase and use food of right quantity and also of quality at various phases of life cycle and seasons too. Food security is a condition related to both supply of food and individual's access to the food and therefore household food security exists when all members at all times have access to enough food for

an active, healthy and dignified life²⁴. As food security is considered to be core component for human development, therefore, right to food is considered to be as vital right for enjoyment of other rights²⁵ by UDHR in 1948 itself. Infact, the 1996 World Food Summit on Food Security very rightly and clearly made the declaration that “ food should not be used as an instrument for political and economic pressure”.

REFERENCES

1. Expert Consultation on Food Security, 2002.
2. FAO World Food Day and Tele Food, 2001.
3. www.youthkiawaaz.com
4. United Nations Children's Fund.
5. State of Food Security in the World 2015, released by the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization in Rome.
6. *Times of India Report*, Dubious distinction: India leads world hunger list, 2015 and The State of Food Security in the World, 2015. (FAO estimates).
7. www.indiafoodbanking.com
8. Bhagawati and Srinivasan (1993) advocate for a move to food stamps away from the present PDS. If food stamp system is not feasible, they say that 'it is still desirable to do away with the inefficient FCI by letting the private sector supply the quantity of grains needed for the PDS, at the place and time needed, by calling for bids' (1993:106).
9. *The Hindu*, April 9, 2010 (<http://www.hindu.com/2010/04/09/stories/2010040963671400.htm>).
10. As Grain Piles UP, India's Poor Still Go Hungry, *New York Times*, June 7, 2012.
11. 'Operation Black by Aaj Tak News Channel'. *Aaj Tak*. Retrieved 14 October 2011.
12. Outlook Business 2009, Tritah 2003.
13. *The National Food Security Bill, 2013* Receives the Assent of the President, Published in the Gazette of India as Act No.20 of 2013. (Press release). Press Information Bureau.

14. *Report of the Expert Committee on National Food Security Bill*, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, Government of India, January 2011.
15. Schedule I, 'Subsidized prices under Targeted Public Distribution System,' stipulates these prices will be effective for a period of three years from the date of commencement of this Act; and thereafter, at such price, as may be fixed by the Central Government, from time to time, not exceeding,- i) the minimum support price for wheat and coarse grains; and ii) the derived minimum support price for rice; as the case may be.
16. Ashok Gulati, et al (December 2012). *National Food Security Bill, Challenges and Options*. Discussion Paper No.2. Commission on Agriculture Costs and Prices, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India.
17. Shekhar Iyer(August 26,2013). 'This isn't food security, it's vote Security, says BJP'. *Hindustan Times*.
18. 'Food Security Bill passed in Lok Sabha after nine-hour debate'. *Food Post*. August 27, 2013.
19. 'Manmonia's FSB: 3% of GDP'. *Indian Express*. July 6, 2013.
20. Ashok Gulati, et al (December 2012). *National Food Security Bill, Challenges and Options*. Discussion Paper No.2. CACP, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India.
21. 'Lok Sabha passes Sonia Gandhi's ambitious Food Bill'. *moneycontrol.com (CNBC)*. August 27, 2013. 'Parliament clears Sonia's pet Food Security Bill, Cong eyes poll gain'. *CNN-IBN*. September 3, 2013.
22. International Fund for Agricultural Development (1992). *Rural Poverty Alleviation and Nutrition: IFAD's Evolving Experiences*. A Technical Paper. Technical Advisory Division: IFAD, Rome.
23. A.K. Sen (1981). *Hunger and Poverty, Essays on Entitlement And Deprivation*. Oxford: *The Clarendon Press*.

24. 'Food Security in the United States: Measuring Household Food Security. USDA. Retrieved 2008-02-03.

25. United Nations Committee on Economic, Social , and Cultural Rights (1999). *The right to adequate food*. Geneva: United Nations.