

Food Security in India

Food security is a broad term with many facets. For survival, food is just as important as breathing air. But achieving food security entails more than just eating two square meals daily. Only when there is enough food accessible for everyone, when everyone has access to affordable food, and when there are no access hurdles is a nation's food security guaranteed. Its dimensions are as follows:

- **Availability:** Food production domestically, imports, and the stock kept in government granaries are all considered available.
- **Accessibility:** This refers to food availability to everyone, without exception.
- **Affordability:** It entails having enough money to purchase adequate food that is both safe and healthy to meet one's dietary needs.

Food Security in India

Food security concerns began during the Bengal Famine of 1943, during which millions of people while under British colonial administration. Various food shortages have hit India since independence, including an initial rush to industrialize while ignoring agriculture and several droughts in the 1960s.

- India's economy has grown significantly in recent years and is still one of the fastest-growing in the world.
- Despite significant advancements, there are still concerns about poverty and food insecurity in India.
- India is placed 107th out of 121 nations in the Global Hunger Report 2022, which was published by Concern Worldwide and Welt Hunger Hilfe, non-governmental organizations from Ireland and Germany, respectively. The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that in the years 2021-2022, the Food Price Index has climbed by 30%.

Although the Government of India has been actively addressing food security through the Public Distribution System and the National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013, there are still issues with Food Security in India due to the country's growing population, the effects of climate change, and the disruption of the world's supply chains caused by the Russian-Ukrainian War.

Food Security in India: Current Framework

Concerns over Food Security in India can be linked to the Bengal Famine, which occurred in 1943 during British colonial control and resulted in the starvation deaths of between 2 million and 3 million people. India currently has 195 million undernourished people, making it the largest country in the world. Due to chronic undernutrition or stunting, about 47 million, or 4 out of 10 children, in India do not reach their full potential.

The current framework adopted by the Indian government for Food Security in India are:

- **Constitutional Provisions:** The fundamental right to life guaranteed by Article 21 of the Indian Constitution can be interpreted to include the right to live with human dignity, which may include the right to food and other necessities. Despite the absence of a specific provision in the Indian Constitution addressing the right to food, this interpretation is permissible.
- **Public Distribution System:** The Public Distribution System (PDS) has grown in importance as a component of the government's strategy for controlling the nation's food economy. PDS is supplemental and is not meant to supply all of the commodity's

requirements. Wheat, rice, sugar, and kerosene are now the commodities allocated to the States/UTs for distribution under the PDS.

- **Buffer Stock:** Food Corporation of India (FCI) is primarily responsible for obtaining food grains at the minimum support price (MSP), storing them in various places throughout the country, and then supplying them to the state governments as needed.
- **National Food Security Act:** The National Food Security Act of 2013 (NFSA) represents a paradigm shift from a welfare-based to a rights-based approach to food security. Following the Antyodaya Anna Yojana and the Priority Households, it covers 75% of the rural and 50% of the urban populations (PHH).

Food Security Programmes in India

The National Food Security Act, 2013 was enacted by the Indian Parliament in 2013 to guarantee everyone in the nation their right to food. This Act, also known as the Right to Food Act, aims to give subsidized food grains to around two-thirds of India's 1.33 billion people. To achieve food security in India, the food management system and food pricing policy comprise three main instruments:

- Public Distribution System
- Buffer Stock maintenance
- Minimum Support Pricing (MSP) for purchases.

The Food Security Programmes in India include:

- Integrated Child Development Services scheme.
- Sampada Yojana
- Mega Food Parks.
- Mid-day Meal Scheme.
- Public Distribution System

Famous Food Security Revolutions

The list below sheds light on the important Food Security Revolutions that occurred:

- Round Revolution – Potato Revolution
- Pink Revolution – Meat and Poultry Production
- Green Revolution – Agriculture Production
- Blue Revolution – Fish Production
- Red Revolution – Meat & Tomato Production
- Brown Revolution – Leather /Cocoa production
- Silver Revolution – Egg/Poultry Production
- Golden Revolution – Horticulture and Honey Production.
- Yellow Revolution – Oil Seeds production
- White Revolution – Milk/Dairy production

Food Security in India and World

The organizations fighting hunger in India and around the world are listed below.

- **World Food Programme:** One of the biggest UN organizations, the World Food Programme (WFP), provides food aid in emergencies to 86.7 million people in about 83 countries each year. It also works with local communities to promote nutrition and create community resilience. The World Food Programme was given the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize (WFP).
- **UNICEF:** UNICEF implements the nutrition program, among other initiatives. It is a component of the Scaling Up Nutrition big global initiative, which promotes attention to and investment in nutrition in many nations worldwide.
- **Akshaya Patra:** Aiming to end classroom hunger by implementing the Mid-Day Meal Scheme program in government-funded schools in India, the Akshaya Patra is an Indian NGO founded in 2000. The organization's main objectives are to end childhood malnutrition and to promote children's rights to an education when their families and parents cannot afford it.
- **IFOAM Organics International:** The IFOAM Organic Guarantee System acknowledges the need for variation and local adaptation while increasing transparency regarding various domestic organic standards. It is founded on a Family of Standards, the sole instrument that permits multilateral equivalence between technical standards and organic certifying organizations across continents, like Biocert India and Argencert.
- **Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO):** The goal of the FAO, a specialized agency of the UN founded in 1945, is to aid in the eradication of hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition.
- **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):** In addition to tackling the food problem brought on by environmental difficulties, UNEP was established in 1972 as an institute for environmental issues.
- **World Bank:** The World Bank was established in 1944 and is one of the oldest international institutions in the world. The World Bank actively participates in sponsoring food-related projects and initiatives.
- **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD):** The United Nations established the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in 1977 intending to eradicate hunger, malnutrition, and rural poverty.

Food Security in India: Challenges

Food Security in India is a significant problem. Different governments have tried to address the problem, but the issue remains unaddressed. Meaningful reform is necessary to address this burning problem of Food Security in India. India is home to 195 million malnourished humans, making it the only country with this huge number. India's agricultural productivity is relatively low. The challenges associated with Food Security in India are:

- **Lack of Framework:** There is no rigid management framework for food security in India. The Public Distribution System has issues with food grain leakages and diversion, inclusion/exclusion errors, false and fraudulent ration cards, and inadequate grievance redress and social audit mechanisms.
- **Weed Threat:** India has experienced more than 10 significant invasive pest and weed assaults over the past 15 years. In 2018, the Fall Armyworm (Pest) virtually wiped out the nation's entire maize harvest. In the Gujarat and Rajasthan districts in 2020, locust attacks were reported.
- **Depleting Soil Health:** Healthy soil is essential for food production because roughly 95% of the world's food production depends on it. Sustainable food production has a substantial obstacle in soil deterioration brought on by the overuse or improper application of agrochemicals, deforestation, and natural disasters.

- Supply Chain Disruption: In 2022, the Russia-Ukraine War interrupted the global food supply chain, leading to food scarcity and inflation when the Covid-19 Pandemic had already influenced the global food supply in 2020.
- Climate Change: Around 70% of India's yearly rainfall and 60% of its net planted area are irrigated by the monsoon. Changes in precipitation patterns and an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events like heatwaves and floods are already lowering India's agricultural productivity and endangering the country's ability to feed its people.

