

Food Security in India: Problems and Prospects

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Abstract: The concept of Food Security is multi-dimensional. Food security exists when all when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preference for an active and healthy life. Ensuring food and nutrition security is a challenge for India given its huge population and high level of poverty and malnutrition.

This paper examines performance, issues, challenges and policies in food security in terms of availability, accessibility and affordability. In particular the paper addresses the following questions:

- (1) What is the advancement in supply side of food as far as accessibility at national level?
- (2) What are the policies that India is following as has followed in achieving food security?
- (3) What ought to be done to acknowledge food security for all citizens of India?

This study adopted descriptive methodology to demonstrate the term food security and its scenario in India. It relied on upon auxiliary information from books, references, and in writing in subject to analyzing the data submitted by FCI and Food Security Portal and Food and agriculture Organization. The present paper attempts to analyze some issues related to food security in India and suggest some ways to achieve food and nutritional security in India for overall growth of an individual and sound and sustainable development of Indian economy.

Food is considered among basic amenities essential for the sustenance and growth of an individual. It has three dimensions (a) **food availability**- total food production including imports and buffer stocks maintained in government granaries like FCI. (b) **Food accessibility**- food should be made available or should be in reach of each and every person (c) **food affordability**- an individual should have enough amount of money to purchase proper, safe, healthy and nutritious food to meet his dietary needs. In the recently released Global Hunger Index, 2014 India ranked 55th out of 120 countries and this report is quite disturbing since India is one of the largest producers of food grains in the world. Still India lacks in fulfilling the basic amenities of its people. India is home of 25 per cent of hungry population. It has been well established that India has become self-sufficient in food availability. Hence India can take pride in being able to fulfill the present demand with indigenous production. But the fact is that there are millions of people below poverty line who are unable to get square meals per day and according to recent data approximately 320 million people in India go to bed without food and the data is very alarming and situation is going even worse. The crux of India's food problem pertains not so much on increasing food availability but with the distribution of food. There are various challenges which India faces in attaining food security. Natural calamities like excessive rain fall, accessibility of water for irrigation purpose, drought, soil erosion, undulating topography and various soil types such as degraded soil, infertile soil, acidic & alkaline soil, non-improvement in agriculture facilities, growth in population, lack of education and job opportunities have further added to the problems. Another challenge which India faces in attaining food security is dependence on monsoon as well as labor on daily wages basis which tends to be variable on different times thus food procurement and access is fluctuating. The income of the family governs the access to food affordability and inflation acts as fuel in fire. PDS (Public Distribution is not satisfactorily functioning hampering distribution of food at low prices.

Thus there is a need to shift from the current inefficient, expensive, perennial and corruption ridden institutional arrangements to those that will guarantee cheap delivery and distribution of requisite qualities of food grains in a transparent manner. To curb existing problems of food security the government has implemented various programs. In the backdrop the government of India enacted new Act i.e. the National Food Security Act, 2013 which aims to provide subsidized food to approximately two thirds of India's 1.2 billion people. The bill is considered as the biggest ever experiment in the world for distributing highly subsidized food for any government through a "right based approach". The proposed bill aims to provide legal right over subsidized food grain to around 67 per cent of the population. Despite its advantages the bill has been severely criticized since it will use extremely "leaky" PDS to distribute food grains. The cost of food grains is rising globally then how would the government be able to provide subsidized food to 70 per cent of Indian population in the situation of inappropriate climate conditions? In nutshell, despite ensuring ample availability of food, existence of food insecurity at the micro-level in the country has remained a formidable challenge for India.

Keywords: Food security; Food Corporation of India (FCI); India; malnutrition; Public Distribution System (PDS).

Introduction

"There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread."

— Mahatma Gandhi

Food fuels life. Life is precious. Food security is a fundamental human right. The right to food is one of the basic human rights which is closely linked to Right to life under Article 21¹ of the Constitution of India, 1950. The denial of one right inevitably influences the right of other, but also the inherent relationship between rule of law and protection of all human rights, including the right to food. Ensuring food security should be an extraordinary significance for a nation like India having 21.9² per cent people living below poverty line and about one-half of all children are malnourished.

"Food security" includes both physical as well as economic access to food. The term accessibility here includes both availability and affordability. The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious, food to maintain a healthy and active life"³. The WHO depicts food security consists of three dimension viz. "food availability", "food access" and "food use". Remarkably, The food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) added a fourth dimension i.e. "the stability of the first three dimensions of food security over time"⁴. Thus food security is multidimensional concept.

Accomplishing food security in India is a matter of primary importance where one third of its population is estimated to be absolutely poor and over half of all children are malnourished. Few critical issues have been raised in the context of food security in India. These are (i) the liberalisation of economy in the 1990s and its impact on agriculture and food security (ii) the establishment of WTO and agreement on agriculture (iii) climate change (iv) the prevalence of hunger and poverty coexisting with high level of food stock (v) 'Right to food' campaign for improving food insecurity in the country (vi) introduction of targeted public distribution system (vii) the National Food Security Bill. These important challenges have posed severe challenges for food security in India.⁵

¹ Article 21, Constitution of India, Protection of Life and Personal liberty – No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law, Universal Publication Press.

² www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/in-2011-12-only-21-9-of-indians-were-below-poverty-line-113072300629_1 accessed on 24.09.2015.

³ Food and Agriculture Organisation (November 1996). Rome declaration on Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action.

⁴ FAO 2009, *Declaration of the World Food Summit on Food security*. (PDF). Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

⁵ Anil Chandy Ittyerah, *Food Security in India: issues and suggestions for effectiveness*, retrieved from www.iipa.org.in/upload/Food%20Security%20Theme%20Paper-2013.pdf

This paper examines performance, issues, challenges and policies under food security in terms of availability, accessibility and affordability.

Objectives of the study:

Precisely the paper addresses the following questions:

- (1) What is the advancement in supply side of food as far as accessibility at national level?
- (2) What are the policies that India is following as has followed in achieving food security?
- (3) What ought to be done to acknowledge food security for all citizens of India?

This study adopted descriptive methodology to demonstrate the term food security and its scenario in India. It relied on upon auxiliary information from books, references, and in writing in subject to analysing the data submitted by Food Corporation of India and Food Security Portal and Food and Agriculture Organisation. The present paper tries to analyse some challenges related to food security in India and propose some methods to achieve food and nutritional security in India for overall growth of an individual and sound and sustainable development of Indian economy.

Concept and Evolution of food security

Food security as a concept has continuously developed over the last few decades to reflect changes in official policy thinking. Concern with food security can be drawn back to the world food crisis of 1972-74 and at the 1974 World Food Conference, Rome the first clear acknowledgement was made that this issue concerned the whole of mankind: **“Every man, woman and child** has the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition in order to develop fully and maintain their physical and mental faculties (...). Accordingly the eradication of hunger is the common objective of the all countries of the international community, especially the developed countries and others in a position to help”⁶.

In 1983, FAO analysis focused on food accessibility, primarily to a definition based on the equilibrium between the demand and supply side of food security. In 1986, the highly influential World Bank report on Poverty and Hunger (World Bank, 1986) focused on temporal dynamics of food insecurity. This was complemented by Sen’s Theory of Famine⁷ which highlighted the consequence of personal rights on food access i.e. production, labour, trade and transfer based resources. The widely accepted World Food Summit (1996) definition reinforces the multidimensional concept food security and includes food access, availability, food use and stability. Currently over 40 countries have the right to food enshrined in their constitution and FAO estimates that the right to food could be judicial in some 54 countries⁸.

The concept of Food security is centred around two sub-concepts; food availability and food title. The former refers to supply of food available at various levels i.e. local, national or international. The latter refers to the capability of an individual or household to obtain food⁹. The main prerequisites or dimensions of food security are as follows:

Food availability: The physical availability of food refers to adequate quantities of food, supplied through native production or imports. It refers to the ‘supply side’ of food security.

Food Accessibility: It refers to access by individual to adequate resources (entitlements) for acquiring appropriate food for a nutritious and balance diet.

Food Utilisation/use: Utilisation in general understood as the way the body makes the most of various nutrients in the food through balance diet, clean water, hygiene, sanitation and health care.

Stability: To be food secure, an individual, household or population must have access to adequate food at all times¹⁰.

⁶ United Nations, 1975. *Report of World Food Conference*, Rome 5- 16 November, 1974. New York.

⁷ *The causes of Famine : A refutation of professor Sen’s Theory*

⁸ Codrin PO, *The Global Food Policy* (accessed on 1.10.2015), retrieved from <https://gcardblog.wordpress.com/2012/10/29/the-global-food-policy/>

⁹ Padmini Prasad and Avani Pratap, *Article on Food security in India: key issues and strategies*, Bihar Economic Journal, Volume 3, Number 1, August 2014, ISSN : 22308970

¹⁰ Sliverster Hwenha, Tshikululu Social Investements, *The South African Food Security Paradox*, retrieved from <http://www.firstrand.co.za/csi/Research/The%20South%20African%20food%20security%20paradox%20-%20lessons%20and%20opportunities%20for%20CSI.pdf>

Food Security in India

During the last few decades the total food production in India has increased at a much faster pace than the population. The Green Revolution started in the late 1967-68 was a noteworthy watershed resulting in phenomenal increase in the production of agricultural crops especially in food grains that has changed the food security situation in India. Wheat crop among the food grains drew maximum benefit from Green Revolution which tripled the wheat production over the next three or four decades while the production of cereals doubled in this period and consequently reduced by over 50 per cent both food insecurity and poverty in the country.¹¹ In India, food security is embodied under Directive principle of State Policy (DPSP) as exemplified in the Constitution of India, 1950. Article 47¹² states, "The state shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and, in particular, the state shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medical purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health".

According to some studies the per capita energy supply has increased significantly, having norms of 2400Kcal for rural and 2100Kcal for urban areas, about 58 million people have come out of the vicious circle of poverty. Despite India's journey to ensure Food security, it is still in a pathetic state. India food security status situation remains to rank as "alarming" according to the International Food Policy Research Institute's Global Hunger Index, 2014¹³. It ranks 55 of the 120 countries in the world. Due to inflation the cost of food item is increasing day by day, leading to hardship by making them unaffordable for poverty traumatized people in India. In addition to these hardships the short supply of pulses and edible oils forces the government to import them. In addition, crop diversification, land fragmentation, climate change, lack of irrigational facilities has added up to the woes of the producers. Moreover, food availability and agricultural growth needs thorough examination as it is the key to food security. Another aspect is the food distribution through Public Distribution System (PDS), accounting for a significant part of government subsidies. The Government and its policies play a major role in ensuring Food security. These policies contain employment generation schemes, social protection programmes, vocational training programmes, National Security Bill, etc. Role of other intermediaries like NGOs, civil societies, private sector and international organisation has let to effectiveness in Food security programme¹⁴.

1. Food Availability in India

Availability refers to physical availability of food stock at desired quantities. In other words it means 'sufficient'. Food production is the basis of food security. It can be alleged that the increased availability of food is an essential condition for achieving food security in India. Food availability relates to the supply of food through production, distribution, carryover stocks and imports. The net availability of food production is estimated by excluding exports and including imports. India's self-sufficiency in food grain has been a major achievement in Post- Independence period. The green revolution piloted in a dramatic and steady increase in domestic food grain production practically eliminating the need of food import, except to a very limited extent in times of extreme calamities or emergencies like famine, drought and serious crop failure¹⁵. As per from the latest information from Directorate of Economics and Statistics, there has been a significant shift in the food production from 50 million tonnes in 1950-51 to 264 million tonnes in 2013-14. The average growth rate of food grain production from 1950 to 2014 is 2.5 per cent per annum.

Food security directly depends upon the total production of food grains, net availability of food grains and per capita net availability of food grains including the price of it.

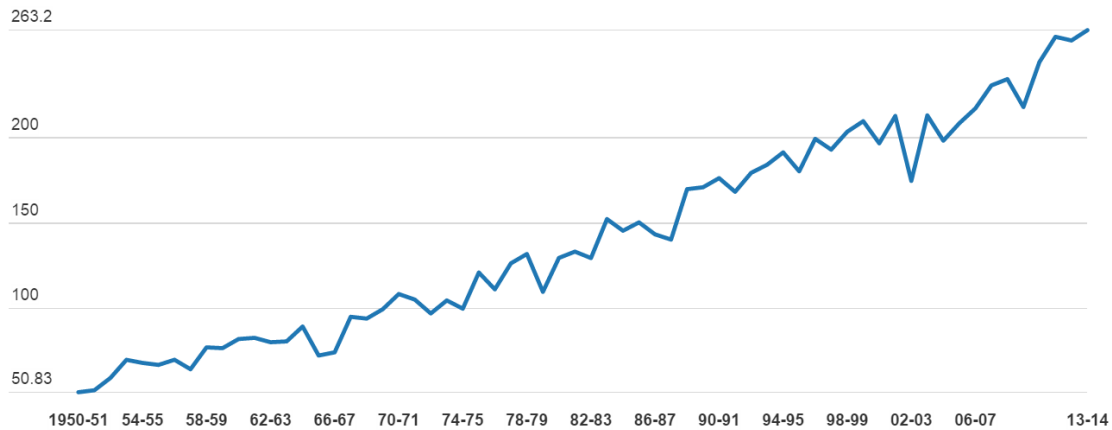
¹¹ Puja mondal, 8 *Major Economical Impact of Green Revolution in India*, retrieved from <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/green-revolution/8-major-economical-impact-of-green-revolution-in-india/20952/>

¹² The constitution of India, 1950, Article 47, Universal publications (2015)

¹³ International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI); Welthungerhilfe (WHH); Concern Worldwide, 2014, "2014 Global Hunger Index Data", retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.7910/DVN/27557>, Harvard Dataverse, V1

¹⁴ Supra foot note number 8

¹⁵ Anil Chandy Ittyerah, *Food Security in India: issues and suggestions for effectiveness*, retrieved from www.iipa.org.in/upload/Food%20Security%20Theme%20Paper-2013.pdf

India's food grain production (in Million tons)

¹⁶Source: Economic survey 2013-14

It is clear from the table that India has maintained a satisfactory level of food production. But the above table shows variation in the production of food grains. It is very clear that production is variable and this variability leads to variability in per capita availability of food grains¹⁷. The per capita availability of food grains stood at 510.8 grams per day in 2013 compared to 450.3 grams per day in 2012¹⁸. The per capita net availability of food grains for the years 2009 to 2013 are given below:

Year	Food grains (grams per day)
2009	444.0
2010	437.1
2011	453.6
2012	450.3
2013	510.8

The above tables show the variations over time in net food grain production, net availability of food grains and per capita availability of food grains. It is very clear that the production is variable which leads to fluctuation in hunger. The per capita availability of food grains in India has declined significantly. Variation in net availability of per capita food grains is due to fluctuation in food production on account of change in climate conditions, growth in population, crop diversification etc.

Government of India has taken several steps to increase the food grain production. These includes schemes like Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna (RKVY), National Horticulture Mission(NHM), Integrated Schemes of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil palm and Maize (ISOPOM). The latest legal initiative is enforcement of National Food Security Act, 2013 which ensures food availability and accessibility to 2/3rd population of poor through PDS.

¹⁶ Team firstbiz, *From 1947 to 2014: How the Indian economy has changed since independence*(accessed on 1.09.2015) retrieved from <http://www.firstpost.com/business/data-business/from-1947-to-2014-how-the-indian-economy-has-changed-since-independence-1983853.html>

¹⁷ Birendra kumar jha & Pradeep kumar tripathi, *Food security in India: A Challenging Issue*, Bihar Economic Journal, Volume 3, Number 1, August 2014,ISSN : 22308970

¹⁸ Kumud shukla, krishi jagran, *Per capita food grain availability fluctuating in India*(1.09.2015) retrieved from <http://www.krishijagran.com/General-News/2014/12/Per-capita-foodgrain-availability-fluctuating-in-India>

Food Accessibility in India

In the words of Amartya Sen, the Indian philosopher, economist and Nobel laureate, “What really matters with the food is not the overall supply but, individual access¹⁹.” Food access refers to the affordability in terms of individual’s capability to purchase food and to availability of food through safety nets of distribution. Food security requires the poor to have adequate purchasing power. Food- based interventions such as Public Distribution System (PDS), Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), and Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDM) were introduced by the Government of India to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable section of the country.

- **Targeted Public Distribution System**

In order to ensure minimum availability of food grains to the vulnerable section of the country, the government launched this scheme in 1997, under this scheme, a quantity of 72 lakhs tonnes of food grains were availed at the rate of 10 kg per family per month.

- **Midday Meal Scheme**

Introduced in the schools, for enhancing enrolment retention and attendance for further enhanced the nutrition improvement among students since 1995.

- **Antyodaya Ann Yojana**

This contemplates identification of poorest of the poor people and foodgrains at the rate of Rs. 2 per kg.

All these schemes are implemented by the government for supplying food grains at subsidized rate to the poor households, ensuring accessibility and vulnerability. In addition to these schemes the government has launched several schemes such as National Food for Work Programme(NFWP), National Rural Employment Programme(NREP), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojna(SGRY) and Legal initiative like Right to food under National Food Security Act,2013 to ensure accessibility of food.

National Food Security Act, 2013: A Landmark

The National food security act aims at assured economic and social access to adequate food, for all person in the country, at all times is a set of core entitlements within a universal right to food and nutrition provided to be enjoyed and progressively expanded until universal access to adequate nutrition is achieved²⁰. It follows a life cycle of human being from pregnancy to old age. Under the provision of the bill the beneficiaries are able to purchase 5 kg. per eligible person per month of cereals i.e. Rice Rs. 3 per kg, wheat Rs. 2 per kg and coarse grains Rs. 1 per kg. salient feature of this act are as follows:

- 75% Rural population and 50% of the urban population are entitled for three years from enactment to 5 kg food grains per month at Rs.3, Rs. 2 and Rs. 1per kg of rice, wheat and coarse grain respectively.
- The states are responsible for determining eligibility.
- Pregnant women and lactating mothers are entitled to a nutritious “ take home ration” of 600 calories and a maternity benefit of at least Rs. 6000 for six months.
- Children 6 months to 14 years old age are to receive free hot meals.
- The Act promotes women empowerment.
- The central government will provide funds to state in case of short supplies of food grains.
- The current food grain allocation of the states will be protected by central government for at least six months.
- The state government will provide a food security allowance to the beneficiaries in case of non-supply of food grains.
- The public distribution system is to be reformed.

¹⁹ Kalpana Beesabathuni, *India Country Head, Sight and Life, India: What Matters Is Access to Food and Nutrition* retrieved from http://www.sightandlife.org/fileadmin/data/Magazine/2013/27_2_2013/Commentary_India_what_matters_is_access_to_food_and_nutrition.pdf

²⁰ Vijay vir singh, *National food security Act: A step towards food security in India?*, Bihar Economic Journal, Volume 3, Number 1, August 2014,ISSN : 22308970

- The eldest woman is in the household, 18 years or above is the head of the household for the issuance of the ration card.
- There will be state and district level redress mechanism and;
- State Food Commissions will be formed for implementation and monitoring of the provisions of the Act.

Appraisal of the Bill: The Indian Ministry of Agriculture's commission on Agriculture cost and Prices has referred to the Bill as the "biggest ever experiment in the world for distributing highly subsidized food by any government through a right based approach". The bill extends coverage of the Targeted Public Distribution System, India's principal domestic food aid program to two-thirds of the population. The stated expenditure of Rs. 1,20,000 crore annually in the NFSB is the tip of the iceberg. The existing food security complex of procurement, stocking and distribution –which NFSB perpetuates- would increase the operational expenditure of the scheme given its creaking infrastructure, leakages and inefficient government²¹.

Criticism of the NFSA

- In this Bill it is implied, that that the Agriculturist assumes that the government is only the largest buyer, distributor and seller of all kinds of food grains and cereals. In this type of situation it will distort the market mechanism, and would lead to reduction in the business and bargaining power of the Agriculturists.
- The bill does not impose any restriction on imports and exports of food grains.
- The Bill does not specify the time limit for the undulating achievements.
- No provision has been made relating to Noon Mid-day meals and Self-help Groups in particular.

Food Utilization in India

Food utilisation refers to consumption of food by the household in the proper manner and individual's ability to absorb nutrients. Food utilisation by households depend upon

(I) the facilities they have for food storage and processing

(II) Their insight and practiced in relation to food preparations.

(III) How food is shared inside the family.

(IV) the condition of strength of every person which may be impeded by ailment, poor cleanliness, water, sanitation, absence of access to wellbeing offices and medicinal services.

This is the column that guarantees the wholesome results of each person in the family unit are sufficient. In India as many as 46 per cent of children are malnourished, even after three decades of implementation of Integrated Child Development Scheme(ICDS). Every second women in India is anaemic (55.3%) and every third woman is under nourished having low body mass index (35.6%) due to inflation²².

By analysing the above criteria it seems that achieving food security is a far cry for India, even though India is self-sufficient in growing food grains.

Challenges of Food Security

The challenges India faces to meet its food security are as follows:

- **Climate change**

Climate change is expected to affect agricultural land use and production due to less availability of water for irrigation and other factors. There is climate change in India due to rising temperature and extreme events on the food production systems which impacts agricultural growth adversely. Various reports indicate that climate change would result in further intensification of temporal and spatial variation in the availability of water and extreme events of flood and drought. There is a strong need to address changes in institution and resource accessibility to tackle the climate induced natural hazards.

- **Crop Diversification**

In recent years there has been great emphasis of agricultural scientist on implementation of crop diversification. The, price of food grains like rice and wheat are no encouraging and farmers ended up with very low return. By concentrating on other crops the farmers were encouraged to earn higher profits. The creation of decentralised

²¹ Nitesh Dhawan, *Social Work for UGC-NET*, McGraw Hill Education (India) Private limited.

²² *India Food Security Conundrum* – National council of applied economic Research retrieved from nfsm.gov.in/.../2%20India%20food%20security%20conundrum.docx (last accessed on 2.10.15)

food grain bank in each block or district would enable the villagers to get subsidized food. This concept will improve the delivery of food grains and reduce corruption²³.

- **Mismatch between water demand and availability**

There is a vast temporal and spatial variation in rainfall and water availability in the country. Majority of water is available during monsoon period and that too, through few spell of intense rainfall. The average rainfall in India is 1170mm . The demand for water for various purposes is increasing due to population growth, industrialisation and urbanization. Presently agriculture sector is using about 83% of water resources, but due to demand from other sector availability may decline to 68% in 2050. Hence, mismatch between demand and supply of water²⁴.

- **Land fragmentation**

Fragmentation of land is widespread in India and it is believed that fragmented nature of land holding plays a major role in explaining low levels of agricultural productivity. Increasing population has led to reduction in availability of land over the decades. There has been increase in putting agriculture land into non agriculture uses to accommodate developmental activities leading to land fragmentation and low productivity. Therefore there is a need for shift in land use and cropping pattern.

- **Quality seeds and Planting material**

The challenge confronting the seed sector is to make available quality seeds having good genetic potential at an affordable price and across the country to the farmers to enable them harvest maximum yield in the given agro-climatic conditions.

- **Agricultural Marketing**

Another critical and crucial challenge is supply chain management in agricultural marketing in India. Farmer's access to market is hampered by poor roads, excessive regulation and poor market infrastructure. Hence steps must be taken for the betterment of agricultural marketing by allowing private sector and Foreign Direct Investment to improve the marketing and agricultural produce in India.

- **Globalisation**

Though globalisation positively brought various changes like technology development, transport, fast communication and higher growth in service sector, at the same time it has also resulted in challenge. Globalisation has certainly intensified interdependence and competition between economies in the world market creating worse condition for domestic framers and producers. The impact of globalisation culminated in the establishment of special economic zones(SEZs) which also led to widening the gap between rich and poor section.

Conclusion

In its brief introduction this paper highlights the widely accepted definition of food security. The concept of Food security is centred around two sub-concepts; food availability and food title. The former refers to supply of food available at various levels i.e. local, national or international. The latter refers to the capability of an individual or household to obtain food²⁵. Thus the performance, challenges and policies in food security in India have been examined in terms of availability, accessibility and utilization. It must be noted that all the three terms are inter-related. Availability and access to food can increase the nutrition level among households. It is seen that there has been a significant decline in the level of hunger among poor's; there has also been a significant lowering of the households below poverty line²⁶. Access to food can be increased through employment due to growth in labour intensive sector. The problem of malnutrition is much border than that of access of food. The crux of India's food problem pertains not so much on increasing food availability but with the distribution of food. There are various challenges which India faces in attaining food security. Natural calamities like excessive rain fall, accessibility of water for irrigation purpose, drought, soil erosion, undulating topography and various soil types such as degraded

²³ R Prakash Upadhyay and C Palanivel, *Challenges in Achieving Food Security in India*, Iranian journal on Public Health retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3481742/>

²⁴ P. S. Brahmanand, A. Kumar, S. Ghosh, S. Roy Chowdhury, R. B. Singandhupe, R. Singh, P. Nanda, H. Chakraborty, S. K. Srivastava and M. S. Behera, *Challenges to food security in India* retrieved from <http://www.currentscience.ac.in/Volumes/104/07/0841.pdf>

²⁵ Padmini Prasad and Avani Pratap ,Article on *Food security in India: key issues and strategies*, Bihar Economic Journal, Volume 3, Number 1, August 2014,ISSN : 22308970

²⁶ Anil Chandy Ittyerah, *Food Security in India: issues and suggestions for effectiveness*, retrieved from [www.iipa.org.in/upload/Food%20Security%20Theme%20Paper-2013.\(pdf\)](http://www.iipa.org.in/upload/Food%20Security%20Theme%20Paper-2013.(pdf))

soil, infertile soil, acidic & alkaline soil, non-improvement in agriculture facilities, growth in population, lack of education and job opportunities have further added to the problems. Another challenge which India faces in attaining food security is dependence on monsoon as well as labour on daily wages basis which tends to be variable on different times thus food procurement and access is fluctuating. The income of the family governs the access to food affordability and inflation acts as fuel in fire. PDS (Public Distribution is not satisfactorily functioning hampering distribution of food at low prices.

The constraints in ensuring food security and reducing hunger are due to inappropriate policy. The government of India has enacted various programmes such as Public Distribution System including Antyodaya Ann Yojana, nutrition programmes like Midday meals, ICDS, etc. to improve food and nutrition security. National Employment Generation Schemes and Self-employment programme can also increase access to food and nutrition. Under National Food Security Law, government wants to provide subsidized food to the vulnerable section of country. It is being considered as the biggest experiment in the world.

India has many policies and programmes. However food insecurity and malnutrition continues to be high. The problem is with both design and implementation of the programme. The focus of reforms can now be shifted to more efficient delivery systems of public services. It has been recognised that better governance is necessary for effective functioning of food based programmes. Social mobilisation, community participation and decentralisation based approach are necessary in this context. Appropriate institution are needed for better implementation of this policies. In nutshell, despite ensuring ample availability of food, existence of food insecurity at the micro-level in the country has remained a formidable challenge for India.

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