

# FOOD SECURITY CHALLENGES IN INDIA

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**Abstract;** Food security is access to enough food by all people at all time for an active and healthy life. The definition as per the Rome declaration is “food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for all active and healthy life. India is developing now and its income, infrastructure, per capita income as also develop. But the major problem faced by India is “the problem of food and its distribution”. In India Agriculture is very important, employing 50% of its population and providing 16.5% of its annual GDP. India is largest and second largest producer of food crops like rice wheat. But India is not able to achieve the food security aim. According to recently released Global Hunger Index of 2018 India ranked 103 out of 119 countries. The Indian Government developed programmes to achieve food security goals but, India is not in the condition to meet the basic food requirements of people. There are many people’s in urban and rural areas of India who strive hard even for the square meals. This paper is focused on the food security issues in the Indian scenario. It also covered the various development programmes taken up by the Indian Government to counter various food security issues including several schemes.

## INTRODUCTION

Global food security will remain a worldwide concern in the recent decade. Food security implies access by all people at all times to sufficient quantities of food to lead a healthy life. Like air and water food is essential for living. It is more than getting two square meals. It has three dimensions- 1. Food availability i.e. total food production in the country, the imported food and buffer stocks maintained in govt. granaries. 2. Food accessibility i.e. food should be within the reach of all people. 3. Food affordability i.e. an individual should have enough money to buy proper safe and nutrition food to meet his dietary needs. Sustainable food security involves strengthening the livelihood security of all members within a household by ensuring both physical and economic access to balanced diet including water, and environmental sanitation, basic health care and primary education. The food should originate from efficient production technologies that conserve and enhance the natural resource base of crop, farm animals, forestry, inland and marine fisheries. FAO has enlarged its concept of food security as ‘The main objective of world food security should be to ensure that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food’.

India’s biggest challenge still remains ensuring food and nutritional security to its people. The need for achieving food security is felt significantly in the recent years due to enormous pressure from the even increasing population in India. India 72<sup>nd</sup> year of independence has not only seen development and progress but also becoming one of the fastest growing economies in the world. This victory takes a shattering twist when one looks at the hunger problem. In May 2014 The World Bank reviewed to its poverty calculation methodology, and purchasing power equality basis for measuring poverty worldwide. According to this revised methodology, the world has 872.3 million people below the new poverty line, of which 179.6 million people are from India. In the recently released Global Hunger Index of 2018, India ranked 103<sup>rd</sup> out of 119 countries and India is at serious level. This is a serious issue because India is self-sufficient in food grain production and leading producer of food grain in World.

## Data Source

The present paper is based on the secondary data published by various agencies and organizations. Data and information of IFPRI, Global Hunger Index of 2018, Economics journals, Magazines, Newspapers etc.

## Food Security and India

The International food policy research institute (IFPR) classified the status of hunger into five category- low, moderate, serious, alarming and extremely alarming. From 1947 onward, achieving food security for all has been a national goal. Food security is defined as physical, social, and economic access to balanced diet, environmental hygiene, clean drinking water and primary health care. Unfortunately in spite of numerous government schemes and safety norms, under and malnutrition remain widespread in our country. India ranked 103<sup>rd</sup> of 118 in global hunger index continues to have serious levels calculated this year. Countries worse than India include extremely poor African countries

**Performance on Global Hunger Index**

YEAR	RANK	TOTAL COUNTRIES
1992	76	96
2002	83	115
2008	102	118
2016	97	118
2017	100	119
2018	103	119

Source:- Global Hunger Report, IFPRI

India was ranked 83 in 2000 and 102 in 2008 with 38.2 and 36 GHI scores respectively. This implies that, while hunger levels in India have diminished somewhat, the improvement has been achieved by several other countries. Hence India's ranking is worse today than it was 15 year ago. In fact, Bangladesh was rank 84 with a score of 38.5 in 2000, just below India. But in 2018 it has improved beyond India with GHI score of 26.1 and rank to 86 to India's 103.

The existence of this Hunger problem is not merely confined to rural area but also extend to urban region. To combat this perennial problem, Government did introduce some major programme such as Public food distribution system (PDS), The Integrated Child Development System (ICDS) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. (MANREGS), Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) etc. This major programmes fails to penetrate in every section of the society and hunger continues to thrive among the poor people. The failure of this programmes can mainly be due to the prevalence of inequality among the society, pathetic liability system, unsuccessful delivery of public services, and infringement in the implementation of pro-poor policies.

Consider the situation in our country. Food grain production increased from around 50 million tonnes at time of Independence to over 252.23 million tonnes in 2015-16. Although what was being produced at the time of Independence and for a coupled decades thereafter was not adequate to meet the caloric requirements of the people, we have now reached a situation where, if what it's produced is distributed equally, the minimum requirement if all can be met in spite of the tremendous increase in population over more than half a century. In no part of the world is the food grain equally distributed but the hypothetical calculation goes to show that availability is not the main issue. Calculations show that in the future also, say in 2030 or 2050 the situation is likely to be similar or may be more serious.

**Food security challenges in India**

India is second largest country after china in population point of view. Today India is largest population of working group and fastest growing economy in the world but Hunger level in country is still serious. Food security is the back bone of national prosperity. The health of any nation is directly attached with food security. Food security may be defined as access and availability of food. A family is considered to be food secure when it's members do not live in hunger. As per definition of FAO- Food security exists when all people have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy life. India is self-sufficient in foodgrains production, but still the problem of hunger in country is very serious. Not only in rural but in urban areas peoples suffers from hunger. Poverty is also a major hurdle in the path of food security. Prof. Amartya has rightly said that the causes of hunger in India currently are the wide prevalence of poverty and the inability of a large section of the population to buy food or to establish entitlement over an adequate amount of food, keeping this fact in mind government of India has launched many anti-poverty programmes especially meant to promote development and employment of the poor persons of the country. But India had the largest number of people living below international poverty line in 2013 with 30% of its population under the \$1.90 a day poverty measure, the World Bank.

Food riots have taken place in many countries of the world. It is becoming very difficult to maintain food security. In rural context, agriculture development for small farmers is the most important dimension of food security. The diversification of agriculture for food e.g cereals, pulses, vegetables, fuel and fuel yielding, plant, medicinal and fodder crops are necessary to meet the food and augment income to farmer to met the food security. Natural vagaries like excessive rainfall, drought and availability of water for

irrigation, undulating topography, soil erosion, and soil type affect the food security. The income level of farmer families and agriculture labour families have to rise so they can get healthy diet. Another major problem is safe drinking water, although India has 4% of the world's water, studies show average availability is shrinking steadily. It is that by 2020 India becomes a water-stressed nation. Approximately 50% of villages still don't have any source of clean drinking water.

**Food Storage and Management**  
**Table. 2 Food storage in India**

As on	Capacity with FCI	Storage capacity with other Agencies	Total
01-04-2011	316.10	291.32	607.42
01-04-2012	336.04	341.35	677.39
01-04-2013	337.35	354.28	731.63
01-04-2014	368.90	379.18	748.08
01-04-2015	356.63	352.59	709.22
01-04-2015	357.89	456.95	814.84

FCI (Fig in Lakh MT)

Food storage is also major problem in India, The state run departments, Food Corporation of India and the Central Warehousing Corporation have the capacity to store 814.84 which is not enough for buffer production of food grains. In this storage 27.45lac MT is uncovered or cap due to this country face have loss of food and food quality during rainfall and storms. According to FCI report 506.48crores value of food losses in transit and 113.70 crore value of food losses during storage. This is serious problem which have to b taken in further for loss of food grains. For tackling such crisis, the country needs to invest substantially, yet rationally on safe storage and scientific management of food stocks because very often it is echoed through mass media that million of tonnes of food lying in the open for years and loss quality and quantity because of inadequate storage capacity.

### Conclusion

Overall, it may be concluded that food security in India can be achieved by paying higher attention to issues such as climate change, food storage, agriculture pricing, inadequate storage capacity, unsuccessful delivery of public services, mismanagement of food production, transportation and crop insurance. Despite considerable effort being made to improve production, not much focus has been given to control food supply chain losses. With over 1.2 billion people to feed, addressing the issue of food wastage is most important to India's efforts towards combating hunger and improving food security.

Limit global warming, including the promotion of climate- friendly agriculture production systems and land use policies at a scale to help mitigate climate change. The impact of globalization in form of SEZs factors has been both positive and negative in term of agricultural prosperity and there is a strong need to regulate the policies related to globalization for minimizing its negative effects on food security in India. Although we can achieve food security because food availability is not a problem in India but problem is distribution and safe storage of food grain. So we can achieve food security goal by focusing on these problems.

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