

**M.A Semester II**

**CONCEPT OF FOOD SECURITY**

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**Introduction**

Food security as a concept originated in mid70'ss in the discussion of International food problems at a time of global food crisis .The initial focus was on food supply problems of assuring the availability and stability of basic of foodstuff on international and national level. World Food Conference took up some issues related to food security in 1974 .The issues of famine, hunger and food crises were examined. Green revolution did not automatically lead to reduction in poverty, malnutrition and hunger.

## **Concept of Food Security**

Global concern related 'Food security 'as a concept originated only in 1974 at the time of World Food Summit.

The concept of Food Security implies a situation that exists when all people ,at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficiency, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO,2002).

We may also define that food sufficiency relates to a condition when each and every individual is able to get nutritionally adequate diet in quantity as well as quality and the food consumed is efficiently being utilized biologically for a healthy productive living.

By mid 1990'3 food security was recognized as as major concern. Access now involved sufficient food indicating concern with protein –energy malnutrition. The 1994 UNDP Human Development Report promoted food security by introducing some of the components in which food security was on threat.

J.M Staaaz (1990) In his paper 'Measuring Food Security in Africa : Conceptual, Empirical and Policy Issues' has defined food security as "the ability to assure on a long term basis, that thee food system provides the total population

access to a timely, reliable and nutritionally adequate supply of food.”

From this definition the following points emerge:-

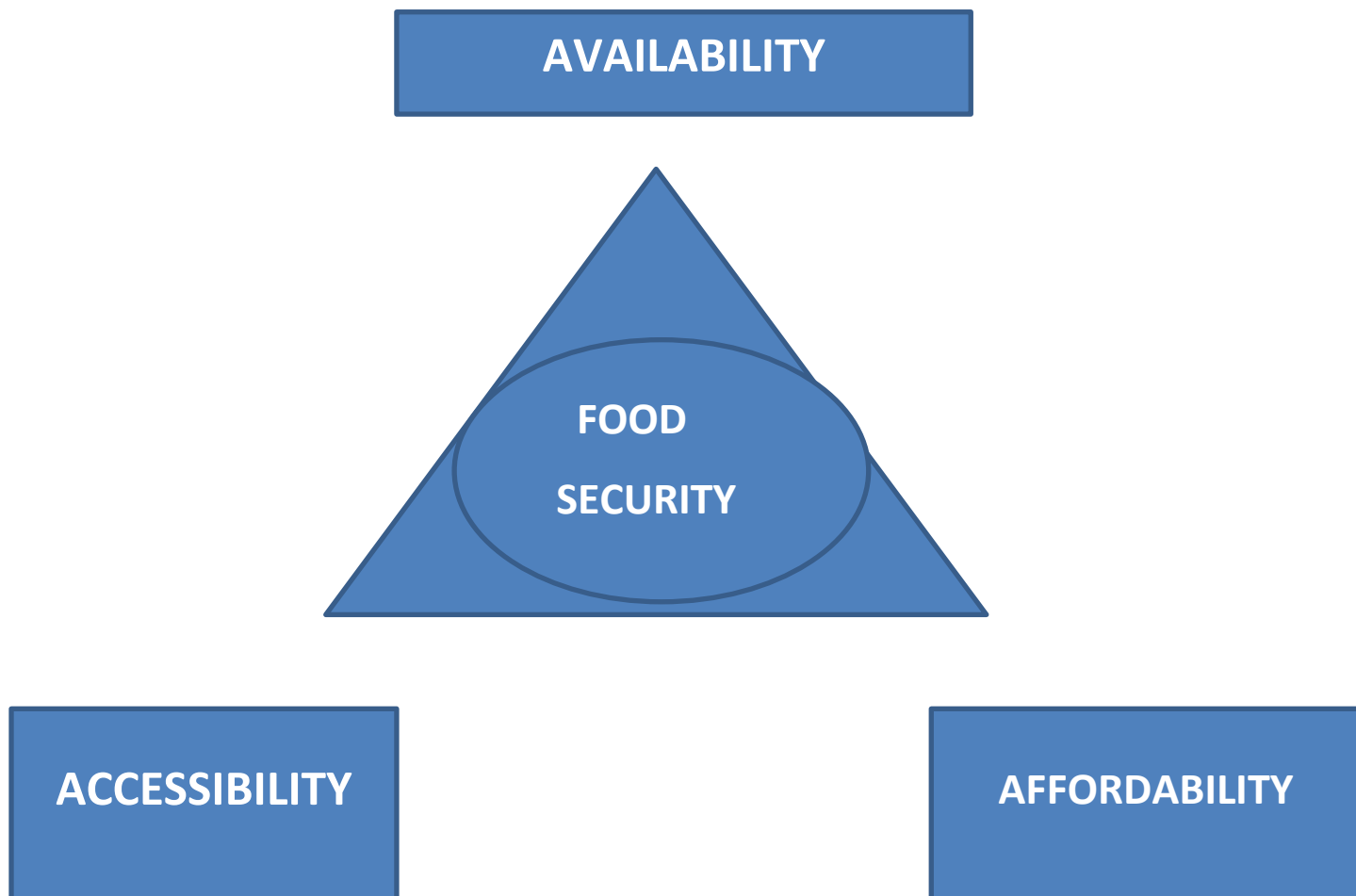
- Food security involves adequate physical availability of food to the entire population of the country.
- People have enough purchasing power so that they can acquire the food they need.
- For healthy life, the food available should be adequate in quality as well as quantity to meet nutritional requirements.
- A nation may acquire self-sufficiency in food at a point of time, but necessitates timely, reliable and nutritionally adequate supply of food.

Food Security should have three specific aims , namely, ensuring production of adequate food supplies, maximizing stability in the flow of supplies, and securing access to available supplies on the part of those who need them. Fig 1 shows the dimension of food security. The poor households are more vulnerable to food insecurity whenever there is a problem of production or distribution of crops .Food security depends on the Public Distribution System (PDS) and government vigilance and action at times when this security is threatened .The scheme was launched in India On June 1947 Major commodities to be distributed were staple foodgrains

such as wheat, rice sugar and kerosene through a network of fair price shop. To be effective food security should have these characteristics.

1. To be effective, security needs to manifest in its dimension ,covering all regions and all strata of the society.
2. To cater to the poorest section of the society as natural disasters as earthquakes, drought, flood, tsunamis, failure of crop famine etc makes people insecure.

**Fig 1                      DIMENSIONS OF FOOD SECURITY**



According to World Development Report 2008 three out of every four people in developing countries live in rural areas. 2.1 billion live on less than 2 \$ a day and 880 million live on less than 1\$ a day and most of them depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. . Poor people depending on agriculture have to face vulnerability to climatic change, crop failures, livestock death. global warming, increase in greenhouse emissions, deforestation and malnutrition, injudicious use of natural resources has all resulted in economic losses ,undermining food security. Food prices have risen 45%. Instances of food riots have already been reported from Egypt, Cameroon ,Senegal, Ethiopia Indonesia, Madagascar, Phillipines ,Haiti etc.

However, India had attained self sufficiency in food According to the Economic Survey 2007-08, between 1950-51 and 2006-07 ,production of foodgrains increased at an average annual rate of 2.55% compared to the growth of population which averaged 2,1% during the period. As a result India almost became self sufficient in foodgrains and imports were occasional. India ranked 76<sup>th</sup> in 113 countries assessed by food Security Index (GFSI) in the year 2018, based on four parameters—affordability , availability, quality and safety

In 2013, Indian Government passed the National Food Security Act. The NFSA is one of the largest social security

programmes which specifies that all Indians have the right to Food Security and 810 million Indians are eligible to purchase the food it provides . But the real problem is all children under four are malnourished, 36% of the children under the age of 5 are underweight . Vitamin deficiency is common in India and

51 % of women of reproductive age are anaemic as mentioned in the World Bank Report “ Wasting Away- The crisis of malnutrition in India”

A high level Conference on World Food Security was convened by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United States (FAO) in Rome in June 3-5, 2008 . The conference was in response to steep escalation in price of fossil fuel and partly from weather aberrations. Greater peril confronting people today is the spectre of a widespread hunger and consequent food riots. The problem arising from poverty and unemployment are the rise in price of cost of petroleum products and consequent diversion of land and crops for fuel and food production, together with crop failures due to pest infestations and exposure to rains. There is a necessity of initiating steps to take advantage of the untapped production reservoir existing with the technologies on the shelf and thereby build a sustainable food security system based on home grown food. As per the Global Hunger Index, 2018, India was ranked 103<sup>rd</sup> out of 119 qualifying countries .

I In countries like India the following stages may be visualized.

**Stage --** The most basic need from the point of view of human survival is to make an adequate quantity of cereals available to all.

**Stage 2 –** In the second stage we may think of food security as the adequate availability of cereals and pulses.

**Stage 3 --** In the third stage, food security should include cereals, pulses, milk and milk products

**Stage 4 --** In the fourth stage, food security should include cereals, pulses, milk and milk products, vegetables, fruits, fish eggs and meat .

There is an instant need of building a sound technologically based sustainable production, based on home grown food:=

- a) In Arica ,Asia and Latin America ,the average yield of foodcrops like sorghum, maize, millets and grain legumes is less than 50 % of wheat can be achieved. The farms of Asia are small and they can be used for marketable surplus to get some income.
- b) Carefully planned agriculture creates more food, income and jobs. Agriculture including crop and animal

husbandary, fisheries, forestry and agro-processing can promote job leading to economic growth .

There is also a need to regions affected by food crisis to –

- I) Bridge the gap between potential and actual yields in major foods and food crops through mutually reinforcing technologies, services and public policies.
- II) Strengthen rural infrastructure particularly in the area of post harvest technology including processing, storage ,value addition and marketing .
- III) Give priority to small farm family with opportunities for assured and remunerative marketing, free and fair trade enabling heavy farm subsidies and enabling more income earning opportunities through trade.
- IV) Agriculture in developed nations are energy intensive and in developing countries knowledge intensive. There is a need of blending traditional methods and modern technologies, promotion of crop and – livestock integrated farming system. Fisheries, forestry and agro-processing can promote job-led economic growth.
- V) Population rich countries as India ,China and Bangladesh need to produce more per unit of land.



Water availability needs expansion under to avoid biotic and abiotic stresses.

- VI) Necessary inputs as seeds, nutrients and balanced fertilizer, should be available at right time and affordable prices. Minimum support prices are also needed.
- VII) In response to climatic changes, crops needing more water requirements as pulses and oilseeds, tuber crops will do well if planted late (in Drought Prone). After floods post flood farming activities should be ready and built up. For countries as India having 131 billion population, Central and State Government should be in a commanding position with reference to management of good distribution system. PDS should include wide range of nutritious cereals referred to as coarse cereals and tubers.
- VIII) The World Bank should fund emergency needs it should enable people to invest more seeds, fertilisers and boost research funding in agriculture. Innovative instruments for risk management and crop insurance should be available.

Apart from all these measures to avoid food crisis food security in India should ensure:-

- Availability of food at National level which depends on food production and imports.
- Access to food at Household level which depends on purchasing power.
- Access at initial household level , more on issues of gender discrimination and society, at household level.
- Absorption of food which is a function of safe drinking water, environmental hygiene , primary health care and education.

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