

CHAPTER 4, FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA

ECONOMICS CLASS-IX

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Food security means availability of food to all people all the time. Food security has following dimensions:

- Availability of food: This means the food production within the country, food imports and previous years' stock stored in government granaries.
- Accessibility of food: This means food should be within reach of every person.
- Affordability: This means that every individual has enough money to buy sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet one's dietary needs.

What is need of food security?

Food security is needed for various purposes. The main purpose of food security is the no person should go to bed with empty stomach. The other reason is that in times of natural calamities, surplus food should be available to ensure adequate food supply to those who are affected by the calamity.

Famine

A situation which leads to widespread death because of starvation and epidemics caused by forced use of contaminated water or decaying food. The FAMINE OF BENGAL in 1943 was the most devastating famine which occurred in recorded history. The Bengal famine killed about 30 lakh people in Bengal.

Historical data suggest that the Bengal famine was not caused due to lack of availability of food but due to lack of access to food. The amount of rice produced was more or less similar from 1938 to 1945.

Food Insecure People

The worst affected people from food-insecurity are the landless poor, traditional artisans, providers of traditional services, petty self-employed workers and destitute. In urban areas; people who are employed in low paid jobs and in seasonal works come under this category of people.

If we look at the socioeconomic groups in India; then the SCs, STs and some sections of the OBCs are people who are either landless or have poor land-base. They are the people most prone to food-insecurity. People who migrate to other areas in search of work are also food-insecure people. Women; especially pregnant women are also at high risk.

The BIMARU states (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh) and Orissa have a large portion of population which can be among the food-insecure people.

Hunger is not just an expression of poverty rather it brings about poverty. There can be chronic hunger or seasonal hunger. Chronic hunger is prevalent among those who earn very low and thus suffer from hunger for most of the time. Seasonal hunger is related to agricultural cycle. Many landless farm workers and marginal farmers may be suffering from seasonal hunger. In urban areas; people who suffer from seasonal unemployment can suffer from seasonal hunger.

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