



DAY 3:
FOOD
GREENER

TEAM NIFTY

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What I read and the issues I learned about

After having extensively read and researched if there's something I've come around on it is that food insecurity is highly stressful. When people do not know when or where they will eat their next meal, finding food may become their central focus. It can take priority over health-related behaviors, such as refilling medications and making doctor appointments.

We all know that we live in a world with so many complex problems and issues but, the thing is with these issues and problems COME SOLUTIONS. Those solutions exist, even if we're still striving to find them.

The world is not the same for all. It offers contrasting situations of opportunities and disappointments. However, one of the most worrying and alarming situations that keeps us on edge is that of food insecurity caused due to racial and economic inequalities for marginalized communities. A person who is poor, is prone to food insecurity. Hunger kills more than a disease, which makes it a matter of grave concern.

The United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) states that one in every nine people go to bed on an empty stomach every night. To tackle this problem, World Food Day is celebrated every year across the world on October 16 to create awareness among people. It aims at ensuring availability, accessibility and affordability of nutritious food and its sustainability by 2030. It's not that there isn't surplus food production to feed the population. We suffer from this problem because of inefficiency and loopholes in the food supply chain. According to FAO, 30% of the global food production is never consumed and is rendered as futile. For instance, some farmers lack access to adequate facilities, markets, methods for risk reduction. As a result, their crops rot and the yield becomes substandard. Also, crops that are vulnerable to natural disasters and won't be available for consumption during crises further result in food insecurity. The improper framing and implementation of food schemes puts a question mark on its accessibility and affordability.

What are the obstacles for people trying to achieve a wholesome diet?

When it comes to people coming from considerably lower income backgrounds it takes a lot to even manage two square meals a day. Few of the many obstacles that hinder them from achieving a wholesome diet are

- poor employment generation
- poverty
- lack of awareness about policies made by the government
- mismanagement of 'fair price' shops
- natural calamities
- improper infrastructure

Oftentimes, this leads to such people using coping strategies like watering down their appetite and purchasing inexpensive and noxious food in order to survive.

Do you see evidence of food deserts and food insecurity in your own local or campus community?

There's a plethora of evidence on food deserts and food insecurity in our surroundings. There are beggars scrounging around hoping to get something to put inside their empty stomachs. India was home to the largest number of undernourished people in the world even before the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the irony is that the government had an unprecedented 100 million tones of food grains in its godowns — larger than the food stocks of any country (as of July 2021). There is no need for the government to ensure additional food stocks but an effective implementation of the already existing policies that facilitate food distribution among the needy ones.

In absolute terms, the number of persons facing moderate to severe food **insecurity has increased by about 9.7 crore since the outbreak of Covid-19.**

Key facts about hunger in India

(source-<https://www.indiafoodbanking.org/hunger>)

India is home to the largest undernourished population in the world

189.2 million people i.e. 14% of our population is undernourished

20% of children under 5 are underweight

34.7% of children under 5 years of age are stunted

51.4% women in the reproductive age (15-49 years) are anaemic

In order to avoid this people go to the extent of playing acts in the middle of the road in broad daylight. Problems arise at ration shops wherein people who cannot afford the ration that is being sold at an exorbitant amount are made to wait in long queues even to get themselves registered. They are maltreated and provided with low-priced, low-quality ration, with defected and tampered with machines so that the quantity is reduced altogether. There is no guarantee of restocking the items either, which further poses a problem for someone who can barely manage to get two square meals a day.

Right to food is not only a statutory right but also a human right. As a state party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, India has the obligation to ensure the right to be free from hunger and the right to adequate food for all of its citizens. The Government of India has not only **avoided its own assessment of consumption/food security surveys, but also it does not approve the publication of results based on the Gallup World Poll.**

choose one of the actions in the articles and get to work! Tell us which one you chose and a comprehensive plan of how you will implement it in your own life.

Ensuring food security requires action in multiple dimensions, including:

- improving the governance of food systems
- Reducing the risk of commercialization- If food is grown for the purpose of feeding the community or the nation collectively, food insecurity levels are meant to take a dip.

Another powerful alternative is to support and promote 'Farmer markets', where they directly get to take charge of their produce. It can prove beneficial for the farmers as well as the consumers, since they get to decide a fair price, and can prevent themselves from falling prey to middlemen and big companies.

- Nutrition education- Knowing about what kind of food is nutritious, which nutrients are required in our body, and in what amount is essential. Making opportunities for nutrition education would empower people to make healthy food and beverage choices.
- Skill development- Skill development as a source of employment plays a key role in building familiarity with policy initiatives surrounding various issues and for identifying and offering solutions for the same.

What are some concrete steps you can take to address these issues where you live or go to school?

Food insecurity affects over 820 million people across the world, and no region is exempt from it. Achieving food security, and improvements in nutrition, and attempts to end hunger is the goal.

In our capacity, ensuring that the food provided to children in government schools (MID-DAY MEAL SCHEME in India) and to the migrant workers, laborers at local workplaces meets the nutritional requirements (calories per consumer, quantity) as listed in guidelines issued by the government.

With an alarming increase in the number of natural calamities, where food insecurity reaches its peak, the schools conducting mid-day meals and the people owning the local workplaces may come together to work and monetize any loopholes in the situation, since they are informed about the locals' conditions and needs, only then will they be able to ensure food security.



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