

## Challenges in Achieving Food Security in India

India is suffering from one of the largest numbers of undernourished people in the world, despite having one of world's largest farm outputs. There are various reasons behind the existence of this dichotomy.

Challenges with Food Security in India has been a major cause of concern for the authorities over the past many years. In this article, we shall discuss at length the present status of food security in the country along with the challenges related to food security.

### Reasons for Challenges with Food Security in India

The reasons behind this challenge can be broadly categorized into 3 types which are listed below.

#### Traditional Concept

The 2 factors that are considered under this category are listed below.

1. Unavailability of Food
2. Poor Purchasing Capacity

#### Socio-Demographic Concept

The 5 factors that are considered under this category are listed below.

1. Illiteracy
2. Poor Environmental Conditions
3. Gender Bias
4. Unemployment
5. Overcrowding

#### Politico-Developmental Concept

The 4 factors that come under this category are listed below.

1. Poorly monitored nutritional programmes.
2. Poor Public Distribution System (PDS)
3. Lack of Political Will
4. Lack of intersectoral coordination

### Challenges with Food Security in India

Discussed below are main challenges regarding food security in India:

- **Population** – Although a major part of the Indian population is engaged in agricultural activities, the availability of food for all is a challenge due to the increasing population of the country
- **Poverty** – This is one of the biggest challenges which need to be overcome in order to attain the desired food security in the country. The percentage of people living below the poverty line (BPL) is extremely high.
- **Climatic Change** – Farming and agricultural activities have been severely affected by climatic change over the past few years. Some regions face floods while some experience drought. Similar

- changes have severely affected livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture
- **Inadequate food distribution** – The balance between the food distribution has been varied in urban and rural areas
  - **Biofuels** – The growth of the biofuel market has reduced the land used for growing food crops
  - **Corruption** – Diverting the grains to open market to get better margin, selling poor quality grains at ration shops, the irregular opening of the shops adds to the issue of food insecurity
  - **Inadequate storage facilities** – Inadequate and improper storage facilities for grains, which are often stored outside under tarps that provide little protection from humidity and pests
  - **Lack of Awareness** – Lack of education and training on new techniques, technologies and agricultural products. Traditional farming methods are slightly more time consuming and delay the production of food grains, etc.
  - **Unmonitored nutrition programmes** – Emphasis must be given on introducing and enacting well-monitored nutrition programmes

## Challenges of Food Security in India – Solutions

One can work on a multi-pronged approach to find solutions to the problem of food security in India. Some of the important strategies that can be implemented are mentioned below.

### Enhancing Food Storage Technologies and Increasing Productivity in Agricultural Sector

Agricultural productivity can be increased by using various techniques mentioned below.

1. Better techniques must be implemented in farming
2. Increased irrigation
3. Distribution of cultivable land and size of farms
4. Providing seeds with higher quality
5. Providing fertilizers

Another reason behind food not being distributed equitably is that a significant amount is wasted. To handle this crisis the following steps need to be taken.

1. Invest more in conducting research on grain storage technologies.
2. Collaborate with nations that have high farm output but low food wastage due to superior grain storage facilities.

### Food availability to people and Accessibility to Below Poverty Line (BPL)

1. Try to find the exact number of people BPL
2. Provide subsidies to people above poverty line
3. Reduce food prices and increase affordability by improving inter-state movement, stocking.
4. The inefficiency in Public Distribution System (PDS) due to corruption must be eliminated and should be made transparent.

### Focus more on Schemes to Increase Employment and Purchasing Power in Rural & Urban Areas

1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a good program working in the direction of increasing purchasing power of people in rural areas. Government should try to come up with more innovative programs to improve purchasing power.
2. Come up with more Poverty Alleviation Programmes.
3. Focus on workers in the informal sector.

### Crop Diversification, Establishing Food Grain Banks

1. Focus on growing legumes as an alternative to rice and wheat.
2. Focus on growing non-cereal crops such as oilseeds, fruits and vegetables.
3. Create decentralized food banks in villages, it may help in tackling corruption.

#### **Monitoring of Nutritional Programmes**

1. Health departments officials must initiate steps to monitor the implementation of various programmes.
2. Need to make sure they have all the latest information and evaluate the effectiveness of the program implementation.

#### **Community Participation and Intersectoral Coordination**

1. There needs to be greater participation from the various stakeholders like Panchayati Raj Institutions, Self Help Groups (SHG)
2. Attention also needs to be paid to hygiene, sanitation and nutrition education.