

Research Paper

The Right to Food, Clothing and Shelter -Step towards Healthy Nation

Dr. Madhuri Yogesh Nasre

Head of Deptt. Of Home Science

S. S. Girls' College,

Gondia (MS) – 441 614

Unfortunately, India today is confronting with a typical situation of “STARVATION IN THE TIME OF PLENTY”. According to official record 30% the stocked 65 million tones food has already been rotted and rendered unfit for human consumption.

The Supreme Court has interpreted Article 19 and 21 of the Constitution, as citizens right to a decent, dignified means of livelihood, constituting as internal aspect of his, right to life.

Article 47 of the Indian Constitution states that:

“The State shall regard raising the level of Nutrition and standard of living of its people and improvement in public health, among its primary duties.”

The goal was planned to be achieved through successive five year plans in India. The policies and strategies were laid down for achieving these goals, the required funds were allocated for implementing the programmes aimed at strengthening food security at National, regional and individual level. This strategy was worked out to improve the nutritional status of the population. A National programme was worked out to launch remedial scheme to address adverse health consequences of under nutrition as well the effects of infection on nutritional status. National programmes were launched to tackle disorders such as 'anemia', 'iodine deficiency' and Vitamin A deficiency.

On the International level, Food and Agricultural Organization (F.A.O.) was established on 16th October 1945, and the organization was brought into relationship with the United Nation. It aims to raise the living standard, to increase the production of food stuffs and to enhance the capacity of their distribution, to improve the conditions of rural population. The basic purpose of this organization was to work out strategies, to increase the production of food for the teaming million of the World.

Gone, are the days, when state was mainly concerned with the law and order and the protection of life, liberty and property of the subjects. Such a restrictive rate of the State is no longer a valid concept. Today we are living in an era of welfare state. The state is under obligation to promote prosperity and well being of the people. The most basic tenet of people's well being, revolves round. Three basic needs without which human survival is not possible. These three basic needs are Food, Clothing and Shelter.

The Directive principles of State policy, as has been enshrined in part IV of the Indian Constitution, provided that:

“State shall strive to promote the welfare of people, by securing and protecting as effectively as it may, a social order, in which food, clothes and shelter constitute the most basic right of people.”

In spite of pledge, and enacted provision and assurances at natural level, and the convention on the global level, it is ironical that sizeable population is suffering from starvation, and starvation related diseases.

According to official statistics, we spent Rs. 50,000 crores, annually on Defence, another 50,000 crores on

emoluments of Government employees, but how much do we spend, on providing food, shelter and clothing to the masses, is the most pathetic story.

India today after 60 years of democratic rule, is showing a shameful paradox of plenty.

It has been reported that

“A sizeable percentage of Indian population is still unable to procure enough food grains to have two square meals a day.”

In the Indian context, the problem is not the shortage of food grains, as for the past few years national reservoir has been overflowing with grains, and still there is hunger. There are reports of starvation deaths, and the instances of farmers committing suicide.

Isn't it, ironical that country's food storage is overflowing to a peak of 22 million tones, yet the tragedy is that over a third of World's hungry and malnourished, continue to languish in India.

The situation is so grave that due to deprivation, an estimated two millions children die every year from diseases related to malnutrition, and it is pathetic that poor has no access to what is their basic human right.

The Statesmen reports :-

The more than 12 Tribals, most of them children have died in the areas adjoining Madhya Pradesh capital, Bhopal, because of mal-nutrition and various ailment over the past month. It is suspected that the real situation of hunger, specifically in the villages, is far graver than reported.”

The Times of India, reports :

The child mortality rate in Andhra Pradesh is the highest in the country. According to reports sent to the Government by the Census Registrar of India, that of over 1000 children born in the state, 68 fail to survive. This is against the national average of 65. It is the situation in the cyber State of India, where crores are spent on computer projects, and here an object poverty and farmer suicide are a reality.”

Isn't it the greatest crime to let people die of hunger while the government sits comfortably saddled over mountains of grains, much of which has already been converted into cattle-feed by rodents, insects, and pathogens.

What a shameful sin it is to keep 65 million tones of food grains away from the reach of 320 million hungry Indians ?

What then is the basic problems?

The basic problem in the Indian Context is that mis-management, callousness, and apathy on the part of delivery system.

No other democracy in the world has witnessed such as apparent Paradox of overflowing grains on the one hand, and a large mass of people, hungry on the other.

Indians food mis-management is leading to the emergence of an acutely hungry and mal nourished society.

With a third of the world's hungry and mal-

nourished in India, the impart on human development and economic growth, can be well imagined.

Sixty year period is enough for a biggest democracy of the world to plug its loopholes and remove all elements of mis-management in the core sectors.

Food, cloth and shelter to the citizen, is a yardstick which measures the progress a country has achieved in its democratic credentials.

Indians Constitution guarantees every citizen a right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, and proper housing.

Achievement of these targets is an essential step towards a progressive healthy nation.