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FOOD SECURITY: FUELING COMMUNITIES AND SUSTAINING NATIONS

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Food is the most fundamental need for maintaining human life. People would still survive even if they have no clothing or a roof over their heads but receive a healthy diet. It is impossible to overestimate the significance of food in human life. The vital vitamins, minerals, and nutrients that our bodies require to function effectively are found in food. A balanced diet is essential for avoiding malnutrition, preserving good health, and lowering the chance of developing a number of diseases. Food also serves as our primary source of energy that is required for our daily activities. Proper nutrition can positively impact mental health. Adequate nutrition during childhood and adolescence is crucial for growth and development.

Food is not only essential for human survival, but it's also essential to human health, culture, economy, and cohesiveness in society. A thriving and healthy global society depends on recognizing the significance of food and ensuring that every individual has access to nutritious and safe food. Therefore it is essential to ensure access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food for individual as well as societal well-being.

The Concept of Food Security

Based on the 1996 World Food Summit, food security is defined when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Food security is a concept that refers to the condition in which all individuals in a society have consistent access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary requirements and preferences for an active and healthy life. Food security is a critical global issue that intersects the fields of social welfare, agriculture, economics, and nutrition. It stands for the capacity of individuals, communities, and nations to guarantee steady access to safe, nutritious food that satisfies their dietary requirements and preferences for an active and healthy lifestyle. Achieving food

security involves more than just producing enough food; it also includes making sure that everyone, everywhere, has consistent access to the nutrition they need, regardless of socioeconomic background or location.

The term “**Food and nutrition security**” is used to combine the aspects of food security and of nutrition security as well as to point out the idea that they are related. It is a condition when adequate food in terms of quantity, quality and safety is available, accessible and satisfactorily utilized by all individuals at all times.

Dimensions of Food Security

There are four vital dimensions of food security that are used for assessing and understanding the overall state of food security in a particular area or population. These dimensions offer a comprehensive perspective of the multiple aspects of food security.

- ❖ **Physical availability of food:** Food availability addresses the “supply side” of food security and is determined by the level of food production, stock levels and net trade.
- ❖ **Economic and physical access to food:** An adequate supply of food at the national or international level does not in itself guarantee household level food security. Concerns about insufficient food access have resulted in a greater policy focus on incomes, expenditure, markets and prices in achieving food security objectives.
- ❖ **Food utilization:** Utilization is commonly understood as the way the body makes the most of various nutrients in the food. Sufficient energy and nutrient intake by individuals are the result of good care and feeding practices, food preparation, diversity of the diet and intra-household distribution of food. Combined with good biological utilization of food consumed, this determines the nutritional status of individuals.
- ❖ **Stability of the other three dimensions over time:** Even if your food intake is adequate today, you are still considered to be food insecure if you have inadequate access to food on a periodic basis, risking a deterioration of your nutritional status. Adverse weather conditions, political instability, or economic factors (unemployment, rising food prices) may have an impact on your food security status.

Each of these dimensions is related to the others and adds to the total evaluation of food security. Policymakers and organizations can more effectively design strategies and

interventions to address challenges related to food security by having a better understanding of the strengths and vulnerabilities within each dimension. To provide a comprehensive picture of the state of food security and direct initiatives to increase food security for communities and populations, food security analysis takes into account a variety of indicators and data sources related to these dimensions.

Procedure to Conduct a Food Security Analysis

The methodical process of analyzing and assessing the state of food security in a particular area, community, or population is known as food security analysis. It involves evaluating a range of elements and aspects pertaining to food stability, availability, access, and use in order to assess the general well-being of people and communities. Analyzing food security makes it easier to pinpoint obstacles, weak points, and chances to create effective plans and actions.

At the very outset there should be a clear description of the purpose and scope of the analysis. According to the purpose of analysis relevant data, such as household surveys, agricultural statistics, market prices, nutritional data, etc. should be collected from a wide range of sources, like local communities, NGOs, government agencies, and international organizations. To measure and assess the different dimensions of food security, significant indicators related to food security, such as food availability, availability, utilization, stability, and vulnerability should be identified and selected. To assess the food availability situation, food production of the particular area, including crop yields, livestock, and fisheries should be recorded. To assess the economic and physical access to food, variables such as income levels, food prices, employment opportunities, market accessibility, transportation infrastructure, and the presence of food outlets should be considered. To assess the food utilization, the population's consumption patterns and diets for nutritional quality should be analysed considering dietary variety, micronutrients consumption, and the frequency of malnutrition, including undernutrition, wasting, and stunting. To assess the food stability over time, capacity of the area to sustain food access during economic volatility, climate-related issues, natural calamities, and rivalries should be determined. Along with these dimensions, segments of the population that are at risk, including women, children, the elderly and underprivileged groups and their ability to handle crises and adaptability to food insecurity are to be determined.

When sufficient data on different aspects are collected, appropriate statistical and analytical tools are to be applied in order to process and interpret the data. The collected data and indicators are to be analysed in order to draw conclusions regarding the area's state of food security. The underlying causes of food insecurity and possible solutions are also to be determined.

Conclusion

Food security is not just increasing food production, but ensuring that every person has steady access to safe and nutritious food. It is a vital human right and a major sign of a healthy society. Food insecurity can result in hunger, malnutrition, and a number of different health and social problems. For human progress, economic stability, and international peace, food security is a must. It involves an interdisciplinary strategy that tackles production, distribution, and equality concerns. To create a sustainable and food-secure future every individual should work together to address these issues. Global food security is a challenge that calls for an amalgamation of social policies, economic development, equitable distribution, and efficient agricultural practices. It is especially crucial in context of the world's expanding population and affects of climate change on food production. Thus analysing the food security situation is extremely necessary to tackle the food security related issues. A food security analysis is a complex process that involves investigating a number of variables and indicators to determine the condition of food security in a particular area or population.

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