

BROKPA: THE FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL INSECURE COMMUNITY, INDIA

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According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (2001), the food security defined as the “Food security is a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”. However, this definition is quite unfit for the community of *Brokpa* (A sub-community of *Monpa* tribe Arunachal Pradesh). As this particular community live at high altitude graze their animal under transhumance migratory system which is the prime cause of food and nutritional insecurity.

Evolution of word “Food Security”

This global concern word “Food security” concept originated only in the mid-1970s, in the consultations of international food problems at a time of global food crisis and how to ensure the food availability among the masses. The burning issues at that point of time such as famine, hunger, and poverty compelled international forum for this initiative. The initial focus of attention was primarily on food supply problems - of assuring the availability and to some degree the price stability of basic foodstuffs at the international and national level. The food security is first defined in the “World Food Conference” held in the year of 1974 as; “availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices”[UN, 1975]. However, it is further redefined in ‘The State of Food Insecurity’ (2001) that “Food security is a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO,2001).

Dimension of food and nutritional security

There are four basic dimension of food and nutritional security which includes food availability, access to food, utilization and stability (FAO, 2014) which are presented below;

A. Availability: Availability of food means the physical existence of products in a particular place. It could be further expressed in national level and household level. The national food availability comprised of domestic food production, commercial food imports and exports, food aid and domestic food stocks. On the other hand, household level food could be from own production or bought from the local markets.

B. Access to food: access to food is certified when all households have enough inputs to obtain food in sufficient quantity, quality and diversity for a nutritious diet. However, this is extremely depends on the amount of household assets and on prices.

C. Use and Utilization: it is related to socio-economic aspects of household food and nutrition security which is determined by the how-to- knowledge of individual. Utilization is narrates ability of the human body to take food and biological conversion of it. Example food and nutritional knowledge, food preparation and nutritional behaviour, hygiene etc.



Fig-1.1 A Brokpa pastoralist

D. Stability: It includes supply of food products, risk reduction, environmentally sustainable and viable, reproducible with respect to time frame.

Who is *Brokpa*?

Brokpa is the small trans human cepastoral community of ethnic *Monpa* tribe in Arunachal Pradesh. However, *Brokpa* is designated as one of the major ethnic tribe in Bhutan and Tibet region. *Brokpa* mostly resides in Tawang and West Kameng districts of Arunachal Pradesh follows non-vegetarian Buddhism. Their population is approximately 2500 to 3000 in numbers. They are highlander and follows migratory pattern of living. Yak is the major animal rear by them under free range management system at high altitude above 4500 m from mean sea level.

Their livelihood is depend on selling of yak milk products such as *chhurpi*, *churkamchurtang*, and butter. The above mentioned milk products use as a barter materials with “*Ungpa*”

community (crops growing community). There is no specific rules for bartering the materials. It's depend on their mutual understanding. Mostly the *Brokpa* bartered for rice, maize flour, salt and other household items.

How *Brokpa* is Food and Nutritional Insecure?

Brokpa follows transhumance migratory system in search of quality grasses for their animal i.e yak and yak-cattle hybrid. Yak is known as threatened species in all over

India. They start their Journey during the month of mid-March to April to high altitude (more than 4500m from msl) and start getting down and settle during in the month of mid-October to mid-November to their base point for 3 months. Factually, their migration is depend on temperature and availability of grasses at particular place. During winter, the yak body weight loss from 25-30 percent due to feed and fodder scarcity. The same thing applied with the yak harder, during migration, they use to compromise with the food and nutritional diet. As they do not stay at a single place, therefore, they have to eat poor quality & dry vegetables, and other meat & meat products. The market distance from their base point is also one of the factor of poor quality diet. However, butter-salt tea, churkam, chhurpi and butter



Fig-1.2 A Lady *Brokpa* with symptoms of VitaminA Deficiency

Table: 1.1 Climate Variation in Arunachal Pradesh			
Istrict	Felt	Not felt	Undecided
Tawang	22 (36.67)	12 (20.00)	23 (38.34)
West Kameng	41 (68.34)	5 (8.34)	14 (23.34)

and dried meat supply some nutritional support but is it not sufficient and balanced. It has been also seen that the people have vitamin A deficiency leads to night blindness.

On other hand climate change playing their own role to have significant impact to affect their livelihood. The pasture land is decreasing, the river stream is drying, green cover of forest deteriorating, dumping of plastic bottles polluting organic places etc. further, study was conducted and questions were asked about felt of climate variation in Tawang and West

Kameng district, the following facts were found that the West Kameng (68.34%) people felt more climate variation than the Tawang (36.67%). Similarly, Maiti *et al.* (2014) also studied on climate change and vulnerability in the costal and alpine region, he found the same that West Kameng people were more vulnerable than Tawang. The Indian Meteorological Department, New Delhi also identified the same that there is a deficit rainfall from actual in the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Conclusion

The livelihood and food & nutritional security is under compromised situation as per ethnic *Brokpa* community is concerned. The population of animal is reducing, less interest among the youth in brokpaism is seen, grazing pastures decreasing etc. However, Indian Council of Agriculture Research-National Research Centre on Yak and other state line department are working tirelessly to uplift the community economically and nutritionally sustainable. Still more continues innovative and adaptive interventions are required for unceasing growth and food & nutritionally security.

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