
Title : Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security in the Context of Affordability, Accessibility, Availability and Acceptability (4A's) of Food across Population Spectrum

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The Agricultural bowl of India is one that of self-containment of different commodities such as staples, fruits and vegetables, dairy, meat, poultry and fisheries, spices and many other minor Food commodities. This is a good news!

One hears this, every year we hear except in cases of drought, floods or disasters which will upset that local area but generally managed very well across the country because we have an excess of Food Production and weather prediction satellites. Perhaps we have so much in excess of Food that sometimes the Food Losses and Wastes attracts my attention from time to time. In this context it is important to realise there are certain pockets of population who still have only one meal in three days resulting in stunted children, malnourished children, SAM children in large numbers, maternal Malnutrition, NCDs not as a result of obesity only but due to several malnutrition problems and complications. Therefore when the Global Scenario of malnutrition is signed in any Symposium, India tends to stand number one compared to all countries unfortunately. This is not a good news?

We have a large number of Nutritionists, Food Technologists in the country contributing to excess of Food Production, Productivity, many health reforming programmes, Anganwadis, noon-meal programmes and the large number of Seminars both National and International, sometimes for almost a week to address the problems, NGOs role in malnutrition reduction programmes, philanthropists contributing to the funds and the end result we are still number one in malnutrition and below five years mortality in the world ! How do we address this? Why are we in this state of affairs? What is the solution from a platform like this in Mumbai which addresses Community Nutrition and Health as a social responsibility and Strategic Planning?

The world is buzzed with words such as CSR which is Corporate Social Responsibility but in the heart my definition of CSR is Concerned Societal Responsibility. The double burden of malnutrition, the problem of reach out of adequate protein and energy to children has become a revisit of history! This is not acceptable at any cost. Therefore this Seminar is timely and we need to discuss in depth how the Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security are linked together (Government has amalgamated a big scheme for grain distribution to people below BPL) and how this works with the affordability index and the accessibility systems in minimising this alarming situation in India is to be seen. If we could eliminate Polio and Small Pox is it not impossible to eliminate this malnutrition problem provided we have a strategy to address it clearly. The excess Food that we have must reach the needy in time. There are too many projects, reports, documents but very few are implemented to ground reality with sustainable programmes at the village level. Also one should not expect any miracles overnight in the area of Nutrition programmes. Sometimes it is a long drawn sustainable programme and it takes may be 10 to 15 years to see the effect, but the wrong effect is always instantaneously seen like the death of one out of four children before it reaches five years of age is no small matter at all and the world sees it swiftly. Of course with 1.3 billion population and poverty looming around and farmer suffering with his produce not getting a good price, the problem is too complex. But we need to find solution however complex it is. That is the challenge. An engineer must be as much involved as doctor, for scaling up of Nutrition if we want to make a difference.

These points will be deliberated in the talk not that solutions would emerge from the talk but I think we should synthesise together a strategy putting all our efforts of Nutrition, Economics, Food Science and Social Fabric knowledge along with people on the ground to make it happen the fastest way possible and that can be an excellent commitment from this Seminar. If not this is one more Seminar that happens in India or elsewhere, raising funds, having dinners, wasted buffet lunches,, paying for travel for



airlines economy, hotel and guest houses expenses, exchange of pleasantries and there goes the below five years age child which dies and above five years of age continues to be more stunted and more malnutritive than before the Seminar! There is an urgent need and we must address it as we attend this Seminar and give a deep thought. Can we commit together in this Seminar which can make a difference?

I look forward with optimism: "If Child and Maternal Malnutrition matters to us, we shall matter more to it by working towards eradicating it and not just minimizing it only"!