

Recommendations on Food Security

1) **Preface:-** One-day Seminar on Food Security on 19.08.16 at NUJS, conducted jointly by WBHRC, Food Department, Government of WB & NUJS, gave opportunity to all participants to come out with valuable suggestions to ensure better future for Food Security in India & also to enable States to make Rules in favour of the marginalized & vulnerable categories of people. Senior representatives from NUJS, WBHRC, Food Department, Government of WB, UNICEF, Food & Nutrient Board, GOI, Enforcement Branch, WB, Department of Health, Govt of WB, etc & Hon'ble MIC, Food & Supplies, Govt of WB, participated in the discussion. During the daylong programme several important issues were churned out such as a) Targeted System Versus Universal System of Food Security Policy, b) if targeted, then how to determine Priority Households, c) importance of Breastfeeding, d) Nutrition-specific Intervention Versus Nutrition-sensitive Intervention, e) nutrition aspect for pregnant women, f) participation of Police along with other stakeholders at grass-root level, g) single umbrella for all relevant Government Departments in implementing Food Security, h) to assign equal importance to Nutrition Security, i) SECC Data Versus Census Data, j) concept of "family" under National Food Security Act, 2013 & k) required modification of some Sections of NFSA, 2013. It was unanimously decided by participants that "Recommendations" listed during discourse should be followed up in right earnest & sent to all concerned including NHRC for ensuring a better prospect of NFSA, 2013 in West Bengal.

2) **Recommendations:-**

- State Government should be allowed to choose "Priority Household" consistent with NFSA, 2013 [List is in Para 3]. Rules made by State Government under Section 40 of National Food Security Act, 2013 should be ratified quickly by Centre in this respect. Good number of Cold-storages needs to be built immediately. NFSA, 2013 should include provision for financial back-up from Centre for this purpose.
- According to Section 29 of NFSA, 2013 every State Government shall set up Vigilance Committees as specified in the Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001, made under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, as amended from time to time, at the State, District, Block and fair-price shop levels. State

Authenticated

K. S. Dasgupta
10/11/16

Assistant Secretary
W.B. Human Rights Commission

Level Vigilance Committee should include IGP, EB as a member whereas at District Level concerned SP should be included.

- Breastfeeding for 6 months with additional supplementary nutrition after 6 months should be made mandatory.
- Due importance is to be laid on "Quality" of food, Nutrition, universal acceptance of Anganwadi Centres, distribution of Iron tablets to resist anaemia of Child & Mother for the first 1000 days from childbirth, periodic free check-up of pregnant ladies, arrangement of food supplementary apart from basic food, monitoring of adolescent care, etc.
- Capacity Building in Storage Facility is immediately required at local level by virtue of Central Help. All existing FCI Godowns should be immediately repaired & new Godowns in good numbers should be built at far-flung areas.
- Police representative should be included in Section 29 of NFSA, 2013.
- SECC Data should be the basis for figures required to implement NFSA, 2013.
- Quantity of Food under NFSA, 2013 should also be raised to 14 kgs per person per month with 100 % back-up from the Centre.

3) **Priority Household:-**

a) Geographically and Socially Vulnerable groups:-

- The residents of slum areas/ jhuggie-dwellers, duly verified by the survey list of Competent Authority.
- Orphans / Children living without protection.
- Street Children
- The homeless/ shelter-less, households/individuals, Pavement-dwellers / Vagrants.
- The households of landless agricultural laborers.
- The residents of notified areas, leprosy-affected villages, etc

b) Occupationally vulnerable households, such as:-

- Street vendors, cobblers, hawkers, barbers, porters, washer man/dhobis, Labourers, etc.
- Technical workers such as plumbers, carpenters, masons, painters, welders, electrician, mechanic, repairman etc.

Authenticated
N. C. Sarkar
10.11.16
N. C. Sarkar
Assistant Secretary
W.B. Human Rights Commission

- Security guards/ chowkidars, casual daily-wage / irregular workers, domestic helpers, unskilled workers in household industries/ shops, unskilled workers in small household enterprises, unskilled construction workers, etc.
 - Home-based artisans, tailors etc.
 - Sweeper, Mali/ gardener, coolies, head-loaders etc.
 - Private transport workers such as taxi, truck, bus, auto-rickshaw drivers, conductors, helpers to drivers and conductors, cart pullers, cycle-rickshaw pullers etc.
 - Beggars/Rag-pickers/ Waste-pickers, subject to verification
- c) Vulnerability due to Stigma & Social Discrimination:- Sex Workers
- d) Sexual Minorities:- gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual, kothi and hijra (eunuch)
- e) People below Poverty Line (BPL).
- f) People with AIDS / HIV.
- g) Victims of Human Trafficking / Immoral Trafficking.
- h) Economically Weaker People having permanent disabilities & households with disabled people (as defined in the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1955), subject to submission of prescribed medical certificate.
- i) Mentally Challenged / Deranged people
- j) Vulnerable Groups Facing Structural Discrimination:- Scheduled Castes, Dalits, Scheduled Tribes & OBC
- k) Unsupported Elderly / Aged / Senior Citizens with poor income status
- l) Economically Backward sections of Minority Communities
- m) Workers of shutdown or sun-setting Factories, Tea-gardens, etc
- n) People of Coastal Region affected by Climate Change
- o) People residing in places / land with poor arability or not tillable (Jangalmahal, parts of Bankura or Purulia having Murram (Laterite) / gravelled soil, drought-hit areas in West Bengal)
- p) People affected by Vulnerability due to Migration
- q) Single women (including widows, unmarried and separated and deserted women), living in household as dependent or as head of household

Authenticated
N. C. Sarkar
20.11.16
N. C. Sarkar
Assistant Secretary
W.B. Human Rights Commission

- r) The households having gross annual income not more than Rs.1 lakh per annum, from all sources.
- s) All skilled/semi-skilled employed in the field of sales, marketing, production etc. in private sector.
- t) Any other such household as may be decided by State Government.

4. Conclusion:- According to NFSA, 2013 up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population will be covered under TPDS (Targeted Public Distribution System) with uniform entitlement of 5 kg per person per month. In West Bengal roughly 6 crores 2 lakh people should come into TPDS according to the formula of TPDS. But the actual figure is less as Automatic Inclusion criteria do not permit to reach this figure. To get rid of this anomaly, Priority Household as enlisted above should be treated as the basis for Automatic Inclusion to avail benefits of NFSA, 2013. West Bengal Government already introduced several policies to benefit both rural & urban poor. Rajya Khadya Suraksha Yojana, Kanyashree Prakalpa, Sabooj Sathi, Swajaldhara Rural Drinking Water Scheme, Gatidhara, Nijo Bhumi Nijo Griho Scheme, Jol Dhara Jol Bharo, Amar Fasal Amar Chatal Scheme, etc are some of the names that already attained huge admiration from all sections of people. Even these Schemes drew commendation from other Countries. But assistance from Centre is a sine qua non for better implementation of NFSA, 2013. Capacity Building in terms of storage facilities including cold-storages & additional financial back-up for ensuring Nutrition Security should be the cardinal responsibility of the Centre. The quantity of Food under NFSA, 2013 should also be raised to 14 kgs per person per month in order to ensure proper growth of underprivileged people. This should be guaranteed by NFSA, 2013 with 100 % support from the Centre.

(Naparajit Mukherjee)
Acting Chairperson
W.B. Human Rights Commission
Purta Bhaban, Salt Lake,
Kolkata-91.

Authenticated -
N. C. Sarkar
16.11.16
N. C. Sarkar
Assistant Secretary
W.B. Human Rights Commission