

Food Security

Key Points:

1. The pre-independent India witnessed starvation deaths on a large scale due to extreme scarcity of food. The Great Bengal Famine, which occurred between 1943 and 1945, killed about 3 to 5 million people in Bengal, Assam and Oddissa provinces.
2. After India's independence, governments started developing various systems to ensure food security for its people.
3. Producing sufficient amount of food grains is an important requirement of food security.
4. Agriculture scientists felt that the cultivation methods of rice and wheat had led to continuous yield levels, but they are not sustainable. These methods have eventually led to soil degradation, and depletion of ground water resources.
5. Besides the production, imports is another important way of increasing availability of food grains in any particular year. Consumers need a diverse food basket and a balanced diet. Hence, allied sectors such as poultry, fishing and dairying shall also be taken seriously by the farmers.
6. Nutritionists suggest that per capita vegetable and fruit consumption should be 300 grams and 100 grams every day. The standard daily food intake must be equivalent to 2100 calories for people in urban areas and 2400 calories for people in rural areas. However, still 80% of people in rural areas in India consume food that is below the calorie standard.
7. From a long period of time, 35% to 45% of Indians are consuming less food than they should have. The issue of food security needs careful thinking and focused efforts. Public distribution shops are important means for people to access food grains in India.
8. The National Food Security Act 2013 legalised the peoples' right to food. Food is required by the body for all its functions for energy, growth and capacity to remain healthy and fight illness.

Key Words:

1. **Production:** The process of growing food. Producing sufficient amount of food grains is an important requirement of food security.
2. **Availability:** Per capita availability of food grains in the country should be sufficient and shall also be increasing over the years.
3. **Access:** Reaching. Everyone should be able to buy food for consumption.
4. **Nutrition :** Food necessary for growth and health. Food is required by the body for all its functions - for growth and the capacity to remain healthy and fight illness.
5. **Buffer Stock:** Stocks of food grains with Food Corporation of India (FCI). Procurement And maintenance of the stocks of food grains, mainly wheat and rice, by the government through FCI is known as buffer stock.
6. **Hunger:** The state of not having enough food. Over a long period of time, 25% to 35% of the Indians are consuming less food than they should and are malnourished or hungry despite adequate food supplies in the country.
7. **PDS:** (Public Distribution System) Ration shops are important means for people to access food grains in India. Southern states of India have followed universal PDS systems, which mean low cost food grains would be available to all.

ESSAY ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Supposing the food grain production has been affected in a particular year, because of national calamity. In what ways can the government ensure higher availability of food grains for the year?

1. A country producing food grains for the whole of its population is the first requirement of food security.
2. Besides the production, imports is an important way to increase availability of food grains in any particular year.
3. Another important source of food grains availability is the change in government stocks. While the stocks of food grains with the government fall, the same amount will be available for consumption in that year.
4. Availability of food grains for the year = production of food grains during the year (production-seed, feed and wastages) + net imports (imports-exports) – change in stocks with the government (closing stock at the year end –opening stock at beginning).
5. The stocks of food grains are procured and maintained by the government through FCI. The FCI releases the buffer stock to ensure adequate availability of food grains when the production affected by a calamity or calamities.
6. Through universal PDS system, food grains are supplied at subsidised prices to all the people. This is one of the food security solutions advocated by a school of economists.
7. The arrangements of food security need careful thinking and effort in all the aforementioned matters.

2. Describe the relationship between increase in food production and food security?

1. Production of sufficient amount of food grains is an important requirement for food security.
2. In order to increase the per hectare yield of crop, necessary inputs have to be provided in a judicious manner.
3. Methods such as growing drought-resistant varieties as per the local climatic conditions, prudent water usage and crop rotation are used to increase production on a given piece of land.
4. The Indian government came out with a new law in 2012 called the National Food Security Act to legalise people's right to food. As per this law, every person from low income families is entitled to 5 kilograms of food grains per month at subsidized rates.
5. It is important to ensure that soil and other natural resources are not damaged or depleted in the process of food grains production.
6. If a country is able to produce food grains for the whole of its population, it is considered as the major achievement towards food security. Besides the production, imports is another way to increase availability of food grains in any particular year.
7. Farmers can also pay attention to allied activities such as poultry, fishing and dairying as the consumers need a diverse food basket and a balanced diet.
8. However, commercially-oriented agricultural diversification may impact food grain production since land would be used for cultivation of non-food crops such as cotton and tobacco. This could result in decreased production of food grains.
9. Therefore, the government food security policy shall aim to balance the production of food grains and other types of food simultaneously.

3. Give reasons in support of the statement - "Public Distribution System can ensure better food security for people"?

1. It is a collective responsibility of both the union and state governments to ensure food availability to all the people through the PDS.
2. PDS can ensure food security through timely procurement and effective distribution of food grains to people.
3. Through the PDS, food grains are made available to the BPL families at affordable prices.
4. Whatever is produced and available has to reach the people. This could be either through open market or through ration shops or through other schemes of food security.
5. Ration shops are important means for people to access food grains in India. Southern states have a good record in public distribution system.
6. PDS is not effective in places where it is most needed such as agency areas and backward districts. Because of this reason, still a large section of people are malnourished or hungry, even

when we have adequate food grain production in the country. This is not acceptable.

Short Answer Questions

1. Collect the false statements

- 1) Increased food production alone ensures food security.
 - 2) It is important to encourage mono-crop cultivation to ensure food security.
 - 3) Low calorie intake is higher among people with low income.
 - 4) Legislations have an important role to play in ensuring food security.
 - 5) PDS system could be used to address the issue of child nutrition.
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1. Food grains access, utilisation and stability of this process are important.
 2. Multiple cropping and crop rotation are important
 3. Yes, it is correct
 4. Yes, it is correct
 5. Yes, it is correct

2. The consumption of calories has consistently Decreased in rural areas. The average per capita calorie consumption in 2004-05 is 2047 than the required calories . The minimum calorie consumption for persons living in urban areas is 2100 calories. The difference between actual calorie consumption in 2004-05 and the required calorie consumption in urban areas is 2400.

3. Use an imaginary example from your context to describe the relationship between underweight and access to food.

1. Nutritionists have devised indications using height and weight that an individual is well nourished or not.
2. Under nourishment, illness and food intolerances are causes of underweight.
3. NIN survey indicates that out of the surveyed 7000 children in the age- group 1-5 years, 45% of them are of underweight. These children are in fact hungry and not getting adequate food. This makes about half of the children in this country are malnourished.
4. When the children are undernourished for a long time, their bone growth is affected. Such children would remain short for their age, this problem is known as 'stunted growth'.
5. About 80% of people in rural areas consume food that is below the calorie standard. The major reason for low calorie intake is the lack of purchasing power of the people. People also lack awareness as to the nutritional values of the foods. As a result even families with decent incomes are not feeding their children adequately.

3. Analyse food habits of your family members for a week time and create a table to explain nutrition elements included in their food?

S.No	Day	Food	Nutritious Elements
1.	Sunday	Chicken and wheat	Proteins, carbohydrates - provide energy
2.	Monday	Dal & rice	Proteins, carbohydrates – aid growth
3.	Tuesday	Dal, vegetables and rice	Carbohydrates, proteins – give protection and aid growth
4.	Wednesday	Dal and beans curry	Carbohydrates, proteins – aid growth and give energy
5.	Thursday	Rice and leafy curry	Carbohydrates, vitamins- energy and growth
6.	Friday	Rice, dal and leafy curry	Carbohydrates, proteins, minerals – provide energy and protection.

7.	Saturday	Rice, dal and fruits	Carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins - help growth and protection.
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