

Unit - 3

Food Security and Nutrition



Learning Objectives

- To study about the meaning, definition of food security
- To know about the availability and access to food grains
- To understand about the purchasing power and agricultural policy
- To gain knowledge about the multi-dimensional nature of poverty
- To study about nutrition and health status and policies in Tamil Nadu



Introduction

Food is defined as any substance that people eat and drink to maintain life and growth. Food security would denote a person's ability to eat enough, stay active and lead a healthy life.

3.1 Food Security

The United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organisation defines food security as follows:

"Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." (FAO, 2009)

While this comprehensive definition highlights the need for food to be nutritious, in addition to that there are certain other aspects that are required to achieve nutrition security. According to eminent agricultural scientist Dr.M.S.Swaminathan, nutrition security is:

"physical, economic and social access to a balanced diet, safe drinking water, environmental hygiene, primary health care and primary education".

Basic components of food and nutrition security

The three basic components of food and nutrition security. They are availability, access and absorption:

1. **Availability of food** is physical availability of food stocks in desired quantities, which is a function of domestic production, changes in stocks and imports;
2. **Access to food** is primarily a matter of purchasing power and is therefore closely linked with the capabilities and employment opportunities to earn. Capabilities and opportunities in turn are related to one's access to assets and education.
3. **Absorption** of food is the ability to biologically utilise the food consumed.