

Regional Consultation: North Zone

1st & 2nd March, 2012

Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Jointly Organized By:

**Disha Social Organization, Wada Na Todo Abhiyan, Oxfam India
& Food and Water Security Coalition India**

Background

Livelihood Thematic Action Group of Wada Na Todo Abhiyan along with Food and Water Security Coalition India and Oxfam India, are attempting to bring CSOs, various campaigns, academicians and experts on food related issues to hold in-depth discussions on the National Food Security Bill. In June 2009, the Government of India announced for a comprehensive legislation to be enacted as “The National Food Security Act” which will focus on the right to food. Currently the bill has been introduced in the Lok Sabha. The Bill has been drafted without any wider consultation with important stakeholders and suffers from a number of shortcomings including minimal reach, reduced entitlements, lack of commitment to vulnerable groups, and intends to do away with double subsidy provided on the TDPS by various states, to name a few. We feel that the pressing need of the hour is to present the concerns of various stakeholders in a comprehensive manner. We hope that the discussions will lead to a common understanding so that a collective civil society force can emerge for advocacy with government.

To take this process forward, multi-stakeholder Regional Consultations across five zones as well as one National Consultation (involving academics, scientists, political persons) in New Delhi is being organized. Each Regional consultation will be a day and a half long with a participation of 50-60 people and will be organized by local partner organizations of WNTA.

- East Zone: Patna (Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Orissa and Chattisgarh) on 30th-31st January, 2012
- West Zone: Ahmedabad(Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra) on 7th-8th February,2012
- South Zone: Anantpur (Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu) on 17th- 18th February , 2012
- North Zone: Dehradun(HP, J&K, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Uttarakhand) on 1st and 2nd March, 2012
- North East: Guwahati,(Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Agartala, Nagaland) on 4th-5th March, 2012
- National Consultation- New Delhi on 20th-21st March 2012

Purpose of Consultations

The purpose of organizing these consultations is to get various actors from different backgrounds to discuss/critique the proposed Food Security Bill in

detail, and to develop a Charter of Demand which will be used as an advocacy tool for the government and policy makers.

Objectives

- Educate, sensitize, motivate and mobilize people at large
- Develop and publish critiques of the food security bill The consultations will also have special sessions which will specially focus on the following chapters of the bill in order to ensure Last Mile Delivery and Citizens' Engagement:
 1. Chapter II: Provisions of Food Security
 2. Chapter IV: Persons Living in Starvation
 3. Chapter IX: Grievance Redressal Mechanisms and
 4. Chapter XIII: Transparency and Accountability
- Develop a Charter of Demands (have with sharp and prioritized recommendations)
- Advocacy with Government and other policy makers in the interest of common people

North Zone Consultation

North Zone consultation on the National Food Security Bill was held in Dehradun on the 1st and 2nd of March 2012. Participants from northern states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand attended the consultation. The consultation was held at hotel Surabhi and hosted by Disha Social Organization. Activists from various walks of life presented their critique of the current draft bill, while also offering a set of recommendations that could help shape an effective and strong food security bill in the future.



Lighting of the lamp to inaugurate the consultation

Divergent Perspectives: Voices of the Stakeholders

Inaugural Plenary/ Chaired by Reuben Furtado, Mamta

1. **Anil Singh, of Sansad**, a New Delhi based NGO, brought to fore some of the main provisions of the National Food Security bill and points of critique that needed deliberation. About 70 crore people will be impacted by the National Food Security Bill, making it the largest social welfare scheme in the world. He felt that the Bill, though tangentially referring to provision of 'nutritious' food, adopted only a tokenistic approach to realizing this goal. Some of the key points of the Bill were-



- The Bill talked about covering 50% urban and 75% rural population, of which only 28% of urban and 46% of rural population would be considered as being 'Priority Households'. The rest would be classified as 'General Households'. Provision of 7 kgs of food grains per person for 'Priority Households' and 3 kgs for the 'General Households', was an amount that was inadequate to meet the nutritional needs of people.
- The positives in the proposed Bill were the provisions made for pregnant and lactating mothers; 'Special Groups' implying the homeless and destitute; guarantee of food during disaster or calamity and for starving populations (as identified by the State). The fact that the Bill also made it mandatory for women to be considered 'Head of Households' was a step towards women empowerment. Installation of Vigilant Committees and use of ICT to create transparency and accountability in the system were also appreciable. It's incumbent on the State to provide food allowance in case it is unable to procure food supply for its subjects.
- However, though the Bill hinted at the need to promote and safeguard the interests of the agricultural sector in the country, the intention is merely a part of an annexure in the Bill and thus not binding on the government in any way. A recent statement given by the Agricultural Minister, Sharad Pawar, that it was impossible to implement the National Food Security Bill was also worrying.
- The Bill must adopt a universal rather than a targeted approach to food security. However, currently the growth in population/per year is marginally more as

compared to the growth in food grain production. Population of the country is growing at 1.76% per year as compared to food grain production which is increasing at 1.58% per year. Thus it is crucial for the government to pay more attention to increasing yield and introduce agrarian reforms if the rate of India's food grain production can be at par with its population growth.

- Cash transfers were also a point of concern as money could easily translate itself to wastage rather than food security.
- Government's claim of lack of finances to support a universal National Food Security Bill can also be refuted. As per CBGA's estimates, universalization or 100% coverage under the National Food Security Bill would cost the government rupees one lakh eighty four thousand crores. Currently, through its other schemes like the PDS, government is already spending rupees sixty three thousand crores on food security. Thus this additional gap that universal application of the Bill would amount to an extra investment of rupees one lakh twenty four thousand crores. Though this gap may seem too large to bridge, the fact was also that the government was unable to collect certain taxes such as customs duty, sales tax, excise duty etc, an amount costing more than five crore rupees annually. Thus, if the government was able to claim even 1/4th of what this amount, the gap in food security estimates could easily be addressed.
- It is crucial that at least 4% of the GDP is reserved for the agricultural sector for us to ensure long term food security of the country in the real sense of the word. .
- Malnourishment is a serious concern for the country where 48% children below the age of 5 are found to be undernourished. 42.5% children below 5 years were underweight; 70% children below 5 were anemic and 52% women also suffered from anemia. Thus it is important that the Bill also addresses the nutritional needs of people by including protein rich diets of pulses, meat, fish, milk, ghee and so on for it to be a holistic intervention
- Insuring good infrastructure for storage was also an important factor and one that must be recognized by the Bill. Currently, the states are able to lift only about 2/3rd of the grains from central godowns because of lack of adequate storage facilities. This must be rectified in the light of building sustainable efforts to ensure food security in the country.
- Grabbing fertile agricultural land for industries and other large development projects must be stopped. Only barren lands must be transferred for industrialization and other related activities.

Anil Singh felt that instead of the government focusing its resources on other activities like building roads (25 kms. of national highways is being built every day as per Central government's claim), attention needed to be given to constructing food



grain godowns, improving the linkages between farmers and agricultural markets and overhauling the distribution system as well.



2. The Guest Speaker for the meeting, **Usha Goyal**, has been associated with the World Food Program in the past, apart from her wide array of experience of working on policy matters with various organizations. She pointed to the fact that 100 crore people can be considered to be 'hungry' of the total 700 crore of the world's entire population. Thus hunger is a very basic and significant development issue. More than 50% hunger can be found in the Asia Pacific region alone, of which India is big part. 70% of people suffering from hunger comprises of

women all over the world. Pointing to the Bill, she said that the category of 'Special Group' was too small and myopic and should be expanded to include all kinds of people suffering from hunger. Women were an important part of the agricultural sector as well, but the proposed bill does little to acknowledge their participation. Despite introducing the PDS and ICDS kind of programs, the data on malnutrition hasn't really shown any improvement in India. We must analyze why past schemes have not been successful. There was little point in having a bill like this if its implementation. Most schemes like this, work only at the level of a political propaganda. We must ensure that the same does not happen with this bill as well. We must try and look at food distribution networks, storage and transportation and other such related issues that could together create sustainable food security conditions in the country. Nutritional security is also an important aspect of such a Bill and must be emphasized.

3. **Avdesh Kaushal of RLEK said that** the grains being procured by farmers were not being used for their own intake but were being exported out as animal feed for poultry industries in Europe and America. There was no need to have many schemes as it only becomes a self serving enterprise of the government and bureaucracy. Instead we must focus on seeking accountability from existing schemes. We must ask ourselves the question that will the new food security bill really guarantee food to the poorest of the poor? Otherwise it will remain a mere political gimmick and nothing more than that. We must insist on having strong quality checks on the nature and quantity of food being provided under the proposed Bill.

4. Discussion

- A lot of corruption and pilferage happens in process of lifting of food grains by the states. Food grains are kept in the open and thus there are huge losses due to lack of proper storage. States must ensure that they distribute the grains in time.
- Great need for convergence and good implementation of exiting food schemes. Thus one must lay emphasis on a proper distribution system. In the hills for instance, transportation and storage of grains was a big problem.
- A lot of discussion happened around the fact that the Bill was only offering food security and not nutritional security to people.
- How much political will can we create as citizens? Political will doesn't exist in a vacuum and therefore the civil society must help in creating it by exerting pressure from the outside.



Session 2: Food Security- State Perspectives. Chaired by Solomon Prakash, Anil Singh, SANSAD and Subhash Mendhapurkar, SUTRA



1. **Uttarakhand: Virendra Painuly**, a member of the State Planning Commission, Uttarakhand felt that there was a need to sensitize people on the issue of food security. In Uttarakhand, in the past the situation used to be such that the villages, every house used to have their own inbuilt

godowns so that they could take care of themselves in times of emergencies. Thus we must understand that food security is not an administrative issue but a social issue- in the sense of how we think of food at the level of a family or a household. The governments also need to think of food security in the same manner. There should be transparency and accountability in food security processes. The price of food and the profile of population to be fed, must be kept in mind by the government while framing this Act. For hill population, one must especially account for their protein intake. Contaminated, artificial food types should not be sold in regional markets. Food security should be seen in terms of seasonality as well. Thus we must look at the food security bill at a macro level for every state as well. People have lost faith in government schemes as they do not work well and people do not feel 'secure' with them. In Uttarakhand there was a system of using traditional seeds and do organic farming, all of which has been destroyed due to pro-market policies of the government. One can't create food security when one is creating this reliance and dependence on the outside

markets. Single, destitute women, who have suffered because of out migration in the hills, must also be looked after under the Bill. By curbing people's access to their own forests, food security of specific communities was being threatened as well. The natural resources- land/ water/ forest have all been diverted to outsiders thus attacking the food security of the people in many diverse ways. Thus the issue of food security cannot be addressed till one gives right to people to grow and collect their own food from their environment, something that they have been doing for years.

- 2. Haryana: Jasphool Singh** from Haryana said that food security remains a huge concern because farmers in the country are in great distress. Agrarian investment has increased a lot – fertilizers, seeds etc cost a lot and everything has to be borne by the farmer. And even though Haryana government is trying to hand-hold the farmers, the efforts are not enough. Even central government schemes do not reach the real grassroots people. The farmers' land is being bought over for industrialization- SEZs have become rampant in Haryana. The fertile land is getting smaller. All this particularly impacts small farmers and women farmers who constitute 60%-70% of the agrarian community. Storage facilities must be improved so that food grains do not get damaged. All these small measures will go a long way in creating food security in the country and the Bill must try and address these issues.

- 3. Punjab: Harbhajan Lal** from Punjab said that there was no problem or scarcity of food in Punjab. In Punjab 30% of the population comprise the BPL category and get subsidized food through the PDS. Given the corruption in the system, some high income group families have also started taking advantage of subsidized food schemes. However, looking at the proposed Bill, it was clear that it was merely a bill that talked about grain security and not food security in a holistic way. Purchase, allocation, storage and distribution of food should also be localized under the Bill to cut the costs of middle agencies that escalate the food process in the market. 1/3rd of food grains are either wasted or not lifted by the states. The Bill must therefore specifically talk about preventive measures where food is not wasted but is given to the right person.



4. **Himachal Pradesh: Madan Sharma** from Himachal Pradesh spoke about the fact that the richer classes in the state had food security but the poor were in a bad way. In mountain regions, if roads were blocked due to bad weather etc. even basic commodities like milk would not reach the people. Thus there was a need to talk about local procurement and distribution in the Bill. Over the years, the cropping patterns in the state have changed as well. Earlier traditions were such that people created their own food security through food storage. But now because of large scale migration in the hills, agricultural communities were shrinking and people were relying more and more on outside markets for their food needs. These processes must be reversed by adopting food sensitive policies by the state. He also pointed to the fact that we needed strong accountability and grievance redressal mechanisms so that the Bill could be effective in its implementation.

5. **Uttar Pradesh: Manish Kumar** said that we must bear in mind that of the 1/3rd malnourished children in India, 50% of them belonged to Uttar Pradesh. This in itself reflected the huge food crisis in the state. The draft Bill had too many gaps in it. And even though just about .03% of the GDP is all that is required to universalize the Bill, the government is not in the favor of doing this. Farmers interests are not being met either. Distribution and storage are huge issues in terms of creating food security in the country. The past government schemes with regard to subsidized food have not fared well either given the large scale corruption around them. It was also important to think of the bill from the perspective of marginal groups like the Dalits, tribal and women as well and ensure that the Bill was inclusive and effective in spirit and implementation.

6. **Discussion**
 - After the 1990s, agrarian investment has been minimal from government's side. As a result, farmers are forced to commit suicide. If we have to realize food security we must invest in agrarian sector.
 - We must have a framework- enabling provision and policies and acts that are required to provide food security in the country such as irrigation facilities, creation of seed banks, storage and transportation facilities etc. This Bill can also be the biggest disaster scheme because none of our eco policies support the Bill.
 - The economic policies of the country should also be in support of the Bill and not,, as is the case, contradict it at every level.
 - Incorporating state specific diets and seasonality patterns were also an important consideration while framing the Bill but they had not been given any thought at all. Food security cannot be created through construction of godowns or warehouses alone. It must be a manifestation of enabling acts and policies and the proposed bill does not address any of the above concerns.

Session 3: Food Security and Livelihoods. Chaired by Anil K Singh



1. **Grow, Food Planet, Justice Campaign: Biraj Swain and Kumaran of Oxfam India** spoke about the GROW, Food, Planet, Justice Campaign of Oxfam India. She spoke about the fact that food is not just about consumption and procurement alone. The backward linkages, nutritional content and enabling policy frameworks required to realize food security were important as well. Food and nutrition, concentration on small holders, recognizing the role of women in agriculture, international and national reasons for decreasing food production and

climate change- the Oxfam India campaign was trying to work on all these issues. From the point of the national food security bill debate, the proposed National Seed Bill, dry land agriculture, accountability and transparency measures in implementation were all important issues for the campaign as well. Adding on, **Kumaran** said that we tend to see food insecurity as a one- time crisis only. This was not the proper perspective on it. Food insecurity means the whole system is broken so mending just one thing is not enough. Thus efforts are required to mend the entire broken down food system. GROW gives us a framework within which to work- how to raise issues and what could be the ways of addressing these. India's exiting situation in terms of food security is grave. The calorie consumption of majority of populations has been decreasing in the last twenty years. Though we are experiencing rapid economic growth, the people are eating less than before and the government is in denial of this fact. He shared the basic principles guiding the Grow campaign:

- Food rights as enclosed in acts like Forest Rights Act or the National Food Security Bill, should be strengthened
- Within these acts, the schemes that are made like the PDS should see last mile delivery- how the poor are accessing these schemes and so on. There was a need to strengthen last mile delivery
- Reforms in the PDS through better accountability systems also need to be supported
- We also need to support the interests of small farmers, not just in distribution but also in procurement processes.
- Ready to eat food must be rejected as it harmed people's interests while supporting big corporates
- Must also look at marginalized farmers, especially women, who do not enjoy property rights. Must also work towards creating equity for all- the Dalit and tribal communities, to name a few.

- We must think of India in a global context and thus observe the climate change negotiations very closely.
- When so much trade in the world is governed by profit, how we could think of controlling food process at a local level are also things to think about.
- Private sector takeover of natural resources and agrarian sector also needed strategizing as did the need to have a plan for the nation's food security in cases of disaster and disruption.

2. **Food Security and Livelihoods: Manish Kumar** from Uttar Pradesh drew attention to the fact that self reliant nature of communities was completely being broken down thanks to the pro-market policies that were being adopted by governments. It was difficult to think about food security under such circumstances. Even though the government was introducing this bill, the fact that all its other policies seemed to be in contradiction to creation of food security in the country, must also be recognized and countered against.

3. **Food Security & Farmers: Mahindra Singh Kunwar** from Uttarakhand said that it was important to look at food security in a holistic manner to imply good, adequate and nutritious food for people. India has only 2% of the world's agricultural land despite being heavily agrarian society. This land was being diverted for industrial purposes at a fast rate, increasingly creating food insecure conditions. The growth rate of our population was much more as compared to our rate of production, indicating an urgent need to pay attention to food production, procurement and



distribution processes. For the National Food Security Bill to be impactful, a host of supportive policies needed to be in place, which was not the case. Creating seed security among the farmers was also important but with the advent of big corporations in the markets, the self-reliant nature of framers was going away. Very little was spent on agricultural related research as well leading to limited innovation and sustainable technique development. Production of oil seeds and pulses is also declining at a rapid rate and since these were the most accessible form of protein for the poor, the government must think of these when implementing the proposed food bill.

4. **Food Security & Urban Poor:** Speaking on the issues of the urban poor and food security, **Madhu Dogra** said that the condition of the urban homeless and poor was worse than ever as they needed many kinds of documents that they either did not have or was impossible for them to attain. on proofs to access any of the

subsidized government food schemes. Their bad living conditions and lack of sanitation and hygiene further aggravated the problem. Thus one must think of how to improve the PDS so that all in need could avail it. The current draft bill spoke about cash transfers in lieu of food but this should also not be allowed as this will distract attention from food to non food items. The Bill must also include provision of clean drinking water and basic sanitation conditions for the urban poor.

Session 4: Food Security and Social Exclusion. Chaired by Bharat Dogra, Journalist

1. **Dalits: Arun Kumar** brought to fore the problems faced by the Dalits in accessing food as more than half the time, their ration cards do not get made due to social discrimination in society. Even if they have cards, they do not get rations as they are considered to be social outcasts. Thus there was a need to address their situations through special provisions in the proposed bill on food security.



2. **Tribals: Reuben Furtado** felt that the proposed Bill was like a white elephant, creating huge machinery around it without really promising to be any better than other subsidized food schemes already running in the country. There is no mention of how agriculture will be supported in order to create food security in the country. A lot of tribal communities were dependent on forests directly for their food requirements. But government policies had only created a gap between communities and their traditional life styles. Community assets have

been destroyed over time. Livelihood options from poor tribal communities had also been taken away. 8-10% of our population constitutes of tribal communities, one of the most deprived in the country. This Bill will only benefit black marketing of food grains. Only if regional, local structures are strengthened will food security become a reality, especially for the marginal communities in India.

3. **Muslims: Anish Bhai** spoke about the 18 crore Muslims in India whose condition was constantly in threat because of the apathy of the state. He emphasised on the fact that all government level committees, though create space for participation of other minorities' like Dalits or tribals, but ignores the Muslim communities. Discrimination against the Muslim could be seen at various levels, even in government positions or smaller levels like lack of Muslim

participation in Aganwadis as well. Muslims also faced severe malnourishment problems in the economically weaker sections and this must be addressed through the proposed food security Bill.

4. **Single Women: Usha Goel** pointed to the fact that when it came to food security it was not just a question of single women but all women in general as they usually bore the worst brunt in food insecure situations. However, the position of single women was particularly stigmatized and needed special attention and hence they should be a part of the Special Groups category in the proposed bill. Traditionally as well, women always were expected to feed themselves after taking care of the entire household. 70% women in the world were victims of malnourishment and hence special attention needed to be given to their condition.
5. **HIV/AIDS Affected People: Uma Prakash** spoke about the need to pay attention to marginal groups like the HIV/AIDS infected communities as they faced huge social stigma and exclusion in all aspects of life. Thus the proposed bill must look at them as special category as well. HIV/AIDS was not just a health issue. The people also needed care and food security so that they could equip themselves to fight with the disease. The adult prevalence rate of the disease was 0.37%, mostly between the ages of 15-49 years. In Uttarakhand alone the registered cases of HIV/AIDS were as high as 4000. Thus the government needs to pay attention to this community in a holistic manner.

6. Discussion

- Widows/ deserted single women must be included in the Bill.
- People with disability should be also be made a part of the Special Category in the Bill
- Older people who could not take care of themselves should also be focused on in the Bill.
- Not only children up to the age of 14, but older adolescent groups should be included in the Bill.



Day 2

Session 1: Nation Seeds Bill & Forest Rights Act. Chaired by Subhash Mendhapurkar

1. **National Seeds Bill: Vijay Jardhari**, well known activist and founder of Beej Bachao Andolan spoke about how exchanging seeds among themselves was the right of the farmers that the proposed Seeds Bill threatened to take away from them. The government should take the responsibility of safeguarding the interests of farmers but it was not doing its duty well. All its policies attacked the very core of Indian agrarian economy. Traditionally the state of Uttarakhand had more than 300 varieties of wheat, 220 varieties of rice and 250 varieties of pulses, but because of the pressures of the market, all these were now disappearing and monoculture had pervaded the hills as well. The hill cultivation was like an ecosystem, supporting people, animals and the environment within which they were all places. All this was fact getting corroded thanks to large development projects, apathy of the government and take-over of big corporate giants of agrarian sector. The Seeds Bill would make the farmers even more dependent on outside factors thus making them weak and helpless. No efforts have been made to preserve the traditional knowledge of farmers. Thus one must strongly oppose the Seeds Bill and ask for more investment of resources and sustainable techniques in the agrarian sector.



2. **Forest Rights Act: Well known activist, Ashok Chowdhary** spoke about the fact that none of the political parties were serious about looking at forests and people's relationship to their environment. The rights of Adivasis and other forest dwellers have been damaged for centuries and there is an urgent

need to restore this. If one separates them from their forests, biodiversity also suffers a blow. Although the FRA was recognition of the forest dwellers rights on their forests, in practice it did not set a very good example. FRA talks about rights- transfer of power to people living in forests. This is a political challenge and needs a political strategy as it is not just a mere scheme of the government. Food security also needs a new perspective. It should not be seen as a right to a certain quantity of ration alone.

The FRA is soaked in corruption and has remained confined to distributing land 'pattas' alone. The Forest Dept. is hesitant to part away with its land. And despite the fact that the Forest Dept.'s authority is getting diluted under the FRA, the tussle is that they have actual control over all that forested land that comes under the Act. Thus we must ensure that constitutional methods are adopted in implementing this Act because all forested areas have remained outside the democratic, constitutional framework of the rest of the country. Huge scale corporate entry is another severe threat to the forest and people living there. Civil society must bring these voices forward. New form of mobilization is required, which calls for building backward and forward linkages. He said that we have to think political strategies afresh to ensure that our land, water, forests are not taken away from us. Only then could we think of creating long term food security solutions in the country.

3. Discussion

- Need to reclaim basic rights on natural resources to ensure certain populations dependent on them are not rendered food insecure due to myopic policy measures
- Need to reinvent civil society approach to incorporate political strategy in it as a way of addressing present crisis on many fronts in the country.

Session 2: Perspective- 12th Five Year Plan and Food Security. Chaired by Anil K Singh



1. Noted journalist **Bharat Dogra** said that there was a lot of restlessness all over the world regarding the basic development models that governments were adopting in the name of progress. In the 12th Five Year Plan, we must think of concentrating on agriculture in a big way. This was also important if we wanted

to create food security in the country as well. Interests of small and marginal farmers needed to be kept in mind, though the Plan was completely silent on all these fronts. Government was only interested in promoting corporate interests- an instance of this was the introduction of GM crops on a large scale throughout the country. U.S companies like Monsanto were being promoted and markets were being made porous for them to easily enter the Indian agricultural sector. Traditional seeds are disappearing from our farmers. Save our seeds/ fighting against corporatization of agriculture- this will be a big fight. Big technology had driven farmers on the verge of suicide. Government's investment in agriculture sector, on the other hand was going down rapidly. Research done in states like Rajasthan, proved this fact as well. The coming of SEZs was another threat to farmers where large agricultural lands were being diverted for industry. The

Plan must answer all these dilemmas but fails to do so in its perspective paper. Natural resources were also deteriorating with coming of large dams and infrastructure heavy projects. Climate change was also a big challenge and instead of hand-holding the farming communities through this crisis, government was further worsening their conditions by adopting anti-farmer policies. Thus land reform programs, R& D in agriculture, policies favoring small and marginal farmers needed to be implemented soon. All this will help create long term food security. This is an alternative way of dealing with the present crisis and we need to struggle to realize this.

2. Discussion

- Food sovereignty issue is as important as food security and this must be addressed in the proposed bill. .
- 14 crore hectares of land in India is under agriculture. This has not expanded despite large population growth. Thus we need to revert back to traditional farming ways to create community based food secure conditions as well.
- We must ensure that national food security issues are not determined through global pressures of markets and industries.

- 3. Recommendations:** All the state participants put together some key recommendations that could help make the National Food Security Bill effective and inclusive.

Recommendations from the North Zone Consultation

1. The National Food Security Bill must be universal in its reach.
2. Food provision under the Act must be increased to 15 kgs of food grain per person/per month
3. Pulses, oil, sugar, coarse grains like Jowar, Bajra, Macca and so on should be included in the food provision.
4. The definition of Special Groups must be expanded to include single women, people with disabilities, adolescents, migrants and old people as well as they all faced food insecurity issues.
5. Clause 52 that spoke took away government's responsibility to provide food to people in cases of extreme disaster, war and the likes, should be removed completely.
6. Identification of starving populations, something that the states were supposed to do under the Act, must be complete within 6 months of the Act's implementation with the help of NGOs and gram panchayat.
7. Concentration on agrarian and land reforms must be a priority to ensure long term food security conditions in the country. The Schedule 3 that spoke about these aspects in the Bill should therefore be part of the main body of the Bill.
8. Decentralized procurement processes must be incorporated in implementation of the Act so that regional food diversity and sovereignty of

communities is respected.

9. Diversion of fertile land for industrialization or other large development purposes must be checked under the legislation.

10. Efforts to promote traditional farming techniques and more R&D in agricultural sector would also help ensure long term food security in the country.