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Topic: Food and nutrition security

Title: Food security: What it means for women and children in India?

Presentation Type: Oral

Introduction: The Food Security Act (FSA) assures right to food as an entitlement. Our aim was to identify the challenges and suggest solutions to address the health and nutrition challenges among women and children in India.

Methods: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis for Food security of women and children in India.

Results:

Strengths: Food security act, food safety and standards act, nutrition and health programs. Increasing emphasis on sanitation, availability of support from national and international agencies

Weaknesses: Lack of food safety guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures, lack of quality data on foodborne illnesses, lack of competence to develop and implement food safety plan at regional level, inadequate infrastructure, weak involvement of women and lactating mothers

Opportunities:

Availability of technical assistance, guidelines from FAO/WHO, support from the Ministry of Health, assured funds through the twelfth five year plan, availability of advanced information, communication technology

Threats: Cultural practices, lack of human resource, lack of training, punitive mind set of administrators, poor reporting on foodborne illnesses from the districts. Emerging communicable disease and climate change impact

Conclusion: Food Security Act remains incomplete with no mechanism to ensure food safety and quality to women and children. Poverty and malnutrition in India is the combined result of low agriculture productivity, high population growth, a variety of cultural challenges accelerating urbanization, unpredictable climate change, degradation of natural ecosystems and habitats, poor governance and inadequate infrastructure. Focus needs to be on women and children who bare the brunt of social and environmental impacts.