Control Food Wastage, Reduce Malnutrition

Aarti Makhija
Address: 131, Shivam Apartment, Sector-15, Rohini, Delhi, India

Abstract

Food wastage and malnutrition are not dichotomies at all. They are very much linked with one another. Food wastage is the epitome of growth, under-nutrition is of deficit. They together create a paradox in our economy. The staggering amount of food wastage is bewildering if looked upon through the eyes of the growing population. According to United Nations development program, India has atleast 40% food wastage. Between 30%-50% of food is never even served on plates, our garbage bins, streets, landfills have sufficient proof of it despite the fact that around 20 millions Indians sleep hungry almost every night, not many steps have been taken concerning the issue. We should not only rely on government to solve the problem. We should come forward to feed the malnourished people by doing nothing hard but by simply reducing food wastage. By containing waste, we are not only saving food to feed needy people but also we are saving acres of land, water and energy resources that were used in the production of that wasted food and thereby reduce many other global problems too like inflation, deteriorating environment depleting resources etc. We by our sincere efforts can make MALNUTRITION-a matter of past. We should strive to widen our slogan on environment day from GROW MORE TO STRIVE MORE!SAVE MORE!FEED MORE!

KEYWORDS: Global hunger index, Malnourishment, Food bank, Contain wastage

Introduction

Out of the thousands of hurdles that India faces everyday Food wastage strikes a chord every common man can strip to. It’s everywhere you see. The shops, homes, and parties’ even kid at school throw away meals and those vegetables they dislike. On the other hand a large number of people sleep without food. They search food in bins, on roads, streets to feed themselves. This scene can be visualized anywhere you or me live. They beg on red lights, roads to fulfill their needs. As an Indian citizen, we should strive hard to reduce this grave situation. Because by tackling malnutrition problem, we are not only solving this problem but a chain of economic problems would be solved to some extent. We can’t call ourselves “Developed” till we eliminate malnutrition. Among various methods, immediate method is to control and contain wastage.

If we reduce food wastage, it will not only feed growing population but also contribute to the economy positively. Reducing food wastage will imply a plethora of food; feeding the needy will create a healthy economy.

On the other hand

| Pressure of demand on resource will reduce.
| Inflation will be eased & resources could be used for other purposes.
Economy will grow.
If I am able to induce even 5-10% people to reduce wastage, it will be worth the effort.

Article

India—the most developing country of the nation suffers malnutrition at its epitome. In fact malnutrition is one of its gravest tribulation. The World Bank estimates that India is one of the highest-ranking countries in the world for the number of children suffering from malnutrition. The 2011 Global Hunger Index (GHI) report ranked India 15th, amongst leading countries with hunger situation. Subodh Varma, writing in Times of India, stated that India ranks 67 among the 80 nations having penury hunger situations which is worse than nations such North Korea or Sudan. 25% of all hungry people worldwide live in India.

Malnutrition refers to a situation where there is an unbalanced diet in which nutrients are either in excess or in deficit.

India faces two types of malnutrition—Under nutrition and over nutrition. Under nutrition being more prevalent. Regions most affected are Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Bihar. The rural areas, slums, unprivileged areas are in an even worst state. Despite the fact India is the fastest growing economy it faces a spate of malnutrition incidences. Many factors contribute to this deplorable state of the country such as gender inequality, lack of awareness, scattered distribution of resources, sky-high population. But the primary cause of malnourishment is Food Wastage.

Indians wastes as much food as the whole of the U.K consumes. This food wastage is an alarming issue in India given that half its population doesn’t even have food to waste. The streets, landfills and garbage bins have sufficient proof of it. Weddings, canteens, hotels, social gatherings and family functions, even households spew out so much food. About 25% of what we buy ends up being thrown away. According to the United Nations Development program, up to 40% food produced in India is wasted. This food wastage is a serious concern for a variety of reasons—

- 25% of fresh water used to produce food is ultimately wasted, even though millions of people don’t have access to drinking water.
- Acres of land are deforested to grow food that is wasted so there is apart of food, wastage of human and physical resources. Approximately 40% of land is degraded due to unsustainable agricultural practices, excessive groundwater extraction and course deforestation to meet food demand, which is never really met.
- 300 millions barrels of oil are used to produce food that is wasted.

Taking all this into consideration, the actual worth of money per year in India from food wastage is estimated a whopping Rs. 58000 crores.

In the developing world, over 40% of food loss after harvest while being stored or transported and during processing and packing is not really proprioceptive.

Factors responsible for food wastage:

- Wasteful practices by farmers, food producers, supermarket and consumers like hoarding food to create unnecessary hype and hike prices.
- Various practices by supermarkets like buy one get one free, unnecessarily strict sales by dates, cosmetically perfect food attained by poor engineering
- Degrading agricultural practices, inadequate and poor storage facilities.
Cornucopian abundance has fostered the culture in which deliberate food wastage is now accepted or even institutionalized! This shows profligate negligence towards food. Cooking too much of food, over ordering stock for supermarkets etc. is a matter of lifestyle in numerous Indian households.

Even though India produces enough food to feed twice the present population, food wastage is ironically behind the millions malnourished people. This wastage not only creates environmental problems but also aggravates inflation. As responsible citizens, Indians can help reducing malnutrition by containing wastage via these measures:

On one hand mountains of food is thrown out every day in cities, whereas on the other hand people in rural areas find it hard to figure out their next meal. Some agency should be allotted to coordinate both types of people. This agency or more appropriately food bank can collect surplus from restaurants, grocers, corporate cafeterias, farms, and deliver it to the needy. Those who can afford to buy food and throw it away-rarely consider how much they have discarded or find alternatives to send unwanted food to land fill. In such cases legislations should be there that requires all household to separate both recycling and compost from garbage. Such initiative fosters awareness among people for reducing personal food wastage.

In the absence of modern style grain stores and processing facilities, adopt some measures to prevent damage to harvest like replace jute bag sand mud constructions with metal grain storage, use solar energy to dry fruits and vegetables.

Apart from the parliamentary and the legislative steps, steps at personal level are required to be taken to reduce food wastage;

Planning meals and making a shopping list to determine the required food items is one efficient method to skirt food wastage.

One must avoid impulse buying. In case one has excess food items and culinary they can consult an NGO to transport excess food to the needy.

In case of weddings or social get together make sure excess food is transported to a place like orphanage or old age home.

Adopting such petty initiatives can help cusp malnutrition to a magnanimous extent.

The slogan modern day India needs is:

DON’T BE IN A HASTE,
DON’T WASTE
THE FOOD YOU THROW
IS THE ONE THE POOR SOW
STOP RIGHT THERE
SHOW SOME CARE
MAKE INDIA STAND TALL
LET’S FEED ALL!

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