

NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT

**AN INTRODUCTORY PRIMER
ON
THE LEGAL GUARANTEES DEMANDED BY
THE RIGHT TO FOOD CAMPAIGN**

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Focus on Children under Six

Anganwadis for All: A Primer

Supreme Court orders on the right to food: A tool for Action

Employment Guarantee Act: A primer

PREFACE

This primer introduces to us the set of minimum demands that the Right to Food campaign has proposed in the context of the “National Food Security Act” announced by the United Progressive Alliance II Government.

This version of the primer is the adaptation of the power point presentation “What the Government Says and What We Want” prepared by the campaign and presented at the concluding panel discussion of the Dharna cum Relay Fast staged outside the Parliament from 15th April to 19th April, 2010. This dharna saw the participation of more than 2500 people from across the country in opposition to the draft national food “insecurity” act prepared by the Empowered Group of Ministers (eGoM) on NFSA.

This Primer presents in a concise and simple manner, the legal guarantees that ought to be provided to the people of the country through the National Food Security Act. It provides arguments and evidence of the availability of funds and food stocks in the country for ensuring universal entitlements for all schemes. It also establishes the principle of how positive affirmations ought to be integrated in a system of universalization.

Above all it shows a way in which agriculture can be incentivised and revitalised if production of millets and pulses are also promoted. It also establishes the principles of food sovereignty while talking of food sufficiency. It emphasizes that local procurement and local storage ought to be guaranteed. And finally distribution of food ought to be done through various schemes which address the needs of food and nutrition of the socially vulnerable, children, old and all other residents of the country at all times to come.

This primer shows how persistent structural hunger and malnutrition in India can be alleviated in the country. It also shows how we can ensure

dignified economic and social access to adequate and nutritious food to all, in pursuance of people's fundamental right to be free from hunger, malnutrition and other deprivations associated with the lack of food.

We owe this present version to Anuradha Talwar and Madhuri Krishnaswamy. This is built on the working draft of the campaign called the Food Entitlements Bill 2009, released on September 12, 2009. The working draft came out of collective deliberations which had the inputs from Abhijit Sen, Abhay Shukla, Anuradha Talwar, Arundhati Dhuru, Asha Mishra, Arun Gupta, Akhila Sivadas, Anjali Gopalan, Anjali Bhardwaj, Ashok Khandelwal, Ashok Bharti, Annie Raja, Biraj Patnaik, Colin Gonsalves, Dunu Roy, Dipa Sinha, Devika Singh, Devender Sharma, Harsh Mander, Himanshu, Jayati Ghosh, Jayashree Valenkar, Jean Dreze, Kavita Srivastava, Kavitha Kuruganti, Kiran Bhatta, Madhuri Krishnaswamy, K S Gopal, Manas Ranjan, Mira Shiva, Mohan Rao, Nikhil Dey, N C Saxena, Paul Diwakar, Radha Holla, Reetika Khera, Rajesh Krishnan, Sachin Jain, Sejal Dand, Sunil Kaul, Shiraz Balsara, Shalini Bhutani, Suresh Sawant, Shefali Sharma, Ulka Mahajan, Vandana Prasad, V.Satheesh, V Suresh, and many others for actively participating in discussions and responding with views and comments.

This primer is still evolving and we welcome your feedback

Secretariat, Right to Food Campaign

Date 1st August, 2010

Food security :

What the Government says and what we want

Nutrition Security –A Constitutional Obligation of the State

- Article 21 of the Constitution of India guarantees a fundamental right to life and personal liberty. The right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 includes the right to food;
- Article 47 of the Constitution of India makes it one of the primary duties of the State to raise the standard of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and to improve public health;
- Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949) recognizes the right of everyone to adequate food;
- Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the General Comment 12 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights further elaborate the responsibilities of all State Parties to recognize the right of everyone to be free from hunger;
- Further responsibilities in this regard, particularly with reference to children and women, derive from the Convention of the Rights of the Child (Articles 27.1 and 27.3) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Article 12);
- India is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Nutrition Security means

- Access to adequate quantities of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, micronutrients through availability and affordability of diverse foods including grains, pulses, oil, meat, milk, eggs, vegetables, and fruits to meet the requirement for a person according to the stage in her/his life cycle.

- Access to safe drinking water as a public good.

The Government's understanding of "Food Security" is so limited as to make a mockery of hunger. The government wants to provide just a small quantity of wheat and rice to a small section of the hungry and call this Food Security for the country.

We want legal guarantees

State should be made responsible and accountable to ensure that no man, woman or child starves or is malnourished.

How much hunger and food insecurity is there in the country?

Around 80% of Indians do not get enough to eat. Despite claims to being an emerging Superpower, India ranks 94th out of 119 countries in the Global Hunger Index.. 43% of Indian children and 40 % of women are malnourished. 50% of child deaths are due to malnutrition. .One in every three Indians is underweight. (BMI of less than 18.5%). According to the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (Arjun Sengupta Report) 77% of Indians live on less than Rs 20 a day (2004).

Why is there so much hunger?

Food prices are soaring, and real wages are falling sharply. This is directly because of government policies and is likely to continue.

While 52% of the population is directly and 65% is indirectly dependant on agriculture, agriculture's share in the GDP (the total income of the country) has dropped to only 15%. On the other hand, the corporate sector, which is less than 1% of the population corners 33% of the GDP while the service sector which is 9% of the population, earns more than 55% of the GDP. Agriculture has been continuously discriminated against, and exploited to subsidise industry and the service sector. The value of agricultural work and agricultural produce

is deliberately undervalued while those of industry, trade and the service sector are inflated.

The Green Revolution promoted only expensive irrigated rice and wheat varieties at the cost of dryland varieties and especially other inexpensive, dry land crops like millets, pulses and oilseeds. It was concentrated in only a few areas, and the majority of the countries – the dry land areas – were neglected. Most important, farming has been made heavily dependant on increasing use of expensive seed, fertilizer and pesticide, driving farmers into debt and making them totally dependant on agribusiness companies. These companies make huge profits while farmers starve. Because of this type of Industrial Farming, soil has been depleted of micro nutrients while the water table has plunged. Mechanised farming has destroyed rural livelihoods.

Instead of learning from these mistakes, the Government now wants a Second Green Revolution that will make farming even more dependant on the Agribusiness Corporations. While the agriculture of areas like Punjab and Haryana is in deep crisis because of wrong “Green Revolution” farming, the government now wants to introduce this type of destructive farming in Eastern India as well. Instead of promoting sustainable agriculture, it wants farming to be based on such dangerous technologies as GM seeds. Cash crops for industrial use- cotton, sugarcane, floriculture, tomato for ketchup, potato for chips etc- are being promoted at the cost of food crops.

There is growing unemployment and insecurity of employment. Most workers are in the unorganized sector and work for very low, irregular wages and have very harsh living conditions.

We believe

- Basic services such as food, education, health, work and social security must be universally available for all.
- All residents of the country must be covered.

- While arguing for universal services, further affirmative action is required for those who are socially excluded.

Present Government View: Only A Limited Number Of People Must Benefit

- BPL is being determined by EGoM based on poverty figures put forward by the Planning Commission. This stands at present based on Tendulkar Committee report at 37.2%.
- NFSA will thus provide only 37.2% of the population with cheap food.

Tendulkar means further exclusion

- The average calorie consumption at the Tendulkar Committee poverty line is 1776 calories per person per day for urban areas and 1999 for rural areas.
- This is much below the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) norms for the average person in India (i.e. 2400 Kcal in rural areas and 2100 calories in urban areas).
- This line is therefore bound to lead to the exclusion of many who are hungry if it is used to set 'caps' for food schemes.

Problem with BPL Figures

- Caps set by the Planning Commission are not a reflection of the ground reality.
- They force state governments to cut down on the number of people on the BPL list, leaving room for manipulation and corruption of all sorts when making the BPL list.
- Most often state governments have had to go beyond the BPL list from their own resources.

- Huge exclusion and inclusion errors exist
- Proper identification through BPL of the poor is proving an impossibility.

Preventing Exclusion

It is only the universal principle that will allow Dalits, Tribals and the Socially vulnerable to exercise their right to food. These are the majority communities who are excluded when targeting happens.

Our Demand - A Universal Public Distribution System

Food security must be Nutritional Security

Food Security Must Ensure Nutritional Security And Health

- Every citizen must be guaranteed at least as much food as the ICMR norms for moderately active male (2700 calories required). This means
 - Food grains- 14 kgs per month per individual (about 50 kgs for a family of 5) family.
 - Oils 800 grams per month (about 2.8 kgs per family).
 - Pulses 1.5 kgs per month (about 5.25 kgs per family).
- Inclusion of millets is essential because these are nutritious, healthy, cheap and often culturally preferred.

Total monthly requirements for a five member family – ICMR norms

Family member	Monthly requirement of cereals (kg.)	Monthly requirement of pulses (kg.)	Monthly requirement of oils (grams)
Man doing moderate work	14.4	2.7	1050
Woman doing moderate work.	10.8	2.25	900
1-6 year old child	5	1.1	675
7 to 12 year old child	9	1.8	750
Elderly person / third child	9	1.8	675
Total	48.2	9.65	4050

Millets in NFSA

1. Provide millets highest priority in the National Food Security Act: Government of India should allocate a substantial portion of its food security budget to millet based farming and food systems that will use millets as their major food component. This is because these grains are extremely crucial to tackle food and farming crisis in an era of climate change that warms up the globe and reduces water availability to cropping. Thus these should be the preferred crops while designing the nation's food security.
2. Put millets into Public Food System of India
 - (a) Millets need to be integrated into the existing Public Distribution System (PDS). Start with 5 kgs out of the present quota of 25 kgs in the year 2010 and gradually increase it to at least 50% by the year 2020.

(b) Also introduce millet meals twice a week in the ICDS, school mid day meals, welfare hostels and such other schemes of the government.

- Millets can offer food and fodder security as well as health, nutrition security, livelihood security and ecological security.
- Millet crops require much less water than rice.
- Millets are storehouses of nutrition – both macro and micro nutrients.
- For instance while pearl millet (Bajra) has 16mg of iron, rice has only 0.7 mg. Similarly, finger millet (Ragi) offers 344mg of calcium while rice has 10mg.

Storehouses of Nutrition

<i>Crop/Nutrient</i>	<i>Protein (g)</i>	<i>Fiber (g)</i>	<i>Minerals (g)</i>	<i>Iron (mg)</i>	<i>Calcium (mg)</i>
<i>Pearl millet</i>	10.6	1.3	2.3	16.9	38
<i>Finger millet</i>	7.3	3.6	2.7	3.9	344
<i>Foxtail millet</i>	12.3	8	3.3	2.8	31
<i>Proso millet</i>	12.5	2.2	1.9	0.8	14
<i>Kodo millet</i>	8.3	9	2.6	0.5	27
<i>Little millet</i>	7.7	7.6	1.5	9.3	17
<i>Barnyard millet</i>	11.2	10.1		15.2	11
<i>Rice</i>	6.8	0.2	0.6	0.7	10
<i>Wheat</i>	11.8	1.2	1.5	5.3	41

Food Security in a Vacuum

- NFSA provides food security without considering production aspects – as if food procurement and food distribution can be divorced from production.
- In actuality, production, procurement and distribution have to be considered together.

Use an Expanded PDS to Revive Agriculture

There is a severe agricultural crisis in the country. Procurement for an expanded PDS will give a boost to production and can become an important instrument for the revitalization of the agricultural economy.

Expanded PDS Along With New Procurement Policy

- Procurement from *all mandis*, so that *all areas* benefit from govt. procurement (not just major procurement from Punjab, Haryana, AP and partially UP, as is now the case).
- Procurement at MSP of *milletts, pulses and oilseeds* etc to boost these crops which are now facing neglect due to low and uncertain prices and due to low investment.
- These crops are easily grown in dry-land areas and are not water/input intensive.
- Procurement should be at *fair MSP* prices.
- MSP of millets and pulses are now very low. During the recent inflation in pulses, farmers sold dal at Rs 25-35 /kg. MSP of moong was Rs 27.6, of tuar was Rs 23/kg. Retail prices ranged from Rs 65 to Rs 120.
- Consumers suffered high prices, while farmers did not benefit at all from them. Even in millets, the differential between farm gate and retail prices has been up to 30-50%.

Local Distribution Of Local Procurement

Distribution of grain procured from beyond the district zone should be resorted to only if there is a shortfall in local procurement. This will allow:

- Procurement, and therefore support to farmers, from all areas.
- Locally preferred grain to be distributed.
- Drastically cut down storage and transportation costs.
- Help curb corruption by allowing easier tracking of grain movements .

However, since many areas suffer from deficits, it is important to ensure that the original intention of the PDS i.e.: movement of food from surplus to deficit areas will be ensured by Central government agencies. There must be storage granaries in every block. Currently thousands of tons of grain are rotting due to lack of proper granaries. The government is neither taking steps to protect the grain, and nor is it distributing this grain to the hungry.

Village level grain banks to be established to encourage local procurement, storage and distribution to ensure food security.

Policies to increase food production, consumption, nutrition

- Immediate ban on export of food until malnutrition is ended in the country. Cattle and poultry in rich countries are being fed on grain being exported from poor countries, while our people starve.
- There should be a ban on the use of food grains for bio fuels and liquor production.
- Protect farmers from “dumping” of unfairly subsidized imports. Our farmers can produce enough to feed the entire country if they are supported by proper government policies.

- First call on all natural resources, including land and water, must be for food. No forcible diversion of land, water and forest resources away from food production.
- Stop corporatisation of agriculture and control of food by agribusiness corporations.
- Immediate moratorium on genetically modified (GM) seeds, GM food imports, and use of GM food in government food schemes.
- All speculation and futures trading in food items should be banned.
- Government must eliminate the entry of corporate interests (including contract farming) and private contractors in food production, the food market, regulatory bodies and nutrition-related schemes.
- Governments must not enter into any partnerships with the private sector where there is a conflict of interests.

Government must ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation for all.

Expanded PDS: Half of Current Cereal Production Required

- Total cereal availability (minus 12.5% for seed, feed and wastage) ranged from 170.8 million tonnes to 191.8 million tonnes over 2005-6 to 2008-9.
- Total requirement for universal coverage at 50 kgs per family with 100% offtake is 138 million tonnes, However, a more realistic requirement estimate, is 96 million tonnes at 70%, 110 million tonnes at 80% and 106 million tonnes if the offtake is at the Arjun Sengupta Committee's poverty estimate.
- *This is therefore around 60% of the current cereal production in the country.*

Is there enough food production in the country to provide for so much PDS entitlements?

Expanded PDS: Quantity of Cereals required (in million tonnes)

Entitlement per month / household (in kgs)	50 kgs	35 kgs
Universal Public Distribution System (23 crore families)	138.0	96.6
Universal (assuming 70% offtake)	96.6	67.6
Universal (assuming 80% offtake)	110.4	77.3
Arjun Sen Gupta Committee (17.7 crore families)	106.2	74.3
Saxena Committee (11.5 crore families)	69.0	48.3
Tendulkar Committee (8.5 crore families)	51.2	35.8

Expanded PDS: Quantity of food grains available

Production (million tonnes)	Total Cereals*	Total Pulses	Total foodgrains**	Total cereals (minus 12.5% for seed, feed, wastage)
2005-06	195.21	13.39	208.6	170.8
2006-07	203.08	14.2	217.28	177.7
2007-08	216.02	14.76	230.78	189.0
2008-09	219.22	14.66	233.88	191.8

Universal PDS: Pulses Required

Requirement of pulses is 20 crores households X 5.25 kgs per household per month X 12 months = 1.45 crore metric tonnes or 14.5 million metric tones.

Currently the pulse production of 4 years ranges from 13.39-14.76 million tones is sufficient to cover the projected PDS requirement of around 11.5 million tonnes (at 80% offtake with universal coverage).

This would require 80% of our total production.

Pulse production in the country is in serious crisis. Production is stagnating due to lack of investment. If pulses are not provided in the PDS, their consumption will seriously decline, leading to increased malnutrition.

If pulses are given a fair and stable procurement price, cultivation is likely to increase.

The quantum of pulses distributed through the PDS may also be gradually increased upto 1.5 kgs per adult per month, over a period of 5 years.

Oil Year (Nov.-Oct.)	Production of Oilseeds	Net availability of edible oils from all domestic sources	Consumption of Edible Oils (from domestic and import sources)
2000-2001	184.40	54.99	96.76
2001-2002	206.63	61.46	104.68
2002-2003	148.39	46.64	90.29
2003-2004	251.86	71.40	124.30
2004-2005	243.54	72.47	117.89
2005-2006	279.79	83.16	126.04
2006-2007	242.89	73.70	115.87
2007-2008	297.55	86.51	142.62
2008-2009	281.57	85.98	183.00

Availability of Edible Oils (in lakh tons)

Universal PDS: Edible Oil Required

- Requirement of edible oils is 23 crores households X 2.8 kgs per household per month X 12 months = 77.3 lakhs metric tonnes or 0.73 million metric tonnes.
- The requirement of oil will be around 61.8 lakh metric tonnes (at 80% offtake). The average availability over past 4 years from domestic production is around 82 lakh tonnes. The current availability (2009-10) including imports is 183 lakh tonnes (estimated).
- We require 75% of our domestic production.

Universal PDS: Increased Production of Food Crops in the Medium Term

- If there is increased procurement, and at fair prices, and therefore farmers have an assured market, production of food crops is likely to increase.
- Currently only 25.8% of the net production of food grains are procured. Only 18.9% of the net available food grains are distributed through the PDS (2008 provisional figures provided in ESI 2009-10).

Is there enough money for all this?

Funds Required

	For 50 kgs/ family/month	For 35 kgs/ family/month
Economic weighted average of wheat and rice cost per kg (in Rs.)	16	16
Proposed per kg price in NFSA (in kgs)	3	3
Net subsidy per kg (in kgs)	13	13
Number of kgs per month (in kgs)	50	35
Subsidy per month per family (in rs.)	650	455
Annual subsidy per family (in rs.)	7800	5460
For universal PDS for 20 crore families (rupees crores)	1,79,400	1,25,580
Assuming 70% offtake	1,25,580	87,906
Assuming 80% offtake	1,43,520	1,00,464

Universal PDS: Availability of funds

Compared to many wealthy nations including USA, Sweden etc. India has very a low tax GDP ratio (around 18% compared to 28% for USA and around 45-50% for Scandinavian countries).

Even this very low rate is not realized. The tax foregone (waived) by the Central Govt on Corporate Income Tax, Personal Income Tax, Excise and Customs was **Rs.5,02,299 crores** in 2009-10 (79.54% of the aggregate tax collection), and it was **Rs.4,14,099 crores** (68.59% of aggregate tax collection) in 2008-9. (the budget documents caution that this might be an underestimation).

This is about 11 times the current food subsidy bill.

Corporate income tax foregone is **Rs 79,554**, almost Rs 13,000 more than last year. Every year, the effective tax rate is a merely around 22% compared to the statutory tax rate of 33.99%. The largest companies, those with more than Rs. 500 crores, get the most exemptions. Public sector companies pay much higher taxes than private sector companies.

In Excise duties, instead of the tariff rate of 16%, only 8% excise duties were levied.

In Customs duties foregone, the exemptions for diamonds, gold and jewellery was as high as Rs 39,769 crores!

This is almost the same as the entire budget allocation for NREGA

Children's Right to Food

Though it is a well recognized fact that child malnutrition and maternal mortality are at severe levels, the NFSA has made no provisions for the same.

Existing food schemes where legal entitlements have been given by the Supreme Court have been ignored.

For Infants' Right to Food

Infants need

- Initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
- Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months.

Nutrition Security for Infants includes

- Skilled assistance and counselling for infant and young child feeding.
- Financial and nutritional assistance to the mother for six months after birth.
- Creches in the community and at the work site.

For Children's Right to Food

- Program of feeding in ICDS centres and schools from birth till Class X.

- Minimum nutrition norms specified in the Act
- Cooked hot meal.
- Proper infrastructure- buildings, drinking water, toilets, equipment.
- Adequate staff.
- Health check ups in schools and ICDS centers.
- No use of contractors.

Universalise ICDS

- All children in the age group of 0-6 years entitled to basic nutrition, health and pre-school education services including supplementary nutrition; immunization; health check-ups; referral services; growth monitoring and promotion; pre-school education; counselling of mothers for infant and young child feeding.
- Support and counselling for Breastfeeding.
- No promotion of baby foods.
- Weekly take-home rations.
- Identification and treatment of acute malnutrition.

Rights of the Vulnerable and Socially Excluded

The Act must recognise the rights of the most vulnerable. These include old people, physically challenged, people suffering from/living with HIV/AIDS, TB or other debilitating and stigmatized diseases, single women headed households, beggars, bonded labourers, primitive tribes, most marginalised groups, homeless, unprotected street and working children etc.

All such people to be provided Antodaya cards.

Antodaya Card Holders

- All Antodaya card holders to get rations at half price.
- Hot cooked meals for old and infirm.
- Double food quotas in ICDS and maternity benefits.
- Old age pensions of Rs. 1300 p.m.

- Supply of one quintal of food per month free of cost for six months (after distress is discovered).
- Other special programs like community kitchens or residential schools for street children.

Other Special Categories

- Migrants, urban homeless and slum dwellers to be categories for whom special measures to be taken up.
- Disaster struck to be given Antodaya cards and double entitlements immediately.
- Pensions of Rs.1300 for elderly, single women and disabled.
- Maternity benefits of Rs 1,000 per month for six months, along with crèches.

Food Coupons or Cash Instead of Food

The RTF Campaign rejects cash transfers because it knows that cash can never take the place of food grains.

- With food prices rising very rapidly, value of cash given will deplete fast before Government revises rates.
- Cash can be spent by heads of households on drinking, gambling or other useless consumption without addressing food security.
- The PDS has a procurement side and a distribution side. The procurement of food at minimum support prices means that farmers are encouraged to produce food. Replacing this with cash transfers means that the incentive to produce food is reduced and therefore the total food production in our country is adversely affected.

Cards for Women

We want cards in the name of women and NFSA has already agreed to this.

Issues of Corruption and Leakages

- Set up a good decentralized redressal mechanism with all offences made cognizable and non-bailable.

- Let them be criminal offences with severe punishments, fines and penalties for the perpetrators and compensation for the victims.
- Transparency measures and strong community vigilance to stop leakages.

Affirmative Action

At least 50% of jobs for cooks and helpers must be for Dalits, Adivasis and minority communities.

Priority must be given for the location of Anganwadis and ration shops in hamlets of Dalits, Adivasis and minority communities.

Even the Congress Party's 2009 election manifesto had promised:

“The Indian National Congress pledges to enact a Right to Food law that guarantees access to sufficient food for all people especially the most vulnerable.”

- Every family living below the poverty line will be entitled to 25 kgs at Rs 3 per kg for all BPL families.
- Community kitchens for the homeless and migrants.
- Ensure Social Security to all persons who are at risk including single women households, disabled and elderly, urban homeless, released bonded workers, primitive tribal groups and members of most backward dalit communities.
- Direct income support to farmers in ecologically vulnerable areas.
- Ensure that farming becomes profitable.
- MSP and procurement at the door step of farmers.
- Universalisation of ICDS with full coverage of all children under six for food, nutrition and health.

Summary of Demands

- **Remove APL BPL– subsidized food for all.**
- **Nutritional security with per head monthly entitlements of 14 kgs of cereals, 1.5 kgs of pulses and 800 gms of oil.**
- **Expand PDS procurement and use PDS to revitalise agriculture.**
- **Make procurement and distribution local and decentralised.**
- **Children's right to food to be ensured.**
- **Special rights for vulnerable and excluded.**
- **No cash transfers.**
- **Food entitlement cards in the name of women.**
- **Effective grievance redressal mechanisms, with punishments, penalties and compensation.**
- **Affirmative action for Dalits, Adivasis and other socially discriminated groups.**

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Right to Food Campaign

The "Right to Food Campaign" is an informal network of organizations and individuals committed to the realization of the right to food in India. We consider that everyone has a fundamental right to be free from hunger and under-nutrition. Realizing this right requires not only equitable and sustainable food systems, but also entitlements relating to livelihood security such as the right to work, land reform and social security. We consider that the primary responsibility for guaranteeing these entitlements rests with the state. Lack of financial resources cannot be accepted as an excuse for abdicating this responsibility. In the present context, where people's basic needs are not a political priority, state intervention itself depends on effective popular organization. We are committed to fostering this process through all democratic means.

The following are part of the steering committee of the Right to Food campaign :

1. National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW)
2. Human Rights Law Network (HRLN)
3. People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL)
4. National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM)
5. Jan Swasthya Abhiyaan (JSA)
6. National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI)
7. Bhartiya Gyan Vigyaan Samiti (BGVS)
8. National Campaign Committee for Unorganised Sector Workers (NCC-USW)
9. National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)
10. National Confederation of Dalit Organisations (NACDOR)
11. New Trade Union Initiative (NTUI)
12. Former "Support Group" of the Right to Food Campaign
13. Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI)