Introduction

All human beings regardless of race, sex or religion deserve the right to adequate and proper nutrition. According to Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO); more than 1 billion people in the world are undernourished. Food is essential to maintain a healthy lifestyle amongst everyone and many important factors get affected when adequate nutrition is not provided to everyone, such as: attending school, having to work a low wage job or even surviving, because of the limited supply of food. If there is not enough food for a child then over time they could become malnutritioned - which means to have a disease or deficiency which is caused by what a person consumes - which can make them severely ill. Hence, making them become unable and unfit to get proper education or to even work in order to provide their family with some sort of wealth and income. Because of poor access of food, almost 6 million kids die each year due to malnutrition, starvation or other relatable diseases. There are about 103 developing countries which have areas suffering from poverty and having an inadequate supply of food and nutrition. Moreover, the World Health Organisation (WHO) actively supports countries to help design and implement health policies, which are able to prioritize and respond to the needs of poor people. This work includes global advocacy, regional initiatives and direct support to ministries of health in developing countries to allow them to have access to adequate nutrition.

There are numerous reasons as to why millions of people don’t receive adequate nutrition, one of the reasons is the economic state of a country. If the country is not fully developed and lacks access to anything and everything available in the world, then it suggests that the government of the country will not be able to fully provide their population with enough resources in order to sustain a proper life; especially if the country’s climate is not beneficial. This means that the country would not even be able to grow basic crops and vegetation and general agricultural needs for themselves and for the community they live in. It is either that the country is extremely hot with high temperatures in such that no plants will be able to survive or that there is continuous rain, destroying all of the plants. In addition, it is proved that
the world is actually able to produce enough food for all 7 billion of us but those who go hungry and starve either do not have the proper land to grow food or money to purchase it.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Poverty**

This term refers to the state of being unable to afford certain necessities for living and surviving; like food, water and shelter. People living in poverty are often unable to have enough money for purchasing materials for required goods and services.

**Malnutrition**

This term refers to the diseases, disorders or deficiencies based on what a person consumes. It also implies not consuming either of the nutrients in the right quantities, resulting with deficiencies like kwashiorkor also known as “edematous malnutrition” or rickets. The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that malnutrition is the biggest contributor to child mortality due to reduced immunities and stunted development.

**Starvation**

This term refers is used as a cause of death due to lack of food and nutrition. Around 795 million people do not have enough food to lead a healthy and active life.

**Life expectancy**

This term refers to the average amount of time a person is expected to live depending on the current situations in their surroundings, for example the availability of food and their economic status.

**Agriculture**

This term refers to the practice of farming, including cultivation of the soil for the growing of crops to help provide vegetation.

**Food security**

This term refers to the state of having reliable and complete access to a sufficient quantity of affordable and nutritious food. In addition, it also relates to the sustainability of having access to food for both the present and future generations.
Food sovereignty

This term refers to the right of people to healthy and culturally appropriate food. Moreover, it also means the right of people to define their own food and agricultural systems.

Pro-poor policy

This term refers to the improvements made to a country which are specifically aimed at poor people, or that are more generally aimed at reducing poverty as a whole.

Background Information

Food is important not just for survival, but also for the full development of a person’s physical and mental capabilities. Every single person should have access to sufficient quantities of food which has proper quality either through market systems or directly from agriculture (land and other natural resources). Diets should contain a mixture of nutrients which are necessary for a healthy lifestyle and physiological needs, throughout the life cycle and regardless of gender and occupation. The food provided should be free from harmful substances and should be culturally appropriate.

Causes of poverty

Inadequate nutrition and restricted right to food usually occurs due to the country’s economic stance. For example, if a country is already in national debt, this indicates that they are not easily able to purchase and afford food requirements for their citizens. They may want to import these goods because the country may not have the proper climate conditions that are needed to grow agriculture or to maintain any animals for meat. As a result, this causes insufficiency in the amount of food and therefore no one gets the amount of food required.

Furthermore, it may also be that the country is safe and secure but the problem may just be that some people in the country are not able to afford the food. There are about 790 million people still in poverty who are surviving with less than $1.90 per day. This expense is given without considering the number of people in the family and having to provide for each and every one of them. Some families are really huge, this is because when there are more kids in the family, they will eventually be able to bring income into the family in the future so that they can afford food and other necessities. However, having a job may also require education which many people may not have access to causing them to stay in the endless circle of poverty.

In addition, another cause of poverty and restriction to food can be war. During war, it is highly likely that the crops and harvest will be destroyed or even infected due to all the dangerous weapons...
used. Not only that, sometimes as a weapon of war, soldiers burn farmlands in order to cause disruption amongst the society. In addition, military forces adopt a “scorched earth” policy, taking control of a community by bribing them with food and if they don’t agree to it the opponent would end up taking control of their farmland and would destroy it. As a result, conflict between people and countries can cause a huge impact towards the right to food, and can be used to build popular support from the population. Due to such destruction, the people living near and around the crops would eventually choose to leave as their private property has been damaged and can’t be used again. It also causes negative effects on the climate which often results in a significant drop in farm production. The impact of war can help to reduce a country’s economic growth. This is because many infrastructure and buildings are being demolished. Moreover, war can also decline in the working population which reduces the total output of a country and can significantly drop economic growth.

**Food Technology**

Food technology is a branch or sector of food science which deals with the production processes or manufacturing stages of food. Additionally, it can also include the preservation, packaging, labelling, quality management and distribution of food products. It is important that whatever food is processed should end up being edible, as well as being nutritious for all people. According to recent development, it is proved that there is already enough food in the world to feed everyone, but it is only a matter of how it reaches people. Because of this, it does raise the question of how are there still people who are malnourished. People still tend to be malnourished due to a poor diet; they may be getting a minimal supply of food which is only based on certain nutrients. According to research carried out, Haiti is the most malnourished country in the world, 2 out of 3 Haitians are believed to survive on less than $2 per day. Obviously, some people are unable to afford the food and in the worst case scenario, sometimes, the food doesn’t even reach the people who need it. Moreover, food technology also focuses on food regulation, this is the process of determining standards for food products and defining its safety for consumption. The regulations are always set by the government.

**Climate Change**

Climate change already easily affects the four main dimensions of food security: physical availability of food, its economic and physical accessibility, its use and stability of these three dimensions over time. When people are unable to afford food, they grow crops by agriculture to provide vegetation for themselves. However, climate change can severely damage and harm the system of food production in numerous ways. For example, if the climate is too hot, then no crops will be able to grow as they would be dying due to high heat intensity. In addition, if the climate is too cold, then there wouldn’t be enough heat given to the plants to grow and provide vegetation. As a result, it can be extremely difficult to grow
crops in these types of temperatures in certain countries like Ghana and Senegal, where temperatures are too high and in countries such as Canada and Greenland where temperatures are too cold.

Furthermore, temperature is not the only affecting food production; the rainfall patterns can also have an affect on food production. Too much rain can cause the nutrients in the soil can get carried away with the water and not reach the plants’ roots, causing it not to grow properly. It can also lead to bacteria, fungus and mold growth in the soil and can eventually be absorbed by the plant. Along with mold or fungus, diseases are also likely to spread amongst the crops. However, not enough watering and rainfall can lead to the destruction of the crops and could potentially make them brown and dry.

Major Countries and Organisations Involved

Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)

The FAO strives to achieve food security for every person in the world. In addition, they also work to ensure that people have regular access to safe and healthy food in order to lead healthy, active lives. The FAO have three main objectives: eradication of hunger and starvation, elimination of poverty and helping towards the economic and social level of the state and making full use of all the resources available to a state. With over 194 member states, FAO successfully works in over 130 countries worldwide. FAO is helping countries develop and implement pro-poor policies, strategies and programmes that can promote inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods, income diversification, decent employment, access to social protection and empowerment of women and men in agriculture and in rural areas. Currently, FAO has been working on ‘Coping with Water Scarcity’ which focuses on strengthening national capacities regarding possible interventions for improved water management. Moreover, FAO is also helping countries to develop and implement pro-poor policy, startegies and programmes that promote inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods.

World Health Organisation (WHO)

The WHO works worldwide where they promote health, keep the world safe, and serve the vulnerable and innocent. They specifically work with developing country’s government to successfully eradicate diseases, improve nutrition and to develop international standards of food. WHO has been able to achieve numerous accomplishments such as: implementing health policies which resulted in an increase in life expectancy which rose from 48 years in 1955 to 69 years in 1985. During that same period, WHO was able to decrease the infant mortality rate from 149 per 1000 to below 59 per 1000.

Currently, WHO is working on developing and implementing a work plan in order to support member states in the protection of human health against climate change. This work plan aims to support
several health systems in all countries, especially in low/middle income states - such as Bangladesh, Kenya and Sudan - to investigate what are the risks and impacts due to climate change. WHO is already working with experts and institutions worldwide to improve the understanding and to make connections with how climate change affects human health. Furthermore, the work plan will also identify strategies and actions in order to protect human health. WHO has been working on partnerships, networks and collaboration in order to improve knowledge and evidence of the ongoing problems so that they could enhance the protection from climate risks based on the information they receive. However, the success of the project is yet to be determined.

**Ghana**

Ever since Ghana’s rapid increase in economic growth, the percentage of people living in poverty has reduced drastically in the last 2 decades. Ghana increase in economic growth was caused by the increase in exports of cocoa, gold and oil. The country’s poverty rate had gone from 52.6% to 21.4% between 1991 and 2012. Moreover, the extreme poverty line dropped from 37.6% in 1991 to 9.6% in 2013 - which is a drastic change. Reducing poverty also calls for reducing inequality amongst all citizens and also improving and widening access to opportunities for all citizens. In addition, more people had access to education which improved their likelihood of attaining job opportunities and more access to food and other wellbeing necessities. However, there is still poverty in Ghana which affects the rural areas and the North of Ghana.

To increase the right to food, Ghana implemented a ‘National Nutrition Policy (NNP)’. A NNP is an overarching multi-sectional framework which is designed to achieve optimal nutrition and reducing malnutrition among the people living in Ghana. The NNP aims to guide the process of prioritising nutrition challenges faced by the people in the country, provide a basis for selectively implementing strategies for prevention and control of malnutrition and lastly, prioritise nutrition above all and formulate an interest and demand for adequate food and nutrition security amongst Ghanians. An example of a selective strategy is that Ghana has now created a project which has a clinic called, Community Management of Acute Malnutrition which is led by the Ghana Health Service with the support of UNICEF. The formation of the clinic has been immensely helpful and effective; a parent took their child to one of the clinics located near their community and was diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition. The health workers gave a week’s supply of medication and after 2 weeks, the child showed massive improvement.

**Canada**

Canada has been able to successfully realise the importance of adequate nutrition for their citizens. The country has also noticed that too many women and girls, particularly adolescent girls, continue to be denied access to the full range of health and nutrition services. Canada is a strong and firm believer of women and girl empowerment. They have empowered women by implementing
international development assistance, which means all the changes they bring towards the country are specifically aimed at empowering women. Furthermore, Canada has 3 main nutrition points: to prevent and treat under-nutritioned people, integrate nutrition into development efforts and helping countries prepare sound national plans and programs to improve nutrition.

An organisation called ‘Health Canada’ is working towards establishing policies, setting standards and providing information about the safety and nutritional value of food. Health Canada works alongside ‘Canada Food Inspection Agency’ who provide all federal inspection services related to food and together they help enforce the food safety and nutritional quality standards. In addition, they are also promoting the nutritional health and well-being of Canadians by implementing nutrition policies; such as providing dietary guidance.

**Timeline of Events**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of event</th>
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<tr>
<td>December 10, 1948</td>
<td>Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) - emphasised the existence of Article 25 which states, &quot;everyone has the right to a standard of adequate living for their health and well-being of themselves and their family, including the right to food.&quot;</td>
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<td>November 16, 1974</td>
<td>The Universal Declaration based on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition was adopted. The conference signified that every man, woman and child should be free of hunger and malnutrition in order to fully develop.</td>
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<td>September 3, 1981</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) had begun and was brought to action. This included the realisation of the right to adequate food and nutrition for all women.</td>
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<td>September 2, 1990</td>
<td>Entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) this recognized that each child has the right to a standard of living adequately to maintain the child’s mental, physical and social development.</td>
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<td>November 17, 1996</td>
<td>Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action was established. This declaration had the countries pledge the right of everyone to have access to safe nutritious food and the basic, most important right of being free from hunger and starvation.</td>
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<td>September 8, 2000</td>
<td>The UN formulated a goal, Millenium Development Goal: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger the UN works with the member states to successfully eradicate poverty as a global partnership.</td>
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<td>October 16, 2007</td>
<td>World Food Day &quot;RIGHT TO FOOD Make it happen&quot;; this event was used to raise awareness about the issue and how there are millions of people who are dying due to starvation and hunger and are not receiving adequate supply of food and nutrition.</td>
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<td>May 12, 2008</td>
<td>The first meeting of the UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis took place. The HLTF aims to promote unified responses towards the challenges of achieving global food security.</td>
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<td>November 18, 2009</td>
<td>The Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security was adopted. This urges everyone to adopt and realise the right to food for all.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 20, 2012</td>
<td>Adoption of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition which encourages States to implement strategies towards eradicating poverty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 25, 2015</td>
<td>Adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development this was the first goal of the SDG is 'No Poverty'</td>
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**Relevant UN Treaties and Events**

- The right to food, 25 January 2017 \(\text{(A/RES/71/191)}\)
- Food and agricultural problems, 17 December 1985 \(\text{(A/RES/40/181)}\)
- Human Rights and extreme poverty, 2 February 2017 \(\text{(A/RES/71/186)}\)

**Previous Attempts to solve the Issue**

Venezuela had undertaken a complete reworking of its legal framework for the right to food. This process had begun in 1999 Constitution in which the importance of food security and food sovereignty was highlighted and emphasised. Later, in July 2008, a framework law was passed which centred around the idea of food security and food sovereignty. This framework law controls the proper access to food by fair trade and exchange while implementing strategic arrangement of safety and quality of food. However, this idea was not the most successful. Venezuela’s poverty had decreased since 2008 to around 48 percent in 2014 but as of September 2018, nearly 90 percent of Venezuelans now live in poverty. This may have failed because Venezuela may not have actually implemented this law, they had not realised the importance that in implementing right to food, the actual process of doing so, is just as important as the textual provisions of the law.

In April 2001, India had implemented a ‘Right to Food case’ which focused at making the duty of every state in India that no one dies of starvation or malnutrition. This indicates that the people who are...
too poor to afford food will be guaranteed to receive minimal means of assistance by the government, either through food aid or access to employment. This campaign helped reduce poverty in India significantly; as of November 2017, the poverty rate was 21.1 percent which was a huge improvement from 31.1 percent in 2009. As a result, the implementation of this campaign was extremely effective and helpful for the citizens of the country.

In 2003, Brazil introduced a program called ‘Fome Zero (Zero Hunger)’. The aim of the program was to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty in the country. Zero Hunger has created programmes called National Family Grant and National School Feeding Programme which has already provided meals for 200 days a year to 34.6 million school children up to 8th grade. The program has been exceptionally successful; they have believed to contribute to Brazil’s recent reported improvements in its fight against poverty.

In addition, the program has also been able to have made a significant impact on being able to provide the poorest of the families with food to eat. They have also made sure that the children attending public schools receive at least one free meal a day, two in the poorest areas; this has been done so that less of their family’s limited income is used for providing food for themselves and their families. However, this solution wasn’t quite effective; only between 2016 and 2017, extreme poverty rose by 1.7 million people from the previous year to reach a total of 15.2 million people or about 7.4 percent of the total Brazilian population. The only problem with this idea was that there was no way of ensuring that all kids were actually receiving all of this food, hence maybe that is the reason the poverty rates till continued to rise.

Possible Solutions

In order to increase the right to food, it is important that all member states increase the minimum wages of their country. This way more people can work low wage jobs and still make enough money to feed themselves and their families. Implementing a low wage job also encourages people to work because they can then improve their living standards and become capable of affording basic necessities of surviving. In fact, if the minimum wage in the United States rose to $10.10 per hour, it would easily and successfully lift 4 million Americans out of poverty; making it much easier to afford food.

In addition, it is vital that the awareness of this issue is raised. Many people don’t know that there are millions suffering due to inadequate nutrition and have been denied their right to food. People would also need to understand the importance of the right to food before any action can take place. When people are aware of this issue they will be able to take actions and make donations for the people...
suffering to help them get food and help them live the best life possible. Not only that, people would be encouraged to fight for these people’s right to food and their right to have adequate nutrition.

Moreover, it is crucial that member states at least provide everyone with access to basic social services such as: education, health care, shelter, clean water and most importantly adequate nutrition. By doing this, it is showing that the country is considering everyone as equal and showcasing the importance of people’s rights. This way at least the people who are completely unable to afford anything, could at least survive on the basic necessities given to them and potentially start a life of their own. These people would also eventually break the cycle of poverty and have all their rights being obeyed.

Furthermore, to reduce hunger more people should have access to both primary and secondary education. A better education system can help provide better opportunities and more access to income and could eventually give access more food for the family. While providing education, schools could also at least provide the kids with free food for coming to school as an accomplishment. After education, the kids would be qualified to enough a low wage job, which should be at least more than the minimum wage of the country, the money made would be used for affording food for themselves and their families.

Guiding Questions

- What is the right to food?
- Why is the right to food important?
- What are the consequences of inadequate nutrition?

Bibliography


