



International Conference on
Food Security and Hunger Management
New Delhi, 28-30 July, 2011

Organised by
Vishwa Yuvak Kendra
Chanakyapuri, New Delhi-110021



The unique leadership of Mahatma Gandhi facilitated in developing a constructive approach amongst the youth who participated in the Indian Independence struggle. Many of them subsequently emerged as leaders of independent India in diverse fields of activity. Formation of Indian Youth Centres Trust was such an initiation by youth leaders and social thinkers of that time. The Trust was set up on 10th August 1961 and the premier institute for youth, Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, came into existence.

Fifty years since then, the Kendra is constantly working for the development of youth. The Kendra has grown to be the premier training institute for youth workers and has been recognised by a large number of agencies in India and abroad.

The objectives of the Vishwa Yuvak Kendra (VYK) can be broadly divided into three, viz; (a) training in youth work (b) research and documentation, and (c) promotion of international understanding. Towards these objectives, VYK conducts workshops, seminars and training programmes for youth and NGO representatives from all over India. The activities of VYK are therefore, aimed at the development of youth, with inspiration drawn from the great slogan, “arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached”. VYK recognises the need to consolidate and bring into focus its programme activities with a clear thrust on development issues. So far, Kendra's its reaching out programmes on Agro-based Entrepreneurship Development, Women Empowerment, Panchayati Raj and Entrepreneurship Development Programme has been conducted in remote districts of sixteen states.

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Gandhiji emphasised that hunger should be overcome without eroding human dignity. He wanted every Indian to have an opportunity to earn his or her daily bread.

India has been ranked 67, much lower than neighbouring China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal in the 2010 Global Hunger Index (GHI) as per the recent report released by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), a United States-based policy think tank. The biggest contributor to the GHI is child under-nutrition, which accounts for almost half the score. Because of the country's large population, India is home to 42 per cent of the world's under-weight children. The hardest hit are populations in rural areas, particularly girls, are among the most vulnerable as hunger and malnutrition severely affect their physical and mental development and inhibit their ability to learn and participate in social and recreational activities. There are 315 million young people aged 10–24 years in India, representing 30 percent of the country's population. Over 85 per cent of the approximately 1 billion youth (18 per cent of the world population) live in developing countries and half of them work in the agricultural sector.

Although, India achieved self-sufficiency in food grains in the 1970's and has sustained it since then, increase in population, and decrease in

agricultural land have failed to provide nutritional security to over 225 million chronically undernourished Indian. Rapid urbanization and increased migration of youth from rural to urban sectors in search of livelihood are some of the factors going against development in agriculture.

As per the definitions of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

A household is considered food-secure when its occupants do not live in hunger or fear of starvation. According to the World Resources Institute, global per capita food production has been increasing substantially for the past several decades. Globally, the number of people who are overweight has surpassed the numbers who are undernourished - the world had more than one billion people who were overweight, and an estimated 800 million who were undernourished. Worldwide around 852 million people are chronically hungry due to extreme poverty, while up to 2 billion people lack food security intermittently due to varying degrees of poverty.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, pointed out three major concerns which need immediate attention —clean drinking water, hunger and malnutrition. He also said that there is widespread hidden hunger in India where one-third of the population suffers deficiency of calories and micronutrients. India is launching "Operation 2015" to ensure that poverty and hunger in the country are halved by 2015.

Persistent hunger, malnutrition, and ill health, made worse by the recent food and financial crises, threaten the ability of many countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

Studying the global need for food security, hunger and nutritional management and observing the power behind the growing youth force Vishwa Yuvak Kendra (VYK) proposes to organise a conference on "Food Security & Hunger Management".

Outcomes

- Increasing food grain production through improved and scientific practices, technologies and expertise.
- Strengthening local economy by developing agro-based entrepreneurship.
- Ensuring good Governance in implementation of policies and schemes.

The way forward

Appropriate policy, financial investment and incentives need to be created to reward farming and prevent the large-scale migration of young people to urban areas. Adequate education, vocational training and professional training opportunities are necessary to prepare youth for life in rural areas. Assistance and access to resources, such as technical knowledge, finances, land, water, seeds, fertilizers, equipment, technologies and markets also need to be provided. Additional opportunities should be provided for youth people to engage and contribute to national and international flora and platforms dealing with food and nutritional requirement for a healthy living. Such involvement would ensure that local needs are considered and concrete programmes of action created with the long-term commitment of young people.

The International Conference to be held on July 28-30, 2011, in New Delhi, India, will take stock of current knowledge, share ideas and innovations, identify cross-sectoral synergies and best practices, and create a framework for action.

Leading global and regional experts and practitioners from the agriculture, nutrition, health, and related development sectors will be invited as active participants in plenary and parallel sessions.

To disseminate conference results to youth at large and interested parties throughout the world, innovative communication outputs such as webcasts, video excerpts, and new social media will be used. It is expected to create a network for cross sectoral dialogue and information sharing at

all levels and to help stakeholders, through mutual learning, better design and implement strategies that tap into agricultural development for improved nutrition and health.

Health and nutrition in turn are inextricably linked to agriculture. Farmers who are in poor health are unable to work, impacting production, productivity, and household income. Moreover, a population that is already suffering from hunger and malnutrition because of an inadequate food supply is unlikely to be highly productive—this situation can create a vicious circle of poverty, food insecurity, and ill health on a macro scale.

Objectives

The ultimate objective of this conference is to inform, influence, and catalyze action by youth at large and key actors—including policymakers, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, educators, and researchers—to better use investments in agriculture to achieve food & nutrition security and good health for the world's poorest people.

Conference

The International Conference will have following structure:

A. **Structure**

The conference will feature plenary and parallel sessions. It will likely to comprise three parts:

- Taking stock of the current situation;
- Assessing emerging developments; and
- Identifying role of youth and prioritizing action

The conference will open by taking stock and assessing the obstacles that have traditionally stood in the way of exploiting the synergies across food availability, hunger, nutrition, and health.

The second part of the conference will focus on responding to emerging changes, identified as having the most substantial global implications for

achieving future positive outcomes in hunger and nutritional management.

The third part of the event — representing the heart of the conference — will focus on role of youth in ensuring good governance in ensuring food availability, nutritional security and hunger management.

B. Participants

The conference is expected to bring together leading experts and practitioners from food, nutrition, health, and related development sectors. They will comprise policymakers, leaders from nongovernmental organizations and the private sector, educators, and researchers, at the local, regional, and global levels.

C. Timing

The conference will be held on July 28-30, 2011.

D. Location

The conference will be held in New Delhi, India.

Communications to achieve impact

Several communication activities will support the substantive parts of the conference with state-of-the-art communication tools:

- Conference speakers and panelists will be selected for their expertise and authority, capacity to effect change, ability to inspire participants, and contributions in constructively furthering dialogue and debate. Sessions will be structured in a way so as to invite different viewpoints, with formats including but not limited to presentations, panel discussions, moderated debates, and consensus building exercises. Technology permitting, online participants will be able to contribute their comments and ideas during session question-answer sessions .
- New and exciting communication modalities will be used during the conference. The conference itself will be web-cast, with 2 to 3

minutes video clip highlights being extracted and posted online for public access and comment. Media briefings will be staged, with an effort to reach media outlets in developing countries and journalists representing nontraditional groups such as youth. Social media tools such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Youtube, and Flickr will be essential for generating interest from new stakeholders. The possibility of a blog featuring video clips and pod casts is also currently being discussed.

- Immediately after the conference, in addition to the material already mentioned, powerpoints and session discussion summaries will be made available online. Policy briefings will be conducted with selected stakeholders to share the information generated by the activity and achieve substantive cross sectoral cooperation in carrying out the recommended policy actions.

Expected outputs

Prior to the conference, selected background papers briefs will be commissioned from leading experts as background material. Immediately after the conference, session materials such as powerpoints and summaries will be made available online. Later on, the materials resulting from the research and conference activities will be gathered in an electronic proceedings volume for online distribution. Finally, a popular-language booklet of 20–25 pages, drawing on the key findings of the conference, will be produced to inform and inspire action. Pending funding, this booklet would be translated into several languages.

Expected impact

The aim of these activities is to

- (1) help key stakeholders better understand the linkages between hunger, nutrition, and health and role of youth;
- (2) increase awareness of the ways in which hunger could be managed;

- (3) create a network for cross-sectoral dialogue and information sharing at all levels; and
- (4) help stakeholders to better design and implement strategies that tap into hunger management with special involvement of youth.

Partners

While VYK will be fully responsible for the design, content, and implementation of this activity, it is approaching partners in the public sector, private sector, and civil society to cosponsor the international conference.

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