



# **Report of Evaluation of Right to food Program**

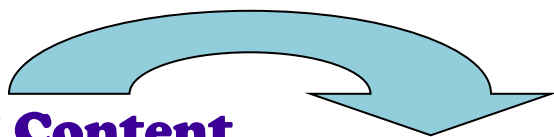
Asian Human Rights Commission / Asian Legal Resource Center

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## **Acknowledgement**

I am not an evaluator; I am a trailblazer, who looks for opportunities to get access to knowledge and to see different social milieus. In this backdrop it was merely not an assignment of program evaluation for me, it was indeed a complete course of learning concepts of food security, hunger, exploitation, deprivation, exclusion, inequality, and reality of justice institutions in some of the south Asian countries. I, from bottom of my heart, appreciate the courageous decision of Shri Basil Fernando and Shri Bijo Francis of AHRC/ALRC for opting me as evaluator, who was looking at the task from a very different perspective.

I would like to thank Shri Avinash Pandey for making all efforts for providing minute-to-minute support to me so that the decision, of Basil and Bijo, does not prove to be a wrong step. He was generous in responding to all my queries regarding program and politics in various countries.

I thank Shri Danilo Reyes, Md. Ashrafuzzaman Zaman, Prakash Mohra and Ms. Noreen at AHRC office for giving me insights into the program.

I am extremely thankful to the friends at CTUHR (Ms. Daisy Arago), WAC (Shri Arnel), Defend Jobs (Ms. Melona), Diana Maroano in Philippines. I cannot miss to acknowledge the support provided by the members of these organisations.

I also met friends at Supreme Court Commissioners Office, New Delhi (Principal Advisor Shri Biraj Patnaik, Shri Aditya Shrivastava and National Advisor on Nutrition Ms. Dipa Sinha), State Advisor on Right to Food in Odisha (Shri Raj Kumar Mishra), Spandan (Shri Prakash Michael) in India and learned a lot on India's experiences of Right to Food Campaign.

In Nepal, I was in conversation with friends at Jagran Media Center – JMC (Shri Rakesh Chandra Marasini, Shri Deepak Pariyar and Shri Dipendra Paswan), FINA, Nepal (Shri Yuvraj) and Intern Ms. Indira Mayashankar (Intern) and I express my gratitude to them for sparing quality time and sharing their views and experiences with me.

Above all, I respect the people of these countries who are struggling hard for their rights and opposing wrongs.

At the end, actually I can express what I have achieved from this work. I just can THANK them all for being with ME.

**Sachin Kumar Jain**

India

31<sup>st</sup> December 2014

# Executive Summary

The report brings out that the AHRC/ALRC have created an indelible niche' in the human rights space across Asia in a highly innovative manner. The innovation pertains to the organisational entity whereby it is clearly established that one need not have a resource-intensive set up to bring about change in societies and their structural mechanisms. However, the report calls for approaches to effect reinforcement measures, both in terms of expanse and depth so that impacts can be translated in to actionable agenda in the real time. After all, protection of human rights must be seen as an emergency as time is of essence in safeguarding and fulfilling human lives with fervor and expectancy. The report brings out the following major findings in terms of achievements and persisting gaps and proposes the emerging way forward:

## Major Findings

1. AHRC/ALRC has made an extremely important contribution by taking the issue of Right to Food (RtF) beyond and across the country/local borders. The key contribution is seen in its presentations to United Human Rights Council and Special Rapporteur on Right to Food. This is an area where grassroots organisations actually need sustained support and guidance and that the AHRC/ALRC has delivered eminently and needs to maintain the same.
2. It has made an important POSITIVE effort in identifying organisations to work on RtF in different countries, gave loud credit to them in Hunger Alerts and respected their individual identity. This character of AHRC/ALRC is mentionable because in most of the cases regional organisations build upon the work of grassroots organisations and share no credit.
3. The Hunger Alerts, Statements and Articles as have been produced by AHRC/ALRC make it evidently clear that Right to Food Program is a successful initiative in creating an evidence-based knowledge platform on Right to Food (RTF) in India, Nepal, Philippines. In Bangladesh and Pakistan, the AHRC/ALRC has demonstrated its capacity to expand its interventions, given the constructive initiatives which have been effectively put in place.
4. Alongside the Hunger Alerts and Updates, wide-ranging analysis through publication of articles has also been a highly significant and useful intervention in enriching the public discourse on challenges and prospects confronting hunger and poverty.
5. AHRC/ALRC has gained an enviable recognition for its factually correct evidences. State institutions (National Human Rights Commissions, Social Welfare bodies, concerned departments) in India, Philippines, Bangladesh, and Nepal have responded with concrete action in most of the cases raised by it.
6. The Internship Program is a creative and constructive intervention, where a group of young, potential human rights workers has an opportunity to learn about the international human rights platform, Human Rights Frameworks and has instilled confidence that they are not alone in the body of work pertaining to struggle for human rights.

7. The AHRC/ALRC has maintained gender balance in their mission. The ratio of female and male interns has been equal in their Internship Program, proving the dictum that charity must begin from home.
8. The AHRC/ALRC has succeeded in initiating a process where Right to Food issues are intertwined with violation of labor rights and forceful eviction. It is for the first time when 36 cases, in the form of grassroots evidence across four countries, are in place now. These cases are a great source for academic studies and international advocacy work.
9. The AHRC/ALRC has made a very important contribution by linking Right to Food with the matters of urban development, caste discrimination, and child rights.

### **Persisting Gaps Meriting Strategic Attention**

1. The stated objectives and operational structures deserve to be congruent. Whilst it is clear that the AHRC/ALRC will not go for establishing any center in any country, there is an urgent felt need that the local organisations do require intimate and regular support on the issues addressed by them.
2. There could have been efforts for bringing about mutual convergence between RtF desk and Country desk of the AHRC/ALRC. Strong support from country desks is very crucial for the successful functioning of RtF desk, which is found to be limited.
3. The organisation has not had a position paper on right to food in place with reference to country-specific situation analysis.
4. Only one person is looking after a program that is expected to cover Right to Food issues across many countries. Due to language constraints and totally different situations, program could not be expanded.
5. There is no opportunity / platform explored, where right to food activists could be brought together to share, discuss and learn from one another in widening and sharpening their views and experiences.

## Evaluation Results at a Glance

The evaluator has sought to make a composite assessment of the AHRC/ALRC work vis-à-vis the key impact criteria in two dimensions of its major activities, namely, Right to Food Programme and Internship Programme. The criteria have been assigned score to arrive at relative worth in congruence with the envisaged mandate. The scores have been assigned to each of the relevant outcome indicators keeping in view a scale of 0 to 5. Scale of zero implies nil achievement, 1 as very low, 2 as low, 3 as moderate, 4 as good, and 5 as very good achievement in terms of extent of congruence with the mandate as the perceived impact. The outcome indicators and their scores are defined as follows:

S. No.	Impact Criteria/Score of Outcome Indicators	Score
1.	<b><i>Movements pertaining to protection of human rights in Asian countries are enabled to effectively link hunger to deficiencies in fundamental rule-of-law systems as reflected in governance. (6.5/10)</i></b>	
	❖ Right to Food investigated and monitored by partners as central to governance.	3.5
	❖ Large number of local grassroots organisations involved in documenting, campaigning, and intervening on issues related to denial of right to food.	3
2.	<b><i>The movements on human rights demonstrate enhanced understanding and practice the indivisibility of civil and political rights vis-à-vis economic, social and cultural rights. (5.5/10)</i></b>	
	❖ Performance of state systems brought under public scrutiny through heightened public discourse on hunger and right to food.	3
	❖ Right to food violations brought to the fore for legal redress.	2.5
3.	<b><i>Sustained domestic and international demand for effective protection of human rights in Asia. (9/10)</i></b>	
	❖ Widened generation of in-depth knowledge and documentation of cases regarding institutional reforms pertaining to human rights violations and their prevention.	4.5
	❖ Rule of law and criminal justice system assume significant interest in public discourse.	4.5

S. No.	Impact Criteria/Score of Outcome Indicators	Score
<b>Overall Score: 21/30 (70%)</b>		
<p><b>Interpretations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="191 457 1430 569">1. The AHRC/ALRC have come to stay and a have critical responsibility to take the rights-based perspective across the boundary of Asian countries as well as up to the local organisations within them.</li><li data-bbox="191 604 1430 716">2. The advocacy on human rights has a rough road and it is only the philosophy and thought of AHRC/ALRC that can smoothen the long-winding journey through known and unknown opponents to the rule of law; and perpetrators of injustice.</li><li data-bbox="191 751 1430 863">3. The AHRC/ALRC have continued agenda for their own organisational development so that their own renewal affords greater and expected influence towards sustaining the noble cause of protection and promotion of human rights.</li></ol>		



# Prologue

Societies have developed their own mechanisms for survival in the wake of natural or human-made crises over time. The State might have had a role to create systems for their functionality and in ending social evils such as caste and gender discrimination and socio-economic-political inequalities. It was not expected that the state would rather become a 'proprietor' and an 'authorized trader' for all kinds of resources! Now the time has come, when we have to distinguish and review the roles of the state and society and the relationship between them. We will keep an eye on the vested interests of sections of our society who seek to garner power at the cost of the other larger sections of the society. Whilst it is not opportune to engage in a classroom discourse on poverty here, we do need to have much more keener insight in to the theory pertaining to rule over the powerless by those who wield power and authority. In last 500 years of colonial history, control over financial resources have been settled by the North and now this is the era when natural resources are being 'levelled' or 'settled' in the guise of economic growth. Every indicator of economic growth-based development proves that market is in nexus with a class of academics and policy makers in creating eyewash of dreams for the gullible poor. The dreams lead them to shut out their senses and this nexus grabs the resources for itself. They also keep communal terror flagged up and 'create' terror bodies to ensure that the intellectual section of the society spends its energies in making arguments on who is actually communal and terrorist! No one exactly knows as to who is drawing the line and setting the agenda.

Conflict is merely not a global phenomenon. It actually starts from an individual, who is under distress and finds it unable to even arrange two full meals a day for her/his children. Firstly, upper caste or the rich exploit them from all corners of their life and opportunities. The oppressed lose their resources – land, labor, skills, and dignity to the powerful. Powerful are those, who have self-acclaimed high religious-social status and who have access to political colonnades at different levels thereby securing control over natural resources and capacity to grab them by way of policies specifically enacted for this purpose. Painfully, wars have become a key resource for growth and for retaining power. The upper caste now rules the dalits with violence and discrimination. In such a situation, even the law-enforcing agencies such as police and administration do not stand in support of the oppressed. Therefore, they are forced to migrate from their native places to bigger cities, believing that no one will be able to identify them as dalit! However, when they reach there, they get another new identity of slum dwellers or thieves, or rapists...because they are poor and distressed migrants. In all Asian countries, big developmental projects are in existence. Governments want their country to develop and corporate are keen to support them, but regrettably the focus is not on its people.

End of discrimination and marginalization is apparently not in their agenda. When a big dam for the purpose of power generation is constructed, 200, 000 families are displaced. They are forcefully thrown-out of their homes, land, water, environment, and are deprived of all kinds of livelihood opportunities simply by being shown a piece of paper that they call the 'policy'. Who are these displacement-affected families? They are the small farmers, peasants, and landless dependents on local economies, dalits, tribals and forest dwellers. When government needs bauxite for infrastructure development or for making weapons, they forcefully displace tribals from their land/forest where they have been living since ages because that land is endowed rich by the nature in bauxite reserves. Likewise, when the state wants to protect tigers, they evict tribals and forest dwellers, who have been living in harmony with

nature for generations without harming wildlife and bio-diversity. At the end, when these people are forcefully evicted, proper rehabilitation and settlement is not considered as their right. They are just abandoned. In India, according to Prof. Walter Fernandez, 100 million persons have been evicted in the name of development until the Year 2000 since 1947, when India gained independence. As many as 60 million amongst them were dalits and tribals. They are the people living with hunger because this so called development nexus has taken their resources away. When these people started settling down in cities or at an appropriate location, they were dubbed as illegal settlers. In the policies meant for urban development that primarily talk about Urban Development and not about 'Urban People's Development', the goals are set out for the beautification of habitats and not for the urban society at large. It is decided by the powers that be that for the purpose of beautification and development of urban areas, these people will be evicted. They are deemed to be the encroachers on this land. Hunger further becomes more acute. In the meanwhile, policy makers come out with structural adjustment programs, which call for reduction in government's expenditure in its functioning. Consequently, welfare expenditures are also cut down. To justify these interventions, they convert Universalisation of Human Right to Target-based approach for Human Rights! Not all people are entitled to entitlement-based programs. Food and Health services are now provided only to those who are identified as poor. Determining as to who is poor is in itself a matter of debate. Just to mention, Asian countries, including India, Nepal, Burma, Philippines, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have been unsuccessful in defining the concept and indicators of poverty. Nevertheless, the poverty-based targeting in welfare-entitlement oriented programs is continuing. The result is manifested in growing exclusion, increase in poverty, hunger and capability deprivation. One may argue that these are very common denominators. However, it needs to be observed that it causes civil and internal unrest as well as increase in social conflicts. State institutions are increasingly losing credibility indicating that we may enter into a complex situation of long-term conflict era. Essentially speaking, democracy, individual freedom, human dignity and human values are at serious risk of irretrievable erosion.

In such a situation, poverty does not merely mean lack of financial capital. It means lack of control over resources and absence of participation in governance. Further to it, the plight of hunger is not limited only to lack of food, it amounts to inflicted indignity in which the people are forced to put up with undignified means of livelihood and survival such as engaging in manual scavenging and caste-based prostitution. Hunger has to be seen as deliberate, structured and planned negligence by state and society towards the excluded and marginalized sections of society such as children, women, old aged, and differently-able people. Likewise, what about those farmers who are committing suicide not just because of draught or floods damaging their crops, but because they have been handed over to the speculations of open market and future trading and state has taken away all protective shields from them? This is an irony that women and children of food producers go to bed hungry and that 300, 000 farmers had to commit suicide in a period of 18 years in India alone. This must be called the most contradictory period in modern history of development – on the one hand largest numbers of policies for development are enacted in this time, but this is also a time when we have recorded huge increase in wars, internal conflicts (naxalism), farmers' suicide, starvation deaths, unemployment, distress migration and communal violence etc. On the face of it, the governments and institutions claim that they are seeking to keep focus on all crises pertaining to financial market, climatic balance and food security.

Now the future challenge will be seen in the solutions of these problems. The way permission of GM technology in food production is being accorded, state control on market is being lifted and over-exploitation of natural resources is being argued as a solution to world crises. It is apprehended that the situation will rather worsen. This is the time to formulate clear position and dedicate all our resources for collective interventions. One must not forget that we have to struggle to confront and join up against their collective lobby to forestall any such move that is directed at real people-centric development. In recent past, it is very clear that these powers seek to influence and legitimize the state and academic institutions in advocating policies that favor their own interests and accordingly the course of governance is charted whereby the resource allocation is skewed in their favour. Almost all the exploitations are now piggy-backed on the so called development-focused policies. Therefore, now argument for change cannot limit only to the theory of Exploitation-Exploiter-Exploited. The politics now has to be around the theory of Power-Powerful and Powerless. This shift must reflect at the social-psychological-emotional and political plateau.

Under the emerging circumstances, we cannot afford to have isolated struggles because we have to bring about a change in the situation which has been created by compromising with the ethics of policies and blatant use of relative powers. The challenges of our time are really complex and trans-boundary. Informed and collective struggles should be led by the communities and efforts for cross-learning in different contexts need to be facilitated. The most important component is involvement of youth and women and we all must speak from the uniform perspective across the spectrum of poverty-hunger-peace-dignity-equality and democracy.

In present socio-political-economic environment, where democratic space is shrinking and right to freedom of speech and expression is being rejected by the state's so called growth-oriented policy makers, it is most important to make investment for cadre building and public education on fundamental human rights issues. We have to keep re-emphasizing that equality, justice and dignity should be the foundation for any social-economic development framework. We need to ensure that we do not just get stuck into new theories for making people only capable of handling shocks. We require wider empowerment from the rights perspective. Let us set an agenda for a superior outlook which is embodied in human values and participation of all. It might be an assumption, but it will become fact that when human rights and dignity are set as central indicators of change, pace of economic growth will relatively be slow and if the pace of economic growth is set very high, beyond a certain level of achievement, inequality, poverty and hunger will grow much faster.

It is a matter of fact that while in political transition phase in Philippines, problem of hunger has been discussed at the state fora but political commitment is found to be missing. The reason why it happened owes to the fact that a new economic policy regime was emerging at the same time. In such a situation, Economic Growth became the prime agenda. Infrastructure development and industrialization has been the center of this economic development and that elimination of hunger and inequalities have been pushed to the periphery. There are 19 big infrastructure development projects and special economic / export processing zones coming in, which are the main cause of people's displacement from their land, home and livelihoods.

The most important thing for eliminating poverty and hunger is to define and explain it in the first place. After all, treatment depends on the diagnosis and motive to eliminate disease from its root depends on the findings of analysis of root causes. Still countries like Philippines and Nepal do not have a clear definition of Poverty and Hunger. Philippines look at it from the perspective of relative and self-defined hunger, whereas Nepal does not have a structured definition. In such a situation, the biggest challenge is to establish the case for right to food as literally a matter of a long drawn struggle. It is challenging because in the era of political economy, where development is actually contributing to widening of inequality, market forces and policy makers seek to hide the truth of hunger or they create a debate to prove that actually hunger is reducing.

It is important to note that the issue of Right to Food has gained space in the academic debates in some countries like India, Nepal, and Philippines. Since Nepal is in the process of its constitution making, this issue has been incorporated in the draft document for consideration. India has already made National Food Security Act and Philippines has certain legal provisions for eliminating Poverty; but in all these cases establishment of independent and accountable grievances redressal mechanism has been denied. India has world's biggest right to food programs but on the other hand, it is very common to find that eligible sections of the society are not getting their entitlements and they don't have a mechanism to get their grievances resolved. Governments at various levels in the federal structure are still resisting making the grievances redressal systems decentralized, independent of political and bureaucratic interference, and accountable towards people with a motive to ensure justice. Without making it happen, social and economic inequality cannot be removed, and standards of democracy cannot be attained.

It is in the backdrop of this foregoing thought that the evaluator seeks to undertake the assessment of the body of work pertaining to protection and Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) and Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC) have led promotion of human rights as.

## **Reflections from the Database**

The evaluator has chosen to accord emphasis to the larger situation analysis, because there is need to highlight the important role of AHRC/ALRC in exposing violation of right to food from the perspective of root causes of hunger. The latest data available from United Nation's Human Development Report (2013 and 2014) make it evidently clear that the countries where AHRC/ALRC is making interventions are at a crucial stage from the Human Development perspective. Myanmar, which is in a transitional phase, does not have any data available for multidimensional poverty or severe poverty or even no national poverty line data is available. It is a case which proves that when democracy is at perilously wanting, poverty and hunger may grow to its highest level and that we will not be able to evaluate the situation.

Another observation from HDR reports must be recognized. All the countries with high poverty levels also have high Maternal Mortality Ratio<sup>1</sup> (MMR) and lowest mean years of schooling. Pakistan's expenditure on education is three times more than its expenditure on military. India also spends 2.7% of its GDP on military, but only 1.2% on health.

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<sup>1</sup> Proportion of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births

Country	Human Development Index	HDI Rank	Mean Years of Schooling	Gender Inequality Index (GII)	GII (Rank)	MMR	Multi-dimensional Poverty	Severe Poverty	National Poverty Line	State Spending - %age of GDP		
										Health	Education	Military
Myanmar	0.498	149	3.9	0.437	80	200	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Nepal	0.463	157	3.2	0.485	102	170	44.2	20.8	25.2	1.8	4.7	1.4
Bangladesh	0.515	146	4.8	0.518	111	240	57.8	26.2	31.5	1.2	2.2	1.1
India	0.554	136	4.4	0.61	132	200	53.7	28.6	29.8	1.2	3.1	2.7
Philippines	0.654	114	8.9	0.418	77	99	13.4	5.7	26.5	1.3	2.7	1.2
Pakistan	0.515	146	4.9	0.567	123	260	49.4	27.4	22.3	0.8	2.4	2.8

Source – UNDP Human Development Report 2013

Country	Underweight Children	Under-5 Mortality	Trust in National Government		Efforts to deal with poor In %	Impact of Natural Disasters	
	in %	Rate	HDR 2013	HDR 2014		Deaths/Year/Million	Population affected/Million population
Myanmar	22.6	66	NA	NA	51	290	6913
Nepal	38.6	50	33%	44%	34	6	9560
Bangladesh	41	48	79%	71%	57	5	29222
India	42.5	63	58%	54%	39	1	11130
Philippines	21.6	29	72%	76%	82	12	68576
Pakistan	31.3	87	28%	23%	16	48	29793

Source - UNDP Human Development Report 2013 & 2014

The UNHDR for the year 2013 and 2014 tells us that proportion of people not having trust in national government is going up in most of the Asian countries. In 2013, 58% persons used to trust National Government in India, now it has declined to 54%. In Pakistan, in 2014 only 23% persons trust national government, earlier this figure was 28%. There is no data available for Myanmar. Now more people in Philippines trust their national government – 4% up from 72% in Year 2013. In such a situation, AHRC/ALRC’s approach towards Right to Food, Hunger, and Poverty is poised on a perfect place, when it sheds light on ineffectiveness of governance and non-existence of justice institutions vis-à-vis hunger.

Right to Food cannot be ensured unless peace in the society is restored and secured. In a situation, where people of the country are losing faith in their own national government, AHRC/ALRC has a mandate to create and contribute to a debate, where linkages of political economy – military rule – weakening democracy – raising inequality – corruption in governance - unaccountability – ineffectiveness of justice institutions are established with evidences and grass root realities vis-à-vis the violation of right to food. This report seeks to examine the extent to which this mandate has been addressed and the factors which further or inhibit it.

# Evaluation Methodology

For the purpose of Evaluation of the CCFD-Terre Solidaire supported program on Right to Food, following methodology was carried:

1. **Perspective** – Framework provided under Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25 (1)<sup>i</sup>), Food and Agriculture Organisation's concept of Right to Food<sup>ii</sup> and Article 2<sup>iii</sup> and Article 11<sup>iv</sup> of the Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that defines right to food in a context formed the premise for the evaluation perspective.
2. **Approach of the evaluation** – Reference to the broader framework of the program given in the proposal and AHRC & ALRC's Program Monitoring Evaluation Manual, perceptions of partner organisations towards right to food and statements of the people/communities facing violation / restrictions of right to food from various social-economic-political and cultural corners.
3. **Literature Review** – Exhaustive review of the available / accessible literature and analytical documents relating to Hunger, Poverty, Social Welfare, / Security programs, State Policies and Law meant for the protection of Human Rights, especially in the context of Poverty, Food Security, Social Welfare, and protection from discrimination in respective countries.

References were also made to reports and papers available at various official websites and on the portals of credible reference-research organisations.

4. Review of Urgent Appeals and Hunger Alerts available on the website –
  - a) <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/hunger-alerts>
  - b) <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/urgent-appeals>
5. Review of media reports and papers analyzing political-economic issues in respective countries – India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Philippines.
6. Review of Human Rights Reports published by AHRC/ALRC for the Year 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013.
7. **Information collection from AHRC/ALRC** – A framework linked format was sent to AHRC/ALRS for providing basic information regarding project and their work on Right to Food. (Annexure - 1).
8. **Discussion and Interviews with ALRC/AHRC team** - Evaluator had a detailed discussion with Director, Executive Director (who also looks after India country RtF Program), Deputy Director (who also looks after Philippines country RtF Program), Country RtF Programs representatives (Bangladesh and Nepal), and Program Coordinator (Right to Food Program).
9. **Visit to Program sites and discussion with representatives of partner organisations** in Philippines, Nepal, and India.
10. **Discussion with the communities and people**, whose cases were raised through Hunger Alerts and Updates.

# **Background of the Program and Initial Steps**

The roots of this program are placed in ALRC's initial work and experiences from Burma and India. These are politically two differently nurtured countries in modern history in Asia. Burma lived in a military rule, whereas India has a functional democratic system, but where crisis of hunger is deep-rooted though consistently denied by the state authorities.

It was back in 1996-2000, when AHRC/ALRC was working on the issues of rampant Human Rights violations in Burma (People's Tribunal on Food Security and Militarization in Burma. It was found that the absence of democracy and effective justice institutions cause Hunger. The tribunal researched and analysed the relationship between hunger and military rule in the country. When state itself becomes violator of human rights, people live and die with Hunger. In these circumstances, AHRC started looking at the specific cases of torture and human rights violation from the lens of Food. The primary observations were focused on the very existence of state institutions with an objective to prevent people from Hunger. The emerging finding was that there are no functional institutions for ensuring protection of people from chronic hunger. The livelihood options were lacking, military regime was found to be instrumental in suppressing voices of the people, so the country was dumbed and thus could not speak and raise voice, even for food. Natural resources were being taken away from the community and over-exploitation was rampant all across. During this intervention, there was no structure like country RtF Programs in the organization, so it was becoming difficult to take the discourse forward.

As per the proposal document, it is clear that the ongoing program on Right to Food and the Rule of Law in Asia is a natural extension and expansion of the earlier work done by the People's Tribunal on Burma. The main objective of this program is not to produce mere periodic reports about the right to food, rather it seeks to identify particular situations, where there are specific structural obstacles to satisfying people's food and water needs, and suggest ways to overcome these through effective and appropriate interventions, lobbying and advocacy work. The mandate, thus, is clearly established.

In such an environment, AHRC made an effort to organize a Human Rights Tribunal covering south Asian countries, where eminent experts on different human rights issues were invited and given a responsibility to make an independent judgment on the human rights situation, especially on Livelihood, Food Security-Hunger, functioning of justice institutions and right to life in an integrated framework. This tribunal faced 20 specific cases and a detailed situation analysis made it clear that Human Rights cannot be worked upon without attaining a stage of inclusive democracy, good governance, effective and pro-people justice institutions, and elimination of systemic caste-racial behavior.

This process could not move, because of certain organizational reasons. However, this matter had made a sharp entry to the thinking and perspective of ALRC's work on Human Rights. In the meanwhile, in the Year 2004, India RtF Program was formulated, to work on criminal justice system. While working on the cases of persons under trial, extra judicial killings, use of state forces on non-violent social struggles, it was noted that the poor and the most marginalized suffer the most in all these situations. The powerful will always be free after committing the crime, but poor will be targeted for nothing in most of the cases, because they are not in a position to hire expensive advocates, because corporate-controlled media does not raise voice in their favor and at the end they do not have a say in the representative

democratic system, which again is now ruled by a nexus of politicians – media- corporate - corrupt bureaucrats and now we can also add CSR-influenced civil society organization amongst them as well.

**Can we expect that human rights will be guaranteed without justice? Can we afford to seek justice only through the courts, exempting the executive? The rule of law is not a situation where the state generates fear about its might and rules by it. What we have in India are rules and laws that exploit the marginalized.**

Sadly, we are living in times where the people's struggles for human rights are highly fragmented in India. Equally disheartening is the fact that whenever or wherever the issue of human rights comes up for discussion, it is addressed in a piecemeal manner, ignoring and leaving far behind a comprehensive approach to rights, based on the notion of justice. The focus is usually on the concept of rights understood within the limited periphery of 'people's welfare', in which the quotient of 'justice' is conveniently forgotten.

In India have 113 legislations which deal with people's rights, their entitlements, and protection. Another 19 on food, nutrition, and health are on the anvil. In fact, we have had a law-making regime for last 65 years, but the concept of justice is missing in the country, given the weak and injudicious implementation.

Do rights make any sense without justice?

When public pressure concerning an issue disturbs the state, the state comes out with a policy and passes a law. But laws are meaningless if there is no system to implement them. And where there is no accountability within the system, legislation becomes a farcical exercise. The basic objective of the people's struggles in the country is to ensure proper implementation of the laws. What we need to do is to think about where and how deep the passive, or sometimes active, negation of rights permissible within the system is. Otherwise, the enormous efforts of the people's struggle to claim these rights will go in vain.

Look at the following example. In 2006, the Indian government passed a law recognizing the forest rights of Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers. The law declares in its opening statement that the indigenous communities have been subjected to historical injustice for centuries and that the state seeks to give them justice through this legislation. Now look at its provisions. In order to establish community rights to forests, the villagers have to produce adequate documentation to show that they have been using forests for their livelihood, grazing and access, or for cultural and religious purposes, or for foraging forest produce for their daily needs. This task is beyond most of them.

In India, systematic records have been maintained at the district level, from even before 1950, for every village, its resources, and their use. Many people are not even aware of this storehouse of data and information. These documents are called nistar patrak (record of use of land, forest and other natural resources) and Bajib-ul-Arz. It is almost impossible for villagers to access these documents in the maze of modern bureaucracy and red tape. The result is that only around five percent of the claims to community rights have been legally established and recognized.

If the intent of the government is to confer community rights to the rightful claimants, why did it not add a provision to the law stating that it will make available all the documents in its possession to the Gram Sabha and the village level Forest Rights Committees, to enable them to process claims and



establish the rights of the community? It is the responsibility of the government to provide the required documentation, not of the people who have been subjected to this historic injustice. Until and unless the state internalizes the concept of justice, every utterance of its officials will be futile, meaningless and perceived as false. But the state is reluctant to part with the power it has over the people.

The first question we need to ask ourselves is: what are the tribulations in our society and what kind of change does this necessitate? We are living in a period of policy changes and laws. The government formulates policies and passes laws, allegedly to solve these problems, but the laws remain on paper. They are of use to society only if an institutional framework for implementing them is created, an adequate budget sanctioned, officers appointed, and other necessary infrastructure put in place.

For instance, the government claims that the people have a right to health. But if there are no doctors, no hospitals and no money to buy medicines, what does this right mean? When will people enjoy the benefits of this right? The government has also passed a law giving people the right to free and compulsory education. Nevertheless, to ensure quality and equal education to all, we need enough teachers, new teaching methodologies and sufficient classrooms and toilets in schools. But the financial resources available for this are not even half of what is in fact required. So what kind of right to quality education can our children hope for or lay claim to?

Justice must be evident and should become visible to be delivered. Rights cannot be seen as disconnected from justice. Currently, if the state is unjust, or if it abdicates its responsibility to dispense justice, people can neither claim nor protect their rights. In India, the state is only putting on an act with its 'people-oriented' policies and laws to hoodwink the people. The reality is the continuing violation of all basic rights. Nowhere in the laws is there a provision that says the government will have zero tolerance for compromise and will take steps to ensure that people get not just their rights, but justice as well.

Justice and rights are not limited to the judiciary or to the state that is supposed to safeguard them for society. They go beyond these institutions. Justice is a universal trait, a basic human character, like courage, equality, and respect for nature. It is not something that one obtains only through a court of law. The notion of justice starts with the faith that justice will not be denied. Justice is also the belief that the authorities and the system where you go to claim your rights will respect these rights, and treat you in a way that raises your morale and reinforces your belief in the system.

During this period of 5 years (2004-09) organisations also experienced that when a innocent individual is sent to jail, their family is also punished with a sentence of hunger or when state decides that the piece of land will be taken away in the name of development by following a law, which do not recognize rightful participation, compensations and rehabilitation is a human right, all affected families forcefully thrown into a vicious cycle of Hunger-Poverty-Destitution-Deprivation-Chronic Hunger. When cases of torture were being reported by AHRC, it was amply clear that only poor and marginalized face police torture without any reason.

The Hunger Alerts and Urgent Appeals have targeted public distribution system in India repeatedly because it is the most widespread food program in the world implemented for the prevention of Hunger. It used to cover 100 million households with subsidized food grains every month. This program was under the grip of corruption from all corners. Government of India sought to reduce number of poor families by keeping poverty line expenditures at the subsistence level. The poverty estimation was

not in favor of the poor and even identification process of targeted families was corrupt. Furthermore, state was not willing to supply-distribute food grains from its stock, because it was of the view that if a lot of food grain is distributed among the poor and hungry, food market will be under threat and corporate will have limited scope for making profit. One may recall that India has a 50-year-old public distribution system which was designed in 1960s with four objectives:

- a. To support the food-producing farmers, state started buying food grains at minimum support price.
- b. Remunerate food production.
- c. Provide food grains to the people at subsidized price; so that their access to food is ensured and issue of hunger is addressed.
- d. Control Market Price, especially of FOOD items.

The situation of Hunger and Civil Society movement in India placed AHRC/ALRC at work. Although it was one of its own kinds of an effort, where an international / regional organisation collaborated with the Right to Food Campaign associates with a specific task and larger responsibility. It is to be made clear that unlike other international organisations, AHRC/ALRC were not for intruding into the spaces of grass roots organisations. They were willing to support community-based / grass root actions by providing advocacy/documentation support.

There have been instances of corruption and exclusion in Public Distribution System that were reported to the AHRC by partner organisations (such as PVCHR in Uttar Pradesh) and then AHRC continued to release Urgent Appeals and Hunger Alerts on such cases. Field interventions also established the linkages between Corruption-Negligence-Unaccountability-Brutality by state law enforcing agencies; when a case of corruption in PDS was raised and in reaction to that, the officials of State Forest Department broke loose down at local community and then the local activists.

AHRC, in due course of time, was analyzing the situation of hunger as well as developing understanding of ongoing movements/interventions within India and other Asian countries. There were certain challenges; rather we should say organizational challenges, which were faced by AHRC –

- Identification of partner organization; initially AHRC got in touch with an organisation in India – PVCHR, which made use of the effective use of AHRC, but AHRC could not move beyond PVCHR.
- It was the time, when AHRC organized Folk School on Right to Food in India and got in touch with key constituents of Right to Food Campaign. Right to Food Campaign<sup>v</sup> is not an identical NGO; it is a network of organisations, individuals, and networks working for Right to Food to make it legal and constitutional human right.
- AHRC made strong efforts for partnership with these constituents in 2010-2012.
- Moreover, here onwards AHRC made those organisations partners, who were actively working on the matters related to Hunger, malnutrition, poverty, right to work and had credible acceptance in Right to Food Campaign.
- AHRC was clear in its mandate that the matter of Right to Food will be raised as a human rights issue and there is a strong need to come out with strong evidences to define severity and multi-dimensionality of Hunger. This could not be made possible without partners having strong presence within the community with a perspective on right to food.

## Right to Food (RtF) Programme

The '*Right to Food & the Rule of Law in Asia*', is a natural extension and expansion of the earlier work done by the People's Tribunal on Burma. Although its scope has broadened, at its root is an ongoing commitment to food and water rights through investigating and understanding conditions, with a view to proposing effective remedies where violations are uncovered. The programme does not propose to make mere periodic reports about the Right to Food. Rather, it seeks to identify particular situations where there are specific structural obstacles to satisfying people's food and water needs, and suggest ways to overcome these through effective and appropriate interventions, lobbying and advocacy work.

It was a learning that people in Asian region are not resource poor. Rather, they suffer from an enforced poverty. There is disconnect between state and society; society and the excluded and marginalized manifested in state and the larger society deserting the marginalized. Very few wield control over the financial and natural resources and that large number of people do not get even daily wage work at minimum wages. There are institutions for ensuring participation of people in governance and decentralization of power in most of the Asian countries, but their actual system is very centralized and state uses it as per its comfort for implementation of exclusionary growth policies. In such a situation, when grassroots organizations raise voice for the protection of human rights and right to food, the state institutions suppress them. Governments are still not willing to be prepared for constructive criticism of civil society organizations and people's movements, which should rather be seen as central to bringing about equality, and strengthening of participatory democracy. AHRC/ALRC, thus, decided to run a program for an evidence-based advocacy process to support the grassroots struggle. The program's dimensions included:

1. Mapping and partnership with local organizations
2. Understanding the local context of Hunger and Right to Food
3. Documenting evidences with a perspective (establish its linkages with forceful eviction, corruption, military operations and shrinking democratic spaces, failure of justice institutions and the rule of law)
4. Capacity building on Hunger and Right to Food and advocacy tools
5. Dialogue and discussion on various aspects of Right to Food
6. Generating an in-depth analysis for contributing in social, political and policy discourse.

AHRC/ALRC chose not to come up with an ambitious program at this stage and decided to create a base in the region on Right to Food issues. It was designed to map credible and active organizations in respective countries and start engaging with them through some programmatic support and interventions.

The Programme, today, has evolved and developed and that it is having a permanent staff based in Hong Kong. This staff member designated as '*Coordinator - Right to Food Programme*' is primarily responsible for **researching, documenting intervening, and publishing** materials concerning food security in Asian countries. Emulating from the experience of Urgent Appeal's Programme, the *Right to Food Programme* issues **hunger alerts, statements, press releases, and interventions** in appropriate national and international fora. By this process, the programme has exposed glaring circumstances that have resulted in the denial of the fundamental right to food to the people living in Asian states.

The CCFD-Terre Solidaire (hereafter CCFD) has been providing funding support to the AHRC/ALRC since 1999. The AHRC/ALRC has been highly aware that the continuing development of human rights work requires an ongoing reflection and evaluation of its performance and impact. In this respect, the AHRC/ALRC and the CCFD have been constantly exchanging ideas and views as to how to further strengthen such kinds of reflection and evaluation. In November 2009, the CCFD signed an agreement with the AHRC/ALRC to provide support to the core funding for the work programmes of the AHRC/ALRC for the period 2010 to 2012.

## **Programme Objectives, Strategy, and Pathways**

The primary objective of the programme has been to fight widespread hunger and starvation that is endemic in many of the Asian countries where the AHRC/ALRC works in. The Right to Food (RtF) programme strives to engage in a host of activities that take on the structural factors that cause and sustain hunger in these countries on the one hand, and mobilizing local and international stakeholders for intervening in urgent and immediate cases at local level, on the other. The central idea of the programme is to contribute in the dominant discourse pertaining to hunger in these countries which appear to see the right to food as a non-justiciable right at best and a favor from the state to the people at the worst. The AHRC/ALRC seek to make the right to food an inalienable part of right to life with dignity. The focus, therein, lies on building redress mechanisms in countries where they do not exist at all and to make them work in the countries where they exist in a dysfunctional or dormant state.

In other words, basic objective of the RtF program was to radically recast the discourse on right to food in countries of its presence and make it an inalienable right of the people. This could only be achieved through a relentless focus on building an honest delivery mechanism with corresponding mechanisms for addressing grievances. That is why AHRC/ALRC through their Human Rights program and RtF Program constantly urged the governments to start off at the grassroots, say by making the system transparent and giving communities a stake in running the mechanism on the one hand, and by strengthening the local struggles, on the other.

The programme has also been striving to take the lessons learnt from the right to food movement in India, where it has been most successful so far because of massive community participation, to other countries. There were efforts to introduce ideas like 'social audits' backed by community-based organisations that make it very difficult for the funds earmarked for food security to get siphoned off, if not rooting it out completely. These lessons have been shared with our partners across countries like Nepal, Pakistan, and Bangladesh which hold common cultural and social affinities with India.

Another key objective of the programme was to lobby with respective country desks for making the lower judiciary more accessible and affordable, as this is what would finally trigger people's participation in the system. The *raison d'être* for this lies in the simple fact that having a right recognized is necessary but not sufficient to ensure that people can and would be able to enjoy it as well. It is of paramount importance for ensuring that there is a mechanism of redress in place where people can go in case of the violation of their rights, right to food included.

This regional human rights organisation has been striving to achieve these objectives through various means. They include working with local, community-based organizations on the one hand, and

publicizing the individual stories/cases of hunger, starvation and any other violation of right to food for national and international advocacy, on the other. Further, the organisation did not stop at being a mere ‘event reporter’ in disseminating grassroots grievances and news. Rather, it also actively engaged with the issues by undertaking field visits, supporting research, and dwelling in to the details of socio-economic concerns. For example, while working with communities displaced by developmental projects in these Asian countries, the programme endeavors to consider the holistic picture with all its fine nuances linking different aspects of dispossession that would affect people’s food security.

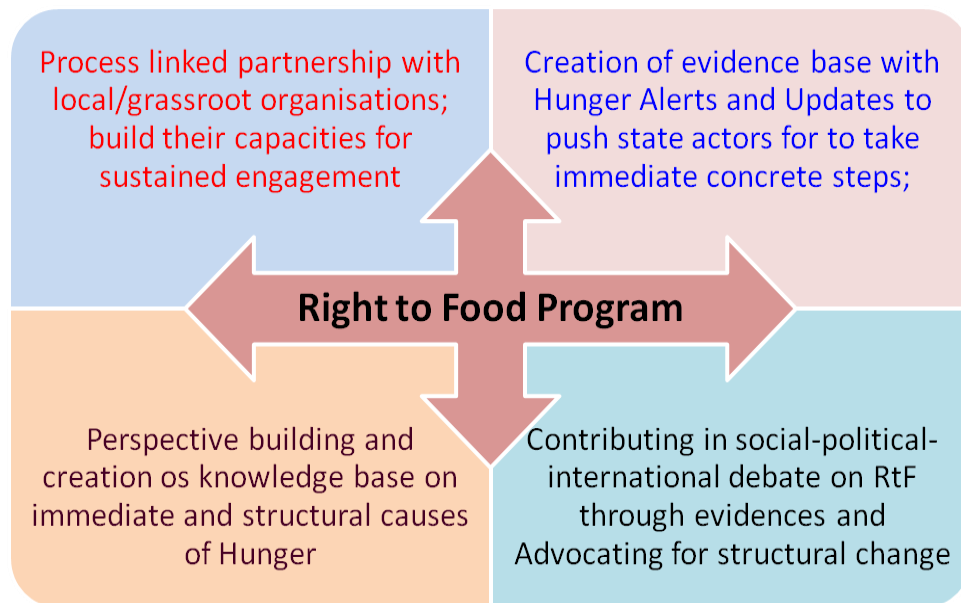
A major tool of achieving all this is by building a complaint mechanism on the violation of right to food of individuals and communities alike, and to frame these complaints in the language of rights. Re-coding private anguishes, thus, becomes the communities’ way of challenging the authorities responsible for violating their rights and forcing them to provide remedy, or to build structures capable of providing remedy if they do not exist in the first place.

Apart from approaching local authorities and judiciary, the programme also raised the issues regionally and internationally including taking the issues to the relevant bodies of the United Nations Organisation like offices of Special Rapporteur or the Human Rights Council for their intervention. The specific strategic interventions that AHRC/ALRC has initiated are –

<b>Strategic Interventions</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Pathways</b>
Document cases of denial of right to food;	Documentation of grass root cases of violation of right to food. It also serves the purpose of making its use as evidences of hunger and acute poverty.	Statements, Urgent Appeals and Hunger Alerts
Assist individuals and communities suffering from the denial of right to food;	Support to local/grassroots / community-based organisations to strengthen their action by providing knowledge of available international and regional platforms (such as Special Rapporteur on Right to Food at UN Level).	Folk School on Right to Food
Promote the work of grass-root level organisations involved in documenting, campaigning, and intervening on issues related to the denial of right to food;	Providing support in raising cases and analysis at the international forums and stand with them in situation of any repression from state or non-state institutions.	Regular communication and by immediate response to their messages.
Establish the pattern of gender, caste and community-specific	Create an understanding on right to food from the perspective of	Publication of Article 2 and AHRC TV along with other available

Strategic Interventions	Strategy	Pathways
denial of right to food based on discriminatory practices caused by corruption and the large-scale breakdown of the rule of law and the absence of a democratic framework;	caste-gender-class.	strategic resources.
Augmenting the work of international bodies like the Rapporteur on right to food at the UN by providing evidence and substantive materials required for effective intervention and the change from the <i>status quo</i> ;	By engaging these institutions, create pressure on the governments / state institutions to take measure for handling structural causes of Hunger and violation of right to food.	Submission to UN Human Right Council and Special Rapporteur on Right to Food at UN level.
Encourage local debates by dialogue and participation of the victims and human rights defenders engaged in the campaign on right to food thereby promoting an environment towards realising democracy and the rule of law;	Inform state institutions bearing responsibilities to protect people from hunger and discrimination and force them to take action.	Hunger Alerts and Urgent Appeals
Creating a database for researchers, activists, and policy makers who are interested in knowing about food security in Asian states;	Create a debate around institutional mechanism for ensuring right to food	Analytical Articles, Statements, and case documentation
Contribute to policy changes regarding guaranteeing the right to food, in particular by addressing issues concerning discrimination and corruption	Expose the negligence and inactive response of the institutions.	Hunger alerts, Updates and analysis relating to grass root situations,
Create a informal alliance of committed organisations / individuals working in Right to Food	Bring such people/organisations on a platform and learn from their experiences. Protection to grassroots organisations, in case they face any repression (organizationally or individually) in response to their work on human rights.	Internship program, Folk School, Statements, Urgent Appeals, and Intervention by responsible institutions (such as National Human Rights Commission or Judicial Bodies.)

## Strategies and Pathways



## Activities

1. Interviewing victims and activists working on right to food;
2. Making use of the interview as materials for publications by the Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC), the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) and other media;
3. Issuing Hunger Alerts that document individual or collective instances of denial of the right and calling for urgent intervention locally and internationally and thus bringing the result of intervention to the victim;
4. Conducting research and writing statements and reports about food security or the denial of it by establishing patterns of discrimination, gender bias in particular, exposing the failure of governments in guaranteeing food security;
5. Conducting workshops and seminars involving activists and victims providing a platform for experience sharing, training, and planning intervention strategies, which will also be an opportunity for local partners for studying rights based international framework on the issue and planning intervention strategies;
6. Contributing to discussion fora locally and internationally available by participation;
7. Bringing cases taken up by the Hunger Alerts before the domestic and international mechanisms like national human rights commission, ministries, and international organisations;
8. Providing information to local media thereby generating local debates on the issue;
9. Calling upon politicians, political parties, professional bodies like that of doctors and lawyers and encouraging them to intervene on local instances of starvation, malnutrition and healthcare in particular that of rural women and children;
10. Documenting and exposing cases of corruption and discrimination that lead to denial of right to food.

## Indicators

1. Local/domestic debate(s) on right to food;
2. More number of local and grass roots level human rights groups working on a daily basis with the Hunger Alert programme;
3. Neglected communities receiving support from the government and other regional and international entities;
4. A greater awareness about the actual situation of the (non)fulfillment of the right to food, domestically and internationally;
5. Lesser number of rural and urban communities facing discrimination resulting in the denial of the right to food;
6. A political debate generated locally upon the issue;
7. More interaction and reflection about the issue in bilateral dialogues between states and international entities like the UN or the EU or between states;
8. A change in the attitude of the victims who otherwise are reluctant to speak about their insecurity of right to food.



# Programmatic Framework on Right to Food

The first segment of conceptual understanding of Right to Food Program in ALRC/ALRC was planned to address the understanding of various key components of Right to Food like Land rights, livelihoods, distress migration, forced displacement, poverty estimation and identification, violation of entitlements, failure of state justice institutions, in addressing the situation of violation of rights, which ultimately leads to childhood hunger and malnutrition, gender discrimination, chronic hunger and starvation deaths. Secondly, this effort was to be shaped with local grassroots organisations to ensure that the local interventions could be augmented through regional and international advocacy work and by using UN specific and other international platforms and mechanisms. It has following structure –

<b>AHRC/ALRC Right to Food Program</b>	
Support to Grassroots Movements	By providing assistance in raising the issues and cases at the regional/international level; and by providing capacity building support (Folk Schools and Internship Program) for broadening perspective and develop strong understanding on UN Mechanisms, National and Local Institutions.
Create discourse on Right to Food	Wherever absent from the rights perspective with the framework of Justice by identifying credible organisations in respective countries and linking their struggle for land, labour, housing, rights and by bringing RTF aspects in struggles against forceful eviction, displacement, distress migration, discrimination and multi-faced violence.
Contribute in the ongoing discourse and in political debates	Wherever any discourse and debate exists, by raising hunger alerts and updates, statements, articles on different aspects of Right to Food.
Hunger Alerts and Documentation	Raise cases from the core of the society, where people live with hunger and state either is not accountable or in denial mode; Follow-up of cases with Hunger Alert Updates, So that policy makers and justice institutions are pressurised to take appropriate actions. It has also become a way that created a strong resource centre at AHRC/ALRC website.
Create an environment for regional alliance / network on Right to Food	So that struggle for people’s right to Food does not face isolation and is prevented from becoming weak.

The objective is to contribute in right to food movements and create an environment for interventions. The purpose is to facilitate a discussion process to understand the connectivity between human rights, political economic scenario, and right to food.

Statistics show that hunger continues to be a formidable problem in developing and emerging countries and that the progress towards the achievement of the MDG goal [Millennium Development Goal to reduce the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by half between 1990 and 2015] is slow, with nearly 1 billion Hungry people<sup>vi</sup>. However, hunger and calorie are only one part of the story. Many have access to the minimum amount of calories, but are deficient in one or more micronutrients. Micronutrients deficiencies, estimated to affect at least 2 billion people, are the cause of so-called “hidden hunger.” Since micronutrient deficiencies lead to a vast range of diseases and other health disorders, overcoming their decrease is likely to help the achievement of the other health-related MDGs such as Goals 4, 5 and 6, which call for reduction in child mortality, maternal mortality, and prevalence of HIV-AIDS, malaria and other diseases, respectively<sup>vii</sup>.

There are nearly 925 million hungry people in the World<sup>viii</sup>. This is a rough estimate based on the prevalence of people, who assumed to have an energy intake below that which is required to maintain bodyweight, body composition, and levels of necessary and desirable physical activity for long-term good health. The number of those hungry is higher than that in 2007 as partial consequences’ of the 2007-2008 food price crises and the overall economic crisis. While the FAO is one of the most cited sources of data concerning hunger and food security, some experts disagree with the theoretical model in which these final numbers are obtained<sup>ix</sup>. Presently hunger is defined by using calorie intake, whereas a very widely accepted definition was given at the World Food Summit (1996); that says “*Food Security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.*”

While looking in to the interventions of AHRC/ALRC, it is observed that the organisations has given priority to the cases which are important in the particular country’s context. In Philippines, eviction from livelihood options and habitations in various forms in the name of economic development has become a prime cause of chronic hunger and constitutes threat to the dignified life. The gravity of the situation is very evident among Floating Population (Freedom Island, Philippines); Cavite Export Processing Zone affected areas in Cavite Province (Philippines), Eviction process along the Road 10 in Tondo, Manila, Demolition of houses in Florentino St., Sto. Domingo, Quezon City, Eviction of vendors of the Luneta Park etc. Along with that, Tropical Storm Trami (Maring) caused hunger situation.

In India, AHRC released Hunger Alerts focusing the crisis on tribal communities (indigenous society) especially Sahariya Primitive Tribal Group, Nutritionally Vulnerable Korku Tribe, Bariha, Mawasi, Kol etc.

In Nepal, food insecurity and violation of right to food issues were raised specifically from Dalit communities (Ganadhava) and economically deprived sections such as small scale farmers (land holding up to 0.3 hectare). AHRC, through their intervention in Mugu district, established the fact that geographical inaccessibility is a cause of hunger and exclusion from state policies. It is painful to note that caste structure do not allow dalit families to utilize their own resources. In Nepal, Dalit families have milk producing livestock but due to their status as “untouchable,” they are not allowed to sell their milk in open market.

## Coverage of Issues

It is clear that the responsibility AHRC/ALRC were willing to adopt as a regional organisation, could not have been executed without having a structured program, human resources, perspective, and resources. In such a situation, the CCFD rendered the financial support. The ALRC has strategically worked on the following -

1. Partnership with the grassroots organisations; so that ALRC could raise the voice of people unswervingly.
2. Documentation; through baseline surveys and rapid assessments so that individual evidences could be compounded and presented in a larger framework for policy change and influencing national / international institutions.
3. Intervention through Urgent Appeals and Hunger Alerts; so that immediate interventions/steps from the responsible institutions could be ensured; believing the fact that persons/community living with hunger cannot wait for policy change and they are in need of very spontaneous support. These alerts and appeals are made to push international bodies such as Rapporteur on Right to Food at the UN by providing evidences and substantive records required for effective intervention and change the status quo.
4. Efforts on evidence collection (alerts and appeals) have been important tools to put forth the aspects of gender, caste, and community specific denials of rights.
5. Release of Articles analyzing human rights framework and policy frameworks as well as character of the state/justice institutions. The purpose of this effort was to contribute in policy and academic debates. It should be remembered that most of these articles are directly linked to the cases, which AHRC released or the experiences of partner organisations.
6. Support for Capacity / perspective building through folk school in respective countries.

It was the time, when actually international advocacy actions based of field realities, and cases were raised efficiently. Organisations from Madhya Pradesh and Odisha specifically focused on chronic hunger, state negligence towards malnutrition deaths, unaccountable governance. There were incidents, which clearly proved that protection from hunger and malnutrition even in a state structure is a matter of utopia. AHRC reported a case from Madhya Pradesh,

*(4.4) When the representatives of the ALRC met Justice Ms. Sheela Khanna, the Chairperson of Madhya Pradesh State Commission for Protection of Child Rights to seek intervention on this scenario as well as to address child malnutrition that is rampant among the children of the tribal community in the state, the Chairperson opined that those children brought to the Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres should be asked to produce their horoscope and if they are found to become worthy citizens of the state by a Brahmin priest reading their horoscope, then only state resources should be spent to recover their lifex.*

Then there were cases of rampant corruption in state programs...

*A farm pond project that was started to ensure salaries for the workers but they were forced to stop working and pay bribes instead. When the case was revealed, the alleged perpetrators tried to silence the human rights activists who brought it to light by assaulting them and filing fabricated cases against them. One of the perpetrators*

*has been given a show cause notice but no guarantee that justice will be granted has been given to the victims. According to the information received from the human rights activists, seven beneficiaries from Kusmal Village of Birighat Panchayat, from Nuapada District in Orissa were selected by the Gram Sabha (village council) for digging a Farm Pond on their own land under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA) in 2007-2008. A budget amounting to INR 245,000 (USD 5,450) was established<sup>xi</sup>.*

In continuation to the jeopardized situation there were cases of starvation deaths –

*The Asia Human Rights Commission (AHRC) regrets to inform you that extreme poverty and long-term starvation lead to the death of five members including two children under age of six of the same family of a tribal community from September to December 2009. It is also reported that within the last two years starvation claimed the lives of 50 among the 35-40 age group in the same village. It has been exposed that all forms of government programmes aiming to ensure food security for the poor and children have not reached Borumal village properly. Even after several complaints from the villagers, the administration authority has never taken action to respect the right to food of the villagers by implementing those schemes. The Right to Food Campaign Orissa filed Public Interest Litigation (PIL) for the case and the AHRC strongly urges the relevant authorities to take immediate action for the villagers who have been denied of their right to food. On September 6 and 7, 2009, ten-month old Gundru Bariha and three-year old Siba Prasad Bariha died due to severe malnourishment. Two days later, on September 9, 2009, they were followed in death by their 35-year old mother, Bimla Bariha. The father, Jhintu Bariha, and the elder son Ramprasad, aged around 7, received medical attention. Jhintu was hospitalized several times for fever and lose motion. He died on October 7, 2009. On December 17, 2009 his mother, Minji Bahira (aged 70), died after she was brought to the hospital in a critical condition. Seven year-old Ramprasad survives alone in the family<sup>xii</sup>.*

In Bangladesh, the issue of Right to Food was also taken up from the point of state's moral obligation for providing protection of old age people. The case released 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013 mentions the story of old age women living with hunger. The Hunger Alert mentioned

*“Five single and destitute women being pushed into starvation in the Ghorabandha village of Gaibandha district in Rangpur division. Most of these women have been widowed for decades and have no immediate family member to take care of them. For example, 85 year old Jamila Begum (wrongly listed as being just 65 years as per official records) has been widowed for 27 years. Her elder son Late-Abdul Malek died soon after his marriage and the younger son Md. Fazlu Sheikh shifted to his in-laws houses. Her daughter too left for her in-laws house leaving her bereft of any family support. She has been suffering with many ailments including general body pain, joint pain, pain in bones, Rheumatic fever and many other diseases associated with chronic malnutrition. Unable to work because of her age and ailments, she often fails to arrange two square meals and gets compelled to beg for food. Though actually entitled to both old age benefits and widow allowance but has refused for the elderly*

*allowance on the basis of her incorrect age. Still, that does not debar her from widow allowances which she has never gotten despite assurances allegedly because she did not have money to bribe the officials. Gaibandha is a poor and regularly flood ravaged district in northern part of Bangladesh is a developing county. It is one of the districts that is officially declared as affected by havoc caused by MONGA twice a year”.*

We must learn from the fact that in India there was a movement for right to food which was going on and there was an unfulfilled need of support at regional level for raising voice at different fora, especially in UNHRC and Special Rapporteur on Right to Food. AHRC was able to fulfill that need of the Indian movement.

# Suggested Future Framework for RtF Program

Whilst undertaking an intervention, we need to follow an approach keeping the current political situation in view. This is crucial because the present day governments appear to be looking upon economic growth as a way to grab resources disregarding the very tenets of the basic framework, which inter alia comprise:

- a. **Inclusion of all people** as a necessary pre-requisite. Unfortunately, these are the times of targeted approach, where governments have decided that the doling out the rights will only be for those who are identified as POOR. However, a faulty definition of poverty which is derived from estimation based on exclusionary aspect of poverty, and identification does not allow all poor people to attain food security.
- b. **Structural causes of hunger** like the one the ones pertaining to caste, gender, racial, and community specific discrimination cannot be generalized and need to be raised as crosscutting aspects. Caste is one of the human created causes of hunger and poverty, especially in India and Nepal.
- c. The way production technology is changing (introduction of **GM Technology**, Junk Food, High use of chemicals etc.), society is increasingly vulnerable to unsafe food.
- d. The way food companies are influencing governments and the society, it is almost impossible to **maintain community centered food preferences**.
- e. The way **labor laws** are being diluted in favor of the open market forces and workers' rights are being denied by making anti-laborer policies, a large working population has also become food insecure and they are out of social-economic safety net.

## Philippines Climate Negotiator Vows Hunger Strike

**WARSAW, Poland**, November 12, 2013 (ENS) – Seasoned climate negotiators from around the world were moved to tears as Naderev “Yeb” Saño, head of the Philippines delegation, made an emotional statement to the UN Climate Change Conference on the disaster in his country caused by Typhoon Haiyan on the weekend.

Sano pleaded with government negotiators to take notice of the devastation in the Philippines as they make their decisions over the coming 10 days about how much they can do to avert the worst consequences of climate change.

Sano announced that he would not eat until delegates made meaningful progress, mounting a hunger strike in solidarity with the victims of Typhoon Haiyan, known locally as Yolanda.

He called on delegates at Warsaw National Stadium to make the connection between climate change and the increase in severe storms, rising sea levels, floods and drought. He urged them to be the ones who inspire their countries to move the world out of the climate danger zone.

“To anyone who continues to deny the reality that is climate change, I dare you to get off your ivory tower and away from the comfort of your armchair,” Sano urged.

- f. **Adverse climatic conditions** and frequent natural calamities across the world, especially in Philippines, India, and Bangladesh are pushing large number of families into a vicious cycle of Hunger-Poverty and Diseases. UNDP's Human Development Report – 2013 mentions, *“Environmental threats such as climate change, deforestation, air and water pollution, and natural disasters affect everyone. But they hurt poor countries and poor communities most. Climate change is already exacerbating chronic environmental threats, and ecosystem losses are constraining livelihood opportunities, especially for poor people.”*
- g. The way **main source of livelihood**, the natural resources like land, water, coastal areas, and forest are being taken away, one wonders as to how hunger will be eliminated or reduced to half as promised in Millennium Development Goals. On the one hand, Philippine Government enacts a law titling Poverty Alleviation Act of Philippines (Republic Act No. 8425) and on the other hand, they make concerted efforts for evicting vendors from their livelihood places inside Luneta Park. They do not behave with these vendors in a sense of humaneness. The National Parks Development Committee moved against them with a huge contingent of police personnel and SWAT team leaving the outnumbered vendors with no choice other than leaving. In India, Government of India takes a decision for increasing height of Sardar Sarovar Dam bypassing all rules and Apex Court orders on complete resettlement and rehabilitation of Project Affected Families. Further, extension in height will cause forceful displacement of around 50000 families.
- h. Certain circumstances are left undefined; most of the institutions – State or International, do not take clear position on right to food in **armed conflicts and communal violence**. These are the political issues and are not debated or raised, whenever needed. We learned that food supply is blocked during road blockade in northeastern India, government stops running Public Distribution Shop in the name of Naxal Violence in Chhattisgarh state of India, so that tribal families living in Forest are forced to leave their original areas and are thus decks are cleared for diversion for corporate groups.
- i. **Medicalisation of Malnutrition** – There is an effort for making profit from Hunger. Giant Food Companies are trying to push packaged food in state policies as best solution of micronutrient deficiencies. Alarmingly, they are doing so in the name of responsibility in tackling crisis of hunger.
- j. **Maternity Entitlements** – In due course of strong interventions on Livelihood and Labor Rights issues in different locations with different partners, it is seen that Maternity Entitlements is a very serious issue and it is evident that constant violation and discrimination is practiced, but somehow it has not been given prominent space in AHRC/ALRC' Right to Food Program, especially in Hunger Alerts and Appeals. Now in next phase efforts on this particular component need to be made.

“Across the globe, people are uniting in a common struggle: to participate freely in the events and processes that shape their lives.” - Mahbub ul Haq

- k. **Social Security** as entitlement for old age, differently able, social excluded (single women, widow, living with chronic illnesses, geographical exclusion etc.) and natural calamity affected families. It may include social security pension, essential health care, food assistance, and safety.
- l. **WTO and Food Security** - There are efforts at World Trade Organisation (WTO) level to pressurize developing countries to reduce Public Stock Holding for Food Security Purposes. In such a situation, governments will be bound to keep their public expenditure low at the level, it is agreed upon. It will push governments not to buy food stocks directly from the farmers and reduce the size of food programs. In WTO negotiations in last one year, countries like India are taking a stand that Food Security is a matter of public welfare and it should not be left open for the market. And countries should be allowed to protect the interest of its farmers. Subsidies however become the major contentious issue in the negotiation. It is a formidable challenge for the developing countries to resist the market-oriented pressures from the WTO!

While export subsidies by developed countries were to be eliminated (by 2013 according to 2008 Chair text) domestic subsidies were divided into Amber, Blue and Green Boxes.

The amber box is seen to be trade distorting and have to be cut if it exceeds a maximum specified level of 10% of aggregate production that is specified as de minimis. The total of subsidy a country gives is called the Aggregate Measure of Support (AMS). The Green Box, which developed countries lobbied hard for and put in most of their subsidies under, was marked for those subsidies seen as non-trade distorting and can be given without limit. The Blue Box covers payments directly linked to acreage or animal numbers, but under schemes that also limit production by imposing production quotas or requiring farmers to set aside part of their land. So it is argued to be less trade distorting than those in Amber Box.

Under Amber Box, all except 17 developing countries, which were not giving any subsidy at that time were barred from increasing subsidies, and were to limit their AMS to the de minimis (10%) levels.

In contrast, developed countries that gave massive subsidies to their agriculture sector were asked to reduce these trade-distorting subsidies (OTDS) by only about 20%. Moreover, they were allowed to shift most of their subsidies to the "green box". It is by now well established that both types of subsidies are very much trade distorting and have undercut prices, encouraged dumping of subsidized agricultural products in developing country markets and has threatened global market access for developing country farmers.

Not surprisingly, total domestic support of the USA grew from US\$61 billion to US\$130 billion between 1995 and 2010. The EU's domestic support, which went down from 90 billion euro in 1995 to 75 billion euro in 2002, bloated again to 90 billion in 2006 and 79 billion in 2009. A broader measure of farm protection, known as total support estimate, shows the OECD countries' agriculture subsidies soared from US\$350 billion in 1996 to US\$406 billion in 2011.



Public food stockholding is the only GB element to be subject to subsidy conditions: “Public Stockholding for Food Security Purposes” is included in the Green Box (GB) that can generally be given without limits. However, while other elements of the GB are allowed without conditions, “only in the case of the Public Stockholding for Food Security Purposes does the Agriculture Agreement place the condition that the difference between the acquisition price and the external reference price should be accounted for in the AMS” (South Centre, Nov, 2013).

For more than two decades now, Most of the Asian Countries have launched their policies of economic liberalisation and opened its doors to the world economy. While at some levels, this has meant these countries can import and enjoy more goods that they do not produce, it has also meant that Indian producers are now forced to compete directly with foreign producers. This often threatens the self-sufficiency of respective countries, especially in basic and essential products such as food. In addition, given their commitments at various international agreements, policymaking in these Asian countries is no longer free from global rules. Domestic policymaking is now subject to global scrutiny even if it is for securing national development objectives such as the right to food of the people.

Developing Countries are now involved in numerous global trade and investment related agreements operating at various levels. There is the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which lays down rules for multilateral trading apparently to ensure “fairness” to all members. On the other hand, there are about 14-16 bilateral trade and investment agreements (Free Trade Agreements or FTAs), with many more being negotiated, which aggressively open up trade between one and another country or group of countries. In addition, these countries have investment agreements with over 80 countries that lay down strict norms for protecting foreign investors’ rights sometimes at the detriment of domestic interests. Another alarming trend is that both the WTO and FTAs have become more and more expansive, often covering areas that are not strictly their domain, such as intellectual property rights (IPRs), investment, government purchases (procurement) with strong impact on domestic policy on development.

It is not as if these global rules are very fair themselves. Global trade and investment agreements have historically entrenched inequalities between the developed and developing countries with the former exerting much more undue influence over the outcomes of these agreements than their developing country counterparts do. For example, the WTO allows the developed countries to give their farmers huge subsidies but restricts our governments from giving subsidies to our farmers. Such inequity has naturally resulted in a situation where these agreements favor developed countries much more than the developing countries. Moreover, such trade rules often hurt the weaker and poorer in our societies much more and challenge their right to development.

Just to give an example, if India agrees to the Peace Clause proposed by WTO, Government of India will reduce its procurement from farmers and it will have to limit its expenditure on Public Distribution System and National Food Security Act and huge number of families will be thrown out from the beneficiary list.

It is important to address these issues in the next phase of the program, because WTO negotiations are looking towards market interests alone and governments may start reducing their expenditure on Food Security programs.

<b>Aspects and Components already covered</b>	<b>Aspects and Components need to be covered</b>
<p>In brief, under Right to Food Program, AHRC/ALRC mostly focused on some important aspects and components of right to food and hunger in the first planned intervention -</p>	<p>There are some key and sensitive and structural parts in the concept of right to food may be incorporated in next phase -</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eviction and Displacement</li> <li>• Caste based and Social Discrimination</li> <li>• Corruption in state programs</li> <li>• Unaccountable Governance and ineffective implementation of existing policies / programs and Institutions</li> <li>• Tribal Identity / Eviction from Natural Resources</li> <li>• Livelihood Insecurity and living wages.</li> <li>• Basic Facilities, such as housing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production related aspects (mainly policy analysis and support to farmer’s struggle by adding voice to their movements.)</li> <li>• Maternity Entitlements and Institutional Arrangements for children under the age of 5 years (such as crèche)</li> <li>• Right to Food with nutrition security</li> <li>• Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation</li> <li>• Need for a constitutional framework to ensure comprehensive right to food</li> <li>• Right to Food in conflict (armed, communal, and civil unrest) affected areas.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cases have been documented in detail, which gives a real understanding to the grass root reality of Hunger and State’s response.</li> <li>• Caste based discrimination reflects in cases from India and Nepal, which contributes in deepening hunger.</li> <li>• There are articles and statements, which analyses the policy and structural aspects of hunger.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to use these cases for analyzing policy and structural causes of hunger. It should a regular intervention, not occasional.</li> <li>• Involvement of partners in in-depth analysis.</li> <li>• Constant dialogue at country level.</li> <li>• Efforts for creating an informed cadre base. For this purpose, efforts for folk schools may be extended.</li> <li>• Preparation of Country specific Hunger report every year.</li> </ul>

# **Observations from Countries**

## **Philippines**

Philippines emerges as the biggest success story from the AHRC/ALRC's work on Right to Food (RtF) work. The outcome is largely consolidated from concerted efforts made within a space of less than a year. Even more heartening is the fact that the consolidation came about more out of active engagement and coordination with the local organizations than via the project-centric approaches. The RtF Program engaged with local organizations throughout the year and put tremendous pressure on the authorities to respect the rights of the urban poor and the working classes especially in the metro Manila Area. The Program also succeeded in halting the proposed displacement of a fisher folk community in Freedom Island in the Paranaque city and in stopping forced eviction of the vendors from the Luneta Park.

Though the RtF Program's endeavors did not succeed equally when it came to force the authorities to revoke the eviction notice served on 250 families living along the R-10 or Road 10 in Tondo, Manila in September 2013, it did succeed in exerting considerable pressure on the authorities to halt the demolition drive affecting more than 5,500 families, or 30,000 people of San Roque, North Triangle, Quezon City.

## **Bangladesh**

The intervention in Bangladesh mostly focused on the country's context of frequent violation of human rights and state's denial towards people's rights, in general. After the initial Hunger Alert interventions of AHRC/ALRC, Bangladeshi Government agencies conducted investigations into the cases, but their primary objective was to wash the evidences and justify the corruption by the co-state agencies. In the next step, state agencies also threatened the activities which were relentlessly exposing the violations. AHRC/ALRC constantly observed the investigation process and found that Bangladesh Government agencies did not record the statements from the really affected people. Instead, they had collected evidence from the fake beneficiaries! They also contacted the Human Rights Defender, who was working in coordination with AHRC/ALRC and threatened him in the guise of taking his statement. In addition, later, they were charged with false cases. It is a clear case that when issues of hunger and right to food are raised, state agencies make all possible efforts to silence the voice and they end up in framing cases against the human rights defenders and activists. To shun this practice, AHRC/ALRC continued to utilize the UN fora and mechanisms, especially the Office of UN Special Rapporteur on Right to Food and Sessions of UN Human Rights Council in amplifying the concerns.

Keeping past experiences in center, AHRC/ALRC attempted to document hunger and destitution in Bangladesh, particularly in chronically food short Gaibandha district. The programme focused on the district as it is officially declared as affected by havoc caused by MONGA twice a year. Monga, also known as Mora Kartik, refers to months of death and disaster because of the vagaries of floods in September to November and drought in March-April and renders people jobless for 5 months a year. The droughts that follow the floods complicate the situation. With no industry in the district, the loss of

jobs in MONGA months renders people vulnerable and exposes them to the vicious cycle of debt and bondage. The RtF Program, thus, keenly focused on such destitute men and women who are entitled to government welfare schemes but seldom receive the same.

## **Pakistan**

Pakistan is a country struggling hard to bring about a sustainable and genuine democratic political and governance system. Political instability, religious fundamentalism, and over-interference of military institutions water down the debate on issues of human rights. It is evident that to continue with this farce, existing system utilizes human rights violations as a tool to create fear. The AHRC/ALRC raised the case of violation of right to food of fishing community and threats to the activists who sought to highlight the violations. In Pakistan, the human rights work is not only targeted by the government, but by the military as well. There have been challenges for developing structured partnership with local organisations in Pakistan. Efforts have been made with Bhandar Sangat, a membership based partner organization in Hyderabad of Pakistan for supporting their struggle for having land reforms that have been stalled by a Sharia Court purportedly for being anti-Islamic as well as another group working on livelihood issues in Karachi. To develop it further, Interns from Pakistan were also taken to AHRC/ALRC.

We must note that Right to Food is enshrined in the Article 38 of constitution of Pakistan - "The State shall provide basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, housing, education, and medical relief." It means that there is a ground for argument provided, however that the state is politically stable and judiciary is free to act upon the constitutional framework.

It is clear that due to difficult political situation, Right to Food Program did not find space in Pakistan. In other words, it may also be said that there is need to have specific efforts for creating an environment for Right to Food Movement in Pakistan. In such a situation, a different strategy needs to be brought out in close coordination with the Pakistan Country Desk within the AHRC/ALRC.

## **Nepal**

The AHRC/ALRC has been working with two partners in Nepal, namely FIAN Nepal and Jagran Media Center. Building upon the work done in Nepal in the preceding years, the programme has made significant achievements into bringing the right to food and related issue into the mainstream discourse that is otherwise very seriously marred by the ongoing political transition. It is observed that working on the economic issues in Nepal remains relatively a much difficult task than in other countries in the region because of the serious rifts among major political players in the wake of continued struggle to secure a full-fledged and functional democratic republic. Nevertheless, the achievements in center staging the human rights violations have not been mean.

During our visit to Nepal, we found that four components are very crucial –

1. Dalit Rights
2. Gender Issues
3. Threats of displacement
4. Absence of effective grievances redressal mechanism

Now Nepal Government, in association with the neighboring countries – Indian and China, is planning to undertake big infrastructural development projects – especially Power Generation and Construction of Roads, which will cause huge human displacement and destruction of natural resources, which is very crucial for ensuring food security in various parts of Nepal.

There is a scope to undertake analysis of ongoing Food and Nutrition Programs and Policies, which has not been undertaken by any of the local or international institutions working in Nepal.

Along with that, there is also a possibility for creating a strong Right to Food Network, where AHRC/ALRC can play significant constructive roles.

AHRC/ALRC worked closely with FIAN Nepal and Jagran Media Center, which have their own approaches capacities and identities. FIAN largely believe in Right to Food but have bit narrow approach towards to importance of Food Security and Food Sovereignty; whereas JMC has a strong focus on Dalit rights. In such a situation conceptual convergence can give a shape to the Right to Food Movement in Nepal.

## **India**

On the one hand, In India, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was lodged in the Supreme Court of India on right to food in 2001 and that the case is continuing for the last 14 years. On the other hand, hundreds of organisations came together and crafted and launched world's most effective Right to Food Movement. AHRC/ALRC collaborated with the campaign members and started providing specific support through Hunger Alerts and International lobby work. AHRC/ALRC has had six strong partners (5 in the states and 1 at national level), who, not only received support from AHRC/ALRC, but they could also contributed in giving a shape to the debate on right to food. The Hunger Alerts have played a pivotal role in highlighting malnutrition and deaths caused by it. They deny the state agencies the luxury of the argument that they did not know about hunger deaths by bringing private grievances of the dispossessed citizens into public domain. Building on the work of last year, the RtF Program continued to take up issues ranging from the failure of the entitlement-based welfare schemes in preventing hunger deaths to displacement caused by development projects endangering peoples' livelihood. The AHRC/ALRC also vehemently took up the issues regarding forced labour and the atrocities committed on the poorest sections of the society, which have been looking for livelihood.

### ***Right to food Secretariat, Odisha***

The supportive programme of AHRC for Right to food Secretariat, Odisha was started with the aim to find out issues in implementation of various Social Security Schemes in different districts of Odisha and for this programme. The main objective was to monitor and Increase awareness among different communities and their organizations on right to food and work related issues and government programs. The strategies of the programme included documenting the media and government reports on right to food and other human rights violation in different areas and conducting field research etc.

The State Advisor Secretariat, Right to Food was continuously trying to raise the issue of starvation deaths through fact-finding and immediate follow up for 33 cases since 2009. Apart from it, many cases of people living with hunger and starvation have been followed up to save valuable lives.

Also through the Human Resource of AHRC, RTF secretariat was able to participate in the study on “Participatory Evaluation of Entitlement Programmes (PEEP)” which was conducted by Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi with the support of Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR). The survey aimed to investigate and evaluate five major national programmes like National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), Public Distribution System (PDS), Mid-Day Meal scheme (MDM), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), and social security pensions for the elderly, widows and disabled persons in 10 states including Odisha. The study itself rendered a deeper understanding of the field reality of food and work related schemes and that the findings were shared at the highest level in the state government.

Also, through the support of AHRC, lot of Information was disseminated among the civil society groups and others individuals, activists and organizations working in different social issues in order so as to orient and inform them through the group emails circulated on daily basis about the happenings and progress of works on right to food issues and introduction of new schemes under right to food either by Central Govt. or by the State Govt.

Further, strategically, print media was used for highlighting the issues relating to right to food like, Direct Cash Transfer Vs UID, Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, what is right to food and the different aspects of Food Security, regarding *Rozgar diwas* under NREGS etc. which were published in different local newspapers in the state.

Keeping an aim to build the efficacy and make the villagers aware of the food schemes like, Public Distribution System (PDS), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Mid-Day Meal (MDM), Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), Annapurna Yojana (APY), Old Age Pension (NOAP, MBPY), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guaranty Act (MGNREGA) and Emergency Feeding Program (EFP), meetings were organized in different villages of Odisha.

**Snapshot of some cases**

Sl. No	Kind of violation	Community/Area	Narration of case
1	Starvation Death of Lala Sahu	OBC Community, Jalpankel village of Khaparakhhol block, Bolangir District.	Malnutrition, ill health and lack of medical treatment led to his death. He was neither enlisted in BPL list nor any Govt. Welfare scheme. He was having two unmarried sisters and a widow mother with him. He was a daily wage labour and after his death others at home started begging regularly nearby areas and managing themselves with that only.
2.	Dhrubaraj Garia	Tribal Community, Bhainsha village of Patnagarh block, Bolangir district	The deceased was died due to hunger and starvation and his rest of the five family members are also suffering with hunger. Though the diseased was more than 60 years and having no land, but the GP never thought to add them in Old Age Pension rather they are in the APL list. The family does not have a single income

Sl. No	Kind of violation	Community/Area	Narration of case
			holder now for which the maintenance of that family is highly difficult.
3.	Starvation death of Annapurna Bagarti	Tribal Community, Bolangir Municipality area, ward no-15, Bolangir District	Annapurna Bagarti (70 years) old lady was neither enlisted in BPL list nor any other Govt. Welfare scheme. Nearest shopkeepers were giving her food sometimes, as she did not have any one of her own. Neither the district administration nor even the ward counsellor looked into the matter at all. Without having food and treatment the old lady died finally
4.	Starvation death of Natha Mallick	Schedule Caste Community, Rahasaguhali village of Kapila GP of Binjharpur block of Jajpur district.	During visit it was found that the deceased has died due to old age and illness. Although he was so old but he was not getting old age pension and PDS items despite having a BPL card in his name. And from last five years the PDS dealer was lifting his rations by giving his duplicate thumb signature.
5	Starvation Death of Bipin Ada (65 years)	Tribal Community, Bandhakani village of Pallahara block, Angul district	Bipin died after surviving for five months in starvation and disease. His four children were unable to buy PDS rice despite having a BPL card and dependent on other's supports and even on alms. His wife also died in similar circumstances three months ago. The family was unable to do the treatment of Bipin due to lack of resources and he died in this process.
6	Starvation Death of Budhu Munda (40 years)	Tribal Community of Bandhakani village of Pallahara block, Angul district	Budhu Munda (40 years) had one son and three daughters and was managing his family in a very difficult situation. Though he had a job card but he was not getting any work under it.
7.	Severely Acute Malnutrition & ICDS	Tribal Communities of Mali Bisali, Chikambo, Goudachema, Podagada of four GPs of Dashamantapur block, Koraput district. And	Though these SAM children has already been referred to Primary Health Centres several times but still in Red Zone but never been to NRCs as they are not fulfilling few criteria of NRC admission which can be a reason for loss of their life. Also the choosing of children's health

Sl. No	Kind of violation	Community/Area	Narration of case
		Gunia Bahal, Barbagha, Barjhula, Bharat Bahal, Suliamal, Indpur, Larambha, Ghasian villages of four GPs of Patnagarh block, Bolangir district.	zone is only based on their weight and Age which may not be appropriate for taking their condition seriously.  Also there is lack of awareness about NRC within the Anganwadi workers.
8.	Displacement and food security	Mostly ST dominated villages of Jhalkusum, Lamipani and Kalimati Nuapada district.	After their displacement due to the “Lower Indra Irrigation Project”, The BPL, APL DPs families have not been provided their rice under PDS, due to the negligence of the civil supply department and the administration.  Anganwadi centres etc. are not functioning in the fully submerged/affected villages.  No proper school building is hampering the MDM programme as well.
9.	Displacement and Education	Mostly ST dominated villages of Jhalkusum, Lamipani and Kalimati Nuapada district.	Due to the “Lower Indra Irrigation Project”, The new school in the shifted place has not been constructed yet and the old school is not functioning now. Only the substitute school is having only one room for class up to 5 in which half of the student are sitting in the room and other half is in Verandahs having only two teachers. In this way the future of the small children is clearly in darkness. But the state Govt. is still not considering this issue though long years has been passed

The response from the state government has been quite encouraging as the communication was done in a collaborative mode with the aim of equipping the government with information in terms of evidences to help take decisive actions instead of pursuing a blame-game exercise.



# A Cross-country Matrix on Observations and Actions for Future

Country and Organisation	Location, Issues and Observations	What is to be done?
<p><b>Philippines</b></p> <p><b>Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTUHR)</b></p>	<p><b>Manila / Worker's Rights in Urban areas and Labor's Unionisation.</b></p> <p>Government evicts people without giving any alternate or rehabilitation package in urban areas in rainy season by citing a reason that the houses are in bad condition and need to be demolished.</p> <p>Collaborating with AHRC/ALRC since 2008. AHRC helped in developing understanding on Human Rights and UN Mechanism.</p> <p>Strong understanding on political economy and role of state-corporate nexus in human rights violations.</p> <p>It is difficult to start data collection when actually the eviction is going on. We usually act when incident is happening. We need to be well prepared with skilled human resources in our team with knowledge.</p> <p>We should build the capacity of our own team and AHRC/ALRC can be of great support.</p> <p>CTUHR is strong on its work on eviction and labor right, but there is a need to link their understanding with right to food and collective action.</p> <p>There are food programs run by the Government of Philippines (National Food Authority), but organisations working with most marginalized sections of the society have not looked into such programs.</p>	<p>Cadre building support by providing training / capacity building inputs on documentation and evidence collection.</p> <p>Continued discourse on the conceptual framework on right to food, public health, nutrition, maternity entitlements and social security.</p> <p>Efforts to creating linkages with other movements and organisations.</p> <p>Policy analysis – Urban development, eviction and rehabilitation, master plan etc.</p> <p>There are some progressive laws that exist in Philippines – Poverty Alleviation Act (Republic Act No. 8425.), Protection against Child Abuse, exploitation and discrimination (Republic Act No. 7610). Advocacy actions must also focus on the proper implementation of these laws and existing state institutions such as National Anti-Poverty Commission and Social Security System.</p>

Country and Organisation	Location, Issues and Observations	What is to be done?
<p><b>Philippines</b></p> <p><b>Workers Assistance Center (WAC)</b></p>	<p><b>Cavite Export Processing Zone / Worker's Rights in EPZ.</b></p> <p>Conducted a baseline survey on the status of food security in 2012-13. However, the results were not used under the program for influencing the policy.</p> <p>This project was established with a promise that it will generate employment for local people, but in reality only 15% jobs are given to local people.</p> <p>Most of the workers are not permanent workers. So they are insecure and can be fired any time.</p> <p>The workers who come from other provinces live in very inhuman conditions. One person lives in an area of 20 to 25 sq. feet and in unhygienic conditions.</p> <p>All workers, even women, have to fill logbook for going to washroom.</p> <p>2 months' maternity leave is given, but after that they have to come back to work and they cannot bring infants / young children to the worksite, which deprives children under the age of six months from exclusive breast feeding.</p> <p>Those who raise voice against exploitation, company management retaliates by restricting the food supply to them.</p> <p>Workers' biggest expenditure is on health services, as employer or state does not consider it as their right.</p> <p>They don't get any leave, they are paid according to number of working days, so if they fall ill, they spend huge money on treatment and on the other hand they lose wages as well.</p>	<p>Their baseline survey report / data needs to be utilized for advocacy purposes.</p> <p>A status report from the perspective of labor rights, gender discrimination, living conditions, availability of basic services, concerns relating to labor, food and social security laws, food-nutrition security and primary health issues should be prepared.</p> <p>A position paper and conceptual framework note linking labor and food rights for right to life with dignity are required to be drafted.</p> <p>While working on Right to Food, right to safe drinking water, human living conditions and sanitation facilities must also be asked for.</p>
<p><b>Philippines</b></p> <p><b>Defend Job Philippines (DJP)</b></p>	<p><b>Floating Community, Freedom Island of Paranaque City and Luneta Park in Manila.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>75 families of fisher folks living in floating community have been displaced and rehabilitated to a 50 KM away rehabilitation site in Hugo Perez village (Hogen Horizon blocks), where these families have been allotted a 240 sq feet house for family of any size. This location does not provide any livelihood option to</li> </ol>	<p>Defend Job Philippines is a unique women-led organization and has grown with an organic process. They survive with the small support from solidarity groups and community contribution. It is worth mentioning fact that DJP believes that AHRC/ALRC's</p>

Country and Organisation	Location, Issues and Observations	What is to be done?
	<p>these families and now they have to live in a situation where there is no employment security, which was there on the coasts. In new challenging situation, they go to Metro Manila in search of work. People say now they have to skip one full meal in the absence of job.</p> <p>2. There were 81 vendors earning their livelihood in and around famous Luneta Park in Manila. National Parks Development Committee by involving police force started forceful eviction in Year 2013. There was no settlement plan for them. Defend Job Philippine raised this matter with the support of AHRC/ALRC. The evidence and rights based efforts made an impact and eviction process was stopped. Not only this, first time had ever Government authorities started involving vendor community in the process of master plan preparation. The most important outcome is that community feels empowered now.</p>	<p>role in their struggle is very crucial and important. They are not a partner of AHRC/ALRC structurally but even then they are constantly sharing the cases and information with it, because it is making an impact and creating a protective shield for the most marginalized community.</p> <p>While selecting any organisation as partner (especially for providing financial support), AHRC/ALRC should design a set of selection criteria by following these broad based indicators – Organization’s commitment, Their interest in engagement with an regional organisation, interest in follow-up and self-initiated interventions.</p> <p>Needs of an organisation should also be evaluated; in some cases partner organization may not need financial support, as they may have other sources of funding, but in some cases partner may be in need of financial assistance. There should be process to justify financial support to any organization. DJP, however, is an organisation, which should be supported financially.</p>
<p><b>Nepal</b> <b>FIAN Nepal</b></p>	<p>AHRC/ALRC started working with FIAN Nepal in March 2010. FIAN decided to work in geographically far located district</p>	<p>There is a need for systematic approach for Nepal program –</p>

Country and Organisation	Location, Issues and Observations	What is to be done?
	<p>Mugu on the right of Dalit community.</p> <p>As far as the matter of violation of right to food is concerned, Mugu was the right place for any such intervention but the fact is that FIAN did not have a base there and after getting into partnership with AHRC/ALRC, it started focusing in this area and made 5 visits. Logistically it was a tough area to begin with.</p> <p>There was no Nepal Country RtF Program in place in AHRC/ALRC, so it was the Right to Food Program RtF Program which had to decide the intervention in the absence of country RtF Program.</p> <p>It was clear to the organisation that there is a complete silence on the issue of poverty and hunger in Nepal. There is no official definition of poverty and set of indicators prepared the state. AHRC wanted to create an environment for discourse and debate by bringing evidence-based field cases at the regional / international fora.</p> <p>FIAN also raised the cases of Hunger from Gandharva Community</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A situation analysis of hunger and poverty along with the policy and state institutional framework.</li> <li>b. Establish dynamic linkages between right to food and discrimination issues/ dalit issues.</li> <li>c. Discussion/Folk school/Training / capacity building sessions with the leadership of partner organization and their team at different levels.</li> <li>d. Systematic identification of partners using certain indicators is called for.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Jagran Media Center (JMC), Nepal</b></p>	<p>JMC is working mainly on developing community media network and for the protection of human rights of dalit communities in Nepal.</p> <p>A workshop on ESCR together with Nepal Desk in May 2012. The three-day workshop was attended by around 20 voluntary organizations including both pan-Nepal organizations. The workshop helped us in establishing partnerships with these organizations.</p> <p>Our work with JMC, a Dalit rights groups making use of information technologies for furthering the cause has helped establishing the linkages between caste-based discrimination, disentanglements, and hunger. In other words, the work in Nepal has started exploring the political economy of hunger and challenging the structural impediments that hinder peoples' access to right to food.</p>	<p>JMC should be involved in RTF program as they can contribute in multiple aspects – Community Media can be used for consolidating voice of the people and civil society on hunger and poverty in Nepal; and JMC has a capacity to establish dalit's right to food issue there.</p> <p>It is important to have a series of discussions with civil society organisations and community to come out with an approach paper and policy brief on the present state policies on Right to Food.</p>

Country and Organisation	Location, Issues and Observations	What is to be done?
		Engage with the constitution making bodies for including these component as fundamental right.
<b>India Center for Equity Studies (CES)</b>	<p>CES is a prime research and knowledge generation organisation addressing the aspects of social exclusion and right of the most marginalized in India. It also functions as secretariat to commissioners on Right to Food in India.</p> <p>The CES conducted a three-day workshop in March 2012 with leading members of the Right to food Campaign of India including several State Advisers to the Supreme Court's Commissioners on Right to Food. The idea of the workshop was borne out of its work with local partners, several of whom are state advisors themselves and aimed at finding issues where they could contribute to each other. As a follow up to this workshop, the programme hosted another consultation with the leading members of the Right to Food Campaign as well as State Advisors to the Supreme Court's Commissioners on Right to Food in December 2012. The workshop culminated in a proper roadmap of collaboration and working together for strengthening the right to food struggle in India.</p> <p>One of the most important of these outcomes was an agreement over the programme supporting digitalization and documentation of the Supreme Court case on the issue that has been running for more than a decade. This is very important for the fact that the case, first in the developing world, has played a pivotal role in legalizing the Right to Food as a judiciable right and can be adapted in many other countries for the same purpose.</p>	<p>The report, which is yet to be finalized, should be used by AHRC/ALRC across Asia, because it can be a great support for organizations to understand the right to food movement in India.</p>
<b>Spandan (Khandwa, India)</b>	<p>Spandan is a grass root organisation based in Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh.</p> <p>AHRC association with Spandan dates back to 2009. The case of 62 children having died due to malnutrition across just two dozen villages in 2008 was brought to its notice. Government was in absolute denial mode and was acting merely on a relief mode. Wherever there was a media report of hunger and malnutrition or deaths; the local Administration was spurred to act in relief mode: just transporting severe acute</p>	<p>There are limitations, due to which, grassroots organisations do not raise issues through hunger alert. This case shows that if an organisation is working towards creating a model institution on any of the Right to Food aspects (ICDS Center in Spandan's case, it becomes difficult for</p>

Country and Organisation	Location, Issues and Observations	What is to be done?
	<p>malnourished (SAM) children to Nutrition Rehab Centers or running makeshift health camps. The underlying problems of the victim families (ones having lost the children) like lack of food at home, lack of adequate employment, lack of health and hygiene facilities at village or at a reasonable accessibility , the poor infrastructure or functioning of Anganwadi; their indebtedness , migration or lack of adequate public employment were not looked into at all.</p> <p>AHRC intervened by issuing an Hunger Alert and prompting the government to look into the issue seriously and provide immediate remedies to victims and think long term to address it squarely. This led the local administration to visit the victim families and look at the problems beyond mere emergency relief. It was the first time that local Administration provided most subsidized food ration cards to these families and began public employment in some villages. Besides top ranking district officials visited some of the remotest villages and motivated and assisted the families with SAM children to be carried to the Nutrition Rehab Centers. Importantly the District Women &amp; Child Development department reported AHRC about the corrective and new measures adopted to address the integrated child development through its network of rural Anganwadi centers.</p> <p>AHRC intervention broadened with hunger alerts for more districts issued and action demanded from the respective governments. It included Satna, Rewa and Shivpuri districts.</p> <p>The AHRC and Right to Food Campaign interface led to identification of certain critical areas that needs to be strengthened to work more effectively with AHRC India Desk on the Right to Food among poor. This included: capacity enhancement of grass roots activists and organization on case documentation, having broadened perspective on hunger and starvation; participation in national level campaign for food policy amends. A field program support was also thought of for Spandan to further its Advocacy efforts for the food rights of Korku tribe it works with.</p> <p>The main objectives of the program were -</p>	<p>the organisation to collaborate with the state government of local bodies, as they become defensive towards such organization.</p> <p>AHRC/ALRC might have a dialogue on operational challenges faced by the local or grassroots partner organisation after or while releasing Hunger Alerts.</p>

Country and Organisation	Location, Issues and Observations	What is to be done?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient the field level activists to report cases of violation of the Right to Food.</li> <li>• Document cases of Right to Food Violation in five districts along with other cases of violation with regard to gender based discrimination, corruption, land rights and distress migration.</li> <li>• Organize grass roots activities and campaigns with participation of vulnerable communities and build pressure on the government and to bring positive change and to ensure the food security of the poor.</li> <li>• Generate Public debates on government programs, policies and failures and involve local media and apprise the government agencies.</li> <li>• Carry out joint campaigns and lobbying activities with the likeminded.</li> <li>• Support and supplement work of AHRC in India.</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <p>Baseline Survey: An intensive survey was conducted across 41 Villages and 288 families were identified that face acute household hunger and worst in certain months of the year.</p> <p>Korku Food Rights Campaign: Korku being nutritionally vulnerable, a Campaign has been launched to generate grassroots demand and wide public and civil society discussion on the issue; a series of street plays were organized across 50 villages to initiate a community discussion on hunger and malnutrition.</p> <p>Malnutrition Monitoring: Spandan has been proactively monitoring the severe acute malnourished children (SAM children) in the villages it is involved. The field workers have been trained in using Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) tapes to assess the malnutrition among Korku children. Such identified children are brought to the notice of Women &amp; Child Development Department for referral and follow up.</p> <p>NREGS in Khalwa: during the month of November 2010 an assessment was made of the NREGS functioning in the region. Data collected from the field and secondary sources showed the dismal state of NREGS in the region.</p>	

# Organisational aspects

It is evident that ALRC has made efficient and concrete efforts to raise cases (in the form of urgent appeals and hunger alerts), establish a network of organisation, which is more informed and capable in changing the situation in their own context and create evidence-based knowledge base on Hunger and Food insecurity by including some of the larger dimensions and structural causes of hunger. Along with it, the evaluation process also looked into the organizational aspects of this program. The following structural aspects were focused –

- **Identification of partners and functioning**
- **Coordination with country RtF Programs**
- **Receiving cases and updates**
- **Dialogue with partners**
- **Capacity building**
- **Monitoring and Follow-up mechanism**
- **In-depth analysis and documentation**

## Identification of partners and functioning

It learned from the initial interventions of AHRC that there was no structured effort for the identification of partners in working countries. It was a conscious decision. On the one hand, this strategy gave opportunity to AHRC/ALRC to go to a country situation without any assumption and prejudice, on the other hand it forced organisation to keep its RTF Framework very open and unstructured. There were as many as 11 cases raised from India until 2009-10 on Hunger and Livelihood insecurity, but due to lack of a comprehensive program, these cases were not followed up. Certainly, it can also be said that through these cases AHRC could bring Hunger cases out from the border of a country. It is an example that proved that hunger grows its roots in caste and in the environment of social exclusion. Furthermore, market created new challenges for weavers in Varanasi. The crisis was aggravated for the weavers, who belonged to religious minorities with the state neglecting their pain and making no efforts for framing protective policies, particularly for dalit and minority weavers.

AHRC/ALRC has worked with 11 partners in four countries –

- a. Philippines – Workers Assistance Center, Center for Trade Union and Human Rights and Defend Job Philippines
- b. India – Center for Equity Studies / Office of the Commissioners on Right to Food, Spandan, and Advisor's Office in Orissa, Vikas Samvad, Spandan and PVCHR.
- c. Nepal – FIAN and Jagran Media Center
- d. Bangladesh – Khan Muhammad Rustam Ali

The learnings prove that in majority of cases, informal partners (having no particular agreement between the two) responded with more seriousness and believed that AHRC/ALRC's role/support is very useful in protecting people from starvation and marginalization in their respective communities. On the other hand, funded (although volume of the funding was not huge) partners could not respond according to the expectation or as per the need of the community. There are examples, where



organisations were supported with financial resources, but they did not contribute in raising the issues of acute poverty, discrimination, and hunger, whereas in the same country, non-funded organisation made all efforts to utilize the strengths of AHRC/ALRC. This issues in not being discussed here for raising any question on integrity of any organisation, but it is surely a matter for the purpose of result-oriented management of Right to Food Program.

Once the organisations were mapped, it was a natural expectation that they will share field situation with ALRC/AHRC and will be released as Hunger Alert. Most of the field organisations or their field workers did not have command over English language. In such a situation, the biggest challenge was to get correct information and sense of the matter. In such a situation, role of the country RtF Program was very important. Somehow, RTF Program faced critical challenges in managing this limitation.

During the evaluation exercise, it was informed by some of the field organisations that Hunger Alert or Urgent Appeals are to be made to raise an immediate issue, may be in a situation of forceful eviction or displacement, but in the same situations, we, as field organisation get stuck in agitation or counseling people, or in arranging immediate help to affected families and do not get a chance for collecting specific data. On the other hand, few organisations were clear that both the tasks could be handled simultaneously, if capacities are built.

It is clear from such experiences that efforts for building capacities of documentation will be useful. Along with it, folk schools for bringing more clarity on dimensions of poverty, hunger, and any other human rights issue should organized more frequently.

## **Coordination between country RtF Programs**

It is necessary issue for discussion because primarily country desk is in a position to connect the RTF Program with the existing partners and ongoing human rights issues in the respective countries. There should have been a strategic activity and planning framework prepared by Right to Food Program in coordination with Country Program. At some level, lack of collaboration exists between these two. As per the structure, there is only one person looking after the entire program. In such a situation, it cannot be assumed that ALRC will be able to follow a very comprehensive plan.

During discussions with Country Program and Right to Food Programme, it is observed that Country Programs were not very actively participating in the program. Sometimes, they had a feeling that this program is interference in their ongoing work. Whereas, while analyzing the 52 Urgent Appeals and Hunger Alerts, It is clear that almost all the issues / cases raised by the Country RtF Programs could have a strong mention / integration of Right to Food.

In Philippines, Natural Calamity – Typhoon, Labor Right in Cavite Export Processing Zone, Eviction from Freedom Island, Eviction in Urban Settlements; all have strong elements of Right to Food violations, but it is clear that due to lack of coordination, this issue could not be raised strongly.

In the present context of poverty debates, there is an urgent need to intervene in the processes defining the concept and indicators of Poverty across the Asian countries (See Annexure - 3). Most of countries are manipulating the expenditure related indicators as well as there are efforts for establishing the theory that now, because of infrastructural development, people need less amount of food for survival. AHRC/ALRC has been able to contribute in the debate by releasing articles and statements in the context of India, where Right to Food organisations are struggling hard to change the mindset of the policy

makers. On the other hand, Nepal is still not having exact data on poverty. Philippines is following the concept of relative poverty and framework of self-rated hunger.

## **Receiving cases and updates**

It is recognized that there can be different opportunities in different contexts. The Jagran Media Center in Nepal is a media advocacy organisation working on dalit rights and for strengthening of democracy there. They run 400 community radio centers and having a strong network of 4000 citizen journalists, who also belong to the most marginalized section the society. Along with the support of AHRC/ALRC, JMC conducted a baseline survey on the status of dalit community and malnutrition in Saptari district. It was an effort, which helped JMC in understanding the issue from its roots and how issues for Hunger Alerts need to be brought out.

On the one hand WAC in Philippines' was working on labor rights with AHRC/ALRC, Right to Food RtF Program, in partnership with them conducted a baseline survey to understand the extent of hunger among households living in Cavite Export Processing Zone. Defend Job Philippines constantly shared the cases from their work in urban settlements.

Spandan in India has been working on this issue for more than 12 years, got it right immediately and since it was already undertaking advocacy activities at local level, they started sharing cases and information for Hunger Alerts.

There have been some challenges of language, data collection methods and clarity on what is to be reported;

## **Dialogue with partners**

Folk schools have been primary mode for having dialogue with partners in different countries. As a regular practice, Right to Food Program Coordinator established dialogue over phone or his / her visit to the respective country. Mostly it has been a one to one dialogue exercise. In the next phase, it will be useful to organize country specific partners meeting / folk schools every year.

## **Capacity building**

There was an absence of any debate / dialogue among civil society organisations on right to food in some parts of this region. It is found that after AHRC/ALRC's interventions in Nepal and Philippines, various organisations are discussing plight of hunger in their own context. In India, AHRC/ALRC could provide a tool to collect evidences on right to food and its violation, even though there was a strong right to food campaign in place. It thus helped in reinforcing the agenda on hunger. There is a need to continue this effort in different countries, keeping their situation and environment in view.

## **Monitoring and follow-up mechanism**

It is clear that partner's commitment and clarity on the issue is very crucial for the proper - result oriented monitoring of the situation and follow-up any particular case. This should be the main criteria for getting into partnership with any organisation. A three-layered approach can be adopted –

1. Self-initiative by an organisation for raising any case

2. Promptness to look into its impact or otherwise
3. Follow-up in any of the situations

There is also a factor of state's pressure on partner organisation or social activist. For this purpose also, continuous follow-up is important. It is learned from the evaluation process that there are partners who actually fall under this three-layered approach. They show their respect towards the work of AHRC/ALRC by making proactive interventions. And in response to it, AHRC/ALRC made all sensitive effort to maintain partnership by getting involved with them in their struggle. This is also a strong reason for AHRC/ALRC to move into next and long-term phase of Right to Food program.

### **In-depth analysis and documentation**

There is no other source where anyone would get evidences and knowledge on right to food – hunger issues for different countries, except AHRC/ALRC's website (<http://www.humanrights.asia/>) and their publications. AHRC / ALRC use all their learnings and interventions (Hunger Alerts/Updates etc) in making its Annual Human Rights Report rich in terms of content and in-depth analysis. A concrete analysis was provided in the 2013 Human Rights Report on the status of Right to Food in different Asian Countries.

Along with it they also release articles written by activists working on this issue. Interestingly AHRC/ALRC has also started releasing articles in Hindi since 2012 and this step attracted more grassroot organisations to their work.

Statements on specific incident, situation, and policy reflects the depth of understating of this organisation. When, a perspective is searched, content of AHRC website provides a direction.

In next step, AHRC/ALRC may think of preparing a country/community focused situation analysis document, approach paper, and analysis of policy framework.

# RtF Program - Evaluation Matrix

Input	Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
<p><b>Human Resource</b></p> <p>Asian Human Rights Commission appointed One Program Coordinator to look after Right to Food RtF Program/Program.</p> <p>Jin Ju (who came to AHRC as intern from South Korea, joined the portfolio after completing internship tenure until mid 2012.).</p> <p>Avinash Pandey (who came as intern twice to AHRC from India, later in 2012 joined as PC.) took responsibility to work as Program Coordinator. He had worked with the right to food campaign associates/organisations in India for 8 Years. Along with it, he also had proper academic understating of hunger and poverty issues in India and other Asian countries.</p> <p><b>Focused intervention</b></p>	<p><b>Mapping of CSOs</b> was done by four means –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coordination / discussion with country RtF Programs (WAC in Philippines, FIAN in Nepal).</li> <li>2. By visiting countries and meeting with several organisations (Defend Jod Philippines, Spandan in India).</li> <li>3. Folk school (Vikas Samvad in India).</li> <li>4. By engaging / participating in programs/ efforts being made by various organisations (JADS in India and other people's organisations).</li> </ol> <p><b>Strengthen partnership</b></p> <p>Close work with partners in documenting cases, assisting victims, producing analytical materials for domestic and International campaigns.</p> <p><b>Folk Schools</b></p> <p>AHRC conducted 5 folk schools in and around this program, 2 in India, 1 in Philippines, 1 in Pakistan and 1 in Nepal. A total 112 participants from 30 organisations participated in it. AHRC provided knowledge and</p>	<p><b>Process</b> - As a first intervention, under this program, Right To Food RtF Program coordinated with the Country's RtF Programs within the organisation.</p> <p>Primarily those CSOs were identified, who were already working on the Human Rights Issues with AHRC.</p> <p>There were efforts to get RTF component incorporated in existing program.</p> <p><b>Partnerships</b> - Secondly, RTF RtF Program made efforts to identify organisations/groups working on the issue of right to food, if there are any.</p> <p>In India, in initial phase they identified PVCHR as key partner, but later on, due to organizational integrity related issues, AHRC did not move with this partnership beyond a certain level.</p> <p>In the meanwhile, during a folk school in India in 2010, AHRC could successfully identify credible organisations working as a part of Right to Food Campaign in India. That partnership is continuing now for last 4 years.</p> <p>FIAN was identified for partnership looking at their work on RTF internationally.</p> <p>In India AHRC established partnership at 2 levels – Organisations working on RTF and partnership with institutions, such as state advisors and RTF Commissioners.</p> <p>In Philippines, organisations working on eviction and labor rights issues became partner.</p> <p>In Bangladesh, One of the interns, after going back to country became partner.</p> <p>In Nepal, AHRC is collaborating with 3</p>	<p><b>A knowledgebase is created</b></p> <p>AHRC/ALRC has created a strong knowledge base on the issue of Hunger and Right to Food. Their website done not provide a sense only for one country, or one context or one dimension of Hunger; it provides multidimensional understanding on the issue, especially from the perspective of Labor Rights, Chronic Hunger, Childhood Hunger, Caste and Gender discrimination, eviction and displacement and larger aspects of political economy.</p> <p><b>Investigating and Monitoring Hunger situation by engaging with partners</b></p> <p>AHRC has made strong contribution in preparing its partners in investigation of hunger situation at the community level.</p> <p>Under this program, AHRC/ALRC documented –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 Hunger Alerts in 2010.</li> <li>• 12 HAC, 4 HAG, and 3 HAU in 2011.</li> <li>• 6 HAC and 2 HAU in 2012</li> <li>• 12 HAC, 3 HAG, and</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contribution in debate and discussion</b></p> <p>AHRC/ALRC's Right to Food Program has made significant contribution in making Hunger issues of discussion and debate in Nepal and Philippines.</p> <p><b>Media taking it up</b></p> <p>It is worth mentioning that mainstream media is now constantly analyzing and linking the context of Hunger with development issues, especially urban housing, eviction and natural calamities.</p> <p><b>Governments and State Institutions responded –</b></p> <p>Governments recognized the seriousness of Hunger Alerts and Updates in different occasions. AHRC received responses from governments in –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 cases (Philippines and India) in 2010</li> <li>• 6 cases (India and Pakistan) in 2011</li> <li>• 3 cases (India) in 2012 &amp;</li> <li>• 6 cases (India, Bangladesh &amp; Philippines) in 2013.</li> </ul>

Input	Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
<p>After looking at immensity of this program, AHRC decided to focus on three countries – India, Nepal and Philippines. There were programmatic efforts for creating a base in Bangladesh as well.</p> <p><b>Communities were in focus</b></p> <p>Fisher Folks, Street Vendors, Mairginalised and Excluded by caste and geographical locations, Women and Children, Urban Poor, Indigenous Communities and facing state repression.</p> <p><b>Hunger Alert and Knowledge dissemination</b></p> <p>This was found to be an appropriate approach, as interventions on Right to Food involve a lot of significant preparations and follow-ups. AHRC applied its existing framework of activities – Urgent Appeals, Hunger Alerts, and Statements. Along</p>	<p>perspective based inputs to the grassroots organisations on the history of human rights, its linkages with social change, existing mechanisms at national and international level.</p> <p><b>Capacity building</b></p> <p>It is important to mention that a partner organisation Vikas Samvad in India, under the guidance of AHRC expertise prepared a format for grassroots workers. Organisations to collect authentic and in-depth information / data on hunger, poverty, marginalization, discrimination, and social exclusion.</p> <p><b>Case Documentation and follow-up</b></p> <p>Hunger Alert Case, Hunger Alert General, and Hunger Alert Updates were regularly released.</p> <p>Baseline survey and rapid assessment of state programs on food and social security.</p> <p><b>Sharing and Dissemination</b></p> <p>Cases and Situational analysis documents were immediately shared with justice institution and disseminated at local, national, and international level.</p>	<p>organisations.</p> <p><b>Interventions</b> – Under this program, 2 baseline surveys were conducted in Nepal and Philippines that gave an in-depth understanding on hunger and poverty issues in respective countries.</p> <p>On the other hand, India, Odisha based organisations conducted two studies on the status of implementation of food-livelihood schemes. These documents are found to be strong evidences from the field.</p> <p>AHRC/ALRC has Right to Food Commissioners Office as partner in India. Under this partnership AHRC/ALRC providing support to the Indian partner in creating a comprehensive data base with analysis of legal and civil society intervention in India. One noted that public interest litigation was filed by People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) in Supreme Court of India for the protection of people’s right to food and make state institutions accountable. This is one of the most important mandamus cases for the protection of any human right across the world. Most important aspect of this matter is, Supreme Court of India created a system to monitor the implementation of its orders and situation of hunger in 2002. For this purpose, two Commissioners to the Supreme Court were appointed and these commissioners were to appoint advisers in each state for assistance. This institution (office of the commissioners) have submitted 11 reports to the apex court, generated 50 case reports, un-counted number of letters to the central and state governments etc. Their work has been very effectual and astonishing, but it not documented properly. ALRC/AHRC providing support to them in creating a data base and proper documentation, so that this learnings of collective and multi-dimensional intervention civil society movement – judicial intervention – commissioners mechanism and informed-</p>	<p>8 HAU in 2013.</p> <p>India: The state had to intervene proactively in Shivpuri and Sheopur districts of Madhya Pradesh. The cases were investigated by National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, as well as provincial government. The state is now proactively engaged in fighting widespread malnutrition.</p> <p>Widespread reproduction of AHRC statements, articles, and Hunger alerts in local media forcing the government to act.</p> <p>AHRC emerges as a resource center to look forward to its interventions.</p> <p><b>Community’s Involvement</b></p> <p>There are good practices of participation of hunger-affected community in Hunger Alert preparation processes.</p> <p><b>Generating in-depth knowledge</b></p> <p>18 in-depth articles analyzing situation, causes and policy components relating to hunger</p>	<p>Local Partners get more adept at documentation of private grievance with relevant legal issues and clauses.</p> <p>Dissemination of grassroots information regarding Right to Food violations has forced the Government of Philippines respond to our interventions positively and regularly.</p> <p><b>Community Leadership</b></p> <p>Affected community has gained faith (Example – Luneta Park Case) and confidence in AHRC’s intervention, once their eviction was stopped after Hunger Alerts were released.</p> <p><b>Engaging with most credible RTF Movement</b></p> <p>This would be a landmark achievement as the camping in India is the first in the developing world, and can play a pivotal role in legalizing the Right to Food as a judicable right.</p>

Input	Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
<p>with that, analytical articles were also published and shared widely.</p>	<p>Continuous dissemination of information inside and outside the countries.</p> <p><b>Field Visits</b></p> <p>Visits of AHRC/ALRC's RtF Program Coordinator and Respective Desk persons have contributed in building in-depth understanding of the organisation and immensely supported in raising issue of Hunger from a political-economic-cultural perspective.</p>	<p>evidence based people's centered advocacy are made available to the world, especially to Human Rights Schools.</p> <p>The statements of victims and witnesses were recorded by the investigation agencies or Committees engaged by the State.</p> <p><b>Submissions to UN Human Rights Council</b></p> <p>ALRC made concrete presentation of Hunger situation in India, Nepal and Bangladesh due to lack of land reforms<sup>xiii</sup>.</p> <p><b>Visits in India</b></p> <p>Field Visit in dalit dominated Rewa district, in Madhya Pradesh, a district where more than 82 percent children are malnourished.</p> <p>The programme undertook a field visit to Gumti Hydro-Electric Project in South Tripura district in Tripura too see the extensive damages it has caused to the local ecosystem in addition to displacing a large number of people. The field visit resulted in long-term interaction and advocacy for the similar project affected people in the region.</p> <p>Another field visit in July to Gorakhpur in eastern Uttar Pradesh to understand the complications that let an easily curable disease Acute Encephalitis Syndrome kill thousands of children every year. The coordinator for the programme met various stakeholders in the area including the Principal of the B. R. D Medical College, the nodal institution for containing the disease. The final field visit for the year of the programme was undertaken in Khairyar of Nuapada district in Odisha. The field visit included extensive interactions with the community displaced by Lower Indra Irrigation Project as well as with the villages caught between the war between Maoist insurgency and state security forces.</p>	<p>7 statements on the issue of hunger and its linkages with eviction, displacements, corruption, negligence, and un-accountability were released.</p> <p><b>Utility of concept and framework of Hunger Alert</b></p> <p>The format prepared by AHRC partner is being used by 17 other organisations across 4 states on India. That has become a basis for hunger analysis.</p> <p><b>Credibility and Faith</b></p> <p>One the one hand AHRC/ALRC raised issues with evidences and understanding credentials of the case and interests behind them; on the other hand it was prompt in responding to the case/situation in emergencies.</p>	

Input	Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
		<p><b>Visits in Nepal</b></p> <p>A visit to several villages in the Mugu district including one in a dalit hamlet of Duma.</p> <p>Another field visit was taken in the Terai region of Nepal that borders India and is relatively much more fertile than the rest of Nepal. The visit included Balapur village in the Banke district that will be severally affected by the Banke National Park, Gandharva community spread over several districts in the region, Sonaha community that survives on Gold panning and fishing in karnali river and is now affected by Bardia National Park and so on.</p> <p>Following an ongoing intervention in partnership with the local partner in Mugu, Karnali division one of the most malnourished places in Nepal. The hunger situation there is compounded by the inaccessibility of the place and is accentuated by the rocky and barren lands coupled with hostile climate.</p> <p><b>Philippines</b></p> <p>A field visit covering many places in the Metro Manila, Cavite, and Rosario, where AHRC/ALRC's work has proved to be very useful, Program Coordinator interacted with the fisherfolk community living in the Freedom Islands in Paranaque city and documented their threats of being evicted in December 2012.</p>		

# Internship Program

## Objectives

1. Create a platform for learning – Human Rights and ways to struggle for the protection of Human rights.
2. To cater the needs of partner organisations of advanced human rights advocacy work.
3. To meet the requirements of respective country desk/program of AHRC/ALRC to be trained on human rights work.
4. Gain first hand insight in to local realities through country-specific experiences.

## Strategies

1. Partner recommendation
2. Involvement from non-partner segments as well such as universities, resource agencies, and academic institutions.
3. Training and Mentoring
4. Promotion of information collection and writing
5. Creative use of modern information communication technology.

## Principles

1. No obligation to work with the same organisation or human rights issues.
2. Respectful environment and equal behavior
3. Focus only on input, without being judgmental.

Nawthaw Zinhtun (Noreen) (22 Years) is an intern at AHRC/ALRC. She comes from Myanmar (Burma). She belongs to a family, where other members have fought for the rights of the people, justice, and restoration of democracy. They faced cruel responses from military junta, but continued their struggle. She came here as an intern for a period of one year. The most important thing is that she is learning new ways, which she was not aware of or equipped with, in raising voices of people. Noreen says, "I have, by myself, witnessed violence and torture back home in my country, and here I am learning how to present it, so that people in other parts of the world also know, what is happening there. Literally, making a Hunger Alert or Urgent Appeal is not a mechanical task, I have to devote myself with the case. When we receive information, I contact the local organisation or the person, who is the victim and listen to the story. It is not a job to tell or ask them, it is about listening to what she/he wants to tell. I have learned what information is needed and try to collect it. It is interesting that, if you want to get more information, one has to know about it and then only we have proper questions to be answered".



She is unable to sleep, when she recalls details of torture cases or works through the in-depth information on human rights violations. The pain of these people does not allow her to rest. She wakes up and continues her work. Noreen says, "When I came here, I was lacking hope that situation will change in my lifetime, but that is what I gained here. Now I know, our society is fighting there in Burma, but there are people and institutions outside the boundary of Burma, who can really play effective role in creating pressure on military junta or local governance institutions for not violating human rights. It is difficult for the local activist to talk about what is the truth; but in AHRC/ALRC we are able to tell the world. There was a case, in which a man was arrested for stealing food items and there was a murder case registered in the same police station. The police people tortured that person, who stole food for feeding his family under the circumstances of acute poverty, to a level when he agrees to say that he committed that murder. Police did it, because it wanted to prove that they have solved the case. A poor man was caught for stealing food but later on charged with in murder case, because he was the easy target for the system. I want to talk and cry on such cases, but will fight always. I am here for a year and I have decided, I will continue to work – evidence collection, documentation, dissemination and analysis of who is doing what and how we should resolve this situation".

She goes on to add. It has not been easy or even for any intern to be comfortable in an environment, which is very different from language to culture. I could learn English here, I work in a team because I participate in all discussions and debates within the organisation and the most important opportunity I get here is for writing. Everyone in the organisation promote interns to ask questions and write".

"Noreen is a stakeholder in AHRC/ALRC's Internship program, which was started in 1998 and till now it has facilitated 164 interns in last 16 Years. For the purpose of evaluation of the program for the period starting from 2010, 75 persons were identified for internship program. One intern did not come because of certain reason and rest 74 came and completed their internship. The main objective of Internship program is to gratify the need of partner organisations for building their capacities on International Framework for Intervention on Human Rights. Under this program, AHRC/ALRC call a staff member of a partner organisation for period between 3 months to one year and train them on advanced human rights advocacy processes by using modern information communication technologies. It is an important program, because these people play a constructive role in Urgent Appeal / Hunger Alert program by communicating with local organisations, individuals and victims. Their capability in communicating in native language is very crucial. On the other hand, they are very prominent part of regular programs because they contribute as well. It is clear from the program framework that Internship is also designed to meet the respective country desks/country programs within the AHRC/ALRC, so that they get a person who is committed for human rights work, to be trained on human rights work at larger level, so that when s/he goes back, they are able to provide strong support to their own organisation and also AHRC's interventions in the respective countries."

The evaluator observes that out of the 15 sampled cases of Interns, seven remained with their organisation for a period of one year or more and the rest left the organisation but continued to work on social issues. Accordingly, the Internship Program can be viewed from the following three aspects:

- a. The AHRC/ALRC has trained the Interns with skills, techniques, and perspective. Thus, the trained persons will carry their insight and heightened competence with them wherever they work. The input thus goes a long way in furthering the course of human rights protection in

different modes and forms of intervention. By all means, the Internship Program is laudable in building human capacities in taking forward the interventions pertaining to observance of human rights from a strategic point of view.

- b. If the trained Intern has left the organisation, the sponsoring organisation will be deprived of the imbibed learning from the program. To that extent, possibly, the AHRC/ALRC may like to consider ways and means through which the trained Intern could transfer and disseminate her/his learning for the organisation. May be, one may consider having continued loose linkages between the organisation and the trained Intern.
- c. Interns, while they are here in AHRC/ALRC, contribute immensely in making UA/HA program successful. In this way, they do become natural and extended arms of the human rights movement as such. For example, Noreen is placed here since May 2014 and she has prepared 10 Urgent Appeals from Burma, which is a noticeable work.

The AHRC/ALRC inform that there is no mechanism to follow-up with every individual intern, their work or association or placement in their home country. It has been developed in an organic process, where they are not monitored what they are doing, but eventually allowed to decide at their own. In today's environment, where every intervention/program is strictly gripped with measurable outcomes and impact indicators, such kind of structure may be appreciated, because it gives a space to the individuals to think and decide.

As far as selection process is concerned, Interns are recommended by the partner organisation, looking upon the skill and capacities of the individual, Vikas Samvad (India) recommended Rolly Shivhare. She successfully contributed in the Right to Food, and Human Rights work after coming back to Vikas Samvad. Vikas Samvad is an advocacy and support organisation and regularly facilitates fact-finding missions. Rolly Shivhare, while designing fact-finding mission for any incident or case, uses Urgent Appeal framework and keeps cautious attention on the correctness of data and facts. Actually, after a point, it depends on the partner organisation, how best contribution is ensured from the intern.

While talking to the organisation and activists in Philippines, it is observed that Internship is a very useful and important intervention from their perspective. There is limited number of persons, who can go for it, whereas number of interested persons is relatively high. Defend Job Philippine is very active partner of AHRC/ALRC there, but they did not get a chance to send any of their staff for the internship program, because of limited space. It is observed that while selecting interns, limited attention is given for the activeness of the partner organisation vis-à-vis AHRC/ALRC's program. It will be good to engage in an in-depth discussion with the partner organisation, as well as the candidate before making a final decision within the framework of the existing unstructured process of selection of interns.

It is observed that though the Interns at AHRC/ALRC participate in almost all the programs and organisation meetings and they are allowed to share their views openly, but since the senior staff is relatively more equipped with the knowledge and expression skills, they consume most of the time in consultations. It would be good for the seniors to intervene in the program processes such that the expressiveness of the Interns is effectively optimized.

# Evaluation Matrix - Internship Program

The matrix below captures the salient features of the Internship Program:

Input	Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
<p><b>Internship Program</b></p> <p>This program plays a very important role for making a base for AHRC/ALRC's work on Human Rights and Justice.</p> <p>Interns prior to becoming a part of AHRC/ALRC's internship program largely have a background of working on human rights issues and have potential to continue their work in future.</p> <p>Identification of interns is done by country RtF Programs in coordination / consultation with specific partners.</p> <p>While planning for the selection of interns, country specific needs and importance of interns (will it support AHRC/ALRC's activity in particular country, why intern should be identified from a particular country</p>	<p>Every intern is linked with a senior AHRC/ALRC team member, who plays the role of mentor to the intern.</p> <p>All interns participate in weekly discussions and regular staff-program management meetings.</p> <p>In practice, interns are linked with the country RtF Program for their regular work where they are guided for identifying issues and cases of human rights violation, communicate with the partner organisation/s, verify data, and collect other references for credible sources, which may be necessary for concretizing Urgent Appeals or Hunger Alerts.</p> <p>Regular sessions with interns are held on Human Rights issues, namely, situation in various societies, role of state institutions and institutional framework for the protection of human rights.</p>	<p>There have been 76 interns from 20 countries, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. India – 7</li> <li>2. America – 2</li> <li>3. British - 1</li> <li>4. Burma - 5</li> <li>5. Philippines - 3</li> <li>6. Nepal – 6</li> <li>7. Danish - 4</li> <li>8. Bangladesh - 7</li> <li>9. Cambodia - 1</li> <li>10. Sri Lanka - 12</li> <li>11. Pakistan – 7</li> <li>12. Hong Kong - 1</li> <li>13. Singapore – 2</li> <li>14. Thailand - 2</li> <li>15. Indonesia – 5</li> <li>16. France – 2</li> <li>17. Korea – 6</li> <li>18. Cambodia – 1</li> <li>19. Italy – 1</li> <li>20. Germany - 1</li> </ol> <p>Amongst them, there were 37 women, a good gender balance.</p>	<p>They have contributed to organisations work from 2 aspects –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If they are going back to their country to work for the protection of human rights, they are more equipped with in-depth knowledge on human rights and its political economy. The most important lesson they learn here the importance of rule of law, peace and approach of equality for human rights. They are able to extend this understanding to their own team and among community leaders.</li> <li>2. In some cases, they may continue to work with AHRC/ALRC after completion of their internship tenure.</li> </ol> <p>At AHRC/ALRC level, they make quality efforts for making Appeals/Alerts crisp, sharp, and effective by providing research inputs.</p> <p>Their role is significantly important because they can communicate in local languages and translate</p>	<p><b>Interns are now able to work on human rights violation cases independently. They have become a worthy source for urgent appeals and hunger alerts.</b></p> <p><b>Internship program has contributed a lot in ensuring protection to young activists, who have lived in armed conflict and who were insecure in their country's political environment. This program converted them into a solid and confident research oriented activist. In cases of Burma and Sri Lanka, interns spend 6 to 12 months at AHRC/ALRC. It is a period, when they learn and attain safety to take Human Rights work forward.</b></p> <p><b>The former interns head Philippines, Bangladesh, Communication Desk, who have faced risks in their respective countries due to instable political environment and conflicts.</b></p>

Input	Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
<p>context looking at the situation of human rights, how it will support partner's work).</p> <p>Knowledge on Human Rights and existing institutional framework.</p>			<p>the message / information in English, which is a very big challenge in AHRC/ALRC's work in different countries.</p> <p>Interns are encouraged to write, as much as they can and they get guidance on their writings. It is a useful intervention for building their analytical skills as well.</p> <p>Internship program has given opportunity of exposure to many enthusiastic and committed youths, where they live in a very different environment and different culture. Most of them learned other language (especially English while in internship), and data collection techniques.</p> <p>Their contribution should be marked HIGH in making AHRC/ALRC's urgent appeals effective and evidence based.</p>	<p><b>Through Internship program, AHRC/ALRC has gained quality, skilled and committed persons to carry forward its mandate.</b></p> <p><b>Now Right to Food Program Desk, Nepal desk, the Indonesia desk are headed by the former interns. Editor of the AHRC too is also a former interns.</b></p>

## **Challenges for AHRC/ALRC**

1. Lack of human resources – It has become difficult to give proper response to the cases and expectations of organisations working at the grass root level, as only one person was looking after the project.
2. Different Countries have different social structures and state policies. These could not be analyzed, as it needed additional resources (Skilled Human Resources, Academic Resources, and Financial Resources).
3. Due to lack of capacities, partners used to send some pictures or very raw statements on the hunger situation with a high expectation that AHRC/ALRC would immediately release a Hunger Alert or Update on it. There is a need to make more investment in building partner's capacities.
4. Follow-up of each case could not be organized. AHRC/ALRC's work ultimately depends on the response from the partner organisation. In some cases it is found that partners did not make efforts to know that whether government or responsible institutions are taking any steps for the protection of people's right to food or not! If steps are taken, those should have been reported to AHRC/ALRC and if no actions have been taken, AHRC/ALRC should have been pushed to release an updated alert. For this purpose, structured dialogue activities need to be planned.

# Recommendations and Way Forward

## Salient Recommendations

- AHRC/ALRC should make efforts towards establishing Right to Food Observatories at regional level and in Asian countries. Its partner organisations may be involved in this effort. There is an immediate possibility of it in Philippines and Nepal. Since there is a campaign on Right to Food in India, it might continue with its present work by broadening the scope of work.
- A brief introduction (their social, economic, and political status) of the community should be included in hunger alerts/appeals.
- Wherever AHRC/ALRC is working, it should make an effort for policy analysis, and this document must be updated at least annually.
- A background paper / situation analysis should be prepared in each country's context to give an understating of hunger, poverty, and state's response towards it.
- A process for identification along with a set of formal/informal criteria must be designed and it should be followed. Along with it, which community and which geographical area will be targeted, looking at limitations of funds and management, should be identified carefully.
- In the given framework of Right to Food program, a two-fold monitoring mechanism is needed:
  - a. Identification of partner organization and their performance or response towards the issue as decided and
  - b. Follow-up of the cases, which have been reported. In case partner organisations are not feeding information or sharing any update, this situation must be reviewed more frequently.
- The AHRC has a mechanism of internal dialogue. On the same line, organization can have a dialogue with its partners as well. Evaluation shows that, this program is not about creating a new base or new organisations at the grassroots; it is more about building their capacities to create linkages of their own area of work with right to food. Once these linkages are made more organic, a clearer process of dialogue may move on smoothly.
- Some partners may need support to build basic understanding. The AHRC/ALRC should assess the capacity building needs of partner organisations more intimately.
- Country specific e-groups may be formed and which can be used for sharing cases, debates and emerging concepts at international level with local partners. As of now all informations are shared will all country programs and partners.
- Level of organisations with respect to their engagement differs in different countries. AHRC/ALRC in next phase may decide to do an assessment of Right to Food Movements or efforts in different countries. For example in India, a strong right to food campaign exists, so the

scope of work for AHRC is to provide additional support for international advocacy , where as in Philippines, CUTHR, WAC and Defend Job Philippines are working on labor rights issues very strongly but work is limited in Right to Food.

In such a case twofold intervention is required there – Promote them to work on RTF and along with this AHRC may try to create a network or consortium to work on right to food issues. This effort may lead to give a shape to a campaign like Right to Food Campaign in India. In brief, local partners should be brought on one platform looking the challenging political-economic environment in Asian countries, where democratic space for debates on human rights is shrinking.

- In initial phase of collective actions, partner organisations may be provided support/facilitated for exposure to other countries/regions, where there are such interventions and movements are active.
- AHRC/ALRC must ensure that crucial human rights pertaining to maternity entitlements, Infant Young Child Feeding Practices (IYCF), access to primary health services, safe drinking water, sanitation, and institutional arrangements for children like crèche are essentially integrated and addressed in its program.
- It is also found that there are laws/policies/programs exist in a country, and these should be utilized strategically. As a specific initiative, while working on situation analysis / background paper, an analysis of all such existing laws on poverty, food security, social security, land-agriculture, health rights, children’s right to nutrition and maternity entitlements may be included in it.
- AHRC/ALRC might take initiative to invite/involve expertise in building program on Right to Food from larger perspective.

## **The Way Forward**

- The AHRC/ALRC should continue to contribute to the struggle for ensuring right to food for everyone with emphasis on groups that have been socially marginalized and are discriminated against in a more concrete and structured manner.
- The approach towards leadership in struggle must be appreciated. Building an indigenous leadership in pushing for attaining democratic rights is crucial and will therefore continue to be called upon to be groomed through engagements at various levels like supporting local research on one hand, and get the local activists exposure through internship and other programs, on the other.
- Another important task they should be striving to achieve is building a regional, or at least two sub-regional networks/alliances in South and Southeast Asia for establishing linkages between our partners in these countries. There should be efforts for cross learning from other social

actions and people's movements. The idea behind building such an alliance can be that the interactions between our local partners will not merely strengthen the right to food struggle in their respective countries but also in the region as a whole. Further, such interactions will also give a major push to the efforts for building an environment conducive to attainment of other socio-cultural rights.

- This is a time when AHRC/ALRC should also make efforts to collaborate with national/regional academic and research institutions. Through these collaborations, AHRC/ALRC will be able to contribute concretely and it would be one of the best and constructive uses of field cases/hunger alerts.



# **Informations sought for the evaluation of AHRC/ALRC's program on RtF**

**(Information Checkpoints and Documents sought for evaluation and Framework for the  
discussion with AHRC/ALRC team)**

1. Copy of the proposal and Annual Program report
2. Copy of annual review report (if it was carried)
3. Some information on following points (it will be great to have year wise and country wise information and data)
  - a. What was the key objective of this project?
  - b. How did the ALRC/AHRC prepare itself for carrying out this program – Trainings / Orientation programs / Exposure visits / Research studies etc.
  - c. What were the key strategies?
  - d. Annual program operation framework ( Year wise priorities / Situation Analysis in terms of issues / Strategy / Activities / Process / Outcome / Impact)
  - e. What were the key activities?
  - f. Expected outcomes according to the proposal
  - g. What could be achieved (OUTCOME)
  - h. Along with process of organizing these activities – how priorities were decided? How all were involved in the process?
  - i. How responsibilities were shared or participation of partners was ensured – in planning and implementation?
  - j. How did you engage with state institutions? Human Rights Commissions or Statutory bodies!
  - k. What were the major threats faced during this program? At International level and at the local level? How could the organisations face or cope with such threats?
  - l. Major political challenges faced at different levels?
  - m. Five major achievements / impacts made by the Organisation.

## **Urgent Appeal Program**

1. Concept of Urgent Appeal Program and Motive –
2. How does it operate?
3. How many urgent appeals were released? Country and Issue wise –
4. What has been the impact? Did concerned bodies (like government, human rights commission or other statutory bodies) respond to our Urgent Appeals?
5. Sustainability aspects -
6. Major Challenges -

## **Right to Food Program**

1. Conceptual Framework of Right to Food Program? (with strategy, expected outcomes and final results)

2. Background / Context (regarding right to food in respective countries)
3. What were the structural issues, this program addressed? (Country specific)
4. How countries were selected and program was designed? (Country specific)
5. Was there any structured process to design country specific plan and activities? (Country specific)
6. Monitoring Process (to monitor country specific interventions) (Country specific)
7. Outcome (Country specific)
8. Impact (Country specific)
9. Major Challenges

### Internship programs

1. Conceptual Framework of Internship program? (With strategy, expected outcomes and final results).
2. Process for interns selection
3. Roles and Responsibilities of interns
4. What actually they delivered?
5. Quantitative data (Year wise no. of interns, country, focused issues, what they contributed etc.)
6. Major Challenges

### Program against discrimination and exclusion

1. Conceptual Framework of Internship program? (With strategy, expected outcomes and final results).
2. Situation analysis (background and context)
3. Strategy
4. Activities (with performance; like how many urgent appeals, alerts, studies etc.)
5. Outcomes of our intervention
6. Impact
7. Major Challenges

### Overall Information

Process of selection of staff (as this program covers different countries, different languages and different context?)

Coordination mechanism adopted and its experiences?

## **Poverty Statistics<sup>xiv</sup>**

In response to the demand for official statistics on the poverty situation in the country, the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) created the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Poverty Determination (later changed to TWG on Income Statistics) under the Inter-Agency Committee (IAC) on Labor Employment and Income Statistics (also recently changed to IAC on Labor, Income and Productivity Statistics). The TWG was initially composed of representatives from:

- NSCB
- Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI)
- National Statistics Office (NSO)
- National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)
- Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and
- Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

Later on, representatives from the

- Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and
- National Wages Commission (NWC) were added to the group.

The TWG compiled the first estimate of official statistics on poverty with 1985 as the reference year and using a methodology which was menu-based and which adopted a basic-needs approach. The same methodology was used in 1988. In 1992, as a result of the efforts of the Philippine Statistical System (PSS) to improve the methodology of estimating poverty in the Philippines, the NSCB approved a new methodology.

The major difference between the old and the new methodology was on the requirements for the non-food component of the poverty threshold. Under the new methodology, non-food requirements for items that were not considered basic such as alcohol beverages, tobacco, recreation, durable furniture and equipment, and miscellaneous expenditures were excluded. The 1992 methodology was used to re-estimate the poverty statistics for 1985 and 1988, and to generate poverty statistics for 1991 and 1994.

### **BASIC CONCEPT/DEFINITIONS**

Food Threshold refers to the annual per capita cost of basic food requirements which meet 100% adequacy of the recommended dietary allowance (RDA) for protein and energy (2,000 calories) and 80% adequacy of other nutrients.

Poverty Line/Threshold is equal to the annual per capita food threshold plus the cost of other basic non-food requirements.

Subsistence Incidence is the proportion of families/individuals whose annual per capita income falls below the annual per capita food threshold to the total families/individuals.

Poverty Incidence is the proportion of families/individuals whose annual per capita income falls below the annual per capita poverty threshold to the total number of families/individuals.

## **TECHNICAL NOTES**

Data for analysis on poverty statistics were drawn mainly from the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) of the National Statistics Office (NSO). The FIES were tabulated and prepared by the TWG on Income Statistics under the IAC on Labor, Income and Productivity Statistics administered by the NSCB.

### **Determination of Low Costs Diets:**

- Low cost diets on a per capita basis are constructed for the regions of the Philippines, subdivided into rural and urban. One-day sample menus for each urban/rural area of a region are provided by the FNRI taking into consideration the nutrient requirements, food commonly eaten in the areas, and the generally cheap foods. These menus are being based on per capita Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) and are generally applicable to the average healthy Filipino performing moderate activities.

### **Nutrient Requirement:**

- The dietary goal of the menu plans is to meet 100% of the per capita RDA for energy and protein and 80% of the per capita RDA for vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. The RDA for energy is 2,000 calories.

### **Food Commonly Eaten in the Area:**

- The menus are typical of a Filipino diet and representative of the region. The typical Filipino pattern is composed of three meals and one snack and usual food combinations are followed, like having rice with viand. Variation in food preference across regions has been reflected in the menus. The consumption patterns are based on the results of the latest Food Consumption survey of the FNRI.

### **Cheap Foods:**

- The term "low cost" implies the utilization of cheap food for the construction of the sample menus. Thus, nutritionally economical food are considered to comprise the menu. This means that an additional quantity of such food items entails comparatively lower cost but has the same nutritional contribution as the other more costly foods. On the other hand, some foods, although a little more costly, are included in the menu because they are the only source of the nutrient required.

### **Determination of Own-Produced Components:**

- For the purpose of costing the menus, the proportion of food bought and not bought are determined. These are based on the results of the National Nutrition Survey of the Philippines conducted by the FNRI.

#### **Derivation of Costs:**

- The menus are valued using average actual prices, but applying different prices for the bought and not bought components. For the bought component, the following set of prices are used: a) NSO Retail Prices; b) the composite prices derived from the NSO urban-provincial retail prices; and c) prices paid by farmers for rural regions. For the own-produced commodities, prices received by farmers as gathered by BAS are used in cases where price data are available. In cases where data are not available, a price value is computed based on the price of more or less similar commodities and/or average value of commodities for which price data are available.

#### **Computation of Food Threshold:**

- The per capita per day food cost is multiplied by 30.4 (approximate number of days per month) to get the monthly food threshold or by 365 days (30.4 days/month x 12 months) to get the annual food threshold. The monthly/annual food threshold or food line derived is thus interpreted as the subsistence line - the monthly/annual income necessary to meet nutritional requirements.

#### **Poverty Threshold:**

- In order to estimate the total poverty threshold (food plus non-food basic needs), the food threshold is divided by the proportion of the food expenditures to total basic expenditures (TBE) derived from the recent FIES using the computation resulting to families with expenditure within ten percentile of the food threshold.

#### **Poverty Incidence:**

- To get the magnitude of poverty, the per capita annual income of each sample family of the FIES is computed and compared to the respective annual per capita poverty threshold of the region (urban/rural) where the sample family resides. Those with incomes below or above the poverty threshold are identified. The number of sample families falling below the poverty threshold is blown up to estimate the total number of poor families.

#### **Subsistence Incidence:**

- The subsistence incidence is measured by determining the number of families with income below the food threshold. The per capita annual income of each sample household in the FIES is compared to the food threshold to determine whether it is above or below the threshold. The magnitude of sample families determined to be poor is then blown up by the appropriate raising factors of the survey.

## **Visits, Meetings and Persons Met with**

### **AHRC/ALRC**

1. Basil Fernando, Director for Policy and Programme Development
2. Bijo Francis, Executive Director, AHRC/ALRC
3. Danilo Reyes, Deputy Director, AHRC/ALRC
4. Md. Ashrafuzzaman Zaman, Sr. Program Office (Bangladesh RtF Program)
5. Prakash Mohra, Nepal Desk
6. Avinash Pandey, Program Coordinator, Right to Food Program
7. Noreen (Intern from Burma)

### **Philippines**

1. CTUHR
2. WAC
3. Defend Job Philippines
4. Group of workers associated with Worker's Assistance Center (11 participants)
5. Group of vendors affected of forceful eviction process at Luneta Park in Manila.

### **Persons**

1. Diana Mariano, assistant to AHRC, Manila
2. Daisy Arago, CTUHR
3. Arnel, WAC
4. Melona

### **India**

1. Right to Food Advisor Secretariat, Odisha, India
2. Center for Equity Studies, New Delhi
3. Spandan Samaj Sewi Samiti, Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh, India
4. Group of community organisations

### **Persons**

1. Biraj Patnaik
2. Prakash Michael
3. Rajkishor Mishra

### **Nepal**

1. FIAN Nepal
2. Jagran Media Center
3. Community Meeting in Taatapani, Baglung

#### 4. Community Meeting in Baange chor (Ram Rekha)

##### **Persons**

1. Rakesh Chandra Marasini (JMC)
2. Deepak Pariyar (JMC)
3. Dipendra Paswan (JMC)
4. Yuvraj (FIAN Nepal)
5. Indira Mayashankar (Intern)

# **Whither Quality of Life & Dignity?**

## **A Note by the Evaluator**

Today we face the challenge of keeping our children alive with dignity. Half the women of our nation are anemic. Because of poverty and discrimination, their right to nutrition is inexorably violated. Because of lack of fundamental human rights to nutrition and health, not only their lives, but the very survival of their un-born children is jeopardized. It is an epic tragedy that every year some 77,000 women in our country die because of maternity related factors, especially complications in giving birth. A recent study shows that maternal mortality ushers infant mortality in 80 percent of such cases. In this context, the scourge of malnutrition becomes the very cause of a highly deficient life. According to a Lancet Study, a severely malnourished child suffers a very high probability of dying due to diarrhea, pneumonia, malaria, and measles: 9.7 times higher in case of deficient weight for age, 4.1 times higher in case of deficient height for age, and 9.4 times in case of deficient weight for height. These figures speak of the children that die. What about those millions of children in each of our successive generations that survive a starved childhood? Stunted, weak, prone to disease: what is the quality of adult life perpetuated by our neglect of child hunger?

### **Pushing Malnutrition-Poverty-Hunger under the Carpet?**

As per the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), we (state and civil society) have resolved that we will halve extreme poverty by the year 2015, and eradicate extreme hunger from our planet. However, while defining poverty and hunger, the state has made efforts to move forward by pushing issues of hunger and poverty under the carpet. According to Prof. Utsa Patnaik, 76 percent families in the country do not get enough food, meaning thereby that their required calorie intake remains unmet. The report of the Arjun Sengupta Committee says that 83 crore people of our country somehow manage to survive on a measly sum of Rs 20 (0.44\$) or less per day. The moot point here is: where do our children feature in this grim scenario?

What is Poverty and who is poor? This question still remains unanswered. While, on one hand, experts follow the calorie intake norms for rural and urban areas, on the other, they also decline to follow the same norms when defining and estimating poverty. Although IMR (Infant Mortality Rate), Life Expectancy and Education are now considered as Human Development Indices (HDIs), these indices still don't get recognition as indices of poverty. About 45 million children are enmeshed in child labour, while 90 million suffer from malnutrition. Every year, 1.4 million children below one year of age and 2.5 million children below five years of age perish. Around 250 million of our women are anemic, and yet, only 82.5 million families are 'officially' considered Below the Poverty Line (BPL). Why is poverty not estimated and defined in the context of children is like a question from another planet for our policy-makers. In 2007, the WHO, UNICEF and World Food Programme released a joint statement saying:



*“Severe acute malnutrition contributes to 1 million child deaths every year - Using existing studies of case fatality rates in several countries, WHO has extrapolated mortality rates of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. The mortality rates listed in the table at right reflect a 5–20 times higher risk of death compared to well-nourished children. Severe acute malnutrition can be a direct cause of child death, or it can act as an indirect cause by dramatically increasing the case fatality rate in children suffering from such common childhood illnesses as diarrhoea and pneumonia. Current estimates suggest that about 1 million children die every year from severe acute malnutrition (WHO is currently estimating the global number of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition and the number of deaths associated with the condition).”*

The Lancet paper series brings out some very alarming conclusions. It says:

*“(1) Poor fetal growth or stunting in the first 2 years of life leads to irreversible damage, including shorter adult height, lower attained schooling, reduced adult income, and decreased offspring birth weight; (2) Children who are undernourished in the first 2 years of life and who put on weight rapidly later in childhood and in adolescence are at high risk of chronic diseases related to nutrition; (3) There is no evidence that rapid weight or length gain in the first 2 years of life increases the risk of chronic diseases, even in children with poor fetal growth; (4) Prevention of maternal and child under-nutrition is a long-term investment that will benefit the present generation and their children.”*

The economic growth of our country and growth in the level of chronic hunger both show a similar upward trend. A rather interesting development approach we follow!

A document of the World Bank begins with a question – Do you know that malnutrition is the gravest health problem in the world? Malnutrition leads to maximum deaths among children. Nutrition expert of World Bank, Ms. Meera Shekhar says that 60 percent of children who die of malaria, diarrhea, or pneumonia could have been saved, if they were not malnourished.

### **The Cycle of Exclusion**

Childhood hunger reduces the potential of physical development in children to such an extent that they first lag behind in neighborhood sports and routine activities, and then later fight a losing battle of livelihood. In determining the daily wages for labour in our country, the work that can be done by a healthy person in seven hours is calculated. However, half the children in the country will have lost that capacity to do this work when they reach adulthood, because of the levels of malnutrition. Yet, when they reach adulthood they will be expected to do labour equivalent to a healthy person. This is impossible. And, then it is said that tribal

#### **Global capital and hunger**

This is an era when global capital defines development. The definition has no place for equality, freedom from exploitation and people’s rights to resources as indicators of development and distributive justice. Global capital ensures that 90% of the people remain victims of hunger in some form or other so they cannot stand on their own feet but remain trapped in a struggle for their daily bread.

people are sluggish and cannot carry out tasks set for minimum wages, and so they get only partial wages.

The situation is worse among disadvantaged social groups like dalits and tribal due to various socio-political and economic reasons; malnutrition level is 16-22 % higher in tribal communities in comparison to the empowered sections of the society. It has been established, time and again, that due to loss of control over the natural resources and new development policies, tribal communities suffer the most. Those who were once most secure are now forced to live on empty stomachs because the fundamental rights to forests and natural resources have been taken away that used to fulfill their nutritional needs and provided a security to their cultural food habits. It is thus clear that if the tribal children are to be brought out of web of nutritional insecurity and cycle of hunger-deprivation-exclusion, actual rights to forests would have to be restored back to the tribal communities, and policies made for the eviction of tribal communities and other forest dwellers from their social habitations must be revoked with immediate effect. Also the so-called development leading to ruination of natural resources has to be stopped, only then would they get the necessary security of nutrition.

At present we are fighting our own government as well as the neo-liberal, capitalistic forces to obtain rights of our own resources back. But would the present day children living with hunger be able to stake their claim on these resources, and if they do not get it, would they be able to survive? There is a strong sense of apprehension that by keeping the children starved and malnourished, base is being prepared for a slavish and fragile society, which will have no vigor left for resistance to inequality and injustice.

The issue of offspring's food security is important, it is an innate part of the biological cycle, and it has strong bearing on women's existence. We need to ensure that mothers should not be forced to teach their offspring how to live with hunger, under any circumstances, as the first lessons of their lives. Starvation among children creates a section in society, which is thrown out of the conventional system on the pretext of being fragile and non-productive. The needs for their (women's) development are denied, even in the context of feeding their children, and it is considered that since they only engage in the recreational role of service provider or supporter, they can survive only on half a plate. The gender-dynamics of hunger keeps them on half stomachs, and their dependence on patriarchal system remains unchallenged! Today's concept of progress is based on a person's competence and capabilities. But the web of chronic hunger would not allow our deprived and malnourished children to stand anywhere on the path of progress, which demands pace and movement.

India has been developing and implementing a number of policies and programmes in the last 40 years: National Policy for Children (1974), ICDS (1975), National Nutrition Policy (1993), National Plan of Action on Nutrition (2005), Anemia prophylaxis programme (involving distribution of iron and folic acid tablets), Mid Day Meal Programme (for primary school age children), Supplementation of massive dose of vitamin A for 9 months to 3 years children, Public Distribution System, Relief and Food for work programme in drought prone areas, Health Programs like Universal Iodization of salt, Universal Immunization Programme for <1 year infants, Provision of safe drinking water and environmental sanitation, Diarrhea control programme, Acute respiratory infection control programme, Periodical deworming, Mobile medical services for inaccessible rural and tribal areas, Employment Programs (like Jawahar Rozgar Yojana & MGNREGS) amongst other rural development and poverty alleviation programmes relating to food, health and nutrition. Yet, the magnitude of malnutrition has failed to be

addressed and childhood hunger has kept on increasing. Why? Most of the food and nutrition programs have been concentrated and designed to feed the stomach with cereals, but not to address the calorie and nutrition requirement.

The nutrition scenario has not changed for the people living with Hunger since 1970, when major Food programs started. The statement of former Director General of Indian Council for Medical Research Dr. C. Gopalan that “if you fill the calorie gap, protein deficiency will disappear”, is valid even today. “But” there is very little room for more calories from cereals to fill this calorie gap in children and adults. Most of our food programs carry only Rice and Wheat. This combination alone is not an ideal source for ensuring food security in totality. Actually calories must come from varied sources, such as fats and oils, roots, vegetables, oilseeds, milk, eggs, fruits like bananas, to meet the massive deficiencies of calories, proteins, and other nutrient deficiencies. There is a saying in villages – we must have different colour food in our food plate to fulfill our dietary needs. And this different ‘colour’ food brings in to the variety in the diet.

Knowledge about energy density of food makes it mandatory that about 40% of calories are provided from fat for children between 6 months to 3 years. “It is unfortunate that even before the calorie gap is filled micronutrients deficiencies are being addressed with the use of chemicals as food substitute for 70% of the population.” Now micronutrient fortification is being promoted as a solution to all sorts of micronutrient deficiencies. Deputy Director (retd.) of National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad (India) Dr. Veena Shatughana says that this strategy is not a right strategy. There is evidence that fortification creates structural problems. Results of iron and folic acid supplementation in Pemba, Tanzania and Nepal in 1-35 months old children with high rates of malaria showed an increased risk of severe illness and death. These risks outweighed any immediate benefits. An isolated nutritional programme cannot be a substitute for a primary health centre (PHC) with facilities for diagnosis and treatment.

Dr. Shatrughana provides some more thoughts –

- Children from Nepal had access to a reasonably well functioning primary health care system, changing the balance of risk and benefit with iron and folic acid. There might be benefits in settings with a high prevalence of anemia, lower malaria transmission, and an effective primary care system.
- Studies from Indonesia show that where vitamin A supplements were given to children with a high incidence of respiratory illness, the increased vitamin A intake did not contribute to better growth.
- In India, studies show benefits only when vitamin A was given during the summer months, in children aged 1-5 years.
- Dr. Bhandari et al provided a micronutrient fortified food supplementation to children. The food supplementation group of children had significantly higher prevalence of fever and dysentery, with a small gain of 250 gm. in weight over 8 months period.
- Studies at the National Institute of Nutrition showed no improvements in heights of children from poor backgrounds that were given calcium supplementation for 6 months.
- Therapeutic iron intake may result in oxidative stress, possibly straining liver enzymes.
- Micronutrient supplementation cannot be a national programme in the absence of adequate and natural food.

## Debate on Poverty

Who is poor? It has been the question all across the world are asking to poor people. In India Poverty line has been derived from calorie consumption norms, which is 2400 Kcal per capita per day in rural areas and 2100 kcal per capita per day in urban areas. Poverty lines, by using calorie norms were derived by Task Force (Alagh) and worked out by expert group (Lakdawala).

There have been criticism to the planned efforts by the economists for reducing poverty by gaming with calorie norms and keeping minimum expenditure at the lowest level. When norms for expenditure are kept low, number of poor people will automatically go out of the line. Due to criticism two things happened – 1. Government of India was forced to decide that centrally sponsored Food Security Program (which later took shape of National Food Security Act-2013) would be delinked from the concept of Below Poverty Line category. It was resolved that 67% of the country's population will covered under NFSA, which will provide highly subsidized foodgrains to the people every month. 2. Government of India set up EXPERT GROUP TO REVIEW THE METHODOLOGY FOR MEASUREMENT OF POVERTY headed by C. Rangarajan (former Governor, Reserve Bank of India and Chairperson of Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council)

As per the Rangrajan Committee Report, the calorie norm for each category of the population in terms of age, sex and activity is lower as per the 2010 ICMR norms relative to those recommended by the Nutrition Expert Group (1968). For example, the calorie norm of male workers engaged in heavy activities was 3900 kcal per capita per day in the late 1960s (based on which the Task Force estimated the calorie norms for the all-India rural and urban populations). The latest ICMR norm (2010) for this group is 3490 kcal, which is 410 kcal per person per day lower. They suggest that the activity structure of population has also changed in such a manner that the proportion of population in the activity –categories requiring relatively higher calorie intake is now lower. The proportion of population engaged as heavy workers has reduced overtime, while that of moderate or sedentary workers has increased. This lowers the average calorie norm of the entire population because calorie requirement of moderate or sedentary workers is much less than that of heavy workers. For example, in case of male

*"The first shock urban development policies bring in the life of urban poor is Hunger! How to recreate their (urban poor, who are usually evicted from their houses without any rehabilitation plan in heavy rainy season) dreams that they have detached from their life. It's a biggest challenge to us as a human rights activist."*

**\*\*\* Daisy Arago, CTUHR, Manila\*\*\***

*"Worker's Assistance Center has worked has been working in Export Processing Zones for a long on labor rights issues. Better living conditions and better living wages are crucial matters for survival and dignity. We learned that women workers cannot use restrooms, laborers are not entitled for a weekly holiday; but more than this in partnership with AHRC/ALRC, we could build our understanding about the very basic issue of human life – Food as right! It was shocking to know after a baseline survey that even after working very-very hard, laborers do not get full stomach quality meal and safe drinking water. There are cases, where company management restricted food supply to laborers', when they were struggling for better wages and other labor rights."*

**\*\*\* Arnel, WAC, Export Processing Zone, Cavite \*\*\***

workers, the requirement per capita per day is: 3490 kcal for persons engaged in heavy work, 2730 kcal for persons engaged in moderate work and 2320 kcal for persons engaged in sedentary work; for female workers, the calorie requirement is: 2850/2230/1900 kcal per capita per day in heavy/moderate/sedentary work. It is clear that in India, concept of poverty, which was based on quality energy food intake is being lowered to be discarded. There have been debates in the country on poverty estimates and their norms all across the country. Earlier Prof. Suresh Tendulkar Committee suggested that families spending less than Rs. 27/ day in rural areas and Rs. 33 / day in urban areas respectively would be considered poor. This definition attracted attention to the apathetic attitude of policy makers. This matter was also raised in the Supreme Court of India and Right to Food Campaign created a logical debate around these norms. C Rangarajan Committee suggests that the average per capita calorie requirement has gone down to the level of 2089.35 Kcal in urban areas and 2154.91 kcal in rural areas. Rangarajan Committee suggest that number of poor in India is 363 million in 2011-12, which is much lower than the number of poor in 2009-10, which was 454 million. These estimates also raises a lot of questions, because this was a period of jobless growth and no opportunities were created, than why did 90 million people move away from poverty line. Still these norms do not account social determinants of poverty and nutritional security. They believed that poor people would continue to spend 57% in rural and 46.7% in urban areas only on Food. In a country where, 80 of health expenditures come from private pockets, poverty line expenditures keeps Rs. 45 as Health expenditure.

There have been debates, where Poverty Line is termed as Starvation Line.

On the other hand, Philippines have been following self rated / experiencing hunger method. In Philippines, Government started defining Poverty officially somewhere around 1984-85, when a institution National Statistical Board set up an Technical Working Group to look into various aspects and ingredients of Poverty. Philippines also used food consumption patterns for identifying poverty line. Technical Working Group collected data on food consumption by using a menu-based methodology; the menu was specifically focused on the minimum basic needs. National Statistical Board very first time came out with official poverty estimates in 1985.

In 1992, Philippines Statistical System made some efforts to improve the methodology for the estimation of Poverty and gave some importance to non-food components.

Now in this country, primary marginalization is defined by using two methods. 1. Social Weather Stations (SWS) collects data every three months to understand the level of Hunger in the country. In a sense Philippines follows the concept of Relative Hunger, which assessed by the people themselves. In the first quarter of Year 2014, Social Weather Station Survey revealed that 3.9 million Filipino families lived with Hunger in the First Quarter. Report said that hunger among self-rated poor has gone up from 24.5 percent in last quarter of Year 2013 to 27.5 percent in First quarter of Year 2014, whereas a decline was observed from 10.3 percent to 7.1 percent among non-food poor/borderline category.

Data changes every quarter. First quarter survey said 39 percent (8.5 million families) rated themselves poor, which was 41 percent (8.8 million) in last quarter of 2013. The contradiction is that 55 percent families (12.1 million) considered themselves poor.

The survey classifies experiencing hunger in these categories – “only once” or “a few times” as Moderate Hunger (which is 15 percent), while going hungry “often” or “always” as “severe hunger”, this accounts for 2.8 percent of 615 Thousand families.

Situation changed in second quarter of the Year 2014, when SWS survey that 3.6 million (less 0.3 million from last quarter) experienced hunger in the past three months. (For definitions, please see annexure - 2). In the Philippines, while more attention to the problem has been given in recent years, data and methodological problems have not given a clearer poverty picture<sup>xv</sup>. According to UNDP HDR, as global development challenges become more complex and trans-boundary in nature, coordinated action on the most pressing challenges of our era, whether they be poverty eradication, climate change, or peace and security, is essential. As countries are increasingly interconnected through trade, migration, and information and communications technologies, it is no surprise that policy decisions in one place have substantial impacts elsewhere. The crises of recent years—food, financial, climate—which have blighted the lives of so many point to this, and to the importance of working to reduce people’s vulnerability to shocks and disasters<sup>xvi</sup>.

The focus is on CCT (Conditional Cash Transfer Program) to promote school education among poor, but the reality is that even after CCT program more than 100 thousand children are working as child labor in Palm Oil Plantations. In a sense this program has proved to be an inefficient and full of corruption. It still does not cover the most marginalized section of Filipino society. There have been policy debates on Land Reforms. In 1995, President of Philippines, through Mining Act of 1995, decided that all the natural resources are the property of National Government and provincial governments have no control over them. It was a major step for the implementation of growth policies for involving corporate and giant companies in extracting minerals and mineral based exports.

Observations from India, Philippines and Nepal clearly show that state policies to promote economic growth are creating more challenges and un-comfort among the societies, especially in most marginalized. 75 Floating families were certainly living in very critical situation on Freedom Island, but the way they were displaced without taking care of their future livelihood options and social security, they have become easy target of starvation. If one has to comment on the integrity of state policies, one finds that these 75 households were not displaced for their welfare, but it was a part of re-acclamation of land for infrastructure development for so-called economic development. *Governments are imposing austerity programs because of a legitimate concern about the sustainability of sovereign debt. But there is a risk that short-term measures will cause long-term damage, eroding the human development and social welfare foundations that enable economies to grow, democracies to flourish and societies to be less unequal and less vulnerable to shocks. There is also evidence that deploying drastic austerity programmes too quickly can deepen and prolong recessions. Fiscal consolidation has already had contractionary effects on private domestic demand and gross domestic product (GDP) while weakening economic conditions and increasing unemployment<sup>xvii</sup>.*

The credibility of governments is also at stake. We all are aware, but level of willingness to accept this fact is very low. UNDP’s Human Development report also says Governments that do not respond to citizens’ needs or widen opportunities for political participation risk losing their legitimacy. Dissatisfaction is on the rise in the North and the South as people call for more opportunities to voice

their concerns and influence policy, especially on basic social protection. According to a recent International Labour Organization report, government dissatisfaction, measured by the Social Unrest Index, rose in 57 of 106 countries from 2010 to 2011.

Philippines have been one of the fastest growing economies in the world, but it has not made efforts to ensure access to health services to its citizens. There were total 1794 hospitals in 1999, there is almost no increase in this number and now there are 1812 Hospitals, increase of 18 hospitals in 15 Years. The worst part of it is related to availability of doctors in government hospitals. There were 2948 doctors in 1999 and it has gone down to 2682, a decline of 266 doctors in government hospitals. According to the United Nations' Human Development Report informs the decline of Philippines from 114<sup>th</sup> position to 117<sup>th</sup> in 2013. It used have 70<sup>th</sup> position in 2001 and witnessing constant depletion in it. Out of 8 Millennium Development Goals, Philippines is going to achieve only goal no. 8 (Develop a global partnership for development) and on the other hand is failing in achieving all other goals on hunger, primary education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal mortality, combat HIV/AIDS and ensure environmental sustainability. *Rollbacks of health, education and other public services are likely to impair the health of the population, the quality of the labour force and the state of scientific research and innovation for years to come. This could put progress in human development on a lower trajectory for some time (box 1.2). Moreover, economic stagnation reduces the tax revenues that governments need to finance social services and public goods<sup>xviii</sup>.*

We clearly, in last 20 years; governments are coming out with new welfare policies and enacting progressive laws. Philippines has Poverty Alleviation Act, Anti-Poverty Commission, and Social Security System with clear financial allocations; but on ground there is no strong, accountable institutional mechanism has been put in place. National Economic Development Authority – Social Development Committee defines Social Protection as “policies and programs that seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability to risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized by promoting and protecting livelihoods and employment, protecting them against hazards and sudden loss of income, and improving people’s capacity to manage risks.” But governments also dare not to implement them. This country has a Social Security System for workers, but it covers less than 50 % of total workers, no continuous protection to them are the initial experiences. The outrageous part is that a substantial amount of worker’s funds are put into investment funds, in particular Social Security System has a Peso 23.4 Billion investment on Philex Mining Corporation. Education, health care, social protections, legal empowerment and social organization all enable poor people to participate in growth. But even these basic policy instruments may not empower disenfranchised groups. Poor people on the fringes of society struggle to voice their concerns, and governments do not always evaluate whether services intended to reach everyone actually do.<sup>94</sup> Often, problems are exacerbated by external shocks, but in many cases policies are implemented where local institutional capacity and community involvement are low.

In India, Government of India used to have world’s biggest food security program for the coverage point of view for last 50 years. There were some serious concerns over its proper implementation and corruption-leakages of food grain was the most important. In 2013, Parliament of India has converted it into a legal framework by enacting National Food Security Act. It will cover 850 million people and an amount of USD\$ 20 Billion will be spent for its implementation. It’s a historic step, but lack of a strong

and independent monitoring and grievances redressal mechanism in this law may make it unsuccessful. Education, health care, social protections, legal empowerment and social organization all enable poor people to participate in growth. But even these basic policy instruments may not empower disenfranchised groups. Poor people on the fringes of society struggle to voice their concerns, and governments do not always evaluate whether services intended to reach everyone actually do. Often, problems are exacerbated by external shocks, but in many cases policies are implemented where local institutional capacity and community involvement are low<sup>xix</sup>.



## END Notes

<sup>i</sup> "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services..."

<sup>ii</sup> "The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement." The Committee considers that the core content of the right to adequate food implies:

- the availability of food in a quantity and quality sufficient to satisfy the dietary needs of individuals, free from adverse substances, and acceptable within a given culture;

- the accessibility of such food in ways that are sustainable and that do not interfere with the enjoyment of other human rights.

<sup>iii</sup> 1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

3. Developing countries, with due regard to human rights and their national economy, may determine to what extent they would guarantee the economic rights recognized in the present Covenant to non-national

<sup>iv</sup> 1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international co-operation, the measures, including specific programmes, which are needed:

(a) To improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;

<sup>v</sup> The "Right to Food Campaign" is an informal network of organisations and individuals committed to the realisation of the right to food in India. We consider that everyone has a fundamental right to be free from hunger and under nutrition. Realising 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 organisation. We are committed to fostering this process through all democratic means.

<sup>vi</sup> The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2010; Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, Italy, 2010)

<sup>vii</sup> Barchi Francesco, Fanzom Jessica, Frison Emile; The Role of Food and Nutrition System Approaches in Tackling Hidden Hunger, Int. J. Environ. Res. And Public Health (2011)

<sup>viii</sup> The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2010; Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, Italy, 2010)

<sup>ix</sup> Barchi Francesco, Fanzom Jessica, Frison Emile; The Role of Food and Nutrition System Approaches in Tackling Hidden Hunger, Int. J. Environ. Res. And Public Health (2011)

<sup>x</sup> [http://www.alrc.net/doc/mainfile.php/alrc\\_st2011/695/](http://www.alrc.net/doc/mainfile.php/alrc_st2011/695/)

<sup>xi</sup> <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/hunger-alerts/AHRC-HAG-001-2010>

<sup>xii</sup> <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/hunger-alerts/AHRC-HAC-004-2010>

<sup>xiii</sup> <http://southasia.oneworld.net/news/poor-governance-corruption-driving-malnutrition-and-hunger-in-south-asia#.U-x1vMWSxOI>

<sup>xiv</sup> <http://www.nscb.gov.ph/ru8/Poverty/povertyprod.htm>

<sup>xv</sup> Bautista Carlo, C. Subjective poverty thresholds in the Philippines, The Philippine Review of Economics (June 2010)

<sup>xvi</sup> UNDP's Human Development Report 2013; The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World

<sup>xvii</sup> UNDP's Human Development Report 2013; The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World

<sup>xviii</sup> UNDP's Human Development Report 2013; The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World

<sup>xix</sup> UNDP's Human Development Report 2013; The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World