CHAPTER - 5

THE FOOD AID PARADIGM
Importance of Food Aid

Technology has placed immense power in the hands of humans. Yet this control of resources is very much a double-edged sword. In addition to promoting abundance and pushing back the frontier of scarcity it also places, extremely heavy demands on the resource base itself. This occurs not only in terms of inputs to the production process but also in terms of the delicate physical and biological balances which sustain life systems and make agricultural production possible.

Most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have been unable to balance much less increase, food output in relation to population growth. It also highlights the increasing population pressures on environmental resources and the need to better understand the relationship between agriculture and the environment.

The regional dimensions of hunger and inadequate food supply are clear as are to a lesser degree a number of environmental impacts of extensification and intensification of the food system. But the solutions to the problems and the implications for world political, economic and environmental stability are not as clear. However, food aid has been one of the most important solutions so far and has come to the rescue of the hungry and under-nourished people of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Food Aid is food that is given free of cost, at concessional rates or as loan to the food-insecure developing countries and in case of natural disasters or emergencies to the developed countries as well. For many people, food aid is synonymous with famine relief. During the 1980’s and early 90s disaster response agencies have become used to trucking and distributing huge amounts of food, and have come to regard it as a given thing. As long as you shout loud enough, the food aid will flow. But all this is changing and changing fast.
Food aid was always a surplus product. Nobody grows food aid, they grow grain to sell and under the old interventionist policies of particularly the United States and the European Union, surpluses needed to be stored or disposed off to keep farm prices up. Hence the domestic attraction of food aid in the surplus countries. But all that is changing. Agriculture, like the rest of world trade, is now subject to free market forces. Food for food aid has to be bought, just like food for commercial purposes.¹

The scale and intensity of hunger and poverty have been exacerbated in a number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa by disasters caused by nature and by people (Droughts, floods and Civil strife). Conditions in all these countries, especially in the poorest, call for a program of assistance that explicitly supports activities in the areas of disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation, and rehabilitation. It is recognise that while ad hoc relief is necessary in the short run other measures are required that addresses the root causes of recurring emergencies. “Many donor and aid agencies are therefore focussing on disaster mitigation and rehabilitation activities as major elements of their assistance programs. Because these activities are often labour intensive and carried out in areas with food shortages, food aid is a particularly suitable form of assistance when labour needs to be mobilised and income provided.”²

“Food aid has become a permanent part of the scene in Sub-Saharan Africa following prolonged and recurring food shortages. The net value of food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa in 1985-90 averaged $1 billion a year, about the same value as the net transfers to the region by the

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank.\(^3\) Owing to its history, constituency, and inherent nature, food aid has special advantages in sustaining a poverty focus, supporting food security programs, and attenuating the social costs of adjustment.

**Figure: FOOD AID SHIPMENTS 1970-71 TO 1994-95**

Source: Table 5.1, Appendix

The above figure shows the proportion of food aid shipments from 1971-72 to 1994-95 for South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. Sub-Saharan Africa shows the maximum increase in food aid shipments while Asia shows a steep decline and Latin America a slow growth in Proportion. This shows the seriousness of the food problem in Sub-Saharan Africa.

\(^{3}\) John Shaw., n.2, pp. 253-54.
Food aid is a keystone of the international community's attempts to uphold fundamental human rights relating to life and food security. Any genuinely human-focused development cannot ignore the problem of hunger. Hungry people are not well served by, and cannot effectively compete in markets even if they are functioning well. Their capacity to participate in economic growth and development is still further constrained when limited resource endowments are compounded by market weaknesses. Food aid can compensate for inadequacies in both endowments and markets by giving people the chance to provide sustenance to themselves and enhance their capabilities to participate in the market place.4

The guiding principle of food aid must be to reach people who need it most, primarily in food-deficit countries. It should be available at times when they need it most, and in ways that provide a lasting impact as well as provide succour during disasters and emergencies.5 Thus, the first claim on scarce food aid resources has to be targeted actions that address one or other of the major dimensions of current hunger.

It is essential to first feed the hungry, especially the dependants (children and old persons). But food aid can be used to advantage within the context of a sound agricultural and trade policies to prevent recurring famines. A number of complimentary ways can be employed to ensure that with food aid agricultural policy is more sensitive to the needs of the vulnerable groups, in the short-term, the problems caused by severe adjustment policies. For example, food aid can be used to benefit women through increased returns for the low paid work they are employed in by providing food-for-work projects which are more

4 Walker., n.2.
remunerative than existing work outlets. "FFW is flexible and women find the timing, particularly of off season employment in FFW schemes, to be compatible with these women's domestic and other responsibilities. Payment on food is also attractive to them as women often have more command over food than cash in the household and a high propensity to attain household food security."  

Further, food aid, either used in food-for-work projects or sold locally to generate funds, can be used to provide the infrastructure (health clinics, small scale irrigation works, wells) that might improve both child welfare and women's work. During periods of agricultural innovations or structural adjustments, when small farmers' crops, work and income come under threat as household farms get more commercialised, food aid can be used as a buffer to dampen the effects and thus to protect vulnerable groups. Also, food supplements for those (particularly women) without any work or other obligation during periods of seasonal stress can be expected to improve their activity levels and ability to cope with the stress. Fifth, food aid projects can provide an incentive effect to popular participation and community development action.

Cautious use of Food Aid can have a very positive effect on increasing productivity in the agriculture sector. Food for work programmes and other food aid mechanisms can be helpful in developing rural infrastructure and households can be made more productive and innovative.

Food aid supports people to attain their human potential. A major priority for food aid is to support people at times when food needs are critical, so that they will be better endowed to attain their human potential. Solving short-term hunger is pre-requisite for longer-term

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6 Shaw, n.3, p. 268.
development solutions. It is necessary to break the cycle of hunger that transcends generations. Vulnerable people must be assisted to be more ready to cope with shocks and able to build on opportunities for advancement.

Hunger constrains human development. People who benefit from food aid are survivors not failures—they have typically managed to live through droughts, nurture families through the depredations of poverty and hunger, and overcome major traumas of conflict or social disruption. What they deserve is a chance to move on in their lives, to move beyond survival and build a sustainable livelihood. Food aid can help them do it.

Damage inflicted on children by hunger is often irreversible. Food aid provided at crucial times of an individual's life is a pre-investment in future health and productivity. It is extremely difficult to make up for the damage inflicted by inadequate nutrition in the first five years of life. The nutritional welfare of mothers and infants is vital. If it is inadequate, the damage is both lasting and far broader than the individuals and families involved. Society as a whole suffers losses when children cannot learn, when poor health restricts energy and productivity, when hungry women give birth to a new generation that is malnourished.7 What is at stake is the productive potential of enormous numbers of affected individuals. To allow these losses is to allow the perpetuation of hunger and poverty.

It has been found that Food aid can reach women better than capital flows. Food aid, as one of several resources supporting change among hungry households, often reaches hungry women better than the capital flows that make up close to 95 percent of total development assistance. Food aid provided as wages or as incentives to participate in

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income earning or training can reach women in food insecure households, who are often 'crowded out' of projects offering cash. Overall, food aid projects that provide employment to women should be compatible with child care needs by allowing flexible working hours, freedom to breast feed, and the ability to carry children to the workplace.\textsuperscript{8}

Food aid can help to break the cycle of hunger by enabling the poor and vulnerable to gain better access to services and markets that help them take the first important steps out of food insecurity. Hunger is integrally linked to other conditions restricting human potential - poor sanitation and hygiene, illiteracy, lack of education facilities, and a lack of access to health care. Food aid, especially targeted food aid, responds to immediate hunger. Not only that, but it also draws vulnerable mothers and children to clinics, encourages and enables poor women to attend literacy and reproductive health training. It also induces parents to allow their daughters to attend school, supports communities wishing to develop improved water supply and sanitary facilities, or improves the quality and reach of nutrition education. Used in such ways, food aid represents a pre-investment in human potential, a way of letting the poor take advantage of external assistance and frees them from long-run dependency.

Likewise, lower status food offered in full or part remuneration for project activities attracts the most needy members of a community. Experience shows that wealthier households tend to participate less in food-for-work, and food wages typically result in a larger share of the wage being consumed as food than when cash is offered. Moreover, food wages are inflation-proof when markets are unstable or shortages

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bring major price increases. In short, the self-targeting potentials of food aid makes it well suited to expanded use as a kind of ‘resource window’ for women and others among the very poor.9

**Where Can Food Aid Help?**

There are three main categories of hunger in which food aid can play a principal role in helping households attain food security.

The first category comprises people facing acute hunger-victims of conflict and natural disasters. To people such as these, survival supersede thoughts of long-term development and there cannot be any longer term solution without first a short-term solution. Action against acute hunger is therefore the first priority in addressing food insecurity; hungry people cannot wait for longer-term gains in productivity to resolve their problems. First, food aid must be available to save lives.10 A direct transfer of food is often essential to ensure survival—the most fundamental of human rights. Yet, saving life with food is not an end in itself. Since food security is about sustaining people, relief actions are not just momentary palliatives against starvation. For millions of people, relief is the essential first step toward sustainable food security. But this first step must be followed by actions aimed at post-crisis rehabilitation of affected households and at sustainable livelihoods. Greater attention needs to be paid to the establishment of improved preparedness mechanisms against future disasters and appropriate investments aimed at reducing vulnerability to crises.

Secondly, there are people with critical needs at special times of the life cycle, including the new-born infants and child-bearing/lactating women. As already discussed, those yet to be born suffer a lack of

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9 Peter Walker, n.3.
nutrients if their mothers are themselves malnourished since the "programming" of chronic diseases among adults starts with malnutrition among women during pregnancy. If constraints at birth are compounded by a continued lack of food, the danger of mortality is great. Children who survive severe malnutrition early in their lives are likely to become disadvantaged adults prone to remain poor, food insecure, and the probable victims of future emergencies. Actions taken to address the current hunger of mothers and young children therefore have significant outcomes on food security in the longer-run.¹¹

Food aid must be focused on key areas of human development, particularly on addressing debilitating hunger among women and children at critical times of their lives. If not met, early problems of food insufficiency lead to damaged health, nutritional status, mental vigour and labour productivity. Often such damage can never be repaired. Nutritional losses of today cannot easily be made up for tomorrow. Food insufficiencies must be tackled head on, complemented by efforts in areas such as nutrition, health, education, skills training, reproductive health, asset creation and income-generation. Breaking the negative cycle of hunger down the generation by investing in people, not just in their lands or their crops, has benefits that last across generations.

Moreover, as mentioned in the previous section, food aid often reaches women and children more effectively than other kinds of assistance and supports an immediate improvement in their productivity. Feeding children through schools in poorest regions of food-deficit countries has a pay-off in addressing current hunger as well as promoting longer-term human growth and productivity. Similarly, transferring food aid directly to women places a valuable, empowering resource in the hands of the person in the household most responsible for domestic food

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 81-89.
security. Women are more likely than men to use any additional income for ensuring a better diet for their family. Food aid often reaches hungry women where other resources do not.

The third group, which partly overlaps with the first two, includes people with low and variable income, limited assets, few marketable skills, deficient purchasing power, and a lack of powerful advocates - the chronically undernourished. Hunger among such people is not just a manifestation of poverty. It is also a cause of their poverty. Removing current hunger is thus the first threshold to be crossed in eradicating poverty and establishing food security. Food aid must also support actions against chronic hunger in regions where food insecure households are bypassed by mainstream development initiatives and where markets are weak. Hundreds of millions of people suffering chronic undernutrition need assistance to overcome their current hunger, but in ways that allow them to become active participants in development.12 Deficiencies in household purchasing power and productivity can be addressed simultaneously through labour-intensive works programmes that transfer an income to food insecure households while building infrastructure or enhancing soil and water management. Thus, food aid is the ally not only of the hungry people of the world, but also of the productive activities and markets on which the hungry ultimately depend.

Targeted food aid is the most important resource for addressing the current hunger of many millions of people in food-deficit countries. But, for food aid to adequately address today’s hunger, the level of targeted aid reaching hungry people needs to be enhanced and protected from fluctuations in global supply, particularly in years of high world food prices.

However, the above categories of hunger tend to be concentrated in more remote parts of the Sub-Saharan Africa that are served by poorly-functioning markets and have low agricultural productivity, high fertility rates, and a risk of natural disaster. These are the very regions where limited economic returns tend to discourage capital investments, and which governments and donors find the most difficult to reach. The structural problems of such regions are increasingly compounded by humanitarian emergencies associated with armed conflict.

Currently, most hungry people are found in Low-Income Food Deficit countries, particularly in southern and eastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. The latter region poses particular cause for concern, since over 40 percent of its population is chronically undernourished and it has recently faced an upsurge in conflict emergencies. As armed conflict has taken over from drought as a primary cause of famine, Sub-Saharan Africa has come to account for most of the world's refugees and internally displaced people. It is often the same people who face the chronic and/or life-cycle risks that are first and most at risk when battle is engaged.

Food aid is a scarce resource. This is no longer debatable. It is a premium resource—a resource to serve people, not a by-product of agriculture. By extension, more will be demanded of food aid than in the past. Food aided projects will have to match the standards of cost-effectiveness and efficiency of capital-assisted projects. And food aid will have to do more than save lives. It will have to sustain and enhance lives.

**Nature and Type of Food Aid**

Food aid is an essential resource for saving and sustaining life in emergencies, as well as for addressing the other forms of hunger.
However, today’s food aid is different from that of the past. In earlier decades, food aid was heavily oriented toward such donor country objectives as surplus disposal, market development and bilateral diplomacy. Interests in improving commercial and political ties with recipients shaped allocations, while these two factors are still important, their relative weight has declined.\textsuperscript{13}

From being largely a bilateral resource used by governments to support broad political and economic objectives, food aid has increasingly become a resource used through multilateral and NGO channels for development goals, humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and preparedness.

The share of global food aid used for targeted assistance in both relief and development has risen from less than 30 percent in the early 1970s to close to 50 percent in the early 1990s.\textsuperscript{14}

Food aid is no longer mainly a means of disposing of industrialised countries’ surpluses; it is increasingly provided, a) through cash purchases of food in developing countries, and b) from tight aid budgets in which food aid must compete with other forms of development assistance.

There has been a decline recently in the supply of food aid—a drop from over 15 million tons of cereals in 1992/93 to around 8 million tons in 1994/95. This has been paralleled by a drop in the amount of food aid received by Low-Income Food Deficit countries—from over 11 million tons to around 6 million tons. Non-cereal food aid has represented a steady 12 percent of total food aid over this period.\textsuperscript{15} The decline in food aid supply

\textsuperscript{14} WFP., n.2.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
is most damaging to the hungry in food deficit countries since it is they, who need it the most, and benefit from, targeted food assistance.

Given that food aid is becoming an increasingly scarce resource, its uses and targeting will need to be refined in coming years. The guiding principles of food aid must be that of reaching the people who need it most, primarily in food-deficit countries, at times when they need it most, and in ways that achieve lasting impact as well as short term help. Thus, the first claim on scarce food aid resources should be targeted actions that address the major dimensions of current hunger.

Broadly food aid falls under two categories- bilateral food aid and multilateral food aid. Bilateral food aid is aid given by individual governments on their own terms and conditions. Bilateral aid involved the subjugation of the recipient country by the donor country. In exchange for aid the donor countries imposed financial and strategic conditions on the recipient. Therefore, multilateral aid was found to be more suitable to the needs of the suffering countries. Today multilateral food aid has assumed the utmost importance in providing food security to the food insecure communities.

**Multilateral Food Aid**

The origin of multilateral food aid was rooted in two meetings, which took place in 1943. The meetings in May at Hot Springs, Virginia, convened by American President Franklin D. Roosevelt, laid the foundation for the creation of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO). In November of the same year an agreement was signed in Washington, DC, which established the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). The UNRRA was the first significant experiment of a multilateral

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agency to deal with food aid and to attempt international co-operation to prevent famine. The UNRRA was a partial success. The termination of UNRRA in 1949 marked the end of operational multilateral food aid until the foundation of the World Food Programme in 1963. The recommendations for multilateral action, based on the work of an expert group charted by H.W. Singer and a thirteen member advisory body, evolved into a joint decision by the UN and FAO to establish the World Food Programme (WFP). The WFP was set up on an experimental basis for an initial period of three years from 1962. The programme was judged successful and its operation was approved in 1965.17

The concern over WFP competition with PL 480 (US bilateral food aid programme) did not restrict the role of WFP and it has gone ahead to become a pioneer, and the most important multilateral food aid organisation, in the structural evolution of food aid. It was among the first agencies to give primacy to development objectives and the careful evaluation of results achieved. The WFP has established the feasibility and special advantages of multilateral food aid programmes, including improved co-ordination, reduced administrative costs, fewer political pressures, the choice to provide more coherent programme assistance, a wider and more appropriate choice of food stuffs to recipients and the ability to engage in multiyear programming.

Food aid has been further classified into three categories: program, emergency, and project. However, the boundaries between these categories have been increasingly blurred. Funds generated from the sale of program food aid have been used to meet the local costs of aid-financed development projects. Emergency food aid has provided balance-of-payments support and allowed the expansion of

17 Ibid., p. 28.
development projects. And project food aid has been used to support sector programs on a national or regional scale.

Programme Food Aid – the largest category of food aid - has been provided entirely on a bilateral, government to government basis. In the recent past, it has constituted over one half of all food aid. This type of food aid has generally supported the balance-of-payments of recipient countries and generated local currency that has been used for public sector expenditures, which have often been attributed to development purposes. However, it seldom has made a large direct contribution to the alleviation of poverty and hunger. Program food aid has frequently been used to provide food at subsidised prices, mainly in urban areas, without much lasting benefit to the poor or to a long-term development. Where the main objective of donors has been political or commercial, the aid has sometimes been erratic and there has been little or no programming of generated funds. The result is often the dissipation of resources in general subsidies or undifferentiated budget support.

Emergency Food Aid - the second largest category of food aid - has provided life sustaining food and short term relief, but needs to be more closely tied to disaster mitigation and rehabilitation activities, which lead to sustained development. Refugees and displaced people needing longer term assistance require an approach tailored to ensure not only survival but their health and nutrition, education and training, jobs and income, and basic social services. WFP, in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has developed a special category of assistance in these protracted refugee operations to meet these needs. The past five years have seen a massive increase in the provision of emergency food aid. Globally, some 4.4 million tons of relief food aid was delivered to afflicted countries in 1992 by the international community, an increase of nearly 50 percent over the
previous five year annual average. In Sub-Saharan Africa alone, it is estimated that more than 40 million people were at risk in 1992 because of drought and civil war.\(^\text{18}\)

*Project Food Aid* is the smallest category of food aid. Only a part of this type of food aid has been used to support food-for-work programs, mainly in agriculture and rural development projects. The remainder has been directed to supplementary feeding programs to improve health and nutrition of mothers and pre-school children, to primary and other schools, to training programs and to food reserves. This type of Food aid has been very beneficial in Sub-Saharan Africa in raising the nutritional level of vulnerable population groups. It has also provided employment and development in areas of conflict and crises.

**Tasks Ahead for Food aid**

Food security is about people. Hunger on a global scale reminds us of the unfinished task of achieving sustainable food security for everyone, everywhere. Abundant food at a national level does not rule out hunger. The important goal of raising agricultural productivity is only one part of the solution. The attainment of food security involves eliminating current hunger facing hundreds of millions of people today, and reducing the risks of future hunger.

Hunger is unacceptable in a world of plenty. Every effort must be taken to address both the symptoms and causes of hunger among the people who are undernourished today. The precise number of today’s hungry people who can best be helped through targeted food aid remains to be determined.

Given that food aid is becoming an increasingly scarce resource, its uses and targeting will need to be refined in coming years. The guiding

\(^{18}\) John Shaw., n. 2, p. 256.
principles of food aid must be that of reaching the people who need it most, primarily in food-deficit countries, at times when they need it most, and in ways that achieve lasting impact as well as short term help. Thus, the first claim on scarce food aid resources should be targeted actions that address the major dimensions of current hunger.

**Food Aid: Problems and Prospects.**

Undoubtedly, there have been vast scale food shortages in Sub-Saharan Africa for the last few decades. FAO, WFP and other NGOs along with the food deficit countries have together made incessant calls for a substantial increase in Food Aid from the industrialised or developed nations. There seems to be no problem in asking the developed and developing food surplus countries to send food to help poorer nations out of their predicament. However, upon closer examination the solution looks far less convincing.

Often the problem of hunger is not related to lack of production, but to lack of buying power of the poor. Poverty not food availability is the issue. Food aid sometimes has a negative effect on the food production. Most Sub-Saharan countries, have a policy of low farm prices; "this policy, intended to placate the urban population which is more important politically, discourages farmers from expanding crop production beyond the needs of their own families. A policy of this sort has resulted in one African country (a traditional exporter of rice until 1971) having to import 400,000 tonnes of rice in 1980 - compared with domestic production of 2 million tonnes."¹⁹

In such cases, where low food price Policies exist we are encouraging low food production to continue. In cases of these structural

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food shortages, it would be better not to send any food aid. This policy of low pricing, often linked to heavy taxation of farmers, is the second reason why food aid is an appropriate response to food shortages in Sub-Saharan Africa, precisely where food needs are said to be critical.

But, if food aid goes to the poor food insecure people, in spite of its discouraging affect on food production it does a good job of reducing hunger. Unfortunately, it has been found out that it is a misconception that food aid reaches the hungry. Perhaps one of the basic misconceptions about food aid is that it is to any extent eaten by the poor. Most food aid goes directly to the governments. These governments sell the food to those who can afford to buy it – usually not the poor – and keep the profits to supplement their budgets. Strictly speaking, this is not food aid at all but government budgetary support. The extra capital could of course be used for development but just as easily it can serve to divert government attention from its own serious agricultural problems, enable it to buy more arms or keep taxes low for urban dwellers.

Food aid is also provided for direct relief to the poor by the WFP and International NGOs such as CARE and OXFAM working in Sub-Saharan Africa. All this food aid falls under a programme known as ‘project food aid’. Food is distributed in various ways: through Food-for-Work projects (FFW), mother child health clinics (MCH) and school feeding. Theoretically, each of these make an excellent contribution to development and increasing food security. FFW improves farmer-to-market roads, builds irrigation channels and a whole variety of related activities. MCH feeds pregnant and nursing mothers and malnourished children. In theory children’s health improves and education classes in nutrition is given to mothers to enable them to look after their families in a
better manner. School feeding helps children learn more at school and grow up to be better-educated citizens.  

However, in reality these programmes are plagued with a number of flaws. FFW, MCH and school feeding are all plagued with serious problems that call in to question their value, both to the poor and as a tool of development. In many Sub-Saharan countries the assets produced under FFW projects accrue to the landowners, not to the land-less poor who work on them. Food aid based MCH is the largest international nutritional programme in the world. Yet evidence suggests that it has a little or no nutritional impact.  

The main reason is that usually the food is not used as a supplement for the normal diet but as a substitute for it. People are poor so they just share out the extra food with the whole family or feed the childless after returning from the MCH centre. In addition education classes largely teach people to cook exotic fortified food aid rather than anything more directly more useful. Often there are no classes. In one major evaluation CARE could find little evidence of education classes in four out of five countries where its programmes were in progress.  

Food aid will play an increasingly important role during the next few decades. Despite aggregate surpluses, current global concentrations of food surpluses in some regions and deficits in others are unlikely to change soon. Even if current (declining) levels of investment in agriculture are maintained to 2020, Sub-Saharan Africa will face an estimated deficit in cereals alone of almost 50 million tons.  

21 Ibid.  
23 WFP., n.3.
It is highly unlikely that by then, the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa would be in a position to generate the foreign exchange capacity to cover this gap through commercial imports. Therefore, most of Sub-Saharan Africa will continue to turn to food aid, not as a last resort, but because it is a unique resource appropriate to meeting two special needs, humanitarian emergencies and chronic food insecurity.

In 1998 Sub-Saharan Africa received 540 thousand tons of food aid on a bilateral basis and Eastern European Countries and CIS 298 thousand tons. Some 856 thousand tons of food aid were delivered bilaterally to the region of South and East Asia in 1997. The regions of Latin America and the Caribbean and of North Africa and Middle East received 195 thousand tons and 94 thousand tons respectively. (Figure 5.2) South Asia and East Asia received the largest amount of bilateral food aid followed by Sub-Saharan Africa.

The major recipient regions of food aid channelled through NGOs in 1997 were Sub-Saharan Africa (0.68 million tons), South and East Asia (0.54 million tons) and Eastern European countries and CIS (0.33 million tons). NGOs channelled 0.27 million tons to Latin America and the Caribbean, while food aid delivered through NGOs to North Africa and Middle East amounted to 73 thousand tons. (Figure 5.3)
Figure 5.2: Breakdown of 1997 bilateral food aid by region

- Eastern Europe & CIS: 17%
- Latin America & Caribbean: 14%
- North Africa & Middle East: 4%
- South & East Asia: 28%
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 36%

Source: INTERFAIS, May 1998

Figure 5.3: Breakdown of 1997 food aid channelled through NGOs by region

- Eastern Europe & CIS: 18%
- Latin America & Caribbean: 10%
- North Africa & Middle East: 8%
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 27%
- South & East Asia: 43%

Source: INTERFAIS, May 1998
Figure: 5.3 Sub-Saharan Africa

Food Aid by Categories (Four Year Average 1989-92)

- Program Food Aid: 26%
- Emergency Food Aid: 12%
- Project Food Aid: 6%
- Agricultural and rural Development: 2%
- Nutrition Intervention: 2%
- Other: 1%

26%
12%
6%
2%
1%
The above figure shows that in emergency food aid formed 50 percent of the food aid deliveries in Sub-Saharan Africa followed by program food aid and project food aid which were 26 percent and 12 percent respectively. This goes with our previous discussion that emergency food aid is tacking most of the resources in Sub-Saharan Africa and leaving less and less for project and programme food aid, which are important for development of sustainable food practices in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Conclusion

Food aid has become a permanent part of the scene in Sub-Saharan Africa following prolonged and recurring food shortages. Food aid is a keystone of the international community's attempts to uphold fundamental human rights relating to life and food security. The guiding principle of food aid has been to reach people who need it most, primarily in food-deficit countries. However, first and foremost food aid must be available to save lives. Thereafter, it is possible to use it in project and programme food aid for targeting vulnerable regions and populations in the Sub-Saharan Africa.

However, food aid is a scarce resource, more so today, when the proportions of food aid are declining. The decline in food aid supply is most damaging to the hungry in food deficit countries since it is they, who need it the most, and benefit from, targeted food assistance. It is therefore, necessary for the food surplus countries to maintain the level of food assistance if not increase it in the future. As discussed earlier these volumes of food aid are necessary not only to feed those effected by natural disasters and wars, but also for the development of agriculture and associated infrastructure, in order to increase the availability of food as well as the 'entitlements' of the population.
As discussed earlier and in the following chapter, poverty not food availability is the issue. Food is generally available in the markets but the poor do not have the resources to buy food. The main reason behind this predicament is the non-availability of productive employment during lean periods and during times of stress.

Moreover, it is understood that food aid sometimes has a negative effect on the food production. This food is sold by the governments to the urban people while the rural poor for whom the food is more important do not have the resources to buy it. This further compounds the problem in vulnerable regions, resulting in famines and emergency situations, demanding immediate relief and diverting developmental resources.

As shown earlier between 1989 and 92, emergency food aid formed 50 percent of the food aid deliveries in Sub-Saharan Africa followed by program food aid and project food aid which were 26 percent and 12 percent respectively. This shows the increase in Calamities and Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa. This increased share of emergency food aid means that not enough have been done to take care of the food situation in Sub-Saharan Africa because of which there is widespread vulnerability to famine and food insecurity of an urgent nature (consuming most of the food aid). This also means that, in the future, there would be less food available for development and infrastructural works (providing employment and therefore food to the vulnerable population).

Therefore, if the bottlenecks related to agricultural production, employment generation, infrastructural development and poverty alleviation, are not addressed on a continuing basis then there are possibilities that the food situation in Sub-Saharan Africa would be a cause of deep concern to the world.