## TIME TO TURN A CORNER

EXPECTATIONS FROM THE NEW GOVT

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# Food security in an innovative way

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OOD security, FS for short, refers to the availability of food and assured access to it. Food that is available may not be accessible due to the lack of entitlements (purchasing power) - also called poverty aplenty. FS exists when occupants of households do not live in hunger (a feeling of desire to eat) or fear of starvation (several reductions in vitamin, nutrient and energy). It exists a la FAO/World Summit - when all people at all times have physical and economic assets to access sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preference for an active and healthy life. Again, it means assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways i.e. without relief, scavenging, stealing or such like. At the national level, "FS means the availability of sufficient stocks of food in a country to meet domestic demand until such time as stocks can be replenished from harvests or imports". In most of the cases, FS is identified through estimates of calorie intake per person per day. An intake of less than 1800 calorie is called extreme poverty (very insecure) and an intake of 2200 calorie is taken as tolerable limit. However, the level of FS could also be judged by other indirect indicators. For example, levels of stunting, blindness, disability, access to three meals a day, household incomesetc

Determinants of security

At the macro-level, FS could be constrained due to: increased farming for use in biofuels, oil price hike, population growth, climate change, loss of agricultural land, etc. At household capital, sickness of the earning member, lower yield of crops, large household size, etc. Food insecurity could gripe a household temporarily or permanently. For example, a sudden Sidr, flood or drought could damage crops and thus forfeit FS of a household for a certain period of time. Permanent insecurity emanates from disability/death of the household head, landlessness, divorce etc.

In the prevailing discourse on FS, we often forget that women are crucial in turning products of a vibrant agricultural sector into food and nutritional security. They have less access to productive factors; yet, for agricultural growth to fulfil their potential, gender disparities must be addressed and effectively reduced and active participation of women at all levels of decision making is necessary.

### Food insecure Bangladesh

By any stretch of imagination, Bangladesh is one of the most food insecure countries in the world. As many as 10 million people do not have access to three satisfactory meals a day;

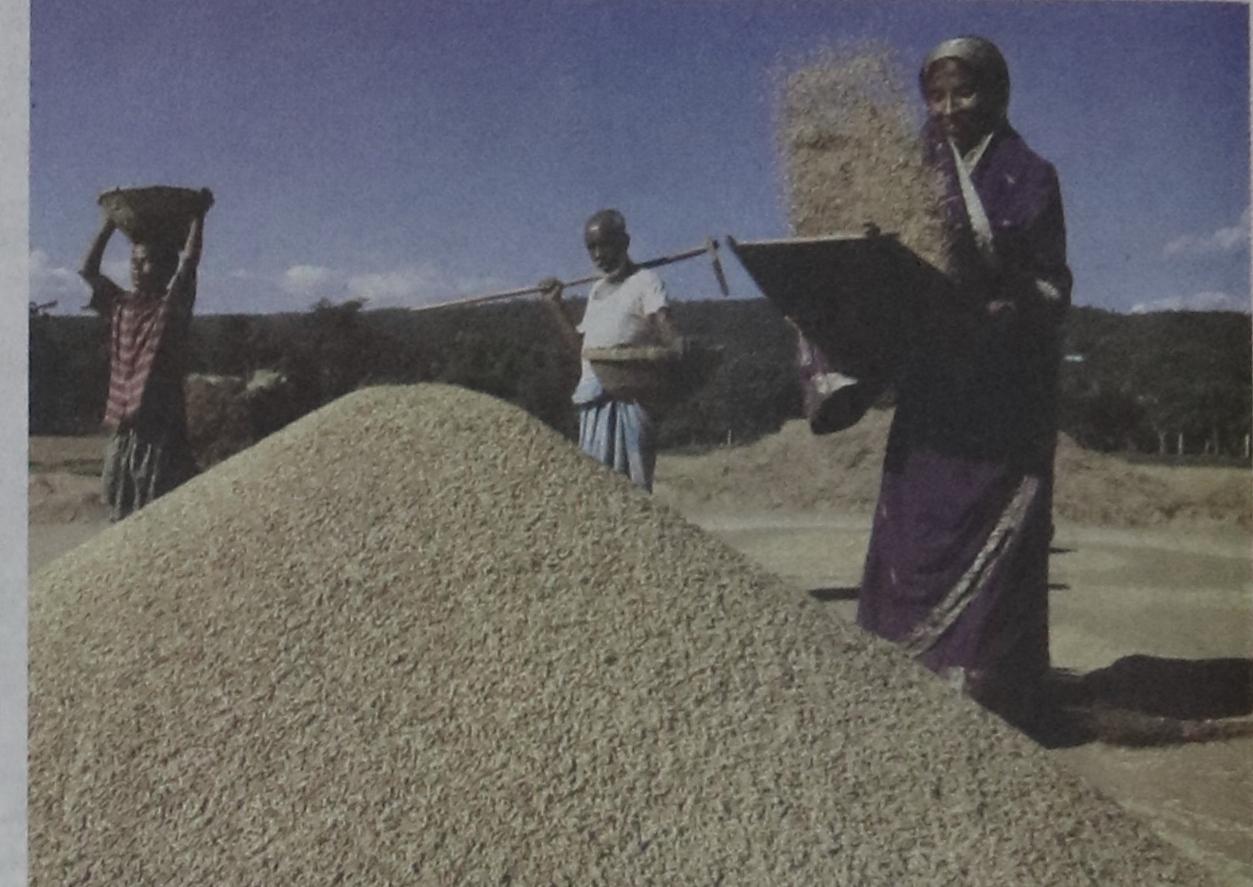
more than half of the people's calorie intake a day is less than 2200 calories. Gender and regional disparity in this regard is very wide. Unfavourable and ecologically backward zones are relatively more prone to FS than favourable zones and non-farm households are levels, the deterring factors are, for worse off than farm households. That example, lack of natural and physical means, if farm activities could be geared up with active participation of women, the FS status could be improved significantly. Empowerment of women and making the resource poor farms more productive would emerge as key policy variables.

### Innovative initiative

To this effect, I shall draw upon some recent initiatives taken in the field to ensure FS of resource poor farms. My intention is to show that small attempts could bring in significant impacts on FS.

## Food Security for Sustainable Household Livelihoods (FoSHoL): An EC/IRRI initiative

FoSHoL starts with the basic premise that agriculture in particular (and rural development in general) is the fountainhead of FS for households. The targets are resource poor households (mostly small and marginal). They are poor but are endowed with some natural capital i.e. their own land up to 100 decimals. However, the average of a large number of them is less than 50 decimals of land and, thus falling outside the 'favour' of NGOs. More impor-

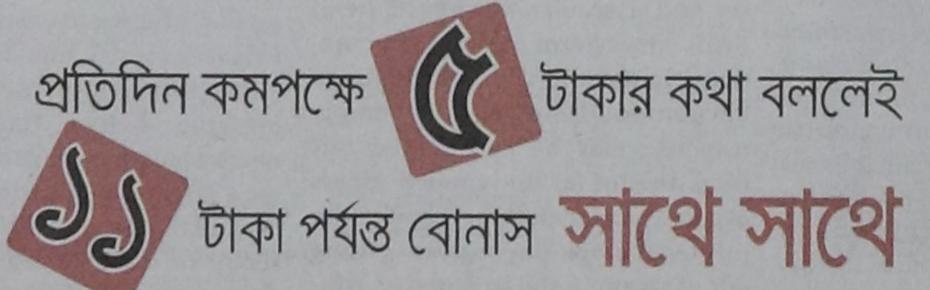


tantly, they reside mostly in backward regions. How could we ensure FS for them in a sustainable fashion? Quite rightly FoSHoL aims to improve livelihoods, by increasing availability and access to food as well as utilisation of food by target households. That their local NGOs. requires technology adoption to

increase food production, capacity building to cope with creeping crisis, linking with extension and markets, etc. The project works in 14 districts administered by three partners (Actionaid, Care, Practical action) and

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১০ টাকা	৩ টাকা
২০ টাকা	৬ টাকা
৩০ টাকা	১১ টাকা
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•২৫ পয়সা কল রেটের ক্ষেত্রে কোন বোনাস প্রযোজ্য হবে না • প্রাপ্ত বোনাস ২৫ পয়সা কল রেট, আইএসডি/ইআইএসডি এবং ইন্টারন্যাশনাল এসএমএস-এ প্রযোজ্য হবে না •এই অফার সীমিত সময়ের জন্য

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