



World Food Day

Dr Shivakumar Magada

Professor of Aquatic Biology, College of Fisheries, Mangalore
shivakumarmagada@gmail.com

World food day is celebrated on 16th October every year. Each year Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations comes out with new themes to create awareness among all the stakeholders in the world. The 2014 World Food Day theme - **Family Farming: “feeding the world, caring for the earth”** - has been chosen to raise the profile of family farming and smallholder farmers. This is a strong signal that the international community recognizes the important contribution of family farmers to world food security. Family farming is inextricably linked to national and global food security. Both in developing and developed countries, family farming is the predominant form of agriculture in the food production sector. Family farming includes all family-based agricultural activities, and it is linked to several areas of rural development. To draw the world attention on the significant role of family farming in eradicating hunger and poverty, providing food security and nutrition, improving livelihoods, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and achieving sustainable development, in particular in rural areas, this theme is selected with the following objectives.

The objectives of this year’s theme are:

- To support the development of agricultural, environmental and social policies conducive to sustainable family farming
- To increase the knowledge, communication and public awareness
- To attain better understanding of family farming needs, constraints and ensure political and technical support
- To create synergies for sustainability

There are 570 million farms in the world of which over 500 million are family owned. They are contributing at least 56% of agriculture production. More than 3.5 billion people depend on rice and 1 billion people depend on rice for their livelihood.

Due to the advancement in science and technology in agriculture and allied fields, the food grain production has increased by many folds. In 1990-92, there were 1015 million people

(19%) undernourished. It is reduced to 805 million (11%) in 2012-14. Even in India, based on prevalence of undernourishment, International Food Policy Research Institute said India is having 20-25% undernourished population. Through Food security bill, mid day meal, National Mission for Protein Supplement (NMPS), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) Government is trying to reduce the hunger and malnutrition. However, we need to go a long way to make this country a hunger free.

Role of fish in eradicating hunger

Fish can be the one of the solutions for eradicating hunger and malnutrition. It is the cheapest source of protein. Its food conversion ratio is the lowest among animals. Present world fish production is 158 million tons (mt) where 91.3 mt comes from capture both in fresh and marine waters and 66.6 mt comes from the aquaculture. India is producing 9.5 mt of fish. Fish protein accounts to 6.5% of the global protein intake and it is 17% of the animal source of the protein. The present per capita fish consumption in India is about 11.3 kg as against World Health Organization's recommendation of 18 kg. India has rich aquatic resources like 2.02 million km² of Exclusive Economic Zone, 3.15 million hectare (mh) of reservoirs, 1.97 lakh km of rivers and canals, 2.35 mh of ponds and lakes, 8129 km of coast line and 1.3 mh of oxbow and derelict waterbodies. Since arable land for agriculture is reducing, we need to look for augmenting fish production in all these natural aquatic systems to suffice the dietary requirement of the growing population. In recent years, aquaculture is also taking an industrial shape and India is earning more than 30,000 crores through export of aquatic products. If the fish and fishery products made available to a common man with affordable price, we can create a healthy India.