Seed, a natural resource generously accessible to the mankind. Being an foundational ingredient for the production of food, in recent times its natural existence has been largely questioned by global players and state legislations. But with changing times, this natural gift has now become a ‘profitable commodity’ for the agro-based companies who are conducting scientific experiments that hamper the natural composition of seeds. Thereby, giving rise to a new product that is Genetically Modified (GMO) seeds which are pesticide/insecticide resistant, making farmers dependent on the scientific discovery on the pretext of higher profit margins and many other reasons.

The emergence and easy circulation of these hybrid seeds amongst the farming community has paved the way out for nutritious food. Easily available in a nearest supermarket and nicely packed for the urban population with high preservatives finds a comfortable space in our kitchen shelves (refer to Table 1). Unaware about the consequences on consumption of packaged food on daily lifestyle, city dwellers rely on medicines for cure without increasing the intake of nutritious food.

It is this continuous onslaught inflicted on the seed and nutrition quotient which has become a contentious issue for those who are producing and consuming the food. Based on this context, the FIAN Delhi will be launching the annual flagship publication—The Nutrition Watch 2016: Keeping Seeds in Peoples' Hands' published by FIAN International and other organizations on 24th October 2016. The latest issue explores the articulation of seeds, lands, and other natural resources with the human right to adequate food and nutrition. Simultaneously, it urges the global audience to understand the issue of encroachment of our seeds, the politics or tussle of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and Patents, role of civil society networks to identifying the primary barriers to food sovereignty and seed sovereignty.

NUTRITION IS NOT A BUSINESS

The World Health Organization (WHO) website clearly advocates that by 2020, an estimated two-thirds of the global burden of disease will be caused by chronic non-communicable diseases, most of which are associated with diet. The global prevalence of malnutrition and under-nutrition is devastatingly high—one billion people are adversely affected by malnutrition, but another one billion people suffer from obesity. The logic behind this is the homogenization of diets, based on ultra-processed food, and is having a dire impact on agro-biodiversity and local food systems. Globally, the problem is not the availability of food resources, but the allocation of nutritious food especially in the developing countries of the world.
Nutrition is important to everyone and is always understood in relation to body's dietary needs. Good nutrition – an adequate, well balanced diet combined with regular physical activity – is a cornerstone of good health. Poor nutrition can lead to reduced immunity, increased susceptibility to disease, impaired physical and mental development, and reduced productivity. Therefore, the source of nutrition will always depend on the quality of seeds sowed by the farmers and subsequently the consumption of food by the people.

For generations, these farming communities through their indigenous or innovative methods saved, protected and exchanged seeds amongst peers to ensure food security. At present, the seed sovereignty is at risk due to enactment of legislations that criminalizes the role of farmers as the ideal 'producers, custodians and distributor' of seeds. Thus, being ignorant to traditional values and norms of protecting and preserving seeds and gradually doing away with the traditional varieties of crops like rice, wheat and minor millet is eating away the role of food producers, thereby impending on food sovereignty.

Furthermore, the destruction of agricultural biodiversity is also rising at an alarming rate: at the end of the 20th century, three quarters of the world's food was generated from only 12 plants and 5 animal species. The capture of seed within the agro-economy by TNCs is a big setback for local seed system and this has shifted towards commercialisation and commodification of seed resources.

The loss of biodiversity, use of poor quality seeds which has been genetically modified, production of toxic food with excessive usage of fertilizers and pesticides have led food become toxic instead of food as medicines. This has been leading to severe implications. For reference, the Global Nutrition Report of 2016 indicates that how India still lags behind in tackling malnutrition effectively. Malnutrition manifests in the form of stunting, wasting, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight/obesity. In terms of stunting, India ranks 114th out of 132 nations (incidence: 38.7%) while for wasting, it is 120th among 130 countries (incidence: 15.1%) and India is the third most obese country in the world with 30 million people suffering from obesity. Regarding anemia prevalence among women of reproductive ages, India ranks 170th out of 185 countries (incidence: 48.1%). Incidentally, Bangladesh and Nepal have performed better than India. (The Senitel, 2016)

Though, the overall picture of Nutritional India appears to be gloomy but one must be intrigued to know about the statistics related to nutrition/malnutrition in the national capital- Delhi.

**DELHI'S REPORT CARD ON NUTRITION**

Being a landlocked Union Territory, it's a home 25 million people with 70% of them residing in urban clusters/slums. From time to time studies have been conducted by civil society organizations to map out the efficacy and efficiency of the State Government schemes working unilaterally on the idea of providing nutrition to the worst off sections of the society. At present Delhi has 11 Nutritional Rehabilitation Centers (NRCs), out of which only 5 are functional.
But according to a report in the newspaper (Live Mint) states that NRC's of Delhi are situated in tiny rooms accommodating with 2/3 beds often separated by a glass door with messier surroundings such as Guru Gobind Singh Hospital and Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital.

In 2014, a report was released by CRY India and Alliance for People's Rights reflecting upon the nutritional status of children in Delhi. It found that at least 36 per cent of children were malnourished and the overall malnutrition among girl kids (38 per cent) was higher than the boys (34 per cent). Out of total malnourished children, 33 per cent children are in Severely Acute Malnutrition (SAM) category and 67 per cent were found to be moderately malnourished (MAM). Overall malnutrition was higher in North-West district - 51 per cent. Similarly, the Government of India in 2015, released malnutrition figures from the Rapid Survey on Children (RSoC) data that was collected in 2013-14. It found 29.4 per cent of children (aged less than three years) to be underweight (low in weight for their age), while 15 per cent were wasted (low weight for their height) and 38.7 per cent were stunted (low in height for age). But in absolute terms, the current levels of underweight and stunted children are abysmally high. Reflecting on these numbers, former Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh declared “malnutrition as a national shame”.

According to the most recent United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) report, nearly 50 per cent of women in India are married before they turn 18, in violation of the law. The poor nutritional status of adolescent girls, combined with child marriage and multiple pregnancies even before becoming an adult, lead to another dismal fact that 30 per cent of all children are born with low birth weight. So we add approximately seven million, potentially wasted and stunted, to our population every year!

(Source: The Hindu, 2016)

Nearly half of all deaths in children under 5 are attributable to under-nutrition. This translates into the unnecessary loss of about 3 million young lives a year.

(Source: UNICEF 2016)

Another study was conducted in 2014 to understand the factors related to social health and nutritional status of women 12 urban slum clusters in Delhi. Results indicated that of total respondents 69.2% were literate with 49.8% married before 18 years, 44.3% had a child before 20 years of age, 13.2% reported of abortions. 56% were either pregnant or lactating. Average energy and protein intake per day was 1242±346 Kcal and 35.4±8.1g respectively. Only 47.2% of lactating women were exclusively breast feeding their children for first 6 months whereas 30.2% of infants had received pre-lacteals as their first feed after birth. (Source: Journal of Community Nutrition & Health, 2014) However, the latest National Health Survey of 2015-2016 showed that 45% of women were anemic and pregnant.

Moving on, the National Sample Survey Organization conducted a survey in 2011-2012 to analyze the nutritional status in rural and urban areas of India. It found that 2099 kilocalories in rural and 2058 kilocalories in urban areas respectively. With reference Delhi, the median energy intake in the rural, migrant and urban groups was 2731, 3078, and 3224 kcal respectively for men, and 2153, 2504, and 2644 kcal for women. (Source: Public Library of Science, 2013)

Therefore, the aggregate levels of under-nutrition in India remain shockingly high and the segments most at risk continue to be adolescent girls, women and children, migrant workers reflecting the insidious economic and socio-cultural deprivation so prevalent in India. In other words, improving nutritional status of Delhi residents requires a more direct, more focused, and more integrated strategy and spotlight must be turned towards consumption of nutritious food and, more encouragement of local ways to preserve and protect seeds as against sowing of hybrid seeds.
FIAN DELHI DEMANDS

Considering the falling state of nutrition in Delhi, the FIAN Delhi leaders have pledged to take the following actions:

- Starting a petition campaign that urges the State authorities to look into the silent emergency of malnutrition.
- Extending support to farming community to protect & preserve seeds through local ways such as formation of seeds banks, seed barter system amongst different peasant communities, exploring new avenues for production of organic seeds and making them available to the farmers.
- State must ensure that nutritious food should find a place in PDS, Kiranas and supermarkets.
- Public authorities should initiate electronic and print media campaigns to assert the importance of consumption of nutritious food.
- Creating awareness among urban communities specially youth, children about the impacts of highly processed food including junk food items
- Respect, Recognize, Fulfill FAO Seed Treaty
- Proactively finalize negotiations for a UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural areas
- Follow the voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests
- The right to food is a human right enshrined in Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Right (Article 25)
- Child Rights Convention affirmed good nutrition to be regarded as FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT
- The Right to Livelihood, Land, Water and Food- CEDAW (Article 14)
- Duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health (Directive Principles of the State Policy, 47)

FIAN Delhi believes that consumption of nutritious food is just not the way of life, but a guarantee to lead a healthy life.