

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 13 April 2021 10:00 GMT +05:30
DIALOGUE TITLE	UN Independent Food System Summit Dialogue Grassroot Perspective for Jharkhand, 2021
CONVENED BY	Welthungerhilfe, India. CARITAS India, Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture Network and Bhoomi Ka
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/8532/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	India

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

93

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-18

15 19-30

40 31-50

26 51-65

12 66-80

0 80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

58 Male

35 Female

0 Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

27 Agriculture/crops

5 Fish and aquaculture

10 Livestock

3 Agro-forestry

20 Environment and ecology

0 Trade and commerce

1 Education

2 Communication

6 Food processing

2 Food retail, markets

1 Food industry

0 Financial Services

0 Health care

1 Nutrition

8 National or local government

7 Utilities

Industrial

Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Small/medium enterprise/artisan

1 Large national business

1 Multi-national corporation

50 Small-scale farmer

10 Medium-scale farmer

5 Large-scale farmer

3 Local Non-Governmental Organization

1 International Non-Governmental Organization

10 Indigenous People

1 Science and academia

Workers and trade union

0 Member of Parliament

0 Local authority

8 Government and national institution

0 Regional economic community

0 United Nations

0 International financial institution

0 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

2 Consumer group

Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

The UNFSS Dialogue's principles and guidelines were thoroughly followed while planning and organizing the Independent Summit Dialogue. The Dialogue was convened by Welthungerhilfe and Bhoomi Ka, and co-conveners were Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture (RRA) and Caritas India along with local civil society organizations. A steering committee was formed with representatives from various organizations with rich expertise in various topics related to food systems. The participants were also selected carefully to represent all the stakeholders involved in the food system, especially small farmers. Each participating organization played an active role in designing, decision-making, planning, engagement, implementation and executing the Dialogue.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The Dialogue facilitated a platform for Government officials, subject experts, community leaders and farmers to come together and discuss all the five Action Track topics. Through a facilitated dialogue, it was ensured that each one remain respectful about others experience on the topic. Considering the complex nature of the food systems, a multi-stakeholder approach was ensured in the dialogue, and every participant was given a chance to share their views.

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENERS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

All the principles recommended by Food System Summit 2021 are very essential for a human rights based approach. All the conveners should follow this to get various perspectives from different sections of the society. The Conveners should particularly focus on the representation of the rural community, who otherwise remain silent.

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

Yes

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The Sub-National level UNFSSD convened on 13th April 2021 primarily aimed (i) to collate suggestions on improving food systems in Jharkhand, considering aspects of production, livelihood, nutrition, consumption and resilience associated with Food; and 2) feed the collated suggestions to Jharkhand's mainstream processes and UN Food System dialogue. The virtual summit brought together key stakeholders including farmers, community leaders, network leaders, CSOs, academicians and government representatives to guide individual and collective action towards a future of food that is sustainable, equitable and secure.

This report analyses the feedback/recommendations put forth by the conveners and participants during the multi-stakeholder Independent Summit Dialogue on 'food systems' in Jharkhand. Overall, the content of the Dialogue was highly appreciated by the participants as it covered a diverse range of aspects under the discussion of Food Systems. It was especially found relevant in the current context when the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating impacts have brought about a gamut of vulnerabilities into sharp focus and compelled the world to rethink about our food systems. The Dialogue witnessed insightful discussions by farmers and community leaders, and other subject matter experts generating comprehensive knowledge around land, water, and forest. The Dialogue focused on all Five Action Tracks decided in the UNFSSD.

The current food systems of the world, including India are highly inefficient and inequitable in terms of production, distribution, and consumption. Jharkhand, home to a dominant tribal population, echoes strong symbiotic relationship between forests, land, and water. Here, people's livelihoods are primarily based on agro-forestry. The agriculture practices in the state are gradually being influenced by urbanization, mining and industries, contract farming, etc.; land degradation and land erosion of topsoil are some of other crucial issues which is affecting productivity and soil quality. As Jharkhand is rich in minerals, availability of safe drinking water is also a concern issue in many places. A large portion of uplands remain underutilized due to lack of irrigation facility. According to ICAR data, only 9.5% the cultivated area in Jharkhand is irrigated. Productivity of a single crop is not enough to measure the success of agriculture; diversity of crops in farm, using fallow land should also be considered as major indicators which has a direct impact on diet diversity.

It is quite evident that chemical fertilizer also play a major role in environmental degradation, operational health hazards and perpetuation of lifestyle and non-communicable diseases. In the wake of the pandemic there is a consensus among the nations of the world to transform the way the world produces, distributes, consumes and thinks about food is the need of the hour.

A broad understanding is emerging that our food systems are a key factor in the environmental emergency: they contribute massively to malnutrition, global warming, biodiversity loss, land use change and soil nutrient loss. This makes it vital to transform the way the world produces, consumes, and thinks about food. Jharkhand being the state of untouched traditional wisdom and hub of nature friendly practices of food production and consumption, is an important example of sustainable practices involved in food systems. However, the voices of many crucial food system actors, have so far been underrepresented in the academic and policy discourse around food systems.

ACTION TRACKS

- ✓ Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- ✓ Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- ✓ Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- ✓ Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- ✓ Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

- Finance
- ✓ Innovation
- Human rights
- ✓ Women & Youth Empowerment
- ✓ Policy
- Data & Evidence
- ✓ Governance
- Trade-offs
- ✓ Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

The Independent Food System Dialogue, Jharkhand created a space for an essential dialogue and discussion especially during the pandemic which is severely affecting the food systems. Various dimensions of Food Systems such as social, economic, political environmental, health, livelihoods etc. were discussed during the Dialogue which was divided into three sessions. The first session was the keynote address given by Dr. T. Vijay Kumar, Special Chief Secretary to Govt., Natural Farming, Agriculture Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh; second session focused on Action Track wise breakout sessions, and the final session was a panel discussion on recommendations by the participants. Below are a few key findings and recommendations derived from the five Action Track discussions.

- Jharkhand is a state of high undulated terrain resulting in large soil erosion, dominated by indigenous communities with a rich knowledge base of local and traditional crops and food systems. Most of these traditional systems are gradually eroding due to input intensive practices and energy dense food patterns promoted by the market.
- It is important to encourage and ensure participation of the rural community in the planning process and execution of emerged plan for community led conservation of traditional high yielding seeds, soil water conservation measures.
- Smallholder farmers play a crucial role in the growth of rural economy, not only in Jharkhand, but many part of the world by their multifunctional role of diverse food production, seed conservation and nature positive production pattern. Hence, it is very important to build their capacities on climate resilient farming systems and practices through practical demonstrations and accompaniments. Participatory Action Research (PAR) on crop performance/cost benefit analysis in control plots systems help in building confidence of small holder farmers. Along with this, vulnerability of the landless people also needs to be addressed adequately.
- Emphasis to be laid on 'nutrition' besides 'securing food'. Nutritious food in Jharkhand and many other places in the world is also being contributed by Tree based food, uncultivated forest based, traditional crops. It is important to bring back dignity of all these.
- Reframe the National Procurement Policy of the government to buy local crops and supply them in public sector programs like Public Distribution System (PDS) in India. The National Food Security Act of India, specifically sections 3, 4, 5 and 31 have provision to support and promote the above action.
- A collaborative platform is needed to take the discussion forward on issues related to agriculture, food and nutrition, and dietary diversity in the state. This platform can facilitate and promote possible innovative knowledge and practices in the state.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

Owing to the ongoing rise in COVID-19 pandemic in the country, the Independent Summit Dialogue was organised online. The 3-hour programme showed an overwhelming response on the discussion topics by the diverse subject matter experts, panelist and smallholder farmers who participated and contributed to the Dialogue. The online platform, Zoom was used for facilitation of the Dialogue where everyone's participation was ensured. The Dialogue was facilitated by representatives of the Civil Society Academy (CSA). The dialogue entailed clear and was divided into three parts – the first session was the keynote address shared an overall objective of the UNFSS, second session was a break out session on five Action Tracks. For each break out session one Facilitator/Rapporteur and one Keynote speaker were assigned; the third and last session was a panel discussion, where all the rapporteurs presented key recommendations on the five Action Tracks from the breakout session. A standardized format was used to capture each Action Track discussion to maintain uniformity. Food insecurity is a multi-dimensional issue, therefore it needs a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach to address the issues. However, there is lack of convergence in true spirit that is not significant to address the issue at the government level. Most of the time food security means proving benefit under certain schemes, like subsidized food at school childcare centre or households through fair price shop.

As an outcome of the Dialogue, below are the issues which needs urgent action (in the next six months):

- Framing agriculture policy for the state of Jharkhand with strong focus on ecological farming. (Action Track 3)
- Forming a working group to facilitate action research and policy advocacy on efficacy of various nutrition sensitive farming and traditional food system and diet diversity. (Action Tracks 1 and 2)
- Brining in various relevant campaigns and networks together on a platform to multiply already existing practices across the country. Some of these network are - Right to Food Campaign, MGNREGA Watch, Jharkhand Van Adhikar Manch, Sukhar Virodhi Abhiyan etc. These platforms could be used to share the possible innovative knowledge and practices in agriculture in the state. (Action Track 4)
- A large-scale mainstream supported program on women led climate resilient ecological farming to be framed and advocated to the government. (Action Track 5)

Action points in the long run:

- Promotion of stubborn and indigenous/local crops through revival of millets and other crops on a community led campaign mode, introducing appropriate technologies for millet cultivation/processing. (Action Tracks 2, 3, 4 and 5)
- Specific focus on upland rainfed to be brought up considering Jharkhand's terrain. (Action Track 3)
- Farm to fork approach to be promoted as a campaign message to bring in focus in all the necessary steps of food reaching from one place to another. Even to Preparation/cooking of food is an important aspect which needs looking into. Community should have the knowledge of how to cook the food without losing the nutrition in it. There is a possibility of initiating a campaign on consumption of indigenous food. (Action Track 1, 2)
- A clear policy dialogue to be facilitated on ensuring procurement of local crop and assuring support price for that. (Action Track 2, 4)

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KEYWORDS

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✓	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
	Human rights	✓	Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Below are few of the areas of divergence which came to light during the multi-stakeholder Dialogue:

- Stigma associated with traditional crops and food – people think it is not 'modern' enough.
 - o Need for awareness and changes in the policy to address this stigma/notion.
 - o Recipe demonstration in schools etc.
- Even if ecological farming is good, we are not able to scale it up.
 - o Policy push is the need of the hour.
 - o Revitalization of procurement to secure assured marketing.
- Agriculture is considered only as 'crop' farming, hence other important components of livestock, forest, fisheries, commons are missed out – which also plays an important role in diet -
 - o Policy push towards more convergence.
 - o Integrated farming systems needs to be boosted.
- Production, market and consumption does not understand each other's pain point.
- The stakeholders, especially NGOs actively working on issues related to food systems need to work on farm to fork concept.
 - o To promote local food systems, Government should take proactive steps for decentralization of the procurement rules for public service program. Local food systems could be a viable option to address hunger and malnutrition, however, there is lack on intent to promote and sustain it.
 - o Government appreciates organic farming, however there is not much effort as there is a misconception that organic production cannot cater to the large scale need of the state. There is also no assured markets available for farmers.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **T Vijay Kumar inputs**
https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/IMG_20210413_111747-scaled.jpg
- **Participants interactions**
https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/IMG_20210413_104224-scaled.jpg

RELEVANT LINKS

- **UNFSSD: Grassroot perspective from Jharkhand state, India**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VwNNbzT0JCo&t=13s>