



STRATEGIES TO REIN IN THE DUAL LOSS OF FOOD WASTE

Anjali Rajwade

Associate Professor, Department of Home Science,
Smt. R.D.G. College, Akola. Maharashtra

Corresponding Author's E-mail ID: arajwade28@yahoo.com

Abstract:

Food is a basic natural need of the living including human being. Man has evolved ways of procuring food & its management. Food, being a largely perishable commodity, is likely to result in food wastage unless specific, well planned and timely executed steps are taken for wastage prevention. If, at times, total prevention is practically not possible, then the aim should be to achieve maximum reduction in wastage of food and utilization of the waste for some related useful purpose. There is need for reduction in food wastage because, it is a double loss – The food that is lost as well as the monetary loss. In order to make some recovery, it is best to utilize the waste food in various gainful manners. Strategies for food wastage reduction include wastage reduction at crop level, at transport level, at storage level, in case of cooked food before consumption and in case of leftover food. Nutrition experts can conduct socially oriented extension activities to propagate the message of prevention of food wastage. Domestic kitchen gardening and community kitchen gardening can be very useful and multipurpose schemes. The strategically managed food wastage reduction involves government departments at local, state, regional and central levels, NGOs and community members; in well coordinated manner with the principle of 'Self help is the best help'.

keywords: strategies, food wastage, wastage reduction

Introduction:

Food is a basic natural need of the living including human being. Man has evolved ways of procuring food & its management. Food, being a largely perishable commodity, is likely to result in food wastage unless specific, well planned and timely executed steps are taken for wastage prevention¹. If, at times, total prevention is practically not possible, then the aim should be to achieve maximum reduction in wastage of food and utilization of the waste for some related useful purpose.

Need for Reduction in Food Wastage:

Indian culture considers food as sacred item. Society has a large segment of people for whom food is scarce. 'The haves', have to be

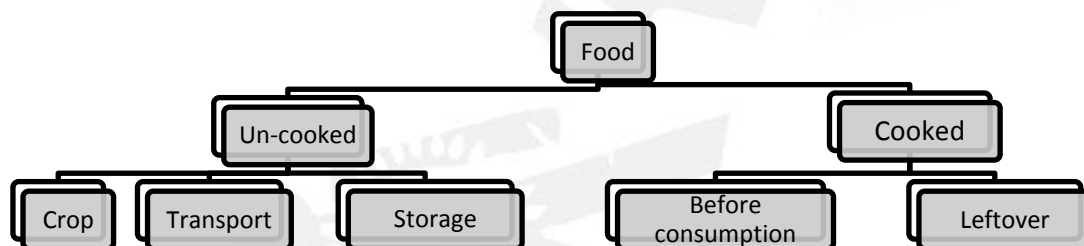




responsible citizen in order to respect & contribute to the need of food for 'The have-nots'. That is basic as a human being. Many regions experience food scarcity due to natural or manmade calamities. Reduction in food wastage as a routine practice will make more food available at such adverse times. Food wastage is a double loss – The food that is lost as well as the monetary loss. In order to make some recovery, it is best to utilize the waste food in various gainful manners.

Strategies for Food Wastage Reduction:

In order to prevent food- wastage, strategies have to be planned at different stages of food² as under –



The flow chart highlights important stages at which reduction in food wastage can be planned.

1) Strategies for Food Wastage Reduction at Crop Level:-

Good quality seeds with inherent strength to withstand common adverse environmental factors need to be made available to the farmers for cultivation purpose. For proper & successful implementation of the strategy, farmers will need concerned educational guidance, appropriate financial assistance & follow-up supervision by experts from Govt, NGO or Agricultural co-operative societies³. The crop pattern should be planned by concerned experts, keeping in mind, not only the crop yield but also the benefits to the farmers in comprehensive manner. It is essential to protect the farmer from commercially minded seed companies & their agents. During the complete process of cultivation, farmers need appropriate advice regarding use of bio-fertilizers and eco friendly insecticides & pesticides. They also need guidance regarding optimally possible ways of crop protection from adverse environmental factors.





2) Strategies for Food Wastage Reduction at Transport Level:-

Transport of food needs organized and well co-ordinate work done by multiple agencies. Food items with early perish ability like milk & milk products need refrigerated transport mechanism, fruits & vegetables have to be appropriately wrapped, stacked & transported with due physical care. It is the role of the Government, to make arrangements for efficient transport within permissible time duration for avoiding preventable food waste⁴. Effective transport facilities on large scales like special goods trains having appropriate inbuilt arrangements & facilities are especially helpful for mass transport of costly as well as essential food items especially at times of adverse circumstances like natural calamities.

3) Strategies for Food Wastage Reduction at Storage Level:-

Food storage should be undertaken only in specially designed food storage facilities & utilized exclusively for that purpose. This prevents cross contamination & wastage. Where ever necessary bioactive preservatives & permissible insecticides or pesticides need to be used under guidance of experts. The same needs to be reassessed periodically & with proper documentations. Storage facilities should be available at the initial location & appropriately planned regional centers, depending on the nature of the food item. Some food items like live fish, potatoes etc need pre-storage processing like cleaning, drying, salt application etc. Facilities for the same should be available at the storage sites.

4) Strategies for Food Wastage Reduction in Case of Cooked Food Before Consumption:-

The quantity of food to be actually cooked needs to be planned in advance especially on occasions like parties, marriages, religious meals, hotels etc. Arrangement for proper utilization & not just disposal of leftover food, if any, should be preplanned⁵. Attractive, lucid & educative advertisements in print media as well electronic media like FM Radio, TV & Social media should be implemented for people to get to know about the need for & the ways of reduction in





food wastage, The larger the percentage of common people involved in implementation of prevention of food wastage, the lesser will be the quantity of food wasted.

5) **Strategies for Food Wastage Reduction in Case of ‘ Leftover ’**

Food:-

Leftover food can be managed in different ways. Sometimes it can be processed into food which can be stored for a longer time e.g. Milk can be converted in to curds, cheese, paneer etc. Fruits can be converted into pulps or agro products like sauce, jam, jelly etc. Leftover food fit for dignified human consumption can be given to needy people at places like orphanages, temples etc. Some of it can also be used as animal feed at domestic level or commercial centers like poultries, dairy farms, etc. Leftover food can be utilized for bio-fertilizers production. This process will reduce the economical loss caused by the food wastage.

Role of Nutritionists in Food Wastage Reduction:

Apart from classroom teachings, nutrition experts can conduct socially oriented extension activities to propagate the message of prevention of food wastage. Domestic kitchen gardening can utilized biodegradable food waste constructively and yield eco friendly & healthy food in return. If implemented under the guidance of an expert team including nutritionists, community kitchen gardening can be a very useful and multipurpose scheme. It can sustain allied schemes like animal breeding to be beneficial to everyone involved.

Agencies Involved in Strategically Managed Food Wastage Reduction:

1) Government departments at local, state, regional and central levels:

These should be involved more in planning and supporting the schemes for reduction in food wastage

2) NGOs:

Genuine NGOs & social workers are necessary for non-profit oriented and humane approach to the schemes. They can educate people about relevant aspects involved , motivate people & carry out analytical evaluation of





effectiveness of a scheme and advise on modifications based on local circumstances and needs .

3) Community Members:

The people who are the targeted beneficiaries should actively participate in the schemes, to make them really meaningful and sustainable. That reflects the principle of – ‘Self help is the best help ’.

References:

- “Loss and waste:”
(<http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/004/AC301E/AC301e02.htm>). Food and Agriculture Organization. Retrieved 2009-08-23.
 - “Post-harvest system and food losses”(http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/004/AC301E/AC301e03.htm). Food and Agriculture Organization. Retrieved 2009-08-23.
 - “The Definition of Waste”- (<http://www.defra.gov.in>) Defra 2009. Retrieved 2009-08-20.
 - “Food Waste Composting Regulations”
(<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/LEA/regs/review/FoodWastComp/Food/Wastcomp.pdf>) Retrieved 2013-11-14.
 - “Compostable materials Handling Operations and Facilities Regulatory Requirements” (<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/regulations>)
 - “Food Security” (<http://www.gaia-technology.com/sa/newsletters/newsletter.cfm?newsleterID=136&ID=0>). Scientific alliance. 2009. Retrieved 2009-08-21.
- =====

