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“Global food security and food safety:
The role of universities”

Need for Interdisciplinary Curriculum in the Universities for Achieving Food Security

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Abstract

Universities are the store houses of knowledge. They generate and update knowledge through researches and transfers to different academic and non-academic levels through education and policy recommendation. Majority of the academicians in the universities are mono-disciplinary in nature. There is conflict among them and the specialists in one discipline very often underestimate the others, for which the poor and food insecure people suffer. The objective of this research is to formulate an interdisciplinary curriculum for food security education so that the experts from similar context can follow for their work. To achieve this, modules of different interdisciplinary centres of different universities of the world have been reviewed and analyzed. Food security is a very complex phenomenon that needs critical and innovative interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and trans-disciplinary education and research on contemporary issues, networking among experts each other at different level. It is not only a matter of poverty rather the issue of security, rights, sovereignty and policy. It is dynamic rather than static. Problems need to be considered from household, community, market, regional, national and international perspectives. Rather than the dimensions, food security includes supply or value chain, hygiene issues, climate change, biodiversity, ecosystem management, environmental sustainability, governance, decision making, nutrition, public health, social justice, indigenous knowledge, households' anthropological consumption pattern, consumer behaviour, and many other issues. The interdisciplinary education and research approach of food security includes crop production, biotechnology, plant breeding, sociology, political science, economics, anthropology, mathematics, statistics etc. It needs to understand, under what conditions different experts work combined together, specially for policy making; and how one's decision affects all others. It is very important to integrate natural sciences research with social science perspectives in order to address the challenges of nutrition and food insecurity in a holistic mode. So, the universities dealing with food security need to work for the intellectual creativeness and teaching capability to address the complex, contemporary matters so that all people can get food sustainably and fairly served by a food system. In that case, intellectuals need to be open-minded to accept each other and work for disseminating public knowledge and recommend the policy.

Keywords: Education and research, Food security, Interdisciplinary, university