We all need to help people who are not able to get adequate food on their own. Authorities can be held responsible by citizens for what they do or do not do to ensure the right to food for all of their people.

Did you know that...

Some facts about my country

With more than one billion people, India is the second most populated country in the world. In the last century, a “green revolution” helped India recover from a great famine and changed it into a leading nation in the fields of agriculture and technology.

Yet, 850 million Indian people live on less than two US dollars a day.

One out of five Indians, over 220 million people, are hungry. Malnutrition affects nearly half of the children under five years old.

Rural poverty is widespread: three out of four rural families lack tap water and toilet facilities and half of all rural women are unable to read and write.

The Constitution of India recognizes the right to life and establishes the duty of government to raise the level of nutrition of its people.

In 2001 India experienced “hunger amidst plenty”. People were going hungry while about fifty million tonnes of grain were stored in public granaries across the country. The Supreme Court of India responded to this by directing state governments to provide every child who goes to government primary school with a nutritious, cooked meal.

Read my story to find out...

How we made our voices heard when we needed food.

What governments can do to help people who need food but are too poor to buy or grow it themselves.

How school lunches help us to be healthier and study better.
In the Name of the Law

right to food: the right of every man, woman and child to always have enough food for a healthy and active life

debt: money owed to another person or organisation

ration shop: a shop sponsored by the government where poor people can buy goods at a low price
fundamental right: a basic right which everyone should have
namaste: a greeting in India
Supreme Court: the highest court of justice in a country
access to food: always being able to buy or grow enough food
allowance: a sum of money given to a person regularly
In a village in the south of India a family is having a simple dinner. They are poor and can only afford one meal a day.

Our food is also good for our health, Gayatri. Rice gives us energy, vegetables provide necessary vitamins and many spices are medicinal.

And now news about the Supreme Court’s decision on the right to food.

Wait, please, Kaushik. Let’s listen to this news.

**vitamin:** substance found in small quantities in food and essential for the health and normal working of the body

**medicinal:** a food or substance which can be used as medicine
India

dalit: the name for the lowest caste of people in India
discrimination: when people are treated unfairly because of their race, religion, colour, sex or origin
In the Name of the Law

Going to school is fun now. There have been so many changes!

The teacher keeps reminding us about washing hands.

Lunchtime! Remember to wash your hands!

A kitchen shed was built and they hired a cook. She always jokes with us while serving food.

We eat all together and it is always fun. It is like having a party every day!

I would like you to sit all together. Remember we are all equal. We should not treat anybody differently on the basis of religion, caste, class. It is wrong and it is against the law.

Our cook makes very good rice. Kaushik is always asking for a second helping!

caste: a social class in India
A neighbour comes in.

Let us have some tea now.

Oh, I hope they will go on with the meals. It is so important for poor people, especially widows like me, to know that their children are fed at school.

Namaste!

Good evening, Lakshmi. What can I offer you?

A cup of tea, thank you. How are you today?

Fine, thank you.

Did you hear the report on the school meals just now?

You know, on some days the school meal is the only meal my children have.

You see?! It is festival food compared to what my children get at home!

Today we had banana chips for dessert!

You know, we became so poor after my husband’s death... Even with the school meals my children are thin because they do not always get enough to eat.
Come on, Kaushik, help me to clean the table! We have to do our homework.

And to think that our children have their hot meals thanks to the right to food campaign! Remember that Action Day? People took to the streets all over the country.

Our whole village participated. It was a great idea to serve meals to our kids in front of the school building.

I remember the attention of the press to these events. Children holding signs were on the pages of all newspapers.

Well, now we know that we should demand change if our rights are violated.

Well, our children will not have school meals for the rest of their lives. One day they will finish school. Will they be able to produce enough food for themselves and their families? Will they earn enough to buy it?

Sure, if the prices are affordable and their income is enough to have food on the table today, tomorrow and the next day.

But school meals are just a start! The next step is to seek opportunities to work and earn the money needed to buy our own food. Then we will take more control of our lives.

The End.
Have you thought about...

- why Gayatri and Kaushik study better now that they get a meal at school?
- what governments can do to help hungry people?
- what the courts, the public and the press can do to ensure everyone’s right to food?

Is it fair that...

- hungry people have to beg for food?
- many children have to go to school hungry?
- people are treated differently because of their race, religion, sex, origin or income?

Everyone can do something

Choose a problem in your community that you find unacceptable and do something to change it.