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## **UNWFP releases food security atlas**

Staff Reporter

*Kandhamal, Malkangiri, Gajapati and Rayagada districts lowly ranked in food security index*

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*WFP prepares atlas in association with Institute of Human Development*

*Job schemes and land for landless relevant to improved food security*

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**BHUBANESWAR:** UN World Food Programme (WFP) on Saturday called for a focussed intervention in four districts such as Kandhamal, Malkangiri, Gajapati and Rayagada that rank as extremely food insecure districts in Orissa.

WFP that prepared 'Food Security Atlas of Rural Orissa' in association with New Delhi-based Institute of Human Development (IHD) said, "our analysis shows that in Orissa there is a contiguous zone of acute food insecurity – all the districts of the Eastern Ghats and the adjoining coastal districts."

"Within this zone there is group of four districts such as Kandhamal, Malkangiri, Gajapati and Rayagada that require urgent and sustained attention," WFP said in the atlas, which was released here on Saturday.

Besides the infamous four, the report called for execution of more developmental projects in Koraput, Boudh and Keonjhar districts.

These districts are lowly ranked in Food Security Index (FSI) and Food Security Outcome Index (FSOI).

Releasing the atlas, Professor Abhijit Sen, member of the Planning Commission, said although rate of poverty had gone down in the infamous KBK district due to 10 years of intervention, it had gone up in northern region.

"The atlas marks the beginning of a comprehensive food security information system for the State and will enable more rational allocation of resources to the most vulnerable areas for improving the food and nutritional security of the local communities," said Ms. Mihoko Tamamura, WFP representative and country director for India.

Rural connectivity

There should be measures to improve irrigation and agricultural productivity while farm income could be improved through better rural connectivity, the report said.

"The diversification into high-value or horticultural crops should be brought about in addition to existing rice production.

In the uplands, there are vast areas that yield very little.

These areas can be turned into cash crop cultivation areas. The cash from such high-value and horticultural crops can be used to advance the process of accumulation," the atlas suggested.

Similarly, the atlas has given emphasis on rural connectivity.

"The target of Orissa is to connect 4,955 habitations with new connectivity of 14,968 kms of roads and upgradation of 7659 kms of roads," the report said.

The atlas found that districts with higher properties of agricultural labour were also the ones with higher food insecurity.

The districts are Gajapati, Ganjam, Bhadrak and Jajpur. Both employment schemes and distribution of land to the landless were relevant to improved food security in these districts.