

[FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA]

Chapter- 4

FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA

STUDY NOTES

Food Security

Food security means accessibility and affordability of food to all people at all times. Food security has the following dimensions:

(i) **Availability of Food** means food production within the country, imports and previous year's stock stored in government granaries.

(ii) **Accessibility** means food is within reach of every person.

(iii) **Affordability** implies that an individual has enough money to buy sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet one's dietary needs. Food security is ensured in a country only if

(a) enough food is available for all the people.

(b) all persons have the capacity to buy food of acceptable quality.

(c) there is no barrier to access to food.

Need of Food Security

(i) The poorest sections of the society might be food insecure most of the time.

(ii) Persons above the poverty line might also be food insecure when the country faces a national disaster/calamity like

earthquake, drought, flood, tsunami or widespread failure of crops causing famine.

(iii) Because of the above two reasons there is a need for food security.

Food Security Affected During a Calamity

(i) Due to a natural calamity e.g., drought, total production of food grains decreases. It creates a shortage of food and the prices go up.

(ii) At the high prices some people cannot afford to buy food.

(iii) If such a calamity happens in a very wide area or is stretched over a long period of time it may cause a situation of starvation.

Famine

(i) A massive starvation might turn into a famine.

(ii) A famine is characterized by widespread deaths due to starvation and epidemics caused by forced use of contaminated water or decaying food and loss of body resistance due to weakening from starvation.

(iii) The most devastating famine that occurred in India was the FAMINE Of BENGAL in 1943. The famine killed 30 lakh people in the province of Bengal in British India.

(iv) Even today there are places like Kalahandi and Kashipur in Orissa where famine like conditions have been existing for many years and where some starvation deaths have also taken place.

(v) Therefore, food security is needed in a country to ensure food

at all times.

Food Insecure

(i) The worst affected groups are landless people with little or no land to depend on.

(ii) Traditional artisans, providers of traditional services, petty self-employed workers and destitute people including beggars are also such groups.

(iii) In the urban areas the food insecure families are those whose working members are generally employed in ill paid occupations and casual labour markets. They are largely engaged in seasonal activities and are paid very low wages that ensure bare survival.

(iv) The SCs and STs and some sections of OBCs, who have either poor land base or very low productivity are prone to food insecurity.

(v) People affected by natural disasters, who have to migrate to other areas in search of work are also among the most food insecure people.

(vi) A large proportion of pregnant and nursing mothers and children under the age of 5 years constitute an important segment of the food insecure population.

(vii) The states of Uttar Pradesh (Eastern and Southern parts) Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra account for the largest number of food insecure people in the country.

Hunger

(i) Hunger is another aspect indicating food insecurity.

(ii) Hunger is not just an expression of poverty it brings about

poverty.

(iii) The attainment of food security therefore involves eliminating current hunger and reducing the risks of future hunger.

(iv) Hunger has chronic and seasonal dimensions.

(v) **Chronic Hunger:** Chronic hunger is a consequence of diets persistently inadequate in terms of quantity and quality.

(vi) Poor people suffer from chronic hunger because of their very low income and in turn their inability to buy food even for survival.

(vii) **Seasonal Hunger:** Seasonal hunger is related to cycle of food growing and harvesting.

(viii) This is prevalent in rural areas because of seasonal nature of agricultural activities and in urban areas because of casual labour e.g., there is less work for casual construction labour during the rainy season.

India is Aiming at Self Sufficiency in Food grains Since Independence

(i) After independence Indian policy makers adopted all measures to achieve self-sufficiency in food grains.

(ii) India adopted a new strategy in agriculture which resulted in the Green Revolution especially in the production of wheat and rice.

(iii) The highest rate of growth was achieved in Punjab and Haryana, where food grains production jumped from 7.23 million tonnes in 1964-65 to reach an all-time high of 30.33 million tonnes in 1995-96.

(iv) Production in Maharashtra, Bihar, Orissa and north- eastern states continued to stagger.

(v) Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh on the other hand, recorded significant increase in rice yield.

Food Security in India

(i) India has become self-sufficient in food grains during the last 30 years because of the variety of crops grown all over the country.

(ii) The availability of food grains (even in adverse weather conditions or otherwise) at the country level has further been ensured with a carefully designed food security system by the government.

(ii) This system has two components

(a) Buffer stock

(b) Public distribution system

Buffer Stock

(i) Buffer stock is the stock of food grains namely wheat and rice procured by the government through Food Corporation of India (FCI) to be used during shortage of food grains.

(ii) The FCI purchases wheat and rice from farmers where there is surplus production.

(iii) The farmers are paid a pre-announced price for their crops. This price is called Minimum Support Price (MSP).

(iv) The MSP is declared by the government every year before the sowing season to provide incentives to the farmers for raising the production of these crops.

(v) The purchased food grains are stored in granaries.

(vi) This is done to distribute food grains in the deficit areas and

among the poorer strata of society at a price lower than the market price, also known as the issue price.

(vii) This also helps to resolve the problem of shortage of food grains during adverse weather conditions or during the periods of calamity.

Public Distribution System

(i) The food procured by the FCI is distributed through government regulated ration shops among the poorer sections of society. This is called the Public Distribution System (PDS).

(ii) Ration shops are now present in most localities, villages, towns and cities.

(iii) Ration shops are also known as fair price shops which keep stocks of food grains, sugar, kerosene, oil etc. These items are sold to people at a price lower than market price.

(iv) Three important food intervention programs were introduced

(a) Public Distribution System (PDS) for food grains in existence but strengthened thereafter.

(b) Integrated Child Development Services (ICDSS) introduced in 1975 on an experimental basis.

(c) Food for Work (FFW) Introduced in 1977-78.

PAPS

Several Poverty Alleviation Programs (PAPS) are in existence mostly in rural areas, which have an explicit food component also.

(i) programs such as PDS and mid-day meal etc. are exclusively food security programs. Most of the PAPS also enhance food security.

(ii) Employment programs greatly contribute to food security by increasing the income of the poor.

Current status of Public Distribution System

- (i) Public Distribution System is the most important step taken by the Government of India (GOI) towards ensuring food security.
- (ii) In the beginning the coverage of PDS was universal with no discrimination between poor and non-poor.
- (iii) In 1992, Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) was introduced in 1700 blocks in the country to provide the benefits of PDS to remote and backward areas.
- (iv) From June 1997, in a renewed attempt, Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) was introduced to adopt the principle of targeting the poor in all areas.
- (v) It was for the first time that a different price policy was adopted for poor and non-poor.

In 2000 Two Special Schemes were Launched

- (a) Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)
- (b) Annapurna Scheme (APS)
- (c) These two schemes target the 'poorest of the poor' and 'indigent senior citizens', respectively.

Merits of Public Distribution System

- (i) The PDS has proved to be the most effective instrument over the years in stabilising prices and making food available to consumers at affordable prices.
- (ii) It has been instrumental in avoiding widespread hunger and famine by supplying food from surplus regions of the country to the deficit ones.
- (ii) The system, along with the minimum support price and procurement has contributed to an increase in food production

and provided income security for farmers in certain regions.

Demerits of PDS

- (i) Instances of hunger are prevalent despite overflowing granaries. FCI godowns are overflowing with grains, with some grains rotting away and some being eaten by rats.
- (ii) The storage of massive stocks has been responsible for high carrying costs, in addition to wastage and deterioration in grain quality.
- (iii) Intensive utilization of water has also led to environmental degradation and fall in water level, threatening the sustainability of the agricultural development in these states.
- (iv) PDS dealers are sometimes found resorting to malpractices like diverting the grains to open market for more profit.
- (v) Dealers sell poor quality grains at ration shops.
- (vi) They open the ration shops at irregular times.
- (vii) The price for APL (Above Poverty Line) family is almost as high as open market price.

Role of Co-operatives in Food Security

- (i) The co-operatives are also playing an important role in food security in India especially in southern and western parts of India.
- (ii) The co-operative societies set up shops to sell low priced goods to the poor.
- (iii) In Tamil Nadu, out of all fair price shops around 95% are being run by co-operatives.
- (iv) In Delhi, Mother Dairy is making strides in provisions of milk and vegetables to the consumers at controlled rates decided by

the Delhi Government.

(v) Amul is another success story of co-operatives in milk and milk products in Gujarat.

(vi) Amul has brought about the 'White Revolution' in the country.

(vii) Grain banks are slowly taking shape in Maharashtra. The ADS (Academy of Development Science) Grain Bank Programme is acknowledged as a successful and innovative food security intervention.

TERMS TO KNOW

Buffer stock: The food grains so procured are stored in

warehouses of the FCI. This stock of food grains is called the buffer stock. The buffer stock is used to prevent a shortage of food in adverse conditions like crop failure and natural calamities.

Chronic hunger: It is a consequence of diets persistently

inadequate in terms of quantity and/or quality. Poorer sections of the society suffer from chronic hunger because of their very low income and in turn inability to buy food even for their survival.

Cooperatives: Cooperative societies in India are playing a

significant role in ensuring food security and are more active in

western and southern regions of the country. In Tamil Nadu, around 94% of all Fair Price shops run under the Public Distribution System are managed by cooperatives.

Green Revolution: It is a programme under which HYV varieties of wheat and rice seedlings are planted in the fields of poor farmers.

Food Corporation of India: Since the Green Revolution, food grain production in India has increased manifold. The food security system in India consists of the creation of buffer stocks of food grains and their distribution through the public distribution system. Every year, after the harvest of food grains like wheat and rice, the government buys food grains from farmers through the Food Corporation of India.

Wheat Revolution: It was a special stamp released in July 1968 by Indira Gandhi., the Prime Minister of India to officially record the impressive achievement of the Green Revolution.

Food security: Food security means availability, accessibility and afford ability of food to all people at all times.

Famine: It is characterized by widespread deaths due to starvation and epidemics caused by forced use of contaminated water or decaying food and loss of body resistance due to weakening of starvation.

Hunger: Hunger is both a cause and effect of poverty and indicates food insecurity

Rationing: It is a term given to the government-controlled distribution of resources and scarce goods or services. It restricts how much people are allowed to buy or consume at a particular time in a particular period.

Malnutrition: It is a state of not having enough food or not getting nutritious food.