

9th - Food Security in India - II



Buffer Stock: It is the stock of foodgrains (wheat and rice) procured by the government. Government purchases wheat and rice from farmers through the Food Corporation of India (FCI) states having surplus production. The farmers are paid a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their crops. The MSP is announced at the beginning of the sowing season to give an incentive to the farmers to grow more. These purchased foodgrains are stored in granaries as a buffer stock. This stock is maintained to distribute foodgrains through the PDS in the areas of the country where production is less. It is provided, to the poorer sections of society at subsidised prices, i.e. lower than the market price which is known as the issue price. The buffer stock also helps to resolve the problem of food shortage due to a calamity or in adverse weather conditions.

Food Corporation of India (FCI): This was set-up under the Food Corporation's Act 1964, in order to support operations for safeguarding the farmers, distribution of foodgrains throughout the country for PDS and maintaining satisfactory level of operational and buffer stocks. **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** This is the price at which the government (through the Food Corporation of India) purchases crops from the farmers. Presently, there are 27 crops being purchased with such prices including varieties of cereals, pulses, oilseeds, fibre crops and others.

Programmes For Food Security In India: In mid-1970s, National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) reported the high incidence of poverty level. Due to this, three important food intervention programmes were introduced. They are

1. Public Distribution System (PDS) for foodgrains
2. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)
3. Food-For Work (FFW) programme.

Public Distribution System (PDS): Through government regulated ration shops, the food procured by the FCI is distributed among the poorer sections of the society. This is called the Public Distribution System (PDS). Ration shops are now present in most localities, villages, towns and cities. There are about 5.5 lakh ration shops all over the country. Ration shops are also known as fair price shops. They keep stock of foodgrains, sugar, kerosene oil for cooking. These items are sold to people at a price lower than the market price. Any family with a ration card can buy a stipulated amount of these items (e.g. 35 kg of grains, 5 litres of kerosene, 5 kg of sugar, etc) every month from the nearby ration shop. The ration cards are of three kinds, colour - coded for easy recognition

1. Antyodaya card for the poorest of the poor.
2. BPL card for families below the poverty line.
3. APL card for all others.'

Rationing: It is a term given to 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 within a particular period. Rationing in India was introduced in 1940s at the time of Bengal famine. Later, it was revived in the wake of an acute food shortage during 1960s prior to the Green Revolution.

The National Food Security Act 2013: This act provides food and nutritional security life at affordable prices and enable people to live a life with self dignity. Under this Act, 75% of rural and 50% of urban population have been categorised as eligible households for food security.

Malpractices in PDS: PDS has also become ineffective in many regions of the country because dealers running the ration shops are indulged in malpractices. The malpractices indulged into by the dealers include:

- Diverting the grains to open market to get better margin.
- Selling poor quality grains at ration shops.
- Irregular opening of the shops and so on.

The malpractices have resulted in consumers of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha buying much less foodgrains than the national average from the ration shops. In the Southern states, where the shops are run by cooperatives, the consumers purchase much more than the national average. Since the



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introduction of Targeted Distribution System (TPDS), with three levels of prices for three different income level families, the Above Poverty Line (APL) families do not have much incentive to buy foodgrains from the ration shops. The prices for these families are not significantly lower than market prices.

Subsidy: It is a payment that a government makes to a producer to supplement the market price of a commodity. Subsidy helps in keeping consumer prices low while maintaining a higher income for domestic producers.

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS): In 1975, it was introduced on an experimental basis. Its aim is to provide children upto 6 years of age supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health check-up, referral services, pre-school non-formal education as well as nutrition and health education for their mothers.

Food-For-Work (FFW) Programme: The main objective of the Food for Work Programme is generation of supplementary wage employment. It is open to all rural people who are in need of unskilled work wage employment.

National Food for Work Programme was launched on 14th November, 2004 in 150 most backward districts of the country with the objective of intensifying the generation of supplementary wage employment. The programme is open to all rural poor who are in need of wage employment and desire to do manual unskilled work. It is implemented as a 100% centrally sponsored scheme and the foodgrains are provided to the states free of cost. The Collector is the nodal officer at the district level and has the overall responsibility of planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and supervision. The programme from 2005 has since been subsumed in NREGA.

Poverty Alleviation Programmes (PAPs): Over the last few years, several other Poverty Alleviation Programmes (PAPs), were launched mostly in rural areas. Some of them have also been restructured. Some of these programmes have explicit food components. Others are employment programmes, which improve food security by increasing the income of the poor. For example, Rural Wage Employment Programme, Employment Guarantee Scheme, Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana and Mid-day-Meal.

Role of cooperatives in Food Security: The role played by cooperatives in food security of India is important especially in the Southern and Western parts of the country. The cooperative societies set-up shops to sell low priced goods to poor people. For example, out of all fair price shops running in Tamil Nadu, around 94% are being run by the cooperatives. The examples shown below are success stories of cooperatives in order to contribute in food security of India

1. In Delhi, Mother Dairy is making progress in provision of milk and vegetables to the consumers at controlled rate decided by Government of Delhi.
2. Amul is another success story of cooperatives in milk and milk products from Gujarat. It has brought about the **White Revolution** in the country.
3. In Maharashtra, Academy of Development Science (ADS) has facilitated a network of NGOs for setting up grain banks in different regions. ADS organises training and capacity building programmes on food security for NGOs. The ADS Grain Bank programme is acknowledged as a successful and innovative food security intervention.