



ANNA-BHAGHYA YOJANA SCHEME OF KARNATAKA STATE ;AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This article throws light on Anna BhagyaScheme - its purpose, benefits, implications and workability of scheme in the State of Karnataka.

KEYWORDS : Anna Bhagya, BPL, EPIC, Adhar. Unit based Scheme

Anna BhagyaYojana Scheme has been launched by Karnataka Government, an ambitious initiative to supply 30 kg of rice at Rs. one to nearly one crore poor families across the state that would entail an outgo of Rs 4,200 crore a year.

The scheme launched in Karnataka State in 2013 by Chief Minister Sri. Siddaramaiah. In this scheme, poor people will be given free rice, so that they can easily get two meals in a day.*1

In India poverty is a major concern. As we know that south India has the highest literacy rate in comparison to other part of our country. But still, most of the population here is below the poverty line. There are many reasons behind this. Many political parties play mind games, while people also have some different mindset. No one in India wants to help others without their concern. And if this doesn't end, India will never be a developed country like USA, England etc.

There are many schemes all over India for poor peoples. But we know the condition of those schemes. Some schemes are still a mystery to others, because no one has ever heard of it. In other schemes, all the facilities are used by government officials, mediators and political party workers. But now-a-days scenario is changing and people are becoming conscious and taking advantage of such schemes.

Purpose of Anna BhagyaYojana

In 2013 Karnataka Government started a scheme for poor peoples or you can say Below Poverty Line (BPL) peoples*2. In this scheme, people with single card holder person in the family will get 10 kg rice at a rate of Rs 1/kg. Family with 2 cardholders will get 20 Kg rice and with 3 or more will get a maximum of 30 Kg rice at same price rate*3. Not only rice peoples will also get **edible oils, sugar, iodized salt, kerosene** and other items in fewer price rates. So this will help poor peoples to get at least 2 times meal in a day.

Benefits of Anna BhagyaYojana

If people get the benefit of this Anna BhagyaYojana scheme, this will make their life easier. At least they don't have to run for food daily without any assurance of getting food in the last. Around 1.09 crore family will get the benefits of this scheme. So we can imagine the total number of peoples in this 1.08 crores family*4. This is better to give food to poor and needy people than to give them money. So that they can at least work freely without any tension of food after reaching their home.

People below poverty line just need to use their BPL card to get the benefits of this scheme. No extra activity is required to get this benefit. Just go to the distributor's shop with your BPL card. Show them your card and then they you can get the things you need. It is a very simple and easy process so that people can easily use this scheme for their benefit.

Anna BhagyaYojana and Criticism

Anna BhagyaYojana scheme will cost around 4200 crores rupees (Indian Currency) to give the benefits of this scheme to the needy

peoples of Karnataka. This much amount has been a reason for other people and political parties to criticize this decision of the government. According to principal opposition party **BJP** and critics of this scheme, this is a waste of tax payers and public money. But the needy & rural population of Karnataka is happy with this decision if it works properly. Also, this much rice cannot be available from Karnataka only. So the government is taking help from the Central Government and Chhattisgarh State Government as Chhattisgarh is one of the major rice producing states in India.

The chief minister also said instead of pondering over the huge sum of money to be spent on the implementation of the scheme, it is important to give food to the poor who struggle even to get two meals in a day*5. According Chief Minister **Siddaramaiah**"The government is there for providing justice to the **deprived and the hungry**"*6. On criticism that the beneficiaries would become **lazy**, Chief Minister **Siddaramaiah** said "If that is so, have people of Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh where similar popular programmes are implemented would become lazy. These States are also have introduced so many similar popular schemes. According to defenders of scheme. these are baseless and politically-motivated statements."*7

Eighty-seven lakh **BPL cardholders and 11 lakh "Anthyodaya Anna Yojane"** beneficiaries are covered under the scheme under which single member cardholders would get 10 kg per month, two-member ones 20 kg and three and above would get a maximum of 30 kg. To meet the huge demand, Karnataka state is buying rice from Chhattisgarh, India's "**rice bowl**", at Rs.23.30, but including transportation and other cost it is expected to go up to around Rs.27 per Kg.

Revised Anna Bhagya Scheme

Now government has launched new Revised Anna BhagyaYojana Scheme. Distribution under Revised Anna Bhagya scheme to be unit based.

A member of each BPL family will get 4kg of rice and one kg of wheat per month for free. Now department of food and public distribution will calculate the quantity of food grains to be distributed to each BPL family based on the number of members in family*8. The Food and Civil Supplies department has reduced the quantum of food grain to five kg of rice for free, against the existing 10 kg for Re one, under Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's flagship programme.

Nearly 50 per cent of the 1.06 crore BPL families are categorised as small, comprising three to four members. These families will now get 15 kg to 20 kg of food grain each month, instead of 30 kg to 40 kg, sources in the department said.

The department has estimated that it will save up to 69,000 metric tonnes (MT) of food grains a month, the cost of which is approximately Rs 170 crore-7.

Under the 10-kg unit system, the total requirement was 2.93 lakh MT per month. It is estimated to come down to 2.24 lakh MT per month

as per the new five-kg unit system, the officials added. The government used to spend nearly Rs 4,000 crore per annum for food subsidy, mainly for implementing the Anna Bhagya scheme, by procuring rice from the open market.

The approximate cost of a kg of rice in the open market is Rs 25. The food subsidy is estimated to come down to about Rs 2,100 crore from the 2015-16 fiscal. The department used to get about Rs 200 crore per annum by collecting Re 1 per kg of rice, the sources said. The food subsidy expenditure for this financial year includes the cost of supply of palm oil (one litre per BPL family) and supply of five kg of rice and wheat each to the Above Poverty Line (APL) families. The subsidy on palm oil is estimated to cost Rs 469 crore per annum, while the cost of supply of rice and wheat to APL families is estimated at Rs 308 crore.

However, food grain to APL families will be supplied from June this year. The government might have restored supply of food grain to APL families, but about 50 per cent of the APL ration cards have been removed from the list. Karnataka had about 34 lakh APL families. The department has in the last two years brought it down to about 18 lakh, according to sources of food department.

The department had last year made it mandatory for ration card holders to furnish their **Electoral Photo Identity Cards (EPIC)** with an intention to integrate it with the ration card database.

Karnataka government is distributing millets like **Ragi** and **Jowar** and wheat at Re.1 per kg to the poor families across the state. The 30 kg of millets per month at Re.1 per kg in place of rice to BPL families in southern and northern regions of the state where **Ragi** and **Jowar** and wheat are staple food of the people.

The modified Anna Bhagya scheme which proposes to halve the supply of rice to each member of a BPL family will substantially reduce the food *subsidy* burden on the state government.

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Conclusion

The Dharmadhikari of Dharmasthala **DrVirendraHeggade** says "Despite drought in Karnataka State people are getting two meals in a day because of government's AnnaBhagya Scheme^{*9}.The Karnataka State is continuously hit by drought last three years. This Anna BhagyaYojanascheme is **lifeline** to BPL and Antyodaya card holders' families in this hour of drought crisis in rural Karnataka.

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