



Food Security and Public Distribution System – A Macro Analysis

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Food Security, public distribution system, Need for food security, Recent initiatives in Food security system.

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ABSTRACT Food security is of vital importance for any country and especially India has the second most populous country in the world. There is a positive co-rrlation between food security and social economic development. Food security is a constitutional commitment and a basic human right. Articles 38 and 47 of our constitution enshrine every Indian citizen's right to food security. Prof. Amartya Sen states that the causes of hunger in India presently are the wide prevalence of poverty and inability to buy food without adequate purchasing power of money. According to the FAO, food security is defined as the availability of a sufficient quantity of food with the necessary purchasing power. People should have access to safe and nutritious food to maintain the healthy life. Food should be available at an affordable price. To ensure long-term availability of affordable food, the local ecological system should be sustained the Public Distribution System (PDS) streamlined. Central and state Government should formulate and activity disseminates their policy on the food grain clearly specifying the implementation responsibilities of local Government and other agencies and Stakeholders. Each state should formulate its policy and action plan on National Food Security and adequate to safe guard to nation.

Introduction:

India's biggest challenge still remains ensuring food and nutritional to its masses. A country can be said to have achieved complete food and nutrition security if each and every person in that country is able to consume 'an adequate and balanced diet' on a regular basis. According to the report of the United Nations Security General (Jan 2011), of the 900 million people who are likely to in extreme poverty in 2015, India is expected to be home to more than 300 million. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) says that around 1.02 billion people in the world are malnourished. This means that almost one-sixth of all humanity is suffering from hunger.

What is Food Security?

Sustainable food security involves strengthening the livelihood security of all members of family. It is also ensured both physical and economical access to balanced diet including micronutrients, safe drinking water, basic health care and environmental sanitation and primary education.

Objectives of the Present Study:

- To study need for food security and agriculture productivity in India.
- To examine the challenges of food security including quantitative and qualitative aspects
- To study the Public Distribution System.
- To examine the defects in Food Security System

Need for Food Security & Agricultural production in India:

Since 1947 Achieving food security for all has been a national goal. Food Security means the physical, economic and social access to balanced diet, clean drinking water and environmental hygiene including primary health care. At present, there is an ongoing exercise in developing a National Food Security Bill which confers every Indian the legal right to food.

According to the fourth advanced estimates food grains

production at 230.7 million tones during 2007-08 turned out to be above the target of 221.5 million tones for 2007-08 and production 217.3 million tones in2006-07. It is showed in Table 1. This reflected a recorded achievement of product levels across all food grains led particularly by coarse cereals and rise our to favorable south-west monsoon.

Table I Agriculture Production in India

Group	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
1. Growth rate % all groups	-1.6	12.1	11.6	6.6
a) Food grains	-7.1	5.8	3.6	5.7
b) Non food grains	1.6	16.0	15.6	7.9
2. Production (million Tones)				
a. Food grains	198.4	208.6	217.3	230.7
I. Rice	83.1	91.8	93.4	96.4
II. Wheat	68.6	69.4	75.8	78.4
III. Course cereals	33.5	34.1	33.9	40.7
IV. pulses	13.1	13.4	14.2	15.1

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Govt of India

In view of the need to address the problem of food shortages in the country, the National Development Council (NDC) in its 53rd meeting held on May 29, 2007 adopted a resolution to launch a food security mission. To increase the production of rice, wheat and pulses etc... . Accordingly National Food Security Mission (NFSM) a centrally sponsored scheme was launched in 2007-08.

Challenges of Food Security through quantitative aspects:

The food security of a nation is ensured if all its citizens have enough food available, have the capacity to buy food of acceptable quality. Since 1947, Because of chronic food shortage that the country focused of food policy was to achieve self-sufficiency. After the third plan implementation with grater stress in Green Revolution Strategy. This has enabled the economy to overcome the problem of food grains to counter the scarcity condition. However, India achieved self-sufficiency in food grains in the 1970s and sustained the same. India had build up large buffer stocks through the Agency of Food Corporation of India (FCI). IT helps a lot to supply these stocks to the people through the PDS.

Qualitative Aspects:

- According to the World Food Programme nearly 50 % of the worlds hungry live in India.
- According to the Global Hunger India 2009-10 India ranks 96 in a group of 119 developing countries.
- Nearly 9 out of 10% women between 15-40 years are malnourished and anemic.
- Anaemia in pregnant women causes 20% of infant mortality.
- Mal nutrition accounts for 50% of under 5 years old deaths.
- About 35% of India's population over 350 million is food insecure.
- 51% of children are not immunized

Table –II Reveals as Below

Production- Consumption gap in major Food items in India (In million tones)

Year	Rice	Wheat	Pulses	Sugar	Oilseeds
2005-06	2.3	-4.2	-0.9	-4.1	-4.6
2006-07	6.7	-0.4	-1.0	0.7	-1.9
2007-08	6.6	2.4	-1.6	8.3	-6.2
2008-09	6.2	2.2	-2.6	5.1	-4.0
2009-10	6.0	9.8	-2.2	-8.1	-4.7
2010-11	-2.8	2.1	-2.3	-7.5	-6.0

Source: RBI Bulletin 2010

Public Distribution System in India (PDS):

This system has been considered as the most important food based safety net introduced by the government of India. The unique objectives of the PDS in India are to provide essentials consumer goods at cheap and subsidized price to the consumers. This helps to the poor people from the impact of rising prices. Baring the food grains PDS has also been used in India for the distribution of edible oils, sugar, coal, kerosene and cloth. PDS distributes whole commodities worth more than Rs. 30000 crore annually to about 160 million families and is considered the largest network of its kind in the world.

Till 1997, the central issue price (CIP) fixed by government remained unaltered. At the same time a dual pricing structure was introduced under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TDPS), in which the prices of for families below the poverty line (BPL). Above Poverty Line (APL) were fixed equal to economic cost. During 2010-11 it was made the PDS system more efficient the government reduced the issue price of APL families by 70% during 2010-11.

Defects in Food Security System:

- **Minimum benefit to poor from PDS:** Many empirical studies have shown that the rural people have not benefited much from the PDS. Poor people have been depending on the open market prices higher than the PDS for most of the commodities.
- **More burden of food subsidy:** It is known that PDS is highly subsidized in India. This has put a service fiscal burden on the Government.
- **Regional disparities in PDS Benefits:** PDS remained limited mostly to urban areas for a considerable period.
- **Inefficiencies in the operation of FCI:** Now a days the economic cost of FCI food grains operation has been rising on account of increase in procurement price including distribution cost & carrying cost.
- **Leakage from PDS:** Problem of leakage from the system in the form of losses in storage and transport and diversion to the open market. This was mainly due to the prevalence of corrupt practices.

Recent Initiatives:

At a meeting of agricultural ministers of the G20 nations in June 2011 at Paris and was discussed the entire issue of food security in the developing countries. The action plan formulated and there is an urgent needs to important certain measures in third world countries.

- Improve farm production and productivity both in the short and long terms.
- Strengthen international policy co-ordination to enhance confidence in world market.
- Increase market information and transparency.
- Improve and develop risks management tools for governments, companies and farmers.
- Improve the functioning of the agricultural commodities derivatives market

Our country faces a paradoxical situation, in which there are poverty stricken, malnourished people on one hand a surplus in food grains production on the other hand. Nearly 200 million people in India are underfed and 50 million are the brink of starvation, while the Food Corporation of India reports a surplus stock of nearly 62 million tones. This clearly highlights the flows in the system. Strong coordinated efforts are required between the various developments to ensure that surplus reaches the needy and citizens of this country, are entitled to food security.

Conclusion:

Food security cannot be achieved without an overall growth in the yield of all food grains. Because of MSP, farmers concentrate certain food grains rice and wheat in different states of India.

Prof. Amartya Sen, a strong admirer and critic of India has been urging India to accord high priority to elimination of latent hunger, under nourishment and malnutrition.

Food security has always been one of the major developmental priorities for rural India since the inception of the country's five year planning process. Rural India achieved self-sufficiency in food grains production in the 70's and has sustained till today. In this context the National Food Security bill 2011 is a revolutionary initiative of the government, rising hope for the millions of Hungry Indians residing across six lakh villages of this country. In the present context, food security system is one of the most significant human development aspects. There is a close linkage ex-

isting between food security and socio economic development, rural health and public distribution system (PDS). We should try to understand and find out the optional solution of mitigating the problems of poverty, diseases and malnutrition.

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