

Food Security and Public Distribution System in Gondia District

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Abstract :-

The food Bill stands to primarily address just one aspect of India's food insecurity access to grain. The food Bill aims to reach 75 per cent of India's rural population and 50 percent of the urban population. India is more or less self sufficient in cereals but deficit in pulses and oilseeds. Due to changes in consumption patterns, demand fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat, poultry and fisheries has been increasing. There is need to increase crop diversification and improve allied activities. It may be noted that the slowdown in agriculture growth could be attributed to structural factors on the supply side, such as public investment credit, technology, land and water management, etc. rather than globalization and trade reforms. In this context that National Food Security Bill NFSB assumes significance as it gives legal right to food grain to 67% of India's population (75% of rural and 50% of urban household) and also makes provision for nutritious meals to pregnant and lactating mother and children.

The public distribution system in India is 68 years old as rationing was first introduced in 1939 in Bombay by the British Government as a measure to ensure equitable distribution of food grains to the urban consumers in the face of rising prices and later extended it to six cities and regions. It was introduced to maintain the morale of the people in the context of war (world war II) mobilization and scarcity of food.

Introduction :-

Ensuring food security ought to be an issue of great importance for a country like India where more than one third of the population is estimated to be absolutely poor and one-half of all children malnourished in one way or another, According to food and Agriculture organization (FAO), food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Food security has three components, availability, access and nutrition the three are interconnected. Many studies have shown that improvement in nutrition is important, even for increase in productivity of workers.

Objectiver of The Study :-

The objective of this research paper is to study.

- 1) Food in security and status of Hunger and malnutrition.
- 2) Summary of the National food security Bill 2013.
- 3) Public Distribution system in Gondia District food Insecurity in India.

India has the largest numbers of hungry people in the world, despite various programs, the number of undemourished people today is similar as 2 years ago. Hunger and malnutrition in India are still major human and social issue. The no main cause of death in the world is hunger followed by Aids, cancer etc. over 10 million people die every year of chronic hunger and hunger related diseases,

of which a quarter deaths take place in India. Almost 50 percent of Indian children are under weight, 30 percent of newborns have low weight at birth and over 55 percent of married women and about 80 percent of young babies in the age group of 6 to 35 months are anemic,. During 2007-2008 malnutrition contributed to seven million Indian children dying, nearly two million before the age of one.

The food corporation of India directly and through state government affiliates procure rice and wheat from farmers at the minimum support prices (MSP) set by the government. These food grains are then distributed by the government through the various programs that it runs, using public distribution system. As per the current norms FCI buys all the rice and wheat that farmers brings to it, as long as it meets a certain quality.

A new report titled buffer stocking policy in the wake of NFSB authored by Ashok Gulati and Surbhi Jain disclosed that the food grain stock as on 1st April 2013 stood at 59.8 million tons against the norm of 21.2 million tones, that the government needs to maintain. In August 2010 the central government admitted that food grains were rotting due to record procurement in the last three years without matching storage capacity.

The National Food Security Act 2013 (NFSA) :-

NFSA was promulgated on 12th September 2013 the act covers wide ranging measures for ensuring food security like mid day meal scheme and the integrates child Development services scheme are universal in nature whereas the PDS will reach about 75 percent of India's rural population and 50 percent of the urban population. For a period as yet undefined, Priority households will receive 7 kg of grain per person each month and free meals will be received by lactating mothers, children, the destitute and the homeless. While the Bill's right to food mandate is encouraging, there are concerns regarding the government's capacity to deliver it is in this context that National food security Bill assume significance as it give legal right to food grain to 67% of India's population (75% of rural and 50% of urban household) and also make provision for nutrition's meals to pregnant and lactating mother and children. Assuming no leakage in the distribution system, we can argue that the demand side constraint in the food accessibility of the intended beneficiaries would largely be removed after the execution of the NFSA .

Public Distribution System in Gondia District :-

Gondia district was carved out by division of Bhandara on 1st May 1999. The district is located in the North- Eastern part of Maharashtra and it is considered the gateway of Maharashtra from central and Eastern India Gondia is bordered by the States of Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh.

Scheme-wise cardholders in the District:-

The present status of public distribution system in Gondia District. Table no. one shows scheme-wise cardholder families in the district. Table indicates that 256515 cards in the district. It is seen that there were 93650 BPL cards in circulation in the district. Somewhat different picture can be seen in the case of per card members in various tahsils.

Table No. 1
Scheme wise Cardholders and FPS owners in the District

S.No.	Tahsil	APL	BPL	AAY	Anna- purna	White	Total	FPS
1	Amgaon	5743	8979	7131	118	597	22568	91
2	Tirora	13162	12373	9189	44	903	35671	129
3	Goregaon	8005	11123	8224	63	506	27921	99
4	Gondia	31952	27441	13120	293	2159	74965	217
5	Salekasa	3454	7237	6356	336	742	18125	86
6	Sadak/Arjuni	8522	8386	7317	116	587	24928	112
7	Deori	8285	7767	6954	169	288	23463	125
8	Arjuni/Morgaon	7669	10344	9460	276	1125	28874	131
Gondia District		86792	93650	67751	1415	6907	256515	990

Source : Department of food, Civil Supplies and consumer protection, Govt of Maharashtra.

There was a considerable variation in the District, Maximum 27441 cards were registers as BPL in the Gondia Tahsil followed by TiroraTahsil and minimum 7237 card holder in SalekasaTahsil. Total 86797 cards were issued under APL category, 67751 cards in AAY category, 6907 card in white category and only 1415 cards were issued in Annapurna category. All the card holders are getting subsidies food items through 990 Fair price shop owners in the district maximum 2017 FPS owners were from Gondia Tahsil.

Distribution and prices of wheat and Rice :-

The actual quantity distributed and price charged under the different schemes to the cardholders in the district show Table No. Two. 25 kg wheat and 10 kg rice was supplied to APL, BPL and AAY cardholders per month in the district Rs. 7 was the price per kg of wheat for APL cardholders. It was Rs. 5 to BPL and only Rs. 2 was for AAY cardholders. APL cardholder paid Rs. 9.5 per kg of rice. For BPL cardholder it was Rs. 6 and AAY cardholders it was Rs. 3 Annapurna cardholders were getting 5 kg rice and 5 kg wheat free of cost.

Table No. 2

Scheme	Quantity Per month (Kg)		Price (in Rs.)	
	Wheat	Rice	Wheat	Rice
APL	15	5	7	9.5
BPL	25	10	5	6
AAY	25	10	2	3
Annapurna	5	5	Free	Free

Source :Deptt. of Food, Civil supply and consumer protection Govt. of Maharashtra.

Monthly Allotment and Distribution of Food–grains to the BPL cardholders :-

Table No. 3 shows that quantity of food grains for distribution increased every year. In this table monthly allotment of wheat and rice from district supply office and distributed through FPS owner to the BPL and APL cardholders in the district is given. Tahsil wise data is given in the table.

Table No. 3
Monthly allotment of wheat and Rice from District supply office and Distributed through FPS owner (BPL)

Tahsil	Allotment from District Supply office BPL			Distributed through FPS owner		
	Wheat	Rice	Total	Wheat	Rice	Total
Gondia	2549	6374	8923	3265	7364	10629
Amgaon	880	2201	3081	888	2231	3119
Arjuni/Morgaon	953	2381	3334	1021	2540	3561
Deori	777	1942	2719	1033	2504	3537
Goregaon	1007	2518	3525	1021	2680	3701
Sadak/Arjuni	757	1893	2650	867	2172	3039
Salekasa	694	1735	2429	745	1865	2610
Tirora	1107	2767	3874	1270	3165	4435
Gondia District	8724	21811	30535	10110	24521	34631

Source : District supply office, Gondia.

Show for Gondia Tahsil total 8923 qut. Good grains was allotted from the district supply office and 10629 qut. Distributed through FPS owner in the Gondia Tahsil. Similary 3525 qut. Good grains were allotted and 3701 qut were distributed through FPS owners. For the district total 30535 qut. Good rains were allotted from the district supply office and 34631 qut. Food grains were distributed to the cardholders from the collected data it is found that the FPS owners were distributing more amount of food grains that allotted amount of food grains by the district supply office. The reason is that the FPS owners are carry forwarding the previous months balance of food grains.

Godwans and Available capacity in the District :-

Table No. 4 shows the availability of godowns in the district. There were 11 godwnas for storing the food grains in the district. All the godwnas are owned by the Government.

Table No. 4
Godowns in the District

Tahasil	No. of Godown (In million Tons)	Capacity of Godown (In million Tons)
Gondia	2	2500
Amgaon	1	500
Arjuni/Morgaon	2	1000
Deori	2	900
Goregaon	1	500
Sadak/Arjuni	1	2000
Salekasa	1	600
Tirora	1	1500
Total	11	9500

Source : District supply office, Gondia.

Capacity of all 11 godowns was 9500 million tones. Gondia, ArjuniMorgaon and Deoritahsils are having each 2 godowns with 2500, 100 and 900 MT capacity respectively. Remaining tahsils were

having each 1 godown in the district. Government is having own godowns in the district so there is no need to nine godowns on rent.

Suggestion :-

1. FCI should have adequate storage capacity in order to maintain 3-4 months of stock for avoiding delay in delivery of PDS articles.
2. Introduction of Smart cards for the beneficiaries.
3. There should be regular distribution of items throughout the month.
4. Quantity of good items allotted per family per month should be increased as per the family size.
5. As an alternative to the existing PDS we may switch over to the use of Smart cards which simply mean that the food subsidy may be directly transferred to the beneficiaries instead of to the owners of PDS stores.
6. There is a need to improve the quality of all items distributed through FPS.
7. All the necessary items should be supplied in adequate quantities through PDS.
8. Fair price shop may be allotted to the residents and genuine persons of the same village or same locality.
9. Diversion of items from PDS to open market should be stopped.
10. Current scheme creates inequity between families just above and just below the poverty line.

Conclusion :-

Food availability is a necessary condition for food security. India is more or less self sufficient in cereals but deficit in pulses and oil seeds. Due to changes in consumption patterns, demand for fruits, vegetables, dairy, poultry and fishery products has been increasing India account for 54 percent of all malnutrition related child death. At the national level, India has solved the problem of food security by mounting buffer stocks. The focus of reforms can now be shifted to more efficient delivery systems of public services. The national food security bill 2013 could be a game changer for national food security if the government is able to overcome large scale corruption and leakages in public distribution system.

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