

Revision Notes

Class – 9 Social Science Economics

Chapter 4 - Food Security In India

- Food security normally refers to the availability, accessibility & also affordability of food for people at all times. The poor households are more susceptible to the food insecurity in times of food production problems or the problems with crop distribution. Public Distribution System (PDS) along with the government vigilance usually responsible for ensuring food security for all in the country.

- **Food Security: Meaning**

Food is essential for our daily survival. Food security has a deeper meaning to it than just getting two square meals in a day. Broader aspects of food security are-

Availability of the food- This includes production of crops within the country, previous years produce which are present in the government granaries, and imports from other countries.

Accessibility- Every person in the country should also access to food.

Affordability- This means that every person is able to financially meet their dietary needs.

- **Food Security: Need**

- ❖ The downtrodden section of our society is the most food insecure. The population above the poverty line are also food insecure sometimes. This happens when the country face a natural disaster like an earthquake, failure of crops, floods, famine, etc.
- ❖ Ways in which food security can get affected by a calamity:

- ❖ During a natural calamity, production of crops is decreased which in turn creates a shortage of food.
- ❖ Shortage of food causes prices to hike.
- ❖ These high prices cannot be afforded by some of the sections of the society.
- ❖ If these calamities stretched over a long period, it then cause starvation which in turn can take the shape of a famine.
- ❖ Famines are also associated with a massive number of deaths due to the starvation and & accompanied by epidemics caused by contaminated water and food. The immune system is also due to starvation which makes the body prone to many kind of disease. The most devastating famine of India was the famine of Bengal in 1943 which nearly killed over 30 lakh people in the region.
- ❖ Even till now places like Kalahandi and Kashipur (Orissa) are facing similar famine-like conditions for many years. Deaths due to starvation have also been stated from here. Baran district of Rajasthan & Palamau of Jharkhand has also reported starvation deaths which is a concern.

- **Section of Society which is Food Insecure**

- ❖ The worst affected people from food and nutrition insecurity are landless people. They are traditional artisans, and the destitute including the beggars. They are mostly ill-paid. These workers are also engaged in seasonal activities and are paid extremely low wages which do not even properly insure their bare survival. The SCs, STs, and the OBCs who are the poor are often prone to food insecurity. People who have migrated from other areas in search of work are also many times food insecure. Population affected by a natural disaster is also food insecure. Malnutrition is common mostly among women and this remains a matter of grave concern as it increases the risk of newborn child malnutrition manifold.
- ❖ Few states in the country have a large number of food insecure people. These places may be tribal, remote, prone to any kind of natural disasters or economically backward.

- **India and Food Security**

After Indian independence, the country has adopted a new strategy in agriculture called the ‘Green Revolution’ for increasing production of wheat and rice. Indira Gandhi was then the prime minister of the country. She also released a special stamp bill which was entitled as ‘wheat revolution’ in the year 1968. The success of wheat revolution was then used as a model for rice revolution. However the increase in the food grains was disproportionate.

The highest growth was then achieved by the states of UP and Maharashtra in terms of the wheat production while West Bengal & Uttar Pradesh recorded significant production of rice.

Since the green revolution which began in early 1970, the country has been able to avoid famines & adverse weather conditions. India has also become self-sufficient in crops during the last 30 years.

- **Buffer Stock**

Buffer stock is normally the stock of food, primarily rice and wheat which is procured centrally through the Food Corporation of India. FCI now purchases the grains from the farmers of the states where it is grown in surplus. The farmers, then in turn, get a price known as Minimum Support Price or the MSP which the government decides in every financial year before the commencement of the sowing season. The purchased food grains are then stored in the government granaries. The grains are usually distributed amongst financially weaker sections of the society at a much lower price than the market rate which is popularly known as the issue price. The buffer stock then also helps to resolve problems in periods of natural calamities.

- **Public Distribution System**

- ❖ The food which FCI procures is distributed by government by regulated ration shops. This is referred as the Public Distribution System. Ration shops are also widely present in localities, towns, villages and cities.
- ❖ There are nearly 5.5 lakh ration shops in the country. They are known as Fair Price Shops. They usually keep stock of food grains, sugar & kerosene at a

much lower price than the market price. Any family which has a ration card can also buy a stipulated amount of ration from the shops. There are three different kinds of ration cards-

1. Antyodaya cards for the poorest people.
2. The BPL cards for the ones which are below the poverty line.
3. The APL cards for every single citizen.

- Rationing was introduced in India in the year 1948 because of the Bengal famine. It was done due to an acute food shortage during the 1960s which was prior to Green Revolution. In wake of high poverty in the mid- 1970s, the Public Distribution System for food was strengthened, and a new Integrated Child Development Services were introduced in 1975 and Food For Work was also introduced. Over the years several other new programs were launched to restructure the already present administrative programs. At present, there are many poverty alleviation programmes run by Government . Employment programmes have also resulted significantly to food security by increasing the income of the poor.
- **Status of Public Distribution System in India (At present)**

Initially the Public Distribution System was universal. There was no discrimination b/w the poor & the non-poor but currently, the policy has also been revised to make it more efficient & targeted to provide benefits to the remote and backward areas. It mainly targets poor in the country. In the year 2000 two schemes were launched - The Antyodaya Anna Yojana & the Annapurna Scheme. The PDS has been facing various criticism on several grounds in past years. There were instances of hunger being prevalent in the country in spite of overflowing granaries in godowns.

- **Cooperative & Their Role in Food Security**

In the southern and western part of India, the cooperatives also play a significant role in food security. Cooperatives have been set up to sell low priced goods to the poor people. In Tamil Nadu out of all the ration shops, around 94% of them are being run by the cooperatives. Mother Dairy in Delhi

is striving to provide milk & vegetables to consumers at low rates as decided by the government of Delhi. Amul is another cooperative in the milk products sector from Gujarat. It has brought about the White Revolution, which is popularly known as the 'Operation Flood' in the country. The Academy of Development Science in Maharashtra has started a network of NGOs that are aiming at setting up grain banks in different regions. The grain bank program is acknowledged as one of the most successful and innovative food security programs.

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