

As per the NSSO report No. 558 in rural India, the per person per month has declined from 6.38 Kg. in 2004-05 to 5.98 Kg in 2011-12. In urban India, the per person per month consumption of rice, too has declined from 4.71 Kg in 2004-05 to 4.19 Kg in 2011-12. Per Capita consumption of PDS rice has doubled in rural India and increased by 66% in urban India since 2004-05. The per Capita consumption of PDS wheat has doubled since 2004-05 in both rural and urban India.

PDS dealers are sometimes found resorting to malpractices like diverting the grains to open market to get better margin, selling poor quality grains at ration shops, irregularly at ration shops, etc. It is common for ration shops regularly have poor quality grains left. This is a big problem. When the dealer is unable to sell, a large quantity of foodgrains piles up with him. In recent years, there is another problem, led to the decline of the income of the family, poor and non-TPDS card with a fixed quota for rice, wheat, sugar etc. are sold at the same low price. There are three types of cards: BPL, APL and TPDS. The prices that you see at the ration shop are very low. A large number of families are buying foodgrains from the ration shops subject to a fixed quota. These included low income families whose incomes were marginally higher than the below poverty line families. Now, with TPDS of three different prices, any family above the poverty line gets very little discount at the ration shop. The price for APL family

is almost as high as open market price, so there is little incentive for them to buy these items from the ration shop.

Role of cooperatives in food security

The cooperatives are also playing an important role in food security in India 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 per cent are being run by the cooperatives. In Delhi, Mother Dairy is making strides in provision of milk and vegetables to the consumers at a controlled rate decided by the government. In Delhi, Amul is another example of cooperatives in milk production. It imports products from Gujarat. It has played a major role in the White Revolution in India. These are a few examples of cooperatives running in different parts of the country ensuring food security for people of different sections.

In Maharashtra, Academy of Agricultural Science (ADS) has been working through a network of NGOs for setting up Grain Banks in different regions. ADS is also working on training and capacity building of NGOs for ensuring food security for NGOs. Grain Banks are now slowly taking shape in different parts of Maharashtra. ADS is making efforts to set up Grain Banks, to facilitate replication through other NGOs and to influence the Government's policy on food security are thus paying rich dividends. The ADS Grain Bank programme is acknowledged as a successful and innovative food security intervention.





Summary

Food security of a nation is ensured if all of its citizens have enough nutritious food available, all persons have the capacity to buy food of acceptable quality and there is no barrier on access to food. The people living below the poverty line might be food insecure all the time while better off people might also turn food insecure due to calamity or disaster. Although a large section of people suffer from food and nutrition insecurity in India, the worst affected groups are landless or land poor households in rural areas and people employed in ill paid occupations and casual labourers engaged in seasonal activities in the urban areas. The food insecure people are disproportionately large in some regions of the country, such as economically backward states with high incidence of poverty, tribal and remote areas, regions more prone to natural disasters etc. To ensure availability of food to all sections of the society the Indian government carefully designed food security system, which is composed of two components: (a) buffer stock and (b) public distribution system. In addition to PDS, various poverty alleviation programmes were also started which comprised a component of food security. Some of these programmes are: Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS); Food-for-Work (FFW); Mid-Day Meals; Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) etc. In addition to the role of the government in ensuring food security, there are various cooperatives and NGOs also working intensively towards this direction.



Exercises

1. How is food security ensured in India?
2. Which are the people more prone to food insecurity?
3. Which states are more food insecure in India?
4. Do you believe that green revolution has made India self-sufficient in food grains? How?
5. A section of people in India are still without food. Explain?
6. What happens to the supply of food when there is a disaster or a calamity?
7. Differentiate between seasonal hunger and chronic hunger?
8. What has our government done to provide food security to the poor? Discuss any two schemes launched by the government?
9. Why buffer stock is created by the government?
10. Write notes on:
 - (a) Minimum support price
 - (b) Buffer stock
 - (c) Issue price
 - (d) Fair price shops
11. What are the problems of the functioning of ration shops?
12. Write a note on the role of cooperatives in providing food and related items.





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