



Food Security and Public Distribution

Shivaraj Researcher,

Department of Development Studies, Kannada University Hampi, Vidyanaraya,
Karnataka, India.

Introduction:

According to the declaration made at the World Food Summit held in Rome in 1996, food security is 'Food security is the availability of food for all people at all times in physically and economically sufficient quantities to enable them to lead an active and healthy life in accordance with their choice of safe nutritious food. Hunger and under nutrition are two important dimensions of food insecurity in humans. 21.92 percent of India's 121 crore population suffer from hunger and malnutrition. 20.19 percent of the population of Karnataka i.e. 1.29 crore people have income below the poverty line. The reason why such a large proportion of people in the society are abject poverty shows that most of them are deprived of their right to food. That is why the United Nations has placed India at the 67th position in the list of world hungry countries. This ranking shows the severity of food security in the country.

Foundation of Food Security Availability The development and productivity of the agricultural sector are important determinants of food availability. In this regard, the figures of Karnataka state give a very disappointing picture. Although 60 percent of the population is engaged in agricultural activities, it contributes only 14 percent to the GDP. This gives a picture of minimum productivity and minimum profitability of this sector. Agricultural backwardness leads to food insecurity. Lack of food drives people to malnutrition. The country's food availability picture remains complex. After independence, the country's population is increasing exponentially from decade to decade. The population of the country has increased from 36.11 crores in 1951 to 130 crores today. Food should be produced in proportion to population growth and should be adequately available to all citizens. If food is not available in adequate quantity and nutritionally, it becomes food insecurity. The increasing population of the country along with inadequate distribution of resources has also contributed

to the poverty of the people. 33 crore people are living in this state of poverty in the country. Thus the number of people who depend on agriculture is not less. Agriculture is still the main occupation in 68% of the 70% states in the country. But agriculture is seeing only 2% to 2.40% growth in the state. Only when agricultural growth reaches the target of 4.50 percent, the achievement of fixed income of farmers and consumer price index can be seen. Besides, agriculture has not yet come out of its dependence on seasonality, weather and rainfall. Besides these, the modernization of agriculture has created some problems of food security. As modern agriculture becomes more mechanized, the number of people involved in agriculture declines. Most of these people who migrate to towns and villages in search of alternative employment are landless and wage labourers. Policies of political parties, political stability, speed of development, speed of economy, economic control and foresight can provide a solid foundation for food security. Availability of food should be obtained either through production or importation in qualitatively sufficient quantity. Sustainability needs to be achieved through water, sanitation and health care along with food consumption issues. Social conditions such as education, health, distribution activities are important for stability in food security index and should not be lost due to any shock. Food security indices are fragmented in many countries due to errors in government policy, large scale in food production and distribution. In this regard, due to the horrors of hunger, sickness and poverty in the society, there is a serious concern about food security.

Constitution of Food Security in India:

Public distribution system is a one of the important poverty alleviation programmes in India. This scheme is very helpful to especially poor peoples in India. There are large numbers of people still living Below the Poverty Line. Government of India in recent years has passed the Food Security Bill of September 2013. This act says that, the main objective of 75% of rural population and 50% of urban population was covered. It gets to the needy people. Karnataka state poverty ratio is presently. According to Article 37 and 38 of the Constitution of India, every citizen has got the right to food security. Poverty and lack of purchasing power are the causes of hunger in the social system. When such a situation is closely observed, there is a need to discuss the implementation of hunger free programs. If governments buy food produced by producers at high prices and distribute quality food grains at low prices through public distribution system to poor people at low prices through fair price shops, some amount of hunger can be curbed. Because the labor of the landless people is not able to cover the expenses of the family. Because of this we all need to change our way of thinking. This concept is linked to a human rights perspective, which should influence discussions about food

safety. A broader inquiry into the role of public action to combat hunger and its impact should strengthen the organizing framework, which has failed to focus instead on the broader structure of social security. Spending only one percent of national income on health and malnutrition is only one facet of the problem. According to a World Food Insecurity scale, the food insecurity situation is defined as having increased further in 2001. Food security implies that all people at all times meet their food needs and have sufficient safe and nutritionally good physical, social and economic conditions to live an active and healthy life.

People's War against C.V:

Although Karnataka has not progressed in building a hunger-free society, it still has a long way to go. Last year 69 crore people in the world suffered from hunger. India's share is 18.92 crores. While the number of people suffering from hunger is high in Asia, it is growing rapidly in Africa. It is estimated that by 2030, half of the world's hungry people will live in Africa. India is the second most populous country in the world and India is on the list of countries facing serious problems in the global hunger index. Due to this, the state has to face serious challenges in food security. For the welfare of the poor, the needy, the landless, the main objective of agricultural activities should be to give importance to the production of nutritious food. Government policies need to move towards the development of farmers and agricultural laborers. Cost reduction in the process of production, storage, transportation, distribution and marketing should be prioritized so that the producer's crop can be priced. The level of food dhyana currently distributed to starving families needs to be increased, taking care not to spoil or spoil food items. 18.92 crore people are suffering from malnutrition in the country in 2017-19. Similarly, in 2019, the number of children under the age of 5 years is 4.3 crore, which is a stunted growth. Therefore, there is a need to create a better system to facilitate local marketing of nutritious food produced at the local level and to set up large scale food processing units in rural areas.

Ration Food Not Reaching the Target:

The central government had set a target to provide free ration to 8 crore migrant workers without ration cards in May and June 2020. But it failed to reach even half of this target. No state has fully distributed the ration grains given to the states to distribute ration grains to the migrant workers. Even in some states the utilization rate is less than 1 percent. An only 1.7 lakh tonne of ration was distributed in the country. 6.4 lakh tonnes of ration has been supplied by the central government. 8,494 lakh rations have been distributed to most migrant workers in Rajasthan in 2 months. Ration was distributed to 20.47 lakh migrant workers in Karnataka. Similarly in Goa Telangana distribution of ration was nil. The central

government has not disclosed the reason behind the very low ration distribution. It was not understood why the state governments failed to distribute the ration even though the central ration was provided. Why is this not taken seriously by the people of this country? And the Center estimated that 3.2 crore tonnes of ration is required for the implementation of the first and second phase of the Prime Minister's Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. But the center bears 30.8 percent of the cost of implementing this project. The Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies has provided an explanation that only Rs 46,061 crore has been released out of the Rs 1.49 lakh crore required for the implementation of the scheme. But it is a conjecture as to what period the ration grains were sold

What Does the Food Civil Act Say About Illegal Ration Card:

In order to reduce the number of ration cards in order to comply with the Food Security Act, the government has indicated that the number of cards has increased rather than households, but has warned of fines and criminal prosecution against those holding illegal ration cards. Although the Food and Civil Supplies Department issued this notice to the district level officials, it could not be phased out without a deadline in any taluk. Going a step further, a large number of cards that did not link the ration card to Aadhaar and mobile number were canceled in which most of the poor people had their ration cards cancelled, while the ration cards of the rich families were not cancelled. As a result, the ration was saved by 9% every month. Who are ineligible to get ration card in the state i.e. government, semi-government employees, tax payers, land owners are also cheating by getting ration cards. Due to this, food donations like Annabhagya, which should be shared with the poor, are being wasted. To put a brake on it, the government took away the food of the poor. Further, the cancellation order was followed for those having 3 hectares of dry land and irrigated land, 1000 square feet pakka house, annual income above Rs 1.20 lakh. The central government has given strict instructions in the Food Security Act to reduce the number of ration cards and reduce the number of beneficiaries. It was estimated that 20 lakh beneficiaries would have to be reduced as per the instructions of the Centre. Even though it has been decided to file a criminal case against the illegal ration card holders and collect Rs 35 per kg for the rice received so far, some sections of people continue to use it illegally without acknowledging the government order.

Reference Writings

1. Amarthiyasen, Poverty and Famine, Oxford Carrenhan Press, 1981.
2. A Study on the Performance of Public Distribution System with Reference to Kolacheel Municipality, Bhagyashree P.G. Volume No-8, 2017.
3. Criminal Case for Illegal Ration Card, Vijayavani News paper, 2020.
4. Question if more money is asked for ration, Prajavani News Paper, 2020,
5. Free ration not reaching target, Prajavani News Paper, 2 July 2020.
6. War against hunger India China Senasu, Prajavani News Paper, 15 July 2020.
7. FAO, the Stage of Food in Security in the World, 2001.
8. Blessy Varghese, Food Security and Public Distribution in India, LAP Lambert Academic Publication, 2020.
9. Nidhi Arora¹, Singh P.D. Bourai V.A., Public Distribution system and food security in India: A case study of uttarkhanad, Volume-03, Issue-08, 2018.

