

Food Security in India | Easy Notes For Class 9th

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Introduction:

Food security means making sure everyone has enough food that's easy to get and not too expensive. Sometimes, when there are problems growing or sharing food, it's tough for poor families. We'll talk about how the government, through something called the Public Distribution System (PDS), and by paying close attention, makes sure our food is safe. Let's figure out why this is important and how we can help make sure nobody in India goes without food.

Understanding Food Security

Food security means there should be fulfillment of three essential things. These are:-

- (a) **Availability:** Having enough food through production, imports, and stocks.
- (b) **Accessibility:** Ensuring food is reachable for everyone.
- (c) **Affordability:** People having enough money to buy safe and nutritious food.

Food security is guaranteed when there's enough food for all, everyone can buy good food, and no barriers stop access.

Why Care About Food Security?

The poorest may face food problems, especially during disasters. Calamities like earthquakes or droughts reduce food, leading to shortages. High prices during shortages make it hard for some to buy food, causing starvation and even famine.

Note: *Earlier the meaning of food security was confined to only having enough food. However, Amartya Sen (an Economist) played a significant role in broadening the concept of food security by adding the word 'access' to it.*

Bengal Famine 1943: A Tough Time

The Bengal Famine of 1943 was India's most devastating, claiming three million lives. Agricultural laborers, fishermen, and others suffered due to rising rice prices. Epidemics followed, caused by contaminated water and weakened resistance from starvation.

Addressing Food Insecurity in India

India has thankfully not experienced a famine like the Bengal Famine again. However, it's concerning that even today, some parts face conditions similar to famine, leading to starvation deaths. Natural disasters and pandemics, like the recent Covid-19, can cause food shortages, impacting food security.

Who are food insecure:

- 1. Landless Individuals:** Lack of access to land increases vulnerability.
- 2. Traditional Artisans:** Reliance on crafts may lead to irregular income.
- 3. Providers of Traditional Services:** Dependence on traditional services affects income stability.
- 4. Self-Employed Workers:** Those in low-skilled occupations may face irregular income.
- 5. Destitutes Including Beggars:** Individuals without stable incomes struggle to meet basic needs.
- 6. Urban Families in Low-Paid, Seasonal Jobs:** Low-paid, seasonal jobs pose challenges for steady income.
- 7. Scheduled Castes (SCs):** SCs with poor land access or productivity face higher vulnerability.

8. Scheduled Tribes (STs): STs with poor land conditions or low productivity are at risk.

9. Other Backward Classes (OBCs) with Poor Land or Low Productivity: Some OBCs face vulnerability due to land or productivity issues.

10. Individuals Affected by Natural Disasters: – Forced migration due to disasters disrupts livelihoods.

11. Women Facing Malnutrition: – High malnutrition among women risks their health and unborn babies.

12. Pregnant and Nursing Mothers and Children Under 5: – This group forms a significant part of the food-insecure population.

Note: As per the National Health and Family Survey (NHFS) 1998–99, approximately 11 crore women and children face food insecurity.

Regional Disparities:

- Food insecurity is more significant in economically backward states, tribal areas, remote regions, and those prone to natural disasters.
- Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, West Bengal, Chattisgarh, parts of Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra have the largest number of food insecure people.

Hunger as an Indicator:

- Hunger isn't just poverty; it causes poverty.
- Achieving food security means eliminating current hunger and reducing the risks of future hunger.
- **Chronic hunger:-** It results from persistently inadequate diets due to very low incomes, leading to an inability to buy enough food for survival.
- **Seasonal hunger:-** It is tied to cycles of food growing and harvesting, prevalent in rural and urban areas with seasonal agricultural and labor activities.

Fortunately, both seasonal and chronic hunger percentages have declined in India.

India's Pursuit of Food Self-Sufficiency:

- Since Independence, India aimed for self-sufficiency in food grains.
- The '**Green Revolution**,' especially in wheat and rice production, marked a significant stride in agriculture.
- The success in wheat production was later replicated in rice.
- Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh recorded substantial growth in foodgrain production.

Recent Food grain Production:

- Total food-grain production was 252.22 million tonnes in 2015–16 and increased to 329.68 million tonnes in 2022–23.
- Significant wheat production in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
- West Bengal and UP recorded substantial rice production.

Self-Sufficiency Achieved:

- India has avoided famine even during adverse weather conditions since the Green Revolution.
- The country grows various crops, ensuring self-sufficiency in food for the past 30 years.
- Besides, the government has design a food security system consisting of two components.
 - Buffer Stock
 - Public Distribution System

Buffer Stock:

Buffer Stock is the reserve of foodgrains (mainly wheat and rice) held by the government through the Food Corporation of India (FCI). It's bought from farmers in surplus-producing states at a Minimum Support Price (MSP) and aims to distribute food at a lower cost to deficit areas and economically disadvantaged sections, addressing shortages during adverse conditions.

Public Distribution System (PDS):

The PDS is a way for the FCI to share food with those who need it. Ration shops, around 5.5 lakh nationwide, have food, sugar, and kerosene, selling them cheaper. Families with a ration card can buy a fixed amount each month from nearby shops.

Origins of Rationing System:

Rationing in India started in the 1940s due to the Bengal famine. It came back in the 1960s when food was scarce and became more important before the Green Revolution. In the mid-1970s, when poverty was high, key programs like the improved Public Distribution System (PDS) were introduced. Over time, new programs and changes made food security better. There are also Poverty Alleviation Programs (PAPs) focusing on both rural and urban areas.

Current Status of Public Distribution System (PDS):

- The **Public Distribution System (PDS)** is a crucial government step for food security in India.
- Initially, it covered everyone, but changes have been made over time to make it more efficient.
- In 1992, the **Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS)** aimed to reach remote areas.
- From June 1997, the **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)** focused on helping the poor, introducing different prices for them.
- In 2000, special schemes like **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)** and **Annapurna Scheme (APS)** were launched for the poorest and indigent senior citizens.

Key Features of PDS (as of 2021):

- **Efficiency:** It evolved to target specific groups and areas.
- **Special Schemes:** AAY and APS targeting the poorest and indigent senior citizens.
- **Impact:** It stabilized prices, ensured food availability, and supported farmers.

Shortcomings of PDS:

- **Overflowing Granaries:** People criticized it for excessive stockpiling of food-grains in storage.
- **Rotting Grains:** It raised issues regarding spoilage and wastage of stored grains.
- **Persistent Hunger:** Despite PDS success, instances of hunger continue in certain areas.
- **Complex card system :** Changes in the ration card system, with three different price categories, reduced incentives for families above the poverty line to buy items from ration shops.
- **Malpractices by Dealers:** PDS dealers sometimes engage in unethical practices, including diverting grains to the open market for better profits, selling poor-quality grains at ration shops, and irregular shop openings, leading to significant issues.
- **Poor-Quality Stock Accumulation:** Ration shops often end up with unsold stocks of poor-quality grains, creating a substantial problem. The accumulation of such stocks contributes to inefficiencies and challenges in the PDS.

Challenges of Minimum Support Prices (MSP):

1. **Regional Pressure:** Leading food-grain-producing states, such as Punjab, Haryana, and Andhra Pradesh, exert pressure, influencing increased food grain [procurement](#) at enhanced MSP, potentially neglecting the diverse needs of other regions.
2. **Crop Shift:** MSP-induced price hikes can prompt farmers, particularly in surplus states, to shift from producing coarse grains, a staple for the poor, to cultivating rice and wheat, causing imbalances in agricultural diversity.
3. **Environmental Impact:** Intensive water utilization in rice cultivation, driven by MSP-induced production shifts, contributes to environmental degradation, including falling water levels and posing threats to agricultural sustainability.
4. **Maintenance Costs:** Rising Minimum Support Prices raise the government's maintenance costs

associated with procuring food grains, impacting the financial burden.

5. **Storage and Transportation Costs:** The Food Corporation of India (FCI) faces increased transportation and storage costs, adding to economic challenges and affecting the overall efficiency of the procurement (purchase) system.

Role of cooperatives in food security:

1. **Supporting Communities in South and West:** In the southern and western parts of India, cooperatives play a significant role in ensuring ample food for all.
2. **Accessible Shops:** These cooperatives establish shops where people can purchase necessities at affordable prices.
3. **Prominent Presence in Tamil Nadu:** In Tamil Nadu, nearly all fair price shops—about 94%—are operated by cooperatives, ensuring accessibility to essential items at fair prices.
4. **Impactful Role of Mother Dairy in Delhi:** In Delhi, Mother Dairy contributes significantly by selling milk and vegetables at government-regulated rates, making them accessible to all.
5. **Success Story of Amul:** Amul, hailing from Gujarat, stands out as a success in the cooperative sector. They supply milk and milk products, earning recognition as the “White Revolution.”
6. **ADS Initiatives in Maharashtra:** In Maharashtra, the Academy of Development Science (ADS) facilitates the establishment of grain banks through various NGOs. ADS conducts training programs to empower NGOs for similar initiatives in other regions.
7. **Advocacy for Change:** ADS not only works locally but also advocates for government policies that promote food security for everyone.
8. **Positive Reception to ADS Grain Bank:** The ADS Grain Bank initiative receives praise, serving as an innovative and successful intervention to ensure food security for all.

Conclusion:

India's food security involves the government's strategic buffer stock and public distribution system. Challenges like surplus storage, inefficiencies, and the role of cooperatives contribute to shaping the nation's food landscape.

Category

1. Class 9th

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