

Food Security in India

Q1. How is food security ensured in India?

Answer: Food security in India is ensured on the basis of two components, namely, buffer stock and public distribution system (PDS). Food security is ensured in India in the following ways:

1. Availability of Food – Presence of enough food for all individuals
2. Accessibility of Food – Food reaches every citizen of the country
3. Affordability of Food – Ability of all persons to purchase food of acceptable quality

Q2. Which are the people more prone to food insecurity?

Answer: A large section of people are suffering from food and nutrition insecurity in India. However, the most affected groups are as follows:

Landless and landless householders, traditional artisans, providers of traditional services, petty self-employed workers and destitute including beggars (in rural areas).

People employed in non-paid occupations and casual labourers engaged in seasonal activities (in urban areas).

People belonging to backward sections of society like SC, ST and OBC.

People affected by natural disasters who have to migrate to other areas in search of work.

People belonging to economically backward states are more likely to have natural disasters, with poverty, tribal and economic events from remote areas and regions.

Large proportion of pregnant and nursing mothers, and children under 5 years of age.

Q3. Which states are more food insecure in India?

Answer: The eastern and south eastern parts of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and parts of Maharashtra are the largest food-insecure states in India.

Q4. Do you believe that green revolution has made India self-sufficient in food grains? How?

Answer: In the late 1960s, the Green Revolution introduced the Indian farmer to the cultivation of high yielding varieties (HYVs) of seeds. HYVs (combined with chemical fertilizers and pesticides) increased the productivity of food grains (especially wheat and rice), helping India achieve self-sufficiency in food grains. Since the advent of the Green Revolution, the country has survived famine even in adverse weather conditions.

Therefore, it can be said that the Green Revolution has made India self-sufficient in terms of food grains.

Q5. A section of people in India are still without food. Explain?

Answer: Despite the large increase in food production, we find people without food in India. Poor people suffer from chronic hunger. They find themselves unable to buy food. More than one-fifth of the country's population still suffers from chronic hunger.

Q6. What happens to the supply of food when there is a disaster or calamity?

Answer: When a disaster or disaster strikes, the production of food grains in the affected area decreases. This in turn creates a shortage of food in the area. Prices rise due to food shortages. Increased food prices affect many people with equal affordability. When a disaster occurs over a very wide area or extends over a long period of time, it can create a state of starvation. Large scale starvation can take the form of famine.

Q7. Differentiate between seasonal hunger and chronic hunger?

Answer: Seasonal hunger:

The type of hunger that occurs when a person is unable to find work for the entire year is called seasonal hunger. Seasonal hunger is related to the cycle of food growing and harvesting. It is prevalent due to the seasonal nature of agricultural activities in rural areas and casual labourers in urban areas. This type of hunger occurs when a person is unable to find work for a full year.

Chronic hunger:

Chronic hunger is consistently insufficient in terms of dietary quantity and / or quality. Poor people suffer from chronic hunger due to their very low income and in turn, inability to buy food even for a living.

Q8. What has our government done to provide food security to the poor? Discuss any two schemes launched by the government?

Answer: The government has launched several schemes for the welfare of the people and to provide food security to the poor. Two such schemes are Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Annapurna Yojana (APS).
Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) – The scheme was launched in December 2000. Under this scheme, one crore poor were identified from BPL families covered by Public Distribution System (PDS). Twenty five kilograms of food grains were made available to each of the eligible families at a highly subsidized rate. After almost two years, the quantity was increased from 25 kg to 35 kg. In June 2003, and August 2004, an additional 50 lakh families were added to the scheme twice.
Annapurna Scheme (APS) – Launched in the year 2000, the scheme aims to provide food to senior citizens who are placed under the National Old Age Pension Scheme. The eligibility for the applicant is that he / she must be 65 years or older.

Q9. Why buffer stock is created by the government?

Answer: A buffer stock of food grains is created by the government so that it can be distributed in areas lacking food grains and among the poorer sections of the society at a price much lower than the market price. A buffer stock helps to solve the problem of food shortage during adverse weather conditions, disaster or disaster. Thus buffer stock is a step taken by the government to ensure food security.

Q10. Write notes on:

(a) Minimum support price – This is the pre-announced price at which the government specifically buys wheat and rice from the farmer, so that the buffer stock can be created. This price is called Minimum Support Price. Every year before the sowing season, the government declares the MSP, and the purchased grain is stored in the grain.

(b) Buffer stock – The buffer stock is mainly wheat and rice grains, which are purchased by the government through the Food Corporation of India. This buffer stock is used by the government for any disaster or calamity or poor section of society.

(c) Issue price – To help the poorer sections of the society, the government provides them food grains from buffer stock at a price much lower than the market price. This price is also known as Issue Price.

(d) Fair price shops – Food grains purchased by the government through FCI are distributed to the poorer sections of the society through ration shops. Ration shops are called fair price shops. Any family with a ration card can buy the specified amount of these items every month from the nearest ration shop.

Q11. What are the problems of the functioning of ration shops?

Answer: Ration shops also, known as Fair Price Shops, keep stock of foodgrains, sugar, and kerosene for cooking. These items are sold to people at a price lower than the market price. However, there are problems of functioning of the ration shops:

1. The quality of food served to poor people is less than the expected quality of food.
2. Ration cards are issued only to those who have proper residential addresses. Therefore, a large number of homeless poor fail to get ration from these shops.
3. Some ration shops are not opened regularly and this causes inconvenience to the poor.
4. Sometimes shopkeepers make fake entries in ration cards.
5. The owners of these shops sell rations in the open market at high prices.

Q12. Write a note on the role of cooperatives in providing food and related items.

Answer: Cooperatives are playing an important role in food security in India, especially in the southern and western parts of the country. Cooperatives set up shops to sell goods to poor people at low prices. For

example, out of all the fair price shops operating in Tamil Nadu, about 94 per cent are run by cooperatives. In Delhi, Mother Dairy is providing milk and vegetables to consumers at a controlled price, which is decided by the Delhi government. Amul is another example in this regard. It has brought a white revolution in the country. Many more cooperative societies and non-governmental organizations are also working intensively in this direction.

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