

Role of Public Distribution System in Providing Food Security – A Study of Mysore District

Mahadavappa Eraiah, University of Mysore, India

Abstract

Public Distribution system is one of the strategies to eradicate the poverty in India. The eradication of poverty is the main slogan of the 10th five year plan. In India even after half a century of independence still 26% of total population is living below poverty line (BPL group). Therefore in the Indian development strategies the thrust was focused to eliminate poverty. In the direction of poverty alleviation the PDS is one of the instruments in India's development processes. The main purpose of PDS was to act as price supporting programmes for the consumers during the periods of food shortage of the 1960. An the other it acted as an instrument of price stabilization and become a countervailing force against private traders who were try to exploits the situation of security of food. The basic aim was to provide essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar, and edible oil and kerosene at subsidized prices. From 1960 to 1980 it continued to be an adhoc scheme. In 1980 the coverage of PDS extended to rural areas in some states as welfare programme. In 1985 the scheme extended to all the tribal blocks covering about 51 million persons. The scheme was revamped and extended to 164 million persons covering the rural areas Thereafterwards the number of fair price shops introduced to distribute the food grains at subsidized price and the amount spent on subsidy for PDS increased from 3295 crores in 1974-75 to Rs. 9000 crores in 1998-99, Which indicate the importance of PDS in the India's development process. However the supply of food under PDS made a clear demarcation between urban rural consumers. Commodity like wheat, rice, sugar and edible oils consumed in urban area where as rural consumer mainly consumed kerosene, rice and sugar. Realizing the significant consumption pattern, Government of India made policy not to supply food grains under PDS to the APL (Above Poverty Line) house holder. From 2001-2002 onwards the criteria for issuing the ration card to the consumer is revamped on the basis of annual income of the family. In the welfare state, one of the primary duties of the state is to provide food security to its people. This becomes more prominent in country like India having high density population with cropping pattern mostly dependent on rains and no regular assured system of irrigation, due to which the availability of food stocks remains fluctuating over periods of time causing uncertainties. To overcome such eventualities and to provide assured supply of essential commodities, a system of PDS is very important. Now the Public Distribution System (PDS) is the key element of the Government's food security system in India. It is an instrument for ensuring availability of certain essential commodities at easily affordable prices especially for the poor. The Government via the Food Corporation of India (FCI) procures and stocks food grains which are released every month for distribution through the Public Distribution System (PDS). Public Distribution System in Mysore District of Karnataka State Study area: Mysore is one of the important district of Karnataka state. It has seven taluks with 1,328 villages. As per 2001 census the population for the district is 2.69 million. There are 6,89,365 card holders who are getting the benefit under PDS in the district. The objective of this paper

is to trace out the impact of PDS in providing food security to the people living below poverty line. Total member of families getting the benefit, quantity of foodgrains distributed in a year will be discussed in this appear. Study will discuss the extent of food security provided through Public Distribution System.