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ECONOMICS

Food security in India

Food Security in India

Since the Green Revolution, the country has avoided famine even during adverse weather conditions. India has become self-sufficient in food grains during the last 30 years because of a variety of crops grown all over the country. The availability of food grains has been ensured with a carefully designed food security system by the government. This system has two components: (a) buffer stock, and (b) public distribution system.

What is Buffer stock?

Buffer Stock is the stock of food grains, namely wheat and rice, procured by the government through the Food Corporation of India (FCI). The stock of wheat and rice are purchased by the FCI from the farmers where there is surplus production. The farmers are paid a pre announced price for their crops, called Minimum Support Price (MSP). Every year, the MSP is declared by the government before the sowing season to provide incentives to farmers for raising the production of these crops. Buffer Stock is created to distribute foodgrains in the deficit areas and among the poorer section of the society at a price lower than the market price also known as Issue Price.

What is the Public Distribution System?

FCI distributes the food procured from the farmer through government-regulated ration shops. It is called the Public Distribution System (PDS). Ration shops also, known as Fair Price Shops, keep stock of foodgrains, sugar, and kerosene for cooking. Rationing in India was introduced during the 1940s against the backdrop of the Bengal famine. In the mid-1970s, three important food intervention programmes were introduced:

1. Public Distribution System (PDS) for food grains
2. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) a
3. Food-for-Work (FFW).

At present, there are several Poverty Alleviation Programmes (PAPs), mostly in rural areas, which have an explicit food component also. Employment programmes greatly contribute to food security by increasing the income of the poor.

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