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CLASS-9TH

(BASED ON N C E R T PATTERN)

Date:- 22.01.22

ECONOMICS

Food security in India

Overview

Food security means availability, accessibility and affordability of food to all people at all times. Food security depends on the Public Distribution System (PDS) and government vigilance and action at times, when this security is threatened.

What is food security?

Food security has the following dimensions

- (a) availability of food means food production within the country, food imports and the previous years stock stored in government granaries.
- (b) accessibility means food is within reach of every person.
- (c) affordability implies that an individual has enough money to buy sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet one's dietary needs.

Food security is ensured in a country only if

- (1) enough food is available for all the persons
- (2) all persons have the capacity to buy food of acceptable quality
- (3) there is no barrier on access to food.

Why food security?

During natural calamity such as drought, production of food grains get decreased, creating a shortage of food in the affected areas. The prices get increased due to shortage of food. People cannot afford to buy food and if such a calamity happens in

a very wide spread area or is stretched over a longer time period, it might cause a situation of starvation. Massive starvation might take a turn into a famine. A Famine is characterised by widespread deaths due to starvation and epidemics caused by forced use of contaminated water or decaying food and loss of body resistance due to weakening from starvation.

Who are food-insecure?

In India, a large section of people suffers from food and nutrition insecurity. People having little or no land, traditional artisans, providers of traditional services, petty self-employed workers and destitute including beggars are the worst affected groups. In the urban areas, the food-insecure families are those who are generally employed in ill-paid occupations and the casual labour market. These workers are largely engaged in seasonal activities and are paid very low wages.

The social composition along with the inability to buy food also plays a role in food insecurity. People of SC, ST and OBC communities who have either poor land-base or very low land productivity are prone to food insecurity. People affected by natural disasters, who migrate to other areas in search of work, are among the most food-insecure people. A large proportion of pregnant and nursing mothers and children under the age of 5 years constitute an important segment of the food insecure population.

Another aspect of food insecurity is hunger, which is not just an expression of poverty, it brings about poverty. Hunger has chronic and seasonal dimensions. Chronic hunger is a consequence of diets persistently inadequate in terms of quantity and/or quality. Seasonal hunger is related to cycles of food growing and harvesting.

Since Independence, India has been aiming at self-sufficiency in food grains. After Independence, Indian policymakers adopted all measures to achieve self-sufficiency in food grains. In the field of agriculture, India adopted a new strategy, which resulted in the 'Green Revolution'.

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