



FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMMES IN TELANGANA STATE

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Abstract

Indian National Food Security Programme, with a goal to provide highly subsidized food grains to more than 800 million people in every nook and corner of the vast country, faces strategic challenges related to production, procurement, storage, transportation, distribution, finance, and organization. While the production issues are related to low yield, small farm size, and lack of financial support, the procurement process is skewed and lacks integration with the markets. The storage facilities are inadequate and are non-optimally located. Transportation facilities lack coordination leading to multiple loading and unloading of the food grains. Leakage and improper distribution of food grains are also big challenges. Very high subsidy, inefficient processes, and a large work force have brought to the fore the question of financial viability of the programme. There are also organizational issues related to payment disparity and resistance to labor reforms. The State Government has focused on nutrition and health interventions for adolescents along with children, pregnant, and lactating women to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescent's Health. Adolescence(10-19 years) is a time of rapid growth and development; also leading to changes in the body's physiology and behaviour. In Telangana, adolescents make up 19% of the population.

Key words: Indian food security programme; food supply chain; strategic challenges.

Introduction

Eradicating world hunger and ensuring food security worldwide is a major public health priority. The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that 795 million people globally, or one in nine, are considered food insecure. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), food security includes food availability and use and exists when populations "have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life". While global food security has improved over the last several decades, it is still a serious problem for countries like India, which ranked 68th out of 109 countries according to the Global Food Security Index (GFSI) study of food insecurity measured in both developed and underdeveloped nations. The WFP reports that one in four hungry people in the world lives in India and 32.7 percent of its population lives on less than \$1.25 a day. India faces what has become known as the "Asian Enigma," which describes the paradox that exists where improvements in stunting and under-nutrition have not kept pace with economic growth and where Indian malnutrition rates are actually higher than some locations in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Since 1975, India has run one of the largest child development programs through the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme, whose objectives are to provide supplementary nutrition, pre-school and non-formal education, nutrition and health education, immunizations, health check-ups, and referral services through local ICDS centers, locally known as Anganwadi centers (Ram et al., 2014). In addition, Indian lawmakers have implemented legislation to address food security, including the 2013 National Food Security Act (NFSA). This act guarantees subsidized grain to a reported 70 percent of the population and contains provisions for children and pregnant women. Both the ICDS Scheme and the NFSA are not without criticism. Research has shown mixed impacts of the ICDS Scheme on malnutrition (Government of India, 2011) and it is unclear whether the NFSA will make a



long-term impact on food security. Despite the attempts of the Government of India (GoI) to implement comprehensive programs designed to reduce malnutrition and food insecurity, malnutrition and food insecurity persist. Within the Indian state of Rajasthan, over half of women and adolescent girls suffer from anemia and 36 percent of children under the age of five are stunted (GoI, 2015). Stunting is highest among tribal children (54 percent) in the region compared to non-tribal children (45 percent), and severe stunting is greater among tribal girls (31 percent) compared to tribal boys (27 percent) (UNICEF, 2014).

Availability refers to physical availability of food stock at desired quantities. In other words it means 'sufficient'. Food production is the basis of food security. It can be alleged that the increased availability of food is an essential condition for achieving food security in India. Food availability relates to the supply of food through production, distribution, carryover stocks and imports. The net availability of food production is estimated by excluding exports and including imports. India's self-sufficiency in food grain has been a major achievement in Post- Independence period. The green revolution piloted in a dramatic and steady increase in domestic food grain production practically eliminating the need of food import, except to a very limited extend in times of extreme calamities or emergencies like famine, drought and serious crop failure.

Food security will remain a worldwide concern for the next 50 years and beyond. There has been no significant jump in crop yield in many areas stressing the need for higher investments in research and infrastructure, as well as addressing the issue of water scarcity. Climate change is a crucial factor affecting food security in many regions including India. The most important thing one has to keep in mind is that some of the technologies relating to crop production which were found to be innovative and quite relevant in the yesteryears might need refinement in the present context as far as food security is concerned. For example, higher use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides was recommended earlier to attain the higher food grain production. However, after realizing the potential ecological hazards caused by them, we slowly started advocating controlled use of fertilizers and pesticides. The concepts of integrated nutrient management and integrated pest management have attained significance in the context of sustaining soil fertility and environmental protection. However, the realization of crop yields may take longer under these sustainable agricultural technologies.

Access to food can be increased through employment due to growth in labour intensive sector. The problem of malnutrition is much border than that of access of food. The crux of India's food problem pertains not so much on increasing food availability but with the distribution of food. There are various challenges which India faces in attaining food security. Natural calamities like excessive rain fall, accessibility of water for irrigation purpose, drought, soil erosion, undulating topography and various soil types such as degraded soil, infertile soil, acidic & alkaline soil, non-improvement in agriculture facilities, growth in population, lack of education and job opportunities have further added to the problems. Another challenge which India faces in attaining food security is dependence on monsoon as well as labour on daily wages basis which tends to be variable on different times thus food procurement and access is fluctuating. The income of the family governs the access to food affordability and inflation acts as fuel in fire. PDS (Public Distribution is not satisfactorily functioning hampering distribution of food at low prices.

The constraints in ensuring food security and reducing hunger are due to inappropriate policy. The government of India has enacted various programmes such as Public Distribution System including Antyodaya Anna Yojana, nutrition programmes like Midday meals, ICDS, etc. to improve food and



nutrition security. National Employment Generation Schemes and Self-employment programme can also increase access to food and nutrition. Under National Food Security Law, government wants to provide subsidized food to the vulnerable section of country. It is being considered as the biggest experiment in the world. India has many policies and programmes. However food insecurity and malnutrition continues to be high. The problem is with both design and implementation of the programme. The focus of reforms can now be shifted to more efficient delivery systems of public services. It has been recognised that better governance is necessary for effective functioning of food based programmes. Social mobilisation, community participation and decentralisation based approach are necessary in this context. Appropriate institution is needed for better implementation of this policies. In nutshell, despite ensuring ample availability of food, existence of food insecurity at the micro-level in the country has remained a formidable challenge for India.

In India approximately, 320 Indians go to bed without food every night and recent data is very much alarming and situation is going even worse. Food riots have taken in many countries of the world. It's becoming very difficult to maintain food security. In rural context, agriculture development for small and marginal farmer is the most important dimension of food security. The diversification of agriculture for food e.g., cereals, pulses, edible oil yielding, vegetable, fuel & timber yielding plants, medicinal and fodder crops are necessary to meet the food and augment income to farmers to meet the food security. Natural vagaries like excessive rainfall, drought, and availability of water for irrigation, undulating topography, soil erosion, and soil type such as degraded soil, acidic & alkaline soil affect the food security. The income levels of farmer families govern the access to food affordability. Food distribution is a big problem. PDS (Public Distribution System) is not satisfactorily functioning. The families very poor within adequate income cannot escape food crisis. Globalization may and may not help food security. However, there are people who feels that globalization will definitely help food security due to trade but its matter of debate. We will have to aim at food security in developing countries through increased and stabilized food production on an economically and environmentally sustainable technologies/ methods. Diversification in agriculture is highly required.

Consider the situation in our country. Foodgrain production increased from around 50 million tonnes at the time of Independence to over 200 million tonnes in recent years. Although what was being produced at the time of Independence and for a couple of decades thereafter was not adequate to meet the caloric requirements of the people, we have now reached a situation where, if what is produced is distributed equally, the minimum requirements of all can be met in spite of the tremendous increase in population over more than half a century. In no part of the world is the foodgrains equally distributed, but the hypothetical calculation goes to show that availability is not the main issue. Calculations show that in the future also, say in 2030 or 2050, the situation is likely to be similar. Not that all matters relating to availability have been solved. But India, though still in the low ranks in terms of per capita availability of food, has reached the stage where, as far as food security is concerned, the accent can be, and has to be, on access of different sections of the population to what is available.

It is defined as the system in which food is procured by the FCI is distributed among the weaker or poorer sections of society. For the distribution of food around 5.5 lakh, Ration Shops has opened in villages, towns in different regions. Ration shops are also termed Fair Price Shop and keep the stock of kerosene oil for cooking, sugar, foodgrains. From these shops, Items have been sold at a very low price as compared to the market. Any family who is having ration card can purchase a stipulated amount of these items.



Ration cards are of three types

1. For the poorest of the poor, there is ANTYODAYA CARDS.
2. For those below the poverty, there is BPL CARDS.
3. For all others, they have APL CARDS.

Food Security Programmes in Telangana State

The Telangana government has recently made the decision to join the free rice scheme of the Central government under the National Food Security Act (NFSA). This initiative aims to provide assistance to families in need by distributing free rice to those who are eligible under the NFSA. The Telangana government's decision to join this scheme demonstrates a commitment to addressing issues of food security and poverty in the state.

About PMGKAY

In March 2020, during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, the central government had announced the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) welfare scheme. Initially, the scheme was planned for a period of 3 months but since then, it has been extended several times. This scheme looked to provide every individual covered under the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) with an additional 5 kg of grains (rice or wheat) free of cost, along with the 5 kg of subsidized food grain that is already being provided through the country's Public Distribution System (PDS). It covers people belonging to Below Poverty Line – Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Households (PHH) categories.

It also covers other vulnerable people like widows, terminally ill, elderly, landless agricultural labourers, primitive tribe households, informal sector workers etc. More than 81.35 crore people are benefiting from this scheme. Wheat has been allocated for 6 states and union territories and rice has been provided for the rest. This supplements the monthly entitlements under the NFSA.

Integrated Child Protection Scheme

The Integrated Child Protection Scheme is to significantly contribute to the realization of Government/State responsibility for creating a system that will efficiently and effectively protect children. It is based on cardinal principles of "protection of child rights" and "best interest of the child".

The ICPS will provide preventive, statutory, Care and Rehabilitation services to vulnerable children including those from potentially vulnerable families and families at risk, children of socially excluded groups like migrant families, families living in extreme poverty, SCs, STs & OBCs families subjected to or affected by discrimination, minorities, children infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS, orphans, child drug abusers, children of substance abusers, child beggars, trafficked or sexually exploited children, children of prisoners street & working children.

The Registration of Society under Societies Registration Act-2001 has registered in the name of "Telangana State Society for Protection and Empowerment of Children".

Government of India has been released Budget for Rs.2692.34 lakhs for the financial year 2014-15 under ICPS Scheme.



State Government have issued G.O.Ms.No.11, Dept. for WCD&SC, dt.25.11.2014 orders for constitute the “Telangana State Commission for Protection of Child Rights under section 17. (1) to exercise the powers conferred upon, and to perform the functions assigned to a State Commission under this Chapter IV of The Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, No.4 of 2006, Dt:20.01.2006. Budget Rs.65.00 lakhs proposed for 2015-16.

CHILDLINE 1098 (free helpline) services are available in all Districts in the state except Nalgonda, Nizamabad and Ranga Reddy, through Child Foundation India by Government of India.

Balamrutham

“Balamrutham” is the weaning food introduced under ICDS to provide improved supplementary nutrition to children between 7 months to 3 years. The weaning food is a preparation of wheat, chana dal, milk powder, oil and sugar. It is fortified and thus provides 50% of iron, calcium, vitamins and other RDA that children require per day. The composition and nutritive values of Balamrutham is indicated at Table-I and II respectively.

The recommended quantity is 100 gms which is to be given to children 3-5 times every day. For children below one year, Balamrutham can be served as porridge mixed with hot water and for older children, it can be given in the form of “Laddu”.

Balamrutham is distributed in packets of 2.5 Kg per child per month. It is distributed on first day of every month on Nutrition Health Day-1 to mothers of 7 months - 3 years children as Take Home Ration. Along with Balamrutham packet, these children also receive 2 eggs a week at the AWC under ICDS Food Model for 7months to 3 years under ICDS is at Table-III.

It is expected that Balamrutham will serve as an effective supplementary nutrition during the child’s crucial period of 7 months to 3 years and along with counseling to mother on IYCF practices will help to prevent incidence of chronic malnutrition.

Balamrutham serves not only as a weaning food but also as a caloric dense food to reduce malnutrition and is therefore used as part of Supervised feeding for malnourished children.

Supplementary Nutrition Programme(SNP)

Supplementary Nutrition Programme(SNP) is the main component of ICDS to tackle malnutrition. SNP services are provided to the target groups of Pregnant & Lactating women and children between 7 months to 6 years.

The cost norms for Supplementary Nutrition Programme, under “Restructured” ICDS were revised by Government of India (GOI).

With the revision of cost norms, food models were revised in consultation with stakeholders to provide for calories / protein/RDA as per GOI norms and to ensure that the Supplementary food is acceptable to the target groups.

In brief, the supplementary nutrition provided for the various categories of target groups is as follows: Pregnant & Lactating women get “*one full meal*” under **Arogyalaksmi** with one egg, 200 ml of milk, rice, dal and vegetable every day. 7 months to 3 years children receive weaning food i.e the fortified



Balamrutham packet of 2 ½ kgs and 16 eggs in a month. This is distributed as THR to the mothers on 1st of every month (i.e on NHD-1).

3 to 6 years children as part of Pre-school get a hot meal of rice, dal, vegetables, egg, and Nutri snacks/chana dal/daily. Malnourished children i.e SUW/SAM/MAM children between 7 months to 3 years are given additional supplementation of 1 egg, 100 ml milk, mini meal+ extra oil daily at the Anganwadi centre.

Malnourished children i.e SUW/SAM/MAM between 3 to 6 years are given additional supplementation of 1 egg, 100 ml milk, oil (with hot meal), 50 gms of Balamrutham daily at the Anganwadi centre.

Feeds for Malnourished children of age groups 7 months to 3 years and 3 to 6 years, are supervised and certain feeds are given at the AWC itself. Hence the additional supplementation are made part of model menus which are appropriate for the malnourished children. Detailed guidelines issued for the “Special care and Supervised feeding” of malnourished children upto 5 years include methodology of identification and categorization of children as Severely Underweight (SUW)/ Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM)/ Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and the details of the Model Menus.

Conclusion

India ranked 63rd out of 120 countries and this report is quite disturbing because India is one of the largest producers of food in the world. Overall, it may be concluded that food security in India can be achieved by paying higher attention to issues such as climate change, integrated water management, agricultural pricing, inadequate storage capacity, unsuccessful delivery of public services, mismanagement of food products and crop insurance. Despite considerable effort being made to improve production, not much focus has been given to curb food supply chain losses. With over 1.2 billion people to feed, addressing the issue of food wastage is essential to India's efforts towards combating hunger and improving food security. The impact of globalization in the form of SEZs and other factors has been both positive and negative in terms of agricultural prosperity and there is a strong need to regulate the policies related to globalization for reducing its negative effects on food security in India. The Food Security Act mandates the State to supply 5 kg of rice per head without any ceiling on the monthly drawal by a household at Rs. 3 a kg. It also restricts the eligibility criteria on those households with three-room houses and those having 5 acres dry or 2 acres wetland in addition to the income limit. However, in order to increase the coverage of the people availing TPDS, Government of Telangana constituted a Cabinet Sub-Committee on Civil Supplies, under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister for Finance and Civil Supplies. Based on the Committee's recommendations, income limit has been enhanced for rural areas to Rs. 1.50 lakhs and to Rs.2 lakhs in urban areas. The ceiling on holding of land has also been increased to 3.5 acres of wet land and 7.5 acres of dry land.

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