



CHALLENGES AND INTERVENTIONS IN ACHIEVING FOOD SECURITY THROUGH ANGANWADIS - A CASE OF GUNTUR DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT :

Public Distribution System is considered as a principal instrument in the hands of the government for providing safety net to the poor and the downtrodden. Public Distribution System is the largest distribution network of its kind in the world. It emerged out as rationing measure in the backdrop of Bengal famine as well as a war-time measure during Second World War.

The Government of India in an effort to ensure fair supply of food items to all citizens of India instituted Fair Price Shops (FPS) under Public Distribution System (PDS). Essential commodities such as Rice, Wheat, Sugar, Kerosene, etc., are supplied to the targeted underprivileged sections as per the eligibility and at fixed by the Government of India. In spite of the best efforts by Government officials at various levels, there are a few bottlenecks and inconveniences to the targeted citizens in availing the services provided. Over the years, Public Distribution System has expanded enormously as poverty alleviation and food security measure to become a permanent feature of Indian Economy.

The Andhra Pradesh state incorporated various modifications from time to time to make its implementation more relevant for the masses and to increase its effectiveness.

The present paper discusses the working of Public Distribution System in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. This paper analyzes the role of Anganwadis to achieve its objective of providing food security to the people. An attempt has been made in this article to study, a brief review of welfare schemes introduced by the government to promote nutritional security to children and women.

KEYWORDS : Public Distribution System (PDS), Fair Price Shops (FPS), Anganwadis, food security, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).

INTRODUCTION

Andhra Pradesh is one of the states pursuing a vigorous Public Distribution policy. Among the states, Public Distribution Systems that have tried Public Distribution Systems to cover rural areas are Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Of these states, Kerala is always deficit, while Tamil Nadu is marginally deficit in years due a bad rainfall. While Andhra Pradesh on the other hand, is a surplus state, encompassing large surplus as well as deficit tracts within its area. It is the government's primary duty to look that all its people should live with maximum quality. The Public Distribution System initially visualizes in terms of checking inflation and protecting vulnerable section from the vagaries of the market mechanism. PDS is an organizational asset of considerable significance improving the nutritional status of poorer groups touching



the one of the antipoverty programmes, PDS has a direct bearing on their success. The concept of minimum needs coupled with enlarging scope of PDS, serves to underline its dynamic character. As we move from the regions of primary poverty to a happier position, the system can be used to concretize the quest for "quality of life" as it may be defined from time to time in politico-administrative terms.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

¹Dr.K.K.Tripathy and K.C.Mishra (2011) estimated that though India is one of the largest producers of the food in the world, yet nearly 300 million people struggle for meeting two square meals a day and 21 percent of the national population (230 million) are malnourished. This indicates the issues of accessibility to adequate and nutritive food to the poor.

²According to Dev. (2007) poverty declined during pre-post reform period is due to effective distribution system function, while that of growth rate of staple food grain prices remain low and inflation is also low. These are the things attributed to reduction of poverty in Andhra Pradesh. On one hand some policy measures to improve agriculture growth, macro policy on industrial and rural non-farm sectors in the post period had adverse impact on poverty reduction. On the other hand, it is believed that, it is due to social welfare programmes, such as focus on providing food and nutritional security, PDS and ICDS which helped in poverty reduction.

³Yesudian (2007) suggested to improve the quality of PDS products are proper grading and standardization of ration commodities must be ensured so that quality services can be provided to consumers, minimize the presence of sand and pebbles in flour and rice, packed and labeled products should be provided to consumers, dealer must be provided with sufficient infrastructure facilities so that they can provide better quality services to consumers, periodical inspection of records maintained by FPS dealers must be conducted by the competent authorities and those who violate rules and regulations must be penalized and debarred from continuing as a FPS dealers.

OBJECTIVES:

The following objectives for study are given below.

1. To make a study of working of Public Distribution System in Guntur district of AP.
2. To examine the brief review of welfare schemes introduced by the government.
3. To observe the role of Anganwadis to achieve its objective of providing food security to the people.

METHODOLOGY:

This study has been conducted on the basis of secondary data. The secondary data has been compiled from the Planning Commission, various journals, books, internet sources and other published papers etc.

DISCUSSION:

WORKING OF PDS IN GUNTUR DISTRICT: The Targeted Public Distribution System was introduced in the state of Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere in the country in 1997 with a view to eliminate hunger. PDS is an important constituent of our food security. Targeted PDS envisages to include the 'really poor' and vulnerable sections of the society and the efficient distribution and allocation of the subsidized grains. The PDS supplies essential commodities like rice, kerosene, sugar, palmolein oil, wheat to the poor at subsidized prices.

The Telugu Desam was introduced cheap rice at Rs.2 per Kg in the state. The fair price shops are the major outlets under public distribution system. Our government has taken many initiatives from time to time to make the public distribution system more effective. The facts of PDS in Guntur district at a glance as on January 2017 are shown in table-1

Table – 1 shows, the total number of shops (FPS) are operating in Guntur district was 2,739. These fair shops are being run by efficient trained staff as many as 2,514 dealers working across the district. The total number of BPL cards existing in the district was 13, 32,926. The total number of transactions made by these BPL cards are as many as 11,436. The total authentications of the beneficiaries in the district was 28, 57,270. The biometric success of the beneficiaries in terms of percentage was 90.7% and failure was just 9.29%. Beneficiaries avail the ration portability facility in other district to the tune of 249 and 1,825 beneficiaries have been making use of portability within the district. Around 2,719 beneficiaries made cash less PDS transactions mapped with bank, on the other hand nearly 1,184 devices enabled with cashless. Guntur district recorded with 99.26% of cash less ration shops next to Krishna district.

Table: 1 Facts about PDS in Guntur District at a glance as on January 2017

Sl. NO	Description	Data in figures
1.	Total Shops	2,739
2.	Total Cards	13,32,926
3.	Total number of FPS Dealers	2,514
4.	Total Authentications	28,57,270
5.	Success in Percentage	90.7
6.	Failure in Percentage	9.29
7.	Total Transactions	11,436
8.	Portability in other District	249
9.	Portability within District	1,825
10.	Cash less PDS transactions mapped with Bank	2,719
11.	Device enabled with Cashless	1,184
12.	Cashless shops in Percentage	99.26

Source: www.epos.ap.gov.in

WELFARE SCHEMES: Andhra Pradesh state is one among the states advanced in the PDS and as introduced a number of innovative novel schemes towards achieving the objective of food security. Table – 2 shows initiatives to ensure food security by government of India.

Table - 2 Initiatives to Ensure Food Security by Government of India

Schemes	Year	Objectives	Beneficiary
*Public Distribution System (PDS)	1939	A war time rationing measure to ensure food grain availability and distribution in urban areas of Bombay	Urban population of Bombay
Essential Commodities Act	1955	To ensure easy availability of commodities and to protect consumers from exploitation by traders.	Communities
Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)	1975	To provide early child development via taking care of lactating women, child and adolescent girl through nutrition, health and education.	Child, adolescent girl and women
Integrated Rural Development Programme	1978	To increase the source of income by providing subsidy and bank credit, training etc.	Rural Population
Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)	1997	To provide food grains (10kg per month per family) to the people belonging to below poverty line (BPL) at subsidized	Family belonging to BPL / AAY household

		rate.	
Swarnajayanti Shari Rozgar Yojana (SSRY)	1997	To alleviate poverty from urban areas.	Urban Population
Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)	2000	To provide food security at the lowest level at the lowest rate	Poorest of poor family
Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)	2001	Providing employment generation in 150 most backward areas (agriculture productivity per worker, agricultural wage rate and SC / ST)	Rural Population
National Food for Work Programme	2004	Providing additional resource to SGRY where food grains are provided for work to generate employment and provide food security in backward areas.	Rural Population
Mid Day Meal (MDM) Scheme	2004	To provide food in the form of mid day meal to increase enrollment and attendance in schools	Children
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)	2005	To ensure 100 days of guaranteed work with minimum wage to sustain the livelihood.	Rural Population
National Food Security Mission (NFSM)	2007	To increase production and productivity of food grains (Rice, Wheat and Pulses) for food security in the state.	Farming Communities
National Food Security Act (NFSA)	2013	Right to food as part of right to life, aims to cover 67.1% of population, it provides rice, wheat and coarse grains to BPL and AAY household	Rural and Urban population of India.

NOTE: * - British Raj, **Source:** Economic survey 2004-05, Govt. of India, Tenth Five Year plan, Planning Commission, Govt. of India, Millennium Development Goals (2005), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Govt. of India 2005.

ROLE OF ANGANWADIS IN ACHIEVING FOOD SECURITY: The meaning of the word 'Anganwadi' in the English language is "Country Yard Shelter". The Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) in the country are part of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme which is a centrally sponsored Scheme.

Anganwadi Programme: An integrated child Development service (ICDS) is the only major national programme that addresses the needs of the children under the age of six years. It seeks to provide young children with an integrated package of services such as supplementary nutrition, health care and pre-school education. Because the health and nutrition needs of a child cannot be addressed in isolation from those of his or her mother. The programme also extends to adolescent girls, pregnant women and nursing mothers.

Basics of Anganwadi Programme (ICDS): The basic services provided under ICDS are mentioned under three headings like nutrition, health and pre-school education. Nutrition services include supplementary feeding, growth monitoring and nutrition and health counseling. Health services include immunization, basic health care and referral services. Pre – school education involves various stimulation and learning activities of Anganwadi. The objectives of the ICDS Scheme are as follows:

- To improve the nutritional and health status of children's in the age-group 0 - 6 years.
- To lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child
- To reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropout rate.
- To achieve effective co-ordination of policy and implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development.

- To enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health education.

NUTRITION:

- **Supplementary Nutrition:** The nutrition component varies from state to state but usually consists of a hot meal cooked at the anganwadi. It is based on a mix of pulses, cereals, oil, vegetables, sugar, iodized salt etc. Sometimes, 'Take home rations' are provided for children under the age of three years.
- **Growth monitoring and promotion:** Children under three years of age are weighed once a month, to keep a check on their health and nutrition status. Elder children are weighed once a quarter. Growth charts are kept to detect growths with the passage of time.
- **Nutrition and Health Education:** The aim of NHE is to help women with age group of 15 to 45 years to look after their own health and nutrition needs, as well as those of their children and families. NHE is imparted through counseling sessions, home visits and demonstrations. It covers issues such as infant feeding, family planning, sanitation, utilization of health services.

HEALTH:

- **Immunization:** Children under six are immunized against polio, DPT, (diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus), measles, and tuberculosis, while pregnant women are immunized against tetanus. This is a joint responsibility of ICDS and the health department. The main role of the anganwadi worker is to assist health staff (such as ANM) to maintain records, motivate the parents and organize immunization sessions.
- **Health Services:** A range of health services are provided through the anganwadi worker including health checkups of children under six, antenatal care of expectant mothers, post natal care of nursing mothers, recording of weight management of under nutrition and treatment of minor ailments.
- **Referral Services:** This service attempts to link sick or undernourished children. Those with disabilities and other children requiring medical attention with the public health care system, also come under it. And these cases are referred by the anganwadi worker to the medical officers of the primary health centers (PHCS).

PRE – SCHOOL EDUCATION (PSE): The aim of PSE is to provide a learning environment for children under the age group of 3 to 6 years and early care and stimulation for children under the age of three. PSE is provided through the medium of 'play' to promote the social, emotional, cognitive, physical and aesthetic development of the child as well as prepare him / her for primary schooling.

A PROFILE OF BALA SANJEEVANI SCHEME (BSS): In order to root out the problem of anemia among poor pregnant women, nursing mothers and children's to promote holistic nourishment our Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Shri. N. Chandrababu Naidu has launched a new scheme called Bala Sanjeevani Scheme (BSS) for women and children at Grama Darshini programme held at Gudivada village in S. Rayavaram mandal in Visakhapatnam district in 2018. This scheme meant for the pregnant women and children in the state. This scheme provide additional nutritious food and a special diet to 20,350 pregnant women, mothers and 5,900 children's below six years old in the district.

Objectives of BSS:

The following are the objectives of Bala Sanjeevani Scheme (BSS).

- To reduce infant mortality rates in the state.
- To avoid birth defects or diseases in new born babies.
- To eradicate malnutrition from the state.
- To provide nutritious food to the pregnant women during pregnancy.

ANGANWADI CENTERS IN KRISHNA AND GUNTUR DISTRICTS: Health Statistics shows that many poor pregnant women and nursing mothers having been suffering from anemia and undernourishment. On the other hand especially poor pregnant women and nursing mothers are not able to afford to buy nutritious diet items. The problem of anemia is highest in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh when compared to Krishna district.

Under this scheme, our state government is going supply five special nutritious food items namely (Dry Dates 1 kg, Kiss miss 200 gms, Groundnut cheeku made up with jaggery 1150 grams, Ragi malt 1Kg and Jaggery 1/2) will given to pregnant women and nursing mothers whose hemoglobin is less than 11 percent will receive the benefit under this scheme. In Guntur district 40,977 and in Krishna district 11,066 beneficiaries would receive the benefit under this scheme. The status of anganwadi centers in Krishna and Guntur Districts are shown in table -3.

Table: 3 Particulars of anganwadi centers in Krishna and Guntur Districts

District	Anganwadi Centers	No. of Children's	No. of Pregnant women / Nursing mothers
Guntur	4,405	2,51,325	40,977
Krishna	3,813	2,24,280	11,066

Source: Eenadu news paper dated 8.1.2019

Table – 3 reveals that Guntur district stood at first place with 4,405 anganwadi centers next to Krishna district with 3,813. The number of children's attached to anganwadi centers in Guntur district was 2, 51,325 and Krishna district was 2, 24,280. With regard to number of pregnant women and nursing mothers Guntur district is having highest number of pregnant women and nursing mothers recorded with 40,977 followed by Krishna district with 11,066. In terms of anganwadi centers, number of registered children's and number of pregnant women and nursing mothers, Guntur district occupied first place next to Krishna district.

CONCLUSION:

Andhra Pradesh State is identified as the “Bejeweled Rice Bowl of India”. In Andhra Pradesh, Agriculture plays a crucial role in its economy, with the largest segment of the population being dependent on agricultural sector for employment. Rapid and sustainable growth in agriculture has been identified not only as a key driver for economic development but also for achieving self-sufficiency and ensuring food security to the people. The Global Hunger Index reveals that nearly 50 percent of Worlds hungry live in India. The PDS has helped to reduce poverty and it improves food security of the poor. The targeted public distribution system aimed at providing essential commodities to the poor both in rural and urban areas at concessional rates. However, very often PDS is being criticized for in effectiveness and in efficiency in achieving its objectives, the government of Andhra Pradesh has been reducing the burden of subsidies on one hand and on the other it has drastically reduced the number of white ration cards during 2013-14.

A new study based on NSSO data, has estimated that 46.7 per cent or 25.9 million metric tonnes of the grain (rice and wheat released through the PDS, did not reach the intended beneficiaries in 2011-12. The study further reveals that Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are among the better performers with 11.1 percent and 12.2 percent leakages respectively. The Shanta Kumar Committee recommendations are completely against the implementation of TPDS and Food Security Act. It wants to reduce the coverage to 40 percent of the population as against 67 percent. The TPDS is no doubt an instrument which reduces poverty and ensures the food security to the millions of helpless poor.

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