

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES TO SECURE RIGHT TO FOOD AND NUTRITION IN INDIA

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Abstract: Food is the basic requirement for a living creature to survive in this world. An individual cannot live for long without food. Even, man would not go for earning if he would not need nay food. The Right to food has been secured by the Constitution of India at its very initial stage. However, the Government has made many policies and schemes from time to time to combat the problem of food security and access to food to all the individuals at national level. Moreover, legal regulations have also been framed and acts has been passed by the government to secure right to food to its citizens. In this chapter and effort has been made to discuss the important policies made by the government to secure the right to food in India.

Keywords: Food Schemes, Right To Food And Nutrition, Combat Hunger, Food Security, National Food Security Act, 2013.

1.0 Introduction:

Food is the basic requirement for a living creature to survive in this world. An individual cannot live for long without food. Even, man would not go for earning if he would not need nay food. However, in this world, not everyone gets the amount of food required by his body daily. Hunger and starvation have become a global problem now a days. One side, we see a lot of wastage of food in routine during ceremonies, hotels and programmes. On the other side, there are lot of people who are dying of malnutrition and hunger worldwide.

Food security is a multi-dimensional concept and its scope is beyond the production, availability, demand and supply of food. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report 2018, there are more than 800 million people worldwide don't get access to adequate foodⁱ and almost 98% of the people are living undernutrition worldwide in developing countriesⁱⁱ. As per the Global Hunger Index Report 2019, India has obtained the 102th rank among the 117 countries, In India approx. 30.3% people are suffering from hunger and malnutrition.

The Right to food has been secured by the Constitution of India at its very initial stage. However, the Government has made many policies and schemes from time to time to combat the problem of food security and access to food to all the individuals at national level. Moreover, legal regulations have also been framed and acts has been passed by the government to secure right to food to its citizens.

2.0 Schemes Of Food Security In India

Some of the important schemes to secure right to food and combat hunger in India are as follows:

1. Wheat Based Nutrition Programme (WBNP) 2021-22
2. The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalayan Anna Yojana, 2020
3. One Nation, One Ration Card 2019
4. National Maternity Benefits Schemes (2017)
5. National Food Security Mission, 2007
6. Village Grain Bank scheme, 2004

7. Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) 2003
8. Nutritional Programme for Adolescent Girls, 2002-03
9. Emergency Feeding Programme, 2001
10. Annapurana Schemes (2000-01)
11. Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) (2000)
12. Targeted Public Distribution Schemes (TPDS) 1997
13. National Old Age Pension Schemes, 1995
14. Mid-Day Meal Scheme, 1995
15. National Nutritional Policy (NNP), 1993
16. Integrated Child Development Services Schemes (ICDS), 1975
17. Applied Nutritional Programme (ANP) (1962)
18. Public Food Distribution Scheme (PPS)

2.1 Wheat Based Nutrition Programme (Wbnp) 2021-22

Wheat-based nutrition programs are an effective approach to improving health and well-being through the consumption of wheat-based foods. These programs aim to educate individuals on the importance of incorporating wheat and its nutritional benefits into their diets. By following a wheat-based nutrition program, individuals can enjoy a variety of health benefits such as improved digestion, increased energy levels, and better overall nutrient intake. Furthermore, research has shown that wheat-based nutrition programs can help prevent certain chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity. Participants in a wheat-based nutrition program will learn about the nutritional composition of wheat and its role in providing essential nutrients such as fibre, vitamins, and minerals. They will also gain insight into ways to implement this nutrition education within an employee wellness program while remaining on a budgetⁱⁱⁱ. By utilizing available resources and collaborating with experts in nutrition and wellness, a wheat-based nutrition program can be designed to meet the specific needs of individuals and promote healthy lifestyles. Additionally, investing in women's agency and decision-making power within these programs can further enhance outcomes and contribute to the realization of development rights for all^{iv}. By addressing the gender disparities in access to nutritious diets and empowering women in decision-making processes, wheat-based nutrition programs can contribute to improved overall health and well-being for all individuals, regardless of their gender or socioeconomic status^v.

2.2 The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, 2020:

The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana is a Government of India scheme launched on 26th March 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is entirely funded by the Government and the funding is shared between Centre and State governments as per prevailing guidelines of the Ministry of Finance. Under this scheme, the Government aims to provide food security to the vulnerable sections of society, particularly the poor and marginalized, who are most affected by the economic repercussions of the pandemic. Through the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, eligible beneficiaries will receive additional food grains and pulses at no cost. The scheme aims to ensure that no one goes hungry during these challenging times and provides essential support to those in need. The scheme is designed to benefit more than 80 crore individuals and will be implemented for a period of three months initially. It is important to note that the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana complements the existing public distribution system and aims to provide additional support during this crisis. Under this scheme, additional measures have also been taken to provide direct cash transfers and other essential support to the beneficiaries. These measures include financial assistance to women and senior citizens, support for migrant workers, and provision of insurance coverage for healthcare workers. The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana is an important initiative that addresses the immediate needs of the most vulnerable sections of society during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing them with essential food grains, pulses, and other forms of support.

2.3 One Nation, One Ration Card, 2019

The "One Nation, One Ration Card" initiative is a government-led program aimed at providing portability and access to subsidized food grains for eligible beneficiaries across the country. The scheme allows beneficiaries to avail of their entitled rations from any Fair Price Shop in the country, regardless of their location. This initiative is particularly beneficial for poor rural youth who are seeking sustainable employment and livelihood opportunities. By implementing the One Nation, One Ration Card scheme, the government aims to ensure that no one is left behind in accessing essential food grains and reduce food insecurity and poverty. This initiative is a major step

towards reducing malnutrition and hunger in the country, as it allows for efficient distribution of food grains and prevents leakage and corruption in the ration distribution system. The One Nation, One Ration Card initiative addresses this issue by providing a platform which allows beneficiaries to access their entitled rations from any location, thus ensuring that they have access to nutritious food regardless of their location.

2.4 National Maternity Benefits Schemes (2017)

National maternity benefits schemes are government programs that aim to support and provide financial assistance to pregnant women and new mothers. These schemes generally include benefits such as paid maternity leave, prenatal and postnatal healthcare coverage, and childcare support. These schemes are implemented to ensure that pregnant women and new mothers can have access to adequate resources and support during the critical stages of pregnancy and early motherhood. These benefits are essential in promoting the health and well-being of both the mother and the child, as they help alleviate financial burden, enable proper rest and recovery after childbirth, and encourage the bonding between the mother and the newborn^{vi}. Some common national maternity benefits schemes include:

- **Maternity Benefit Program:** Provides cash benefits to pregnant women for a specified period before and after childbirth.
- **Universal Healthcare Coverage:** Ensures that all pregnant women have access to comprehensive healthcare services, including prenatal care, delivery, and postnatal care.
- **Childcare Support:** Offers financial assistance or subsidies for childcare services to help new mothers return to work or pursue educational opportunities.
- **Maternity Leave:** Guarantees a certain period of paid time off from work for pregnant women, allowing them to rest and bond with their newborn child.
- **Maternity Cash Grant:** Provides a one-time lump sum payment to pregnant women to help cover the costs associated with pregnancy and childbirth.

2.5 National Food Security Mission, 2007

The National Food Security Mission was launched in India in 2007 with the aim of increasing food production and ensuring food security for the people of the country. This mission specifically targeted the production of rice, wheat, and pulses, which are essential staples in the Indian diet. The mission aimed to increase productivity by promoting the adoption of improved technologies and best agricultural practices among farmers. The National Food Security Mission also focused on providing financial support to farmers for the procurement of quality seeds, fertilizers, and other farm inputs. The success of the National Food Security Mission relied on two key preconditions - the development of infrastructure facilities in rural areas and the organization of homogeneous groups of producers, particularly small producers, to empower them to interact effectively with delivery systems. The Mission also emphasized the need for a holistic approach to address the challenges faced by farmers. This approach involved collaboration among various stakeholders, including farmers, experts in nutrition, and other relevant fields. By working together, these stakeholders could design multifaceted interventions that would increase women's resources and ability to improve nutritional benefits for their families^{vii}.

2.6 Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) 2003

The Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana is a flagship rural employment scheme implemented by the Government of India. Under this scheme, individuals residing in rural areas are provided with opportunities for employment and livelihood generation. The scheme aims to alleviate poverty and improve the socio-economic conditions of rural communities by providing them with sustainable employment opportunities. The Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana is a part of the National Rural Livelihood Mission and is focused on promoting rural livelihoods through various initiatives. One of the key objectives of the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana is to skill rural youth between the ages of 15 and 35 years from poor families and provide them with the necessary training to enhance their employability. This scheme is also aligned with the government's larger initiatives like the 'Make in India', 'Digital India', 'Smart Cities', and 'Start-Up India, Stand-Up India' campaigns. The scheme implements skill development through a public-private partnership mode, whereby registered private sector partners or project implementation agencies plan and implement skills training and place program participants in suitable employment opportunities^{viii}.

2.7 Nutritional Programme For Adolescent Girls, 2002-03

Adolescent girls have unique nutritional needs due to their rapid growth and development during this phase of life. These needs can be best met through a balanced and nutritious diet that provides all the essential nutrients required for healthy growth and development. This programme should focus on providing education and awareness about the importance of a healthy diet, as well as practical strategies for incorporating nutritious foods into their daily meals.

2.8 Emergency Feeding Programme, 2001

The Emergency Feeding Programme is a comprehensive initiative aimed at providing immediate food assistance to individuals and communities experiencing acute food insecurity during times of crisis or disaster. The programme combines both short-term emergency aid, such as food distribution and meal provision, with long-term strategies that aim to address the underlying causes of food insecurity and build resilience within affected communities. The programme takes into account the relationship between poverty and malnutrition, recognizing that insufficient, irregular, and fluctuating incomes contribute to food insecurity.

2.9 Annapurana Schemes (2000-01)

The Annapurna Scheme is a government program aimed at providing financial support to senior citizens who are not covered under any other social security scheme. The scheme provides a monthly pension of Rs. 2000 to eligible beneficiaries. The scheme was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development in 2000 and is implemented through the state governments. The scheme aims to ensure a dignified and fulfilling life for the elderly by providing them with a basic income for their sustenance. The scheme targets senior citizens who are at least 60 years old and belong to below poverty line households.

2.10 Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) (2000)

Antyodaya Anna Yojana is a flagship program of the Indian government aimed at providing highly subsidized food grains to the poorest of the poor. Under this scheme, eligible households are provided with 35 kilograms of food grains per month at a highly subsidized rate. The objective of Antyodaya Anna Yojana is to ensure food security and reduce hunger among the most vulnerable sections of society. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Antyodaya Anna Yojana program, a series of studies were conducted in Chhattisgarh to examine the key issues in the design and implementation of the scheme^{ix}. In conclusion, the Antyodaya Anna Yojana program is a significant step towards ensuring food security for the poorest segments of society.

2.11 Targeted Public Distribution Schemes (TPDS) 1997

Targeted public distribution schemes refer to initiatives implemented by governments or organizations to provide specific goods or services to a particular group of individuals in need. These schemes aim to address various social and economic issues such as poverty, unemployment, healthcare, education, and more. These schemes not only contribute to economic and social development but also promote democracy by allowing individuals to participate in public activities such as elections^x. Moreover, targeted public distribution schemes can effectively contribute to poverty eradication by involving public participation in ensuring a better quality of life for the urban poor^{xi}. One key aspect of targeted public distribution schemes is the efficient and equitable distribution of public services^{xii}. This can be achieved through the use of strategies such as top-down and ground-level planning, hierarchical models for location of facilities, and considering both efficiency and equity in provision.

2.12 National Old Age Pension Schemes, 1995

The National Old Age Pension Scheme is a government initiative aimed at providing financial assistance to senior citizens in India. Under this scheme, eligible individuals who are 60 years or older and belong to below the poverty line category receive a monthly pension. The scheme aims to support the elderly population, who may face financial challenges in their old age, by providing them with a reliable source of income. This scheme is funded by the central government and implemented in collaboration with state governments. The National Old Age Pension Scheme plays a crucial role in addressing the socio-economic issues faced by the aging population^{xiii}. The scheme provides financial support to eligible individuals, enabling them to meet their basic needs and live with dignity in their retirement years.

2.13 Mid-Day Meal Scheme, 1995

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme is a government initiative implemented in schools across India to provide hot, nutritious meals to children. The scheme aims to address the issue of malnutrition and improve attendance, retention, and academic performance among students. Through the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, the government envisions feeding over 55 million impoverished rural youth, thus empowering them with the necessary nutrition to excel academically and pursue a brighter future. By expanding the feeding program to multiple provinces and cities, the Department of Education aims to address undernourishment among public school children and improve their academic performance^{xiv}. Overall, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme is an essential initiative that addresses the nutritional needs of vulnerable schoolchildren, offers employment opportunities, and contributes to poverty reduction efforts in India. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme, implemented in schools across India, aims to provide hot, nutritious meals to children in order to address malnutrition and improve attendance retention, and academic performance among students.

2.14 National Nutritional Policy (NNP), 1993

The National Nutritional Policy is a comprehensive plan developed by the government to address issues related to nutrition and food security. This policy aims to improve the overall nutritional status of the population, especially vulnerable groups such as children, women, and the elderly. It includes strategies to increase access to affordable and nutritious food, promote breastfeeding and adequate infant and young child feeding practices, prevent and treat malnutrition, and improve nutrition education and awareness. This policy aims to address the disparities by providing support and resources to women, such as microfinance, labour-saving technology, and education opportunities. Furthermore, the policy emphasizes the need for diverse and balanced diets to address the problem of low-quality monotonous diets prevalent in resource-constrained settings.

2.15 Applied Nutritional Programme (ANP) (1962)

The Applied Nutritional Programme Planning Commission is a specialized organization that focuses on developing and implementing nutritional programs to address malnutrition and improve the overall health of individuals and communities. This commission takes into account various factors such as food security, good health, adequate care, and sustainable agriculture in designing their programs. The commission recognizes that malnutrition affects people of all age groups, but particularly the poor and vulnerable in developing nations^{xv}. Despite global and national commitments to addressing malnutrition, many poorer developing countries have neglected nutrition as a policy area^{xvi}. Overall, the Applied Nutritional Programme Planning Commission plays a crucial role in developing and implementing effective nutritional programs to combat malnutrition and improve the overall health and well-being of individuals and communities, with a focus on the most vulnerable populations.

2.16 Public Food Distribution Scheme (PPS)

National Food Security Mission, launched in India in 2007. The National Food Security Mission aims to increase the production of rice, wheat, and pulses by a certain target amount, in order to meet the food demands and improve the livelihoods of the people of the population and improve their livelihoods. The scheme focuses on rice, wheat, and pulses as these are high-priority food grains. To achieve the goals of public food distribution schemes like the National Food Security Mission, it is important to invest in smallholder farming systems and associated food systems that can provide sustainable and inclusive food supply chains. These schemes should also address challenges such as climate change, which can affect food production and availability. To support the effective implementation of public food distribution schemes, it is crucial to have coordinated and updated regulatory frameworks, adequate infrastructure, skilled personnel, and sufficient resources^{xvii}.

3.0 Conclusion

Hence, we can say that though food security is an essence to live a healthy life and our government is constantly working to combat this problem of hunger and malnutrition. There are a number of policy initiatives taken by the Government of India to secure the Right to life to its citizens. Though there are some implementation hurdles that restrict the proper implementation of these policies. Overall, these policies are great initiatives taken by the government in this regard.

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