

Food Security: A Precondition for Inclusive Growth

Brief Summary

FOOD SECURITY: A Precondition for Inclusive Growth

“Any security implies a sustained and long term safety.” Obviously food security is such a form of sustained and persistent safety net for BPL people, which cannot be temporarily and arbitrarily developed and offered. What we need today is, not the mercy and charity to the poor by the way of subsidies or food coupons/stamps, but there is a need to strengthen the system within; by what is rightly pointed out by Dr. Amartya Sen in terms of food and exchange entitlements to be conferred upon this vulnerable segment. This would more easily enable us to reach the goal of Inclusive Growth in a more sustainable manner. The food security is a panacea for Inclusive growth.

It is observed from the various Reports of committees, that the norms for determination of poverty are different and do not have any uniformity. Hence it is not possible to compare them. The differences in the methodology for criteria of poverty make it difficult to identify the poor first and then to target them under different schemes.

At present the problem in the country is not the shortage of food grains but in search of ways and means to manage the accumulated surplus. The procurement policy of the government is thus resulting in higher food stocks, higher inflation for foodgrains and a bigger food subsidy (Arvind Virmani and Rajeev, 2001). As any monopoly, FCI suffers from inefficiency. Increase in off-take of subsidized food-grains through the TPDS is required. Control of PDS by using Global Positioning Systems, Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing with Data Mining and RFID are short of requirements.

Keeping in mind the foregoing discussion and understanding the reality in Indian agriculture and the economic conditions of poor and vulnerable in India, following things can be recommended:

- Effective implementation of the Food Security Act.
- Combining growth promotion with social protection: measures needs to be taken as a priority.
- Right to Food Campaign is to be promoted.

- Making the Right to Food a Fundamental Right
- Securing employment as a fundamental right linked to the Right to Food.
- Increasing total factor productivity that is the efficiency with which both labor and capital resources are used to produce output which would in turn raise the efficiency of production as well as returns of factors of production so that factor rewards as per productivity enhancement would increase factor earnings.
- Norms for Better identification of chronically poor and vulnerable groups: we can easily see the differences in the methodology for criteria of poverty.
- Increase in off-take of subsidized food-grains through the TPDS:.
- Control of PDS by using Global Positioning Systems, Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing with Data Mining and RFID
- Effective food utilization and Changing food consumption patterns

The project has the context of a paradoxical situation as *of the eight richest people in the world four are Indian, but the irony still remains that there's a marginal farmer in the interior of Maharashtra, who is struggling to feed his children, uneducated and unemployed. Telling the farmer that the economy is growing at a handsome 9% per annum, is hardly consolation for the empty stomachs his children go to bed every night.* More important is what the state policies can do for these segments to bring them in the mainstream of inclusive growth. Ensuring Food security is a precondition for inclusive growth.
