

# **Anna Bhagya Programme in Ensuring the Food security among the Rural Dalit Households: An Empirical study of Chikkabalapura District**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The current study was aim to investigate whether Anna bhagya program is ensuring food security among the rural Dalit Household. For the current study, Evaluation research design was adopted, thus analyzing the impact of Annabhagya program in offering basic minimum quantity of essential commodities at lowest prices especially to poorer sections of society, ensuring food security and opinion towards the Annabhagya programme in ensuring food security among the rural Dalit households. For the convenience of the study researcher has adopted Purposeful sampling technique, with the sample size of 120 respondents. From each taluk, 20 respondents were selected from Gouribidanur, Chintamani, Sidlaghatta, Gudibanda, Chikkabalapura and Bagepalli Taluks of Chikkabalapura District. To know the socio-economic condition of the respondents researcher has prepared self prepared questions, and to know the Household food insecurity status researcher has adopted modified Household food insecurity questionnaire. Both primary and secondary method of data collection was used. To draw the conclusion researcher has computed the primary data by applying simple statistical percentage method. The result were found that Annabhagya progamme is ensuring food security to a meager level at fulfilling the basic minimum quantity of essential food grains at lowest prices especially to poorer households. But it was evident that, still they worried about not having different kinds of foods they preferred to eat, and sometimes have to eat limited variety of foods due to lack of affordability capacity.*

**Key words:** Annabhagya, Dalit, Food security.

## **Introduction:**

Public distribution system is a structure that is sponsored by a government and includes chain of shops trusted with the work of distributing basic food and non-food commodities to the disadvantaged group of the society at very low prices. The problem of hunger is due to poor economic accessibility. Food security is an essential, universal dimension of household and personal well-being. The deprivation of basic need represented by food insecurity and hunger are undesirable in their own right and also are possible precursors to nutritional, health, and developmental problems (Bickel, Price, Hamilton, & Cook, 2000).

Food subsidization and public distribution systems are the cornerstone for the assessment and eradication of food insecurity in India. While the government of India passes the National Food security Bill, the government of Karnataka has implemented a revised food distribution system, known as the *Anna Bhagya* Yojana from May 2015. Under this ambitious programme, the government is supplying food grains free of cost to priority households across the State. A total of 108.98 lakh households holding either antyodaya or BPL cards are eligible for the same. This scheme is critical in addressing issues of hunger and food insecurity, especially among the poor. In most developing countries, people spend only around 8-10% of their incomes on food, while a typical poor household India used to spend upto 70% of their income on food. Apart from the uncertainty that unstable incomes create, the poor had very little money left over for fulfilling other needs after spending such a large share on food itself. With food now being free or at very little cost, the poor can re-deploy their freed up incomes for other gainful activities. (Balasubramaniam, 2017)

## **History of PDS system in India:**

The Public Distribution System (PDS) is the largest food subsidy programme in India. It reaches out to nearly 11 crore households and provides food grains at subsidized rates. PDS has its origin in the 'rationing' system introduced by the British during World War II (1939-45) and was retained as a key component of social policy during the process of planned economic development initiated in 1951. It formed the basis of the policy for growth with justice. During the First Five-Year Plan (1951-56), the system was extended to cover all rural areas that suffered from chronic food shortages. In 1965, the Food

Corporation of India (FCI) and the Agricultural Prices Commission (APC) were formed. Over the years, PDS was continued as a deliberate social policy to provide food grains and other essential items to vulnerable sections of society at subsidized prices. Until 1997, the PDS provided food subsidy to all beneficiaries without targeting (National Council of Applied Economic Research, 2015).

A supplementary food security scheme was launched in the year 2000 to cater to the poorest of the poor stratum of society, namely, the Antyodaya Anna Yojna (AAY). There was a set of five criteria to identify these families following a Supreme Court order. The entitlement was fixed at 35 kg per month per family covered under AAY. The scheme was expanded in two phases, in 2003 and in 2004, to increase coverage. The central government is responsible for making available the food grains needed for the PDS through the Food Corporation of India and providing a subsidy to make it affordable, whereas state governments are responsible for ensuring that beneficiaries can access commodities sold under the PDS, co-ordinating the entire supply process from FCI godowns to the beneficiaries and monitoring PDS activities.

Karnataka has implemented the National Food Security Act partially under the name of '*Anna Bhagya* Yojna'. Karnataka implemented the NFSA in July 2013 and. Karnataka and Chandigarh states have adopted the criteria proposed by expert committees appointed at the state level to identify the poor. The new categorization of priority households (PHH) under the NFSA includes families below the poverty line and a proportion of families that previously belonged to the APL category (ibid). A BPL family will get two square meals a day it will provide nourishment to the family and motivate people to work and attack malnutrition through this scheme. The state food subsidy is cost of the government Rs460 crore in a financial year. It's providing 30kg rice at per kg one rupee(now its free) to the poor families and also the main agency for food grains under the special programmes like Food for Work, SCRY , Mid-day-Meals, ICDS and all other schemes also running in the state. (Mahendran, 2013)

#### Review of Literature:

*Food security and Nutrition in the World 2017 Report* states that, children and women at reproductive ages are most vulnerable. 38.4 of the children under five in India are stunted and 51.4% of women in reproductive ages suffer from lack of iron in the blood. The relationship between hunger and nutrition is as direct as it seems. If one does not eat enough food to fill current physiological needs they feel hunger. When a person has the hunger for a sustained period of time, they are susceptible to develop malnutrition, either mild or severe. Hunger is the world's number one health risk, greater than HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria combined. Statistics form 2014 State and agriculture Organization(FAO) estimate that 805 million people in the world are chronically malnourished, down more than 200 million over the last decade, indicating progress.

*International Food Policy Research Institute's Global Hunger Index*, reveals that India's position to 100<sup>th</sup> rank from 97<sup>th</sup> from previous years. By calculating the score in four indicators-undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality, all of which are directly and indirectly related to hunger or malnutrition. Though the government has been running many programmes to ensure food security and reducing the hunger reduction however the country has failed to address hunger reduction significantly (The Financial Express, 2017). Besides ensuring access to food for all people, it is must to ensure that Indian citizens get basic nourishment to become more dynamic and be able to take benefit of the opportunities that come from rapid economic growth. The consciousness of food security for all has to be the basic building block in efforts to navigate the economy in order to fulfill its development goals. Food and nutrition is certainly the most basic need without which education, work opportunities and wealth creation cannot achieved. Therefore the present study imperatively needed to explore the role of *Anna Bhagya* in ensuring the food security among the rural household Below Poverty Line Families (BPL).

As the various studies quoted, especially developing countries like India, the root causes of food insecurity include, poverty, corruption, national policies that do not promote equal access to food for all, environmental degradation, barriers to trade, insufficient agricultural development, population growth, low levels of education, social and gender inequality, poor health status, cultural insensitivity (Das, 2016)

**Mahendran ( 2013)** in his study *Targeted Public Distribution System in Food Grains: An effective Method for the Tribal's of Rural Karnataka (India)* quotes that, Targeted PDS is by far the largest food entitlement programme in India. It is accessed by more than a third of the total population of India and families living BPL remain the single most important constituency that the PDS. But despite its political significance, the PDS remains mired in systemic problems that are very deep-rooted. It is mired in corruption, food inefficiencies, lack of transparency and poor ill health people, become dysfunctional in many parts of in the state and to suggest in this study. This study on Targeted PDS has demonstrated that

this scheme has not reached the rural and poor people in tribals. This study finds that out all households with poor education, each family has at least 2 adult members and one child who are sick (during group discussion). The major reasons are poor family income and consumption of food grains is very low. This study also suggests methods to improve the Targeted PDS in rural and urban areas particular poor families. Those improvements are policy oriented implications which are needed for the success of Targeted PDS in rural India (Mahendran, 2013).

### Rational of the Study:

From the above reviews it was found that, Respondents from poor and vulnerable households unanimously acknowledged the important role of the public distribution system in mitigating hunger. The introduction of the National Food Security Act makes it even more imperative to assess whether the current program is reaching objective of Anna Bhagya Yojane, or whether there is a need to revamp the identification exercise with a more dynamic, need-based and unbiased approach to achieve the goal of the NFSA. (*ibid*). There is a paucity of evaluative studies conducted on *Anna Bhagya* programme (Public Distribution System ) except the government evaluative studies. Though there is a negative and positive comments on this programmes. The present study was to assess the impact of Anna Bhagya programme in ensuring the food security among the rural Dalit households.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To know the socio-economic condition of the respondents
2. To analyze the impact of *Annabhagya* program in ensuring food security among the respondents
3. To explicit the opinion of the respondents towards *Annabhagya* programmes.

### Methodology:

The current study was aimed to investigate the whether Anna Bhagya program is ensuring food security among the rural poor or not. To evaluate the impact of the programme, Evaluation research design was adopted, thus analyzing the impact of Annabhgya program in providing basic minimum quantity of essential food grains at lowest prices especially to the BPL families in ensuring food security among the respondents. For the convenience of the study researcher has adopted Purposeful sampling technique, with the sample size of 120 respondents. From each taluk, 20 respondents were selected from Gouribidanur, Chinthamani, Sidlaghatta, Gudibanda, Chikkabalapura and Bagepalli Taluks of Chikkabalapura District. Prior consent was taken from the BPL families to participate in the study. Both primary and secondary method of data collection was used. To know the socio-economic condition of the respondents, researcher has used self prepared questionnaire, and to know the Household food insecurity status researcher has adopted modified Household food insecurity questionnaire developed in 2006 by the USAID-funded Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance II project (FANTA) in collaboration with Tufts and Cornell Universities, and other partners. To draw the conclusion researcher has computed the primary data by applying simple statistical percentage method.

### Results and Discussion:

This part presents the findings of the study, which has mentioned below.

**Table-1 Socio-Economic Status of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Particulars	Variables	Percentage
1	Age of the respondents	15 to 20	11.1
		21 to 30	19.4
		30 to 40	59.9
		40 to 49	11.5
2	Education of the respondents	Illiterate	58.3
		Primary school	24.1
		Middle School	17.6
		PUC	0
3	Occupation of the respondents	Unemployed	19.4
		Petty trade	4.6
		Agriculture labour	43.5

		Others	32.4
		Rs.1.999 or less	38.9
4	Monthly income of the respondent's Family	Rs. 2000 to 2999	31.5
		3000 to 3,999	9.3
		Rs.4000 to 5.999	20.4
5	Type of Family of the respondent	Nuclear	15.7
		Joint Family	84.3

The above **Table.No-1** depicts the socioeconomic conditions of the respondent's households, which has played an important determinant of health and nutritional status. Majority 59.9 percentage of the respondents were aged between 30 to 40 years. 19.4 percentage of the respondents were aged between 21 to 30 years of age. 18.5 percentage of the respondents were aged between 40 to 49 years. Rests 11.1 of the respondents were teenage. Majority 58.3 percentage of the respondents were illiterate, 24.1 percentage of the respondents were completed their primary school where as 17.6 percentage of the respondents were studied up to middle school. Majority 43.5 percentages of the respondents were works as agricultural wage labour in the farms of others. 32.4 percentage of the respondents were involved in other type of work such as they migrate to urban areas for piece work, 19.4 percentage of the respondents were unemployed, and do household work, remaining 4.6 percentage of the respondents were engaged in petty business for their livelihood. Caste has significant implications for poverty and other welfare outcomes focusing on two arenas such as education and the labor market. This is because education and occupation both had ritual significance in that they were the preserve of upper castes. Dalits were usually illiterate, landless and were meant to serve in low level occupations passed down through generations. Majority 61.1 percentage of the respondents did not have sanitation facility; open defecation was common among them. Only 25.9 percentages of the respondents had sanitation facility, while 12.9 percentages of the respondent's households had the toilets but did not use it preferring to go for open defecation. The general economic condition of the respondents is average. Socioeconomic status is a measure of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on various variables responsible for that like income, education, occupation, family influence, socio, economic status.

When they have better income employment, they purchase cloth and other requirements, but generally their budget shows a total absence of items like milk, ghee and entertainments. The economic position of this group becomes very difficult in times of acute scarcity, when work is not sufficiently available to make out of their livelihood.

**Table-2 Household Food insecurity Status of Respondents**

Sl. No	Particulars	Percentage		Total
		Yes	No	
1	Worried about not have enough food because of lack of resources	71.30	28.70	100
2	Not able to eat the kinds of foods preferred because of lack of resources	65.74	34.26	100
3	Have to eat to limited variety of foods because to lack of resources	71.30	28.70	100
4	Have to eat some foods that not want to eat because of lack of resources	73.15	26.85	100
5	Have to eat smaller meal than needed because lack of resources	42.59	57.41	100
6	There ever no food to eat any kind of food in household	23.15	76.85	100
7	Slept hungry at night because of not enough food	31.48	68.52	100

The above **table No.2** reveals the food insecurity status of respondents. The majority 71.30 percentage of the respondents reported that, from past four weeks they were worried that they were not have enough food due to of lack of resources. Majority 65.74 percentage of the respondents expressed that, they were not able to eat the kinds of foods they preferred. Majority 71.30 percentage of the respondents

expressed that, they had to eat limited variety of foods due to lack of resources. Majority 73.15 percentage of the respondents revealed that, they had to eat some foods that they did not want to eat. 42.59 percentage of the respondents reported that from past four weeks they had smaller meal than they needed. 23.15 percentage of the respondents expressed that, there was no food to eat any kind of food in household especially among the vulnerable people, whereas 76.85 percentage of them had some little food. 31.48 percentage of the respondents shared that they slept hungry at night. None of the respondents slept hungry whole day and night. From the above analysis it is clear that these households were far from food security programs and especially during the time of every last week of a month. It clearly depicts that inadequate access to affordability to varied nutrient rich food. This state of food poverty leads them to have insufficient nutritional intake and which might be the cause for their malnutrition status.

**Table.No.3 Showing the respondents opinion towards the effective management of Anna Bhagya**

Sl. No	Opinion	Percentage		Total
		Yes	No	
1	Need to Increase the food varieties	81.00%	19.00%	100%
2	Introducing Bio-metric system is good	51.00%	49.00%	100%
3	Need to introduce packed carrying food grains	68.00%	32.00%	100%
4	Need to introduce Token system	57.00%	43.00%	100%
5	Need stringent Monitoring /Inspecting	89.00%	11.00%	100%

The above table is showing the respondents opinion towards the effective management of PDS system. Majority 81 percent of the respondents were shared that, PDS system should include variety of food grains rather than giving only rice, oil, dal, salt and kerosene. 51 percent of the respondents were felt good about introducing Bio-metric system in receiving the food grains. Majority 68 percent of the respondents argued, to minimize the mismanagement, government should provide the commodities in a packed from, so that it will be easy for carrying and reduces the risk of standing in queue. Majority 57 percentage of the respondents reveals that introducing the token system will reduce the burden of uncertain issuing of the food grains. Majority 89 percent of the respondents stated opined that, stringent monitoring should be followed by the government to eradicate the mismanagement and fraud.

From the above analysis and filed study it was observed that, people experience difficulty in carrying the food grains especially from the long distances situated fair price shops, and felt standing in queues whole day was time consuming which disturbs their daily work. Majority of the respondents demanded to extend the food variety provisions in order to combat malnutrition and to ensure food security. Therefore the study come up with few policy implications which are mentioned below.

### Policy Implications

- It was sturdily expressed by respondents and persuaded by research 'to use the pre-packed packets to significantly minimize the distribution time and simplify the carrying process for beneficiary.
- To combat the long queues, a token system, where the consumer receives a number and the trader specifies which numbers will be served per day, could be implemented in notice board of the fair shops.
- The existing monitoring, inspecting, and grievance systems are derisory. State shall form vigilance committees and call centers to help the people.

### Conclusion

From the above analysis it was found that *AnnaBhagya* programme is ensuring food security to a meager level at fulfilling the basic minimum quantity of essential food grains at lowest prices especially to poorer household. From the study it was evident that, still they worried about not having different kinds of foods they preferred to eat, and sometimes have to eat limited variety of foods to lack of affordability. Government should also take measures to make the programme people friendly by extending the food varieties at lowest cost. Prioritizing alternate productive deployment of wealth occurs only when there is sufficient awareness, access to productive employment, financial inclusion into the mainstream economy and profitable skills amongst the poor. Ensuring food security without a wide-ranging programme to complement the *Annabhgya* scheme with these interventions will unable to reach the necessary impact. The government needs to inspect the *AnnaBhagya* scheme not just from the perspective of food security, but as a critical tool to fight against the poverty.

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**All that we are is the result of what we have thought.**

~ **Buddha**