

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON FOOD GRAIN STOCK AND PER CAPITA AVAILABILITY IN ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Food security is described by the World Food Summit of 1996 as having physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that fits their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life at all times. National Food Security Act of 2013 defined as a condition that ensures assured economic and social access to adequate food for all people in the country at all times, in fulfillment of their fundamental right to live in dignity. Indian economy has been facing many socio-economic problems before the Covid-19 lockdown struck. In fact, it remains a subject of concern before and after independence. However, the problem of food insecurity, undernourishment, starvation, hunger deaths etc. was modest at best. The Covid-19 pandemic is affecting India's long-cherished food security. It has had an impact on all four dimensions of food availability, access, stability, and utilization. The purpose of this study was to examine the food security situation in Andhra Pradesh (AP) in terms of total stock of food grains with FCI and State Agencies and to assess per capita food grain availability during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as to provide a policy prescription for achieving food security. The study is based on secondary data which drawn from the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Economic survey reports, and other relevant sources of information and it then establishes a conceptual and empirical framework for the status of food grains stock in AP with FCI and State Agencies and analysed in detail throughout the lockdown. Since 2020 to 2022, rice stock with FCI in AP has gradually decreased from 5.93 to 3.94 lakh MT and In India, rice stock reached FCI 206.76 MT in 2020, dropped to 163.81 MT in 2021, and thereafter increased to 187.32 MT on January 1, 2022. According to data, FCI procurement has considerably beyond the buffer stock limit and more food grain reserves than required by January 1, 2021, which indicates there is a continuous procurement of food grains but there is a significant problem in the distribution process.

KEYWORDS: Covid-19, Food Insecurity, Buffer Stock, Food Grains.

INTRODUCTION

Food insecurity is a major challenge for the world's population. Despite the fact that economic development is nearing its end, people are still fighting for survival in their daily lives, with at

least 25,000 people dying every day owing to a lack of sufficient nutrition. Around 925 million people worldwide are chronically hungry as a result of extreme poverty, and up to 2 billion people are food insecure (Trivedi, 2019). Food security is described by the World Food Summit of 1996 as having physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that fits their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life at all times. Food security is described by the Indian government in its National Food Security Act of 2013 as a condition that ensures assured economic and social access to adequate food for all people in the country at all times, in fulfillment of their fundamental right to live in dignity (Prasad et al., 2019). Indian economy has been facing many socio-economic problems before the Covid-19 lockdown struck. In fact, it remains a subject of concern before and after independence. However, the problem of food insecurity, undernourishment, starvation, hunger deaths etc. was modest at best. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected India's long-cherished food security. It has had an impact on all four dimensions of food availability, access, stability, and utilization. India had implemented one of the most stringent and long-term COVID-19 lockdowns, affecting the livelihoods of millions of people. Income has been harmed by limitations on movement and the closure of firms. The lockdown has also resulted in financial shortages in rural areas, where the economy is predominantly informal and cash-based.

Objective of the Study: The purpose of this study was to examine the food security situation in Andhra Pradesh in terms of total stock of food grains with FCI and State Agencies and to assess per capita food grain availability during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as to provide a policy prescription for achieving food security.

Data and Methodology: The study was related to India, primarily focused on Andhra Pradesh state. The secondary data collected from the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Economic survey reports, and other relevant sources of information wherever possible and the existing available information, alternative information, or proxy data were used to examine the food security situation in Andhra Pradesh. The study establishes a conceptual and empirical framework for the status of food grain stock in Andhra Pradesh with FCI and State Agencies throughout the lockdown. The data analysed by using simple percentages and by using excel spreadsheet. The results are discussed and the report finishes with a summary and policy implications indicated by the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The obtained data was analyzed the present situation of India, as well as the current situation of Andhra Pradesh's food security.

- I. Total food grain stock with FCI and State Agencies
- II. Per capita availability of food grains in India
- III. Government Initiatives during Covid-19 Pandemic Period

Total Food Grain Stock with FCI and State Agencies

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the availability of total food grains stock i.e, Rice and Wheat, with FCI and state agencies as shown in Table 1. According to data, Food Corporation of India procurement has considerably beyond the buffer stock limit and more food grain reserves available than the required quantity by January 1, 2021, which indicates the continuous procurement of food grains with a significant problem in the distribution process. As of January 1, 2020, Andhra Pradesh rice stock with FCI is about 5.93 lakh MT which is 50.55 per cent and the remaining stock with state agencies 5.8 lakh MT (49.45%) and the total central pool stock is 11.73. Since 01.01.2020 to 01.01.2022, rice stock with FCI in Andhra Pradesh has gradually decreased from 5.93 to 3.94 lakh MT, on the other hand rice stock with state agencies has gradually increased

from 5.8 to 9.4 lakh MT in Andhra Pradesh. In India, rice stock reached FCI 206.76 MT on January 1, 2020, dropped to 163.81 MT on January 1, 2021, and thereafter increased to 187.32 MT on January 1, 2022.

**TABLE: 1 TOTAL STOCKS OF FOOD GRAINS WITH FCI AND STATE AGENCIES:
2020-22**

(In lakh MT)

As on 01.01.2020	Andhra Pradesh				India			
	Rice	%	Wheat	%	Rice	%	Wheat	%
Stock With FCI	5.93	50.55	0.12	100.00	206.76	87.19	112.41	34.28
Stock With State Agencies	5.8	49.45	0	0.00	30.39	12.81	215.55	65.72
Total Central Pool Stock	11.73	100.00	0.12	100.00	237.15	100.00	327.96	100.00
As on 01.01.2021	Andhra Pradesh				India			
	Rice	%	Wheat	%	Rice	%	Wheat	%
Stock With FCI	5.42	47.46	0.05	100.00	163.81	87.74	116.51	33.98
Stock With State Agencies	6.0	52.54	0.0	0.00	22.88	12.26	226.39	66.02
Total Central Pool Stock	11.42	100.00	0.05	100.00	186.69	100.00	342.9	100.00
As on 01.01.2022	Andhra Pradesh				India			
	Rice	%	Wheat	%	Rice	%	Wheat	%
Stock With FCI	3.94	28.49	0.06	100.00	187.32	83.72	103.14	31.24
Stock With State Agencies	9.89	71.51	0	0.00	36.43	16.28	226.98	68.76
Total Central Pool Stock	13.83	100.00	0.06	100.00	223.75	100.00	330.12	100.00

Source: Annual Report: 2020-21, Department of Food & Public Distribution, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India.

Note: Transit figures are estimated. • Rice does not include unmilled paddy with FCI/State Agencies in terms of rice. • Total quantity of unmilled paddy with FCI and State Agencies = 404.21 LMT (FCI 0.51 LMT; State Agencies 403.70 LMT).



Per Capita Net Availability of Food Grains

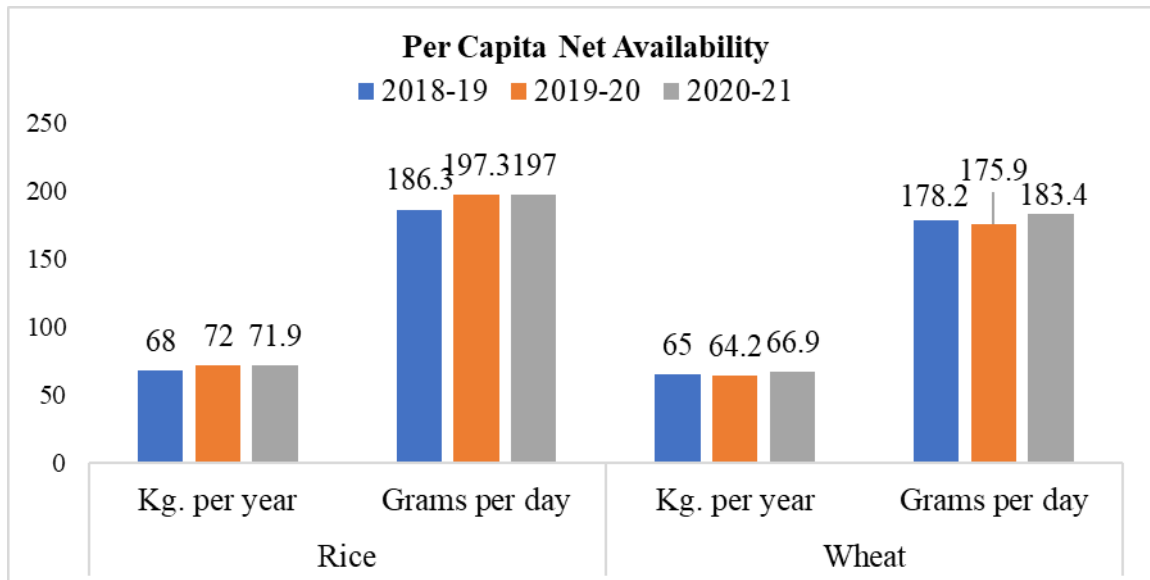
Table 02. Illustrates the per capita net availability of rice and wheat in Kg per year and grammes per day in India from 2018-19 to 2020-21. According to the data, per capita rice availability increased from 68 to 72 kilograms per year in 2018-19 to 2019-20, and then slightly declined to 71.9 kilograms per year in 2020-21. Rice net availability per capita increased from 186.3 grammes per day in 2018-19 to 197.3 grammes per day in 2019-20, then declined slightly to 197 grammes per day in 2020-21.

TABLE: 2 PER CAPITA NET AVAILABILITY OF FOOD GRAINS

Rice				
Year	Population	Net Availability of Food Grains	Per Capita Net Availability	
			Kg. per year	Grams per day
2018-19	1338995	91049	68	186.3
2019-20	1353378	97485	72	197.3
2020-21	1367173	98319	71.9	197
Wheat				

Year	Population	Net Availability of Food Grains	Per Capita Net Availability	
			Kg. per year	Grams per day
2018-19	1338995	87076	65	178.2
2019-20	1353378	86883	64.2	175.9
2020-21	1367173	91506	66.9	183.4

Source: Economic Survey 2021-22 Statistical Appendix



Government Initiatives during Covid-19 Pandemic Period

Regarding the country's COVID-19 outbreak in early 2020, the government announced the distribution of additional food grains (Rice/Wheat) at free-of-cost to all of the country's 80 million National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries at a rate of 5 kg per person per month (in addition to regular monthly NFSA food grains) under the "Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY)". The scheme was launched as part of the government's pro-poor 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP)' announced in March 2020 to alleviate the sufferings encountered by the poor and needy as a result of the country's unprecedented national lockdown and economic disruptions caused by the pandemic. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian government conducted the country's longest ever programme of delivering free food grains through public distribution system (PDS) to the population in order to achieve food security.

CONCLUSION

In the current circumstances, planning based on this may not be viable; instead, we need smooth supply networks to distribute existing stocks rather than adding to stocks. The healthy stock position and ease with which not only the central government but also the states have been able to announce free dry rations for the poor has revived the long-running debate over whether India needs to increase its quarterly grain stocking norms in order to deal with crises like Covid-19. The food system in India is one of the socio-economic components of the country's economy, but it is the government's primary obligation to provide food security. As a result, if its food system collapses, it will be unable to control the pandemic. If people don't have enough food or money to meet their fundamental necessities, enforcing vital measures like the lockdown will become impossible.

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