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Economics – Food Security



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1. What is famine?

Ans. A Famine is characterized by widespread deaths due to starvation and epidemics caused by forced use of contaminated water or decaying food and loss of body resistance due to weakening from starvation.

2. Why was rationing introduced in India?

Ans. The introduction of **Rationing** in India dates back to the 1940s against the backdrop of the Bengal famine. The rationing system was revived in the wake of an acute food shortage during the 1960s, prior to the Green Revolution.

3. Name the three important food intervention programmes introduced by the Government in India in the mid-1970s.

Ans. Public Distribution System (PDS) for food grains; Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (introduced in 1975 on an experimental basis) and Food-for-Work (FFW) (introduced in 1977–78).

4. Name the two special schemes introduced in 2000, targeting 'poorest of the poor' and the needy poor senior citizens.

Ans. (1) Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and
(2) Annapurna Scheme (APS)

5. What is food security?

Ans. Food security means **availability, accessibility and affordability** of food to all people at all times. The poor households are more vulnerable to food insecurity whenever there is a problem of production or distribution of food crops. Food security depends on the Public Distribution System (PDS), Government vigilance and action at times when this security is threatened.

6. What happens to the supply of food when there is a disaster or a calamity?

Ans. Due to a natural calamity, say drought, total production of food grains decreases. It creates a shortage of food in the affected areas. Due to shortage of food, the prices go up. At the high prices, some people cannot afford to buy food. If such calamity happens in a very wide spread area or is stretched over a longer time period, it may cause a situation of starvation. A massive starvation might take a turn of famine.

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7. **A section of people in India are still without food. Explain. Or Why is food security needed in India?**

Ans. Even today, there are places like Kalahandi and Kashipur in Orissa where famine-like conditions have been existing for many years and where some starvation deaths have also been reported. Starvation deaths are also reported in Baran district of Rajasthan, Palamau district of Jharkhand and many other remote areas during the recent years. Therefore, food security is needed in a country to ensure food at all times.

8. **Who are the people more prone to food insecurity in India?**

Ans. (1) Although a large section of people suffer from food and nutrition insecurity in India, the worst affected groups are landless people with little or no land to depend upon, traditional artisans, providers of traditional services, petty self-employed workers and destitutes including beggars.

(2) In the urban areas, the food insecure families are those whose working members are generally employed in ill-paid occupations and the casual labour market. These workers are largely engaged in seasonal activities and are paid very low wages that just ensure bare survival.

(3) The SCs, STs and some sections of the OBCs (lower castes among them) who have either poor land-base or very low land productivity are prone to food insecurity.

9. **What are the dimensions of hunger?**

Ans. (1) **Chronic hunger** is a consequence of diets persistently inadequate in terms of quantity and / or quality. Poor people suffer from chronic hunger because of their very low income and in turn inability to buy food even for survival.

(2) **Seasonal hunger** is related to cycles of food growing and harvesting. This is prevalent in rural areas because of the seasonal nature of agricultural activities and in urban areas because of the casual labour season. This type of hunger exists when a person is unable to get work for the entire year.

10. **What are the two components of the food security system in India?**

Ans. (1) **Buffer stock:** Buffer Stock is the stock of foodgrains, namely wheat and rice procured by the government through **Food Corporation of India (FCI)**. The FCI purchases wheat and rice from the farmers in states where there is surplus production. The farmers are paid a pre-announced price for their crops.

(2) **Public distribution system:** The food procured by the FCI is distributed through government regulated ration shops among the poorer section of the society. This is called the public distribution system (PDS). Ration shops are now present in most localities, villages, towns and cities. There are about 4.6 lakh ration shops all over the country. Ration shops also known as **Fair Price Shops** keep stock of food grains, sugar, kerosene oil for cooking. These items are sold to people at a price lower than the market price.

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