

AN EVALUATION OF TARGETED PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM FOR FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA

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Abstract

The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is a major food subsidy program implemented by the Indian government to address this challenge. This research paper evaluates the effectiveness of the TPDS in achieving its objectives of ensuring access to adequate and nutritious food for vulnerable households. The paper begins by providing an overview of the historical context, tracing the issue of food security back to the colonial period and the subsequent introduction of the Public Distribution System (PDS) in the 1960s. It then focuses on the TPDS, which replaced the universal PDS in 1997 and aimed to target the needy households and reduce leakages and diversions. However, the TPDS has faced various challenges, including the identification of eligible beneficiaries, quality of food grains, and leakages. To evaluate the TPDS, the paper adopts a methodology that involves an extensive review of literature, household surveys, government reports, and newspaper articles. The implementation of the TPDS involves joint responsibilities between the central government and state/union territory governments. The identification of eligible households is an ongoing process, with the NFSA legally guaranteeing subsidized food grains to a large proportion of the population. The procurement of food grains occurs seasonally, and they are distributed through a network of Fair Price Shops (FPS) to beneficiaries. The evaluation of the TPDS reveals several challenges, including flaws in beneficiary identification, leakages, and poor quality of food grains. The paper highlights the government's initiatives to address these challenges, such as the use of technology for beneficiary identification, biometric authentication, and the establishment of monitoring mechanisms. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives remains to be seen.

Keywords: Distribution, Food, Households, Security, Supply, Subsidy.



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Introduction:

Food security is a critical and major issue in India, where a large percentage of the population is still vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition. The issue of food security can be traced back to the colonial period when the British introduced policies that focused on exporting cash crops and importing food grains, resulting in famines and food shortages. The situation improved somewhat after independence in 1947, with the introduction of the Public Distribution System (PDS) in the 1960s. To address this challenge, the Indian government has implemented several policies and programs, including the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). TPDS is a food subsidy program that provides subsidized food grains to eligible households. The program aims to ensure that vulnerable households have access to adequate and nutritious food. This paper evaluates the effectiveness of TPDS in achieving its objectives. The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is a major food subsidy program in India that aims to ensure food security for the poor and vulnerable sections of the society. The program was launched in 1997, replacing the erstwhile universal Public Distribution System (PDS) that was criticized for being inefficient and wasteful. The TPDS was more focused on targeting the needy households and reducing leakages and diversions. However, the system continues to face several challenges, including identification of eligible beneficiaries, quality of food grains, and leakages. The TPDS is operated by the Department of Food and Public Distribution under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

Under TPDS, the central government procures food grains such as rice and wheat from farmers at a Minimum Support Price (MSP) and distributes them to the states for onward distribution to the beneficiaries through a network of Fair Price Shops (FPS). The beneficiaries are identified based on their socio-economic status, and the program provides them with subsidized food grains at a nominal cost.

Initially, TPDS was implemented through two categories of beneficiaries - Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL). However, in 2013, the government launched the National Food Security Act (NFSA), which expanded the coverage of TPDS to include a third category of beneficiaries - Priority Households (PHH). Under NFSA, 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population are entitled to receive subsidized food grains.

Despite the expansion of the coverage of TPDS, the program has been plagued by several challenges. One of the major challenges is the identification of eligible beneficiaries. The current system of identifying beneficiaries through the BPL list is flawed, as it excludes several deserving households and includes several non-poor households. There have been

several instances of bogus ration cards being issued, leading to exclusion of deserving households and inclusion of non-eligible households. Moreover, the lists are not regularly updated, leading to inclusion of non-poor households and exclusion of poor households.

Another major challenge is the issue of leakages and diversions of subsidized food grains. There have been several instances of food grains being siphoned off from the system and sold in the open market or diverted to non-eligible households. This has led to exclusion of deserving beneficiaries and inclusion of non-eligible households. The issue of leakages and diversions is compounded by the poor quality of food grains distributed through TPDS.

To address these challenges, the government has launched several initiatives, such as the use of technology to improve beneficiary identification and tracking, introduction of biometric authentication for beneficiaries, and establishment of Vigilance Committees to monitor the functioning of FPS. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives remains to be seen.

In conclusion, TPDS is an important program for ensuring food security in India, but it faces several challenges that need to be addressed to enhance its effectiveness. The government needs to explore alternative mechanisms for beneficiary identification, improve the quality of food grains distributed through TPDS, and strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to address leakages and diversions. The success of TPDS in achieving its objectives will depend on the ability of the government to address these challenges and ensure that the benefits of the program reach the intended beneficiaries. In 2013, the government launched the National Food Security Act (NFSA), which aimed to provide legal entitlements to subsidized food grains to around two-thirds of the population. The NFSA expanded the coverage of TPDS and included a third category of beneficiaries, Priority Households (PHH). The PHHs are identified based on several criteria, including their socio-economic status, caste, and occupation. Despite the expansion of the coverage of TPDS, India continues to face significant challenges in achieving food security. According to the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020, India ranked 94th out of 107 countries, indicating a serious level of hunger and malnutrition. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the issue of food security, with many vulnerable households facing food shortages and disruptions in supply chains.

Khera and Nayak (2020) in the study provides a comprehensive assessment of the Indian Public Distribution System (PDS) as a food security intervention. The authors argue that the PDS has played a critical role in ensuring food security for millions of households, but also highlight several challenges in the implementation of the system, including leakages and inefficiencies.

Garg et al. (2021) discussed the detailed review of the literature on the impact of the Public Distribution System on food security in India. The authors argue that while the PDS has been successful in ensuring access to food for many households, there are still significant challenges in terms of leakage and inefficiencies in the system.

Nidhi (2019) in her study provides an analysis of the National Food Security Act 2013, which aims to provide food security for all households in India. The author argues that while the Act has the potential to address many of the challenges facing the PDS, there are still significant gaps in its implementation.

Swaminathan (2021) discussed a comprehensive analysis of the food security situation in India, including an evaluation of the PDS. The author argues that while the PDS has been successful in reducing hunger and malnutrition, there is still a long way to go in terms of ensuring access to nutritious and diverse food for all households.

Overall, the literature on the Targeted Public Distribution System in India highlights both the successes and challenges of the system, as well as the need for continued policy attention and innovation to ensure food security for all households in India. A social science research paper on this topic could build on this literature to provide a more nuanced and comprehensive evaluation of the TPDS and its impact on food security in India.

Methodology:

The methodology for this study involves an extensive review of available literature and data sources, including household surveys, government reports, and newspapers. Additionally, the study incorporates an analysis of data specifically obtained from government reports on the implementation of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). The first step in the methodology is conducting a thorough review of the existing literature. This involves identifying and collecting relevant research papers, articles, studies, and publications related to the subject of the study. The literature review provides a foundation of knowledge and helps establish the context for the research.

The study utilizes available household surveys as a key data source. These surveys may have been conducted by government agencies, research organizations, or other entities. They provide valuable insights into various aspects of the TPDS, such as its effectiveness, coverage, targeting mechanisms, and socioeconomic impact. The data collected from these surveys will be analysed to extract relevant findings. The study relies on official government reports related to the TPDS. These reports may include policy documents, implementation guidelines, evaluation reports, and performance assessments. Government reports provide authoritative information on the objectives, design, implementation, and outcomes of the TPDS.

The study considers relevant news articles and reports published in newspapers. These sources may provide additional information, insights, or perspectives on the TPDS. Newspaper analysis helps capture public opinion, media coverage, and any emerging issues or challenges related to the program. Such analysis enriches the study with real-time information and societal perspectives. By following this methodology, the study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the TPDS, utilizing available literature, household surveys, government reports, and newspaper sources.

Implementation of TPDS

Assessing the implementation mechanisms, processes, and operational aspects of the TPDS, such as identification of beneficiaries, procurement, storage, and distribution of food grains. The implementation of TPDS is based on the following aspects –

a. Identify the eligible households:

The NFSA legally guarantees subsidized foodgrains to a large proportion of the population. It entitles up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population to receive subsidized foodgrains through the TPDS. This means that approximately two-thirds of the population in India is covered under the Act and can access highly subsidized foodgrains.

One noteworthy provision of the NFSA is its focus on women empowerment. According to the Act, the eldest woman in a household, aged 18 years or above, is required to be the head of the household for the purpose of issuing ration cards. This measure aims to empower women and promote their active participation in accessing foodgrains through the TPDS.

The NFSA is being implemented across all states and union territories in India. Currently, out of a maximum coverage of 81.34 crore individuals, around 80 crore persons have been covered under the NFSA, enabling them to receive highly subsidized foodgrains. The process of identifying beneficiaries is an ongoing one for states and union territories. It involves the exclusion of ineligible, fake, or duplicate ration cards, as well as the removal of beneficiaries due to factors such as death or migration. Simultaneously, the inclusion of new-borns and genuinely deserving households is also ensured.

The coverage of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) in India was initially based on poverty estimates, with households categorized as Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL). However, in December 2000, the government introduced the "Antyodaya Anna Yojana" (AAY) to enhance the focus of the TPDS on the poorest of the poor. Detailed guidelines were issued to all state governments and union territory administrations to

facilitate the identification and inclusion of AAY households in the TPDS. Currently, approximately 2.5 crore households are covered under the AAY scheme nationwide.

The TPDS in India is currently operated in accordance with the provisions of the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA). The implementation of the TPDS involves joint responsibilities between the central government and state/union territory governments. The central government is responsible for foodgrain procurement, storage, allocation, and transportation to designated depots of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) across the country. On the other hand, the state/union territory governments are responsible for identifying eligible households/beneficiaries under the NFSA, issuing and managing ration cards and beneficiary data, allocating and delivering foodgrains to all Fair Price Shops (FPSs), licensing, monitoring and supervising FPS operations, as well as distributing foodgrains to all beneficiaries.

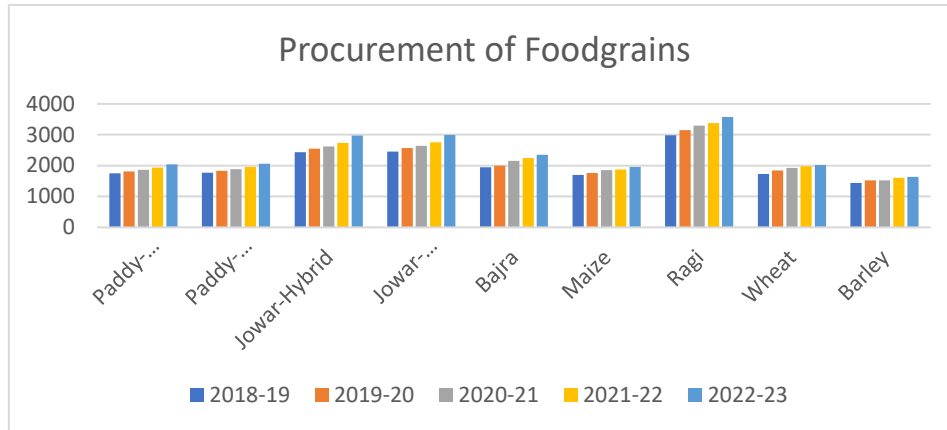
The eligible households/beneficiaries under the NFSA include those belonging to the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Households (PHH) categories. AAY households, which represent the poorest of the poor, are entitled to receive 35 kg of foodgrains per household per month, while households covered under the PHH category are entitled to receive 5 kg of foodgrains per person per month. Previously, foodgrains were provided at subsidized rates of Rs. 3/2/1 per kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains, respectively. However, the central government has recently made the decision to provide foodgrains free of cost to all NFSA beneficiaries, including AAY families and PHH individuals, as per their entitlement, for a period of one year from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

b. Procurement of Foodgrains

The procurement operations for foodgrains in India are conducted seasonally. The Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) commences on October 1st and extends until the following September 30th. During the KMS, the procurement of crops such as paddy/rice and coarse grains like jowar, bajra, ragi, and maize takes place. Similarly, the Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) begins on April 1st and concludes on March 31st of the subsequent year. Wheat is primarily procured during the RMS, with occasional procurement of barley.

Prior to the commencement of each marketing season, the Department organizes a meeting involving the State Food Secretaries to make necessary arrangements for the procurement of foodgrains and coarse grains. During this meeting, various aspects are discussed in detail, including the opening of procurement centres by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and State Government Agencies (SGAs), allocation of storage space, development of an evacuation plan for foodgrains, and arrangement of packaging material.

The targets for total procurement for the Central Pool are determined based on the estimates provided by the State Food Secretaries during the meeting. These targets serve as a guideline for the procurement activities carried out by the FCI and SGAs throughout the marketing season.



Source: Department of Food and Public Distribution

Above Chart discussed, the comparative MSP of wheat and paddy as announced by the Ministry of Agriculture for crop year 2018-19 to 2022-23 Foodgrains are procured at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) fixed by the Government of India. For KMS 2022-23, the MSP for Common and Grade 'A' paddy has been fixed at `2040/- and `2060/- per quintal, respectively, as compared to the MSP for Common and Grade 'A' paddy at `1940/- and `1960/- per quintal respectively, for KMS 2021-22. The MSP of wheat was fixed at `1975/- per quintal for the RMS 2021-22, and for RMS 2022-23, it has been fixed at `2015/- per quintal.

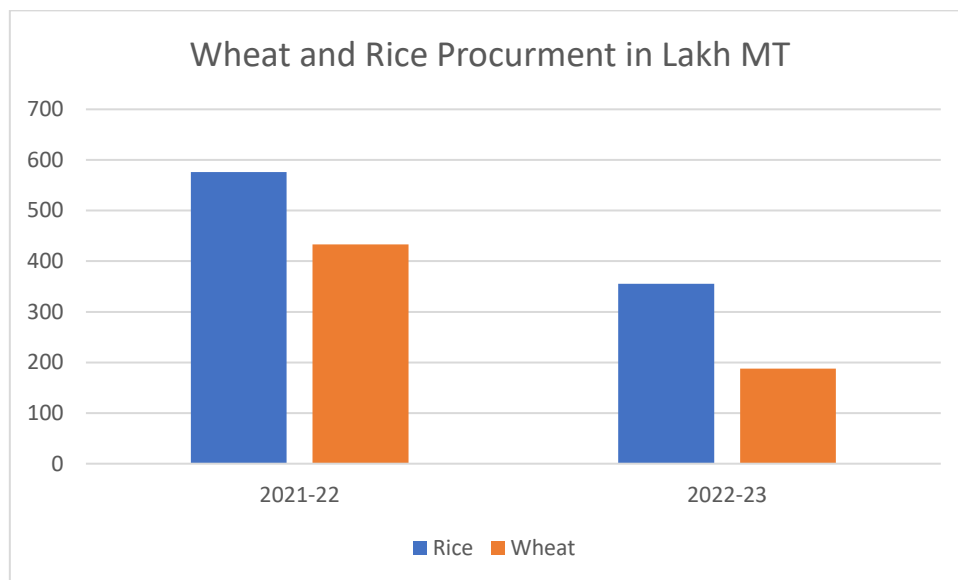
The duration for the procurement period of coarse grains has been extended to 6-10 months, compared to the previous timeframe of 3 months. This extension aims to boost the procurement and consumption of these commodities, as it allows states more time to distribute them through the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and other welfare schemes. This measure is expected to increase the availability of coarse grains to the beneficiaries.

To accommodate the advance demand placed by consuming states before the start of procurement, a provision for inter-state transportation of surplus coarse grains through the Food Corporation of India (FCI) has been introduced. This provision ensures that the consuming states receive the required quantity of coarse grains in a timely manner.

The implementation of new guidelines is anticipated to enhance the procurement and consumption of coarse grains through the Public Distribution System (PDS). These crops are typically grown on marginal and unirrigated land, and promoting their increased cultivation would encourage sustainable agriculture practices and crop diversification. With higher

procurement levels, a greater number of farmers would benefit from the procurement of these crops.

The procurement and subsequent distribution of millets free of cost will particularly benefit marginal and poor farmers who are also beneficiaries of the PDS. Additionally, the distribution of region-specific coarse grains for local consumption would help reduce transportation costs associated with wheat and rice.



Source: Department of Food and Public Distribution (Data as on 31.12.2022)

The above chart shows the procurement process for the Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) of 2022-23 started in September 2022. As of December 31, 2022, a total of 355.08 LMT (Lakh Metric Tons) of rice has been procured for the central pool. For the Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) of 2022-23, a total of 187.92 LMT (Lakh Metric Tons) of wheat has been procured. The decrease in wheat procurement during RMS 2022-23 can be attributed to the rise in market prices and a mismatch between demand and supply caused by the prevailing geopolitical situation.

Overall, the changes in the procurement period and guidelines aim to promote the sustainable cultivation, increased consumption, and equitable distribution of foodgrains, benefiting both farmers and PDS beneficiaries.

c. Food subsidy

The central government distributes food grains to states based on factors such as the identified Below Poverty Line (BPL) population, the availability of food grain stocks, and the quantity of food grains lifted by states for distribution through the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). The allocation of food grains to each state is reassessed annually, taking into account the state's average consumption over the preceding three years. This ensures that the

allocation is adjusted to reflect the changing needs and patterns of food grain consumption in each state.

The central government assumes the responsibility of food subsidy, which represents the disparity between the cost of procuring food grains and the price at which they are distributed to beneficiaries through the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). The overall cost associated with handling food grains, including the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and other expenses, has witnessed an increase owing to rising production costs and escalating charges related to the handling and distribution of food grains.

The escalating costs of producing rice and wheat can primarily be attributed to the significant rise in input expenses, such as labor and energy costs, including fertilizers. Moreover, the expenses linked to handling food grains or incidental procurement costs, such as the cost of gunny bags, storage charges, and interest levied on state governments, have also shown an upward trend. Additionally, as the procurement process is concentrated in a few states, the expenditure associated with distributing these food grains to other states has witnessed an increase.

The widening gap between the mounting costs incurred in procuring and handling food grains and the unchanging issue price has emerged as a crucial factor contributing to the rise in the food subsidy burden.

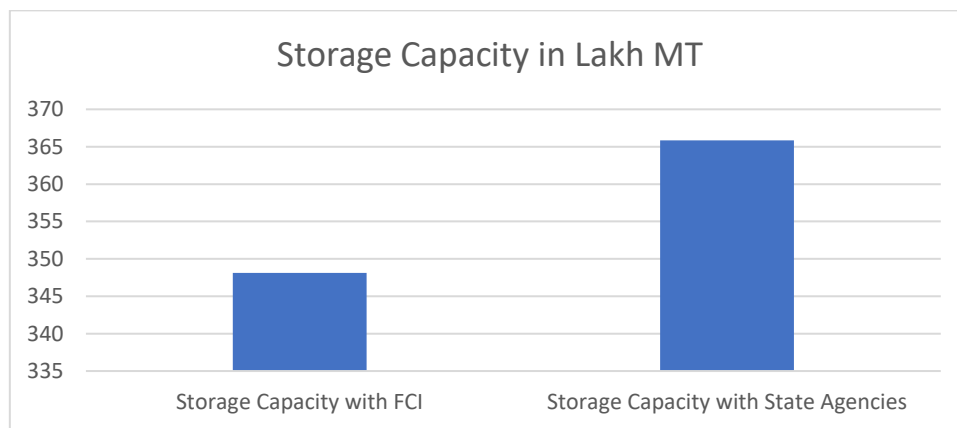
Initially, the implementation of the new Act is expected to lead to an increase in food subsidy, which will subsequently rise steadily over time. This initial increase can be attributed to the higher per kilogram subsidy, as the average issue prices under the new Act are lower compared to the current level.

The subsequent growth of food subsidy will be driven by two factors. Firstly, as the proportion of the population covered remains constant, the number of eligible beneficiaries will increase in line with population growth. This will result in a higher quantity of food grains to be procured to meet the growing demand. Secondly, the Minimum Support Price (MSP) is likely to increase in response to inflation in input prices. If the issue prices are not revised upwards accordingly, the subsidy per kilogram of grains will increase.

d. Storage space for Foodgrains

FCI conducts regular evaluations and monitoring to determine the storage capacity needed. Based on this assessment, storage capacities are either created or leased. The requirement for storage capacity in FCI is influenced by factors such as the level of procurement, buffer norms, and operations related to the Public Distribution System (PDS) for rice and wheat, which are the primary commodities involved.

To assess the storage gap, the procuring states analyse the highest stock levels observed in the past three years. Similarly, consuming states evaluate their storage needs based on a four-month period (six months for the north-eastern regions) as per the requirements of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS). This assessment provides the basis for determining whether new warehouses need to be constructed or existing ones expanded to accommodate the storage requirements effectively.



Source: Department of Food and Public Distribution (Data as on 31.12.2022)

According to the data presented in the above chart, it can be observed that the Food Corporation of India (FCI) has a storage capacity of 348.13 LMT (Lakh Metric Tonnes), while state agencies possess a capacity of 365.84 LMT for the storage of foodgrains allocated to the Central Pool. Consequently, the combined storage capacity amounts to 713.96 LMT, providing adequate space for storing the Central Pool stock of foodgrains. The program aims to construct storage warehouses through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, involving private entrepreneurs, the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC), and State Warehousing Corporations (SWCs). The evaluation of additional storage capacity needed for this initiative is determined by considering factors such as overall procurement, consumption, and the existing storage infrastructure.

Once the requirements of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) have been fulfilled, the procured food grains are designated for storage as a buffer stock. Additionally, the government seeks to establish storage facilities in the procuring states and facilitate the transfer of food grains from surplus regions to regions facing deficits.

Targeting Mechanisms

Evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the targeting methods employed by the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is crucial to ensure that food subsidies reach their intended beneficiaries. This evaluation process helps identify any gaps or weaknesses in the

targeting mechanisms and enables policymakers to make informed decisions for system improvements.

One aspect of analysing targeting methods involves evaluating the accuracy of the criteria used to identify eligible beneficiaries. The TPDS commonly employs categories like Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) to determine eligibility. The effectiveness of these categories in accurately identifying households in need of food subsidies can be assessed by comparing the actual socioeconomic status of the beneficiaries with the criteria used for their selection. If a significant number of beneficiaries fall outside the intended target group, it indicates a lack of precision in the targeting process.

Another important consideration is the efficiency of the targeting methods. This involves assessing the cost-effectiveness of the mechanisms used to identify and deliver food subsidies. The resources allocated for targeting activities, such as surveys or beneficiary database maintenance, should be evaluated in relation to the outcomes achieved. Efficient targeting methods ensure that subsidies are delivered to beneficiaries at a reasonable cost, minimizing leakages and optimizing resource utilization.

To assess the effectiveness of TPDS targeting methods, researchers can conduct field surveys or utilize existing data sources such as household surveys, government reports, and census data. These sources provide valuable information on the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the beneficiaries, which can help determine if the subsidies are reaching the intended population.

Additionally, the analysis can focus on specific aspects of the targeting process, such as inclusion and exclusion errors. Inclusion errors occur when eligible households are unintentionally excluded from the beneficiary list, while exclusion errors happen when ineligible households are included. These errors can be identified by comparing the beneficiary list with reliable data sources and conducting verification exercises.

Furthermore, technology can play a vital role in improving targeting efficiency. The implementation of digital systems, biometric identification, or unique identification numbers can streamline the identification and verification process, reducing errors and enhancing targeting outcomes.

Overall, analysing the effectiveness and efficiency of targeting methods in the TPDS involves a comprehensive evaluation of the criteria used for beneficiary selection, the accuracy of targeting mechanisms, the cost-effectiveness of the process, and the utilization of technology to enhance efficiency. By conducting such analyses, policymakers can identify areas for

improvement and implement strategies to enhance the reach and impact of food subsidies, ensuring they effectively and efficiently reach the intended beneficiaries.

Leakages and Challenges

Leakage of subsidized food grains: A significant hurdle faced by the TPDS is the unauthorized diversion of subsidized food grains that are intended for the targeted beneficiaries. These leakages can transpire at different stages, including procurement, storage, transportation, and distribution. Pilferage, diversion, and corruption within the supply chain contribute to these leakages, resulting in a considerable portion of the allocated food grains failing to reach the rightful beneficiaries.

Inaccurate beneficiary identification: Accurately identifying eligible beneficiaries poses a significant challenge for the TPDS. The system relies on precise beneficiary identification to ensure that the subsidies reach those who genuinely require them. However, there are challenges in accurately identifying the deserving beneficiaries. Inclusion and exclusion errors can occur, leading to eligible households being omitted or ineligible households being included erroneously. These inaccuracies in the targeting process undermine the system's effectiveness and result in the misallocation of resources.

Weak grievance redressal mechanism: Another challenge is the absence of a robust grievance redressal mechanism. Beneficiaries who encounter issues such as non-receipt of entitled food grains or other problems often face difficulties in seeking resolutions. The lack of an accessible and responsive grievance redressal system hampers accountability and leaves beneficiaries without proper recourse to address their concerns effectively.

Quality of food grains: Ensuring the quality of the food grains distributed through the TPDS is crucial. However, instances of distributing poor-quality grains have been reported, which adversely affects the nutritional value and overall well-being of the beneficiaries. Maintaining and monitoring the quality of food grains throughout the supply chain remains a challenge that needs to be addressed.

Technological limitations: Implementing the TPDS encounters technological challenges, particularly in remote and rural areas. Insufficient infrastructure, limited connectivity, and inadequate access to digital systems hinder efficient beneficiary identification, monitoring, and tracking of food grains. The absence of robust technological support makes managing the TPDS more challenging and increases the likelihood of errors and leakages.

Price inflation and market fluctuations: Price inflation and market fluctuations pose challenges to the TPDS. Subsidy rates for food grains may not keep pace with rising food

prices, affecting the affordability and accessibility of subsidized grains for the intended beneficiaries. Moreover, market fluctuations can disrupt the availability and procurement of food grains, leading to disruptions in the distribution process.

Lack of awareness and education: Limited awareness and education among beneficiaries regarding their entitlements, the TPDS process, and their rights can pose a hurdle. Insufficient information contributes to challenges in accessing and utilizing the benefits effectively. Enhancing awareness and providing education about the TPDS can help address this issue.

Conclusion

The findings suggest that TPDS has contributed to reducing hunger and malnutrition in India. The program has increased food availability and accessibility for vulnerable households and reduced their dependence on market purchases. The study found that TPDS has had a significant impact on food consumption patterns, with beneficiaries consuming more nutritious and diverse diets. However, there are several challenges that need to be addressed to enhance the effectiveness of TPDS.

The study found that the identification of eligible households is a major challenge in TPDS implementation. The current system of identifying beneficiaries through the below poverty line (BPL) list is flawed, as it excludes several deserving households and includes several non-poor households. The study also found that leakages and diversions of subsidized food grains are widespread, leading to the exclusion of eligible households and the inclusion of non-eligible households. The study recommends that the government explore alternative mechanisms for beneficiary identification, such as self-declaration or community-based targeting.

Another challenge identified in the study is the poor quality of food grains distributed through TPDS. The study found that the quality of food grains distributed through TPDS is often inferior to that available in the open market. This affects the utilization of food grains and the nutritional status of beneficiaries. The study recommends that the government improve the quality of food grains distributed through TPDS by strengthening quality control mechanisms and introducing third-party inspections.

Implementing measures such as improved transparency, enhanced grievance redressal mechanisms, technology-enabled tracking systems, and targeted awareness campaigns can contribute to mitigating these challenges and improving the overall functioning of the TPDS. The TPDS has contributed to reducing hunger and malnutrition in India. However, there are several challenges that need to be addressed to enhance its effectiveness. The study

recommends that the government explore alternative mechanisms for beneficiary identification, improve the quality of food grains distributed through TPDS, and strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to address leakages and diversions. food security remains a significant challenge in India, with millions of people still vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition. While the government has launched several initiatives to address the issue, including the TPDS and the NFSA, the effectiveness of these programs needs to be improved to ensure that the benefits reach the intended beneficiaries. Addressing the issue of food security requires a multi-pronged approach that includes improving agricultural productivity, enhancing supply chain infrastructure, and improving access to nutritious food for all. The study also emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to food security, including measures to enhance agricultural productivity, improve rural infrastructure, and promote income-generating activities for vulnerable households.

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