



COVID -19 A GREAT PANDEMIC: ROLE OF FCI

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 corona virus outbreak has affected population across the world. In short time we were exposed to a critical situation faced with numerous medical, social and economic challenges many international borders are closed which limited the supply of goods, including Food. This paper throws a light on the role of the FCI, importance of such as pandemic situation. Corona virus has put the whole world in a war like situation. This paper also explains the various Food security schemes which is announced by prime minister during this critical crisis.

KEYWORDS: Covid-19, FCI, Government schemes.

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring Food security should be an extra ordinary significance for a nation like India. During this pandemic its only (FCI) which is standing with the government for like saving commodities like wheat and rice . After green Revolution to ensure Food for all, the FCI has been set up under the FCI act 1964 to be the nodal central government agency responsible for the purchase, storage, inter-state movement, distribution, Transportation. FCI is providing wheat and rice daily to state government without going through the e-auction mode at open market sale rate to ensure continuous supply of food grains. FCI has been able to ensure availability of sufficient Food grain in all status by proper planning on an average of food 40 to 42 million Tonnes of Food grain are transported by across the country in a year. Even in this challenging operational environment FCI is able to meet the increasing demand of food grain by supply of wheat and rice throughout the country.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the importance of FCI.
2. To assess the meaningful role of FCI
3. Also understand government schemes during (Covid-19) and their benefits.

4. To know how the Lockdown situation has hit the basic needs of the people.
5. To discuss the various suggestions for ensuring food security.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used to analysis this paper is both primary and secondary.primary data has been taken from the general takes and statements given by person.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Rituraj Tiwari¹: In her article she explained the situation during lockdown. She talks about the role of FCI which is standing with the government for life saving commodities like wheat and rice. The author also explain FCI working strategy which is very efficient and ensure to people about the sufficient Food grain. FCI distribute wheat and rice 40 to 42 million tonnes of food grain across the country in a year .during this crisis FCI unloaded 4.6 MMT stocks are disturb 9.8 MMT to state government under various schemes including (PMGKAY).

¹ Rituraj Tiwari," FCI operation hit in lockdown",
Published in Economic Times dated 25-March-2020.



2. H.E. Tijjani Muhammad Bande²: The above statements delivered on 74th session of the united nation general assembly during this session talk about small and medium enterprises in the food sector including retailers who are highly vulnerable to economic shocks and also talk about the result of this pandemic create mass unemployment and also further threatens millions of Jobs resulted depression and various health issues This Pandemic disrupt our lives, but U.N.O. Food program have been protested of zero hunger.
3. CSU SEAKR³: In this article, the author talks about Covid-19 effect on Indian economies. The continuing Lockdowns across the country, affecting labour and input availability for agriculture operations. The stoppage of transport networks will seriously disrupt food supplies. The author also discuss about income of farmers perishable crops and poultry products are going to be much lower due to crop losses. The fall in prices due to lack of demand will further aggravate these problems.
4. Sheela Jain⁴: In her article she talks about such problems which are related to food security. As we all know India currently has the largest number of undernourished people in the world i.e around 195 million. The author not only talk about problems but also discuss about inadequate distribution of food through public distribution mechanism. moreover, she explores the role of the government in this direction over past two decades various schemes have been introduced like – PMGKAY, RKVY, E – Market place, Subsidized grain, NFSA.

² H.E Tijjani Muhammad Bande, “The impact of Covid-19 on global food security and nutrition: Preventing a health crisis from becoming a food crisis”, published in General Assembly of the United Nations President of the 74th session.

³ CSU Seakr, “Ensuring food security during the pandemic”, published in economic times on 11-May-2020.

⁴ Sheela Jain, “Food Security in India: Problems and Prospects” published in OIDA International journal of Sustainable Development, Ontario International Development Agency, Canada.

COVID-19 AND INDIA

Ensuring Food security for the country has been a major pre occupation of the government since Independence.⁵ As we know Covid-19 the biggest global issue. The impact of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic in India has been largely disruptive. It has created a global health crisis that has had a deep impact on the way we perceive our world and our everyday lives. The Covid-19 Pandemic has spread to more than 114 countries.

The government of India announced a variety of measure to tackle the situation, on 26 march a number of economic relief measures for the poor were announced. The government said Covid-19 effect the global economy and if proper measures are not taken, it could have serious implication. India has already implemented nationwide lockdown since march 25,2020 with the vision to “break the chain” of infection and control its transmission.

FCI operation during Covid-19 Emergency

India the second most populous country in the world is under tremendous pressure. As we all know Covid-19 is the biggest issue for the whole world. The Covid-19 pandemic could have a divesting impact on the livelihood and food security of millions of people across India. Food security implies access by all people all time to sufficient of Food to lead active and healthy life. ⁶The ordinary lives of every Indian took when a nationwide lockdown was declared. This situation have a drastic effect on the lives of people and local food system on that time food stock of FCI will be an important factor in helping the government to avoid a potential crisis in these difficult times, when many countries are likely to comfort Food shortage, beside India having enough stock and FCI which is standing with the government for like saving commodities .

Food corporation of India set a new bench mark an 22-4-2020 when it moved 102 train loads carrying about 2.8 laky metric Tons (2.8LMT) food grain maximum movement was from Punjab. The total food grain stocks moved by FCI during the Lockdown period crossed 5MMT at a daily average of 1.65 lakh tm if we talk about FCI Labour they have faced problem during this pandemic because while loading and unloading a single Rack the contractor has to arrange number of trucks and Labour for these

⁵ Uma Kapila, “Indian economy – Issues in development and planning and sectoral aspects”, Academic foundation, New Delhi, 2002-2003, p.313.

⁶ P.V. Srinivasan, “Agriculture and food security”, in Shovan Ray (ed.), Handbook of Agriculture in India (New Delhi, 2007), p. 130.



operations on this time social distancing is meaningless.

FCI collaborations with N.G.O for relief work during lockdown

During this pandemic crisis the government of India allows NGO to buy Food grain directly from FCI for relief works. The ministry of consumer Affair, Food and Public distribution asked FCI to provide wheat and rice to such organization at the open market sales scheme (OMSS) rates without going through e-auction process. From the day of the lockdown, the government said the FCI has delivered 32 million tonne of food grain to status for PDS distribution as per the allocations specified under the National food security Act (NFSA).⁷

FCI ensuring Food security through PMGKAY in national capital during lockdown

In this pandemic time India biggest challenge ensuring food and nutrition security to its masses⁸so the government of India has announced one of the most important initiatives called (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojna) PMGKAY that provides free Food grain to the needy population through FCI giving ensurity for us that no one suffers on account of non-availability of Food grain due to lockdown. Government of India has ensured that all under NFSA gets double their usual allocation during 3-month April, May and June 2020.⁹

Is India prepared to meet the supply requirement of Food stuffs

Poverty itself is both a cause and consequence of undernourishment from chronic food in security¹⁰. As we all know the migrant workers often need their day's income for Food and consumer goods and the Covid-19 crisis hit them hard.

In his first address to the nation on dealing with covid-19, the PM said that all necessary steps would be taken to ensure no shortage of essential items. But as

we saw poor and hungry workers walking back hundreds of kilometers to their town and villages. Media reports tells us that, lakhs of workers still stuck at their places of work in Delhi, Mumbai, or Surat are struggling to even access food. No doubt FCI and many more N.G.O. help the people. The labour class play the biggest role in India's development today. They have been the backbone of P.M Modi Make in India “ long before the even coined the term. So, the state and center government should take 5 steps to make their lives better not just during this Lockdown period but also for future. I propose the five R's.

*Recognize

* Register

*Responsibility

*Ration card

*Residence

Glitches of FCI at times of crisis

There are few serious short comings to be overcome by the FCI to play an efficient and meaningful role at time of crisis. On the eve of a new round of procurement with bumper harvest of wheat, it was observed that FCI was facing a serious shortage problem. There is not only shortage of modern storage facilities but the FCI also lacked a “Pro-active liquid policy”.

As we know in the month of march lot of rabi crop has already been harvested but the crop still standing, there could be shortage of farm Labour after the crop harvested it has to be packed and transported to markets which again needs workers, vehicle, drivers and uninterrupted movement.

ONE NATION ONE RATION CARD SCHEME HELPFUL IN FUTURE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

Jan 20,2020 Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan announced that NDA government ambitious project “One nation one ration card” scheme will be rolled out the whole of India form 1-June -2020. However, COVID-19 crisis has delayed the process but also made it inevitable. This scheme will be very helpful in future to face any kind of pandemic. Under one nation one ration card scheme a beneficiary will be able to get benefits across the country using the same ration card.

Recently, the supreme court had ordered the center to consider the feasibility of “temporarily” adopting the one nation one ration card scheme during the ongoing covid-19 lockdown period to enable the migrant workers and economically weaker sections (EWS).

⁷ R. RadhaKrishna, “Feed and Nutrition security of the poor”, Economic and political Weekly, April 30, 2005, 1817.

⁸ Dr. Sultan Singh Jaswal, “Challenges to Food Security in India”, IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), Vol. 19, Issue 4, Ver. 11 (April 2014) available at www.iosrjournals.org.

⁹ A. Gulati, J. Gujral, T. Nandakumar, National Food Security Bill – Challenges and options. New Delhi: Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, Government of India, 2012.

¹⁰ S. Broca, Food Insecurity, Poverty and Agriculture: A concept paper, ESA Working paper No.02-15, FAO, 9 2002.



CONCLUSION

This is no doubt that FCI needs to overhaul its operation and modernize its storage post pandemic and in the long term. However, it can't be denied that the relevance of an organization such as FCI, thousands of contractors and their lakhs of workers attached with FCI who are earning through this organization. The organization holds the key of warding off a looming crisis of hunger and starvation. I would like to wind up by the words of Mahatma Gandhi:

“There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the Form of Bread”.

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