

A Study on Economic Analysis of Pds on Food Security of Deprived Families in Kerala

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ABSTRACT : *The problem of food security is de facto and global. While we look at the financial crisis, we cannot ignore the almost forgotten food crisis. India has revolutionised its agriculture, but there is the phenomenon of Food Mountains and lakes alongside poverty, malnutrition and ill-health. For an emerging economy of India, food insecurity is both an immediate tragedy and a threat to long-term well-being. National Food Security Mission (NFSM) is expected to deliver the goods. Two things are significant in the context of food security: ensuring availability, affordability and accessibility of adequate food to people throughout the country; and promoting entrepreneurship for sustainable food production and supply. In this paper, we attempt to look at the food security problem with reference to PDS in Kottayam (Kerala). Since the beneficiaries of the PDS there belong to the people of low educated and low-income groups, PDS has helped them to save their income and thus increase their standard of living by eradicating poverty. We draw lessons for India too.*

Keywords: *Food security, Kerala, PDS, population, poverty, "What is of concern is how much of the food will reach those who need it the most and how much will be siphoned off by greedy hands along the way." – MeghaBaree*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Irrespective of the status and class of individuals, the basic needs of humans are the same. Basic requirements like availability and access to food, clothing and shelter are mandatory for every person in the society. For rich and middle-class people, this might not be difficult to acquire as it is affordable for them, but the poor section of society still finds it too expensive and unaffordable to fulfil these basic needs and wants. In a developing country like India where self-sufficiency of food grains and various other commodities have been achieved at the national level, the availability and affordability of food items to the deprived sections of society, to each and every household, remains a big challenge. Those who cannot have enough money to depend upon the market forces to obtain their supplies rely on such alternative sources for food availability. To tackle this, the government's Public Distribution System (PDS) is considered as the most important initiative by which the government helps to provide the basic pre-requisites of survival to its citizens at reasonable prices or free of cost that leads to eradicate poverty and hunger and brings self-sufficiency and progress in the country, besides the food security in India. Almost all state governments in India have considered PDS as a principal instrument of food security in the midst of spiralling prices of essential commodities (Nakkiran, 2004). In this regard, Kerala is a model by itself. Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation is a strong line of defence. Kerala is often praised for its PDS (Mooij, 1994).

Human beings are bounded with unlimited needs and wants. Among all the needs, food is the basic need for the survival of human beings. According to the 2011 Census, in the state of Kerala, 52.3 per cent people live in rural regions, and 47.7 per cent live in urban regions. In Kerala, from 1973-74 to 2011-12, rural and urban poverty ratio declined from 59.19 per cent to 7.3 per cent and from 62.74 per cent to 15.3 per cent respectively. Providing food security to its citizens also depends on enhancing agricultural productivity. The State aims at achieving a hunger-free Kerala for which the development programmes needs to be channelized and targeted appropriately (Economic Review, 2016). Here the PDS had an oblivious relationship with antipoverty concern because only such a system can have the arrangement to deliver essential commodities to meet the minimum food necessities of poor household and to breakdown the vicious cycle of poverty constantly. Therefore it is clear that food security is the backbone of national prosperity and well-being of any country. The health of any nation is directly linked to food security. It has to be proved by constitutional rights as food security touches on all the dimensions of human security: economics, social relations, health, community development and structures of political power and the environment. In these situations, the services of PDS must reach to the concerned people directly to provide food security to its poor people. This system aims to

make sure that the grains are available in sufficient quantities at all times and also in all the areas; not only that it gives to the targeted household beneficiaries at highly subsidised prices, but also making sure that suitable BPL household has access to food. By which government of India tries to raise the standard of living of the people who are below the poverty line.

Food security has emerged as an issue in global governance (Margulis, 2013). As per the Global Hunger Report (2017), India ranked the 100th position among 119 countries in the world report, 38.4 per cent of children under the age of five in India are stunted, and 51.4 per cent of women in reproductive ages are anaemic. In the recent release of Global hunger Index 2019, India ranks at 103 out of 119 qualifying countries with a score of 31.1, which shows that India is seriously suffering from hunger (Verma & Singh, 2019).

Close to 800 million people worldwide still suffer from hunger and are unable to consume enough food to conduct an active and healthy life. In addition to acute hunger, 2 billion suffer from micronutrient deficiencies, and 60 per cent of individuals in underdeveloped countries are food-insecure (Perez et al., 2017). In India, around 270 million poor people are living in poverty that is not even able to fulfil their basic needs as per 2012-2013 estimates of Planning Commission.

Food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Jerome K. Jerome, in a delightful essay on "Idle thoughts of an idle fellow", said that kitchen is the temple of God and Cook the high priest. Food as an icon of the foremost Divine concept is present in almost all major religions. The importance of food in modern times has been widely accepted. Because it is a shocking and alarming fact that every seventh person universally and every fifth person in the developing parts of the world are hungry today. In these situations, it will break the development and sustainability of the country. To avoid this crucial situation, the Government of India introduced various welfare programmes on food, education, health, and infrastructure and so on. So, the Government came up with a subsidy, which further lowered down the price of the product within the extent of poor people. These subsidies target a goal that is to turn poor class people to a medium class population. To ensure that everyone gets food, various subsidies were introduced by the Indian government and among all; Public Distribution System (PDS) is one of the largest food subsidy programmes in the world that protects the food safety measures in India. Here the PDS had an oblivious relationship with an anti-poverty issue because only such a system can have the infrastructure to deliver essential commodities to meet their minimum food requirements of poor household, and by to break the vicious cycle of poverty forever. The eradication of poverty is the main aim of the National Food Security Act (NFSA). Food security is defined as the availability of food and one's access to it. Public Distribution System (PDS) is one of the major strategies to provide food security in India. PDS acted as an instrument of price stabilisation and became a countervailing force against private traders who were trying to exploits the situation of security of food (Venkateswarulu et al., 2015).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The implementation of PDS in any developmental context has to meet the basic idea of poverty eradication which was dominantly seen in earlier studies. The PDS has promoted economic access by providing food grains at subsidised prices (Suryanarayana, 2001). Thereby, the average monthly per capita expenditure in fifteen major states changed (Dubey&Nirankar, 2001 or 2011; Deepa & Shanmugam, 2016).

PDS is an income support and social protection in rural India; thereby it supports the poor in meeting their food security (Dreze&Khera, 2013; Zhou & Wan 2006; Bartfeld& Rachel Dunifon, 2006; Srivastav&Dubey 2010; Zhou & Gandhi, 2000; Devindrappa&Gurubasappa, 2014; Nair, 2013; Thomas, 2017; Pal, 2011). As a result, it helps the poor to maintain minimum nutritional status and a standard level of living (Uttam, 2014).

PDS transfers contributed to the decline in income inequality for each year. Therefore PDS is a social safety net measure (Mula, 2014). This scheme is effectively fulfilled its purpose, and a great number of poor populations has benefited from PDS (Deepa & Shanmugam, 2016). Singh & Kumar (2011) in their article focused on BPL households and how the PDS should be more effective to them. In their study, they underlined that PDS provides essential and important commodities to them. At present, the system has a clear relationship with anti-poverty issues, and by this scheme, it meets the needs of the poor, hungry people and helps to reduce the market prices of food grains (Suri, 2014). Vatsala et al. (2017), in their study, highlighted that the frequency of consumption was reported to be low irrespective of the presence of food insecurity. Therefore it can be found that food security correlates with food frequency in consumption and dietary diversity and nutrient density related to the access of a sufficient quantity of food (Isauraetal, 2018). Analysing the role of Government schemes in ensuring food security in India, it was noticed that there was a positive correlation between food security and social development (Sabannavar&Harale, 2014). Tanveer (2015) in his study noticed that the huge imports into the state through the PDS and the assured entitlement of a minimum 35 Kg of food grains to all households at subsidised prices provide food security to the individual households in any corner of the state with

same quality of grain being provided to all types of beneficiaries. Rajendran & Diwankar (2015) described the close linkages existing between food security and PDS. As per the study, the percentage of the total rural and urban population that was poor declined by 23.4 percentage points from 1993-1994 to 2011-2012. Pingali et al., (2017) narrated in their study that PDS assistances increase calorie intake along with the improvements in dietary diversity through an income effect.

The close linkage between public Distribution System and poverty eradication in a developing country like India is closely examined by Suryanarayana, 2001; Kripa Shankar, 2002; and Himanshu 2013. The study shows that PDS provides relief to the poorest sections of the population, particularly in rural areas. With this scheme, the procured food grains were distributed to BPL and APL households through a network of ration shops, and it has reduced the starvation and death; instead of increased the welfare of the poor people. There was enough and more data to prove the claims that the impact of poverty reduced from 35 to 33 percent in all India level due to PDS purchase (Nirankar & Amaresh, 2010). The data was also confirmed by (Kumar et al., 2014) in their paper "PDS in India: Implications for poverty and food security" which revealed that access to PDS has also played a vital role in reducing poverty and enhancing the food security in the country.

Further, the study shows that the PDS contributed to the overall reduction in poverty by 3.5 per cent points in 2011-2012, and the share of PDS in calorie consumption has been increasing continuously since 2004-2005. Thus, PDS plays a dominant role in the lives of BPL people because the supply of free rice in PDS reduces starvation to death (Thambi & Jayakumari, 2014). Vishwambhar Sati (2015), in his paper, showed that food security and poverty go opposite to each other. Effectiveness of PDS has improved over time because PDS provides a rational amount of basic food items and non-food items at subsidised prices to consumers through a network of fair price shops (Kumar & Kumari 2016). Assurance of food security to poor people was the main benefit of food subsidies (Deepa & Shanmugam, 2018). PDS had a significant role in the food security, thereby the fact that the Government has to reallocate and distribute much more food grains for the wellbeing of the poor people (Deepa & Shanmugam, 2017).

As far as Kerala is concerned, a study by Kasim (2012) shows that the Kerala's agricultural sector has undergone major structural changes by increasing its area under commercial crops and reducing the area under food crops. As a result, food production in Kerala has declined. The efficient functioning of PDS has ensured food availability in the State. However, the policy changes implemented by the Central government since liberalisation has adversely affected the efficient functioning of PDS in Kerala and it ultimately resulted in increased external dependence. The economic access to food improved since per capita GSDP, real income, real wage and land entitlement have improved consistently. Nutritional status of men and women in the State is found to be better, and the incidence of under-nutrition among children has declined. Despite the high deficit on the production front, what helps the State to achieve better health indicators and lower incidence of poverty is the better economic status.

Kerala spends an estimated Rs.376.5 crore per month towards subsidizing food grains, the lion's share (Rs331.9 crore) of which is provided by the Central government. Before NFSA kicked in, the subsidies were provided by dividing the population into three categories—BPL, APL and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY). The implementation of NFSA meant the government had to create only two categories—a priority list and a non-priority list. Typically, as it has been in other states, the priority list would include BPL and AAY families, and the rest would go to the non-priority class. People have concerned that they may be pushed out of the PDS (livemint, 2016).

III. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study is based exclusively on Primary data. To collect Primary data, Multistage Purposive Sampling technique has been used, and the personal interview method was adopted. In total, three panchayats have been chosen for the present study. That was based on the concentration of BPL SC, BPL ST, and APL categories. Based on this from the AAY category, 10 per cent of PDS card households, from AAY 10 per cent and BPL 3 per cent were selected. Thus about 485 households have been selected for the survey. In this paper, two well-known economic theories are used to analyse the influences of PDS scheme for the need of food security and in turn, how it touched human development among the poor people in Kerala.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Individual Deficiency Theory

According to the individual deficiency theory – one of the theories of poverty – the main reason for poverty among individuals is their own characteristics such as laziness, insufficient hard work, low intelligence, and lack of skills, low educational attainments and some of the inferior manners. Poor choices by an individual or not working hard enough also cause poverty. The theory says further that the chance of poverty varies and this depends upon age, gender, family structure, health, economic conditions, and geographical features, and so on. These factors are pushing the people in a life-threatening situation and create it difficult for them to outflow

deprivation or to reach their complete human developments. To overcome these deficiencies, people who suffer these situations need education, constructional training of their skill, hard work, motivation, well-paid job, policies and assistance that should be in the form of services and goods, etc. The theory gives importance to policies, various poverty programmes and methods to overcome their deficiencies, through which to help them to set work as their primary goal. The approach of individual deficiency theory of poverty in a practical way can help to overcome the barriers of the theory by providing public assistance through services and goods instead of cash. Thus a proper implementation of PDS system extends its scope, thereby stimulating people to overcome their basic need of resources triggering to achieve physical wellbeing.

Individual-level anti-poverty programmes have a social component; however, firstly, a reliable safety net that can help people who are otherwise not able to help themselves is a public duty. These deficient people are part of society; therefore, instead of blaming them, their individual needs should be met by anti-poverty programmes and schemes. With this objective, PDS is also very much important among the various other poverty alleviation programmes. Deficiency in the form of low income, unhealthy people, low economic status and assets, people who live in poor and miserable geographical situations is due to many factors. Still, a minimal amount of possessions provided can be an inducing factor to raise the standard of living. So in this situation, along with the various poverty schemes, PDS is very much important factor to meet the basic needs. With a fruitful scheme, PDS can transform these deficient people into productive people by motivating them to work and improve their economic status. It helps them to keep up good health standard and which in turn can overcome their physical barriers to work for a better living. Thus, in effect, these people become profitable and useful persons in socio-economic society. As food security is a combination of proper availability, affordability, accessibility and utilisation of food in a defined population, any barriers to these four components can be valued as a deficiency leading to poverty that fails to ensure proper living status. Thus, the shortage to satisfy any of the factors can also create an individual deficiency which, in a way, can be resolved through proper Public Distribution System.

4.2 Malthusian Optimism

The Theory of Population is the eminent theory of population by the classical economist, Thomas Robert Malthus. He vocalised his views about population in his famous book, 'An Essay in the first principle of population' as it shakes the coming enhancement of society, published in 1798. In it, he narrates his visions on the effects of the population over the food supply, and also he states that human population tends to grow faster than the power to produce subsistence in the earth. In other words, population multiplies geometrically and food arithmetically. It means food supply upsurges in a slow ratio and population itself rises in a rapid ratio. By nature, the human being is rational, and he tries to maximise his welfare and profits; but to satisfy his unlimited wants with limited resources are impossible. Therefore, he is worried about the poor, particularly those who have affected by rural poverty. In the opinion of Malthus, an upsurge of population than the food supply would terminate the perfection, and there would be misery, poverty and famine in the world. In this way, the theory explains the relationship between the growths both in food supply and in population. The theory states that the population increases faster than food supply, and if we do not check or control the infinite growth of population, it constructs negative disparities in the society. Therefore the supply of essential food articles at the subsidised rate is efficient and practical to eradicate food deficiency. The importance of PDS is seen in this context to avoid these insecurities as a scheme of equal distribution of resources. PDS is an Indian food security system and intimately linked with the policy of anti-poverty programmes so that, it as an integral part of food policy for protecting the poor.

According to Malthus, food is an indispensable requirement in the life of a man, and the inevitably should be limited by means of supply where PDS becomes applicability. Fortunately, through the PDS, the government tries to balance the availability of food grains among the people (who are deprived of the possibility of producing food grains for their livelihood and the people who own food grains). As the second populated country in the whole world, the supply of resources especially the food grains (that is one of the basic elements of human existence) to the entire inhabitants is necessary for India's development. With the proper implementation of the PDS system, it can reduce poverty, famine, hunger and epidemics, which can be a helping hand for the poor.

V. FOOD SECURITY

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of United Nations, food security is a situation when all people at all times have sufficient food to meet their dietary and nutritional needs to lead a healthy and productive life. In this sense, food security necessary includes nutritional security. Food security also implies food affordability, that is, an individual's capacity to purchase proper, safe, healthy and nutritious food to meet one's dietary needs. Realizing the wide-spread poverty as a major threat to food security, the government of India launched several social welfare schemes which ensure food to poor and 'poorest of poor' sections of the

society. However, to sustain food security in future, India faces several challenges of varied nature (Shaghdar, et al., 2019).

5.1 Dimensions of Security

Food security happens when all people at all times have access to enough food that

- is affordable, safe and healthy
- is culturally acceptable
- meets specific dietary needs
- is obtained in a dignified manner for all
- is produced in ways that are environmentally sound and socially just

Food security is a set of security, system and sovereignty. The food system includes...

- everyone who grows or catches food (farmers, fishers, and hunters)
- earth, air, water, energy (the physical environment)
- food processors, packagers, distributors, marketers, and advertisers (food industry?)
- food wholesalers and the warehouses where food is stored
- the transportation system: trucks, planes, boats, trains
- places that sell food: grocery stores, markets, bakeries, farm stands, co-ops, restaurants
- places where food is served: hospitals, nursing homes
- governments, policies, taxes (the political and economic environment)
- the health care system, the workforce, schools, technology (the social, educational and cultural environment)
- everyone who eats!

The food sovereignty is ...

- ◇ the right of people and communities to safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate food, to food-producing resources, and to the ability to sustain themselves
- ◇ the right of peoples and communities to define their own agricultural, labour, fishing, food and land policies which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances.

5.2 Security vs. Insecurity

We may now juxtapose food security and insecurity:

FOOD SECURITY	FOOD INSECURITY
Farmers and fishers are skilled, enterprising and innovative. They are proactive agripreneurs. They get fair and stable income for their efforts.	Farmers'/fishers' potential is untapped/underutilised. Their work and income levels are volatile.
Food is produced in a way that is safe/healthy for the people and the environment. Food and nutrition are in-built to the system.	The health of the farmers and the consumers is at stake (pollution, contamination, etc.). Unhealthy (junk) food has become a fashion (passion?) – bad food vs. good food ala Gresham's Law.
The food distribution network is strong. Local, regional, and community food production is supported and coordinated.	There are no farms or grocery stores nearby; our food travels a long distance to reach us.
Social justice and inclusion are priorities.	Disparities and deprivation
Availability-Accessibility-Affordability	Healthy foods cost more than unhealthy foods (food inflation).
All people are empowered to work together to create positive change in the food system and our communities.	The food economy is under-developed. Empowerment is wanting.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Our field study has produced the following results.

Table 1: Determinants of Seven Days Food Consumption Score based on the purchase from PDS, Open Market and Both

SL.NO	FCS Thresholds	PDS Dependence			Open Market Dependence			Both Dependence		
		BPL	AAY	APL	BPL	AAY	APL	BPL	AAY	APL
1	Poor (0-21)	63 (22)	11 (15.1)	102 (81.6)	80 (27.9)	66 (90.4)	8 (6.4)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
2	Borderline (21.5-35)	206 (71.8)	38 (52)	22 (17.6)	205 (71.4)	7 (9.6)	53 (42.4)	2 (0.7)	22 (30.1)	0 (0.00)
3	Acceptable (Above 35)	18	24 (32.9)	1 (0.8)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.00)	64 (51.2)	285 (99.3)	51 (69.9)	125 (100.0)

		(6.2)								
	Total	287 (100)	73 (100)	125 (100)	287 (100)	73 (100)	125 (100)	287 (100)	73 (100)	125 (100)

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 explains about the Food Consumption Score (FCS) of the selected three groups of sample households based on their food consumption requirements; they are consuming food articles from the PDS or open market or from both. FCS is an index that is developed by the World Food Programme (WFP). Here the FCS thresholds are classified into three categories. Based on these categories, the researcher determines whether they are food secured or whether they belong to mildly food insecure or severely food insecure.

A glance at the Table 1, based on the sample households seven days food requirements reveals that, if the BPL category consumes food articles from PDS alone, then majority (71.8%) of the households belonged to the borderline, and for the AAY it was 52 per cent, and for APL it was 17.6 per cent which means they were in the stage of slightly insecure. Also, 6.2 per cent from BPL households, 32.9 per cent from AAY, and 0.8 per cent from APL were satisfied with the available food articles from the PDS. It means they are in the stage of the acceptable condition. They come under the category of food secured people. In the view of individual deficiency theory, the key cause for poverty among individuals is their own personal characteristics and to overcome these deficiencies, people who suffer these situations need education, hard work, motivation, well-paid job, policies and assistance that should be in the form of services and goods, etc. In this study, it revealed that PDS thus is an unavoidable factor to reconcile the deficiencies addressed in individual deficiency theory of poverty. Thus a proper implementation of PDS system extends its scope, thereby stimulating people to overcome their basic need of resources triggering to achieve physical wellbeing.

A look at the Table based on sample households seven days food requirements reveals that the consumption score from PDS for the poor was 63 and for AAY it was 11 and for APL it was 102 out of 485 households. This means they are not able to get enough food articles from the PDS to meet their consumption and in which they belong to severely food insecure stage. In the opinion of Malthus, an upsurge of population than the food supply would terminate the perfection, and there would be misery, poverty, and famine in the world. Further, the theory states that the population increases faster than food supply, and if we do not check or control the infinite growth of population, it constructs negative disparities in the society. In the current study, it shows that, if the population increases faster than food supply and if we do not check or control the infinite growth of population, it constructs negative disparities in the society.

The Table also clarifies that, for the improvement of consumption pattern of the sample households, they have to rely on the open market. If the surveyed households depend only on the open market for their food consumption, then 27.9 per cent from BPL, 90.4 from AAY and 6.4 per cent from APL they fell under severe food insecurity; 0.7 per cent from BPL and 51.2 per cent from APL were satisfied with the available food articles from the open market. It means they were at the stage of the acceptable condition. They come under the category of food secured people when they are consuming only from the open markets. If all the three categories of households are consuming from the PDS and the open market, there are no food in-secured people in the selected households that means no poor category. In the study, 24 households are in a slight food insecure stage, and 461 households are food secured. Also, there is no one in the stage of the poor category. So it is concluded that for the food consumption and the eradication of poverty, both PDS and open market are necessary for the people. So from the above evaluations, it can be concluded that PDS system is considered as a strong weapon in the hands of the Government for providing food and non-food items to the poor and the oppressed and thereby ensure sustainable growth among the poor households in Kerala's present situation. In Kerala, the food problem is more on the production front and not distribution. That vulnerability needs to be tackled. However, food security cannot be achieved merely through the availability of food grains. Entitlements also need to be ensured (Baranwal&Pandey, 2019).

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The global population in 2050 is predicted at 9 billion. Output has to double with dwindling and degrading resources. By 2030 India needs to produce 60 MT more rice than it does today. It is quite a challenge for agronomists as well as policy-makers. Suitable strategies are required to overcome vulnerability and have modernisation with moderation (Hans, 2011). A few strategies at this juncture could be as follows.

- 1) Reducing yield gaps and productivity gaps in agriculture – crop-wise and area wise (geo-specific food security)
- 2) Step up the tempo of food production. Have an agricultural growth rate of 4-5%
- 3) Imparting sustainable agricultural literacy throughout the country (e.g. farm schools, farm clinics etc.)
- 4) Business Implications should be communicated to the farmers – investment management, capital expenditure, cost-benefit analysis

- 5) Promoting agribusiness along with organic farming, cost-effective and environment-friendly methods (e.g. use of organic manure, biofuels etc.; withdraw synthetic chemicals, resolve the issue of GM Seeds): bio-dynamic agriculture with value addition
- 6) Agribusiness must include post-harvest management also
- 7) The success of agribusiness requires bold measures of agri-entrepreneurship ranging from crop management to food management, including knowledge management and quality management
- 8) Agri-entrepreneurship should be developed as a subset of social entrepreneurship (e.g. collaborative farming), with environment-enterprise nexus that generates and manages natural, material, social capital, as well
- 9) Economic and political actions should be pro-farmer, pro-nature, and pro-democratic
- 10) Synchronising technological reforms (e. cleaner and affordable technologies) with institutional reforms
- 11) Hundred per cent financial inclusion should be achieved: remove agrarian distress and help risk mitigation – on-farm and off-farm, including graduating from micro financing to macro financing – with emphasis on accessibility of intermediation
- 12) The country needs healthy doses of de-bureaucratisation and de-politicisation
- 13) Good Governance for food management, with increasing interest/initiatives by the Civil Society for better production, management, delivery and research
- 14) Combination of gene revolution-gram (village)-revolution-green revolution
- 15) Scoping financial inclusion to capture accessibility meaningfully – solving poverty to solve insecurity, finding new areas of operation for the Self Help Groups (SHGs)
- 16) Developing comprehensive indices of food security and livelihood security (the latter ranging from production to procurement to entitlement).
- 17) Understanding that developmental policy-making is can never be independent and isolated – theoretically and practically. It is interdisciplinary and inter-related with various social, ecological and developmental variables that are relevant and sustainable for the economy in general and food security in particular.
- 18) Within the PDS there must be grievance redressal and vigilance committees.

VIII. CONCLUSION

To conclude the role of PDS in ensuring food security to the poor people in India is vital. It helps to eradicate absolute mass poverty and lays the foundation for the growth and development of society. PDS is primarily social welfare and anti-poverty programme of the Government of India. Essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar and other non-food products are supplied to the people under PDS at below-market prices. In this study, the researchers have adapted the Kottayam District of Kerala and studied how the PDS works and benefits the poor people. Since the beneficiaries of the PDS belong to the people of low educated and low income, PDS helps them to save their income and thus increases their standard of living by eradicating poverty.

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