

## Study of Food Security Schemes in Odisha: A Performance Evaluation

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### Keywords

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to evaluate the performance of various food security and poverty alleviation schemes of Odisha. This paper documents the main findings of a performance audit of these schemes in the Indian state of Odisha in order to find out how these schemes are being implemented, what are the various problems if any and how these problems can be solved. The schemes covered under this audit include, 1.The Public Distribution System (PDS), 2. Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), 3.Mid-day Meals (MDM), 4.Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), 5.National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), 6.National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS), 7.Annapurna, 8.National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS), 9.Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), and 10.The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS).

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## INTRODUCTION

Even though Odisha is virtually self-sufficient in food grains, there is a significant prevalence of food insecurity in the state and around 9 per cent of the population are classified as extremely food insecure (consuming less than 1,800 kcal per day). In Odisha, a combination of economic, social, ecological and institutional factors contribute to food insecurity. Because of high level of incidence of poverty & income disparity, inadequate employment opportunity in lean season, a large tribal population living in remote areas with poor connectivity, coupled with periodic occurrence of drought & flood, Odisha has been put in the category of severely food

insecure regions.

It has been pointed out that severe food insecurity in Odisha is primarily due to the presence of vulnerable rural population who are basically Schedule Caste & Schedule Tribe with poor & marginal livelihood assets. Odisha's proportion of scheduled tribes (ST) (22 per cent) and scheduled castes (SC) (16 per cent) is significantly higher than that of India as a whole and poverty among these two groups is strikingly higher than among other population groups.

To address widespread poverty and food insecurity the Government of India has since independence implemented multiple initiatives such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Programme, the Mid-day meal Scheme, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme etc. Our research focuses on assessing how these schemes are actually performing in Odisha, especially in the most food insecure and poor districts such as the KBK districts. This study attempts to find out the reality regarding the availability and regularity of these schemes for the dalit (SC) and adivasi (ST) households in the selected districts.

### **Conceptual Background**

A Brief Introduction of 10 Food Security and Social Security Schemes;

#### **1. Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)**

The aim of the Antyodaya Anna Yojana scheme, launched in 2000, is to provide special food-based assistance to destitute households. These households are given a special ration card (an "Antyodaya card"), and are entitled to special grain quotas at highly subsidised prices. Against each Antyodaya card, beneficiary household or individuals are entitled to 35kg. of subsidized rice or wheat per month from the designated local ration shop. The subsidized price charged is Rs. 2/- per kg. for wheat and Rs. 3/- per kg. for rice. Under no circumstance a FPS dealer should charge any additional charges above this price.

#### **AAY Supreme Court Order Summary:**

1. Every family or individual in the following social group should be given an Antyodaya Card: Aged, infirm, disabled, destitute men and women, pregnant and lactating women, destitute women;
2. Widows and other single women with no regular support;
3. Old persons (aged 60 or above) with no regular support and no assured means of subsistence;
4. Households with a disabled adult and assured means of subsistence;
5. households where due to old age, lack of physical or mental fitness, social customs, need to care for a disabled, or other reasons, no adult member is available to engage in gainful employment outside the house;
6. Primitive tribes.

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## **2. Annapurna Yojana**

The Annapurna Scheme was launched by the ministry of rural development in 2001 but it was transferred to the state governments in April 2002. Indigent senior citizens above the age of 65 years, who do not receive the National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), are covered under the scheme. The implementation of the scheme at the ground rests with the States/UTs. Under the scheme, Gram Panchayats are required to identify and display a list of eligible persons after giving wide publicity.

The Annapurna Scheme envisaged supply of 10 kg. of food grains (6 kg wheat + 4 kg rice) every month free of cost to destitute old age persons. However, the programme became virtually a non- starter as it covered only the left out eligible persons under the National Old Age Pension Scheme. Existing pensioners were deprived of the food grains component.

## **3. Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)**

In June 1997, the Government of India launched the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) with focus on the poor. Under the TPDS, States are required to formulate and implement foolproof arrangements for identification of the poor for delivery of food grains and for its distribution in a transparent and accountable manner at the FPS level.

## **4. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)**

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is the only major national programme that addresses the health and nutrition needs of children under the age of six. It seeks to provide young children with an integrated package of services, including supplementary nutrition, health care and pre-school education. Since the needs of a young child cannot be addressed in isolation from those of his or her mother, the programme also extends to adolescent girls, pregnant women and nursing mothers.

ICDS services are provided through a vast network of ICDS centres, better known as "Anganwadis". Under this programme, children up to 6 years should be provided 300 calories and 8-10 grams of protein; adolescent girls 500 calories and 20-25 grams of protein per day and pregnant and nursing mothers 500 calories and 20-25 grams of protein per day. Undernourished children are entitled to double the daily supplement provided to the other children (600 calories and/or special nutrients on medical recommendation). The ICDS is a centrally sponsored scheme with the state governments contributing towards 50 per cent of the costs of supplementary nutrition (i.e. Rs. 1 per child per day).

## **Emergency Feeding Programme**

This programme is also implemented through ICDS infrastructure. Emergency Feeding Programme is a food-based intervention targeted for old, infirm and destitute persons belonging to BPL households to provide them food security in their distress conditions.

The objective of this food-based intervention is to provide one square meal a day to old, infirm and indigent persons on a sustained basis which will help the poorest and most vulnerable section of the rural population to cope with food insecurity and food distress periods to break the food insecurity cycle. The Programme is also expected to have an impact on the life expectancy of the people in the area. This was introduced in May, 2001. The Scheme is being implemented by Government of Odisha in eight KBK Districts namely Bolangir, Kalahandi,

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Koraput, Malkangiri, Nawarangpur, Naupada, Rayagada and Sonepur of Odisha covering around 2 lakh beneficiaries. Under the scheme, food grains (rice) at BPL rates are being allocated to the State Government since May, 2001 by Department of Food & Public Distribution. Cooked food containing, inter-alia, rice- 200gms, Dal (pulse) - 40 gms, vegetables- 30 gms is provided in the diet of each EFP beneficiary daily by the State Government. The scheme is being implemented in the KBK districts under the Revised Long Term Action Plan (RLTAP) and Special Central Assistance is allocated by the Planning Commission.

#### **5. Mid-day Meal Scheme(MDS)**

Every Government and Government-aided primary school and all schools run by a State Government, UT Administration, or with Government money by a Local Body or Non-Government organisation, in every part of the country must provide a nutritious, clean hot cooked meal to all primary school children. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme serves a two-fold purpose. First, it provides nutrition to primary school students across the country. Second, it helps increase attendance at schools with the lure of a quality meal. Cooked meals with a minimum content of 450 calories and 12 grams of protein are to be provided on each working day of the school. The Mid-day Meal Scheme has recently been expanded to cover children in upper primary schools too.

The Government of India contributes to the mid-day meal scheme in the form of supply of free food grain (@ 100 grams per child per day) and a contribution of Rs. 1.50 per child per day towards cooking costs provided the State Government/UT Administration contributes a minimum of 50 paise.

Many independent studies, carried out on the MDMS by researchers and civil society organizations, suggest that this scheme has many benefits such as increasing enrolment and attendance in schools, especially of girl children, and addressing the issue of classroom hunger, thereby also increasing learning ability. The MDMS also has large socialization and educational benefits. However, these studies have also found that there is still a lot to be achieved as far as the quality of the midday meal is concerned. For instance, in many places the same menu is given every day (usually roti or rice and a watery dal or sambar) with no vegetables, eggs, fruits and so on.

#### **6. National Maternity Benefit Scheme**

The National Maternity Benefit Scheme was introduced in 2001 to provide nutrition support to pregnant women. Under this scheme BPL pregnant women are given a onetime payment of Rs. 500/-, 8-12 weeks prior to delivery. In the year 2005, the Government of India launched the Janani Suraksha Yojana under the National Rural Health Mission to provide cash incentives for women to have an institutional delivery. The NMBS was merged into the JSY and with the intervention of the Supreme Court the benefits under the NMBS retained, irrespective of place of delivery.

#### **7. National Family Benefit Scheme**

The National Family Benefit Scheme provides for lump sum cash assistance to families below the poverty line on the death of the primary breadwinner (member of household whose earnings contribute substantially to household income) between the age group of 18-65 years.

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The Scheme provides for Rs. 10,000/- to be paid in cash to the family in case of the breadwinner's death. This payment is made after inquiring the surviving head of the bereaved household.

#### **8. National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)**

The National Old Age Pension Scheme is available to all poor persons aged 65 years or older. Under the NOAPS, the Central Government provides for Rs. 200/- per pensioner per month and the states are urged to contribute an equal amount. The scheme should be implemented as per state guidelines and the old age pension beneficiaries should get the benefit regularly each month before 7th of the month. After the expansion of the scheme to all old persons below the poverty line, the scheme has been renamed as "Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme".

#### **9. Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY):**

This scheme is being implemented since 1999. The objective of the scheme is to provide assistance to BPL families to bring them above the poverty line. This objective is achieved by forming Self Help Group (SHGS) from the rural people through the process of credit mobilisation, their training and capacity building and by providing income generating assets. Key activities for group mobilisation selected in the district are dairy, animal, minor irrigation, poultry, piggy, leather, tendu leaves, bamboo product, readymade cloth, fisheries, bee keeping, goat groups, bricks products etc.

They may take up the activity either individually or in Groups, called the Self-Help Groups. For successful Self-Employment, it is necessary to take up the right activity. For this purpose, 4 to 5 activities are selected in each Block with the help of officials, non-officials and the Bankers. These are called 'Key Activities', and should be such that they give the Swarozgaris an income of Rs. 2000 per month, net of Bank loan repayment.

Effective Self-Employment not only means choosing the Right activity but also carrying out the activity in the Right manner. Self-Employment involves procurement of raw material, production, marketing of goods and dealing with finance. A single Swarozgari may not be able to do all this by himself/herself. It is therefore advisable for the Swarozgaris to form Groups - the Self-Help Groups. SGSY actively promotes Self-Help Groups.

#### **10. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)**

The NREGS is a landmark social security legislation that epitomizes the right to employment on demand. It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a year to every household. NREGS has a Right-based framework, unlike earlier employment generation programmes. Its demand based entitlements stem from the fundamental right "to live with dignity" and sets it apart from other cash conditional transfers, as well as a social safety net, dependent on Government benefaction.

### **Objective Of The Study**

The primary objectives of this study was

- to evaluate the performance of various food security schemes of Odisha in selected districts,
- to find out the problems affecting these schemes and
- to suggest a few solutions for these problems.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design:**

This is mainly a descriptive research undertaken to find out how the various food security schemes of Odisha are performing in the state's most poor and backward districts.

#### **Sample Design:**

The sample population comprises of the dalit (Schedule Caste-SC) and adivasi (Schedule Tribe-ST) households residing in the 7 selected districts of Odisha, i.e., Bolangir, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Ganjam, Gajapati, Sundargarh and Kendujhar. The total number of sample households covered under this survey is 2000. Sample households include 31.8 percent of dalits and 69.2 percent adivasis. A few villages were selected from each district through deliberate sampling method. From every village 25 households were selected by simple random sampling method for the survey.

#### **Data Collection:**

The methodology used for the collection of data has been divided into two groups:

– Primary Data:

In this project the primary data was collected through questionnaire method. A semi-structured questionnaire was used with open ended questions to collect the opinions of selected dalit and adivasi households. The survey was designed to find out how effectively these schemes are being implemented in the selected districts. The interview method was also considered as in it the interviewer and the interviewee can interact face to face.

– Secondary Data:

Some data for this study was also collected from various books, journals, newspapers, official gazettes and from the internet.

### **MAIN FINDINGS**

#### **1. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)**

We found large numbers of very poor dalit and adivasi households in Odisha who have not received even a single day of NREGS employment in last five years or received it only for a few days. About 77 per cent of the very poor and needy sample households in Odisha did not get even a single day of the NREGS employment during previous one year. Many of these sample households have not received even job cards. It is important to note here that this survey was conducted only among extremely poor adivasi and dalit households, most of whom desperately need NREGS job and earn their livelihood primarily by casual wage employment. Most of these households live a life of chronic hunger and extreme deprivation.

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The average NREGS employment actually provided to the surveyed households in Odisha during the previous one year was only about 4 days per household against the 100 days of stipulated entitlement in one year. The actual average employment per household has been arrived at by calculating total days of actual employment of the total sample households and dividing it by total number of sample households.

Only 2.2 per cent of the sample households in Odisha had got over 50 days of job during the previous year. It is shocking to note that out of 2000 very poor households surveyed in Odisha, only 5 households had received 100 days of job during the previous year.

The segregated data analysis of surveyed districts suggests that the average actual NREGS employment provided to per needy and eligible household in Bolangir district during previous 12 months (previous 12 months from the date of household survey) was about 8 days. It should be noted that Bolangir is one of the most backward and poor districts of India with highest distress migration in the country.

The status of NREGS in Nuapada and Kalahandi is worse. The average actual NREGS employment provided to per needy and eligible household in Nuapada district during previous 12 months (previous 12 months from the date of household survey) was only about 3 days. The average actual NREGS employment provided to per needy and eligible household in Kalahandi district during previous 12 months was also only about 3 days.

The average actual NREGS employment provided to per needy and eligible household in Ganjam district during previous 12 months was less than half day (0.26 day to be precise). During previous year, all the 300 sample households from 12 sample villages of Ganjam put together had got only 80 days of NREGS job as against their total entitlement of 30,000 days. It is a tragic irony that Ganjam district was declared by Odisha Government as the best practice district in NREGS and it has received best performing /model district award by the Central Government too.

The average actual NREGS employment provided to per needy and eligible household during previous 12 months was about 4 days in Gajapati, about 5 days in Sundargarh and about 6 days in Kendujhar district.

The comparative data analysis of sample districts of Odisha suggests that on account of actual average NREGS employment during previous one year, Ganjam district (the so-called best performing district of Odisha in official assessments with many awards and accolades for its so-called best practices) is the worst performing district among all the 7 districts covered in this survey.

### **Did you receive the full wages?**

While 67.3 per cent of those households who had got NREGS employment in the previous one year said that they had received their full wages, 31.6 per cent said that they did not receive their full wages. 1.1 per cent of the households in this category could not say for sure whether they had received their full wages or not.

74.2 per cent of relevant samples in Bolangir district, 81.4 per cent in Nuapada, 74.3 per cent in Kalahandi, 77.8 per cent in Ganjam, 67.2 per cent in Gajapati, 49.1 per cent in Sundargarh and 70.2 per cent in Kendujhar district said that they had received their full wages.

### **Generally how many days after the work do you receive your wages?**

Only 20.5 per cent of sample households said that they had received their wages within the stipulated period of 15 days. 25 per cent had received it within one month, 25.5 per cent had got it within two months, 12.9 per cent had got it within four months, 2.4 per cent had got within six months and remaining 13.7 per cent households were absolutely uncertain as to when they would receive their NREGS wages.

### **District-wise Analysis**

Only 9.7 per cent of sample households in Bolangir district had received their wages within two weeks, 38.7 per cent had received within one month, 48.4 per cent had got it within two months, 1.6 per cent within four months and 1.6 per cent were absolutely uncertain as to when they would receive their NREGS wages.

Only 2.5 per cent of sample households in Nuapada district had received their wages within two weeks, 20 per cent had received within one month, 35 per cent had got it within two months, 40 per cent within four months and 2.5 per cent within 6 months.

In Kalahandi district, 15.4 per cent of sample households had received their wages within two weeks, 29.2 per cent had received within one month, 40 per cent had got it within two months, 4.6 per cent within four months, 3.1 per cent within six months and 7.7 per cent were absolutely uncertain as to when they would receive their NREGS wages.

In Ganjam district, 28.6 per cent of sample households had received their wages within two weeks and remaining 71.4 per cent had received within one month.

In Gajapati district, 55.9 per cent of sample households had received their wages within two weeks and remaining 44.1 per cent had received within one month.

In Sundargarh district, 9.5 per cent of sample households had received their wages within two weeks, 21.4 per cent had received within one month, 14.3 per cent had got it within two months, 16.7 per cent within four months and 38.1 per cent were absolutely uncertain as to when they would receive their NREGS wages.

In Kendujhar district, 36.4 per cent of sample households had received their wages within two weeks, 23.9 per cent had received within one month, 17 per cent within four months, 6.8 per cent within six months and 15.9 per cent were absolutely uncertain as to when they would receive their wages.

### **Transparency and Accountability in NREGS**

We found very serious irregularities and rampant corruption in the implementation of the NREGS in Odisha. Very few villagers have seen muster rolls. Live muster rolls are never available at the worksite. There is little transparency and accountability in the implementation of the rural job scheme in Odisha. The grievance redressal mechanism is as good as non-existent. Payment of unemployment allowance is unheard of.

In none of the surveyed villages there has been any Gram Sabha meeting or Social Audit of NREGS work. At least, none of the villagers in these surveyed villages has ever attended any Gram Sabha meeting or participated in any social audit of the NREGS projects. We were told by the villagers that NREGS related Gram Sabhas and Social Audits were conducted only in the official records and not on the ground.

### **Modus operandi of job denial under NREGS**

The needy poor households are denied wage employment in three ways:

- First, the officials and functionaries of implementing agencies ensure that when someone applies for NREGS work (written or oral) they are not issued any acknowledgement or proof of the work application so that the labourers would neither be able to prove denial of employment to them nor claim the consequent unemployment allowance in case the employment is denied. Since the amount of unemployment allowance is to be paid from the funds of the state governments, they ensure that they do not give any proof of denial of employment.
- Second, the NREGS is a demand driven scheme but it is being implemented as a supply driven scheme. In other words, the labourers are not given job as and when they need and would like to do the work, but when the implementing agencies decide to give the wage employment as per their convenience.
- Third, since the wage payment is not made within the stipulated period of two weeks and many a time labourers are forced to wait for months together (in some cases even years), they do not see any point in working under the NREGS because these people are extremely poor and live a hand to mouth existence and can not wait for the due wages for months.

### **NREGS and Distress Migration**

There is no let up in the distress migration of dalits, adivasis and other poor communities from the rural areas Odisha. Due to brazen denial of the NREGS employment, large numbers of poor villagers have migrated to cities and towns in search of the casual wage employment. The level of distress migration from most of the sample villages of Odisha is very high; in many cases over 50-60 per cent of the working population has migrated from the village.

### **NREGS and Poverty Alleviation**

The current level of hunger and deprivation in the sample districts of Odisha is as deep as ever even after five years of the launch of the NREGS. The NREGS has made virtually zero impact on the livelihood security of Odisha's rural poor. On the Human Development Index, the Sub-Saharan villages would fare much better than most of the sample villages in Odisha. Chronic hunger and abject poverty are widespread in all the villages of Odisha surveyed. Large numbers of children in these villages are suffering from acute malnutrition.

## **2. Public Distribution System (PDS)**

### **Type of Ration Cards among Sample Households**

Among 2000 total surveyed households, almost one third (**28.3** per cent) had no ration card whatsoever. In other words, almost one third of these extremely poor dalit and adivasi households have no access to public distribution system (PDS) at all. Of 2000 sample households, only 3 had Annapurna cards. In the total surveyed households, 18.8 per cent had Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) cards, 44.5 percent had below poverty line (BPL) cards and 8.3 per cent had above poverty line (APL) cards. It must be noted that almost all the surveyed households are extremely poor dalits and adivasis who earn their livelihood by casual wage

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employment and are either landless or have very little area of productive land. Most of these sample families live a life of chronic hunger and semi-starvation, still one third of them are completely out of the PDS.

### **District-wise Analysis**

In the KBK districts of Odisha, every household which has a ration card (AAY, BPL or APL) has effective access to PDS grain ; but, in the non-KBK districts only BPL and AAY card holders have effective access to PDS grain and APL card holders hardly get any grain under the PDS.

In Bolangir district, 26.4 per cent of the surveyed households do not have any ration card, 16.4 per cent have APL cards, 45.6 per cent have BPL cards, 11.6 per cent have AAY cards and no one has Annapurna card.

In Nuapada district, 26.8 per cent of the surveyed households do not have any ration card, 5.2 per cent have APL cards, 52.4 per cent have BPL cards, 15.6 per cent have AAY cards and no one has Annapurna card.

In Kalahandi district, 32 per cent of the sample households do not have any ration card, 16 per cent have APL cards, 38.4 per cent have BPL cards, 13.6 per cent have AAY cards and no one has Annapurna card.

In Ganjam district, 36.3 per cent of the sample households do not have any ration card, only one of the samples has APL card, 45.7 per cent have BPL cards, 17.7 per cent have AAY cards and none has Annapurna card.

In Gajapati district, 52 per cent of the surveyed households do not have any ration card, 5.5 per cent have APL cards, 34.5 per cent have BPL cards, 8 per cent have AAY cards and no one has Annapurna card. While the figure of 52 per cent sample households not having any ration card is true for the sample universe of Gajapati, it may not be true for the district as a whole. Secondly, while in some villages of Gajapati large number of households claimed that they did not have any ration cards, the veracity of their claims is suspect because in some villages dalits and adivasis were trying to outsmart one another by making bogus claims about denial of ration cards to them. However, there is no denying the fact that there are large numbers of poor dalit/adivasi households in many villages of Gajapati who do not have any ration card.

In Sundargarh district, 26.8 per cent of the sample households do not have any ration card, 15 per cent have APL cards, 51 per cent have BPL cards, 7.3 per cent have AAY cards and no one has Annapurna card.

In Kendujhar district, only 9.4 per cent of the sample households are without any ration card and not a single sample has APL card. 39.7 per cent of the surveyed households in Kendujhar have BPL cards, 50 per cent have AAY cards and 3 households have Annapurna cards. In other words, about 90 per cent of surveyed households in Kendujhar have either Antyodaya cards or BPL cards. It is crystal clear from the above figures that Kendujhar district has the best PDS coverage among all the 7 sample districts of Odisha. However, while the above figures are true for the sample universe in Kendujhar, it may not be true for the district as a whole because many of the sample villages are JUAG (primitive tribe) villages where almost all households have got either AAY or BPL cards. It is important to note here that while we found 3 households in Kendujhar who had Annapurna cards, we could not find a single sample household with Annapurna card in the remaining 6 sample districts of Odisha.

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### **Bribe for Ration card**

In answer to the question – did you pay bribe to get your ration card? - 90.7 per cent of the respondents replied no and 9.3 per cent said that they had to pay bribe for getting their ration cards.

### **During last 12 months have you actually received your full quota of grain?**

75 per cent of ration card holders in Odisha said that during previous 12 months they had actually received their full quota of grain and only 25 per cent said that they did not get their full quota of grain actually during that period.

The better performance of the PDS in Odisha is largely on account of the implementation of the universal PDS in KBK (Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput) districts. Due to universal PDS in the KBK region, even APL card holders are getting 25kgs of grain every month. The APL card holders in non-KBK districts are hardly getting any subsidized grain under the PDS. Actually, in the non-KBK districts the APL card is popularly known as “Kerosene card” and not ration card because these card holders get only kerosene oil by virtue of being APL households. During the household survey in non-KBK districts, when we would request the adivasi and dalit households in the village to bring and show their ration cards, only BPL and AAY card holders would bring their ration cards and those who had APL card did not bring and show their cards. Since APL card holders actually do not get any ration, they do not consider it as ration card. This shows the failure of the PDS system to deliver grain entitlements to APL card holders.

### **District-wise Analysis**

97.2 per cent of the ration card holders in Bolangir, 89.1 per cent in Nuapada, 100 per cent in Kalahandi, 54.3 per cent in Ganjam, 9.4 per cent in Gajapati, 54.8 per cent in Sundargarh and 91.4 per cent in Kendujhar district said that they had actually received their full quota of grain during previous 12 months. 2.8 per cent of ration card holders in Bolangir district, 10.9 per cent in Nuapada, none in Kalahandi, 45.7 per cent in Ganjam, 88.5 per cent in Gajapati, 45.2 per cent in Sundargarh and 8.6 per cent in Kendujhar district said that they had not received their full quota of grain during previous 12 months. It is obvious from the above analysis that the performance of PDS is much better in the KBK districts compared to non-KBK districts of Odisha. It is also clear from the above figures that among 7 sample districts of Odisha, the performance of PDS is best in Kalahandi and worst in Gajapati district. Kendujhar is the only non-KBK district where the performance of PDS is satisfactory and almost at par with KBK districts.

### **What proportion of food grain quota have you received in last 12 months?**

As shown above, 25 per cent ration card holders had said that they did not receive their full quota of grain actually during previous one year, we further asked this category of respondents as to what proportion of food grain quota had they actually received? 14.3 per cent of households in this category said that they did not get any grain at all and 1.4 per cent said that they had received only negligible quantity of their grain entitlement in the previous one year. 81.1 per cent of respondents in this category said that they had received about 75 per cent of their grain quota. Only one household in this category said that it had received about 50 per cent

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of grain quota and 2.9 per cent said that they had got only about 25 per cent of grain quota during previous 12 months.

#### **Problems in PDS:-**

#### **What are the problems you have faced in availing your food grain entitlements under PDS?**

15.3 per cent of respondent households identified “full quantity of grain not provided” as a major problem faced by them in availing their food grain entitlements under the PDS. “Irregular availability of grain at the PDS shop” was identified by less than 1 per cent of the respondents as a major problem faced by them. None of the respondents said that there was over-pricing by dealer. 14.7 per cent of sample households said that there was corruption in the PDS. 54.4 per cent of the respondents said that poor quality of grain was given to them under the PDS. “Lack of cash when grain was available at the PDS shop” was a problem faced by 34.4 per cent of the surveyed households.

#### **District-wise data Analysis of the problems in PDS**

5.2 per cent respondents from Bolangir district, 8.4 per cent respondents from Nuapada district, none from Kalahandi, 30.3 per cent from Ganjam district, 37.5 per cent from Gajapati, 19.3 per cent from Sundargarh, 8 per cent from Kendujhar said that full quantity of grain was not provided to them.

Zero per cent respondents from Bolangir, Kalahandi, Ganjam, Gajapati, Sundargarh and Kendujhar districts, 4.4 per cent respondents from Nuapada district said that there was irregular availability of grain at the PDS shop.

0.4 per cent respondents from Bolangir district, 7.2 per cent respondents from Nuapada district, none from Kalahandi, 30 per cent from Ganjam district, 37.5 per cent from Gajapati, 20.3 per cent from Sundargarh, 8 per cent from Kendujhar said that there was corruption in the PDS.

70.8 per cent respondents from Bolangir district, 69.2 per cent respondents from Nuapada district, 66.8 per cent from Kalahandi, 56 per cent from Ganjam district, 30.5 per cent from Gajapati, 36.3 per cent from Sundargarh and 56.3 per cent from Kendujhar district said that the quality of PDS grain was poor.

68.8 per cent respondents from Bolangir district, 69.2 per cent respondents from Nuapada district, 68.8 per cent from Kalahandi, 46.7 per cent from Ganjam district, 1 per cent from Gajapati, 8.3 per cent from Sundargarh and none from Kendujhar identified ‘lack of cash when grain was available at the PDS shop’ as a problem.

### **3. Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDM)**

While only 2.1 per cent of the total households said that their children were getting regular, adequate and satisfactory mid day meal in their schools, an overwhelming 86.7 per cent of the respondents said that their children were getting regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory meal in their schools. 15.6 per cent of the households said that their children were getting irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory meal and 2.5 per cent said that their children were getting mid day meal only once in a while. It was shocking to find that school-going children of 3.9 per cent households had never got mid day meal in their schools.

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2.7 per cent of surveyed households did not have school going children.

#### **District-wise data analysis of MDM**

While 6.8 per cent of the sample households from Bolangir district and 12.5 per cent from Gajapati district said that their children were getting regular, adequate and satisfactory mid day meal in their schools, children of not a single household from Nuapada, Kalahandi, Ganjam, Sundargarh and Kendujhar were getting regular, adequate and satisfactory mid day meal in their schools.

School going children of 74.4 per cent sample households in Bolangir district, 99.6 per cent in Nuapada, 90 per cent in Kalahandi, 65.9 per cent in Ganjam, 75 per cent in Gajapati, 100 per cent in Sundargarh and 92.9 per cent in Kendujhar are getting regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory meal in their schools.

School going children of 9.2 per cent samples in Ganjam and 7.1 per cent in Kendujhar are getting irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory mid day meal.

School going children of 7.6 per cent sample households in Ganjam and 12.5 per cent in Gajapati are getting MDM only once in a while.

It is shocking to note that school going children of 10 per cent households in Kalahandi, 0.4 per cent in Nuapada and 17.2 per cent in Ganjam never get any kind of mid day meal in their schools.

#### **4. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)**

##### **During last one year did any member of your family receive ICDS Benefits?**

About 1 per cent sample households said that they had availed regular, adequate and satisfactory ICDS during previous 12 months. While 51.7 per cent of surveyed households had availed regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory ICDS in previous one year, 26.4 per cent of the samples had got irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory ICDS. It is shocking to note that 13.9 per cent of the total sample households had received ICDS benefits only once in a while during previous one year. Only 4.5 per cent of sample households (despite being extremely poor, needy and eligible) had received no ICDS benefits whatsoever during the previous year. Only 2.7 per cent of the sample households were not eligible for ICDS.

##### **District-wise analysis of ICDS data**

Regular, adequate and satisfactory ICDS was available to not a single household in any of the sample districts, except 7.2 per cent households in Bolangir district.

Regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory ICDS (second best category) was available to 42.8 per cent sample households in Bolangir district, 89.6 per cent in Nuapada district, 10 per cent in Kalahandi, 17.3 per cent in Ganjam, 25 per cent in Gajapati, 100 per cent in Sundargarh and 50.3 per cent in Kendujhar.

Irregular, inadequate and unsatisfactory ICDS (third best category) was available to 12 per cent sample households in Bolangir district, 10 per cent in Nuapada, 30 per cent in Kalahandi, 32.7 per cent in Ganjam, 62.5 per cent in Gajapati and 49.7 per cent in Kendujhar.

11.2 per cent sample households in Bolangir district, 40 per cent in Kalahandi, 41.7 per cent in Ganjam and 12.5 per cent in Gajapati had availed ICDS benefits only once in a while during previous one year.

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6 per cent sample households in Bolangir, 20 per cent in Kalahandi and 8.3 per cent in Ganjam did not get any ICDS benefit whatsoever during the previous one year.

#### **5. National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)**

Only 15.6 per cent of the total households have got old age pension card but 16.2 per cent of the households have not received NOAPS cards despite being eligible and extremely poor. The remaining 68.3 per cent of the surveyed households were not eligible for NOAPS.

#### **Is the card holder getting regular and full amount of pension?**

The performance of national old age pension scheme is far better in comparison to other food security and social security schemes. 99 per cent of the surveyed NOAPS card holders are getting regular and full amount of pension. Only 0.7 per cent of card holders are getting regular but partial amount of pension. Only 0.3 per cent of NOAPS card holders are getting irregular and partial amount of pension. There was only one card holder who was getting NOAPS once in a while.

This is arguably one of the best performances by any food security, social security and poverty alleviation scheme anywhere in the country. This does not give only a sense of great satisfaction and hope but also has many important lessons for improving the delivery mechanism of other food security and social security schemes in the country.

#### **District-wise analysis of NOAPS data**

100 per cent of NOAPS surveyed card holders in Nuapada, Kalahandi, Ganjam, Gajapati, Sundargarh and Kendujhar districts are getting regular and full amount of old age pension. 94.1 per cent NOAPS surveyed card holders in Bolangir are getting regular and full amount of old age pension.

#### **6. National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)**

#### **Has your family ever in last 10 years received NFBS benefits (after death of the primary bread winner: 18-64 years)?**

The performance of NFBS in Odisha is so poor that most of the respondent households are not even aware about this scheme. For getting an appropriate answer to this question, researchers had to explain a lot of things to respondents. Less than 1 per cent (0.8 per cent) of total sample households had availed NFBS benefit during previous 10 years. It is shocking to note that 8.1 per cent of the sample households did not get any benefit under NFBS in previous 10 years despite their eligibility (death of the primary bread winner of the family aged between 18-64 years). The beneficiaries of this scheme complained of huge corruption in this scheme. It is difficult to avail the benefit of this scheme without giving bribe to recommending and sanctioning authorities. 91 per cent of sample households were not eligible for this scheme because there was no death of primary bread winner in these households.

#### **District-wise analysis of NFBS data**

While not a single household in Bolangir, Kalahandi, Gajapati and Sundargarh had availed NFBS benefit during previous ten years, one household each in Nuapada, Ganjam and Kendujhar districts had received NFBS benefit during previous ten years.

## **7. National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS)**

### **During last five years, how many times have your family availed NMBS benefits?**

Among all the 10 food security and poverty alleviation schemes covered in this survey, performance of the National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) is worst. This scheme is as good as non-existent. Hardly anyone knows about this scheme in surveyed areas. It is shocking to note that only 3 households in total had availed NMBS benefit during previous 5 years. We found only 2 households in Bolangir and 1 household each in Ganjam who had received benefit under NMBS.

## **8. Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)**

The performance of SGSY was disappointing. Only 12 households in the total samples said that they had availed some benefits under SGSY. All 12 SGSY beneficiary households were from Bolangir district and we could not find a single sample household in any other district who had ever secured any benefit under SGSY. Very few people among the surveyed households even know about this scheme.

## **CONCLUSION**

We can see that most of these schemes, with the exception of NOAPS, are performing very poorly in the state. Where NOAPS is doing fairly well compared to other schemes, MDM and ICDS are also to some extent working in most of the sample districts. However in case of MDM and ICDS, even though these two schemes are available to most of the children in the sample districts, but they are inadequate and unsatisfactory. The main reasons for the miserable performance of these schemes are rampant corruption, lack of concern by Government officials and lack of awareness in case of the beneficiaries. If we wish to alleviate poverty and hunger from our nation everyone concerned needs to participate and work for the successful implementation of these schemes designed for this very purpose.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

These are some suggestions that might be helpful in removing the obstacles and improving the performance of the various schemes discussed in this study.

- Universal PDS can be implemented with exclusion of 25-30 per cent households on the basis of objective parameters like – Employment in the Organised Sector, Ownership of Motor vehicle, Tax payer etc.
  - A National Campaign should be launched to bring transparency and accountability in the delivery of all food security and social security schemes.
  - Section 4 of RTI can be implemented to ensure pro-active disclosure of all information related to all food security and social security schemes.
  - All information regarding the actual delivery of food security and poverty alleviation schemes should be disclosed on the district websites.
  - A National /State level MIS (Management Information System) should be created for all food security and social security schemes.
  - Awareness campaigns can be used to enforce all food security entitlements at GP, Block and District levels.
  - Social Audit of all food security and social security schemes should be made mandatory.
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- Effective and Independent oversight body at GP level (of villagers, activists, NGOs,) for Vigilance and Monitoring of the food security and social security schemes, can be created.
- An Effective Grievance Redressal Mechanism should be in place and provide for exemplary punishment for Officials/functionaries responsible for irregularities in the functioning and delivery of all the food security and social security schemes.

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