

23-01-21

Ques Explain the various measures that are required to fix the imbalances in the distribution of food grains in the country. [200 WORDS]

Ans.

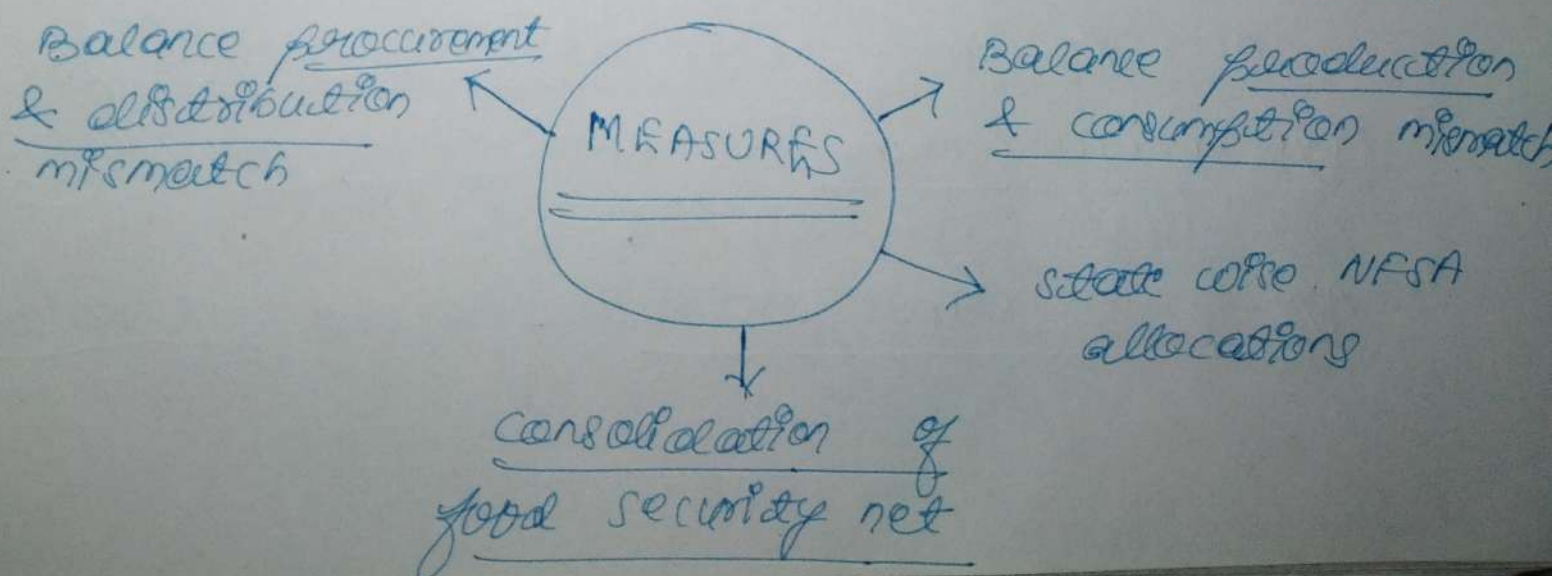
The paradox of 'hunger amidst plenty' has haunted India for a long time and shows no sign of going away. On the contrary, it reached a new plane in 2020.

⇒ WHAT IS THE SCENARIO? :-

- ↳ On the one hand; the economic recession precipitated by COVID-19 crisis and national lockdown exposed huge numbers of people to food insecurity (in both quantitative and qualitative terms).
- ↳ On the other hand; excess cereal stocks (mainly rice and wheat) have reached unprecedented levels and are all set to grow further in 2021.

The aforementioned scenarios reflect the imbalances in the distribution of food grains in the country.

⇒ VARIOUS MEASURES TO REDUCE THIS IMBALANCE :-



→ Procurement & Distribution — Procurement by MSP, Distribution by NFSA ~~rooms~~  
The gap between procurement and distribution may be filled through expanding distribution. This is reflected in recent PMGKAY under which an additional PDS ration of 5 kg per person per month were provided to NFSA cardholders.

→ Consolidation of food security net — The various possibilities in this regarding this are —

- Expanding the Antyodaya Programme
- Updating the population figures used to calculate the NFSA coverage.
- Raising monthly cereal rations above 5 kg per person
- Universalising the PDS in rural areas and urban slums
- Implementing one nation one ration card effectively.

→ State-wise NFSA allocations —

Another approach is to fix the percentage of NFSA allocations (state-wise) and let the states to decide to use the additional quotas within the PDS framework.

→ Production & consumption —

Acc. to India Human Deve. Survey (2<sup>nd</sup> J);

“Avg. cereal consumption” — below 12 kg per person per month (2011-12)”.

“Aggregate cereal production” — above 250 mln tones”.

This imbalance can be produced through;

- Diversification of agr.; especially towards nutritious crops - millets, pulses, oilseeds & vegetables.
- Balanced subsidies; higher MSPs for pulses, <sup>MSP</sup> active procurement and inclusion of pulses in PDS.
- Public support - such as marketing arrangements, credit facilities, scientific advice, effective insurance - especially for small farmers and deprived regions.