

Sociological study of the impact of foodgrain distribution under
Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana on the economic condition of rural families: in
the context of Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract - This study is based on primary data by adopting qualitative research methodology. Hunger is a common problem in a developing country like India with a population of billions and if free food grains are provided to 80 crore people through Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, then this work automatically brings change in the society. Government assistance and efforts are important to meet the food needs of the people in a welfare economy. This scheme was started at a time when the whole world was struggling with the Corona epidemic. The entire economy had come to a standstill, everyone's work was closed and even people with the title of poor, labourers were on the verge of dying of hunger. At that time this scheme was launched on 26 March 2020 by the Prime Minister of our country, Shri Narendra Modi. This is the biggest scheme ever in terms of food security. This program successfully maintained food security during an epidemic like Corona. This program proved to be very helpful in easing the standard of living and social status of the poor. And this is why this scheme is still in force.

Keywords - Food Security, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. Social Change, Rural Areas, Community Impact

Introduction - India's poverty alleviation and sustainable development depend on food security and equitable resource distribution. In rural areas where agricultural livelihoods are predominant, guaranteeing access to grain is crucial for enhancing social well-being and economic stability. The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), which was launched in 2020 as part of the government's response to the economic hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, was intended to address these problems by providing millions of vulnerable families with free foodgrain. During an unprecedented crisis, this initiative became a pillar of India's social safety net.

Uttar Pradesh, which is one of India's most populous and agrarian states, provides a compelling context for studying the effects of PMGKAY on rural households. Uttar Pradesh was in severe economic distress during the pandemic because a large part of its population lived in villages and relied on subsistence farming or daily-wage labor. PMGKAY aimed to provide free foodgrain to marginalized and economically disadvantaged groups in order to mitigate economic shocks and improve food security. This sociological study seeks to analyze the extent to which the distribution of foodgrain under PMGKAY has influenced the economic condition of rural families in Uttar Pradesh. It examines both the immediate and long-term impacts on household expenditure, livelihood stability, and social equity. By exploring these dimensions, the study aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of how welfare policies can mitigate economic vulnerabilities and foster resilience in rural communities. This sociological study aims to examine how much the economic situation of rural Uttar Pradesh families has been affected by the foodgrain distribution under PMGKAY. It looks at the effects on household expenditure, livelihood stability, and social equity both short and long term. The study aims to develop a complex understanding of how welfare policies can mitigate economic vulnerabilities and foster resilience in rural communities by examining these dimensions. Key questions guide the research: How has PMGKAY helped rural Uttar Pradesh families cope with food insecurity and financial stress? What are the sociological effects of this intervention on intra-household dynamics, gender roles, and community relationships? Additionally, the study aims to find scheme implementation issues and gaps, helping policymakers improve future schemes. This study aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of PMGKAY's role in shaping rural Uttar Pradesh's economic and social landscape by using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. By situating this analysis within the broader framework of rural development and welfare policies, the research underscores the critical importance of targeted interventions in addressing structural inequalities and encouraging inclusive growth.

Research Methodology –

This research paper is based on qualitative data including primary and secondary data. Under this, I have used ethnographic research design and its type is internal perspective.

Ethnographic methodology is that in which that aspect of human behaviour which is related to their day-to-day activities is studied. In this method, we collect data by living among the people, observe their expressions and then on that basis we analysed the data.

Emic perspective - This means that we get information about a community only from the people of that community.

Method of data collection -

Primary data collection method - For the study of this research paper, I have used observation and interview method. The method of interview is informal.

Secondary data collection method - Under this, I have used newspapers, research papers, news etc. Sampling method -

Size of sample - For this research paper I have selected 50 people.

Sampling area - Gontha village of Mau district of Uttar Pradesh has been selected for this research paper.

Data Analysis –

Consumerism says to increase happiness and reduce sorrows. A person will always want to do such work which gives him maximum benefit. The tendency to get maximum benefit through exchange is hedonistic and not individualistic. Anthropologists have studied primitive society and found that the practice of getting happiness through exchange is prevalent in tribes also. The intellectual roots of modern social exchange theory are linked to utilitarianism, psychology and anthropology. George Casper Homans is especially taken among modern social exchange theorists. According to this theory developed by Homans, there is a mutually beneficial relationship between the individual and the society. His theory is based on exchange behaviorism. His book The Human Group was published in 1950. In this book Homans came to the conclusion that the activities of the individual in any group are important. He outlined his exchange theory in this book. Homans developed his exchange theory in his book Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms, published in 1961.

Exchange Propositions of Social Exchange Theory -

1. The success proposition - This proposition states that the person repeats the tasks which benefit him.
2. The stimulus propositions - If a person's past tells him that he had received benefit due to some work, then he will repeat his past work.
3. The value proposition - If a person gets a more valuable benefit by doing an activity, then there is a possibility that he will repeat that activity.
4. The deprivation-satiation proposition - If a person gets benefit from an activity, then the value of this benefit will gradually decrease for the person.
5. the aggression - approval proposition - if a person does any activity to get some benefit and does not get the benefit then he becomes unhappy and gets the benefit by becoming aggressive

Homans does not talk about exchange behaviour anywhere in his above mentioned proposition. According to him exchange behaviour is not a swap but the entire form of social interaction is a form of exchange. The analysis of our paper is based on the above three propositions of Homans. We selected 50 data for this paper, which included both men and women. After interviewing them separately, it was found that PMGKAY scheme affects their lives not only economically but also socially and politically. This scheme is fulfilling the food needs of the people. This scheme is helping the person to buy everyday items. By selling grains, arrangements are also being made for medicines, oil, salt, children's fees etc. But on the other hand, they say that the government also has its own benefits in distributing free grains. They want votes and we want grains. On this basis, we can say that this scheme follows Homans' exchange principle. Because the government is also getting victory, due to which this scheme which was implemented only for the time of Covid-19 will continue till the present date or 2025. Under the value proposition, it is said that if a person gets more valuable benefit by doing an activity, then there is a possibility that he will repeat that activity, and the government is doing exactly the same.

We can also analysed this research paper on the basis of Peter Blau's social exchange theory, which is such that his social exchange theory is structural. He presented his

theory framework in his book *Exchange and Power in Social Life* (1964). Peter Blau's social exchange theory has been continuously related to the concept of power. Peter Blau has done the important work of advancing Homans' social exchange theory. Homans created a deductive theory on the basis of the study of small groups. In contrast, Peter Blau took the social structure in entire complex societies out of small groups and made it his object of study. He explained some rules of social exchange which are as follows - rule of prudence, rule of reciprocity, rule of justice, rule of marginal utility, rule of imbalance. We analyze our research paper on the basis of his second rule which is the rule of reciprocity. According to this rule, the more benefit a person gets from other people, the more he also does actions that benefit others. In case of getting benefit, gratitude is expressed and in the opposite situation, punishment is given. Since the government is giving free ration to the needy, it is also taking votes for itself in return. If it stops giving free ration, the public will stop voting for it, the brunt of which will be borne by both the groups. Therefore, this scheme follows Peter Blau's rule of reciprocity. Following are important aspects of Blau's exchange theory: Power comes from social exchange | In his book *Exchange and Power in Social Life*, Blau emphasized power's role | According to Blau, providing useful services to others is where power comes from | Blau says that power comes in two types: The first is that it increases people's dependence on useful services, and the second is that this power gives society freedom | Blau's crucial claim is that inequality exists in the embryo of exchange relations | When someone provides useful services to society, maintains power with himself, and the person who receives those services becomes dependent on this power. It has been rightly said by Blau that exchange gives birth to power. When we provide valuable services to someone, we are empowered and the people who are taking our services become dependent on us. For example, at present, the poor families do not even want employment, they only want food grains from the government. This is a kind of helplessness of the people. They want this government to remain in power by voting and they keep getting free ration because not all of us can get employment but we are definitely getting ration. We do not worry about what will happen if we do not get work tomorrow, what will happen if there is

no grain in the field, etc. On this basis, we can say that social exchange gives birth to power.

Conclusion –

The impact of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana has definitely been positive on the economic condition of the poor, but still this scheme is not able to reduce hunger. The ration of the poor is being saved by this scheme, those who want to sell it are selling it and getting profit in the form of capital. This scheme is feeding 80 crore people, yet why is our country so backward in terms of hunger. The Global Hunger Index report before Covid 19 shows that India's position was 102 out of 117 countries in 2019 and 103 in 2018. In 2020, it was at 94th place out of 107, in 2021 it was 101 out of 116, the score was 27.5. In 2022, it was at 107th place out of 121 and the score was 29. In 2023, it was at 111th place out of 125 and the score was 28.7 which indicates serious level. Whereas India's neighbouring countries like Pakistan are at 102, Bangladesh 81, Nepal 69, and Sri Lanka are at 60. And in the current report i.e. 2024, its rank is 105 out of 127 countries with a score of 27.3. This also indicates a serious situation.

There are 05 categories to measure the severity of hunger which are as follows -

- 50 is very worrying, or more points
- 35 to 49.9 - worrying
- 20 to 34.9 - serious points
- 10 to 19.9 - normal
- 9.9 or less - good

Perhaps one reason for this could also be that those who are not beneficiaries of this scheme are also taking advantage. The government does not have any data which can decide who are actually the beneficiaries of this scheme. The village's ration dealer is providing food grains to everyone because all the ration card holders are beneficiaries. This idea is based on ethnographic research and database.

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