

Antyoday Anna Yojana craving to reach needy: Study

■ By Ajay Mardikar

THE ambitious Antyoday Anna Yojana has not adequately reached the target group, and needs certain modifications in its implementation. The survey conducted by Dr Deepak Masram, Associate Professor with



Dr Deepak Masram

Tirpude College of Social Work, indicates neither very positive nor very negative response about the scheme in Nagpur division. The report based on the survey titled 'Food security in India: An evaluation study of PDS with special reference to Antyoday beneficiaries in selected districts of Vidarbha region in Maharashtra', was submitted to the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), which has published it.

The survey has indicated that the quality of foodgrains supplied through public distribution system (PDS) needs to be improved and at the same time the fair price shop owners should be forced to follow the rules. A large number of beneficiaries belong to backward classes are not aware of the system for redressal of their grievances about the system. Although majority of illiterates have opened bank accounts for getting direct

benefits transferred to their accounts, they are not happy with the overall functioning of the system.

Mainly because of lack of awareness, very less number of beneficiaries have actually lodged complaints with the Grievance Redressal Committee. A huge majority (3/4th) is not even aware of existence of such a committee.

About 26% of the respondents are very negative about the scheme, while majority of 45% did not reply and preferred to remain neutral. Only 29% beneficiaries were very positive about the scheme. Only 22% have expressed satisfaction over the quality of foodgrains supplied to them under the scheme. The remaining 78% are not satisfied with the quality of foodgrains.

Dr Masram has suggested that the method of categorising poor families based on income/expenditure should be eliminated. Appropriate method to identify the target group for Antyoday scheme should be devised. The definition of 'poor' by the Planning Commission also needs a review, so that the Food Security could be extended to those who actually need it. He has also sug-

Major findings

■ 6.6 crore families are below poverty line in the country. Of them 2.5 crore are poorest of the poor getting food under Antyoday Anna Yojana (AAY) ■ 58% are in joint family. They include 46% ST, 26% SC and 23% OBC ■ The monthly income of majority of the beneficiaries is between Rs 2,000 and Rs 4,000. They include 47% daily wage workers, 38% farm labourer ■ 45% are neutral, 29% very positive and 26% very negative about the impact of AAY on their economic status ■ More than 50% beneficiaries are ration card holders since the beginning of the scheme ■ 64% have bank accounts. Proportion of having bank accounts is higher among illiterates ■ 71%, both literate and illiterate have not considered availing benefits of PDF as social stigma ■ 55% PDS shops are run by private persons and 30% by co-operative societies ■ Majority have expressed displeasure over the quality of foodgrains supplied through PDS. Only 22% are satisfied with the quality ■ 30% respondents stated that samples of foodgrains for verification by the customers are not maintained. 28% stated that it is kept sometimes, but not always. Only 17% stated that it is always maintained. Similar is the situation about the display of stock, availability of foodgrains etc on the board. This display is mandatory under law ■ The quota missed is not given in the next installment, in majority of the cases ■ Majority of beneficiaries (75%) are not aware of any Grievance Redressal mechanism. 58.7% never approached grievance redressal committee ■ 33.6% feel the scheme is somewhat significant to them. The benefits availed is only upto 40.4%

gested that the vigilance committee should be made more accountable. Help of self-help groups could be taken in monitoring implementation of the

scheme. He has suggested control over pilferage of foodgrains in transport and other malpractices. This can be done by devising effective delivery system.