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## Food shortage in Belur Taluk Hassan District-A post pandemic study

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### Abstract

Food is the exilir of life. But there are many who during the pandemic time and after struggled for a single meal per day. To get a clear picture of the food crisis which occurred during the corona season of 2021 and in its aftermath a study was conducted in five villages of Belurtaluk. Belur and its twin place Halebeedu are heritage sites boasting of Karnataka 's cultural history. The sampled villages are Narayanapura, Hulikere, Lingapura,Tholalu and Vaginakere. The total sample size was 200.Though there was government run PDS fair price shops no rations were given even to ration holders. Anganwadi workers were the ones who cooked meals in grounds and village schools and fed the hungry masses. This was so because of lack of work and income in their own small land holdings. Community members who took care of their fellowmen were the ones who prepared the meals. The main communities were Gowdas, 50% Kurubas 25% and SC/ST 25%.Each community made their own meals arrangements. The target groups taken for study were small farmers with one acre or lesser than one acre. The main crops grown by them were groundnuts cowpeas and vegetables like brinjals, beans, carrots, cauliflower, cabbages, green chillies and broad beans. The study proceeded with the following objectives. A)To find out what were the main causes for food scarcity in the above sampled villages.B)To suggest a few remedial measures for removal of food scarcity. The research gap suggested difficulty in carrying out agricultural activities, small land holdings were the main drawbacks coupled with poverty which led to loss of two square meals per day.Part time working as guides in these tourist places brought some income but it was insufficient.Research Methodology used both primary and secondary data. Primary data formed the basis of the study. Secondary data was collected from articles published by previous authors and government reports.Simple random sampling was used to collect data and questionnaire method was designed to conduct face to face interviews.Descriptive analysis was followed.Measures suggested to rectify the situation to a certain extent was to bring back the agriculturelabourers to their villages and to fix minimum wages for them.Giving them BPL cards and minimum rations without missing for a single month is very beneficial to them. With food inflation on the rise though the production of important food grains such as paddy and wheat has increased manifold still hunger persisted in many villages of Belur.Abolishing pilferage of foodgrains and regulating the foodgrains marketdoing away with middlemen,are the other remedies for curbing food scarcity in Belur's villages.

**Keywords:** food scarcity, poverty, Ration cards, foodgrains ,agricultural activities.

### 1. Introduction

Belur is a historic temple town in Hassan District of Karnataka.Though tourism has flourished in Belur agriculture remains its main occupation. Post covid season it was noticed that there was food shortages in a few villages namely Narayanapuraa gram panchayath comprising of villages like Almidi, Channapura, Bennuru, Shettigereand Yakashettihalli.This was due to farmers havingsmall agricultural landholdings &labour shortages. problems.

Totally a hundred and fifty samples were collected from the field survey conducted in the above mentioned six villages.All the sampled respondents said that the government schemes were implemented but yet there was food shortage. Why? These were the current schemes of Karnataka Government for food security. 1.PaditharaKhathi 2014 was started to deliver foodgrains at Public distribution shops. 2.Ksheera Bhagya(2017-18)-Distribution of milk thrice a week to school children and child care centre besides endorsing the midday meal scheme of central government. The

government also provides 30 kgs of rice for Re.1 to feed the poor with two square meals per day. Their main intention was that the income spent on food can be spent on their children education and on family health benefits. Thus the main motive of the government was to addresss undernourishment malnutrition and hunger among the needy and have not. 4. AnnaBhagya Scheme which had the government distributing 5 kgs per month , food grains to BPL families free of cost 5.Steps to improve Public Distribution System by digitalizing of public distribution and food allotment to card holders and online details of ration cards. Even a grievance redressal mechanism related to PDS was started. MatruPurna Scheme was implemented by the Child Development Department This was for the benefit of pregnant and lactating mothers in rural areas where dal pulses eggs and groundnuts were distributed freely.Nama Canteen was started in 2017-18 with a budget of 100 crore per year where Saviruchi canteen was introduced. Here breakfast cost around 5Rs. And lunch was 10 Rs.7.Budget 2017-18 proposed eggs distribution to children of Anganwadi workers for two days per week. Implementation of integrated child development scheme ICDS where more nutritious could substitute packaged food.Food Distribution with SHG' and NGO's was started in 2018 in all rural areas.Besides diversification in procurement of pulses lentils oilseeds etc was also implemented in all fair price shops across the states.So when the government undertook such extensive measures to bring in food security why was there food shortage? So a field survey was carried out and Narayanpura gram panchayath of Belurtaluk was chosen for the study.

Sl.no	No. of sampled villages	No.of sampled responddents.
1	Narayanapura	50
2	Almidi	20
3	Chanapura	20
4	Bennuru	20
5	Shettigere	20
6	Yakashettihalli	20

**Source Field survey-2023 January-February.**

## 2 Review of Literature

**HanumanthaRao (2004)** According to National Sample Survey (NSS) data that the per capita households demand for food grains has been declining. Since per capita income has been rising, this would have led to some rise in per capita demand for food grains. The prices of food grains relative to the index of non-food grain prices have declined over a greater part of the last two decades, which would have also resulted in some rise in the demand for food grains. But the actual per capita demand for food grains has been declining. There must be powerful forces operating in our economic system which are dampening the demand for food grains. He cited some factors constraining consumption of food grains among the poor could be the need for increased expenditure on fuel and lights and on miscellaneous goods and services including on conveyance and medical services which have together received a sharp jump for rural population between 1970-71 and 1993-94.

**Swaminathan (2006)**, has equated food security with livelihood security at the levels of each household and all members within and involves ensuring both physical and economic access to balanced diet, safe drinking water, environment sanitation, primary education and basic health care. To give operational content to such a concept of food security, we should initiate a Hunger Free Area Programme consisting of ensuring sustainable availability of food, sustaining the productivity of the natural resource base, ensuring adequacy of household income through promotional social security, providing entitlement to food through protective social security measures and introduction of a National Food Security Act.

**DebeshBhowmick (2007)** the study about the worst form of deprivation is, according to hunger. But every person has the fundamental right to live in for satisfying his hunger taking safe and nutritious

food. For achieving world food security and abolish hunger, he suggested some immediate steps. They are (a) to supply calorie to those people who are consuming below the specified level of calorie intake, (b) to increase the weight of the children who are underweight and below 5 years, (c) to supply food to disabled hungry people, (d) arrange the essential services, such as medical facility, minimum education, sanitation, safe drinking water free from infections, diseases.

### 3 Research Gap

Loss of agricultural land holdings due to debts labour migration coupled with poverty which led to lack of two square meals per day. Measures to bring back the labourers with better wages and providing water and food in the place of work. As agricultural facilities are costly and loan facilities a must providing loans with low interest will help the farming community to earn better income. Provision of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers tractors tilling machines will help in case of labour shortages. Water was available with the Hemavathi river flowing by but harnessing it posed a problem. It was seen that most of the farmers were using bore well water, ponds and man made tanks for irrigation purposes. So ultimately it was lack of agricultural inputs and labour shortages which posed a big challenge to procure adequate foodgrains for all.

### 4 Objectives.

1. To compile the profile of the sampled respondents of Belur.
2. To find out the causes for food scarcity in all the sampled villages of Belur.
3. To suggest a few remedial measures to remove food shortages in the above mentioned villages.

### 5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table -1

SL NO	Name of the sampled village	No of sampled respondents	Access to BPL labor card	Access to two meals per day	Drinking water facility	Access to all welfare food street	Presence of PDS	Presence of fair price cups	Rations given per month	To child	To pregnant women
1	Naranapura	50	20%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
2	Almidi	20	35%	10%	-	10%	10%	10%	10%	-	15%
3	Channapura	20	30%	10%	-	-	10%	15%	10%	10%	15%
4	Shettigere	20	35%	10%	-	-	10%	15%	10%	10%	10%
5	Bennuru	20	30%	10%	-	-	10%	15%	10%	10%	15%
6	Yabashethiha lli	20	-	-	-	-	10%	15%	10%	10%	15%
		150									

#### Source Field Survey-2023 January -February

The highest no samples were collected from Narayanapura curd access to BPL cards was prevalent only around 26.16% had access out of 600 respondents from six villages had 10% respondents had access to two meals per day and 1.6% had access to drinking water and 3.33% had access to all government welfare facilities like food security schemes while only 10% laid there was public distribution system in all their villages .All percentages are calculated based on data from all the six villages presence of fair price shops 13.33% existed in all the six villages taken together .While rations given per month post covid season was 10% and child welfare schemes was 8.33% and pregnant women’s access to government food security schemes was around 13.33%.In all the six sampled villages taken together which in very low .Their main problem stated by these respondents was there was shortage of paddy production and ragi production which vegetables was less thus post covid their

major problem occurred due to shortage of agricultural labour to work in field as those who were during the pandemic never turned up.

**Table -2 The causes for food security in the six sampled villages**

SL N O	Name of the sampled village	No of sampled respondents	Insufficient agriculture inputs	Severel about shortage	Small and scattered land holdings	Deficiency in soil quality	Pilferage of food grains	No marketing and pricing was done as per rules	Regulated markets was absent	Middleman and money lender
1	Naranapura	50	20%	20%	20%	-	20%	10%	-	10%
2	Almidi	20	10%	10%	10%	10%	20%	20%	20%	20%
3	Channapura	20	10%	20%	10%	-	10%	10%	10%	20%
4	Shettigere	20	10%	20%	10%	-	20%	10%	10%	20%
5	Bennuru	20	10%	20%	10%	-	20%	20%	10%	10%
6	Yabashethi halli	20	10%	20%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	20%
	Total	150	11.66%	18.33%	10%	3.33%	16.66%	13.33%	8.33%	16.66%

**Source -Field Survey-January=February 2023.**

The first cause for food shortage was several labour shortage followed by pilferage of food grains from fair price shops and rice mandis. The other menace was the problem of middleman and moneylenders who food advantage of the poverty ridden farmers. Ultimately the times were hard and food inflation was prevalent despite a good yield.

**Limitations**

1. The major limitations were there was labour shortages which resulted in wastage of crops. This in turn led to shortages in foodgrain supply.
2. As per the BPL ration cards as most of the time there seemed to be shortages in foodgrains such as ragi and rice it affected the distribution of these grains.
3. There were many middlemen in the markets who interfered in the pricing and weighing of rice and pulses which resulted in farmers being paid less for their produce. For instance one quintal of rice cost 1,200 Rs approximately. But this was sold at around 450Rs.

**Suggestions**

1. More efforts by anganwadi workers and NGO's to ensure midday meals in schools were distributed on a daily basis..
2. The village panchayath committee should overlook the fair price shops foodgrains distribution and stop pilferage and wastage of freshly harvested crops. Storing foodgrains for a long time ingodowns will make them get spoilt. Avoiding there problems as far as possible will go a long way in saving food grains.

**Conclusion**

To conclude the main drawbacks for food scarcity in the above mentioned villages was labour shortages post covid season as labour preferred to migrate to cities in search of any jobs rather than to trust agricultural work which was riddled with uncertainties.

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