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Universal PDS: Efficiency and Equity Dimensions

Sowmya Dhanaraj and Smit Gade

Abstract

With the largest number of poor and malnourished population in the world, India faces renewed public pressure for universalisation of Public Distribution System (PDS) after the tabling of National Food Security Bill. In this regard, Tamil Nadu's model of universal PDS has been cited for its success in providing comprehensive food security. We conducted a survey in the Coimbatore-Tiruppur region of Tamil Nadu to assess the merits and demerits of a universal system. The survey covering 154 households seeks to understand the utilisation of PDS by the poor and the non-poor households, and if there is voluntary exclusion of the better-off sections from the system and the reasons behind this. It is found that the drop-out rate of non-poor households from the universal system is low. This is because around 25% of all households who are eligible for any PDS commodity reported selling one of the commodities or feeding them to livestock. Also, the entitlements of the poor to subsidized commodities are reduced in a uniform universal system. Based on the survey experience, this study puts forward an analytical framework to analyse the resource use efficiency and redistribution achieved in the food distribution system of India. Based on the theoretical framework and the observations from the survey, we make further recommendations in designing an optimal PDS model.

Do Farmers Need Free Electricity? Implications for Groundwater Use in South India

Elumalai Kannan

Abstract

The present study analyses farmers' perception on free farm electricity and groundwater extraction based on survey data collected from two South Indian states, viz., Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The study is prompted by lack of empirical evidence on farmers' perception on free power and groundwater overuse and its connection with public policy formulation. The study reveals that benefit from free electricity differed for different groups of farmers, and at the same time most farmers reported excess use of electricity leading to over-exploitation of groundwater. A high proportion of farmers did not want free electricity due to its poor quality and frequent power cuts, and hence expressed willingness to pay for its use.

Job Search Methods of Rural Migrants in Urban Unorganised Sector Labour Market in India

R Mariappan

Abstract

This paper analyses the job search methods of rural migrants in the urban unorganised labour market. The determinants of job search behaviour of migrants are analysed employing Maximum Likelihood Logit (MLL) techniques using primary survey data. Informal job channels play a more significant role for the rural migrants than other job search strategies in

terms of job-seekers' placement in the urban unorganised labour market. The data suggest that about 90 per cent of the sample workers got their job information through informal job channels before and after they moved to Chennai. The results of Logit suggest that migrant workers with formal education and landholdings have a positive and statistically significant effect on urban jobs; on the other hand, family migration and urban residence have a negative effect on urban job searches in the urban unorganised labour market.

Motorization of Fishing Craft and its Economic Impact: A Field Study in Andhra Pradesh

S Surapa Raju

Abstract

This study aims to compare and contrast motorized and traditional craft households in terms of (1) characteristics of fishing craft and source of finance to acquire the craft, (2) investment and returns from fishing craft; and (3) capital efficiency and profitability. The results of the study showed that motorized craft owners have been able to improve their fish catches and incomes compared to traditional craft owners. As a result of improved catches and incomes from motorization, the living standards of the fishing households have increased. So there is a need to extend credit facilities to other poor traditional craft owning households in the marine villages to improve their socio-economic condition. The study recommends supplying adequate varieties of nets to beneficiaries through co-operative societies and ice boxes to get more value for fish catches. In addition to this, it suggests providing GPS (Global Positioning System) at subsidized rates to these fishing households to get larger fish catches by locating possible fishing areas with minimum expenditure on fuel and to get higher profits from their fishing units.

Urban Agriculture: A Step towards Food Security

Swati Rajput

Abstract

Urban planning is not just about positioning the infrastructure and designing concrete structures; it is also about designing in such a way that it fulfills the need of the huge population residing in it. In India, Master Plans have been ignoring the importance of agriculture in and near the city. Agricultural areas are becoming homes to skyscrapers, roads and malls. Every year, the urban areas welcome migrants resulting in mushrooming of slums and homeless people. This leads to unemployment and food insecurity. This paper focuses on the importance of agriculture in urban and peri-urban areas to target the problem of food security.