

SC's Recent Question on Food Security

Why is in News?

The Supreme Court recently said states showed a high per capita growth when asked to highlight the development index but claimed 75% of their population was below poverty line when it came to subsidies.

The Indian government uses Below Poverty Line (BPL) to identify and target assistance to those with incomes below a specific threshold, considered to be living in poverty.

- **Questions of Supreme Court** - The SC asked about the contradicting behavior of states claiming high per capita income while having a significant population below the poverty line.
- The apex court asked whether the subsidized ration system, meant to provide food security to the deserving poor, was merely a ploy by governments to garner popularity.
- The court said corruption and mismanagement of the Public Distribution System must not be a ground to discourage its implementation.
- The court was hearing petitions seeking ration cards for migrant workers to ensure food security.
- **Legal provisions** - The court said the poor have a right to access **at least 2 square meals a day** in terms of their fundamental right to life under **Article 21** of the Constitution.
- **Central government's clarification** - Union government was duty-bound under the National Food Security Act to provide food grains.
- She said the coverage under the Act was **81.35%**. There was additional coverage for 11 crore people under the Anganwadi scheme, and further coverage for another 22-crore people.
- **Challenges** - The Supreme Court, in an earlier hearing, had taken strong exception to the delays in the implementation of its April 2023 order to provide ration cards to about 8 crore migrant workers registered on the [e-Shram portal](#) but not covered under the National Food Security Act.
- The court was then informed that the portal had 28.6 crore registrants. Of this, 20.63 crore were registered on ration card data.
- SC had argued that there could be more than 10 crore workers left outside the protective umbrella of the Food Safety Act as the statistics were **based on the 2011 census**.
- The population would have increased since then. The court had underscored the duty of a welfare state to include each and every migrant worker on the ration card roll expeditiously.

Reference

[The Hindu - Supreme Court Question on High Per capita income](#)

