

# WHAT IS A "SURPLUS" STATE ? PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION OF RICE IN A. P.

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In recent years, there have been a few national-level estimates of the requirements for public distribution based on a set of norms relating to minimum coverage and minimum quantum per unit covered.<sup>1</sup> However, apart from studies on Gujarat and Kerala,<sup>2</sup> very few state-level studies dealing with past performance and/or estimating gaps between the minimum desirable coverage and actual performance of the public distribution system have appeared. The object of this note is to assess the public distribution system in Andhra Pradesh as it operated during the three recent years (1973-74-1975-76); to estimate district-wise requirements on the basis of minimum norms for coverage and for quantum to be distributed per unit covered; and compare these requirements with (a) production and procurement potential of rice of each district for determining district-wise surplus/deficit position and (b) the quantities of food grains actually distributed so as to arrive at the gaps between desirable coverage and actual performance.

## *Section I*

### *The desirable level of requirements for public distribution*

At the national level, three studies estimated the requirements for public distribution; viz. (i) The National Commission of Agriculture; (ii) I. S. Gulati and T. N. Krishnan; and (iii) V. S. Vyas and S. C. Bandhopadhyay. These estimates differ from each other with respect to (a) coverage of population and (b) quantum of foodgrains per unit to be distributed. While the first two estimates are based on a

<sup>1</sup> National Commission on Agriculture, "Report on Agricultural Price Policy", February, 1975; I. S. Gulati and T. N. Krishnan, "Public Distribution and Procurement of Foodgrains: A Proposal", *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 24, 1975; and V. S. Vyas and S. C. Bandhopadhyay, "National Food Policy in the Framework of a National Food Budget", *Economic and Political Weekly*, March 29, 1975.

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, "Poverty, Unemployment and Development Policy—A Case Study of Selected Issues with Reference to Kerala", Vol. I, March, 1975; and Y. K. Alagh, "Report of the Committee on the Economics of Public Distribution System in Gujarat".