

WORKING AND PERFORMANCE OF FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA IN PUNJAB

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Abstract

Food Corporation of India (FCI) is a non-profit food marketing organization in India. FCI is responsible for the procurement, storage, movement and distribution of foodgrains across the country, on behalf of the Government of India. The government held foodgrains buffer stock for the monthly release of foodgrains for supply under TPDS and for meeting emergencies. Punjab is called as 'Food Bowl' of India since it contributes a large amount of paddy and wheat to the central pool. The present paper discusses the organizational structure of FCI and reviews the working of the Food Corporation of India in Punjab state. Moreover, the paper examines the performance of FCI in Punjab. A substantial body of literature highlights the various issues related to the functioning of FCI, with some studies being conducted in various Indian states. There is a huge gap in the literature on the functioning and performance of FCI in Punjab. The paper is based on secondary data. The data on foodgrain procurement, storage, movement, and distribution from 2014-15 to 2019-20 was collected from several issues of the Punjab Statistical Abstracts, the Economic Survey of Punjab, the Bulletin on food statistics, website of FCI, and from the annual reports of FCI. The results demonstrated that the share of FCI in the procurement of wheat and paddy in Punjab state has decreased during the study period. The research indicated that FCI in Punjab state is doing exceptionally well, but faces obstacles in terms of movement and distribution of crops.

Keyword: Buffer Stock, Movement, Procurement, Public Distribution, TPDS.

1. INTRODUCTION

Food Corporation of India (FCI) is a public sector undertaking established on 14th January 1965 under the Food Corporation Act, 1964 of Parliament for the trading of foodgrains and foodstuffs with the authorized capital of 100 crores. The corporation is the primary government entity in charge of carrying out the Government of India's food policies (Annual report of FCI, 2018-19). FCI operates under the administrative supervision and direction of the Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD), the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India (GOI). FCI's primary functions include foodgrain procurement, storage, transportation, distribution, and buffer stock maintenance. Aside from these operations, FCI sells wheat and rice in the open market regularly to increase the availability of foodgrains during the lean season and to reduce open market prices. Since its inception, FCI has efficiently dealt with the complex issue of guaranteeing food security for the country.

Punjab has played a critical role in bringing the country's foodgrain production to self-sufficiency. Until the mid-1960s, India's foodgrain output growth remained insufficient to meet continuous domestic demand. The green revolution of the late 1960s resulted in considerable changes in the country's agricultural output pattern. It increased agricultural output by orders of magnitude in many Indian states. Punjab state's agricultural productivity has also expanded significantly during the green revolution period. Punjab state Government has formed its corporation and four other agencies for the procurement of foodgrains. FCI executes foodgrain procurement in Punjab in collaboration with five Punjab state procurement agencies (NITI Aayog, 2016).

The five public agencies in Punjab are:-

1. Punjab State Grains Procurement Corporation Limited (PUNGRAIN)
2. Punjab State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited (PUNSUP)
3. Punjab Agro Foodgrains Corporation Limited (PAFC)
4. Punjab State Warehousing Corporation (PSWC)
5. Punjab State Co-operative Supply & Marketing Federation Limited (MARKFED)

and 18 percent of wheat production even though the state's percentage share of the country's area under cultivation of these two crops is 7 percent and 12 percent respectively (Punjab Economic Survey, 2019-20). Punjab's total contribution to the central pool of rice and wheat has increased from 188.40 lakh tonnes (LT) in 2010-11 to 217.01 LT in 2016-17, comprising of 110.52 LT of rice and 106.49 LT of wheat (Jindal, 2018). In 2019-20, the overall contribution of Punjab state in the central pool is increased to 237.88 LT (Table-1).

Punjab is still known as 'India's Granary' because it contributes 12 percent of the country's rice production

Table-1
Contribution of Punjab in wheat and rice to the Central Pool
(Figs. in Lakh Tonnes)

Year	Wheat		Paddy	
	Contribution to the Central Pool	Percentage share to the Central Pool	Contribution to the Central Pool	Percentage share to the Central Pool
2014-15	116.41	41.5	77.86	24.2
2015-16	103.44	36.8	93.50	27.3
2016-17	106.49	46.4	110.52	29.0
2017-18	117.06	37.97	118.33	30.98
2018-19	126.92	35.46	118.34	25.53
2019-20	129.12	37.82	108.76	20.92

Source- Compiled from various issues of Statistical Abstract of Punjab

Table-2 shows the total contribution of rice and wheat by the Punjab state to the central pool in June 2021. The total stock of foodgrains of the Punjab region in June

2021 was 292.25 Lakh MT from which stock with FCI was 140.24 Lakh MT and stock with Punjab state agencies was 152.01 Lakh MT.

Table-2
Total Stock of Foodgrains of Punjab Region in Central Pool as of 1st June 2021
(Figs. in Lakh MT)

STOCKS	Stock With FCI	Stock With State Agencies	Total Central Pool Stock
RICE	111.40	0.00	111.40
WHEAT	28.84	152.01	180.85
TOTAL	140.24	152.01	292.25

Source;- Food Corporation of India website, <https://fci.gov.in/aboutUs.php>

2. OBJECTIVES

1. To study the organizational structure of FCI.
2. To examine the working and performance of FCI in Punjab state.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on secondary data. The data of procurement, storage, movement, and distribution of

foodgrains from 2014-15 to 2019-20 was collected from various issues of Statistical Abstracts of Punjab, Economic survey of Punjab, Bulletin on food statistics, website of FCI, and from the annual reports of FCI. Percentages and averages were used to analyze the data to get the proper conclusion of the study.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gulati, Pradeep, and Satu (1996) assessed the role and performance of the Food Corporation of India and concluded that the availability of foodgrains has increased with successful operations of FCI but the target of distribution of foodgrains to poor consumers has not been fully achieved.

Ramesh (2008) has examined the role of FCI in foodgrains procurement in Andhra Pradesh. The study revealed that the contribution of direct paddy procurement by FCI is very low whereas levy procurement has a 90 to 95 percent share in total paddy procurement in some selected areas of the state.

Choudhry & Dhingra (2013) studied the nature of the food grain market in India. The study highlighted that mainly, wheat and paddy have been procured by the FCI and both crops experienced a high inflation rate. It was concluded that the fiscal burden on the country has increased.

Chaturvedi & Raj (2015) in their study analyzed the problems and challenges faced by the agricultural warehousing industry. They revealed that government procurement agencies, including FCI did not have adequate covered storage capacities and modern storage facilities to store food grains procured from farmers.

5. NEED OF THE STUDY

The above-cited studies throw some light on the functioning of the Food Corporation of India. A few studies explore the problem of wastage and damage of foodgrains in FCI godowns. These studies are conducted

in India. A few studies on foodgrains are conducted in different states of India, but the study on the working and performance of FCI in Punjab state is not conducted. Thus, there is a need of relevant study to be organized.

6. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF FCI

FCI operates through the nationwide network with its headquarters at New Delhi, 5 Zonal offices, 25 regional offices, and 163 divisional offices. Over 2000 Depots are working under FCI (As of March 2020). FCI has a manpower of 20851 employees (As on 31 March 2020).

The head offices of Zonal offices of FCI in India are as follows:-

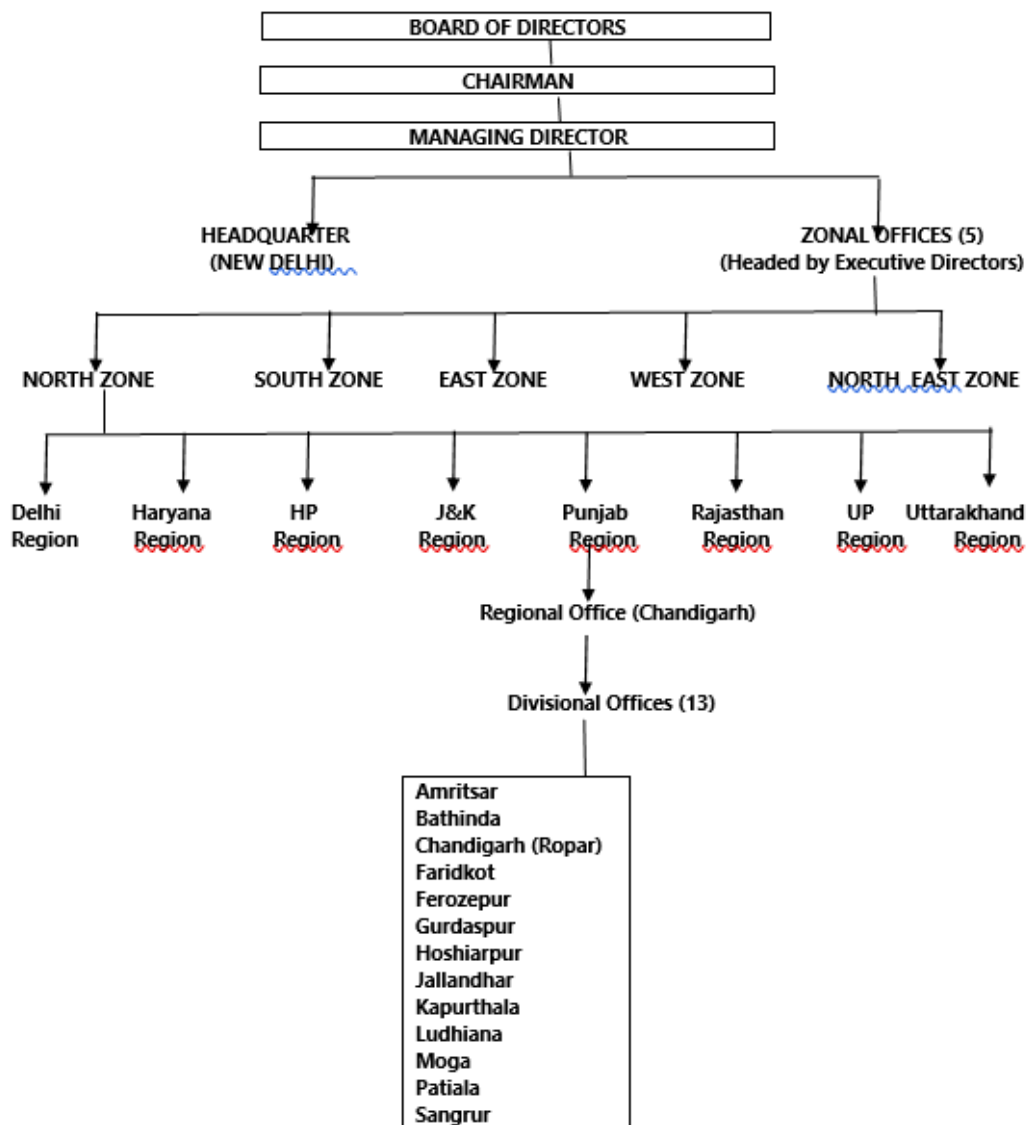
1. East Zonal Office -Kolkata
2. West Zonal Office - Mumbai
3. North Zonal Office – Noida (New Delhi)
4. South Zonal Office - Chennai
5. North East Zonal Office – Guwahati

The management of the Food Corporation of India is controlled by the Board of Directors in carrying out its functions. The headquarter of the FCI is headed by a Chairman and Managing Director. The Zonal offices of the FCI are headed by an Executive Director and control their work through the regional offices. The regional offices of each Zonal office manage their work through the divisional offices headed by Divisional Manager in each region.

6.1. Organisational Structure of FCI in Punjab

Punjab is one of the regions of Food Corporation of India and comes under North Zone, New Delhi. There is one Regional Office of FCI in Punjab state located at Chandigarh. FCI has 13 divisional offices in Punjab, each managed by a Divisional Manager. These offices are located in the Amritsar, Bathinda, Chandigarh (Ropar), Faridkot, Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Ludhiana, Moga, Patiala, and Sangrur districts in Punjab state as shown in Chart-1.

CHART-1
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF FCI



Source- Annual Report of FCI 2019-20.

7.1. Procurement

7. WORKING OF FCI IN PUNJAB

FCI mainly deals with procurement, storage, movement, and distribution of foodgrains in association with state agencies. The working of FCI can be described as follows;

- A. Procurement
- B. Storage
- C. Movement
- D. Distribution

FCI purchases wheat and paddy from farmers on behalf of GOI every year through state government agencies at the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) set by the government. The MSP of wheat and rice is based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). There are two procurement systems for foodgrains in India, i.e., Centralized Procurement System and Decentralize Procurement System. Under Centralized Procurement System, FCI purchases foodgrains directly from farmers, or state

government agencies purchase foodgrains from farmers and provide them to FCI. Whereas, state governments handle direct procurement, storage, and distribution of foodgrains for TPDS and other welfare initiatives under the Decentralized Procurement Scheme (Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, 2018). FCI takes surplus stocks into the central pool after deducting the demands of the state.

Punjab has implemented a Decentralized Procurement Scheme for wheat crops. The state government purchases wheat for the central pool, store it, and distribute it through the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and other welfare schemes (OWS) depending on the central government's allotment. In

the case of rice procurement, the state government purchased paddy directly from farmers and then shipped it to be custom milled. Aside from that, the rice millers also purchased some quantity of paddy from the farmers. They turn paddy into the rice and provide it to FCI and state government agencies.

Table 3 depicts the production and procurement of wheat and paddy in Punjab state from the period 2014-15 to 2019-20. The table shows that the production of wheat has increased from 15050 thousand tonnes to 18262 in 2019-20 whereas the procurement of wheat has increased from 112932 thousand tonnes to 12685 thousand tonnes in the same period.

Table-3
Production and Procurement of wheat and paddy in Punjab
(Fig. in Thousand Tonnes)

Year	Wheat		Paddy	
	Production	Procurement	Production	Procurement
2014-15	15050	11932	11111	11841
2015-16	16068	10506	17621	14333
2016-17	17636	11834	18863	17915
2017-18	17830	11834	19966	17972
2018-19	18262	17281	19135	17027
2019-20	18262	12685	19135	16381

Source- Compiled from various issues of Statistical Abstract of Punjab

Table 4 depicts the agency wise procurement of wheat and paddy in Punjab. The table shows that the share of FCI in the procurement of wheat in Punjab has decreased from 18.38 Lakh MTs in 2014-15 to 15.72 Lakh MTs in 2019-20. The share of FCI in the procurement of Paddy in Punjab has also decreased

from 2.88 Lakh MTs to 2.24 Lakh MTs in 2019-20. However, the Total procurement of wheat and paddy has increased from 116.41 Lakh MTs and 116.21 Lakh MTs to 129.12 Lakh MTs to 62.33 Lakh MTs respectively in Punjab.

TABLE- 4
Agency-wise procurement in Punjab for Central pool
(In Lakh MTs)

Year	Procurement of wheat			Procurement of paddy		
	FCI	State agencies	Total	FCI	State agencies	Total
2014-15	18.38	98.03	116.41	2.88	113.33	116.21
2015-16	18.47	84.97	103.44	6.54	133.02	139.56
2016-17	17.48	89.01	106.49	7.66	157.30	164.96
2017-18	14.53	102.53	117.06	3.81	172.80	176.61
2018-19	15.31	111.61	126.92	2.52	166.64	169.09
2019-20	15.72	113.40	129.12	2.24	160.09	162.33

Source- Food Corporation of India website, <https://fci.gov.in/aboutUs.php>

7.2. Storage

Storage is an important function of FCI. Food Corporation of India, Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC), and State Warehousing Corporations (SWCs) are the three public sector organizations in India that are primarily involved in the development of large-scale storage capacity (Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers welfare, 2017). However, FCI stores enormous amounts of foodgrains to meet the prescribed minimum buffer stock norms for food security and the management of

the country's buffer supplies. The purchased food grains are stored in covered godowns, silos, or uncovered godowns known as Cover and Plinth (CAP). FCI owns godowns and also rents storage space from CWC, SWC, and other private parties. Aside from that, the government developed the Private Entrepreneurs Guarantee (PEG) Scheme in 2008 to assist private entrepreneurs, CWCs, and SWCs in developing storage godowns in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode to ease storage shortages around the country.

TABLE- 5
State Owned Storage Capacity in Punjab (as on 31st March 2021)
(Fig. in Lakh Tonnes)

Agency/Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Food Corporation of India	111.80	109.53	112.79	115.06	115.88	124.74
Food and Supply Department	29.32	46.50	46.50	34.30	42.61	36.91
Marketing Federation	0.88	0,74	13.61	32.67	40.95	39.91
State Warehousing Corporation	20.80	20.64	17.57	17.00	18.80	17.82
Central Warehousing Corporation	7.03	7.06	7.13	7.02	7.02	7.02
Punjab State Civil Supply Corporation	30.79	29.44	29.44	28.64	28.10	28.22
Marketing Board	0.08	0.22	0.49	0.49	0.33	0.64
Punjab Agro Industries Corporation	20.25	18.86	18.86	10.93	18.86	14.82
Total	220.95	232.84	246.39	246.11	272.55	270.08

Source- Various Issues of Statistical Abstracts of Punjab

Table 5 shows the storage capacity owned by the state of Punjab. The total storage capacity of Punjab state has increased from 220.95 Lakh tonnes to 270.08 Lakh tonnes from 2014-15 to 2019-20. The storage capacity of FCI in the Punjab state has also increased from 111.80 Lakh tonnes to 124.74 Lakh tonnes in the same period.

7.3. Movement of Foodgrains

Foodgrain movement is crucial to FCI's operation. It is a critical component in achieving the country's food security goals. To meet the requirements of foodgrains for TPDS and to maintain adequate levels of buffer stockpiles at several important locations across the country, FCI began the transportation of foodgrains from surplus states to deficit states and within the states. FCI transports foodgrains through rail, road, and riverine means to evacuate surplus foodgrain inventories from

surplus regions. FCI headquarters sets a plan for the distribution of foodgrains on a monthly basis. For the plan, it considers the number of foodgrains available in surplus states as well as the amount needed by consuming states. Because Punjab is a surplus region, the procured wheat, and rice supplies in Punjab state are transported to deficit regions of the country every month, according to the FCI Headquarters' Sponsored Movement Plan.

7.3.1. Allocation and Movement of Foodgrains

Table 7 displays the movement of stock by FCI through railways and roadways from Punjab state. A perusal of the table shows that the total allocation of foodgrains during 2019 LMT and actual movement was 221.80 LMT constituting 87.26 percent. The actual stock moved with reference to a total allocation of foodgrains was 91.94 percent in 2019-20. While 311,50 LMT of foodgrains

were allocated in 2020-21, only 77.65% of the stock was moved to the deficit regions.

Table- 7
Movement of stock by Rail and Road from Punjab
(In Lakh MT)

Year	Allocation			Movement			Percentage
	Wheat	Rice	Total	Wheat	Rice	Total	
2014-15	114.74	139.45	254.19	97.67	124.13	221.80	87.26s
2015-16	114.64	87.37	202.01	100.98	76.53	177.51	87.87
2016-17	157.45	102.95	260.40	126.05	88.04	214.09	82.22
2017-18	98.98	116.08	215.06	90.32	101.53	191.85	89.21
2018-19	90.69	121.5	212.19	75.87	103.51	179.38	84.54
2019-20	94.93	78.77	173.70	87.40	72.30	159.70	91.94
2020-21	131.92	179.58	311.50	104.95	136.92	241.87	77.65

Source- Movement, Food Corporation of India website, <https://fci.gov.in/movements.php>

7.3.2. Supply of rakes by railways for Movement of Foodgrains

The position of actual loaded rakes in comparison to planned rakes from 2014-15 to 2020-21 is indicated in Table 8.

Table-8
No. of Rakes Loaded by FCI during previous years in Punjab

Year	Planned			Loaded			Percentage
	Wheat	Rice	Total	Wheat	Rice	Total	
2014-15	3962	4791	8753	3298	4072	7370	84.20
2015-16	3989	2902	6891	3434	2481	5915	85.84
2016-17	5602	3438	9040	4223	2729	6952	76.90
2017-18	3455	3923	7378	2953	3142	6095	82.61
2018-19	3090	3941	7031	2490	3254	5744	81.70
2019-20	3060	2380	5440	2861	2106	4967	91.31
2020-21	4113	5538	9651	3447	4433	7880	81.65

Source- Food Corporation of India website, <https://fci.gov.in/aboutUs.php>

The table shows that only 7370 rakes were loaded in 2014-15, accounting for 84.20 percent of the total 8753 rakes planned. The rakes loaded with reference to planned rakes was 81.65 percent in 2020-21. The percentage of the loaded rakes in comparison to the actual planned rakes varies from 76.90 percent to 91.31 percent during the study period. Thus, minor deviations were found in FCI's loaded rakes compared to movement plans.

7.4. Distribution

The Government of India developed a Public Distribution System under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution to provide food security to the poor people by delivering subsidized food and non-food goods to the most vulnerable members of society.

(a). Targeted Public Distribution System

In June 1997, GOI established a program known as Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) that

targeted the underprivileged. The TPDS is run jointly by the State and federal governments, with the central government allocating procured foodgrains to each state. The foodgrains are distributed around the country through a network of Fair Price Shops (FPS). The GOI established Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) under the TPDS in December 2000 for the lowest BPL families.

(b). Allocation and off-take under TPDS

The majority of the foodgrains are supplied under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) of 2013, and other government welfare programs. Foodgrains from the Central Pool were distributed to the States/UTs for distribution to the poor sections of the society by the Government of India. Based on GOI's allotment, state

governments lift (off-take) the foodgrains from the Central Pool for distribution to the impoverished households. FCI issues the stocks to the Punjab state government, which then sells them to the fair price shop dealers. PUNSUP is the Punjab state government designated organization for lifting the foodgrains from the godowns according to allocation and distributing them to the depot holders for onward distribution to Punjab's beneficiaries.

Table 9 depicts the allocation and offtake of wheat by FCI in the Punjab region from 2017-18 to 2020-21. It indicates that total wheat lifted is 8.32 and LMT from 8.99 LMT allotted wheat in 2017-18, In 2020-21, 14.85 LMT wheat was allotted from which 14.32 LMT wheat was lifted by FCI from Punjab state.

TABLE-9
Allocation and offtake of Wheat by FCI in Punjab Region
(in Lakh MTs)

Year	Allocation of Wheat					Wheat Lifted				
	NFSA	PMGKAY	Standard Migrant	OWS	Total	NFSA	PMGKAY	Standard Migrant	OWS	Total
2017-18	8.70	0.00	0.00	0.29	8.99	8.1	0.00	0.00	0.22	8.32
2018-19	8.70	0.00	0.00	0.28	8.98	7.87	0.00	0.00	0.25	8.12
2019-20	8.70	0.00	0.00	0.24	8.94	7.67	0.00	0.00	0.23	7.90
2020-21	8.70	5.64	0.14	0.37	14.85	8.31	5.62	0.14	0.35	14.32

Source- Food Corporation of India website, <https://fci.gov.in/aboutUs.php>

The allocation and offtake of rice by FCI in the Punjab region from 2017-18 to 2020-21 is shown in Table 10. It indicates that 0.34 LMT rice were lifted by the FCI from

the total allotted 0.37 LMT of rice in 2017-18. The 0.46 LMT rice was lifted from the Punjab state against the allotment of 0.48 LMT rice in 2020-21 by FCI.

TABLE-10
Allocation and offtake of Rice by FCI in Punjab Region
(Figs. In Lakh MTs)

Year	Allocation of rice					Rice lifted				
	NFSA	PMGKAY	Standard Migrant	OWS	Total	NFSA	PMGKAY	Standard Migrant	OWS	Total
2017-18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.37	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.34	0.34
2018-19	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.38	0.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.36	0.36
2019-20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.34	0.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.34	0.34
2020-21	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.48	0.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.46	0.46

Source- Food Corporation of India website, <https://fci.gov.in/aboutUs.php>

Thus, modest differences in foodgrain allocation and offtake of rice were identified. The magnitude of FCI would be determined by its function in PDS feeding. To achieve national food security, the government must reevaluate the amount of buffer stock that should be held by public entities.

8. CONCLUSION

The current system of involvement through the FCI in Punjab state combines a number of actions and goals. The FCI is in charge of foodgrain procurement, storage, transportation and distribution. During the study period, FCI's share of wheat and paddy procurement in Punjab state has reduced. The overall amount of foodgrains allocated by FCI and the amount of foodgrain actually transferred to deficit regions varies. Minor discrepancies in FCI's loaded rakes were discovered when compared to movement plans. There were also minimal differences in foodgrain allocation and offtake of wheat and rice in Punjab state during the study period. Despite the challenges it has in terms of movement and distribution of foodgrains, the FCI in Punjab state is performing admirably. However, FCI should begin to refocus and reorganise itself in order to improve its performance.

8. PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper is solely applicable to the state of Punjab as the present study is focused on the working and performance of FCI in Punjab state. Hence, the paper's conclusions may not apply to all states. The working process and performance of FCI in different Indian states or the entire country can be assessed in the future. The financial status of FCI can also be examined in the further research work. Moreover, the profit and loss of FCI in different Indian states or in the entire India can be examined.

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