

CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND AWARENESS AMONG IN FAIR PRICE SHOP (RATION SHOP) AT CHIDAMBARAM TOWN, CUDDALORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

A public distribution shop, also known as fair price shop (FPS), is a part of India's public system established by the Government of India which distributes rations at a subsidized price to the poor. Locally these are known as ration shops and public distribution shops, and chiefly sell wheat, rice and sugar at a price lower than the market price called Issue Price. Other essential commodities may also be sold. To buy items one must have a ration card. These shops are operated throughout the country by joint assistance of central and state government. The items from these shops are much cheaper but are of average quality. Ration shops are now present in most localities, village's towns and cities. India has 478,000 shops, constituting the largest distribution network in the world. The present study aims to find out the Consumer Satisfaction and Awareness among in Fair Price Shop (Ratio Shop) at Chidambaram Town, Cuddalore District. A samples of 91 respondents selected randomly were studied. Primary data were collected by using a structured interview scheduled. All the respondents were asked the some questions in the same fashion and they were informed the purpose of study. Cross tabulation and Percentage analysis were applied. The findings and observations are the result and outcome of the interpretations made during the study of analysis.

Key words: Awareness and Demographic variables, Consumer Satisfaction, Fair Price Shop

INTRODUCTION

Tamil Nadu has a universal PDS, where all households are entitled food ' from ration shop, including 20 kg of rice per month. In many other states, the Targeted PDS could be accessed only by Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. In those states, BPL lists are far

from perfect, firstly they cover too few households, and secondly, they come with a lot of exclusion errors. As a result, the Targeted PDS does not ensure food security in early time. But now impact is particularly large in those states with a well-functioning PDS reinforcing recent evidence of the fact that PDS is now an important source of economic security for poor people in many states. But the Tamil Nadu state followed the old system of universal PDS 35 kg rice is distributed to AAY families and 20 kg rice is distributed to rest of the families which are supplied through Civil Supplies and Co-operative Societies.

Licensing of Fair Price Shops

Fair price shops or ration shops form the last mile delivery of the TPDS network. Ration shops can be owned privately, by co-operative societies or the government. The owners of ration shops are licensed under the PDS (Control) Order, 2001 to sell essential commodities at central issue prices. Ration shop owners are issued licenses by state governments and have certain responsibilities under the scheme. These responsibilities include:

- (i) Sale of commodities as per the entitlement of ration card holders at the retail issue prices fixed by state governments.
- (ii) Maintenance of records and the display of information such as the list of BPL and AAY beneficiaries, entitlements of essential commodities, timings of shops, and opening and closing stocks.
- (iii) Maintenance of accounts of actual distribution of essential commodities and the balance stock at the end of the month to government officials and the gram panchayat.

Targeted Public Distribution System

The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) was introduced w.e.f. June 1, 1997. TPDS envisaged that the Below Poverty Line (BPL) population would be identified in every State and every BPL family would be entitled to a certain quantity of food grains at specially subsidized prices. While BPL population were offered food grains at half the economic cost, the APL, who were not to have a fixed entitlement to food grains, were supplied grains at their economic cost. Thus, TPDS intends to target the subsidized

provision of food grains to 'poor in all areas' unlike RPDS, which laid stress on 'all in poor areas'. The guidelines for the implementation of TPDS were issued by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution in 1997.

Timeline of PDS: 1930s to present

PDS	1940s	Launched as general entitlement scheme
TPDS	1997	PDS was revamped to target poor households
Antyodaya Anna Yojana	2000	Scheme launched to target the „poorest of the poor"
PDS Control Order	2001	Government notified this Order to administer TPDS
PUCL vs. Union of India	2001	Ongoing case in Supreme Court contending that "right to food" is a fundamental right
National Food Security Act	2013	Act to provide legal right to food to the poor

Agency of Fair Price Shop

Sl.no	Agency	Full time	Part time	Total
1	Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation	1,178	277	1,455
2	Cooperatives (Under R.C.S)	23,727	9,100	32,827
3	Other Co-operatives	314	162	476
4	Women fair price shops, including Self Help Groups	370	41	411
	Total	25,589	9580	35,169

Source: Tamilnadu Civil Supplies Corporation

Types of card

S.No	Particular	Commodities entitled	No. of Cards
1	PHH	All Commodities including Sugar	76,99,940
2	PHH-AAY	All Commodities including 35Kgs of Rice	18,64,600
3	NPHH	All Commodities including Rice	90,08,842
4	NPHH-S	Sugar Option Card (All Commodities except Rice)	10,01,605
5	NPHH-NC	No Commodity	41,106
	Total		1,96,16,093

Source: Tamilnadu Civil Supplies Corporation

Monthly Allotment of Rice in Tamil Nadu

S.No	Category	Monthly allotment (in MTs)	Price (R.s per kg)
1	Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)	57437.202	3.00
2	Priority cards	135783.900	3.00
3	Tide over	99773.138	8.30
	Total	292994.240	

Source: Tamilnadu Civil Supplies Corporation

Scale of Supply of Commodities

S.No	Name of the Commodity	Price per kg	Scale of supply
1	Rice	Free of Cost (as per Hon'ble Chief Minister's Announcement) (w.e.f 01.06.2011)	All rice card holders are eligible for 5 kg of rice per person (including a child) per month or erstwhile entitlement (prior to NFS) whichever is higher. All AAY cards are supplied with 35 Kg per month
2	Sugar	Rs. 13.50 per Kg. for AAY cards and Rs. 25/- for all other cards	500 grams per head per month subject to a maximum of 2 kgs. per month. In the care of sugar option cardholders, 500 grams per head per month plus an additional quantity of 3 kg of , sugar subject to a maximum of 5 kg per month
3	Wheat	Free of Cost	Out of the rice entitlement of a family card, 10 kgs per month in Chennai City and district head quarters and 5 kgs per month in other areas are issued in lieu of rice at free of cost subject to the availability of wheat.
4	Kerosene	Rs. 13.60 to Rs. 14.20 per litre	Ranges from 3-15 litres per family card depending upon the possession of LpG Connection and place of residence of the family cardholders.

Source: Tamilnadu Civil Supplies Corporation

The purpose of establishing Public Distribution System may not be satisfied until the subsidized products are distributed to the real beneficiaries. Further, the functioning of Public Distribution System is said to be success only if the number of population in Below Poverty Line diminishes. Whereas, in India contradictory results are noticed (i.e.) Quantum

of below poverty line population is ever expanding, which implies that the goods distributed through fair price shops have not reached the true beneficiaries. Unless, the PDS goods are distributed to genuine recipient, poverty may not be reduced in our country. Hence, in this study an effort has been made to ascertain the problems that exist at public distribution system at Chidambaram town and to suggest methods to resolve the problems.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Balchand (2011) says that Poor households holding BPL or AAY cards purchased some 30% of the total TPDS grain sales (estimated at 12.17 million tonnes), while other poor households managed to buy another 8%, or one million tonnes.⁸ Out of total TPDS grain sales, poor households hence bought about 38%. As the poor accounted automatically included are the homeless and others who are completely destitute (3- 4%). Other households are to be assessed according to seven indicators and ranked in order of priority in the BPL list. All-in-all, with the new guidelines, 46% of rural households are expected to be included in the BPL list. 100.

Basu (2011) says that, The Chief Economist at the Ministry of Finance has given the nod for replacing food subsidies with cash or food coupons, although with some reservations. The GOI and the Planning Commission seem split, however, and have yet to commit either to a CT scheme or to a thoroughly reformed PDS. 101

Himanshu and Sen (2011) proposed scheme, there would be three constituencies entitled to purchase subsidised grains at different prices. Based on projected demand for PDS grains at these prices, the authors estimate the annual outgo subsidy required at Rs 794 billion. The lowest of these pure subsidy estimates could be financed within the current overall food subsidy budget, but would leave nothing for other programmes. Moreover, none of the estimates include the running costs of an enlarged semi-universal PDS.

Brij Pal (2011) in his study it has been found in many states that ration cards are being mortgaged to ration shop owners and the beneficiaries are not aware about their rights. It is suggested that there should clear cut policy

Anshu and Vinit Kumar (2011) stated that the Public distribution system has an obvious relationship with anti-poverty issues because only such a system can have the infrastructure to deliver essential commodities to meet their minimum food requirements of BPL households, to control prices in the open market and to deliver food grains to beneficiaries of welfare and anti poverty programmed. Public distribution system serves two purposes first in controlling prices and protecting the consumers from exploitation by the leading community.

Sarbapriya and Ishita (2011) stated that food security means availability, accessibility and affordability of food to all people at all times. The poor households are more vulnerable to food insecurity whenever there is a problem of production or distribution of food crops. Food security depends on the Public Distribution System (PDS) and government vigilance and action at times, when this security is threatened.

Velmurugan and Lavanya (2017) in his study A Study on Customers Satisfaction towards Public Distribution System. The purpose of setting-up Public Distribution System will be nullified, unless real beneficiaries have not utilized the products offered at fair price shops optimally. Unless, customers are satisfied with regard to services offered at fair price shops, they may not make use of service of fair price shops to a maximum extent. Thus, in this study a serious attempt has been made to identify the factor that enhances customer's satisfaction. The study has been carried at Coimbatore District of Tamilnadu. By adopting convenient sampling, feedback obtained from 900 card holders. The collected data are analyzed through Chi-square test. Result of study disclose that customer satisfaction which is associated with age, occupation, family income, family expenditure, possibility of obtaining goods all over the month, accuracy in weight on goods distributed etc.

Mahendran and Indrakant (2014) stated that Public Distribution System in Tamil Nadu, India: Rice Supply Scheme of Prosperous, Problems and Policy. It is indicate Public Distribution System (PDS) a poverty alleviation programme and contributes towards the social welfare of the people. Essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar, kerosene are supplied to the people under the PDS at reasonable prices. As per the announcement of Govt

of Tamil Nadu, from 01st June 2011 onwards the rice is supplied at free of cost. Rice is important and stable food for poor people and PDS is a back bone to the below poverty line family. This study analysis the impact of free rice in coastal region population in the state. In this study multi- stage random sampling was used to select different coastal districts. The results showed that only 17.4 percent of poor families are utilizing and others are buying in open market and black markets. The system facing many problems in inside and outside the state.

Velmurugan.R and Lavanya.D (2017) in their study titled Problems in Public Distribution System at Coimbatore District. It is indicate Vicious circle of poverty in India may not be reduced until the goods distributed at fair price shops reaches the ultimate beneficiaries. Government adopts various steps to clear the problems prevailing at PDS. Still, a number of problems prevail at fair price shops, thereby the real beneficiaries have not received the goods distributed at fair price shops. Thus, the present study has been carried out to ascertain the problems that prevail at Public Distribution System at Coimbatore District. Data required for the study have been collected through the Questionnaire. By adopting a convenient sampling method, data are collected from 900 card holders. The collected data are analyzed by employing the factor analysis. The result of the study disclose that the fair price shops are found over crowded, public have to spend two to three hours for buying goods at PDS, non availability of new stock etc.,

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the performance of Public Distribution System in Tamilnadu.
2. To study the satisfaction level in fair price shops in Chidambaram town.
3. To identify the problems relating to the implementations of the fair price shops in Chidambaram town.
4. To offer suggestions to improve the working of fair price shop.

Methodology

Data required for the study is primary in nature. Thus, the primary data have been collected by employing the Interview Schedule. The secondary data is collected from

journals, articles, Tamilnadu fps record through internet. The present study is confined to the Customers who avail services of fair price shop (Ratio Shop) in Chidambaram town of Cuddalore district. The fair price shop study is adopting convenient sampling method used. In the selected sample size is 91 in Chidambaram town. The collected data have been analyzed by making use of simple percentage analysis method. Data utilized for the study is primary in nature. Hence, all sorts of limitations applicable to primary data are applicable to present study too. Further, the present study is confined to Chidambaram town.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	35	38.5
Female	56	61.5
Total	91	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 1 show that out of respondents 38.5 percent of respondents are belong to the male. 61.5 percent of respondents are belong to the female. Hence, the majority of the respondents are female.

Table 2: Age wise of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below-20	24	26.4
20 to 30	8	8.8
30 to 40	16	17.6
Above 40	43	47.3
Total	91	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 2 show that out of respondents 26.4 percent of respondents are belong to the below-20, 8.8 percent of respondents are belong to the 20 to 30, 17.6 percent of respondents are belong to the below 30to40,47.3 percent of respondents are belong to the below above 40. Hence, the majority of respondents age group is above 40.

Table 3: Education level of the Respondents

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	48	52.7
SSLC/HSC	25	27.5
College level	18	19.8
Total	91	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 3 show that out of respondents 52.7 percent of respondents are belong to the illiterate, 27.5 percent of respondents are belong to the SSLC\HSC,19.8 percent of respondents are belong to the college level. Hence, the majority of respondents are illiterate.

Table 4: Marital status of the Respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	63	69.2
Unmarried	28	30.8
Total	91	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 4 show that out of respondents 69.2 percent of respondents are belong to the married.30.8 percent of respondents are the belong to the unmarried. Hence, the majority of respondents are purchased in married.

Table 5: Family Type of the Respondents

Family	Frequency	Percentage
Join	36	39.6
Nuclear	55	60.4
Percentage	Percentage	Percentage

Source: Primary data

Table 5 show that out of respondents 39.6 percent of respondents are belong to the join, 60.4 percent of respondents are belong to the nuclear. Hence, the majority of the respondents are nuclear.

Table 6: Monthly Income of the Respondents

Income	Frequency	Percentage
Below Rs.5000	16	17.6
Rs.5001-10000	28	30.8
Rs.10001-15000	35	38.5
Rs. 15001-20000	12	13.2
Total	91	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 6 show that out of respondents 17.6 percent of respondents are belong to the Rs.5000, 30.8 percent of respondents are belong the Rs.5001-10000, 38.5percent of respondents are belong to the Rs.10001-15000, 13.2percent of respondent are belong the Rs.150001-20000. Hence, the majority of respondents income in Rs.10001-15000.

Table 7: Family Size of the Respondents

Size	Frequency	Percentage
3 members	19	20.9
4 members	44	48.4
5 members	20	22.0
More than 5	8	8.8
Total	91	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 7 show that out of respondents 20.9 percent of respondents are belong to the 3 members, 48.4 percent of respondents are belong the 4 members,22.0 percent of respondents are belong the 5 members,8.8 percent of respondents are belong to the more than 5.Hence,the majority of respondents family size in 4 members.

Table 8: Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	20	22.0
House wife	25	27.5
Douceur	36	39.6
Business	10	11.0
Total	91	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 8 show that out of respondents 22.0 percent of respondents are belong to the student, 27.5 percent of respondents are belong to the house wife, 39.6 percent of respondents are belong to the douceur, 11.0 percent of belong to the business. Hence, the majority of respondents douceur.

Table 9: Prefer of the Goods

Goods	Frequency	Percentage
Rice	22	29.7
Sugar	23	25.3
Wheat	27	24.2
Kerosene	19	20.9
Total	91	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 9 show that out of respondents 24.2 percent of respondents are belong to the rice, 25.3 percent of respondents are belong to the sugar, 29.7 percent of respondents are belong to the wheat, 20.9 percent of respondents are belong to the kerosene. Hence, the majority of respondents are purchased in rice.

Table 10: Good Purchased of the Respondents

Purchased	Frequency	Percentage
Controlled Commodities	50	55
Uncontrolled Commodities	41	45
Total	91	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 10 show that out of respondents 55 per cent of controlled commodities and 45 per cent for uncontrolled commodities. It is concludes that the majority of the consumers controlled commodities in fair price jobs.

Table 11: Customer Satisfaction level in FPS

S. No.	Sources	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1.	Weight of goods	16	16	31	18	10	90
		17.6	17.6	34.1	19.8	11.0	100
2.	Workers approach	39	16	18	10	8	91
		42.9	17.6	19.8	11.0	8.8	100
3.	Price of goods	6	10	25	20	30	91
		6.6	11.0	27.5	22.0	33.0	100
4.	Quality of goods	32	10	35	10	4	91
		35.2	11.0	38.5	11.0	4.4	100
5.	Quickly purchased	5	57	14	6	9	91
		5.5	62.6	15.4	6.6	9.9	100
6.	SMS system of goods received	9	17	12	15	38	91
		9.9	18.7	13.2	16.5	41.8	100
7.	Availability of goods	8	16	23	26	18	91
		8.8	17.6	25.3	28.6	19.8	100
8.	Opening time	12	18	34	12	15	91
		13.2	19.8	37.4	13.2	16.5	100
9.	Workers working hours	12	16	22	12	29	91
		13.2	17.6	24.2	13.2	31.9	100
10.	Smart ration card (Chip)	4	6	10	30	41	91
		4.4	6.6	11.0	33.0	40.0	100

Source: Primary data

Table 11 that clearly indicate that out of 91 respondents in agree 35.2 per cent of the respondents are belong to the weight of goods, 60.5 per cent of the respondents are belong to the Workers approach, 17.6 per cent of the respondents are belong to the Price of goods, 46.2 per cent of the respondents are belong to the quickly purchased, 28.6 per cent respondents are belong to the SMS system of goods received, 26.4 per cent of the respondents are belong to the availability of goods, 33 per cent of the respondents are belong to the opening time, 30.8 per cent of the respondents are belong to the workers working hours, 11 per cent of the respondents are belong to the smart ration card(chip).

Table 12: Problem of the Respondents

S. No.	Sources	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1.	Black marketing	8	12	8	45	18	91
		8.8	13.2	8.8	49.5	19.8	100.0
2.	Adulteration	6	8	12	39	26	91
		6.6	8.8	13.2	42.9	28.6	100.0
3.	Irregularity in the opening of FPS	8	14	14	35	20	91
		8.8	15.4	15.4	38.5	22.0	100.0
4.	Long distance of distribution point	6	17	15	33	20	91
		6.6	18.7	16.5	36.3	22.0	100.0
5.	Political intervention	6	19	22	39	13	91
		6.6	20.9	24.2	34.1	14.3	100.0
6.	Non display of information on notice board regarding availability of commodities	8	9	24	37	13	91

Source: Primary data

Table 12 clearly indicate that out of 91 respondents in agree 22 per cent of the respondents belong to the black marketing, 15.4 per cent Of the respondents belong to the adulteration, 24.2 per cent of the respondents belong to the irregularity in the opening of FPS, 25.3 per cent of the respondents belong to the long distance of distribution point, 27.5 per cent of the respondents belong to the political intervention, 18.7 per cent of the respondents belong to the non display of information on notice board regarding availability of commodities.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the study, following suggestions have been offered.

1. Special Task force (STF) may be formed by Government to look after the issue of food adulteration. Sufficient Precautionary Measures have to be undertaken by STF to avoid Adulteration at the time of Procurement of goods and at the time of distribution of goods.
2. Inferior quality goods should not be distributed to the general public.
3. Accurate electronic weighing machine must be given to FPS and ration shops by the government.
4. To avoid over crowd, token system (or) time slot may be allotted to consumers.

5. Goods should not be sold in open market (or) neighboring States for which Government officials have to take necessary steps, thereby shortage of goods at fair price shops may be avoided.
6. The inventory level of goods and goods to be distributed are to be displayed in the notice board.
7. Employees of PDS shops have to initiate necessary step for ordering necessary
8. Goods in advance, when stock level reaches minimum level so that there would

CONCLUSION

Family cardholders prefer to acquire goods on fair price shops only when the goods are available at right time, right quantity and quality. Nevertheless, the cardholder's face various problems like, over crowd at fair price shops, public have to wait two to three hours for receiving goods from fair price shops, distribution of old goods, exorbitant delay in distribution of goods by staff members at PDS, paucity of stock at fair price shops etc., Hence, the Civil Supply Corporation have to initiate necessary actions immediately to curtail the problems that exist at fair price shops else the real purpose of establishing public distribution system may not be fulfilled.

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