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Problems in Public Distribution System

¹Dr.R.Velmurugan ²Mrs.D.Lavanya

¹Associate Professor in Commerce Karpagam University, Coimbatore – 21 drvelsngm@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor in Commerce Karpagam University, Coimbatore – 21 lavanmithu@gmail.com

Abstract

To minimize the poverty level among general public, Government of India promoted Public distribution system for extending basic necessary goods at subsidized rates. But their primary motto has not been fulfilled due to numerous problems prevailing in PDS. Thus, an attempt has been made in this study to ascertain the Problems prevailing in PDS. The result of the study indicates that Adulteration, Distribution of inferior quality goods, Under Weighment are the common problems found in Public distribution system.

Keywords: Public distribution System; Adulteration; Under Weighment.

Introduction

Evolution of Public distribution of grains in India had its origin in the 'rationing' system introduced by the British during the World War II. In view of the fact that the rationing system and its successor, the public distribution system (PDS) has played an important role in attaining higher levels of the household food security and completely eliminating the threats of famines from the face of the country. The system was started in 1939 in Bombay and subsequently extended to other cities and towns. By the end of 1943, 13 cities had been brought under the coverage of rationing and by 1946; as many as 771 cities/towns were covered. Some rural areas, suffering from chronic shortage were also covered. Ever Since the independence in 1947, one of the aims of Government of India has been to provide Food Security to all the citizens of India. Keeping this objective in mind, Public distribution system (PDS) was started by Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Civil Supplies. TamilNadu Government is implementing Universal Public Distribution System (UPDS) and no exclusion is made based on the income criteria. The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) was introduced with effect from June, 1997. The TamilNadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC) is a 'No profit No loss' Public Sector Undertaking of Government of TamilNadu. The Corporation is entrusted with the responsibilities of procurement, storage and distribution of essential commodities under the Public Distribution System. Distribution of commodity's through fair price shop at free of cost or at subsidized rate fixed by the Government of Tamil Nadu and is carried out by TamilNadu Civil Supplies Corporation and the Cooperative societies. However, the Primary goals of Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation have not been met due to the malpractices that have been found in public distribution system. To quote a few, following are the common problems that have been faced in PDS Adulteration, poor quality of goods, under weighment, overcrowd, shortage of stocks and the like. To find prominent problem that prevails in the fair price shops, the following study has been carried out.

Review of Literature

Nakkiran.S (2004)"in his study entitled "A Study on the Effectiveness of Public Distribution System In Rural Tamilnadu" found that leakage, under weighment, inability to obtain ration cards, infrequent opening of the Fair Price Shops, frequent stock-out situations, distribution of inferior quality of food grains, non awareness of their entitlement, and non-existence of grievance-redress channel are the problems faced by the general public in PDS. Mahendran A and Indrakant S (2014) in their study "Public Distribution System in Tamil Nadu, India: Rice Supply Scheme of Prosperous, Problems and Policy" founds that sale of goods in open market is the major problem in PDS. Swaminathan A.M (2010) in his study entitled "Public distribution system in Tamil Nadu: Evaluation of its impact and examination of policy options" observed that under weighment and non-availability of all the commodities at the same time" are the problems found in PDS. Megha (2013) in her topic "Ensuring food security with an efficient Public Distribution System" identifies that inclusion of people who are not eligible into BPL, circulation of Ghost Cards and Shadow Ownership are the problems found in PDS. Sawant. S , and Rahul J. Jadhav (2013) in their study "Public Distribution System of Essential Commodities as a Social Security(A Study of Satara District Maharashtra)" examined that supply of poor quality goods,

weight cutting, non-availability of commodities, calculating PDS articles in open market are the problems prevailing in PDS. Ananth Krishnan (2007) in his topic “Report finds problems in PDS in TamilNadu” stated that there is a Lack of transparency and smuggling of food grains to neighboring states are the problems found in PDS.

Statement of the Problem

To distribute essential commodity at subsidized rate to the general public, who belong to below poverty line, public distribution system has been established by Government of India. But, various malpractices have been carried out in public distribution system namely distribution of inferior quality goods (Nakkiran, 2014), under weightment of goods (Swaminathan, 2010), circulation of ghost cards (Megha, 2013), circulation of PDS articles in open market (Sawant and Rahul, 2013). As a result, eligible beneficiaries are unable to obtain goods from public distribution shops. Thus, main goal of Government has not been fulfilled as a result of problems prevailing in PDS. Thus, the present study has been undertaken with an aim of identifying problems in PDS and to offer solutions to contain the same.

Objective of the Study: To find the problems faced by the general public.

Research Methodology

Data: Data required for the study is Primary in nature. Primary data has been collected by making use of Interview schedule.

Study Area: The present study has been carried out in Pollachi taluk of Coimbatore district.

Sampling: By adopting convenient sampling method, 150 consumers residing in Pollachi taluk have been selected for the study.

Framework of Analysis: The collected data have been analyzed by making use of Garrett raking method.

Limitations of the Study

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 Pollachi taluk. Hence, utmost care to be exercised while generalizing the result.

Analysis and Interpretation

Garrett's Ranking Technique has been used to analyze the problems faced by consumers at Fair Price Shops. The Following table illustrates the Problems, which are frequently faced by the Consumers.

Table 1
PROBLEMS IN PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
	82	71	64	58	53	48	43	37	30	19				
Under Weightment	73	38	12	7	5	3	2	3	4	3	150	10641	70.94	3
	5986	2698	768	406	265	144	86	111	120	57				
Poor Quality of Goods	75	35	17	8	4	3	2	3	2	1	150	10819	72.13	2
	6150	2485	1088	464	212	144	86	111	60	19				
No Timely Supply	31	42	29	18	9	3	4	6	5	3	150	9646	64.31	8
	2542	2982	1856	1044	477	144	172	222	150	57				
Non Display of Information on Notice Board Regarding Availability of Commodities	55	31	24	16	11	7	3	1	1	1	150	10309	68.73	6
	4510	2201	1536	928	583	336	129	37	30	19				
Adulteration	77	42	20	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	150	11070	73.80	1
	6314	2982	1280	174	106	48	43	74	30	19				
Inconvenient Working Time	47	39	21	15	12	5	2	4	3	2	150	10075	67.17	7
	3854	2769	1344	870	636	240	86	148	90	38				
Compel to Buy Unwanted Grocery Goods	36	32	21	18	16	11	6	5	3	2	150	9559	63.73	9
	2952	2272	1344	1044	848	528	258	185	90	38				
Over Crowd	72	28	17	11	9	7	2	1	2	1	150	10633	70.89	4
	5904	1988	1088	638	477	336	86	37	60	19				
Shortage of Stocks	69	31	15	9	6	10	4	2	3	1	150	10494	69.96	5
	5658	2201	960	522	318	480	172	74	90	19				
Unable to Obtain Free Items	28	29	32	21	11	15	7	4	2	1	150	9452	63.01	10
	2296	2059	2048	1218	583	720	301	148	60	19				

From the analysis, it is found that adulteration is the main problem faced by consumers followed by Poor quality of goods, Under Weightment and the like.

Suggestions

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

- 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.
- Sales persons and PDS staff-incharge have to be dismissed, if they indulge in Adulteration.
- Inferior quality goods should not be distributed to the general public.
- Accurate electronic weighing machine must be given to FPS and ration shops by the government.
- To avoid over crowd, token system (or) time slot may be allotted to consumers.

- 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.
- The inventory level of goods and goods to be distributed are to be displayed in the notice board.

Conclusion

To deliver PDS goods to the real beneficiaries, public distribution system has to be streamlined by stringently punishing the persons who assist for mischief of goods. Further, local service clubs like rotary club, lions club and non government officials should assist government employees in eradicating the problems that prevail in public distribution system. Thereby, the government motto of eradicating poverty may be attained.

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