

Glimpse of Awareness on Public Distribution System in Tamilnadu State

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ABSTRACT

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, it will be in the fitness of things that its evolution, working and efficacy are examined in some details.

1. INTRODUCTION

It was really the generation of World War's own compulsions that forced the then British Government to introduce the first structured public distribution of cereals in India through the rationing system-sale of a fixed quantity of ration (rice or wheat) to entitled families (ration card holders) in specified cities/towns. 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.

Keywords: Public distribution system, Ration, food security

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (PDS) is an Indian food security system. Established by the Government of India under Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution and managed jointly with state governments in India, it distributes subsidized food and non-food items to India's poor. Major commodities distributed include staple food grains, such as wheat, rice, sugar, and kerosene, through a network of public distribution shops (also known as ration shops) established in several states across the country. Food Corporation of India, a Government-owned corporation, procures and maintains the PDS.

MEANING

A public distribution shop, also known as fair price shop (FPS) or Ration Shop. It is a part of India's public distribution system established by Government of India which distributes rations at a subsidized price to the poor. It is built around a network roughly 4, 62,000 Fair price shops often referred to as ration shops. Food Corporation of India, a government owned corporation, procures and maintains the public distribution system.

The primary policy objective of department of food and public distribution is to ensure the food security for the country timely and efficient procurement and distribution of food grains.

PRESENT SCENARIO

TDPS system today supports over 40 crore Indians below the poverty line with monthly supply of subsidized food grains. The system also provides gainful employment for 4.78 lakh fair shops owners, their employees and hired labor who work at Food Corporation of India and state ware housing godsons. PDS has also become a corner stone of government development policy and is tied to implementation of most rural development programs. PDS is also a key driver of public sentiment and is an important and very visible metric of government performance. For every Rs.4 spent on PDS, only Rs.1 reaches the poor 57% of the PDS food grain does not reach the intended people”.

2. OBJECTIVES OF PDS

- Providing food grains and other essential items to vulnerable sections of the society at reasonable subsidized prize.
- To put an indirect check on the open market prizes of various items.
- To attempt socialization in the matter of distribution of essential commodities.

NEED OF PDS

Great role in serving the poor people. PDS is a critical source for food security of the poor, especially urban poor and particularly women who manage house hold food supplies.

FEATURES OF PDS

MAINTAINING PRICE STABILITY

Public distribution system keeps the price stable throughout the year by managing flow of food items in the market.

SOCIAL WELFARE

It ensures that poor section of the society also has the access to the food. There are many programmes run by the government such as the Annapoorna yojna. Public distribution system provides food for the implementation of such programmes.

RATIONING DURING THE SCARCITY

Public distribution system also keep the buffer of food grain in the warehouses so that flow of food remain active even during the period of less agricultural food production.

KEEPING A CHECK ON PRIVATE TRADE

Public distribution system also keeps an eye on the hoarders and black markets who try for windfall gain at the cost of poor people and other consumers

RESPONSIBILITY

- The central and state governments shared the responsibility of regulating the PDS. While the central government is responsible for procurement, storage, transportation, and bulk allocation of food grains, state governments hold the responsibility for distributing the same to the consumers through the established network of Fair Price Shops (FPSs).
- State governments are also responsible for operational responsibilities including allocation and identification of families below poverty line, issue of ration cards, supervision and monitoring the functioning of FPSs.

BENEFITS OF PDS

It has helped in stabilizing food prices and making food available to consumers at affordable prices. It has helped in avoiding hunger and famine by supplying food from surplus regions of the country to deficient regions. The system of minimum support price and procurement has contributed to increase in food grain production

DISADVANTAGES OF PDS

Instances of hunger occur despite granaries being full. This points to certain lacunae or inefficiency in the system. High level of buffer stocks often leads to wastage of foodgrains and deterioration in quality. The storage of food grains inculcates high carrying costs on the government. The provision of minimum support price has encouraged farmers to divert land from production of coarse grains that are consumed by poor, to rice and wheat

FURTHER IMPROVEMENT OF PDS

To improve the current system of the PDS, the following suggestions are: Vigilance squad should be strengthened to detect corruption, which is an added expenditure for taxpayers. Personnel-in-charge of the department should be chosen locally. Margin of profit should be increased for honest business, in which case the market system is more apt anyway. F.C.I. and other prominent agencies should provide quality food grains for distribution, which is a tall order for an agency that has no real incentive to do so. Frequent checks & raids should be conducted to eliminate bogus and duplicate cards, which is again an added expenditure and not full proof. The Civil Supplies Corporation should open fairer price shops in rural areas. The fair price dealers seldom display rate chart and quantity available in the block-boards in front of the shop. This should be enforced.

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