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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	A STUDY OF VOCATIONAL MATURITY OF COMMERCE STREAM ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN RELATION TO PERSONALITY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT <i>DR. SIMRAN KAUR SANDHU & VANDANA AGGARWAL</i>	1
2.	A STUDY OF GREEN CONSUMERISM AND FACTORS INFLUENCING GREEN PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR <i>VIJAY PRAKASH ANAND</i>	4
3.	BANK RISK MANAGEMENT AND ROLE OF RESERVE BANK OF INDIA-A STUDY <i>DR. GIRISH KUMAR PAINOLI & DR. G. S. GAUD</i>	8
4.	EFFECTS OF HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT ON FOOD SECURITY: A CASE OF KWALE COUNTY, KENYA <i>HASSAN, MOHAMED KEINAN & MOSES. M. OTIENO</i>	11
5.	COST OF CAPITAL, CAPITAL STRUCTURE AND VALUE OF FIRM <i>DR. H. J. GHOSH ROY, DR. A. S. BOORA, DR. GARIMA DALAL & DR. SONIA</i>	18
6.	A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON BLUE OCEAN STRATEGY <i>N. SANTOSH KUMAR & DR. M. K. PURUSHOTHAMA</i>	26
7.	A STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON EMPLOYEE WORK BEHAVIOR IN NESTLE, CHENNAI, INDIA <i>S.SUSENDIRAN & DR. T. VETRIVEL</i>	29
8.	ORIENTATIONS: A CAPACITY BUILDING TOOL FOR IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION OF HEALTH WORKERS REGARDING NON SCALPEL VASECTOMY <i>DR. RAKESH MEHRA, CHANDER PAL THAKUR, SWATI MAHAPATRA, CHAHAT NARULA & DR. TAPAN JYOTI KALITA</i>	33
9.	WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR TANK MAINTENANCE: A STUDY ON TANK IRRIGATION IN THE DRY ZONES OF WEST BENGAL IN INDIA <i>SEBAK KUMAR JANA</i>	37
10.	MGNREGA: A BOON TO RURAL WOMEN IN HIMACHAL PRADESH <i>DR. SATINDER SINGH RANDHAWA</i>	40
11.	EXAMINATION AS A DETERRENT: A CASE STUDY ON EXAMINATION PHOBIA AMONG HIGHER AND SENIOR SECONDARY LEVEL STUDENTS OF MORADABAD CITY <i>DR. CHANCHAL CHAWLA, DR. SONIA GUPTA & TUSHAR MAHAJAN</i>	45
12.	SOCIO-ECONOMIC SEGMENTATION OF THE HOUSEHOLDS OF AUTO RICKSHAW OWNERS: A CASE STUDY OF TRIPURA <i>MANISH DAS & NIRMALYA DEBNATH</i>	50
13.	A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF PERFORMANCE AND IMAGE OUTCOME EXPECTATIONS ON INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOUR IN THE WORKPLACE <i>DEEPAK BABU & SIBY JOSE</i>	56
14.	MEASURING STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES: A CASE ON OMAN AND BAHRAIN <i>SUHAILA E. ALHASHEMI</i>	64
15.	DETERMINANTS OF FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT INFLOWS INTO INDIA: A FACTOR ANALYSIS <i>DR. S. JAYARAJ & ADEWALE ADENIYI-KIE</i>	76
16.	A CRITICALITY TESTING ON HUMAN RESOURCE AND TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT FACTORS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A PERSPECTIVE FROM INDIA <i>MEETA MANDAVIYA</i>	83
17.	OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF RECRUITING LESS THAN THE REQUIRED – A CASE OF GSRTC <i>DR. MEHUL G. THAKKAR</i>	87
18.	FOREIGN POLICY OF INDIA AND THE STATE OF SIKKIM: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE OF TRANS-NATIONAL BOUNDARIES IN NATHULA REGION <i>DHANRAJ RAI</i>	92
19.	REGULATING NATIONAL HIGHWAYS IN LIGHT OF THE CHANGING SCENARIO <i>ABHINAB GHOSH</i>	96
20.	THE STUDY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EARNINGS MANAGEMENT AND THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS AND RENT EXCHANGE IN COMPANIES LISTED IN CAPITAL MARKET OF IRAN <i>SEYYED SAEB MOUSAVI & MOHAMMAD REZA POURALI</i>	98
21.	A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF WOMEN LEADERS OF CIVIL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS IN AMHARA REGION, ETHIOPIA <i>GASHAW MOGES YIMER</i>	103
22.	IMPACT OF PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM ON FOOD SECURITY OF RURAL AND URBAN POOR <i>SAWALE SANGHARSHA BALIRAM</i>	109
23.	RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COOPERATIVE AND SOCIALIST MOVEMENTS IN THE FORMATIVE YEARS <i>VINCENT DODOO</i>	113
24.	BALANCE OF PAYMENTS CONSTRAINT GROWTH: AN ARDL APPROACH <i>ASLI SEDA BILMAN & MEHMET CETIN</i>	118
25.	POTATO PRICING: A SOLEMN DILEMMA FACED BY THE FARMERS OF BANGLADESH <i>ABDULLAH ISHAK KHAN, FARZANA AFROZ & MOHAMMAD MOHIUDDIN</i>	126
26.	THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS) IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT <i>ANILKUMAR B KOTE</i>	133
27.	EXPORT OF INDIAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS: PRE AND AFTER TRADE REFORMS <i>PREETI SHARMA</i>	138
28.	TRENDS IN AGRICULTURAL WAGES: AN INTER-DIVISIONAL ANALYSIS IN CHITTOOR DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH <i>DR. E. LOKANADHA REDDY</i>	146
29.	TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF ISO CERTIFIED COMPANIES IN HYDERABAD <i>P. AVINASH GOYAL</i>	155
30.	AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF CONTRIBUTION PENSION SCHEME ON RETIREES' BENEFITS IN NIGERIA <i>OLA OYE CLEMENT OLATUNJI & OLOLA OLAYEYE ADUWO</i>	158
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	165

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IMPACT OF PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM ON FOOD SECURITY OF RURAL AND URBAN POOR

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ABSTRACT

If we see during 1950s India was importing food grains from other countries, but after that India become self-reliant in the production of food grains for the citizens. Public Distribution System (PDS) has been applied in rural and urban areas. As well as PDS has the most important function of a marketing mechanism, as it provides a vital link between the producers and consumers of various goods and services. The PDS encompasses all movements of goods right from transportation of raw material to the delivery of finished products to all consumers. We know that India is a democratic country and objectives of equality and social justice are in the constitution of India. So for that Indian government tries to meet the citizens need for food grains through Fair Price Shops (FPS) aims to protect the the citizens from the impact of rising prices. But the most important purpose of PDS by the governments is to give a legal right to food the both Above poverty line (APL) and Below poverty line (BPL) and other general categories of deprived persons under National Food Security Act. In our research studies we have examined the Buldhana District, which service has the PDS provided to consumers and do they directly benefit? For that purpose we have done a critical study. This study has completed in Buldhana district with selection of a sample of cardholders from urban and rural sector. We have conducted direct interviews going on FPS, from all these to know information about real impacts of PDS. We have also taken interviews Administrative officers of food suppliers.

KEYWORDS

PDS, food security.

INTRODUCTION

Malnutrition and starvation is one of the serious problems in the globalized world. In the year 2009 the people who slept with empty stomach, alarmingly the number of such people was more than are billion. This problem has been analysis by a number of economist. According to Dr. Amartya Sen the hidden cause of this problem is not only because of scarcity of food grains but also lack of entitlements and lack of purchasing power of the people .In India the problem of malnutrition and starvation has posed a serious problems before Government. Recently International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has published the world index of starvation in 2010. In this report countries taking this issue, India got 67th place among the total 84 countries. India did not fare well in comparison to neighbor countries China and Pakistan.

Food security is a broader term which encompasses malnutrition and hunger. Access by all people to enough food for an active and healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum: (a) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods . (b) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways. For the food security, an efficient and effective mechanism to reach food to all people at all time at affordable prices is an essential prerequisite. It is increasingly coming to be recognized that it is not just energy deficiency but micronutrient deficiencies that limit human growth and development.

In India to fight this issue under the public distribution system a chain of fare price shops are distributing food grains to economically poor section at affordable prices under these a BPL scheme, Aantodaya Anna Yojna, Annapurna yojna. So PDS has become the nations food security system which has been operating as the food access mechanism for several decade.

Indian Public Distribution System started before Independence when people suffered from serious food shortages. The Government of India imported food grains and supplied them through rationing system-sale of a fixed quantity of ration to entitled families in specified cities. The department of food, under the Government of India was created in 1942 to co-ordinate this arrangement. After Independence the Government had to reintroduce rationing in 1950 facing to inflationary pressures of food grains. In the First Plan the system, which was extended to all such rural areas which suffered from chronic food shortages. The creation of the Food Corporation of India and The Agricultural Prices Commission in 1965 consolidated the position of the PDS. The PDS was later expanded under the Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) which was introduced on 1 January 1992. But in this system food grain did not often reach the poorest in the society. So in June 1997 introduced Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) to directly and effectively benefit those Below the Poverty Line(BPL). Under this programme BPL families were to get an assured supply of 10 kg of food grains a month. Rice and wheat are the two major food grains procured by the central and state agencies for supplied through the Public distribution system and occasionally sugar, edible/vanaspati and gram/dal. Both the Central Government and state Government participate in the procurement and distribution of food grains.

But we know PDS has becoming the nations food security system, functioning for more than four decades. Now there has been no dispassionate review of the system with reference to food security and poverty alleviation. Now a days there are several shortcoming in the functioning of PDS. Such as its ineffectiveness in reaching the poor, misuse of ration cards by cardholders, diversion of food grains from PDS, wrong identification of the BPL families, inadequate supply of food grains to BPL families etc. So many reasons the role of PDS as a guarantor of food security is largely debated. At this backdrop PDS should not play effectively to reduce the incidence of poverty and food insecurity. On one side large number of people are dying due to starvation and malnutrition and on the another side around seven thousand ton food grains has rotten in the Government warehouse and at the same time 1.78 crore bogus ration card are still in operation. So in the context of national food security and poverty alleviation, it is essential to take a look at the efficiency and efficacy of the PDS.

NEED OF THE STUDY

We know that PDS is the most important function of marketing management, as it provides a vital link between the producers and consumers and various goods and services. The distribution system includes all movements right form transportation of raw material to delivery and finished products to the consumers. The distribution system of various goods and services, particularly those essential to human beings are, managed by the government so it is called a public distribution system. PDS has been working in the past and at present also is being operated as a system of controlled and equitable distribution of essential commodities in short supply. It is a system of sale of selected commodities through fair price shops.

The public distribution system is an important and integral part of demand and supply, of goods and services. Therefore, its main aim is and the basic requirements of the public at large in general and the unprotected section of the society in particular, who cannot afford to buy needed goods prices which are determined by the market forces.

India is a democratic country and the objectives of equality and social justice are in the constitution of India. The Indian government tries to meet the citizens' need for food grains through the public distribution system. The markets sections of society are unable to purchase essential commodities at the increased market prices. So the main aim of the PDS is to distribute essential commodities to such persons a reasonable price.

In India the PDS is jointly administered by the Central and State governments. The weak and poor sections of society are supplied with necessary goods at low prices. The supply of goods at a fair price through fair price shops aims to protect the citizens from the impact of rising prices.

The government tried to remove the problems of food and for improved their nutritional status. We can say it aims at improving food security. Food security at the household level is an issue of great importance for a developing country. 'Food security implies access by all people at all times to sufficient quantities of food to lead an active and healthy life'.

The food security problem has many dimensions. It may arise at global, national or household level. It is also true that more availability of food will not ensure food security to all section of society.

So the public distribution system in India has become one of the important economic and social aspects of democratic government. The poor and majority of middle class people have been able to breathe easily to some extent owing to existence of PDS despite several difficulties encountered by both the fair price owners and cardholders.

But the government is supplying essential commodities. This is essential in order to protect the poor and weak sections of the population in particular and all other in general from the continuously and all other in general from the continuously rising prices and some provide food security it is a matter of serious concern that the PDS is not implemented systematically.

In Vidarbha region of Maharashtra state is known one of the most distressed region in India. It also facing severe agrarian distress. Buldhana is the poorest district in Vidarbha region. Keeping in view the poverty and backwardness of Buldhana district, it has been decided to take up an in depth research study on food security and PDS.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1) *Economic Survey Government of India. Delhi (2000) "Public Distribution System-TPDS"*

The Economic Division of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India presents a review of developments in the past one year.

The Economic Survey includes prices and food management and important aspects of the publication is related to consumer price index (CPI), whole sale price index, food management, Procurement of food grain for supply in open market through PDS. The stock of food grains to be maintained and its latest position, different schemes including through PDS. And finally the food subsidy provided by the Government as a facilitator state is reflected in the economic survey.

The Economic Survey presents a overall view of infrastructural implementation of central sectors projects. Also are covered poverty alleviation and the report relating to development backward classes and the weaker section of the society.

PDS schemes details are given by the Economic Survey and its distributed each state. This is reported comprehensively in Economic Survey report published by Ministry of Finance.

2) *Mungekar Bhalchandra (2003): The Economy of Maharashtra, Changing Structure and Emerging Issues, Himalaya publishing house, Mumbai*

This book emphasis in context of Maharashtra this are described five sections that at last two section 4 section most important on social sector, poverty food security weaker sections and employment guarantee schemes.

This book including 14 no. poverty and level of living, this paper of surynarayana M.H. in this paper described that on poverty and food security, poverty scenario: Temporal profile, then no. Of 15 chapters describe public distribution system and food security of Mehandra Dev. In this paper, consider poverty as the major determinant of food insecurity there are several ways in which the food security of the poor improved India's strategy in this regard consists of promoting economic growth.

This papers of main objective is to examine the PDS and its impact on food security in Maharashtra and also suggest at the end some measures for restructuring on PDS and its better targeting and successful implementation.

This paper examines the PDS and food security in Maharashtra mainly using the household level data on the PDS. This study also discusses various problems and options available for the restructuring of the PDS.

3) *Pro. Mishra S.K and Mr. Puri V.K.: "Indian Economy its Development Experience" Shyamal College Delhi*

This book attempts to analyze the difficult time from which India passing especially after the new economic policy.

The book encompasses the developmental issues facing the Indian economy. It divided into 46 chapters. The present work includes information relating to PDS in the last decade from 1989 to 1999. The new parlance regarding the Public Distribution System in the liberalized economic scenario and the intention of the government to fulfill the targets in the time as regards to production and distribution through PDS are. The book also includes a chapter on the financing of the plans and investment pattern, food security, industrial development during planning period.

4) *Silva Dimitri And Suryanarayna M.H.(2008): Poverty and Food Insecurity in India*

A Disaggregated Regional profile. Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai. March 2008

This article provides a profile of deprivation with respect to consumer expenditure, cereal consumption and energy intake across demographic and agro climatic regions as defined by the National Sample Survey Organization of India.

It examines this evidence at the disaggregated level to verify whether a Public Distribution System(PDS) targeted with reference to estimate of poverty would end up penalizing the non-poor but insecure. The empirical profiles have also useful policy relevance with respect to decentralized formulation and implementation of the Public Distribution System (PDS).

This article is an attempt to verify the same issues on the basis of the disaggregated national sample Survey (NSS) regional levels by rural and urban sector in context of consumers expenditure, food insecurity, poverty. This article examines economic deprivation and food insecurity as reflected in the rural/urban sectors incidence depth and severity of poverty, food insecurity and severity across region in India.

5) *Khan Amir Ullah (2008): Food Price Stability: Is PDS Working?*

Director of India Development Foundation after a brief stint with the Indian Civil Services. Also work with large UNDP

This article argues on that though the off take per household has shown improvement under Targeted Public Distribution System, only about 57% of the BPL households are covered by it.

This article analyzes PDS and its improvement through targeting system in different states. It examines amount of subsidies during 2007-2008 for food, fertilizers and petroleum.

This article sees PDS as a fulfilling need for a safety net to the poor. It shows that backward regions received higher subsidies. Identification of beneficiaries depends on household characteristics, their occupation, dwelling type and size.

This article at last describes the lacunae of TPDS and recommends distribution of Food stamps which can be used only to purchase food grains. The authors consider this superior to the existing PDS.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To assess the overall implementation process of the PDS.
- 2) To find out the role of PDS in terms of providing food security of households in Malkapur tahsil in Buldhana District.
- 3) To examine the strength and weakness of the existing PDS.
- 4) To suggest remedial measures for the more effective role of PDS in food security to poor households.

HYPOTHESIS

- 1) PDS does not function as per expectation in either rural or urban areas.
- 2) Targeted PDS has not resulted in better coverage of BPL families.
- 3) PDS is more successful in providing Food Security in urban as compared to rural areas.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on both the primary and secondary data. For an effective analysis of the present study and sharp focus on the food security and the role of PDS as a provider of food security. Primary data will be collected from the selected beneficiaries of PDS in the Buldhana district. For the purpose of data collection separate interview of PDS beneficiaries.

The study is limited to the area of Buldhana district. On the basis of random sampling techniques villages will be selected from the list of villages covered in the census reports and then required number of households was chosen in each sample village. The study is limited to around 120 sample households from urban and rural area of Buldhana district. Households are categorized into Auntyodaya families (very poor), families below poverty line (BPL families), and families above poverty line (APL families) and the quantity and price of food items supplied to them through the PDS varies according to the category. In the household survey besides information on socio-economic, demographic characteristics of the study population an assessment of nutritional status of children's. From 1st June 1991 to 2005 is considered as the reference period of the study.

CONCLUSION OF THE RESEARCH

Buldhana District is familiar as an industrial backward district. So there ratio of unemployment is high. In spite of, this in present condition benefits of the Government schemes have been taken by below poverty line families, middle classes, farm labor & laborers. Through this they tried elevating their economical level.

In this research we have examined the Buldhana District, which service has the PDS provided to consumers and do they directly benefit? For that purpose we are doing a critical study. This study has completed in Buldhana District with selection of a sample of cardholders from urban & rural sector. For urban Malkapur tahsil town has been chosen and for rural sector village in Malkapur Tahsil Kund (khurd).

We have selected 60 cardholders in Malkapur town of which 20 are APL & 40 BPL cardholders and for rural 60 cardholders of which 20 APL & 40 BPL cardholders. As well as the owner of FPS. We have conducted direct interviews going on FPS, from all these to know information about real impacts of PDS.

For the study in rural and urban areas, we have also taken interviews of Administrative Officers of food suppliers. After our visit, they have expressed their views, their views & Opinions.

Distribution is the most important function of marketing management, as it provides a vital link between the producers and consumers and various goods and services. The distribution system includes all movements right from transportation of raw material to delivery and finished products to the consumers. The distribution system of various goods and services, particularly those essential to human beings are, managed by the government so it is called a public distribution system. PDS has been working in the past and at present also is being operated as a system of controlled and equitable distribution of essential commodities in short supply. It is a system of sale of selected commodities through fair price shops.

The public distribution system is an important and integral part of demand and supply, of goods and services. Therefore, its main aim is and the basic requirements of the public at large in general and the unprotected section of the society in particular, who cannot afford to buy needed goods prices which are determined by the market forces.

India is a democratic country and the objectives of equality and social justice are in the constitution of India. The Indian government tries to meet the citizens' need for food grains through the public distribution system. The markets sections of society are unable to purchase essential commodities at the increased market prices. So the main aim of the PDS is to distribute essential commodities to such persons a reasonable price.

In India the PDS is jointly administered by the Central and State governments. The weak and poor sections of society are supplied with necessary goods at low prices. The supply of goods at a fair price through fair price shops aims to protect the citizens from the impact of rising prices.

So the public distribution is a direct state intervention in the national distribution system of goods. PDS provides such commodities as food grains, sugar, kerosene, oil, wheat, rice. PDS can be defined as "an equitable distribution of an essential commodities at a reasonable prices". In June, 1997, the targeted public distribution system (TPDS) was introduced under which two sets of PDS were announced, one each for above poverty line (APL) and below poverty line (BPL) households.

The government tried to remove the problems of food and for improved their nutritional status. We can say it aims at improving food security. Food security at the household level is an issue of great importance for a developing country. 'Food security implies access by all people at all times to sufficient quantities of food to lead an active and healthy life'.

The food security problem has many dimensions. It may arise at global, national or household level. It is also true that more availability of food will not ensure food security to all section of society. In our findings really poor people depend on food grain which is provided through FPS at affordable prices in urban and rural areas. Some poor people cannot purchase food grains in the market, in this inflation conditions.

We have observed really people have need of food security and they want good quantity and quality to improve their life style as well as nutrition status.

So the public distribution system in India has become one of the important economic and social aspects of democratic government. The poor and majority of middle class people have been able to breathe easily to some extent owing to existence of PDS despite several difficulties encountered by both the fair price owners and cardholders.

The government is supplying essential commodities. This is essential in order to protect the poor and weak sections of the population in particular and all other in general from the continuously and all other in general from the continuously rising prices and some provide food security it is a matter of serious concern that the PDS is not implemented systematically.

But at present we see many problems in the functioning of the PDS. The poor do not get justice in terms of quality of good supplied, fair prices or timely supply of essential commodities. A black market is observed to be operating where FPS owners sell the subsidized commodities supplied by the government to traders. Prices of the same commodities are different in shops in the same town. There is no inspection of the FPS to see whether the PDS is functioning properly. Also, only three commodities wheat, rice and kerosene, are supplied through the PDS. No other type of food grains are supplied.

So for that it is essential to prevent black marketing availability of adequate stock of food grains at the fair price shops, increase in number of fair price shops and extended hours of opening of the FPS and also opening through out the week. As well as allowing cardholders to draw ration in maximum number of installments as per their purchasing power.

Even so, the PDS is extremely important in order to bring food security in India. Food security means 'Food security implies access by all people at all times to sufficient quantities of food to lead an active and healthy life'.

The citizens will have food security only if food items are supplied which are of suitable quality in adequate quantity and at the appropriate times.

We found in our survey that the majority of persons in the rural and urban areas feel that the PDS is really very important. Because some persons because of their occupations are unable to purchase food grains in the open market.

To conclude PDS must be continued for the society in rural and urban areas, people are in need of food grains for increasing their nutritional status.

RECOMMENDATION

The present research examined whether the PDS is functioning satisfactorily or has any serious drawback by appraising the role of the PDS in total consumption of essential commodities, assessing the economic viability of PDS, evaluating the working of PDS along with the opinion of the cardholders.

- 1) Government officers strictly ensure that there should not be black market sales of fair price commodities. They should be provided to the Below Poverty line people only.
- 2) Government should concentrate on smooth working and functioning of the PDS by appointing special investigation officers to check the Public Distribution System and transparency.
- 3) The elected members of wards (Corporators) are empowered to inspect the fair price shops by regular checking. This control over, the working of fair price shops must be ensured by peoples' representatives.

- 4) A committee should be constituted to attend to all the complaints both from the shopkeepers and the cardholders and the committee should have adequate powers.
- 5) The wholesale nominees should deliver the kerosene within fixed time at the doorstep of the fair price shopkeepers.
- 6) The shopkeepers suggest fixing ration amount on basis of the number of members in a family. The quota fixed should be at least 50% of their monthly family requirements.
- 7) The government should take adequate and timely steps for making quality goods available. Similarly rigorous and different punishments should be meted out to dishonest and unfair price shop owners including in any kind of malpractice.
- 8) The government must advise to the fair price shops owners to replace poor quality food grains instead of penalizing the innocent cardholders.
- 9) The proper implementation at AAY must be there as per the rules and criteria of the government.
- 10) There should not be bias due to caste, religion and other factors while distributing the daily necessities to the public through FPS.
- 11) Presently, (FPS) remain open only twice or thrice a week. This arrangements should be done away with and instead arrangement should be made so that FPS remain open throughout the week.
- 12) Doorstep delivery of grains by government agencies or wholesale dealers would also contribute towards reduction in leakages. Ensuring timely availability of ration quota should be the responsibility of state.
- 13) The involvements of local bodies in overseeing the functioning of PDS is generally, nominal/non-existent in most states. A committee should be formed among member of each municipality/Gram Panchayat, which should be responsible for effective functioning of FPS.
- 14) The proportion of population with food insecurity should be identified based on planning Commission's poverty ratio. The planning commission should make appropriate adjustment in the method of BPL identification that would enable the state government to correct its own estimates of people with food insecurity.
- 15) Families who do not have a secure source of regular income, should be included in the BPL list, irrespective of their income. This would benefit a large majority of the poor, particularly, those with economic insecurity.
- 16) Since the BPL identification survey is critical to the success of TPDS, it is appropriate that this be carried out with the assistance of reputed agencies such as the NSSO and state level research institute. The data base should be then computerized for effective monitoring and regular updating.
- 17) The lifting of food grains from FCI godowns, State/Civil supplies corporation's warehouses as well as delivery at FPS should be computerized.
- 18) The Annapurna Yojna must be contained all the commodities consumed by the poor i.e. Rice, Sugar, Oil, Kerosene, and bajra, jawar, pulses not only wheat products.
- 19) Fresh stock of the commodities must be distributed by FPS i.e. Sugar, Wheat, Oil and Rice.
- 20) The most needed commodity is Kerosene, the Government officers himself or the supply officers found involved many places in selling the kerosene in black market. It should be avoided by the strict and proper implementation of the government rules and regulations. There must be punishment to the distributors or government officers who is fully involved in this black market practices.
- 21) The sugar, oil, kerosene must be sold only to the ration card holders, it should not be sold to the consumers without cards.
- 22) Local bodies like municipalities and panchyats should not be involved in the process of identification of the poor. Since their members are very closely involved with the local community, they may not be as objective as desired. Thus, survey and identification should be done by teams of officials from various departments.
- 23) There should be greater decentralization of operations relating to PDS. States should be free to procure cereals themselves, buy it from private traders or from FCI, and maintain buffer stocks. Any rules and regulations standing in the way of the states in this regard should be removed.
- 24) Quantum of total subsidy to be provided, issue price of food grains, amount of food grains to be distributed per head, the extent of subsidy involved in food stamps etc should be decided by the state government.

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