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**PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN TAMIL NADU NEEDS DEFINITE OVERHAULING****DR. S. MAYILVAGANAN****ASST. PROFESSOR****P. G. & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****A.V.C.COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)****MANNAMPANDAL****B. VARADARAJAN****RESEARCH SCHOLAR****P. G. & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****A.V.C.COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)****MANNAMPANDAL****ABSTRACT**

The Government of TamilNadu is implementing PDS since the year 1964. The scheme village shop programme was introduced by the State with the intention to have one shop for one village in order to feed essential articles to rural public. Subsequently the scheme was converted in to PDS with the intention of providing essential commodities to the public both in rural and urban areas at concession rate. However, very often PDS is criticized for its ineffectiveness and inefficiency in achieving its objectives. By keeping this in mind, the present article deals with the evolution of PDS in India, Goals of PDS, Fair price shops in Tamil Nadu, Attack on PDS etc. The present study highlights the various pitfalls of PDS like Poor quality of goods supplied, underweight, leakage of PDS articles to open market, non availability of commodity easily etc. The paper also offers suggestions to overhaul the present system of PDS.

**KEYWORDS**

PDS, rural public, essential articles.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Public Distribution System (PDS) evolved as a system of management of scarcity and for distribution of food grains at affordable prices. Over the years, PDS has become an important part of Government's Policy for management of food economy in the country. PDS is operated under the joint responsibility of the central and the State Governments. The central government, through FCI, has assumed the responsibility for procurement, Storage, transportation and bulk allocation of food grains to be state Government. The operational responsibility including allocation within State, identification of families below the poverty line, issue of Ration Cards and supervision of the function of FPS, rest with the State Governments. Under the PDS, presently the commodities namely wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene, are being allocated to the States/UTs for distribution. Some State/UTs also distribute additional items of mass consumption through the PDS outlets such as cloth, exercise books, pulses, salt and tea, etc.,

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main aims of the present study are to identify the various pitfalls of the existing network system of PDS in Tamil Nadu and to offer suitable recommendations to overcome the drawbacks of PDS

**METHODOLOGY**

The study is fully based on desk-task research. The required secondary data were collected from the records of the office of registrar of co-operatives, Chennai and from various journals and magazines relating with the present study.

**EVOLUTION OF PDS IN INDIA**

The origin of PDS in India could be traced back to the Second World War. The dawn of independence lead to a great emphasis on the need for an uninterrupted supply of essential goods everywhere so that none would die of hunger. Undoubtedly, deficiency in food grains supply did exist in the country even before this period, which was met out from imports, as deficit then was only marginal. However, the import of the food grains became difficult and ticklish during and even after the times of war. This resulted in rising process of food grains. These two significant developments compelled the government to resort to control of food grains in the country.

**GOALS OF PDS**

The goal of PDS does not restrict itself with the distribution of rationed articles. Making available adequate quantities of essential articles at all time, in places accessible at prices affordable to all and protection of the weaker section of the population from the vicious spiral of rising prices is the broad spectrum of PDS. More specifically, the goals of PDS are;

- Make goods available to consumers, especially the disadvantaged/vulnerable sections of society at fair prices;
- Rectify the existing imbalances between the supply and demand for consumer Goods. Check and prevent hoarding and black marketing in essential commodities.
- Ensure social justice in distribution of basic necessities of life.
- Even out fluctuations in prices and availability of mass Consumption goods.

**PDS IN TAMIL NADU**

The Government of TamilNadu is implementing PDS since the year 1964. The scheme village shop programme was introduced by the State with the intention to have one shop for one village in order to feed essential articles to rural public. Subsequently the scheme was converted in to PDS with the intention of providing essential commodities to the public both in rural and urban areas at concession rate. Since the introduction of TPDS from 1.6.1997 the universal PDS is in operation in Tamil Nadu with the Antyodaya Anna Yojana and the expanded Antyodaya Anna Yojan schemes under the universal PDS there is no discrimination of families on APL and BPL lines based on income. Tamil Nadu sets a model in implementing the PDS as universal system for the cause of eradicating poverty and improving standard of living of the people living below the poverty line.

**CARD CIRCULATION**

The details of family cards circulation in Tamil Nadu are as follows:

Sl. No.	Categories	Re-issue Cards	Left out families	Total
1	Green Cards (Rice Cards)	1,41,57,737	36,62,385	1,78,20,122
2	White Cards (Sugar Cards)	7,83,439	2,43,727	10,27,166
3	Kakhi Cards (Police Kerosene only)	29,280	10,343	39,623
4	Non-cards (Drawing no articles)	52,253	--	52,253
5	Total	1,50,22,709	39,16,455	1,89,39,164

**FAIR PRICE SHOPS**

In Tamil Nadu all the fair price shops are run by the co-operatives and the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd. The details of the fair price shops are given as follows.

Sl. No.	Agency	Full Time	Part Time	Total
1	Tamil Nadu Civil Supply Corporation Ltd.	1,091	63	1,154
2	Co-operatives (Under R.C.S.)	21,660	4,763	26,429
3	Other Co-operatives (Fisheries etc.)	152	13	165
4	Women fair price shops (SHGs)	418	173	591
5	Mobile fair price shops (Co-operatives)	36	-	36

The aim of the government is to have at least one fair price shop in each Revenue Village. The district Collectors have been empowered to open the fair price shops including part-time shops as per the guidelines prescribed by the Government. The objective is to ensure that no cardholder travels more than 2 km to get his supplies. The maximum number of cards attached to a shop should not exceed 1000 in the case of urban areas and 800 in the case of rural areas. In order to ensure better reach in far flung and remote areas, part-time shops are opened even with 200 cards, if the distance exceeds 2 kilo metres.

**ATTACK ON PDS**

- The PDS has been affected by inefficiency and corruption; these problems are likely to be exacerbated by narrow targeting based in income and exclusion of persons vulnerable to food insecurity. It was found that problems like leakages poor quality, under weightment, non-availability of controlled as well as non-controlled articles during certain times, non-availability of ration cards, bogus cards, etc., affect the efficiency of the system.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Infrastructure at Fair Price Shops across the State to be upgraded and should have uniformity in almost all respects.
- Restrict selling of commodities that are essential for sustaining livelihood. Of course, the Government can add Sugar for taste.
- Take the example of post offices which are centrally located all across India. Similarly, chalk out a definite plan for fair price shop location for easier wherever to be situated.
- In this modern technological era, it is pathetic to see public lining up in long queues wasting their precious time. Bring mobile automatic vending kerosene machines (some what like petrol pump machine) distribute and pack off to another location after refilling kerosene.
- Any subsidized/free scheme should be announced and implemented only as a contingency measure and temporary in nature. Otherwise, we are disrespecting the agriculturists, farmers and agricultural laborers.
- Neither there is commitment from the public to fight against burning issues nor any political will to check the deficiency that has crept into the PDS in Tamil Nadu.
- Husk is sold at over Rs.4/Kg whereas; Rice is sold through PDS at Rs1/Kg.
- Differential treatment adopted for providing facilities at fair price shops.
- There is no correlation between address/location of fair price shop and its respective officers for Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection. If the card holder shifts his/her residence, he/she could feel the pinch.
- The Tamil Nadu Government is ensure timely supply of commodities with good quality to fair price shops and see that it reaches only to the indeed section of the public through the public distribution system.

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