

A STUDY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING LEVEL OF UTILISATION OF PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM – WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO POLLACHI TALUK

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Abstract Government of India provides food (ration) at highly subsidised rates to the poor people through public distribution system (PDS). Cooperation, food, and consumer protection department of the Government lays down the policy for public distribution system. Public distribution system in Tamil Nadu is a universal system to cover all the needy families by supplying rice at a price much lower than the BPL price fixed by the Government of India under the targeted public distribution system. Also it ensures food security to all citizens, particularly poor people, by making essential commodities of good quality available at affordable prices every month, through a chain of shops called ration shops (or Fair Price shops). The study aims to find out the utilisation level of PDS by the public for which 350 ration cardholders belonging to Pollachi Taluk (Coimbatore Dist., Tamil Nadu, India) were surveyed and the data were collected through questionnaire (literate) and interview schedule (for illiterates). It was found that cardholders have moderate satisfaction only and it was suggested to improve the working of PDS by opening the shops on Sundays, quantity of few items can be increased during festival time, etc. The result of the study is based on the opinions given by the cardholders of Pollachi taluk. It might not be applicable to other places.

Keyword: Public Distribution System, Cardholders, Below Poverty Line (BPL).

INTRODUCTION

The distribution system undertaken by the government or any public agency is termed as Public Distribution System (PDS). A PDS is whole or a part of the distribution system in principle owned and controlled by the public authorities on behalf of the general public and run by them for the good of the general public or a specific group thereof.

After independence, the weaker section of India could not get on with the cost of living. The government framed a policy to form a system of supply of essentials at the least possible rate for the weaker section. It developed a network of ration shops all over India for public distribution. This system of distribution is regulated by a number of rules and laws framed by the government. Today ration shops support several poor families, by providing different essential items at the rate affordable by the poor people. This system of distribution is of immense help to the weaker section. This is a boon to public, when it is effectively conducted. The purpose of Public Distribution System is to provide the essentials of day to day life to the weaker section at affordable or minimum cost.

Now this system of public distribution has grown vastly (both in number of products and number of shops). The state government is responsible for public distribution. For this purpose they have opened ration shops (fair price shops)

for each ward of municipality/panchayat/corporation. It is governed by the hierarchical structure of officers and staffs. People are given ration cards in accordance with their income. They are given cards with photo identity. The supply of the ration items is based on the number of members in a family. It is a greatest gift to the public that too to the weaker section. The central government gives a whopping of INR 28,000 crores annually to the states to subsidize food for the poor but till, the poor will go on suffering at the hands of corrupt officials, dishonest fair price shops (FPS), treacherous transporters, and possibly to a large extent, unscrupulous millers as well.

The service rendered by the public distribution system is very poor due to the delay in providing goods to the people in need. There are many irregularities -irregular lifting of grain, no lifting, and bulk lifting. Also the details about the supply date are not informed properly. The quantities of supply of the goods are not sufficient. Further, the person in-charge of the ration shop exhibits uncourteous behaviour to the public. Presence of red tapism also leads to ineffective administration of PDS. The main problem faced by the public is that the service rendered by the authorities in ration shops is not satisfactory. Government has taken adequate steps to solve this problem and arrange the goods to reach the people in right time as well as right quantity. In addition to this, government has arranged for a proper display of the availability of the goods in the ration shop.

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Public have number of options to buy their daily requirements. They can get things from grocery shop, departmental stores, supermarket and the like. But many people prefer ration shops for certain items as these goods are supplied at lower price compared to the price of goods offered in other shops. Several factors like proper quantity of goods, good quality, etc., are likely to affect the level of utilisation and satisfaction of cardholders of PDS. In this regard some questions have been raised like, how does the customers utilise the PDS for their requirements, are they purchasing all items for which they are eligible, why they are not showing interest on certain items.

In the existing available literature there is no much literature pertaining to this study. Only few studies were carried out, dealing with satisfaction. Hence the researcher has identified the gap of utilisation of ration goods by cardholders.

The aim of this study is to ascertain the level of utilisation of public distribution system by cardholders.

METHODS

Primary data were collected from the cardholders of Pollachi Taluk (Coimbatore Dist., TN) through questionnaire and interview schedule. Questionnaire was used to collect data from the literates and interview schedule for others (daily wage earners). A total of 350 cardholders were selected by convenient random sampling method. 300 questionnaires were issued. Out of which 250 questionnaires were usable (50 being incomplete). Interview schedule was undertaken for 50 illiterate cardholders. Total 300 (250+ 50) questionnaires were taken for analysis purpose. Data for the study were collected during the year April 2013 to March 2014.

In this article, literature is reviewed first, followed by analysis part and finally findings and suggestions are offered at the end.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nakkiran (2004) has attempted to analyse the effectiveness of public distribution system in rural Tamil Nadu. The objectives of his study were to study the socio-economic conditions of rural population brought under PDS. For analysing these objectives, by multi-stage random sampling and through pre-tested interview schedule, data collection was carried out. His study revealed that lower price was the motivating factor for all section of the public to use PDS. Majority of the sample respondents felt that goods were not available in time in all FPS. There was dissatisfaction towards the quality and quantity of goods available among the weaker sections of Dindigul and Coimbatore districts. Lack of information on the availability of goods was another important reason for the sample respondents for not purchasing commodities during certain times.

Jha *et al.* (2013) examined the performance of PDS in three Indian states - Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan. The analysis throws a new light on how demands vary with economic status of a household, inequality in the distribution of land in a village, amount of food price subsidy, transaction costs of buying from fair price shops, and supply shortages. Tobit analysis was estimated to assess the determinants of probability of participation in TPDS. The analysis documented the fact that the programme was not well targeted in some instances. 30 percent of total TPDS purchases of subsidised food grains were made by poor households with Anantha Anna Yojana (AAY) or Below Poverty Line (BPL) ration cards. Due to poor quality and under weighing, the poor on an average tend to buy considerably lower than their entitlements.

Khera (2011) studied the effectiveness of India's Public Distribution System as a food security intervention, using field survey data collected in Rajasthan. Utilisation was low and many households purchase wheat from the market at higher prices before exhausting PDS quotas. This 'puzzle of under-purchase' was analysed by extending the dual pricing model to account for supply-side and demand-side constraints. Primary and secondary data as well as field observations suggest that under purchase was mainly due to supply constraints. It was also found that the PDS affects the composition (away from more nutritious 'coarse cereals'), rather than level of cereal consumption.

She estimated the proportion of grains, diverted from the public distribution system to the open market, using the well-established method of matching State off take figures published by the government, with household purchase reported by the NSS. Though at the all-India level diversion of grain remains a serious issue, looking at state level trends reveals interesting contrasts.

Aggarwal (2011) analysed the problems relating to PDS, benefits derived out of PDS to the beneficiary and also offered suitable suggestions to improve the working of PDS by adopting automation of PDS. In the study it was found that a large number of families in Himachal Pradesh are living below the poverty line and have not yet enrolled and do not have accessed the ration card. The shadow ownership was possible due to inefficiency in ration card issuance, distribution and record keeping. Many fair price shops were opened only for a few days and hence people were denied their rights. Hence they concluded that supply and distribution of food grains was focused on to bring out cost-effective, corruption free, and transparent system of PDS in Himachal Pradesh.

Cherian (2006) examined and reviewed the obligations and initiatives by the government of India to ensure food security in India. He identified corruption as one of the reasons for the failure of the programmes meant for the poor and suggested

the role of civil society organisations in making the schemes workable for the poor.

The literature reviewed paved the way to find out whether the families (cardholders) utilise all the items (offered by state government through PDS) that are eligible to them.

UTILISATION

Factors influencing the level of utilisation are examined here. Eight independent variables (age, family size, employment status, family income, location of shop, mode of transport, personal visit to ration shop, and satisfaction) and one dependent variable (purchase of items that are eligible) have been taken to find out the level of utilisation of ration items eligible and ration items purchased by the cardholders.

Utilisation level has been measured by assigning scores to the question that was included in the questionnaire/interview schedule, namely, items eligible for a cardholder and items purchased by him/her is considered for utilisation analysis. Utilisation index is calculated in the following way:

The sum of the items purchased is divided by the sum of the items eligible for each cardholder, will give a score. Score obtained by each cardholder is multiplied by 100 to convert it into an index. This index is termed as 'utilisation index for

items eligible and items purchased'. The index ranges between 0 and 100 and the grand mean of utilisation index is 76.04.

Of the 300 cardholders, 180 (60%) are with utilisation index above the average and 120 (40%) are with utilisation index below the average. Based on the utilisation index, the cardholders have been divided into three groups as cardholders with low, moderate and high level of utilisation. In order to classify the cardholders into three such groups, quartiles have been made use of. Accordingly, cardholders with utilisation index ranging up to 47.62 (Subtraction of mean from standard deviation i.e., $(76.04-28.42=47.62)$) are termed as cardholders with low level of utilisation; those with utilisation index ranging between 47.63 and 104.45 are termed as cardholders with moderate level of utilisation and those cardholders with utilisation index above 104.46 (Addition of mean with standard deviation $(76.04+28.42=104.46)$) are termed as cardholders with high level of utilisation. Of the 300 cardholders, 70(23.33%) cardholders are with low level of utilisation; 230 (76.67%) cardholders are with moderate level of utilisation. There are no cardholders with high level of utilisation.

Factors Influencing Utilisation

Table 1. Factors Influencing Utilisation

Particulars	No. of Card Holders	Average Utilisation Index	Above Average	Below Average	Range
Age					
Up to 30 Yrs	143 (47.67%)	71.20	83 (58.04)	60 (41.96)	0-100
31 – 50 Yrs	151 (50.33%)	81.29	93 (61.59)	58 (38.41)	22.23-100
Above 50 Yrs	6 (2%)	59.33	4 (66.67)	2 (33.33)	0-100
Family Size					
2 members	11 (3.67%)	66.70	8 (72.73)	3 (27.27)	0 -100
3	76 (25.34%)	73.50	43 (56.58)	33 (43.42)	0 – 100
4	93 (31%)	71.97	50 (53.76)	43 (46.24)	12.5 – 100
5	69 (23%)	82.08	46 (66.67)	23 (33.34)	0 – 100
6	51 (17%)	81.10	33 (64.71)	18 (35.29)	25 – 100
Employment status					
Agriculture	71 (23.67%)	73.16	40 (56.34)	31 (43.66)	12.5 – 100
Business	52 (17.33%)	72.20	26 (50)	26 (50)	22.23 – 100

Particulars Age	No. of Card Holders	Average Utilisation Index	Above Average	Below Average	Range
Govt.employee	40 (13.33%)	74.25	25 (62.50)	15 (37.50)	0 – 100
Private employee	43 (14.33%)	77.45	28 (65.12)	15 (34.88)	0 – 100
Professional	23 (7.67%)	80.29	12 (52.17)	11 (47.83)	22.23 – 100
Retired	13 (4.34%)	65.69	8 (61.54)	5 (38.46)	0 – 100
House wife	3 (1%)	63.89	2 (66.67)	1 (33.33)	25 – 100
Others (Daily wage earners)	55 (18.33%)	84.92	39 (74.55)	16 (25.45)	0 – 100
Family Income					
Below 25,000	103 (34.33%)	79.36	61 (59.22)	42 (40.78)	0 – 100
25,001 – 50,000	84 (28%)	77.13	52 (61.90)	32 (38.10)	25 – 100
50,001 – 1,00,000	67 (22.33%)	73.99	42 (62.69)	25 (37.31)	0 – 100
Above 1,00,000	46 (15.34%)	69.61	25 (54.35)	21 (45.65)	0 – 100
Location of Shop					
Very Near	34 (11.34%)	78.27	20 (58.82)	14 (41.18)	0 – 100
Near	190 (63.34%)	75.59	119 (62.63)	71 (37.37)	0 – 100
Far	66 (22%)	78.11	37 (56.06)	29 (43.94)	11.12 – 100
Very Far	10 (3.34%)	63.33	4 (40)	6 (60)	44.45– 100
Visit in Person					
Yes	274 (91.34%)	77.56	166 (60.58)	108 (39.42)	0 – 100
No	26 (8.67%)	60.09	14 (53.85)	12 (46.15)	0 – 100
Satisfaction					
Low	14 (4.67%)	40.12	9 (64.29)	5 (35.71)	0 – 77.78
Medium	252 (84%)	78.75	152 (60.32)	100 (39.68)	11.11– 100
High	34 (11.33%)	70.76	19 (55.88)	15 (44.12)	25 – 100
Mode of Transport					
By Foot	205 (68.34%)	76.88	125 (60.98)	80 (39.02)	0 – 100
By Two – Wheeler	85 (28.34%)	75.09	51 (60)	34 (40)	0 – 100
By Bus	10 (3.33%)	66.94	4 (40)	6 (60)	37.5 – 100
Total	300	76.04	180	120	0 – 100

Age is likely to have an association with utilisation. Cardholders, who are young, may have lesser utilisation of PDS. Since, the young may not find the services and products in PDS, those provided by other shops. In order to examine the level of utilisation, based on age, the cardholders are divided into three groups. The average utilisation score is found to be high with those between the age group of 31 and 50 Yrs. Hence it can be inferred that the middle aged persons utilise more ration items than person from other age groups.

Family size is likely to have an association with utilisation. Cardholders, who have more family members, may use PDS than those having less family members, since more members require more quantity which can be offered only by ration shops at low rate. In order to examine the level of utilisation, based on family size, the cardholders are divided into five groups. The average utilisation score is found to be high with the five members' family. Hence it can be said that, as the family size increases, utilisation also increases.

Employment status is likely to have an association with utilisation. Cardholders, who are working as daily wages may have higher utilisation, since they could not purchase from outside due to high price of goods and lack of sufficient money. In order to examine the level of utilisation, based on employment status, the cardholders have been divided into eight groups. The utilisation score is found to be high with the daily labourers group. Hence it can be said that daily wage earners have more utilisation than other group cardholders.

Family income is likely to have an association with utilisation. Cardholders with low income may have more utilisation than other income groups, as they could not even meet the basic needs of life with their income. So they may not be able to get things from other sources than the ration shops, which provide goods at lower rates. In order to examine the level of utilisation based on family income, the cardholders have been divided into four groups. The utilisation score is found to decrease along with increase in the annual income. Hence it can be said that lower income group are utilising the ration shops at high level than the other cardholders.

Location of shop is likely to have an association with utilisation. Cardholders may have high utilisation, where the shops are nearer. If the ration shops are very far, many cardholders will not tend to visit frequently. In order to examine the level of utilisation based on the location of shop, the cardholders are divided into four groups. The average utilisation score is found to be high in the category, where the shops are very near. Hence it can be inferred that, if the shops are near the cardholders utilise more.

Visit in person to ration shop is likely to have an association with utilisation. Cardholders, who are visiting by themselves, may have high utilisation, as they come know about the availability and date of supply of goods. In order

to examine, the level of utilisation, based on visit in person, the cardholders are divided into two groups. The average utilisation score is found to be high with those who visit the ration shop in person. Hence, it can be said that the cardholders visiting in person are having more utilisation than others.

Satisfaction is likely to have an association with utilisation. Cardholders, who are highly satisfied (towards the price, quality, quantity, behaviour of the staff, working hours of the FPS, working days of the FPS, measurement and the environment) may have high utilisation, since, one who has satisfaction with a shop will like to visit it frequently. In order to examine the level of utilisation, based on satisfaction level, the cardholders are divided into three groups. The average utilisation score is found to be high with medium level of satisfaction score (57.61 - 83.29). Hence, it can be said that the cardholders having medium level of satisfaction have high utilisation.

Mode of transport is likely to have an association with utilisation. Cardholders, who have two-wheelers may have high utilisation as compared to others who does not have a two-wheeler. Where the ration shops may be far, many would not wish to visit frequently and purchase the goods in the shop and prefer to go other general stores which are near to their residence. In order to examine the level of utilisation, based on mode of transport, the cardholders are divided into three groups. The average utilisation score is found to be high with the cardholders who go walking, i.e. on foot.

HYPOTHESIS

To examine if the variables (viz., age, family size, occupation, family income, location of shop, mode of transport, visit in person, and satisfaction) influence the level of utilisation, the following hypotheses have been framed and tested.

Hypothesis	Alternative Hypothesis
H₀₁: Age influences utilisation.	H_{A1}: Age does not influence utilisation.
H₀₂: Family size influences utilisation.	H_{A2}: Family size does not influence utilisation.
H₀₃: Occupation influences utilisation.	H_{A3}: Occupation does not influence utilisation.
H₀₄: Family Income influence-utilisation.	H_{A4}: Family Income does not influence utilisation.
H₀₅: Location of shop influences utilisation.	H_{A5}: Location of shop does not influence utilisation.
H₀₆: Visit in person influences utilisation.	H_{A6}: Visit in person does not influence utilisation.
H₀₇: Satisfaction influences utilisation.	H_{A7}: Satisfaction does not influence utilisation.
H₀₈: Mode of Transport influences utilisation.	H_{A8}: Mode of Transport does not influence utilisation.

Table 2: Level of Utilisation

Age	Level of Utilisation		Total	
	Low	Moderate		
Up to 30 Yrs	41 (28.67)	102 (71.33)	143	df = 2 $X^2 = 5.123$
31 – 50 Yrs	27 (17.88)	124 (82.12)	151	
Above 50 Yrs	2 (33.33)	4 (66.67)	6	TV = 5.991
Family Members				
2 Members	3 (27.27)	8 (72.73)	11	df = 4
3 Members	21 (27.63)	55 (72.37)	76	$X^2 = 3.981$
4 Members	25 (26.88)	68 (73.12)	93	
5 Members	13 (18.84)	56 (81.16)	69	TV = 9.488
6 Members	8 (15.69)	43 (84.31)	51	
Occupation				
Agriculture	20 (28.17)	51 (71.83)	71	df = 7
Business	11 (21.15)	41 (78.85)	52	$X^2 = 7.627$
Government employee	12 (30)	28 (70)	40	
Private employee	10 (23.26)	33 (76.74)	43	TV = 14.067
Professional	3 (13.04)	20 (86.96)	23	
Retired	5 (38.46)	8 (61.54)	13	
House wife	1 (33.33)	2 (66.67)	3	
Others (Daily wage earners)	8 (14.55)	47 (85.45)	55	
Annual Income (Family)				df = 3
Below 25,000	18 (17.48)	85 (82.52)	103	$X^2 = 6.783$
25,001 – 50,000	19 (22.62)	65 (77.38)	84	
50,001 – 1,00,000	16 (23.88)	51 (76.12)	67	TV = 7.815
Above 1,00,000	17 (36.96)	29 (63.04)	46	

Age	Level of Utilisation		Total	
	Low	Moderate		
Location of Shop				df = 2
Very Near	8 (23.53)	26 (76.47)	34	df = 3
Near	47 (24.74)	143 (75.26)	190	$X^2 = 0.760$
Far	13 (19.70)	53 (80.30)	66	
Very Far	2 (20)	8 (80)	10	TV = 7.815
Mode of Transport				df = 2
By Foot	45 (21.95)	160 (78.05)	205	$X^2 = 0.940$
By Two – wheeler	23 (27.06)	62 (72.95)	85	
By Bus	2 (20)	8 (80)	10	TV = 5.991
Visit in Person				
Yes	60 (21.90)	214 (78.10)	274	df = 1 $X^2 = 3.642$
No	10 (38.46)	16 (61.54)	26	TV = 3.841
Satisfaction				
Low	7 (50)	7 (50)	14	df = 2
Medium	51 (20.24)	201 (79.76)	252	$X^2 = 9.634$
High	12 (35.29)	22 (64.71)	34	TV = 5.991
Total	70	230	300	

The percentage of cardholders with moderate level of utilisation is found to be high with those between the age group of 31 and 50 years. The percentage of cardholders with low level of utilisation is found to be high with those above 50 years of age. There is no one with high level of utilisation. Thus it can be said that middle aged cardholders are utilising the ration shops more than other age group persons. However, the calculated chi-square value is lower than the table value at five per cent level, the hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted (H_{A1}). Hence age does not influence the level of utilisation of ration items.

The percentage of cardholders with moderate level of utilisation is found to be high with six members' family. The percentage of low level of utilisation is found to be high with the three members' family. There is no one with high level of utilisation. Hence, it is found that cardholders with more members in the family utilise the ration shops more than the

card holders with fewer members in the family. However the calculated chi-square value is lower than the table value at five per cent level the hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_{A2}) is accepted. Thus family size does not influence utilisation.

The percentage of cardholders with moderate level of utilisation is found to be high with those of professional category. The percentage of cardholders with low level of utilisation is high with the retired persons category. There is no one with high level of utilisation. It is evident from the analysis cardholders who are professionals have high level of utilisation than others. However, the calculated chi-square value is lesser than the table value at five per cent level, there is no significant association between employment status and utilisation. Therefore, the hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_{A3}) is rejected.

The percentage of cardholders with moderate level of utilisation is found to be high, with the cardholders having the family income below 25,000 INR. The percentage of cardholders with low level of utilisation is high with the cardholders having the annual income above 1,00,000 INR. There is no one with high level of utilisation. Thus it can be said that, lower income group utilise the ration shops more than the other income groups. However, the calculated Chi-square value is lesser than the table value at five per cent level, there is no significant association between family income and utilisation. Therefore, the hypothesis (H_{04}) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_{A4}) is accepted.

The percentage of cardholders with moderate level of utilisation is found to be high with the cardholders having ration shops far to their residence. The percentage of cardholders with low level of utilisation is found to be high with the cardholders having the ration shops near to their residence. There is no one with high level of utilisation. As the calculated chi-square value is lower than the table value at five per cent level, the hypothesis (H_{05}) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_{A5}) is accepted. It is inferred from the analysis that the location of ration shops has no influence in utilisation of ration items.

The percentage of cardholders with moderate level of utilisation is found to be high with those who go to ration shops by foot. The percentage of cardholders with low utilisation is found to be high with the cardholders those who go to ration shops by two wheeler. It is found that percentage is high with cardholders who go to the ration shops on foot. Thus, it can be said that cardholders going to the ration shops by foot have more utilisation than others. However, the calculated Chi-square value is lesser than the table value at five percent level the hypothesis (H_{06}) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_{A6}) is accepted. There is no significant association between mode of transport and level of utilisation.

The percentage of cardholders with moderate level of utilisation is found to be high with those who visit in person. The percentage of cardholders with low utilisation is high with those who do not visit the ration shop in person. Hence, it can be said that percentage is high with cardholders with high utilisation. There is no one with high level of utilisation. However, the calculated chi-square value is lesser than the table value at five percent level, the hypothesis (H_{07}) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_{A7}) is accepted. There is no significant association between personal visit to ration shop and utilisation.

The percentage of cardholders with moderate level of utilisation is found to be high with the cardholders who have moderate level of satisfaction. The percentage of cardholders with low level of utilisation is high with the cardholders who have low level of satisfaction. There is no one with high level of utilisation. Thus, it can be said that moderate level of satisfaction cardholders are having more utilisation as compared to the others. As the calculated chi-square value is greater than the table value at five percent level, there exists a significant association between satisfaction and level of utilisation. Therefore, the hypothesis (H_{08}) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_{A8}) is accepted.

FINDINGS

The findings and suggestions are evolved out of the profile of the sample cardholders and factors influencing the utilisation of cardholders.

The majority (180) cardholders are above the average of the utilisation index. Hence it can be said that majority of the cardholders purchase (utilise) the things offered at ration shops.

Also majority 103 (34.33%) cardholders belong to low income group who utilise the ration goods than the others. It is seen that majority of the cardholders (274) visit the ration shop in person (i.e., head/member of the family) to get the goods.

The variables age, family size, occupation family income, location of shop, mode of transport, and visit in person do not have association towards the utilisation. But the variable satisfaction associates. Hence it can be inferred that if a person is satisfied towards the items offered, he/she purchases it. It can be concluded that the cardholders are satisfied towards the ration goods offered by the government. It should be noted that cardholders have moderate satisfaction only. It implies there needs a little improvement in the working of PDS.

Suggestions by Cardholders

The following are the suggestions:

As there is no one with high satisfaction, 350 cardholders have given the following suggestions:

- The ration shop should be opened at correct time and the items should be distributed in the afternoon also.
- Quantity of the items like pulses, sugar, palm oil etc., can be increased during festival time.
- As the daily wage earners have to lose their wages when they come to purchase the items ration shop can be opened till 7.00 p.m.
- Quality of goods should be maintained always.
- Ration shops may be opened on Sundays also.
- If number of cardholders are more to a particular ration shop, in order to speed up the work, additional counter can be opened to reduce the pressure.
- Frequent inspection by Tahsildar should be made to check the smuggling of ration goods.
- Computerisation of billing should be made to avoid delay in supply.
- Open space must be covered by roof to avoid people standing in the hot sun.
- Parking stand facility for parking the vehicle safely should be arranged to avoid traffic jam in the area of ration shop.
- Bio-metrics-based handheld billing machines have been introduced in Chennai. Adequate steps to be taken to introduce all over Tamil Nadu to avoid malpractices.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that out of eight variables (age, family size, employment status, family income, location of shop, mode of transport, personal visit to ration shop, and satisfaction) taken, personal visit to ration shop by the cardholders is likely to have an significant association with the items eligible and items purchased. The cardholders while visiting the ration shop in person, might know what are the items that are eligible to them and will get a mindset to purchase those items, which are cheaper when compared to grocery shops, departmental stores and other shops.

Moreover the cardholders who are satisfied with price, quality, quantity, measurement, etc., purchase all the items that are supplied through PDS for which they have eligibility to purchase.

In this article, utilisation and satisfaction of PDS in Pollachi taluk alone have been concentrated. In future, researchers can take a whole district for analysing, also can make a comparative analysis between two districts/states, and take

a particular group of people (AAY or BPL) to analyse their level of utilisation and satisfaction.

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APPENDIX

A Study on Factors Influencing Level of Utilisation of Public Distribution System – with special reference to Pollachi Taluk

QUESTIONNAIRE / INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Age:

- a) Upto 30 yrs b) 31 – 50 yrs
c) Above 50 yrs

No. of members in your family:

- a) 2 b) 3 c) 4 d) 5 e) 6

Employment status:

- a) Agriculture b) Business
c) Govt. employee d) Private employee
e) Professional f) Retired
g) Housewife
h) Others(Please specify)_____

Family (annual)Income:

- a) Below INR 25,000 b) 25,001 – 50,000
c) 50,001 – 1,00,000 d) Above 1,00,000

State the distance of shop from your residence :

- a) Very near b) Near
c) Far d) Very far

Do you go to ration in person?:

- a) Yes b) No

How do you go to ration shop?:

- a) Foot b) Two wheeler
c) Bus

What are the items do you purchase in a month? (Please ✓)

Sl. No.	Items	Items Eligible	Items Purchased
1	Rice		
2	Wheat		
3	Sugar		
4	Kerosene		
5	Palm Oil		
6	Pulses		
7	Maida		
8	Wheat flour		

State your level of satisfaction towards the following factors:
(Please tick)

HS : Highly Satisfied S: Satisfied DS: Dissatisfied

Sl.No.	Aspects	HS	S	DS
1	No. of items provided to you			
2	Quantity and Measurement of goods			
3	Quality of the goods			
4	Working hours of the ration shops			
5	Behaviour of the staff			
6	Place to stand in queue			
7	Parking facility			

Please give your valuable suggestions:
