

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN TAMIL NADU

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Abstract

The Public Distribution System evolved as a system of management of scarcity and for distribution of food grains at a 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 supplemental in nature and is not intended to make available the entire requirement of any of the commodities distributed under it to a household or a section of the society. 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 the State Governments.

Key Words: Public Distribution System, Fair Price Shop, Food Corporation of India, Targeted Public Distribution System.

Introduction

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 into 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 Yojana schemes. Under the universal PDS there is no discrimination of families on APL and BPL lines based on income. The operational responsibility including allocation within State, identification of families below the poverty line, issue of Ration Cards and supervision of the functioning of EPS rest with the State Governments. Commodities namely wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene are being allocated to the States/UTs under PDS for distribution. Some States/UTs also distribute additional items of mass consumption through the PDS outlets such as pulses, edible oil, iodized salt, spices and so on.

Public Distribution System Network

The unique feature of PDS in this State is Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation, Cooperatives and women SHGs govern the entire network. No private dealer is allowed to run FPS. Also, the Government guidelines show that no family cardholder is to travel more than 2 kms to reach FPS. Details of shops run by the different agencies are given below:

Table 1 Public Distribution System Network

S.No.	Agencies	No. of Fair Price Shops	Percentage
1	Cooperatives	28,752	93.41
2	TNCSC	1,251	4.06
3	Other Shops	138	0.45
4	Mobile Shops	10	0.032
5	Women Shops	630	2.05
	Total	30,781	100.00

Source: Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation, Chennai.

The Shops under Co-operatives are controlled by Joint Registrar of Co-operatives in the District. He is assisted by Deputy Registrar (PDS), Co-operative Sub-registrar(PDS) controls the liftment and distribution at the block level.

Agencies Involved in Public Distribution System

Co-operation, Food and Consumer Protection Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu lays down policy for Public Distribution System in Tamil Nadu is under the charge of Hon'ble Minister for Food and headed by a Secretary to Government. The agencies involved in Public Distribution System are given below.

Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department

Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department is implementing and regulating Public Distribution System in this State. Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation procures rice and other essential commodities required for public distribution system from Food Corporation of India and through tenders. Distribution of commodities through fair price shops is being carried out by Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation and the Cooperative societies.

Fair Price Shops

The Public Distribution System is implemented through 33,222 fair price shops are functioning under the various agencies are as follows:

TABLE 2 Agency-wise Fair Price Shops

S.No.	Agency	Full-time	Part-time	Total
1	Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation	1,269	125	1,394
2	Cooperatives (Under R.C.S)	23,109	7,967	31,076
3	Other Co-operatives	124	18	142
4	Women fair price shops, including Self Help Groups	533	63	596
5	Mobile fair price shops run by Cooperatives	14	0	14
	Total	25,049	8,173	33,222

Source: Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation, Chennai.

Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation lifts essential commodities from Food Corporation of India and stores them in 226 operational godowns located all over the state. From the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation operational godowns, stocks are moved by lead Cooperative Societies/self lifting societies and delivered at the doorsteps of fair price

shops. Similarly, Sugar is moved by Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation from the respective Cooperative/ Private Sugar Mills and distributed through its operational godowns. Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation also procures various other essential commodities for Special Public Distribution System directly from the market through tenders and also through designated Government of India agencies. Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation and Cooperatives lift kerosene from wholesale dealers of the oil companies.

Antyodaya Anna Yojana Scheme (AAY)

Antyodaya Anna Yojana Scheme (AAY) is being implemented in our State. Even though, there is no classification under this scheme, the poorest of poor are targeted for the issue of Antyodaya Anna Yojana cards. This has now been expanded by the Government of India based on the directions of the Supreme Court of India. The Antyodaya Anna Yojana family cards are eligible for 35 kgs. of rice per month and rice is distributed free of cost to these family Cardholders only in this State, despite the fact that the Government of India has stipulated cost at 3/- per kg. for this scheme.

Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department of State of Tamil Nadu as on 31. 01.2010 have identified 18, 97,985 families eligible for the AAY scheme while the beneficiaries of AAY schemes allotted is 18,64,600. Periodic verification is conducted by the respective District Collectors to eliminate ineligible families and include the eligible ones. The off take under AAY scheme is monitored online and reviewed every month during the monthly meetings of DSOs and ACs.

The following categories of persons/families have been targeted under this scheme:

- Widows, terminally ill persons, disabled persons, persons aged 60 years and above with no family or societal support or assured means of subsistence.
- All primitive tribal households.
- HIV positive/affected, leprosy affected persons, urban homeless.

Food Corporation of India

The Government of India is allotting Rice and wheat to Tamil Nadu for distribution under PDS, every year. Based on the said allocation, the FCI issues district wise allocation orders, as per the requirement furnished by the TNCSC. On receipt of sub-allocation from the General Manager, FCI the TNCSC gets the release orders from the District Offices of FCI after making payment and the rice is lifted from the depots through the approved transport contractors appointed by the TNCSC for each Region.

It was informed to the Committee that at State level, the Principal Secretary, Co-operation Food and Consumer Protection Department conducts the Co-ordination meeting every Monday with the General Manager, FCI, Chennai, and with the Managing Director, TNCSC and review the stock position and lifting problems if any at state level are sorted out and solved then and there. Similarly at the district level the Area managers of Food Corporation

of India hold monthly Co-ordination meetings with the Senior Regional Managers / Regional Managers of TNCSC.

Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC)

Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC) is functioning as the, storage and distribution agency under the Public Distribution System. TNCSC was incorporated on 24th April 1972 under the companies Act.1956. Later, in 1975 it was converted as a Stated owned public Undertaking. The main functions of the TNCSC are procurement of essential commodities, storage, movement of stocks to godowns and transporting the stocks to fair price shops. It also procures and distributes pulses and other commodities required for the various welfare schemes of the Government.

TNCSC is the wholesale agent for moving commodities like Rice, Wheat from the depots of Food Corporation of India and sugar from sugar mills to 212 operational Godowns and to distribute it to Public Distribution System outlets owned by TNCSC. TNCSC is running 1251 Fair Price shops in the state out of the total 30,781 FPSs in the State.

In Tamil Nadu FPS distributes Rice, Wheat, Sugar and Kerosene. Apart from the above, as a price control measure, the Government of Tamil Nadu distributes Toor Dhall, Urid Dhall, Palmolein, Fortified Atta and spices packet containing 10 items at concessional rates.

Role of Cooperatives in Tamil Nadu

In Tamil Nadu no private persons are permitted to run the Fair Price Shops. The Fair Price Shops are run mostly by the Cooperative Societies like Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS), Consumer Cooperatives and Marketing Societies or by the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation. Very limited numbers of shops are run by the Women Self Help Groups. Hence the Cooperatives play a predominant role in the functioning of Public Distribution System. PDS came under the Co-operatives in 1987. The Shops under Co-operatives are controlled by Joint Registrar of Co-operatives in the District. He is assisted by Deputy Registrar (PDS), Co-operative Sub-registrar (PDS) controls the liftment and distribution at the block level.

The Unique Features of Public Distribution System in Tamilnadu

- a) Universal Public Distribution System is followed in Tamil Nadu, whereas targeted PDS exists in other states. Universal Public Distribution System connotes distribution of subsidized PDS commodities to all residents without classification of them into different categories.
- b) The distribution of quality rice free of cost with effect from 1.6.2011
- c) No private trader is engaged in the Public Distribution System activity. The TamilNadu civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC) lifts and transports Foodgrain from FCI godown to their godown. From TNCSC Godowns the cooperative Societies lift the food grain and delivers the same at the Fair Price Shops (FPS). FPSs are mainly run by the cooperative societies and TNCSC.

Commodities Distributed Under PDS in Tamil Nadu

FPS distributes mainly rice, wheat, sugar and kerosene. Special PDS items to meet price rise, are also distributed. Items are Toor Dhall, Urid dhall, Palmolien oil, Fortified Atta and Masala Packets at subsidized rates. 2500MT of wheat is utilized for fortified Atta from Central allocation and about 2500MT procured under OMS by the State.

Elimination of Bogus Cards

The State Government has made periodical arrangements for weeding out bogus cards by making 100 per cent verification in selected shops regularly. Apart from this a State-wide drive was launched in 2008, 100 per cent door to door verification undertaken in four phases covering all the families as a result of which 2 lakhs cards have been finally cancelled, 5.66 lakhs cards are under notice of cancellation and 19 lakhs cards are under orders of stop supply for which public appeal is being received now. After observing judicious procedures, in two stages family cards which are confirmed as bogus are being finally cancelled.

- After 100 per cent door-to-door verification, list of cards, where families are not residing are issued stop-supply orders with 30 days opportunity to file representation.
- After verification of representations, eligible cards are restored and ineligible cards list is published in shops as cancelled with time limit of 30 days for appeal.
- Appeals are verified and cards related to eligible appeals alone are restored.
- The List of Bogus cards identified for cancellation is published at PDS outlets and other public places. Bogus cards are finally cancelled after observing formalities.

Conclusion

The Government of Tamilnadu took all efforts to ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of essential commodities to the poor. Further, the involvement of women SHGs in the distribution network ensures safety, transparency and accessibility and above all reduced the transaction cost. Hence, this channel of distribution can be promoted Universal coverage is the hallmark of PDS in Tamil Nadu. State Government is making all efforts to make the PDS more effective by ensuring the availability, affordability and accessibility of PDS articles to the poor. The network of PDS consists of 29321 FPS covering 1.97 crore family cards. Here, Co-operatives have been given more roles in running FPS. The emerging role of SHGs in PDS is widely appreciated. Moreover, they enjoy the participation and involvement of entire village in running FPS. Hence, universal PDS is in operation in this state and the Co-operatives are given much importance in the distribution system.

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