

# Public Distribution System in Solapur District of Maharashtra: A Case Study

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## Abstract

The universal Public Distribution System (PDS) had several limitations. In 1997, the government of India launched the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), with a focus on the poor. TPDS aims to provide subsidized food to the poor through a network of ration shops. In the present dissertation, survey has been undertaken to understand and evaluate the Public Distribution System in Solapur District of Maharashtra. It was observed that there are large number of people were unable to lift their grains from the Fair Price Shops. The research was focused on reasons behind the grains incoming quota was not equal to its outlet. The research suggests that there is need to improve the PDS system in India for food security and consumer protection.

**Keywords:** food security, public distribution system, poor, fair price shops.

## 1. Introduction

The concept of Public Distribution System in the country was evolved around 1942 due to shortage of food grains during 2nd World War and Government intervention in distribution of food started. 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 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 Food Corporation India (FCI), has assumed the responsibility for procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation of food grains to the State Governments. The operational responsibility including allocation within State, identification of families below the poverty line (BPL), issue of Ration Cards and supervision of the functioning of Fair Price Shops (FPS) rest with the State Governments. Presently, under the PDS, the commodities namely wheat, rice, sugar are being allocated to the States for distribution. The Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) was launched in June, 1992 with a view to strengthen and streamline the PDS as well as to improve its reach in the far-flung, hilly, remote and inaccessible areas where a substantial section of the poor live. Food grains for distribution in RPDS areas were issued to the States at 50 paise below the Central Issue Price. The scale of issue was up to 20 kg per card. Subsequently, in 1997, the government launched the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), with a focus on the poor. TPDS aims to provide subsidized food to the poor through a network of ration shops. Food grains such as rice and wheat that are provided under TPDS are procured from farmers, allocated to states and delivered to the ration shop where the beneficiary buys his entitlement. The centre and states share the responsibilities of identifying the poor, procuring

grains and delivering food grains to beneficiaries. In September 2013, Parliament enacted the National Food Security Act, 2013. The Act relies largely on the existing TPDS to deliver food grains as legal entitlements to poor households. (FCI 2013-2014)

This marks a shift by making the right to food a justifiable right. In order to understand the implications of this Act, the note maps the food supply chain from the farmer to the beneficiary, identifies challenges to implementation of TPDS, and discusses alternatives to reform TPDS.

The number of people undernourished in India and China, the world's two most populous countries, currently stands at 363 million (two-thirds are in India), accounting for 43 per cent of the world total (FAO 2004). Sources of food insecurity for both countries, i.e., huge population, limited agricultural resources, and unstable and unpredictable world markets, still prevail, presenting potential threats to national food security

The present paper critically analyzes the organizational structure and their loopholes in the functioning of agencies storage and distribution and suggests remedial measures to make the PDS transparent, efficient and effective.

## 2. Methodology

### The State of Maharashtra

Maharashtra is the second largest state in India in terms of population. It is divided into thirty-five districts. Solapur district was selected for study of PDS. There are 11 Tehsils and in the present dissertation, 20 FPS from 20 villages were covered. The present status of PDS is noticed and studied to evaluate the performance of PDS.

Phule nagar, sangole, Narayangaon, Udagi, Bhimnagar, Pathardi, Wadala, Mandrup, Jadhavwadi, Mohol, Mangalwedha, Kanher, Bhamb, Giravi, Mandave, Sadashivnagar, Islampur, Rede, Mahadevnagar, Kacharewadi these are the name of villages which were selected . 1 FPS from each 20 villages was studied comprising 6887 cardholders. The survey was based on the categories such as APL, BPL, AAY and Annapurna card holders including the members or units from each cardholder family. The observations recorded during the present case study are described in the present topic.

### 2.1 Major Observations

The major observations that we attempt to record here are based on the facts that we collected in the field for the study on public distribution system in the District.

- Distribution of Items
- Gap between Requirement and Distribution of Items
- Distribution of Ration Cards

- Awareness of the Households regarding Price Chart, and Price information
  - Perception of the households about FPS Dealers
  - Perception of the households about the Role of Panchayats in PDS
  - Perception of the FPS Dealers about the Role of Panchayats in PDS
  - Reactions of FPS Dealers about the State Supply Department
  - Problems of FPS Dealers about the quantity and quality of items allotted by the
  - Supply Department Problems of FPS Dealers Regarding Withdrawal of Quota and Transportation
- Similarly, the views and opinions of the people benefited from the FPS were examined to evaluate the services and facilities provided to the consumers. The evaluation was based on the questionnaire format as described below.

### 2.2 Questionnaire for peoples

- How many FPS in your village?
- Are you a regular user of the Fair-price shops?
- Are you satisfied with the service at the FPS?
- Why are you not satisfied about service of FPS?
- How far is the FPS from your house?
- How many times a month do you visit the FPS?
- What is the reason for repeated visits?
- Which type of ration card you have?
- Which types of food grains you sold from FPS?
- What is the price of food grains in FPS?
- How much quantities of food grain obtaining from FPS
- What is the annual income of you or your family?

### 2.3 FPS (Fair Price Shops) Questionnaires

- How educated or qualified are you?
- Since how long your FPS is working or in which year your FPS established?
- How many families or persons get benefited by your FPS?
- Do the families or persons takes food stuffs from your FPS on regular basis?
- Why families or persons do not takes food stuffs from your FPS?
- What is percent of commission for quintal on the food stuffs you sell through FPS?
- After distribution, how much quantity of food grains remains in your FPS? If yes, Why?
- What you do with the remained food grains in your godown after distribution?

- Where you store the food grains?
- Are you satisfied about the quality and quantity of food grains?

### 3. Results and Discussion

In the state, as on 1.4.2013 there are 2, 29, 80,911 Ration cards are in force .The numbers and the classification of the same is as follows.

**Table 3.1 Ration cardholders Under Tricolor ration card Scheme (Maharashtra)**

Yellow Ration card		Saffron (APL)	White	Annapurna	Total
BPL	Antyodaya				
4341138	2440870	14277157	1843321	78425	22980911

(Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department of Maharashtra 2013-2014)

**Table 3.2 Rate and Quantity of food grains distributed under TPDS**

Category	Food grains	GOI Sale price (Rs./Qtl.)	Ex godown Rate (Rs./Qtl.)	F.P.S. owners Margin (Rs./Qtl.)	Retail Price (Rs./Qtl.)	Monthly quantity distributed (per family)
AAY	Wheat	200	150	50	2	35 kg.
	Rice	300	250	50	3	
BPL	Wheat	415	450	50	5	35 kg.
	Rice	565	550	50	6	
APL	Wheat	610	670	50	7.20	15 kg.
	Rice	830	910	50	9.60	

Under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), 35 kg of foodgrains (wheat and rice) are provided to BPL card holders at ` five per kg for Wheat and ` six per kg for Rice. For APL (orange card holders), 15 kg of foodgrains (wheat and rice) are provided at ` 7.20 per kg for Wheat and ` 9.60 per kg for Rice. (Department of Food & Public Distribution Government of India 2013-2014)

**Table 3.3 Tehsil of Solapur district Tahsil & Card Wise RC Count**

Sr. No	TAHSIL NAME	APL SAFFRON	AAY	BPL Yellow	APL White	ANNAPURNA	TOTAL
1	Akkalkot	25775	9117	24204	114	148	59358
2	Barshi	29220	7690	39010	5328	59	81307
3	Karmala	26622	5510	21509	2618	98	56357
4	Madha	36975	4254	13591	6167	101	61088
5	Malshiras	54877	11308	16490	1044	116	83835
6	Mangalvedhe	23356	4251	15269	1600	120	44596
7	Mohol	26953	5229	16887	2846	65	51980
8	Pandharpur	57500	8587	12955	7017	49	86108
9	Sangole	40608	6340	21052	6549	155	74704
10	Solapur North	247248	10852	45145	12733	52	316030
11	Solapur South	18929	5449	23309	1943	120	49750

**Table 3.4 District: Solapur, Tehsil: All Tehsils and No. of FPS**

Summary	
Tehsil	No. of FPS
11	4138

(Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department of Maharashtra 2013-2014)

### 3.2 Allotment and off take of food grains from 20 FPS for month.

Solapur district of Maharashtra consists of total 11 Tehsils. 20 FPS from 11 Tehsils were selected for the survey of PDS. The survey was based on the card categories such as APL, BPL, AAY and Annapurna. 20 FPS were having 3837 APL card holders, 1695 BPL card holders; AAY shared 723 card holders while Annapurna

cardholders found to be 32. The allotment of wheat and rice for all the FPS in Solapur district was recorded. The allotment of wheat was 753.94 QTL and for rice it was 552.45 QTL. While the off take of wheat was 543.20 QTL and rice recorded 474.94 QTL off take. The details are described in the table.

**Table 3.5 Allotment and off take of food grains from 20 FPS for month.**

Name of Village	No. of Cards				Allotment (QTL)		Off take (QTL)	
	APL	BPL	AAY	Anna Purna	Wheat	Rice	Wheat	Rice
Phule nagar	178	90	35		36.75	29.40	26	20
Sangole	167	70	42		33.90	31.50	23.70	21.50
Narayan gaon	160	51	25	2	28	24.35	17	18.80
Udagi	180	90	41		37.50	34.90	28.50	27
Bhimnagar	200	70	30	3	37.92	30.52	25.52	21.80
Pathardi	180	106	55		44.80	37.50	33.60	27.30
Wadala	205	90	38	3	39.12	36	30.40	23.90
Mandrup	318	70	29		41.70	38.80	30	31
Jadhavwadi	130	65	36		27	22	19.60	16.10
Mohol	197	130	64		50.10	45.30	37	33
Mangalwedha	245	89	28	5	40.57	36.77	25.50	27.60
Kanher	195	88	42		38.40	34.30	24	25.90
Bhamb	151	102	49	2	39.35	35.15	30.10	25.35
Giravi	208	93	33	4	40.60	35.80	26.85	25.65
Mandave	189	111	43	1	41.88	39	36.98	31.37
Sadashivnagar	230	79	24		37.50	30.90	27.70	20.40
Islampur	190	111	53		44.40	32	30.70	26
Rede	210	77	34	7	37.62	32.50	25.50	21.80
Mahadevnagar	199	46	11	5	27.58	23.40	19.70	16
Kacharewadi	105	67	21		25.80	18.90	20	14.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>3837</b>	<b>1695</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>753.94</b>	<b>552.45</b>	<b>543.20</b>	<b>474.94</b>

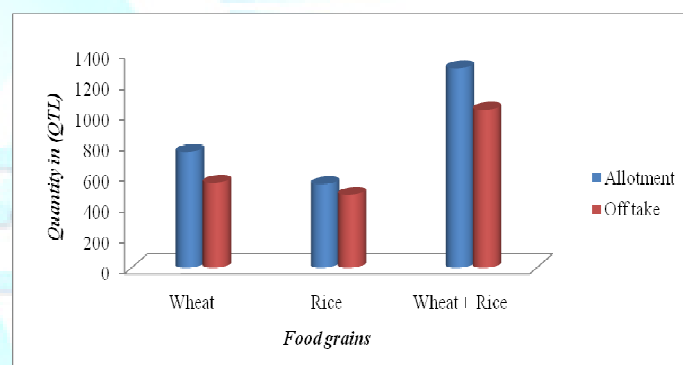
### 3.3 Total allotment and off take share of Wheat and Rice for month

The table and graph shows the Allotment and off take of wheat and rice of the Solapur district of Maharashtra. According to survey, 1297.14 QTL grains(wheat and rice)

was allotted to Solapur district of which 1027.39QTL grain was off taken on timely basis. The survey further recorded off take percentage 79.20%.

Cardholders (6887)	Wheat	Rice	Wheat + Rice
<b>Allotment (QTL)</b>	753.94	543.20	1297.14
<b>Off take (QTL)</b>	552.45	474.94	1027.39
<b>Off take Percentage (%)</b>	73.27	87.43	79.20

**Table 3.6**



**Fig 3.1 Total allotment and off take share of Wheat and Rice in 20 FPS for month.**

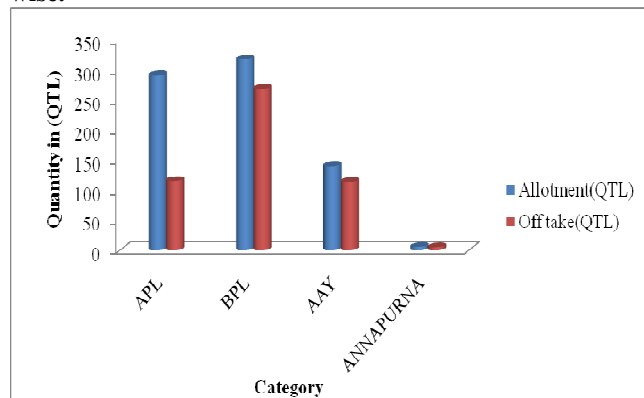
### 3.4 Wheat

The distribution of grains is based on the category of cardholder's i.e. APL, BPL, AAY and Annapurna. The allotment and off take of wheat for 20 FPS in 20 villages of Solapur district was recorded as category wise.

**Table 3.7 Category wise allotments and off take of wheat for month**

Category	Allotment (QTL)	Off take (QTL)	Percentage (%)
APL	291.15	115	39.49
BPL	317.4	268.2	84.49
AAY	139.8	113	80.83
ANNAPURNA	5.59	5	89.44
Total	753.94	552.45	73.27

**Fig 3.2 Allotment and off take of wheat for 20 FPS in 20 villages of Solapur district was recorded as category wise.**

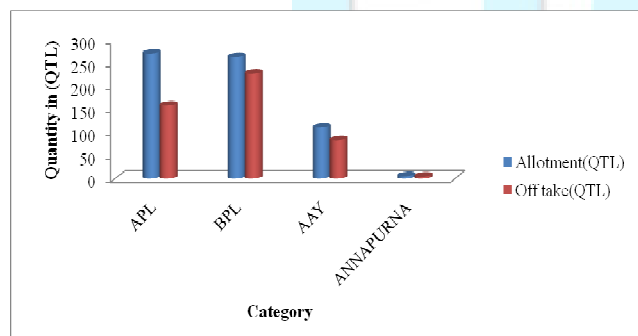


### 3.4 Rice

The distribution of grains is based on the category of cardholder's i.e. APL, BPL, AAY and Annapurna. The allotment and off take of rice for 20 FPS in 20 villages of Solapur district was recorded as category wise.

**Table 3.8 Category wise Allotment and off take of rice for month**

Category	Allotment (QTL)	Off take (QTL)	Percentage (%)
APL	271.80	158.7	58.38
BPL	263.8	228	86.42
AAY	111.3	83.6	75.11
ANNAPURNA	5.55	4.64	83.60
Total	543.20	474.94	87.43



**Fig 3.3 Allotment and off take of Rice for 20 FPS in 20 villages of Solapur district was recorded as category wise.**

Most of the APL beneficiaries in the village are farmers. They have their own food grains which are produced in their farms. Therefore, some of these beneficiaries do not turn for the lifting of food grains under PDS. In urban area most of the families, females go for the jobs thereby they prefer readymade atta as against the whole food grains. And according to APL quality of food grains are very poor so most of the APL families did not get food grains from FPS.

Allotment of food grain is made on the basis of card. Card holders would recommend that allotment of food grain should be on unit basis and not as per ration card. I observed that in the last of the month a large quantity of wheat and rice is left as balance. The dealer stated that often beneficiaries do not lift their entitlement for the previous month in case they miss it. The dealer stated that he was willing to give but beneficiaries often do not lift. He further state that people often do not lift as they do not have the money to buy the food grain. The procedure for allotment of food grain is such that the food grain reaches the FPS only by around 15th to 25th of the month in which distribution is take place. At times, the grain reaches the FPS at the end of the month. There is not much time left for distribution and a lot of food grain is left balance at the end of the month. The allotment for the subsequent month is not adjusted in accordance with the previous month's balance. Late arrival of food grains at FPS is an important constraint in the timely distribution of PDS grains in some villages.

### 4.9 Fair Price Shops

In the state, there are 51,596 fair price Shops are in force up to September, 2013. The numbers and the classification of the same are as follows.

**Table 3.9 Classification of FPS (fair Price Shop) in Maharashtra**

Individual Shops	Self Help Groups (Women)	Self Help Groups (Men)	Grampanchayat	Co-operative Societies	Total FPS
41220	2050	48	77	8319	51596

(Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department of Maharashtra 2013-2014)

### 3.5 FPS Classification as per above survey

The FPS in Solapur district of Maharashtra which were selected for evaluation PDS were 20 FPS. Out of the total 20 FPS, 16 FPS were found to be owned by the single person. And remaining 4 were found to be runner by the co

operative societies. The FPS which was owned by single person showed in proper functioning such as the timings and distribution pattern of grains. It was observed that consumers are not fully satisfied with the services rendered by the 16 FPS owners owned by single person.

The 4 FPS which were operated by the co operative society showed some proper and management system of distribution. The monopoly was not observed in the co operative societies FPS. The timing of FPS was found to be convenient for the consumers or cardholders.

SO it can be suggested that there is need of allotting the FPS to Grampanchayat or self help groups to avoid the monopoly for betterment of the cardholders by having maximum advantage of PDS.

**Table 3.10 Classification of selected fair Price Shops in Solapur**

Individual Shops	Self Help Groups (Women)	Self Help Groups (Men)	Grampanchayat	Co-operative Societies	Total FPS
16	-	-	-	4	20

### 3.6. Public Hearing

#### At area where survey had been conducted

- Poor, labor class, domestic servants do not get ration card despite of applying through forms.
- The registration of BPL cards may be continued permanently.
- Supply of the allocation should be made to the FPS dealer to its fullest.
- Shops are not open throughout the day. No board on display is shown
- Every person must get 14 kg and every family should get 50 kg of grains
- Complained that though extra allocation is released during festival period like Diwali, Dusshehera, Eid the same does not actually reach the poor and the needy.
- He complained that many of the cardholders have died but still grains are lifted in their names. There has to be a check on this.
- The Commission of the FPS dealers should be increased.
- Dealers should get minimum Rs.5000/- and maximum Rs.10, 000/- honorarium for service and efforts. Commission on a quintal should be raised by Rs.100/- from Rs. 50/-.
- FPS owners should be made available two persons for manual work like weighing the grains and making bills.

- New ration cards should be granted as expeditiously as possible and number of BPL cards should be increased.
- Allocation from the state should remain constant.
- Licenses of the FPS owners who are not running the shop on their own should be cancelled Stock availability, rates prevalent, complaint book, phone numbers of the concerned officers shall be available at a display board outside the FPS.
- Many people who are actually poor are still out of the purview of the BPL cards.
- FPSs do not open on time.
- In rural areas it is particularly unfair as the beneficiaries are often daily wagers and lose out on a day's wage in order to get their entitlement.
- Display board should be maintained a manner that the stock position, rates prevalent, complaint book, and phone numbers this will ensure transparency.
- Both rice and wheat should be available at the same time so that that people do not have to make multiple visits to the FPS.
- The timing should also be as per the convenience of the daily wagers, i.e., early morning and late evening and the dealers should follow it.
- Many FPS dealers are not giving receipts.
- Records at the FPS must be inspected.
- Shops do not open regularly in this area and hardly distribute food grains to beneficiaries.
- FPS dealers do not get full quota every month, because of which they are unable to distribute food grain to all the beneficiaries attached to the shop.
- FPS is so far from main village.
- CCTV should be installed in Shop and department.
- Many FPS distribute food grains for last three to four days of month.
- Only wheat and rice are distributed by FPS, there is need of more commodities.
- In some villages, BPL families have been missed out; performance of TPDS is considered to be poor.
- The behavior of the FPS owners is arrogant.
- Wheat at the FPS is extremely poor quality. It is completely insect ridden and in an inedible condition.
- Poor quality grains are supplied to the beneficiaries and on being asked, the reply of the FPS dealer is that the supply from the godown is poor.

### 3.7 Suggestions

The observation during the present survey was recorded over the consumer reactions and views regarding the public distribution systems in Solapur district of Maharashtra.

- The procedure for allotment of food grain is such that the food grain reaches the FPS only by around 15th to 25th of the month in which distribution is take place. At times, the grain reaches the FPS at the end of the month. There is not much time left for distribution and a lot of food grain is left balance at the end of the month. The allotment for the subsequent month is not adjusted in accordance with the previous month's balance. Late arrival of food grains at FPS is an important constraint in the timely distribution of PDS grains in some villages.
  - According to the observations it can be suggested that, and the fair price shops should be allotted the adequate amount of grains for every month as demanded. The F.P.S. should be open throughout the weeks and months for the regarding grain supply to the needy consumers.
  - It can be suggested that there is need of allotting the F.P.S. to Grampanchayat or self help groups to avoid the monopoly for betterment of the cardholders by having maximum advantage of PDS.
  - There should be proper receipts on the every purchase made by consumer to avoid any illegal practices in the distribution system.
  - The monitoring and inspection of F.P.S should be done on the regular basis by government officials for fair practicing of the public distribution systems.
  - The F.P.S. should be allotted to the appropriate persons by checking their social status and not by any recommendations.
  - The exercise of rationalization of ration cards allotted to each F.P.S. should be undertaken at the earliest bring about uniformity in distribution of ration cards to respective F.P.S.
  - The renewal of F.P. S. should be done on the basis of the performance of the F.P.S.
  - The proportion of population with food in security should be identified and the inclusion must be there on timely basis.
  - The consumers may be allowed to draw ration quota in weekly installments as per there requirement.
  - Only wheat and rice are distributed by FPS, there is need of more commodities.
  - The lifting of grains for godowns should be computerized for onward transmission and monitoring. This would prevent manipulations in the records of issues and receipts at later dates.
- Finally the overall review on the beneficiaries in P.D.S. should be done for the inclusion of needy consumer who still is not included in the public distribution system. So the above suggestions can be made by the survey for

the betterment of overall public distribution systems in Solapur district of Maharashtra.

#### 4. Conclusions

From the investigations performed during the present dissertation, it can be concluded that, the public distribution system in Solapur district of Maharashtra was analyzed for the availability of food grains and distribution system. It was found that food grains are available adequately but distribution pattern needs some improvement. The anomalies in the distribution system were analyzed and it found to be the cause of improper storage as well as management of the distribution of PDS. To tackle these lacking, it can be suggested that, there should be proper distribution system (regular and adequate amount) to the needy consumers. It is also necessary to monitor the FPS and their regulations on regular basis for betterment and development of the PDS.

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