



A Status Report of Food Security In Selected Areas of Tiruchippalli District

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ABSTRACT

Food Security System (FSS) is a poverty alleviation programme and contributes towards the social welfare of the people. The present study elaborately discusses in detail on "A STATUS REPORT OF FOOD SECURITY IN SELECTED AREAS OF TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT". The Primary objective of the study is to study the affordability, accessibility and adequacy of food materials to the people in ensuring Food Security. The responses of the consumers about the working of Public Distribution System (PDS) are satisfactory. They are fully satisfied with the working of Public Distribution System (PDS) on the basis of location, timely supply, time spent, quota availability adequacy of stocks, quality of food items and behaviour of staff. There is no significant difference among different income groups unanimously agreed that location facilitates the buying of commodities in fair shops.

KEYWORDS : Food Security, Public Distribution System, Poverty, Ration Shops

The long term solution for providing national level food security is economic growth of the country that can provide productive employment to all. Yet economic growth is a necessary but not necessarily employability and skills among people. This requires investment in education Apart from creation of skills, there is yet another route along which investment in education brings about long term food security. Female literacy results in decline in fertility, infant mortality and better nutritional status, for children (Kirit S. Parikh, 1997, p.259). A reduction in the growth rate of population means a quick increase in percapita net availability of food grains and percapita income, Thus food security involves three major aspects of food production, assured supply, and access to food. Food security at the level of each individual child, woman and man is the first requirement for a healthy and productive life. Jawaharlal Nehru had said in 1947, "Everything else can wait, but not agriculture". India's position in the 2010 Global Hunger Index conducted by the International Food Policy Research Institute shows that she holds the 67th rank among 122 developing countries. It has stated that "serious hunger" is prevalent in all the states.

Food security system (FSS) is a poverty alleviation programme and contributes towards the social welfare of the people. Essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar, kerosene and the like are supplied to the people under the food security system at reasonable prices. Food security system is a boon to the people living below the poverty line. Food security system is the primary social welfare and antipoverty programme of the Government of India. Revamped Food security system (RFSS) has been initiated by the Government of India since 1992 in order to serve and provide essential commodities to the people living in remote, backward and hilly areas. The Government introduced Targeted Food Security System (TFSS) in ensuring food security to the poor people in 1997. Central Government and State Governments have been actively involved in steering the operations for the success of the food security system. The present study elaborately discusses in detail on "A STATUS REPORT OF FOOD SECURITY IN SELECTED AREAS OF TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT".

The Primary objective of the study is

➤ To study the affordability, accessibility and adequacy of food materials to the people in ensuring Food Security.

Commodities Purchased

A number of consumers purchased various commodities through the FSS outlets. Almost all the consumers purchased Sugar, Rice and Kerosene; only three fourths of them purchased Wheat.

Table 1

Table Showing the Commodities Purchased by Consumers

Commodity	Total No. of Consumers who made purchase	Percentage
Rice	180	60
Wheat	60	20
Sugar	40	13.33
Kerosene	20	6.67
Total	300	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table reveals clearly that Rice is the most important item of purchase of the consumers. 60 per cent of the respondents bought Rice, 20 per cent of the respondents bought Wheat, followed by Sugar (13.33 per cent Kerosene) 6.67 per cent.

Distance of the Shops

The general policy of the Government is to ensure one shop within a distance of 3 Km. of the habitation where the cardholder lives. The survey reveals (Table 2) that only 2.66 per cent of shops of the sample are situated at a distance of more than 3 Km.

Table 2

Table Showing the Distance of the Shops

Distance	No. of shops	Percentage
Below 1 Km	222	74
1-2 Km	48	16
2-3 Km	22	7.37
Above 3 Km	8	2.67
Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The sample respondents availing the ration commodities at the ration shops should be located in close proximity to their residence. The convenient location enables the respondents to avail their ration commodities without any inconvenience. The convenient location reduces their waiting time and travel expenses.

Timely availability

To the question whether the commodities are made available to them on the scheduled dates, the consumers responded as in Table 3.

Table 3
Table Showing the Timely Availability of Supplies

Response	Score (or) Ranking	Frequency	Percentage
Available	2	228	76.
Not Available	1	72	24
Total		300	100.0

Mean = 1.71 S.D = 0.454

It is found that a rather substantial proportion (76%) of the consumers feel that commodities are made available to them on the scheduled dates. It is further examined whether the commodities are made available to them at least before the end of the corresponding month. The result is shown in Table 3.

It is clear from the above table that in majority of the cases (51.67 per cent) the time taken for purchasing commodities is less than 30 minutes. It is also important to see that 37.67 per cent respondents are able to transact business within 60 minutes. It is clear that majority of the respondents 89.34 per cent of the respondents transact business within 60 minutes.

The following table shows the availability of ration commodities at the fair price shops.

Time taken to complete the purchases

The respondents are asked to estimate the time it takes generally for them to complete their purchases

Table 4
Time Taken to Purchase

Response	Score (or) Ranking	Frequency	Percentage
Upto 30 minutes	4	155	51.67
Above 30 but below 60 minutes	3	113	37.67
Above 60 but below 120 minutes	2	22	7.33
Above 120 minutes	1	10	3.34
Total		300	100.0

Mean = 3.612 S.D =0.603

The average time taken to complete the purchase is found to be less than one hour. But about 66 per cent of the respondents are able to do so within half an hour.

Table 5
Table Showing the Availability during the Course of the Month

Response	Score (or) Ranking	Frequency	Percentage
Available before month-end	2	245	81.66
Not Available before month-end	1	55	18.33
Total		300	100.0

Mean = 1.898 S.D = 0.302

Thus it is established that though there might be delay in supplies at the proper time, yet about 82 per cent of the consumers are able to draw their full supplies before the end of the respective month.

Based on the objective, the following hypothesis is tested.

Proof of Hypothesis (i)

There is no significant difference between level of effectiveness in both the rural and urban areas under Public Distribution System.

TEST OF MEAN: URBAN VS. RURAL CONSUMERS

The consumers who responded to the survey are broadly classified as rural and urban. They gave their impressions (comments) on all the 9 selected elements which collectively determined the effectiveness of the Public Distribution System. In order to find out whether there are any significant differences in their perceptions of these elements between the rural and urban consumers, the inferential statistics test ('t' test) was undertaken. The critical ratio values for all the 9 elements for the various responses given by the above two categories of respondents were arrived at (Table 6).

Table 6
Comparison of Opinions of Urban Vs, Rural Consumer

Elements	Rural		Urban		Critical ratio value	Significant level
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation		
Convenient location	1.9457	0.227	1.9155	0.280	0.85	N.S
Timely supply	1.7029	0.458	1.7465	0.438	0.75	N.S
Time spent	1.3898	0.600	1.3803	0.618	0.12	N.S
Convenient working hours	1.9425	0.233	1.9577	0.203	0.55	N.S
Quota availability	1.8978	0.303	1.9014	0.300	0.09	N.S
Adequacy of quantity	1.0160	1.280	1.0845	1.180	0.43	N.S
Acceptability of quality	1.8115	0.445	1.8310	0.507	0.30	N.S
Behaviour of staff	1.9361	0.324	1.9155	0.368	0.44	N.S
Overall assessment	2.4792	0.716	2.6197	0.570	1.78	N.S

The above table shows that there is no significant variation between the responses of the rural consumers and the responses of the urban consumers on any of the 9 important elements; in other words, both the categories have the same view and assessment of the various elements which go to determine the effectiveness of the Public Distribution System.

The consumers are classified as belonging to low, middle and high income groups. ANOVA test was carried out to assess the differences in the perceptions of various income groups regarding the 9 selected elements. The results are as follows.

Table 7 shows that the ANOVA table for locational convenience of the shops as perceived by different groups.

Proof of Hypothesis (ii)

There is no significant difference between Locational Convenience and Perception of Different Income Groups in their purchases at the FSS shop.

Table 7
Locational Convenience - Perception of Different Income Groups

Source of variance	Degree of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F. value	Significance level
Between groups	2	0.0411	0.0206	0.3632	Not significant
Within groups	298	21.5813	0.0566		
Total	300	21.6224			

Thus it is seen that there is no significant difference among the respondents belonging to different income groups as far as their perception regarding the locational convenience of the shops is concerned.

Table 8 shows the Analysis of Variance Analysis (ANOVA) regarding the timely availability of commodities as perceived by the various income groups.

Table 8
Timely Availability of Commodities - Perception of Different Income Groups

Source of variance	Degree of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F.value	Significance level
Between groups	2	0.0766	0.0383	0.1851	Not significant
Within groups	298	78.8375			
Total	300	78.9141			

It is clear from Table 8 that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of the respondents belonging to various income groups as far as timely availability of all commodities is concerned.

The perceptions of various income groups regarding the time taken by them to complete their purchases at the FSS shop were analysed to find out whether there are any significant variations (Table 9).

Table 9
Time Taken to Complete the Purchase at FSS Shops - Perception of Different Income Groups

Source of variance	Degree of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F. value	Significance level
Between groups	2	0.42266	0.2183	0.5995	Not significant
Within groups	298	138.7483	0.3642		
Total	300	139.1849			

There is no significant difference in the perceptions of the different income groups in respect of the time taken to complete the purchases.

Table 10 shows the ANOVA picture in respect of convenience of the working hours.

Table 10
Convenience of Working Hours of FSS Shops - Perceptions of Different Income Groups

Source of variance	Degree of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F.value	Significance level
Between groups	2	0.0162	0.0081	0.1553	Not significant
Within groups	298	19.8354	0.521		
Total	300	19.8516			

There is no significant difference in the perceptions of the respondents belonging to different income groups in respect of the convenience of the working hours of the shops.

The variations in the responses of different income groups regarding their views on the overall availability of their entitlements during the course of the month are as shown in the Table 11.

Table 11
Availability of Entitlements - Perceptions of Different Income Groups

Source of variance	Degree of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F. value	Significance level
Between groups	2	0.2665	0.1333	1.4600	Not significant
Within groups	298	34.7726	0.0913		
Total	300	35.0391			

Conclusion

The responses of the consumers about the working of Public Distribution System (PDS) are satisfactory. They are fully satisfied with the working of Public Distribution System (PDS) on the basis of location, timely supply, time spent, quota availability adequacy of stocks, quality of food items and behaviour of staff. There is no significant difference among different income groups. They unanimously agreed that location facilitates the buying of commodities in fair shops.

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