CHAPTER-VII

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the major findings of the present study, conclusions and suggestions to make the Public Distribution System more effective and women agricultural labourers to change their present role in a constructive way.

No scientific study has been brought out the fact that women agricultural labourers are involved in the illegal trade of free Rice distributed through the Public Distribution System.

Women play a pivotal role in agriculture as female agricultural labourers, as managers of farms and farm entrepreneurs. They are regarded as the backbone of the rural scene. The women’s work force outside the four walls is larger in rural areas than urban areas in India. While women have always played a key role in agricultural production, their importance both as workers and as managers of farm has been growing, as an increasing number of men move to non-farm jobs. According to the census reports, there is an increased participation of rural women in economic activities besides doing household duties.

Their participation in agriculture contributes a lot for the economic growth and progress of the country, yet their problems are not tackled. Women’s role has biologically and socially combined to create four distinct functions - that of mother, wife, homemaker and worker. The role of worker
is equally important as that of the other three roles. But her role as an active worker-producer is rarely acknowledged; it is significant for the family’s survival. These unknown and unacknowledged beings are responsible for keeping the economy at a steady pace and have helped the nation occupy a significant place in the world.

The Public Distribution System is the key element of the Government’s food security system in India. It is an instrument for ensuring availability of certain essential commodities at easily affordable prices especially for the poor. The Public Distribution System is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and State governments. The Central government, through the Food Corporation of India, has assumed the responsibility for procurement, storage, transportation and allocation of food grains to the State Governments. Over the years, the Public Distribution System has become an important part of Government’s policy for management of food economy in the country.

The Public Distribution System is supplemental in nature and is not intended to make available the entire requirement of any of the commodities distributed under them to a household or a section of the society. In Tamil Nadu, the Public Distribution System is monitored under the Tamil Nadu Civil supplies Corporation and it is the wholesale agent for lifting commodities like Rice, Wheat from the depots of the Food Corporation of India and Sugar from Sugar mills to its 212 operational godowns and distributes them to the Public Distribution System outlets.¹
The Public Distribution System was introduced in Tamil Nadu in the year 1964. Since the introduction of the Targeted Public Distribution System from 1st June 1997, the Universal Public Distribution System is in operation in Tamil Nadu with the Antyodaya Anna Yojana Scheme and the expanded Antyodaya Anna Yojana Scheme. Under the Universal Public Distribution System, there is no discrimination of families on APL and BPL lines based on income.

GENERAL PARTICULARS OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS

FAMILY CARE

While the majority of the sample respondents are married and live with their husbands, only a small percentage of the sample respondents are widows and women deserted by their husbands.

The majority (74 percent) of the sample respondents are Hindus and it is followed by (21.9 percent) Christians. The numbers of Muslim sample respondents are only 4.1 percent.

62 percent of the sample respondents belong to the Scheduled Caste (SC) and remaining 38 percent belong to Most Backward Class (MBC) and Backward Class (BC). From this, it could be learned that a majority of the women agricultural labourers of Lathur Block belong to the SC Category.

The majority of the sample respondents (69.5 percent) live in nuclear families and the remaining 30.5 percent of the sample respondents live in joint family.
The average number of family members in a family is 4 or 5 and the average size of the family members is 3.

The average number of working members in the family is two and the maximum number is 4 in a few families.

The average number of children is two.

The majority of the sample respondents (96.1 percent) have adopted the family planning programme.

This study found that a majority of the sample respondents (87.8 percent) suffer from Chronic Illness like Headache and Leg Pain.

The majority of the sample respondents (85.8 percent) receive treatment in the Government hospital and only 2 percent of the sample respondents get treatment from Private Hospital.

The monthly medical expenses of the sample respondents vary from Rs.100 to Rs.800.

From this study, it is understood that a majority of the sample respondents (68 percent) had taken treatment for one to three times in a month and the rest of the sample respondents (32 percent) had treatment more than three times.

It is found that all the sample respondents are the members of Self Help Groups.
The sizeable sample respondents are living in concrete houses (42.2), while the remaining is living in Mud & Thatched, Roof/Tiled/Sheet and in Green Houses.

The average monthly income and average of the sample respondents is 6998.48 rupees, their expenditure is 6634.14 rupees, and their saving is only 362.34 rupees.

The sample respondents annual average debt is found to be Rs.29,321/- and they borrow from the Self Help Groups.

Majority of the sample respondents (54 percent) have borrowed money for housing purpose and it is followed by marriage purpose (25.7 percent) and the education of their children.

The maximum number of the sample respondents (43.8 percent) has got financial assistance from Government for having toilet facility, and it is followed by housing (31.8 percent) and children’s education (18.5 percent) respectively.

**THE PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM**

The majority of the sample respondents (82.0 percent) have a green family card and it is followed by a yellow family card (16.1 percent).

The maximum number of sample respondents (32.2+57.7=89.9 percent) live within two Kms of the Fair Price Shops.

The sample respondents mostly get Rice for their families from the Fair Price Shop – (Free Rice) followed by Neighbors/Relative (Free Rice for
Price), Co-operative – For Price, Neighbors/Relative (Prod. Rice for Price) and Private Shop – For Price.

The majority of the sample respondents (77.3 percent) carrying free Rice to home by cycle and remaining 22.7 percent by head load.

The sample respondents mostly buy Sugar followed by Kerosene, Wheat and Edible Oil from the Public Distribution System.

**ECONOMIC NECESSITY**

Reasons for selling free Rice factors have mean values which are more representatives of their values as their Standard Deviation are lesser in value. Their distributions are slightly skewed.

This study has identified that the widowed agricultural labourers and married women agricultural labourers are involved more in selling the free Rice distributed through the Public Distribution System as against young women agricultural labourers and aged women (above 50 years) agricultural labourers.

The sample respondents mostly sell their quota of Free Rice to workers of other states followed by fellow poor people, Non-Card Holders, Cattle Owners, Petty Shop Owners and Petty Eaters.

The sale of free Rice significantly increases when the family debt increases and during times of crop failures. Also this study has identified that more the inflow of other state non-agricultural workers more the sale of free rice distributed through Public Distribution System.
The sample respondents mostly sell their free Rice for a price of rupees five to seven.

98 percent of the sample respondents are for the continuance of free Rice distribution by the Tamil Nadu Government.

The sample respondents are aware of the fact that it will result in the cancellation of the family card, spot fine and imprisonment, if they are caught.

The majority of the sample respondents (92.1 percent) were punished for selling free Rice (fine), and it is found that a few of the sample respondents (26.0 percent) had faced legal action for selling free Rice.

Efforts are made to monitor the movement of stocks from the Food Corporation of India depots to TNCSC Ltd Taluk operational godowns and then to the Public Distribution System outlets. Route charts were followed for movement from Taluk godowns and shops which are being intercepted and inspected by various teams.

General inspections and monitoring of the Public Distribution System is carried out by the following agencies:

1. District Collectors
2. The Civil Supplies Department
3. Co-operatives/TNCSC Ltd. Officials in their respective shops.
Inspections are being carried out at godowns, shops and also enroute. The system of Universal Public Distribution System followed in Tamil Nadu with its effective and diligent mechanism of implementation has contributed to a great extent in stabilizing the food grain price even during the drought years.

Effectives and efficiency are handled by the Tamil Nadu Government to overcome the fallouts in the system. In order to ensuring availability of essential commodities to the Public at fair prices and to prevent hoarding and black marketing, the State Government has issued various Control Orders under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

Enforcement and vigilance is paramount for the proper functioning of any system, therefore the Government of Tamil Nadu has taken steps to provide all facilities to the enforcement wing by creating monitoring units in all districts to intensify the monitoring activities in order to enforce strict vigil and thus prevent diversion of commodities meant for the Public Distribution System. And, moreover the Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department has been taking all steps to curb the problem of smuggling of the public distribution system commodities. Enforcement work is very daunting and the following two agencies have been involved in various anti-smuggling activities: The Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection department and the Civil Supplies Criminal Investigation Department.

To make the Public Distribution System more effective from Public Distribution System leakages, at present the Central Government has initiated the Aadhaar card commonly termed as ‘Smart Card’ in every State. It is also
currently being processed in Tamil Nadu. Fair Price Shops are not entrusted to Private individuals in our state, with a view to having accountability and minimize leakages.

To strengthen the Public Distribution System the Tamil Nadu Government has set up a vigilance committee to control the diversion of food grains from the Public Distribution System outlets. The Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation has a Vigilance Officer with a team of officials working under the control and supervision of the Managing Director to collect intelligence on diversion of commodities from the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation godowns or while in transit from the Food Corporation of India to the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation godowns, the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation fair price shops and initiate necessary action.²

CONCLUSION

This chapter attempts to analyze whether the Government of Tamil Nadu monitoring the Public Distribution System is an effective and efficient way of distribution. The above analysis and interpretation show both the effectiveness as well as ineffective method of this system. The free supply of Rice is highly benefited by the poor families in Tamil Nadu. On the whole, the respondents stated that the ration items are very much essential as it prevents them from falling below the poverty line. In spite of the problems, the ration items help to solve their hunger and serve as an effective anti-poverty measure.
POLICY SUGGESTIONS

This research has a few suggestions for making the Public Distribution System more effective.

The Public Distribution System is considered as a principal instrument in the hands of Government for providing a safety net to the poor and the downtrodden. The Government has taken various steps to create awareness about the Public Distribution System among the rural people. The Tamil Nadu Government has been taking serious efforts to provide essential goods through Fair Price Shops at a specific time. However most of the women agricultural labourers found it difficult to go at a specific time when the fair price shops were kept open. It is suggested distribute to the essential commodities during a time which is convenient for most of the women agricultural labourers in Lathur Block of Kancheepuram District in Tamil Nadu. It is found that any time between 7 a.m and 9 a.m in the morning and between 3 p.m and 5 p.m in the evening is very convenient for them.

This study has identified that a reasonable percentage of the food grains are being wasted either by leakage while transporting, loading and unloading times or being spoilt. Also this study has identified that food grains are wasted since there are no proper storage facilities in the study area. It is recommended to provide modern types of godowns to keep the food grains in good manner condition to cut down on wastages.

The family cards are distributed to the beneficiaries without making any queries of the economic status. This research work has also identified that the family cards are not distributed to the holders in a proper manner. This
resulted in the misuse of the family cards. It is recommended that a thorough study be undertaken by the authorities concerned about the economic status of the beneficiaries before issuing the cards in the study area.

Further, this study has found that the commodities distributed through the Fair Price Shops are not qualitatively appreciable and quantitatively acceptable. Many respondents of this study area had made complaints about this fact. It is recommended that vigilance has to be made to the fair price shops to strengthen the Public Distribution System in the study area effectively.

This study has identified that the women agricultural labourers are misusing the free Rice distributed through the Public Distribution System and they are earning a huge income out of it. This trend has made them to stick on to this illegal business and not concentrate on the welfare of their own family especially in health and education of their own children. It is recommended that proper guidance and psychological counseling be provided to these women agricultural labourers and make them know the future consequences of their actions for their family.

This research work has revealed that all the respondents are the members of Self Help Group. Hence a strong network prevailed among the women agricultural labourers in controlling the act of misusing the free Rice distributed through the Public Distribution System. It is recommended that the Self Help Groups can actively participate and guide the members to earn income in a legal way and opportunities must be provided to have various types of business which would bring more income to the Self Help Groups.
The study has found that by selling the free Rice, a sizable percentage of the women agricultural labourers are caught and fined by officials. Enquires revealed that many offenders repeated the same crime many a time. It is recommended that the offenders might be educated by “Grama Saba” in a positive way.

This study has also found that the women agricultural labourers who are involved in the sale of free Rice are found to be financially very poor, widows and aged people. It is recommended that they should be brought under the scheme of micro finance.

**SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:**

- This research work has studied the Public Distribution System and women agricultural labourers. There is sample scope lie to study the Public Distribution System and construction workers in Tamil Nadu.

- The Present scenario shows a heavy inflow of migrated construction workers to Tamil Nadu. It is a visible sight they live on the free Rice distributed to Tamil Nadu’s weaker Section. A study along these lines will be highly beneficial to strengthen the Public Distribution System in Tamil Nadu.

- Food Security is the main concern of any government. Today, India witnesses a large number of people begging for food and searching food in waste bin meant for dumping garbage. Food wastage from high class and star hotels in cities is very high. No Study has been attempted
in this line. A Scientific Study on this aspect would be helpful to Tamil Nadu to provide food security.

- Amma Unavagam is highly successful in Tamil Nadu, but this coverage is very much limited. A research study on Amma Unavagam and Unorganized workers would be highly beneficial for authorities to convert Tamil Nadu into a Hungry-Nil State.

- A Study on the misuse and wastage in PDS has been useful to strengthen the Public Distribution System in Tamil Nadu.

- A financial study related to TASMAC and the Public Distribution System Rice distributed has also been studied.

- The suggestions given above are only a few suggested areas for further research. There are a number of related areas depending upon the mentality of the Researchers.
REFERENCE

1. Gupta Aravind, “Public Distribution of food grains in India”, Centre for Management in Agriculture, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmadabad monograph, No.69