CHAPTER -III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
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3.1 INTRODUCTION:

The Public Distribution System in Maharashtra is established to meet the basic needs of the community who cannot afford to depend upon the market forces alone to obtain supplies of essential commodities. It also involves a heavy outgo in the form of subsidies from the public exchequer both at the Central and State Government levels. Hence it is imperative that the system needs to work at its peak efficiency. However, there have been several complaints about the system through the mass media as well as through direct representations to the authorities concerned.

The present section elaborates the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research hypothesis, sample plan, sources of data, statistical tools used, organization and limitations of the study.

3.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study is conducted to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the mechanism of Public distribution system in Maharashtra State.

2. To assess the operational efficiency of the system from the standpoint of its benefits to consumers and to explore consumers' perspective with regard to their satisfaction from PDS.

3. To examine dealers' viewpoints and experiences with regard to the problems in execution of PDS.

4. To study the impediments in management of PDS as experienced by the officials involved in its implementation.

5. To critically evaluate the existing system of public distribution in Maharashtra and in Nanded.

6. To suggest workable measures to improve the PDS in the light of the problems and snags revealed by the study.
3.3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES:

Research hypothesis is the statement of tentative solution of problem. In view of the above objectives of the study, a number of research questions arise. On the basis of these research questions and review of related literature, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. There is no difference between rural and urban customers of FPSs regarding their perception and satisfaction about packing of goods, display of products, location of FPSs and quality of goods.

2. The majority of customers are not satisfied with the locations of FPSs and packing, display, and quality of goods available at FPSs.

3. Monitoring of the scheme is ineffective.

4. PDS has created overall benefits to poor people.

3.4 SOURCE OF DATA AND SAMPLE PLAN:

The study is based on the data collected from both the primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected through field survey by administering well-structured questionnaires. The respondents were the officials of various agencies involved in PDS in Maharashtra; the dealers of the fair price shops and the consumers. For the collection of the primary data, sets of questionnaires were constructed with the help of the experts after extensive discussions with them after reviewing the literature on the subject.

The secondary data were collected from the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department Govt. of Maharashtra, District Supply Office Collectorate Nanded, books, journals, magazines, newspapers and reports. The information gathered from questionnaires from the agencies, dealers and consumers participating in the PDS were also further supplemented by the observations based on discussions with the respondents and experts. This was held for validating and authenticating the results of the study.

For the study, 300 customers including 150 from urban area and 150 from rural area have been taken randomly from the various part of the Maharashtra. In the second stage, 50 FPSs which include 25 from the urban and 25 from rural areas were selected. In addition to this researcher approach 25 government personnel working for smooth implementation of public distribution system. Their perception about the problems of
PDS have also been studied by the researcher. However only 280 customers responded to the questionnaire and therefore the response rate is 93.33 percent.

Keeping in view the objective, nature and scope of the study, the sample unit is the zones, districts, villages, officials, ration dealers, agencies and ultimate beneficiaries. The systematic random sampling is followed while selecting the beneficiaries, dealers and officials as respondent.

The respondents are approached personally to get the first hand information. Mail and telephone systems were also used wherever it was necessary and convenient to supplement the information.

3.5 STATISTICAL TOOLS USED:

In order to derive concrete and concise results from the information collected through questionnaires, various statistical tools like percentages, averages, ranks, chi-square test were used.

3.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

PDS is a wide field of the study and coverage of each of its aspects is a little difficult. Though as attempt has been made in the study to cover all important dimensions, still some of the factors might have remained uncovered. The selection of the sample may not be quite representative of the whole state especially when the sample works out to be very small percentage of the total size of the population.

However, all the precautions have been to overcome this deficiency by including all types of respondents through a systematic sampling plan. The data for the study has been collected from the consumers of the rural areas, who are mostly illiterate. Though sufficient care has been taken during the analysis and by way of incorporating adequate cross checking through interview schedule, but their reporting cannot be claimed as completely correct. Ambiguous, Incorrect and inadequate information through the incomplete responses entered in the questionnaires could not be ruled out. In certain cases, the respondents were found indifferent to the assurance given to maintain confidentially of data, yet it can be possible that the desired success is not achieved. The scope of the study has been kept limited due to limited means and time constraint.
3.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY:

The present study is divided into following Eight chapters:

Chapter I - Introduction
Chapter II - Literature Review
Chapter III- Research Methodology
Chapter IV- Profile of Nanded District
Chapter V - PDS in Maharashtra
Chapter VI- PDS in Nanded District- A Survey
Chapter VII- Problems in Managerial Effectiveness of PDS in Maharashtra with Special reference to Nanded District.
Chapter VIII- Conclusions & Suggestions.